



REBECCA HOSSACK

ART GALLERY

Phil Shaw



Shelf Isolation, 2020
eight colour pigment based
archival print on Hahnemuhle paper,
74 x 67 cm

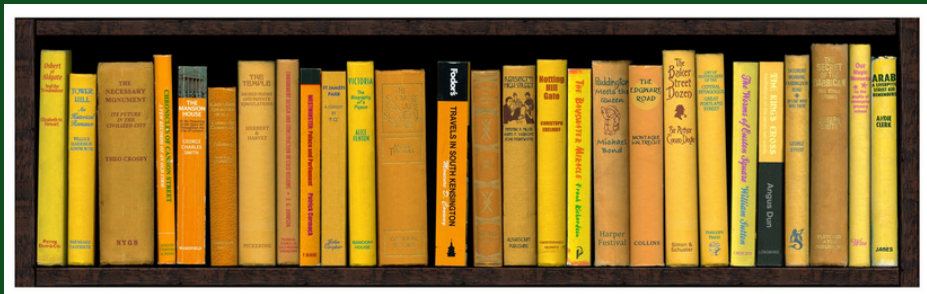
Phil Shaw was born and brought up in the West Yorkshire town of Huddersfield. He studied painting at Leeds Polytechnic before going on to study printmaking at the Royal College of Art.

In 2000 he was awarded a Doctorate from Middlesex University for his work in identifying and developing a range of plant-sourced colourants for use in screen process printing. He has taught Printmaking at Middlesex University since 1980. He has also taught courses at Ruskin School of Art and Chelsea College of Art, and lectured extensively throughout the United States of America, Canada, Sweden, Denmark, France, Mexico and Israel.





You Can't Judge a Book, 2022
eight colour pigment based archival
print on Hahnemuhle paper
140 x 91 cm
55 x 35 in
Edition of 75



