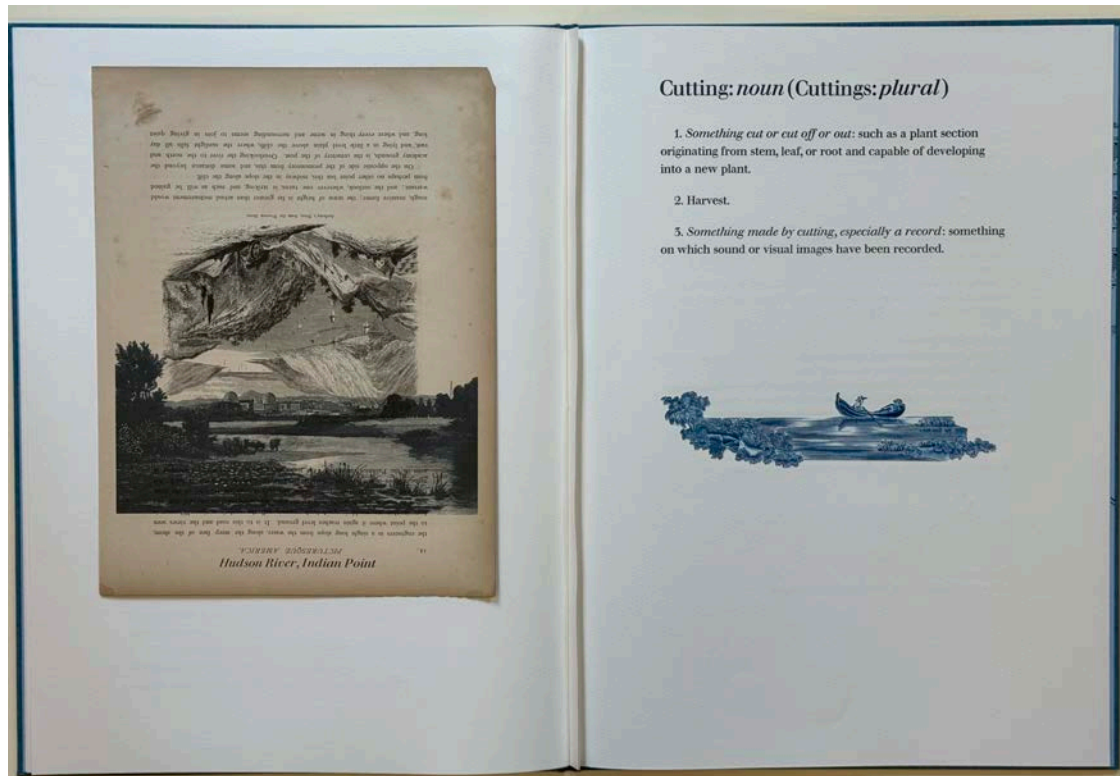


Cumbrian Blue(s), the Book



Pages from *Cumbrian Blue(s), the Book*, sampler/prospectus June 2024

Background:

I'm best known for my *Cumbrian Blue(s)* artworks,¹ contemporary ceramic transferwares which can be found in public & private collections around the world. These include the V&A in London, National Museums in Scotland, Norway & Sweden, as well as Boston, Brooklyn, Birmingham, Newark, Philadelphia Art Museums, and Shelburne Museum in the US. An established authority on the creative development of graphic ceramic surfaces, published books include *Ceramics & Print*, *Painted Clay*, and *Horizon Transferware & Contemporary Ceramics*. I completed my PhD *Ceramics & Landscape, Remediation & Confection, A Theory of Surface* in 2010.² I have curated associated (touring) exhibitions in the UK, Norway & Sweden.

¹ <https://cumbrianblues.com/> & <https://ferrincontemporary.com/portfolio/paul-scott/>

² Manchester Institute for Research & Innovation in Art & Design, Manchester Metropolitan University 2010

Cumbrian Blue(s) artworks use the materials, language and history of industrially printed ceramics, they are enabled by rigorous research in museum and factory archives.³ My transfer prints rely on the the discipline of drawing, the graphic manipulation of historic patterns through analogue and digital means. They directly reference 19th century Staffordshire transferware patterns, and are applied to antique and specially commissioned pearlware forms. Their vitreous surfaces are manipulated through selective erasure and collaged transfer print. Artworks act to re-animate the historic, creating new socio-political commentaries... at the same time they invite us to re-examine messages and meanings ascribed to the original forms.

