

Kate Bernstein is a contemporary book artist and printmaker. Kate was invited by Creativity and Curiosity to collaborate with them in their research at the **Royal Astronomical Society Library**, London. Facilitated by the RAS Librarian **Sian Prosser**, Kate has been exploring early printed books on astronomy, in which both astronomical discoveries and advances in print technology are evident.

Inspired by the various forms in which astronomers' observations and theories were rendered in these early printed books, she has responded by producing artist's books and prints which explore the role of the printed image as a significant astronomical tool for communication and display. Combining images directly inspired by engravings in the astronomical works with contemporary artwork, Kate has produced screenprinted editions, bound by hand, in which the historical and the contemporary combine to create works which reflect her long-term fascination with the bonds between the present and the past, evident throughout her practice.

In her artist's book *The Infinite M* it is suggested that the placing of a single printed letter, M for Mundi (World), challenged the perception of the Earth as a singular planet at the centre of everything. Giordano Bruno, a sixteenth-century Dominican friar, astronomer and mathematician observed that the world was only one of many planets, in so doing he challenged the teachings of the Church, repositioned the Earth in the Universe and contributed to the charges of heresy against him which led to his death.

The Typographical Planet explores the significance of astronomers sharing information in print, in this case regarding the form of Saturn, through comparative imagery. In *The Typographical Planet*, an outline image of Saturn is held in the beak of a bird perched in a linear landscape and flanked by further comparative images of the planet, which derive from *Systema Saturnium*, 1659, by Christiaan Huygens. The tiny typographical depiction of Saturn in the bird's beak is based upon Galileo's first telescopic observation, printed in 1613. The raven or crow is derived from an engraving of Corvus, the constellation, found in Johann Bayers' 1603 *Uranometria*. This star atlas, with its accurate observations and Greek and Latin letter labelling system, was the forerunner of all later star atlases.

Kate is also working on a print series, *Observe*, inspired by an extraordinary book, *Astronomicum Caesareum* by Peter Apian. Printed in 1540 with elaborate engravings and moving parts coloured by hand, it was produced for Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor and is a testament to both the printers' art and the cultural significance of astronomical endeavour.

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