

OSP IN 2014

This report is a short overview of OSP's activities in 2014. We invite you of course to explore them more deeply in their individual repositories.

We've separated them into:

- works our design commissions
- tools, tools we started or further developed in 2014
- and finally live the talks & workshops we gave or organised

WORKS

THÉÂTRE LA BALSAMINE 2013–2014, BOOKLET, FLYERS, POSTERS, WEBSITE, SIGNAGE

<http://balsamine.be/index.php/Archives/Saison2013-2014>



Since 2011, OSP modulates the visual identity of la Balsamine. This year’s thematic relied on parallel universes. We looked into articulating text and images (images coming from zoom of manga patterns). With the recent CSS regions feature –allowing text flowing into boxes, we dove into experimenting web tools to make a printed booklet. This allowed us to work altogether simultaneously on the design through Etherpad. But it also offers an interesting design setup inbetween visual and code approach thanks to the web inspector (something existing only, for print documents, in Inkscape).

Files: <http://osp.kitchen/work/balsamine.2013-2014>

ORAL SITE/OLGA, WEB PUBLISHING PLATFORM



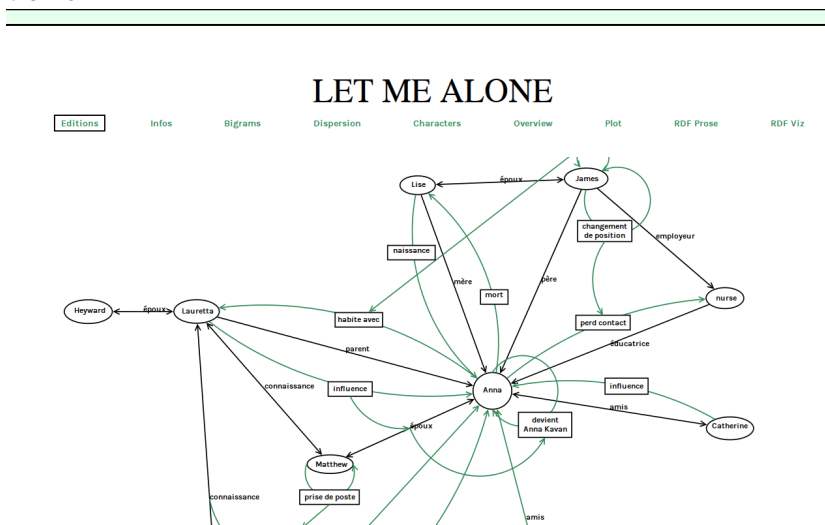
Oral Site is an open source software and platform that Myriam Van Imschoot initiated as part of her artistic work on orality, transmission and interview archives. In 2011 it has been developed by a team of coders, writers and sound specialists of Sarma, Constant and Rits, who share an interest in oral and experimental publication formats.

Oral Site enables users to read, edit and publish online multimodal publications that merge sound, image, text and graphics. Oral Site is both an instrument and a place where one can “expand” publication beyond the classical written form. Publications pay attention to experimental documentation and artistic work based on sound and text. Oral Site was inaugurated on 13 April 2012. Olga is a rewrite of the underlying software, in the hope to stabilize it and drag more contributors.

Files: <http://osp.kitchen/work/oralsite.www>

KAVAN.LAND, WEBSITE

<http://kavan.land>



Kavan.land is a web platform where browsing between natural and programming language, database and metadata, graph and prose, reveals an expanded territory, an echo-fiction. Kavan.land is a semantic and fictional archive designed out of a collection of data related to the British novelist Anna Kavan (1901–1968). It is part of the larger project *Anna K. mythologies personnelles*, a literary creation of the writer Catherine Lenoble. The website will dialogue with a printed book to be published in 2015.

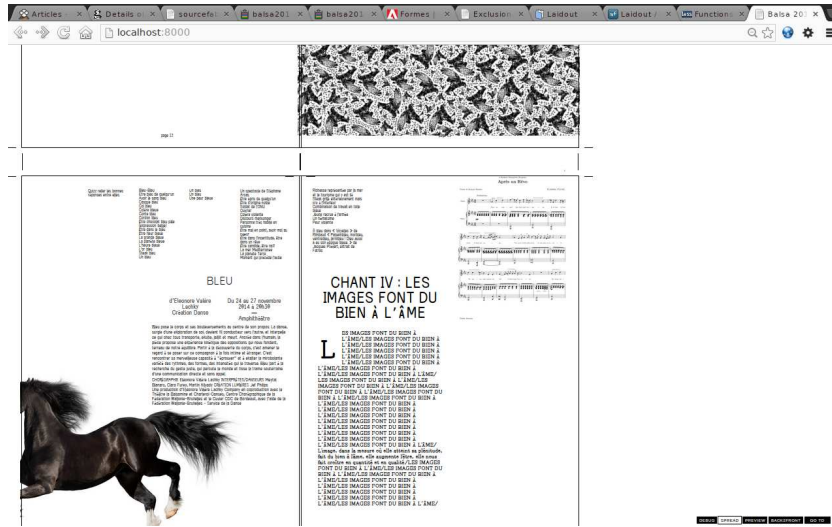
VARIABLE FLOSS ARTS LAB, FLYER + PUBLICATION, KRIEKELAAR



OSP designed the publication and flyer for the exhibition of Constant Variable at De Kriekelaar. It showed various projects of all the ateliers of Variable (see “Variable FLOSS Arts Lab” in Live). We used the html2print boilerplate (see “html2print” in Tools) to design both objects.

