

Torpedo

WHAT IS TORPEDO PRESS?

Torpedo Press is an independent publisher, bookshop and archive. We also host and produce exhibitions and other activities related to art publishing. Our publications encompass art, architecture, poetry and theory. Since 2006, we have published around 40 titles ranging from fanzines and artists' books to monographs and collections of theoretical essays.

Torpedo is an independent project and is currently headed by Elin Maria Olaussen, Julie Leding and Karen Christine Tandberg. Since 2017, Torpedo has also shared responsibility for the running of PUB (a project space) and NAP (a distribution platform) with Eller med a and other partners.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO START A PUBLISHING PRACTICE AND WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR IN A BOOK PROJECT?

Torpedo Press was founded in the wake of the closure of the bookshop at Oslo's Museum of Contemporary Art in 2004 – a result of the museum merger that created Norway's National Museum for Art, Architecture and Design. Believing that Oslo should have a non-commercial source of art books and publications from Norwegian and international small and independent publishers, we opened a bookshop in 2005. We founded the publishing house soon afterwards with the goal of providing opportunities for the creation

of high-quality experimental publications in collaboration with artists, art projects and projects about art. We aimed to invigorate this form of artist self-publishing by working closely with artists, authors and graphic designers.

Since there were few similar publishers in Norway, we decided to forge connections between Torpedo Press and the international art publishing scene.

Each of our publications has its own audience, and it is important for us as a publisher that our books incorporate some degree of self-reflection and awareness of their own context. Our aim is for our books to incorporate high production values and contribute to a wider artistic discourse.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ROLE IN THE PROCESS OF PUBLISHING A BOOK?

The modern world of small and independent publishing is very diverse, with publishers being run by designers, artists and authors who publish their own and other people's work. Torpedo functions as an initiator, advisor and collaborator with respect to the various publications on our list. Every book project is unique and requires its own unique solutions to achieve production and distribution. We spend much time on pre-project discussions and forge links between suitable authors and highly competent graphic designers. Sometimes potential collaborators approach us with an existing idea for a project, but in

The logo consists of the letters 'N' and 'AP' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The 'N' is positioned above the 'AP', and they are both centered horizontally. The 'A' and 'P' are connected at the base.

general we initiate our own projects and then invite participation. For some projects we take a back-seat role, while for others we are more actively involved with a clear editorial voice. We value the whole process of bringing a publication into being, not only the finished product. The pre- and post-publication periods are just as important to us as the actual publication date. Reflecting on the discussions and choices made during the creation of a project and after publication can be very worthwhile. In this regard, the relationships that the book contributes to creating, what it is like to read, and its reception are all relevant considerations.

Torpedo endeavors to create alternative structures based on collaborative practices, rather than simply reproducing the structure of a commercial publishing house or exhibition space.

WHO ARE THE AUDIENCES FOR YOUR PUBLICATIONS? HOW ARE YOUR BOOKS DISTRIBUTED?

Every book is different, but in general they are targeted towards art world professionals.

One of our most recent titles, *Concrete Oslo*, though, was aimed at a wider audience. Sales figures are not our priority, but it is important for us that a book reaches its audience, even if this audience is small. A major and challenging part of the work involved in publishing a book is the work that starts

after publication. Distribution networks for art books are not sufficient for the number produced. Although Torpedo has worked determinedly on distribution for many years, there are still very few outlets for these kinds of publications, particularly in Norway. By exhibiting at selected international art book fairs over many years, however, we have established a presence in a global network of similar enterprises.

WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

We have many exciting ideas for the future. Currently we are creating a digital version of the large archive of publications we have collected over the years. Our aim is to make this archive available to a wider public. If we can find suitable premises for the physical archive in the longer term, we plan to expand this project into a national archive/library of publications within our field.

More immediately, we are busy getting two major publications ready for print: *Postnordisk 1976–2016* by Jonas Ekeberg, about the rise and fall of the Nordic art scene. And *These are Situationist Times! An Inventory of Reproductions, Deformations, Modifications, Derivations, and Transformations* edited by Ellef Prestsæter and Torpedo – an ongoing exhibition, digitization and publishing project based on the legendary magazine *The Situationist Times*, which was published from 1962 to 1967 by the artist Jacqueline de Jong.