

A Manual for Publishing the HumDrum Way

A Model for Publishing as a Commons

Introducing the Manual

Welcome to *A Manual for Publishing the HumDrum Way*. This publication is for anyone who may be interested in our specific model for publishing, or one example of a model for (experimenting towards) publishing as a commons, or publishing with us.

We hope the document can provide a comprehensive overview of the different layers that exist within this publishing model that makes up our expanded publishing practice and project, the principles from which we publish, and the context in which this research and practice takes place.

We chose a Manual for the format, first of all because it speaks in correspondence with our *Living, Breathing Manifesto for Publishing the HumDrum Way* (more on this in a below section). Second (but most important) of all because we find 'the manual' the simplest, most comprehensible and accessible way to make the information and know-how we have gathered over our three years of operating, shareable and reproducible for others. We have therefore structured this as a step by step process for how we (currently) engage in collaborations, make publications, and maintain our publishing model. As and when this process, which is a constant-work-in-process, changes, the model will be adapted, too. We hope to make these changes visible in the text so the new layers and (un)learnings can become recognisable.

This document is open access and also edible. This means you are encouraged to add to, remove or add comments with any questions, feedback, critique or additions you may have. Our only request is that you make the amendments visible in some format, so that we know when changes have taken place. Comments may include your name or be completely anonymised. Please note that once every year (around August) we make a 'snapshot' of this document. This 'snapshot' becomes a digital or physical publication that archives and stores the particular edition, and the additions that were included. Once this snapshot has been made, the comments, feedback and suggestions are merged into the document, which becomes the new original edition and is once again open access and fully edible. This process takes place on an annual cycle.

What is a Model for Publishing as a Commons?

For us, a commons-based framework works with three core components: a *commons* (material and immaterial resources), *commoners* (a group of people/community who wish to collectively organise the commons resources) and *commoning practices* (the methods, exercises, activities, and tactics that ensure the collective organisation and maintenance of the commons, by the commoners).

Within a publishing model, this same framework applies. For HumDrumPress the commons are both material and immaterial, they can be found in the knowledge production and circulation that happens in every stage of the publishing cycle, in the publications that we make, the other publishing outputs we organise, in the relationships that we build through our collaborations, in the finances that we gain, share and spend, and the opportunities that we receive to present our model and work at book fairs, workshops, events, and other public moments. The commoners are present in the different groups we work with (that often merge) from readers, to audience members, to collaborations, to distributors, to printers, to a more general public that has a general interest in our work.

The commoning practices are for us the most interesting of the three components, as they directly ask us how we share our resources with our groups. This is the greatest challenge but also the most rewarding area, and it encourages us to think of alternative modes of working with collaborations, making what we do public, distributing and circulating our work, and ensuring everything we (un)learn is fed back into a model and is made public in some way.

To embark on the journey of creating a publishing model based on a commons-framework, we began by identifying each typical process that sits within a publishing model. This included public and private moments, and areas of publishing that interact with authors, publishers and readers individually and also simultaneously. From there we began to evaluate, analyse and revise how these processes could adopt and adapt in relation to commoning practices, to function as a commons for different groups of commoners. This process will remain a constant and consistent work in progress, as commoning is an active way of working that requires continuous learning, implementation, maintenance and adaption.

Our hope is to continue to learn, create and share new methods of commoning within the specific context of publishing, that can hopefully eventually be opened outwards towards different frameworks, fields and disciplines, too.

This Manual in Relation to the Living, Breathing Manifesto for Publishing the HumDrum Way

In 2021 we developed the *Living, Breathing Manifesto for Publishing the HumDrum Way*. This was when we very first started our publishing endeavour. This document continues to be titled a *manifesto* but in reality it is dumping space for our hopes, wishes, worries, visions, needs, requirements, utopian thoughts, as a publisher. As well as the start of us thinking through how all of the above could be translated into a publishing practice. This manifesto goes through the same annual 'snapshot' cycle described above that this manual will, too.

This manual is the response to the manifesto. As much as the manifesto speaks of hopes, dreams, theories, expectations, this manual hopes to be the counterpoint of action, reaction, practice, and reality. Our endeavour is for the two to be in continuous conversation with one another, and when a new dream and wish is added (by us or by you or by those in the space in between these two), the companion to that can be found here in this manual and in our practice.

You can find the manifesto [here](#) on our website.

Important to Note #1: The Context from which we are publishing

Before we break down our publishing model, it is vitally important to explain the social, societal, economic, geographic, and ecological context from which we are publishing.