Files: <http://osp.kitchen/work/variable-publication>

THÉÂTRE LA BALSAMINE 2014–2015, BOOKLET, FLYERS, POSTERS, WEBSITE



Since 2011, OSP modulates the visual identity of la Balsamine. For this year, the co-directors wanted to relate to engravings and the first forms of essays from the 16th century. Besides making a boilerplate to make print documents out of HTML (see “html2print” in Tools), we used a series of tools (Inkscape scripts, paper.js, Gimp...) to process photographic images into lines. We also developed a script to produce a font by vectorizing it by its center line. The outcome would be as if it was engraved or plotted with one stroke only (see “Strokify” in Tools). OSP commissioned Christoph Haag to develop an Inkscape hatching script and Tom Lechner to develop the engraving tool in Laidout so that the software would translate the luminosity of a photograph into thicknesses of lines (see “Laidout” in Tools).

Files: <http://osp.kitchen/work/balsamine.2014-2015>

FUTURE, WEBSITE

http://f-u-t-u-r-e.org/

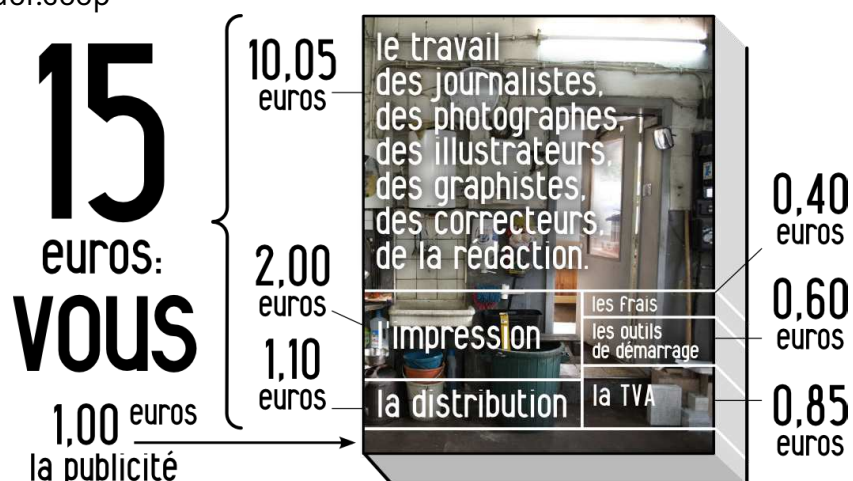


In 2013, for the Relearn summer school OSP organized, we developed Ethertoff (see “Ethertoff” in Tools), a wiki whose text editor is an Etherpad. Participants of this one-week school could then document simultaneously on the wiki, making both a website and a printed publication.

The French publishing house, BAT éditions obtained a subsidy from the Centre National des Arts Plastiques for us to stabilize and develop Ethertoff for the needs of their publications. The main goal being to produce publications directly from the website. The pad-based editing would allow to involve all five editors into the editing process. While the Markdown to HTML conversion would keep for a good CSS-based design.

MÉDOR, JOURNALISM MAGAZINE COOPERATIVE

<https://medor.coop>



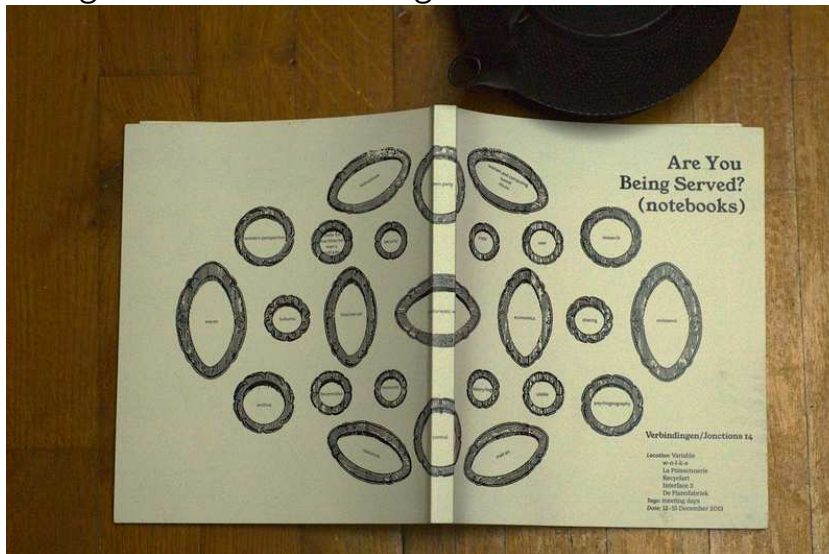
Médor is a cooperative trimestrial Belgian magazine of investigation and stories. 128 pages in full color, 16 × 23 cm with 100% of journalism, investigations, stories, portraits, photos, graphs, columns with guts. All focused on Belgium.

