

## *The Page: Material and Visual Literature Conference*

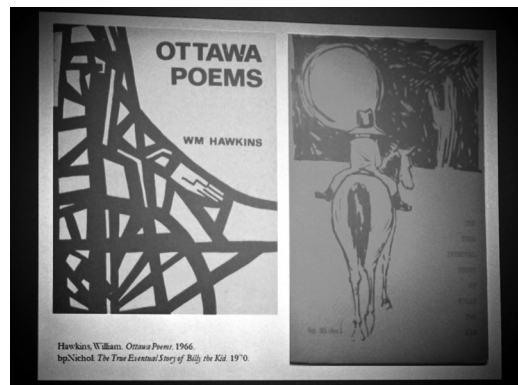
ON MARCH 14, 2014, graduate students from across North America gathered in the Department of English at the University of Ottawa for *The Page: Material and Visual Literature*, a three-day graduate conference focused on academic approaches to the book-as-object within literary studies. Prompted by Robert Darnton's description of book history as "interdisciplinarity run riot" and the journal *Book History's* description of the field as "the entire history of written communication," 29 graduate students presented original research on topics as diverse as 15th-century manuscript culture, 19th-century public print cultures, 20th-century small-press labour and 21st-century digital experiments.

Paul Nelles, an associate professor in the Department of History at Carleton University, delivered the keynote address, "Form, Function, and the Mobility of the Page." Nelles surveyed the history of material innovations that led to the development of movable type and the printing

press, and he explored how print was used for different purposes across cultures and centuries.

The conference also included a curated panel on papermaking, letterpress, and book conservation, with contributions and demonstrations from Ottawa-based printers Richard Coxford, Christine McNair and Grant Wilkins. Proceedings were well attended by students, faculty and members of Ottawa's vibrant publishing community, with dozens sitting in on each of the 14 panels presented over the event's three days. The conference provided ample evidence that book history is a thriving field that continues to attract new graduate students, who are producing much exciting literary scholarship.

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 ~ Cameron Anstee is a student at the University of Ottawa and a co-organizer of *The Page: Material and Visual Literature*; accompanying photos by Pearl Pirie.



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 Clockwise from top: Bridgette Brown delivers her talk on Canadian literary production; Colin Morton discusses Canadian small presses; Cameron Anstee gives a talk on Barbara Caruso; Barbara Caruso book cover art highlighted in Cameron Anstee's talk.