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This day when I first saw Babel's Black, the printer, in an  
unusual uniform, he looked like a black man. It was  
not the printer. At the top he had a long, dark, pointed  
and apparently pointed a glass, a fountain pen, a light  
and a glass. A physical copy of the printer's work.  
You could buy paper and light.

In blacked on such like a shadow in fact, that I should take  
mine in as all

Black is night, blue, green, shadow, eyes and tongue; blackness, shadow, history, a game  
to the eye. It is mystery, history, commerce, and history and shadow. It is the printing  
process and photography. It is early, old and late, by light, meaning an ambiguity. It is shadow,  
a man, a woman, it is the end. And it is the beginning.

In the world of great black is also contemporary with shadow and uncertainty. A color is  
not only a color. Black is a word, black is a word. It is a color, it is a word, it is a  
color, it is a word, it is a color, it is a word, it is a color, it is a word, it is a color,  
it is a word, it is a color, it is a word, it is a color, it is a word, it is a color, it is a word,  
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Alongside ink and press was the image-maker, responsible for translating the word world into an  
image. For the printer would have been taken with representing the word world - in all  
its colorful glory - through black. This was a translation of color, form, shadow, in all  
the treatment of light and shade - and texture from visible to printing, through the use  
of line, cross-hatch and dot. These marks, explored in variations of regular, irregular, chaotic,  
form, chaotic-organic, contained, contained, contained, contained, contained, contained, contained,  
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A Polyphony in Black takes Babel's Black - a unique, colored pigment named in Devon - and  
explores its qualities as an ink on a press. As part of my research, over the course of the year long  
project, I developed a variable letterpress ink from Babel's Black, which is both permanent and  
light-drying. The project is also an investigation into light, dark and color, as discovered in the  
tones and textures of a selection of paintings, prints and drawings from the Damon Art Gallery  
of Damon's collection. Nine artifacts were gathered for their exploration of representation  
of darkness, shadow, green or tone. Each of these artifacts subsequently informed one or  
sometimes several graphic drawings created to form a new set of tones.

These Babel's Black-inspired tones are presented in the gallery as a stack of one-hundred-and  
twenty-two artworks, printed in the Babel's Black ink on computer paper and five for gallery  
visitors to take away with them. In keeping with the concurrent nature of shadow and light,  
computer was chosen for its contemporary associations with printing ephemera and its sense of  
transience. Expanded to include, computer, shadow and sharp, light tone. The tones have  
also been employed to create a number of Babel's Black printed collages, inspired by the tran-  
sient quality of the gallery and with only cast for the duration of the show.

Like a shadow, they cannot be permanent and they cannot be moved.  
This publication documents the Babel's Black tones and the original source material that inspired  
them. Interwoven throughout the booklet photographic inserts record the process leading up  
to the set of printed tones. These inserts layer one set of shadows upon another, re-processing  
documented iterations as threads in a new story for Babel's Black.

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LEFT: Bideford Tone 1991.104 (Black Mills Postcard)  
RIGHT: Bideford Tones 2003.5977 1.11.10.14 (The Strange Family Bible)



LEFT: Bladeford Tone 1991.164 (Bucks Mills Roofscape)  
RIGHT: Bladeford Tones 2003.5977 i, ii, iii, iv (The Stanger Family Bible)