Médor is a new process to make information. It creates working conditions to bring an independent, demanding and fun on-field deep journalism. Médor is a cooperative company of 17 founders; 3 of them are OSP effective members.

Files: <http://osp.kitchen/work/medor.www>

ARE YOU BEING SERVED?, PUBLICATION

<http://areyoubeingserved.constantvzw.org>



Are You Being Served? is the publication of Verbindingen/Jonctions 14, a festival organized by Constant in December 2013. During the festival, dedicated note-takers were transcribing lectures but also taking subjective notes alongside. All notes were taken on the Ethertoff platform (see "Ethertoff" in Tools).

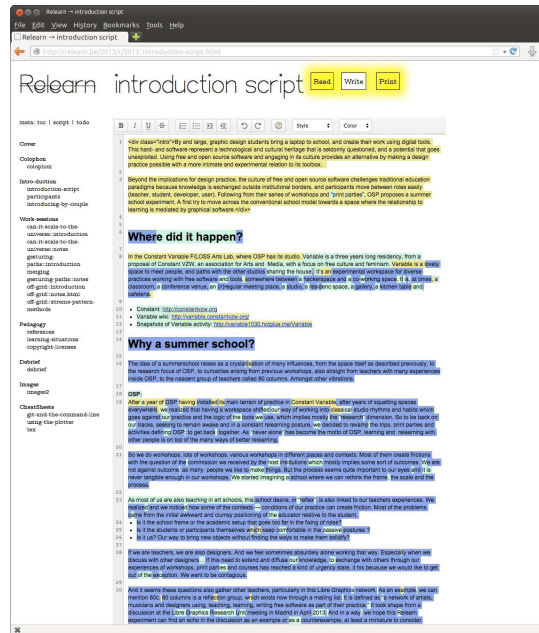
In September 2014, Constant reunited editors and designers for a five day long booksprint still using Ethertoff. As the content was still getting into shape, editors had to find ways to transmit the content to the designers so that structural and design choices could be made.

Files: <http://osp.kitchen/work/vj14>

TOOLS

ETHERTOFF, WEB PUBLISHING PLATFORM

Files: <http://osp.kitchen/tools/ethertoff>



Ethertoff is a wiki whose text editor uses Etherpad, a synchronous collaborative text editor. It is using Django as a shell around Etherpad, which runs on node.js.

The development of this tool started during the preparations of the first Relearn summer school OSP organized in 2013. We wondered whether we would install a local or remote Etherpad server to share resources during the summer school. With Eric Schrijver's knowledge on the workings of this platform, a pad-based wiki became possible, with a read mode for the public visiting the Relearn website, a write mode for account holders, and also a print mode, hinting towards the printing of a Relearn book / report using the content gathered on these pads.

The print mode was later extended with the ability to import other pads to allow for a specific order in the publication. With this in mind, the editing experience for book publications was really extended and rich.

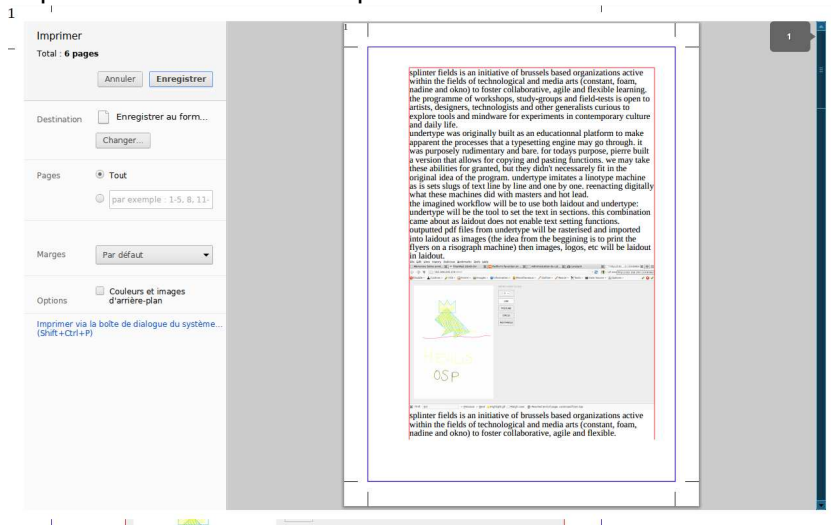
ETHERTOFF.JS, WEB PUBLISHING PLATFORM BASED ON NODE.JS

Files: <http://osp.kitchen/tools/ethertoff.js>

Ethertoff.js is a port of Ethertoff based on node.js which should simplify the install process.