In the process of investigating the movement of images, patterns and designs as they journey through media, histories and geographies, I have consistently returned to the relationship between prints on paper, in books, and their ceramic iterations. Travel texts illustrated by prints, referenced by copper plate engravers for the ceramic industry, to the extensive collector literature dedicated to Staffordshire transferwares, and their attributions of wider meanings. These persistent literate affiliations have lent themselves to the notion of creating new artworks in book form for a long time.

In 2015 writer Shax Riegler⁴ interviewed me for an article in *The Magazine Antiques*.⁵ As a result of our conversation he alerted me to the 1899 publication, *Early New York on Dark Blue Staffordshire Pottery* by R. T. Haines Halsey.⁶ I was already aware of the tome having owned and referenced a well thumbed copy of a Dover paperback reprint, but I had no idea of the sumptuous nature of the original. Published in an edition of 268 copies on hand made paper (with an additional 30 copies on imperial Japan paper), the book contains letterpress printed text illustrated by jewel like photogravure prints. Halsey's distinctly odd narrative about the transferwares is used to illustrate his own version of American colonial history. The wondrous discovery of the original re-animated my idea of creating an artist book, one that would, like my ceramic artworks, update the narrative for the 21st century.

In 2017, through my gallerist Leslie Ferrin⁷ I met master photogravure printmaker Jon Goodman.⁸ We started collaborating, and I commissioned Jon to create a small number of photogravures of my *Cumbrian Blues(s) New American Scenery* artworks. Unfortunately the

³ Spode Museum Trust, the Potteries Museum (Hanley), V&A Wedgwood, V&A Prints & Drawing Department London, in Sweden at Rörstrand & Gustavsberg, Egersund in Norway, Royal Copenhagen (Denmark), Petrus Regout in the Netherlands, as well a Syracuse in the USA.

⁴ <https://www.shaxriegler.com/bio.htm>

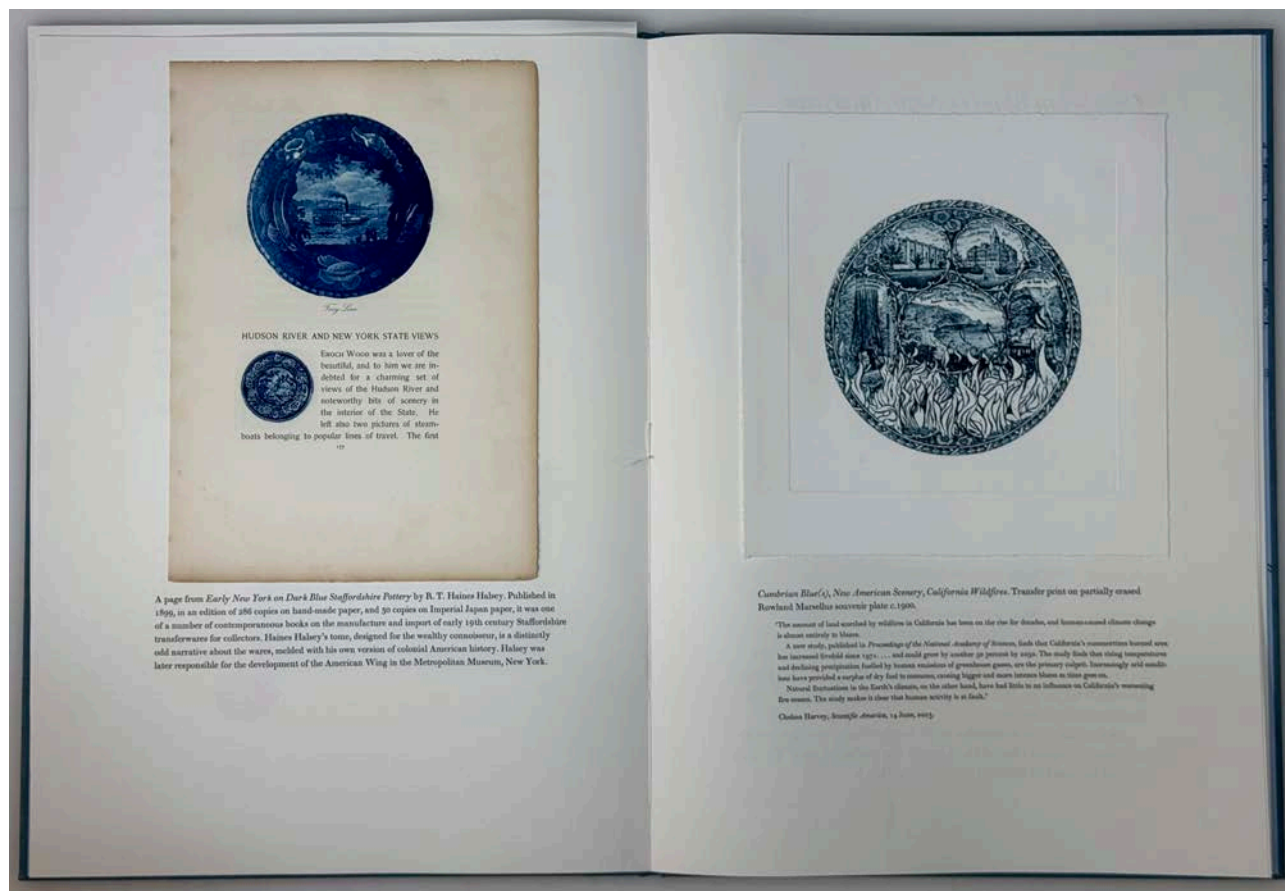
⁵ Riegler, Shax, *Getting the Blues* in *The Magazine Antiques*, Jan/Feb 2016, vol CLXXXIII, pages 162- 164

