

JAB Proposal

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Concerning Roundabouts

Travel of some sort is always a significant factor in my life – a moving site between sites. Currently, I commute to work by car, driving from Bristol to Bath to Bristol, often on the A420. The portion of my journey on this particular road is seven miles, with a double mini roundabout about six miles in. I've been reflecting for a while on the clarity and beauty of the road sign, which contrasts with the complexity of traversing the actuality on a busy morning, or evening. The double mini roundabout requires maximum concentration and can be read as pause, as choice, as node, as nexus, as aporia. Aporia is defined as 'a perplexity or difficulty', while aporetic might mean 'to be at a loss', to be 'impassable', or to be 'inclined to doubt, or to raise objections'. (OED) Valiur Rahaman defines aporia as 'an edgeless edge of the text or a work of art'.

As a highly skilled activity, driving is, in a sense, analogous to making. It is easy to disregard it, to take it for granted, like many of the activities that make up our lives, but it presents a useful opportunity for training oneself to be present (or for noticing lack of presence). I am skilled in some making techniques, but not in woodcut, or engraving. Doing something badly, while trying to do it very well, can reveal much about the intimate engagement between body and a particular material, a particular set of tools.

The seven-mile stretch of road has been transposed to the space of the sixteen-page booklet – front and back covers (13.3 x 10.4 cm) and seven spreads (13.3 x 20.8 cm). One spread will contain a larger view of the double mini roundabout. The road pages will be lino printed and the roundabout page will be woodblock printed. These will then be scanned and taken through a digital design process (the pdfs accompanying the proposal represent starting points).

Writing and making have equal weight in my practice. Production is set up in order to generate a language of making; and language, or text, is imported into production, as a form of speculation on embodied knowledge. This might involve a play between tacit, or embodied knowledge and the language of instructional texts. *On Roundabouts* has been produced from two such texts:

1. Highway code: Rule 184 – 190 Roundabouts.
2. *Wood Engraving*, by George E. Mackley, London: The National Magazine Company, 1948.

Dr Faustroll introduced me to the creative swerve, the Clinamen. The swerve suggests possibilities for a change of direction, a change of mind, a veering off course. (Perhaps the car is the unforeseen beast.) A third text will be introduced to, and will possibly fuck up, the space of the book:

3. Lucretius, *On the Nature of the Universe*, trans. By R. E. Latham, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1951, pp. 66-68.

This Clinamen passage will act vertically from top to bottom of page, from North to South and, possibly, from space to earth; The Highway Code / Wood Engraving text (*On Roundabouts*) works from left to right, from East to West. The making process – the cutting of the road and the space of the page – acts up and down, left and right.

1. Lawrence Hill Roundabout to Lawrence Hill to Church Road (0.5 miles)
- 2-3. Church Road to Clouds Hill Road (1.5 miles)
- 4-5. Clouds Hill Road to Bell Hill Road to Two Mile Hill Road (2.5 miles)
- 6-7. Two Mile Hill Road to Regent Street to High Street Kingswood to Hill Street (3.5 miles)
- 8-9. Hill Street to Deanery Road / Deanery Road Roundabout / Deanery Road to High Street Warmley to London Road (4.5 miles)
- 10-11. London Road to Homeapple Hill to Riding Barn Hill (5.5 miles)
- 12-13. **unnamed double mini roundabout**
- 14-15. Riding Barn Hill to Church Road to High Street Wick (6.5 miles)
16. High Street Wick to Bath Road (7 miles)