Londinensi Subterraneis: Circulus Linea, 2012

**eight colour pigment based archival
print on Hahnemuhle paper**

38 x 101 cm

15 x 40 in

Edition of 45



Londinensi Subterraneis: Elizabeth Linea, 2022

**eight colour pigment based archival
print on Hahnemuhle paper**

38 x 101 cm

15 x 39 3/4 in

Edition of 70

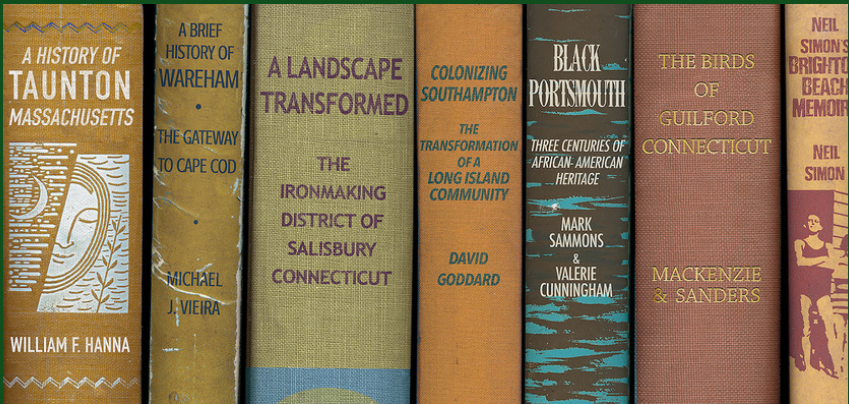


Detail, *The Truth in Black and White with Some Grey Areas 3*, 2016

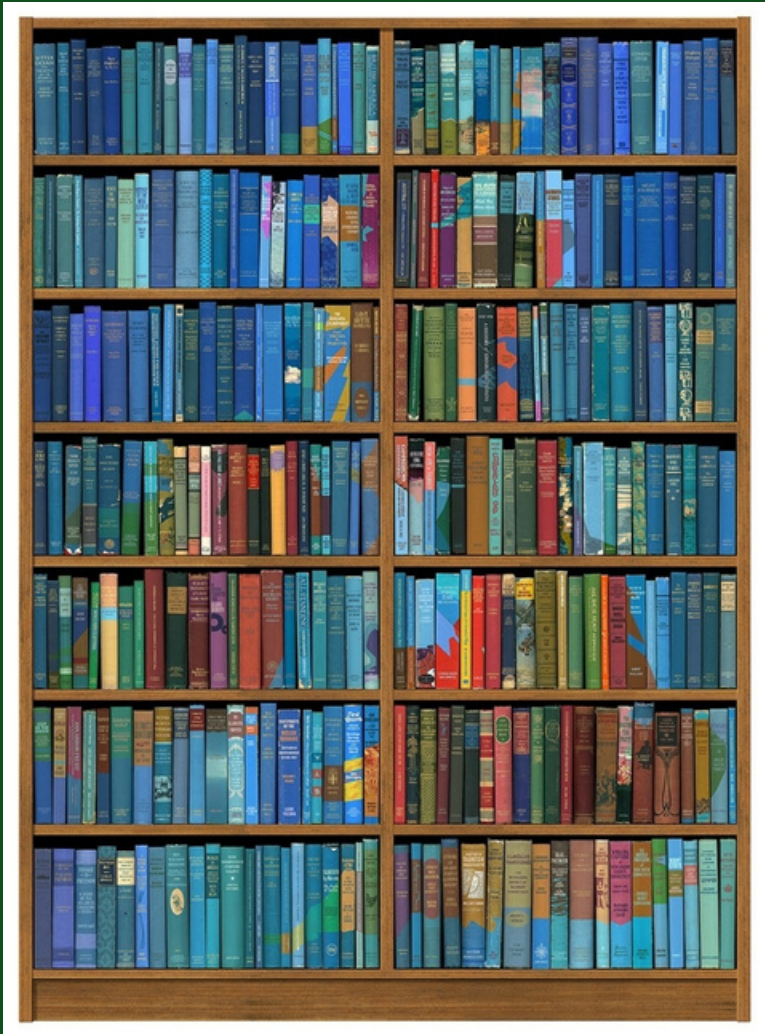
'Some people have tended to regard what I do as light-hearted and probably of little consequence. In fact my work is really quite serious, everything I do is in some sense a commentary on questions relating to what we believe, what we think we believe and what we are told to believe.

Probably as a result of a strict fundamentalist upbringing, I have always been troubled by the possibility that things may not be what they appear to be and certainly not what they are said to be. As a result, I see most beliefs (even scientific ones) as a form of dogma. And I enjoy poking serious fun at dogma - wherever it lurks.'

- Phil Shaw



Detail, *Climate Change, 2022*
eight colour pigment based
archival print on Hahnemuhle paper
62 x 56.5 cm
24 3/8 x 22 1/4 in
Edition of 150



The Special Relationship, 2015

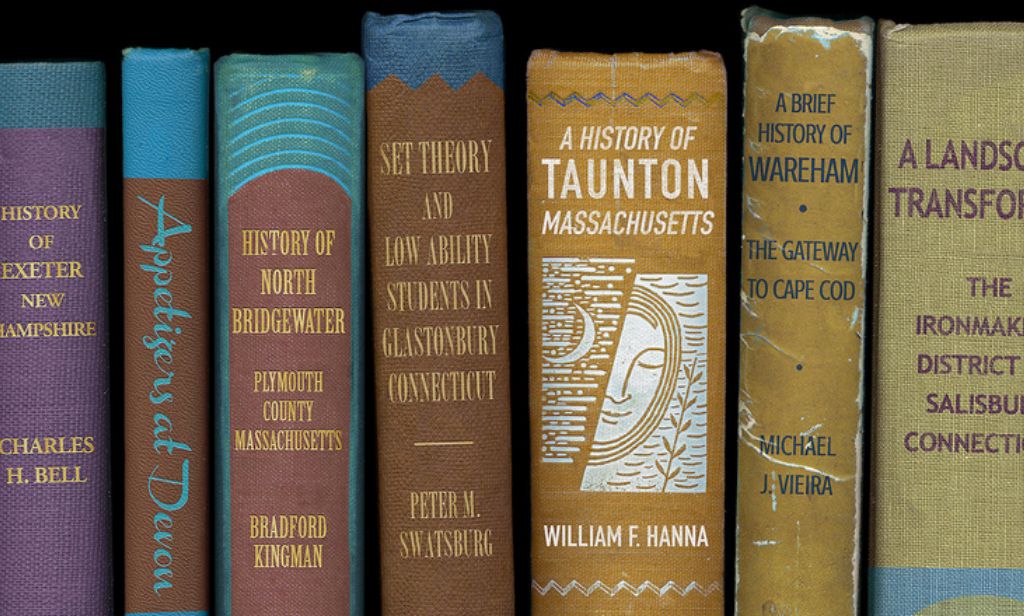
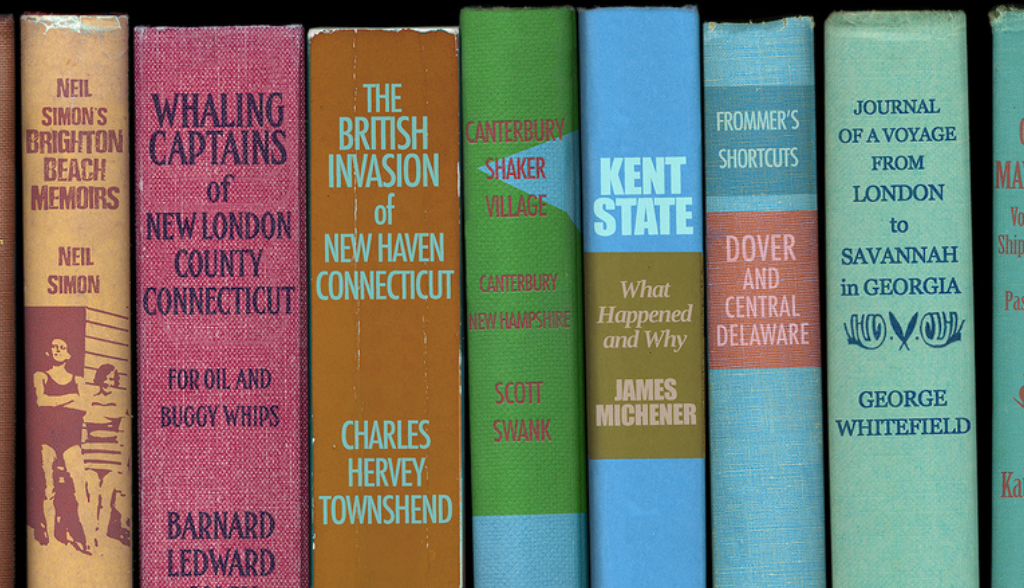
archival print