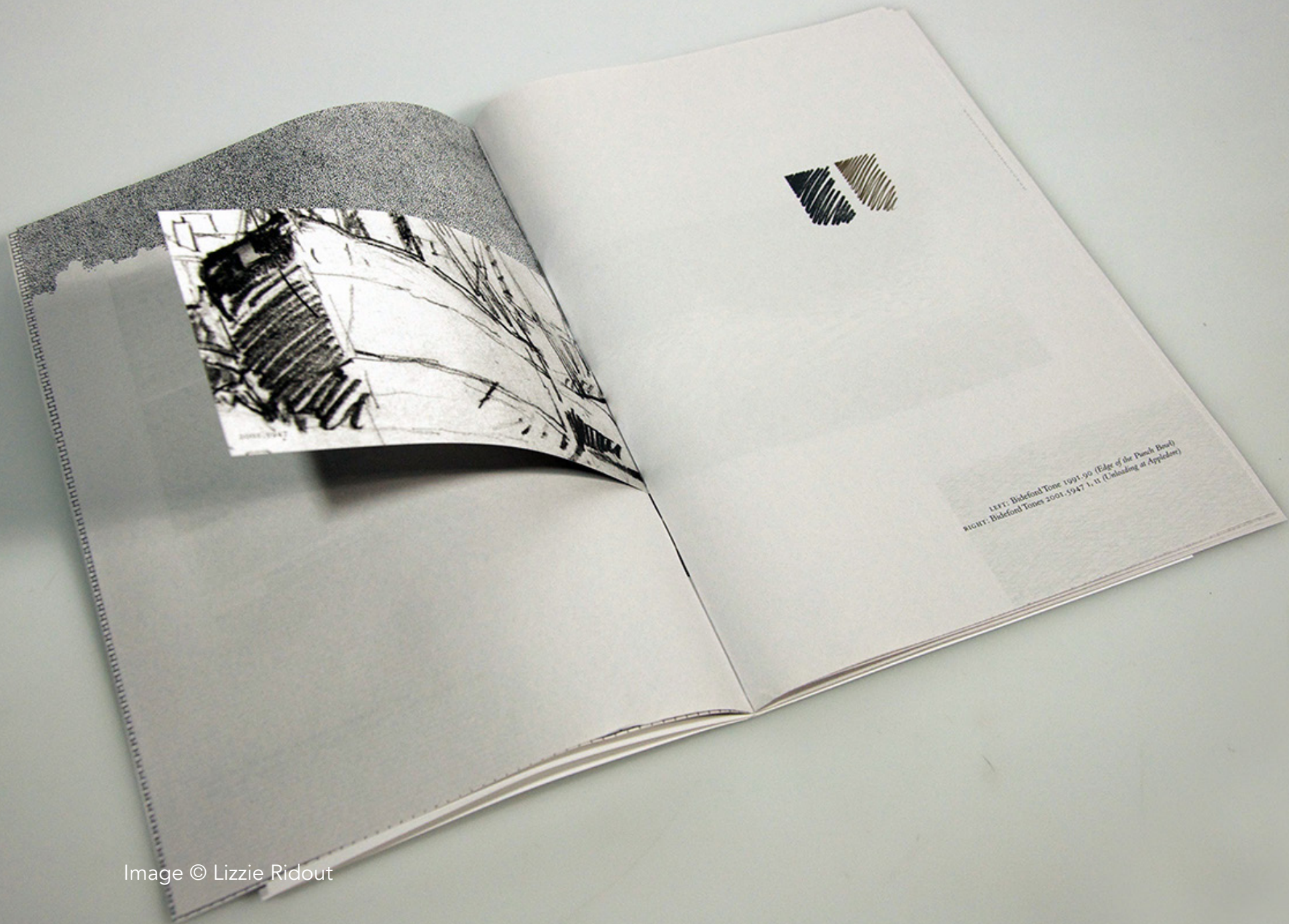


2006.04.47

LEFT: Bideford Tones 2015.01.1.11 (Judith Akkand Looking Out to Sea from The Cabin, Bucks Mills)  
RIGHT: Bideford Tones 2006.04.47 (Noli Mc Tangers)  
OVERLEAF: Bideford Tones 2011.01.1.11.111 (Bideford Bridge)



Image © Lizzie Ridout



LEFT: Bideford Tone 1991-95 (Edge of the Punch Bowl)  
RIGHT: Bideford Tones 2001-2047 1-11 (Unloading at Appledown)



ÉTUDES