Behind HumDrumPress are Amy Gowen Wibke Bramesfeld, two caucasian women in their early 30's. Wibke is originally from Germany, and now lives in Berlin. Amy is originally from the U.K, and is now living in Rotterdam. We both obtained MA's in the Netherlands, Wibke in Information Design at Design Academy Eindhoven, and Amy in Arts and Society at Utrecht University.

Although we have had a range of job roles prior to HumDrumPress, ranging from hospitality, to retail, to gallery workers, to call centres, to third sector volunteers, we both met when working for Onomatopee Projects, a publisher in the Netherlands, fresh out of our MA degrees. There, Wibke was in charge of PR and graphic design related tasks, and Amy was city curator and publications editor. We worked for Onomatopee for two years together, before both moving to Rotterdam. This was very much the period where we cut our teeth in the publishing field and learned all of our initial how's to's, what not to do's, and what we would do differently in relation to book making and publishing practices.

As stands, we decided 1 day per week to HumDrumPress split across many days and weird hours. This is combined with different work. Wibke holds a freelance

design practice and works in retail, Amy works for a community arts festival, an alternative education institute and has a freelance research and writing practice.

We try to split the workload of HumDrumPress as equally as possible, with Wibke taking care of the more design, production financial tasks, and Amy taking care of the more conceptual, organisational and editorially focussed tasks. Beyond this divide (which only means each person 'takes care of' and does not mean they own the workload) all other research, administrative, communication, funding, and public representation tasks are regularly agreed upon and shared.

We try to meet at least once a week for a HumDrum meeting to check-in, delegate tasks and ensure we are communicating the most up to date information with one another. We try increasingly hard to separate this work relationship from our friendship, for example by having a dedicated HumDrum Whatsapp chat and a Amy-Wibke chat

Financially, all economic support for HumDrumPress has come from the Netherlands and Zürich. We were awarded a School of Commons residency in 2021 which granted us a production budget of 3,500 CHF, we were accepted for the Design Starting Grant at Stimuleringsfonds which gave us 7,500€, and we have collabed with WdKA in Rotterdam twice now on publications with a budget of 5,000€, 8,000€, and 20,000€ - most of which was spent on the production of books, but the surplus was reinvested back into the publisher.

Wibke and Amy also pick up freelance gigs in relation to HumDrumPress every now and again (workshops, talks, mentorship etc.) where we always reinvest 5% into the publisher and include the rest as personal income. In 2024 we intend to apply for the Stimuleringsfonds Design Grant for the full 25,000€ to continue to experiment with and build this commons model.

From Wibke's studies at DAE, and our time working at Onomatopee we began this publishing venture with a healthy network of friends, artists, bookstores, publishers and art spaces. However, over the past three years we have worked really hard to continue spreading the word and the joy of HumDrumPress and grow this network and ecosystem of collaborators, partners and supporters. We feel these efforts have come a long way and as of 2024 think we are in a good position in the Dutch publishing field as a publisher. We feel what really paid off was doing Book Fairs, attending publishing events, and hosting our own events and book launches.

As you can see from above there are certain privileges that inform our publishing context: we are white women, we are young, we are childless and do not have care responsibilities, we are educated, we are based in Europe, we already have a firm foot in the field, there is funding that is dedicated to publishing initiatives where we live, and we do not rely on this as our main income. Some of the

above factors are fixed, others may change and fluctuate over time. We will update this context accordingly.

Important to Note #2: The Principles from which we publish

There are six core principles from which we publish:

1. Needs and Requirements Based

Firstly, we are a need and requirements based publisher. Which means, for everyone we work with, it is important to establish a basis for the needs and requirements from which each collaborator wants to publish, and the support they need or expected to receive from HumDrumPress.

2. Commons-based Publishing Methods

Secondly, our priority is establishing and maintaining a publishing model that works as part of a commons-based framework and is informed by commoning practices. This means we are interested in working openly, communal, and collaboratively in each stage of the publishing process. This can initially feel more demanding than the typical publisher/author/reader relationship as we want the collaborator to be involved in every part of the process. The end result, however, is a publication and publishing process that is polyvocal, and in which the hands, ideas, minds, voices and labour of many are involved.

3. (Open) Accessible Publishing

We are committed to making more transparent, more durational, more communal and, thus, more accessible, the processes and entry points into publishing. Questioning precisely what it means to "*publish*" and become "*published*". Everything we publish is open access on our website (and free to be uploaded and shared elsewhere). We also aim to activate the content of our publications in many different ways over a long life period of the publication. This could be digitally as part of newsletters and on our website, or physically as part of reading groups, events, workshops, lectures, panels etc.

