Slade/NCA Lived Experiences
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At the age of 17 my dad learned his trade whilst working for the Western SMT bus company in Ayrshire, Scotland. Against the unions wishes they ran their own in-house black and white printing facility on an A3 and A4 Heidelberg Platen Press to produce timetables, forms and posters for the bus drivers. Unlike a commercial press where tasks were divided and separated by skill (and gender) he had the opportunity to learn everything from compositing to printing and finishing.

He was a jack of all print trades though further training in typography allowed him to specialise and transfer his skills to the digital world when the use of mono-type and lino-type fell into decline. He secured a career with Linotype which soon merged with Hell Graphic Systems in 1990, to form Linotype-Hell, the company, alongside Apple, that fore-fronted the development of digital imaging hardware and software such as AM and FM screening - a technology that simulated continuous tone photography through the composition of dots arranged in a regular pattern or grid. In his pocket he carried a small magnifying loupe that enabled him to count these dots clearly and for as long as I can remember he would look through it when out walking viewing posters on billboards, reading magazines and papers. He constructed his world through this object and until now I didn't realise how much it forms the basis of mine, how I teach to look at print, identify print and talk about printmaking today.

My dad recently gifted me the loupe he used to keep in his pocket. The loupe in the short film however was also gifted to me by an alumni who studied at the Slade in the 70's who I met during the photo etching short course I run as part of the Slade Summer School.

I now have 2 loupes, one for each eye with different print histories to tell.

Image left: Heidelberg Technology and Kodak 2000 loupe
Image right: Ruper 10x chrome metal loup