182 x 136 cm

71 5/8 x 53 1/2 in

edition of 65

In 2013, Shaw was commissioned by Prime Minister David Cameron to produce a special edition print, which was presented to the eight World Leaders and two European commissioners attending the 2013 G8 Summit in Lough Erne, Northern Ireland.



Detail, *The Special Relationship*, 2015



Bookshelf art tells a story for our time

Thank goodness for the publishing company Corona Books, the artist Phil Shaw thought. It ensured the narrative of his latest piece of "bookshelf art" could have its most important element (David Sanderson's digital printmaker, has found his latest piece — entitled *Shelf Isolation* — to be in global demand after "crafting" a bookshelf print using real book titles to tell a story about the coronavirus pandemic. Having found the titles Shaw

then designs the book spines on his computer and places them in order to produce a coherent narrative. For the latest prints, 10 per cent of the proceeds from which are being donated to the NHS and Doctors Without Frontiers, Shaw used books by Stephen King, Michael Ondaatje, Edna O'Brien and Adam Thorpe, among many others. When lining up the book titles the full text reads: *The English Patient Had Caught It On The Beach. I Should Have Stayed Home She Said. Now She Was In Quarantine In The Dark House of Splendid Isolation. Still Hope Springs Eternal. With A Little Bit of Luck. Common Sense And Personal Hygiene. The Corona Book of Horror Stories. Must End Soon. Always Remember Clean Hands Save Lives And When In Doubt Don't Go Out.* "I became so tired of the doom and gloom," Shaw said. "So, I thought: Let's try and do something positive about it.



Phil Shaw uses digital tools to compile his unique tales of the unexpected

"The development of the narrative is dictated by what books you can find and you don't know whether it will work because you don't know where the story will go," he added. Shaw previously created a "social distancing" print featuring titles including *A Room of One's Own*, *Far From the Madding Crowd* and *One Hundred Years*

of Solitude. All the books had a book-sized space between them. "All I have is the name of the book and then I use a computer to craft them one by one," he said. "I design book spines. It is like painting except by a computer. I spend hours on little worn bits, torn bits, creases, lumps and bumps and things." The artist, who has been creating his bookshelf prints since 2003 and who was commissioned by the former prime minister David Cameron to create the print presented to world leaders at the 2013 G8 summit, said he knew millions of book titles. "At the back of my mind I knew there was a publisher [named Corona]," he said. "I looked at their titles and thought that [*Book of Horror Stories*] was perfect." He said that within 24 hours of the prints being put on sale, priced at £1,500 at the Rebecca Hosack Art Gallery, there had been more than 100 purchases from across the world.

For my bookshelf prints I spend a great deal of time searching the British Library and Library of Congress catalogues for titles which seem right for the particular subject I'm dealing with, but I have no idea what the original bindings and design may look like. The books as they appear in the prints are entirely crafted from my imagination although most have an approximately 'right' style and typographic treatment for the date of the original publication.

'Sometimes they're ironic, sometimes they're caustic, sometimes they seem to me to be quite poignant. Puns both literary and visual have always fascinated me, and all my work has this fascination as it's primary ingredient.

'A fellow artist recently described what I do as being ...'a coalescence of the poetic with the subversive...' – sounds pretty good to me!

- Phil Shaw



Fiction 14, 2017
archival print
146 x 98 cm
58 x 39 in
Edition of 65

PHOTOS



Shaw's work has been featured on the front of *The Times'* Arts pages as the *Critics' Pick* during London Art Week, and his *Big Fiction* was the cover image of the *South China Morning Post* during Art Basel Hong Kong 2015, following his exhibition at Art Central Hong Kong.