⁶ Haines Halsey, R. T. *Early New York on Dark Blue Staffordshire Pottery*, Dodd Mead & Co., New York 1899. Photogravure plates made by W.H. Gilbo & Co., printed by J. L. Phillips, The Gillis Press.

⁷ <https://ferrincontemporary.com/>

⁸ <https://jgoodgravure.com/>

project was then rapidly superseded by the need to create new ceramic artworks for exhibitions,⁹ and the book put on the back burner.



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Photogravure illustration from R.T Haines Halsey's *Early New York on Dark Blue Staffordshire Pottery*, with *Cumbrian Blue(s) New American Scenery, California Wildfires*, photogravure by Jon Goodman

Some years later, once my attention returned to the artist book, I became aware that using paper as the primary substrate (as opposed to a supportive/process material for artworks realised in ceramic form), involved a major adaptation of my long held working practices. Although I had contributed paper works (collage and print) to *Real Art* publications between 1987 and 2002,¹⁰ in the ensuing years, my creative processes had become firmly welded to the printed ceramic. I realised that they had become materially specialised, intuitive, almost unthinking, and it came as

⁹ Including *New American Scenery* in *Raid the Icebox Now* at RISD Museum, September 13, 2019 - December 30, 2021. <https://publications.risd-museum.org/raid-icebox-now/paul-scott-new-american-scenery>. *New American Scenery* at Albany Institute of History & Art, August 13, 2022 - December 31, 2022, <https://www.albanyinstitute.org/exhibition/paul-scott-new-american-scenery>

¹⁰ *Real Art* created and published limited edition artist books over 15 years from 1987 to 2002. Rachel & Malcolm Gibson (Cumbria), collaborated with Andrew Law & James Hall (London). Each *Real Art* Publication was devoted entirely to visuals & techniques include screen, block printing collage, digital imagery + handmade materials. *Real Art* had a national and international reputation for producing innovative book art. Publications form part of a number of major collections including the Tate Gallery & the UK National Art Library.

something of a shock to realise that creating 'finished' artwork on paper was now problematic, almost intimidating. In addition, whilst I had been heavily involved in the design and production of published books, making my own from scratch involved very different processes. It was clear that I needed a period of studio time to refresh, rethink, and re-learn. In June 2022 I was successful in an application to the Arts Council's *Developing Your Creative Practice* scheme.¹¹ The award enabled me to set aside a period of time to explore, refresh, better understand and develop levels of competence in a number of creative processes involving paper and bookbinding. As well as solo studio explorations, I worked with printmaker Vega Brennan¹² and spent time with bookbinder Roger Grech.¹³

As a result of studio time the DYCP funding enabled, realisation of the artist book became clearer, and more feasible. The narrative was expanded beyond the Halsey reanimation, to be a more comprehensive story of the development of *Cumbrian Blue(s)* practice. I decided to collaborate on intaglio and screen prints, delegating their actual production to specialist printmakers. The project became more manageable.