4. Durational Life Cycles of a Publication

We understand the publication beyond an 'object'. Instead as an active, malleable source of knowledge, ideas, voices, experiences, contexts and insights. In this way, the "publication" can be activated far before it takes on material form, and with a much longer afterlife, too. Thus showcasing publishing as a non-linear and cyclical process with a clear before and afterlife of a publication.

All of our public outputs are considered publications of sorts, this includes our social media posts, newsletters, website content, emails, P.A.P Series, are considered acts of publishing, and part of our wider publishing model.

5. Polyvocal Approach

We want our publications to include as many people, voices, and ideas as possible. We therefore plan a lot of open moments within each publication cycle so the content of the book can encounter, be shared with and shaped by different audiences and readers, in the hope they may want to contribute in some capacity small or large. By offering feedback, reflections or suggestions, or by contributing to the publication.

6. A Porous, Maintained, Publishing Model

Alongside individual publications and collaborations, we are committed to enacting larger scale, longer-term and meta-level research that positions publishing and publication cyclers within larger systems and structures, including economic cycles, ecological cycles and knowledge cycles. This is to ensure our publishing model, and publishing as a wider practice remains an active agent within, and responsive to shifts and moves within wider society.

Important to Note #3: Durational Publishing as a Process

As mentioned above in 'Durational Life of Publication', in all our publishing endeavours we commit to long-term, durational processes and relationships. This is with our ecosystem of collaborators, mentors, partners, bookshops, and also with the publications that we publish, with a lifetime commitment to the content and the knowledge that is stored and shared, rather than giving the publication a shelf life. The temporality and timeframe for all of the processes in our practice and model is long-term, durational, and, inherently, slower than the usual publishing pace. We are far more interested in exciting ways to continue to activate and make public the relations and the knowledges we are building, than to focus on accumulation and growth. This is why our model is based upon a temporality and publishing cycle that is non-linear in its approach and prioritises slowness and depth over fast-past acceleration.

A MANUAL FOR PUBLISHING THE HUMDRUM WAY

We understand each of the following 14 steps as circular layers (a bit like an onion), some sit more at the core than the others, but together they make a whole. It's important that these layers remain circular in their shape and function, as we see their processes as non-linear, non-ending and cyclical.

LAYER 1

Formerly known as: Acquisition

The HumDrum Approach: Relationship Building, Outreach

Layer 1 refers to how we find, reach-out to and connect to our growing network of those we publish with.

Current methods of relationship building and outreach encompass:

- *People within our own context and networks*
- *Participating in residency programmes such as SoC*
- *Friends and former/current collaborators*
- *People we meet at book fairs and events*
- *Friends of friends*
- *Recommendations*
- *People directly reaching out*

When we first started HumDrumPress one of our biggest questions was how we would reach our writers and our authors. We began in a very privileged position in that we had just begun a residency as part of School of Commons where we worked as part of a peer learning environment, collaborating and exchanging with projects and practitioners from, quite literally, all over the world. Our proposition for SoC was that we would work with the different projects to create publications. This not only gave us a hub of writers and authors, who were being supported for their work by SoC, but also a year to figure out how we would work with authors beyond the scope of SoC.

Naturally, being active in the art, design, educational fields in Berlin and Rotterdam as well as being members of several different communities, we spread the word that we were beginning our publishing venture and that we wanted to publish. This was combined with the first publications of SoC making it's way into the world, and friends and colleagues of the different projects learning about HumDrum and our way of working. Simultaneously, we began being invited for different workshops, talks, lectures and to book fairs, where we were connecting, in person, to different audiences and authors.

With all of the above in mind, we now have a healthy network of authors who we have published with, intend to publish with, and to still wish to reach. Our aim is to create durational, long-lasting relationships with those we publish with, so we are also interested in repeat publishing with the same authors. We understand that with the exception of SoC, our reach remains very Euro-centric, we therefore are thinking of methods and ways we can reach authors outside of

Europe. For now we believe the best methods would be visiting bookfairs outside of Europe, and creating non-European specific open call.

LAYER 2

Formerly known as: Project Management

The HumDrum Approach: The Before Life of the Publication

The Before Life of a Publication is key to HumDrumPress in order to set our expectations, accountability and the best ways to support. Project management mainly encompasses:

- *Needs and requirements*
- *Care Rider*
- *Establishing correspondence and communication (preferred)*
- *Timelines and deadlines*
- *Economic / contract*
- *Co-editing and co-designing agreement*
- *How to make the publication public throughout the process*

Layer 2 refers to the initial agreements made with our publication collaborators, and how the overall management of the project is set-out and agreed upon.