HTML2PRINT, BOILERPLATE TO PRODUCE PRINT DOCUMENTS WITH WEB TOOLS

Files: <http://osp.kitchen/tools/html2print>



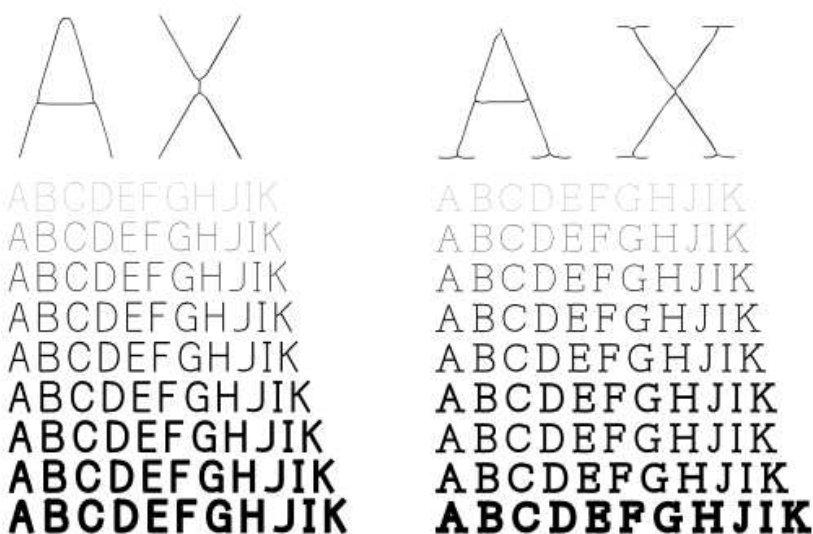
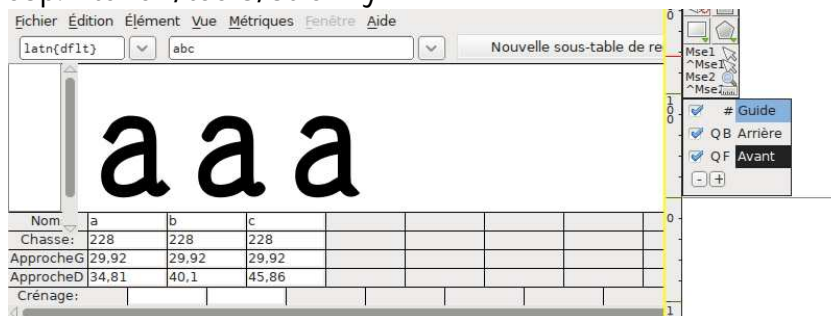
This little tool is a boilerplate, a minimal example to start a print project using HTML, less/CSS and Javascript/Jquery to design it.

The most exciting reason to use HTML/CSS is the fact that you can go back and forth between code and visual manipulation thanks to the element inspector of browsers. With Javascript on top of it, you can access every object in the DOM and its properties or do programmatic manipulations. This back-and-forth between hand and code manipulations is new to print production.

The second strong reason why we set this up is that because the design is made with code/text, it means we can use collaborative text editors such as Etherpad to design with several people at the same time.

STROKIFY, A PYTHON SCRIPT TO VECTORIZE A FONT BY ITS CENTER LINE

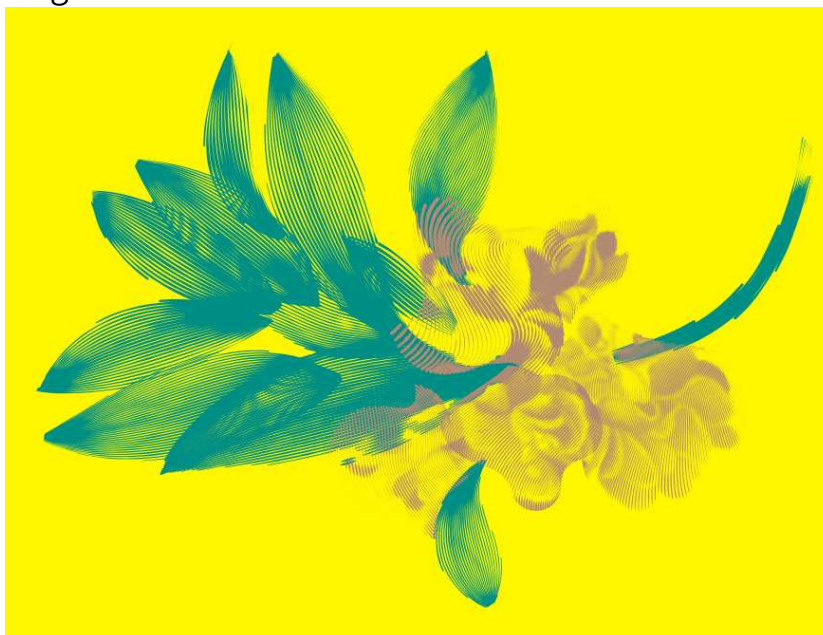
Files: <http://osp.kitchen/tools/strokify>