In June 2024, in close collaboration with Christopher Wakeling (letterpress),¹⁴ and Roger Grech (bookbinding), a limited number of full size brochures/samplers announcing *Cumbrian Blue(s) the Book* the were produced.¹⁵ In the process of realisation, I developed new organisational skills in the handling of pages, papers, prints and in compilation.

Because of the comprehensive nature of the proposed content, selecting, editing visual and textual material, became the next part of the creative journey followed by distillation into 10 x 8 page sections. Today, much content is fixed in place, enabling letterpress printmaking to commence, and over the coming weeks further creative decisions will be made, enabling the long planned project to finally become a reality.

Cumbrian Blue(s) the Book:

Designed by Paul Scott and Christopher Wakeling, *Cumbrian Blue(s) the Book* will be published in October 2025 in a limited series of 12 special artworks, of which 10 will be made available for sale, with 2 retained as artist proofs. A visual and textual narrative, it will trace the development of *Cumbrian Blue(s)* artworks through collage, print and transferware. It will examine historical sources, as well as the journeys of images, patterns and meanings through media, histories, and geographies.

¹¹ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/dycp>

¹² <https://vegabrennanartist.wordpress.com/about/>

¹³ <https://www.rgrechbindery.uk/>

¹⁴ <https://corvusworks.co.uk/>

¹⁵ <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/ss6p4ps5bbspo6dbhikz1/AGtjyZBzLP6pNLCH6TNGpMQ?rlkey=oc80b6v40zleudzcs91o39i7y&st=0b69ah8t&dl=0>

Each 80 page volume (335mm x 440mm) will be hand bound by Roger Grech, in full cloth (Dubletta 3251), housed in a bespoke solander box (bound in *Cumbrian Blue(s) Detroit, Dogs & Dragons* fabric) and will contain:

- 50(+) artworks, including:
- Original *Cumbrian Blue(s)* collages, paper cuts, prints, drawings, and ceramic transferwares. These include giclée & laser prints, rubber stamps, as well as individual drawings, paintings, and collages.
- 4 serigraphs printed by Dan Bugg at Penfold Press.¹⁶
- A set of 8 photogravures of *Cumbrian Blue(s)* artworks by Jon Goodman.
- An *Indian Point* cup plate created in collaboration with former Spode head engraver Paul Holdway, and a print on Fabriano Rosapina paper taken from the copper plate, by Vega Brennan.
- A cyanotype photograph featuring *Cumbrian Blue(s) Shelburne Jug*, by David Sokosh¹⁷



Cumbrian Blue(s) Shelburne & Sugar Jug (Spout to the Right with Corot), Shelburne Museum
Cyanotype Sketch, David Sokosh 2024.

- Prints from original transferware copper plate engravings, taken during factory research at Gustavsberg, Rörstrand and Spode, and original factory tissues.
- Pottery tissue interleaving sheets
- Texts & prints from antique books.

¹⁶ <https://penfoldpress.co.uk/collections>

¹⁷ <http://www.davidsokosh.com/index.html>

- The 12 individual visual narratives will be illuminated by a common letterpress commentary, in hand-set Walbaum types, on Somerset Book archival paper from St Cuthbert's Mill, by Christopher Wakeling at his Corvus Works.
- Book end papers screen printed by Dan Bugg on Hahnemühle Bugra Bütten paper.

It is intended that a facsimile book edition and digital iteration will follow in 2026



Cumbrian Blue(s), Cutting.

Paper cut from Rörstrand copper plate transfer print on Fabriano Rosapina paper. Paul Scott 2024

Paul Scott, 27 November 2024