



METHODS OF ITERATING
WRITTEN RESPONSE

Risograph

Iteration 1

Medium & Project chosen: Risograph

Cover of latest Counterpoint magazine issue illustrated by Elis Tolsma. Counterpoint magazine is an independent magazine which explores a different concept on every issue through independent journalism and illustration. The magazine is Risograph printed on speckled recycled paper using only 3 colours per each issue.

What's unexpected?

I didn't expect for the drums and stencils of different colours not to match, every copy is different, every copy totally unique. No matter how many times we tried to adjust the position of the stencil and drums on the machine, every copy would come out different because the machine also moves the paper when it grabs it from the tray and the stencil and colour drums move at every duplicate print. That was the most unexpected to me. I thought we would have more control over it.

What do you understand better or different?

I now understand better how it works. To 3 colours, first we need to do one drum colour print, let it dry and then print the other two on top. By printing two colours at once instead, without the third, one can be more efficient, precise, and sustainable with the resources available.

The stencil is the most precious resource of Risograph printing. By making small designs printed in an A3, the more economical and environment friendly I can be with this experiment.

Once the colours are separated and create a flat greyscale PDF, the machine burns the artwork in the stencil within the machine by creating tiny little pixel holes (which can be seen with a loupe) and then the colour drum applies the colour on it.

What kind of output favours? And what relationship does it have to graphic design?

The Risograph printer is a Japanese digital duplicator manufactured in 1986 by Riso Kagaku Corporation. The more copies the more affordable and sustainable use of machine and resources. At the publishing workshop in CSM, the Risograph produces A3 prints.

Is my iteration high fidelity? Did it pose a technical challenge?

First, I researched Risograph and traced the illustration on illustrator. Due to time constrains I didn't fully finish the illustration but printed it anyway. - I missed to include the shadows and made some other errors. The technicians explained step by step and helped me print.



Differences: I made some mistakes such applying a colour on the background to try get a similar tone to the original paper, coloured some text in the incorrect colour, used fluor orange instead of regular orange, the paper was different, how the illustration was created and processed was different (this could be seen with a loupe), the shadows were missing... Furthermore, on every copy of paper, the machine would also create colour marks on the paper from residual ink on the rollers from past printed projects. However, this could be easily removed with a rubber.

We printed the artwork in a variety of different papers:

- Copy paper
- Crush Corn 120gsm
- Munken Pure Rough 120gsm
- Redeem 240gsm
- Five Seasons 90gsm

The closest to the original artwork would be a mixture of Five Seasons and Redeem paper.

Conclusion

I failed at making a high fidelity copy but I enjoyed a lot the process and the most exciting thing to me was to look for new differences and errors in every single copy the machine released. It became like a game about spotting for differences. The ink was smudgy and the machine temperamental. Overall, impossible to be perfect and I embraced it. The machine had the control of the outcome and found it to be super fun and a little magic.

Questions that rose while at the printing workshop:

- How can I create new colours by only using two colour drums?
- What other interesting results can I produce by applying graphic pattern combinations rather than full blocks of colour?
- What about manipulating images to print them in duotone?

My intention is to explore these in my next iterations.

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Iteration II