Developed first by Christoph Haag as a bash script as a commission for Théâtre la Balsamine 2014-2015, the Strokify repository is a set of python scripts which use Autotrace to find the centerlines or “skeletons” of a font and Fontforge to turn the resulting SVGs into a font again.

COMMISSIONING LAIDOUT ENGRAVING TOOL

<http://laidout.org>



In the frame of our work for la Balsamine (see “Théâtre la Balsamine 2014–2015”), OSP commissioned Tom Lechner to continue the development of Laidout’s mesh-tool to give it more engraving functionalities. Back then, it was possible to thicken or thinner the lines by hand with a brush tool. We asked Tom to extend the software so it would automatically adjust the thicknesses of lines based on the luminosity within an “underlying” picture.

TOOLKIT FOR NEW OSP-LIKE GROUPS

<https://lite4.framapad.org/p/i1J1luNy2W>

In the recent years, we received more and more requests for internships from students interested in Free and Libre software for graphic design. As we don’t have the structure to welcome them properly, we wrote back to all of them proposing them to gather. We explain in this letter how we function to maybe take some of our tools and methods and find new ones.

This lead to a group called Young Free Graphist:

<http://lite4.framapad.org/p/youngfreegraphist>.

LIVE

SELF-CONSCIOUS DESIGN, WORKSHOP, HEAD, GENEVA, JANUARY

Within the issue of “Responsive Design”, we proposed to explore the ePub-format (a standard for digital publications/books) and its implications for media design. Radically different from a traditional book, but much like HTML, an ePub publication adjusts itself to the capabilities of the reading device and the settings of the user. The self-aware publication can, aware of these different factors, adjust itself towards different media. Can you turn a poster into a book of 200 pages? How do you deal with the different scales of content? And when we have self-aware publications, we can also imagine them to perform information hostile to the users. What happens if a book radically censors itself when it is read on a smartphone? Can we expand this self-awareness (geo-awareness, time-awareness) to re-introduce limits within the limitless of the digital. Perhaps a sort of DRM gone wild?

Files: <http://osp.kitchen/workshop/self-conscious-design>

SEOUL FONTS KARAOKE, PRINT PARTY, LAB SIN01/ DE LA CHARGE, JANUARY



In October 2013, during the 3rd edition of Typojanchy biennial, OSP set up a 5 day workshop in Seoul. OCR (Optical Character Recognition), the process by which a computer learns to distinguish letters, has already been the subject of OSP projects such as Fonzie, the image to font processor and the itinerant Dingbats Liberation Fests (a.o. CASCO, Espace MyMonkey). In Seoul, OSP and 10 Korean participants went a step further and bashed and trashed the OCR system, teaching it to recognize beyond the alphabet.

Live from SIN lab, inside De La Charge house, OSP reviews the trip that took place 3 months before.

Files: <http://osp.kitchen/workshop/typojanchi-seoul>

ETHERTOFF, RESIDENCY + TALK, LA PANACÉE, MARCH

<http://lapanacee.org/fr/evenement/osp-open-source-publishing>

In the frame of a residency of BAT éditions at the art center La Panacée, OSP was invited to explore with them editorial platforms. This exploration was the first step in the continued development of the Ethertoff wiki for BAT éditions.

RELEARN (VARIABLE SUMMERSCHOOL), TALK, LIBRE GRAPHICS MEETING 2014, LEIPZIG, APRIL



Presentation given at the LGM, to introduce and report on Relearn 2013 and to present Relearn 2014:

Relearn is a temporary art school, organized by OSP, without teachers or rather it has as many teachers as it has participants. It is about sharing and trying new cultural practices, and is entirely running on Free, Libre and Open Source software. The first edition took place in August 2013 in Variable F/LOSS Arts Lab in Brussels. During five days, 40 people from all over the world gathered to learn from each other about experimental design. From 7-11 July 2014 a second edition will take place. This time Relearn expands to include Libre video, sound and hardware. In this presentation at LGM, OSP showed methods and outcomes from the first edition of Relearn.

