History of Letterpress

Printing is the art of multiplying text by using a press, in particular by combining different reusable parts printing a text in bigger numbers. Around 1457 Gutenberg invented the first printing press with moveable type. That is each letter was a separate carving and could be used again and again in different pages on different books. Gutenberg lived in Mainz in the heart of Germany’s wine growing region and his press was built on the same idea as the presses that are used for pressing the juice from grapes to create wine.

Loving Letterpress

Due to new technological development letterpress printers are a vanishing breed. But the love for letterpress printing is bigger than ever: ‘The beauty of letterpress is in the feel of the paper in your hands, the vivid colors of pure inks and the slight impression where the type or plate kissed the paper’ (www.threeredhens.com/about.html).

Printing Today

I visited a printing office that uses offset as well as digital printing. Offset is used for bigger orders, digital is cheaper for smaller orders because the printer doesn’t have to warm up. Offset also has the quality of being able to print specifically mixed colours, while a digital printer can’t.