ETHERTOFF RELEASE ANNOUNCEMENT, LIBRE GRAPHICS MEETING 2014, LEIPZIG, APRIL



Presentation of Ethertoff at LGM 2014:

OSP releases a wiki built around the popular Etherpad software. Easy to install as an Etherpad plugin, Ethertoff allows groups of collaborators to write text, but to also edit the corresponding stylesheets and to generate a PDF version. Designed for fluid transitions between writing, editing and designing, Ethertoff seeks to redefine the space of collaborative writing and of book sprints.

IT'S NOT VERY NICE THAT: GRAPHIC DESIGN AND POLITICS, EXHIBITION/WORKSHOP, GLASGOW, FEBRUARY → APRIL

<http://itsnotverynicethat.com>



It's Not Very Nice That is an incomplete inventory –a slice through contemporary politically engaged graphic design which aims to chart some of the modes of practice currently used by designers to explore, document and respond to political affairs.

For the exhibition we proposed a re-visit/interpretation of our archive/repository by the curators. This remix can benefit from the freedom and possibilities we provide by releasing our work under a free/open license and the tools we provide to explore our archive. But it also shows the complexities and borders of intellectual property.

Part of the closing events for *It's Not Very Nice That*, an exhibition at the Lighthouse, OSP discussed their recent projects but mostly the issue of tools. How Adobe envisions “the designer” or “master craftsman” in their “Creative Suite”. How hackers treat, create and modify their tools. And the explorations of OSP within this spectrum.

More pictures of the exhibition:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/64194931@N07/sets/72157642462543125/>

LOOP, PRESENTATIONS, RECYCLART, APRIL

Short public presentations of projects developed with the frame of the 3 years residency at Variable, rue Gallait. OSP presented the work in progress on *Kavan.land*, and the Relearn Summer School.

TABLE RONDE HÉRITAGE, TALK/ROUND TABLE, CAMPUS LA FONDERIE DE L'IMAGE, MAY

A round table, organized by students in the field of packaging, on the theme of heritage in graphic design. We tried to stress the influence of tools on their/our practice and why we so consciously decide which to use.

BITS AND SOUNDS, RELEARN 2014, WORKSESSION, JULY

<http://osp.constantvzw.org:9999/p/typebitsandsound>



This worksession is about reconnecting (or at least connecting closer) with the inherent properties of the binary computer, and explore its qualities to create audio and visual artworks. We explore bits and bytes writing, manipulation and data interpretation as an artistic playground. This worksession focuses on translation, from text stories and digital languages to sound, from raw bits, coordinates, colors and shapes to songs and scores.

DRAWING THE (UN)PERFECT CIRCLE(S), RELEARN 2014, WORKSESSION, JULY



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This workshop starts with the idea of the circle, perfection. As an idea, it's easy and well known; to actually draw one is a lot harder. We've invented tools like a compass to help us construct circles, but if they need to be really big we run into problems.

Drawing a circle with a computer is just as hard. First there is the mathematics to find the coordinates on the circle, second there is the problem of the pixel. Which pixel is drawn if the border of the circle is just in between two pixels?

Many (digital) techniques have been invented to "hide" these problems, to deal with the limits of the medium or, more precisely, to hide them. With halftoning/color dithering we've even enabled ourselves to construct colors which are not there at all. Thanks to the kind limits of the human eye.

This worksession proposes to deconstruct images into their smallest units (i.e. pixels, color shapes) and reinterpret, mix and rebuild them. From CMYK screen angles, halftones to typography hinting, we'll go through the structure of glyphs and images tracking their hidden patterns. But we'll happily invent new ways to deceive our eyes.

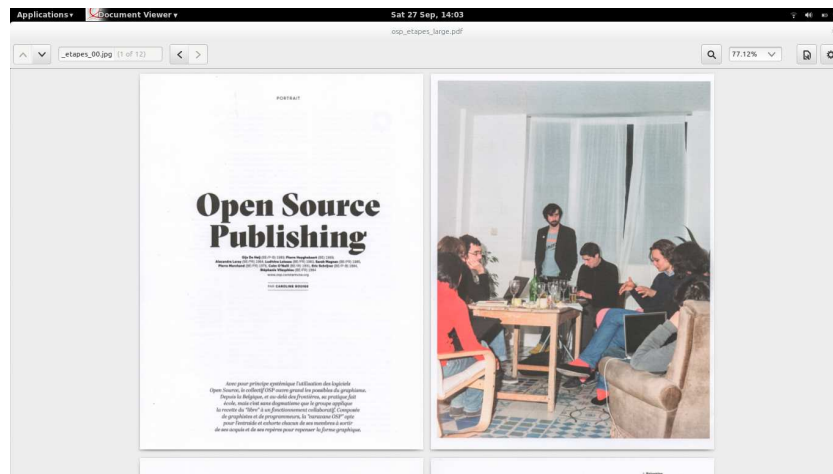
VARIABLE FLOSS ARTS LAB, EXHIBITION, KRIEKELAAR, JULY



Variable, the Free Libre Open Source Software Arts Lab in Schaerbeek, presents an exhibition in the foyer of De Kriekelaar from 12th June till 12th July. This exhibition is the closure of an adventure that started in 2011. A selection of projects developed in the house will be available to the eyes and ears of the public for a month: from graphic design to photographic collage, from tactile installation to sound installation, from video to music, from e-literature to data banks on line. The common thread? Open software and participatory work that truly characterized Variable from beginning to end.

OSP had its atelier for three years in this house and showed all the posters made during that period.

ÉTAPES, N°220 — CO-DESIGN, INTERVIEW, JULY–AUGUST



Étapes magazine n°220 focused on Co-design, so we were pleased to be asked for an interview for the Portrait section of the publication. In proper OSP fashion, after an initial set of questions from Caroline Bouige, the interviewer, we answered collaboratively, both to the questions and to each other. You can read the full Q&A up on <http://osp.constantvzw.org:9999/p/etapes>. For the full article: <http://etapes.com/etapes-220>.

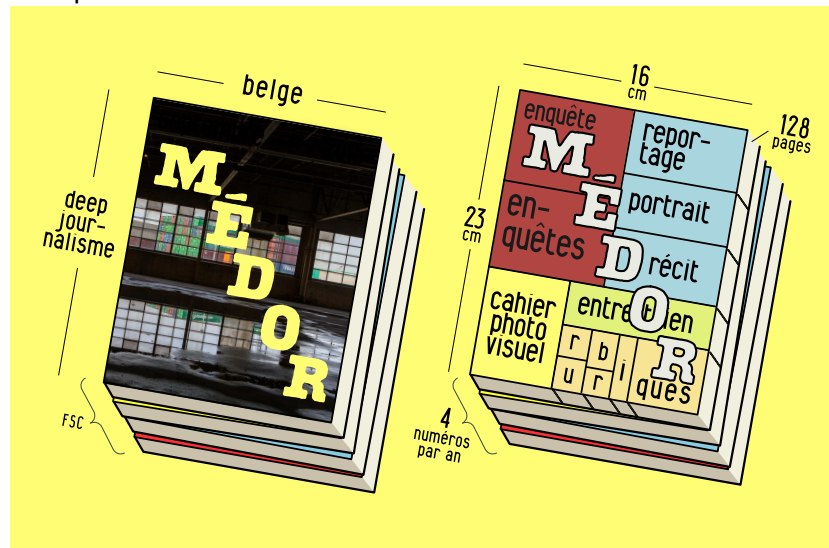
VISUAL CULTURE, CROWDFUNDING, EUROPE REFRESH, HALLES DE SCHAERBEEK AND CARREAU DU TEMPLE (PARIS), OCTOBER



Visual Culture is the name we've given to the tool that we're building to share and publish any (design) project with the possibility to see and retrieve any previous version. Its current form is what constitutes OSP website's home page, and it makes up the exploratory system enabling navigation into each repository OSP uses.

MÉDOR CROWDFUNDING, EUROPE REFRESH, HALLES DE SCHAERBEEK, OCTOBER

<http://medor.coop>



Médor is not a dog! It's a trimestrial, Belgian magazine of inquiries and stories, 128 pages long. Médor contains long-term investigations, reports and portraits focused on Belgium. Médor digs the heart of issues. It inquires and it is persistent. It takes the time needed to be further, beyond appearances. It seeks to understand the facts and to give opinions about uncovered truths. Médor's funding is launched during Europe Refresh and is planning several methods to get the project fully financed.

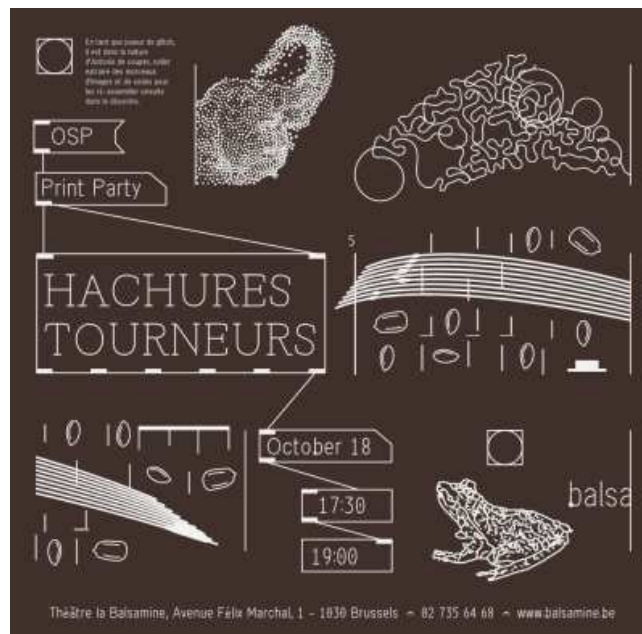
VARIOUS POSTERS, EXHIBITION, TOUT GRAPHISME!, ATELIER 13-16 DU CENTRE GEORGES POMPIDOU, OCTOBER

<http://studio13-16.22ruemuller.com/>



22ruemuller invited us to exhibit posters at the Studio 13-16 of Centre Georges Pompidou. The exhibition was a setup for workshops where teenagers could make graphics to create generative posters. The generative posters were displayed on the website of the event and in the window of the space.

HACHURES TOURNEURS, PRINT PARTY, THÉÂTRE LA BALSAMINE, OCTOBER



After Seoul Font Karaoké and Bits and Sounds from Relearn Summer school, OSP mulls over the graphical score of this year Balsamine visual identity to transform it into musical instruments. How can we reconcile writing and singing, translating a pixel into a beat, a vector curve into a bass line? By installing a paper on a loop, equipped of plotters, pens, qwerty keyboards and ukuleles, this is an attempt to construct with the audience a new loop machine, a modern barrel organ. With Antonio Roberts as a featured guest.

Files: <http://osp.kitchen/live/hachures-tourneurs>

LE PANTALON MOULANT ET LES MATHÉMATIQUES: RÉSISTER AU GEEK, PRESENTATION, APREM#4, LA FABRIQUE DE THÉÂTRE, FRAMERIES, OCTOBER

<http://www.lafabrique.be/#!aprem4/c9px>

Eric Schrijver participated in a round table about the ecology of the Internet, the web as *our* milieu. The title of Eric's talk comes out of his blog name: "I like tight pants and mathematics". By this association of at-first-sight opposite notions, Eric is talking about interstices where new practices can happen.

KABK PROJECT WEEK, WORKSHOP + TALK,
KABK, DEN HAAG, THE NETHERLANDS,
OCTOBER

WHO OWNS CULTURE?

Presentation given at the start of the KABK project week. It introduced the concept of open source software but more importantly Free culture. Also we focused on some of our experimentation with tools and our more recent endeavours in creating our own like HTML2Print.

Presentation PDF:

http://silo.schr.fr/PRESENTATIE_OSP_PROJECTWEEK2014.pdf

WORKSHOP + TALK, FCFORUM + BAU, BARCELONA, NOVEMBER



Video: <http://bambuser.com/v/5056158>

* Eric Schrijver and Gijs de Heij, together with OSP board member Femke Snelting, gave a presentation and remote workshop. The presentation was based on the one given at KABK. The workshop was given through Skype as our flight was delayed for ten hours. We drafted questions around the use and teaching of F/LOSS software within art education. We invited the participants to help us summarize the conversation in a collaborative GraphViz.

Presentation PDF:

http://silo.schr.fr/PRESENTATIE_OSP_PROJECTWEEK2014.pdf

KAVAN.LAND, RESIDENCY + PRESENTATION, LA PANACÉE, MONTPELLIER,

November

A one week residency with Catherine Lenoble to develop together *Kavan.land* (see “Kavan.land” in Works). Our residency ended up with a small public presentation and discussion on our process and more broadly on data-literature and non-academic approaches to biography.

“VISUAL CULTURE — OPEN SOURCE
PUBLISHING, GIT ET LE DESIGN GRAPHIQUE”,
ARTICLE ON OSP BY ANTHONY MASURE,
STRABIC, NOVEMBER

<http://strabic.fr/OSP-Visual-Culture>

Courier

Alongside Visual Culture crowdfunding campaign, Anthony Masure interviewed Eric Schrijver and Gijs de Heij about the tool. The interview has been the basis for this article in *Strabic*.

PLOTTERS, WORKSHOP, LE 75, WOLUWÉ-
SAINT-LAMBERT, NOVEMBER

A two days workshop with graphic design students from le 75, together with and at the invitation Lionel Maes and Ronan Deriez, teachers. This workshop was about exploring the affordances HPGL, the native language of the plotter, to create collaborative posters on the (ironic) theme of “communal identity”. Students constructed text commands and sent them all together through the network to a central machine machine on which the plotter was connected.

HTML2PRINT, PRESENTATION, LE 75, WOLUWÉ-SAINT-LAMBERT, DECEMBER

HTML slideshow (click on "Slide" on the top right): <http://pad.stdin.fr/r/html2print-presentation.md>

A presentation with a focus on OSP exploration of the use of HTML for print design. (See "html2print" in Tools)

PRESENTATION, BELLECOUR, LYON, DECEMBER

HTML slideshow (click on "Slide" on the top right): <http://pad.stdin.fr/r/html2print-presentation.md>

A sequel of the presentation at le 75 in front of a mixed audience of art and design students. (See "html2print" in Tools)