When we begin a collaboration with an author, we feel it is very important to set our needs, desires and expectations. We call ourselves a needs and requirements based publisher, which means we can adapt and add to our support services and structures depending on what will best fit the author, their project and their needs. This is always the first question we ask collaborators: what are your needs and requirements? These can be needs and requirements such as editorial and design support, co-applying for funding, but it can also be communication preferences and accessibility needs (for which we can provide a dedicated access/care rider, if collaborators feel comfortable completing one).

With this same attitude in mind, we establish preferred deadlines, methods we would like to adopt for co-editing, co-designing, and adding as many voices and ideas into the process as possible (we have our own methodologies for this, such as live google-doc editing sessions, and publishing sprints).

Financial contracts are drawn up on a case by case basis. For many of the projects we have overseen, funding has been provided by an institution (namely

School of Commons and Willem de Kooning Academie) with a generous agreement that all profits made can be reinvested back into HumDrum so we can either reprint in the future or continue our collaborations with a next book together. For other agreements we have agreed on a 50/50 split model with the author. For these instances it is usually because a public or private fund has been acquired to support the making of the book and the labour of the author. On other occasions, Wibke and I give our time editing and design "in kind" with the agreement, again, that profits will be reinvested back into HumDrumPress. Moving forward we wish to create a collective pot which will determine the way that contracts are drawn up and finances are distributed.

From the very outset, we are interested in how the knowledge of a publication can be made openly accessible and reproduced outwards. From this first project management conversation we begin to plot moments and points in which we can support the author in making this possible in a way that feels authentic to the author and the project.

LAYER 3

Formerly known as: Conceptualisation

The HumDrum Approach: Co-Construction & Co-Composition

Layer 3 refers to how we construct and compose the content of the publication

The conceptualisation, and journey from idea to publication, for our publications is an ever evolving, collaborative process. As mentioned previously, we do not consider the printed (or digital) publication to be the "end result" of our publications, so conceptualisation of publications goes beyond physical, printed means.

As mentioned in the previous point, we want to make the ideas, information, perspectives and content contained in a publication, public from the first possible point. For all of our publications we therefore devise an "Open Book" event. The HumDrumPress "Open Book" series is an experiment in making the voices, ideas and content usually contained in a publication - the last stage of the publishing process - publicly accessible and visible from the very first moment in the publishing cycle.

Each author who collaborates with HumDrumPress is invited to facilitate an "Open Book" public event session, in which they share, in a performative yet accessible manner, the knowledge they have gathered on the given topic, theme or idea from which they wish to make their publication. Audiences are then able to access, interact, comment and critique, and feel invited into the collaborative publication process.

On one hand, the “Open Book” series hopes to attract a broader and more engaged readership, as well as ensuring the knowledge documented in each publication breaks away from traditional linear publishing cycles and access barriers. On the other hand, it helps the author to share questions, insecurities and areas of “unknowing” around their publication as well as test the ideas of the content they want to include. Open Book has been hugely successful in offering feedback to authors, as well as connecting authors to interested individuals who they often end up collaborating with either in the publication or later on in the process (during book launches or activations of the publication).

For all of our publications we like to think how as many people, voices, hands, eyes, ideas, can be included to make a singular publication as polyvocal as possible. This is an area we concentrate on when conceptualising the content journey of a publication.

The main features of “co-construction and co-composition” are:

- *Open Book*
- *Contributors and collaborators*

LAYER 4

Formerly known as: Editing

The HumDrum Approach: Co-Editing

Layer 4 refers to the tools and manners in which we edit the content that is produced for the publication.

- *Re-establishing needs and requirements around editing*
- *Live, collective editing sessions*
- *Personal approach to going through editing and feedback: a call or in person if possible*
- *Open invite editing sessions*
- *Publishing in newsletter for feedback and responses*

Editing has been one of the toughest areas we have found to “open up” the publishing process, as the act of editor, no matter how care-based or collaborative the process, there is an act of power imbalance, and authoritarian voice. We very much address this in our process, and begin by asking what kind of editorial support our collaborators would most need and desire. What kind of editing would feel supportive, and what kind would feel too much. Typically

authors choose for copy editing and proofreading, but we are happy to accept publications that do not go through a strict editorial process.

For all publications we offer to oversee a collective editing session towards the end of the publication process. This is where we meet online and move through the document together, editing collaboratively. We have also played with 'editorial sprints' where editing is done over a quick succession of days, in person with the authors.

If authors are happy with the process, we also offer publishing a copy edited, but not proofread version of (sections or the entirety) of their publication in our newsletter for public feedback.

LAYER 5

Formerly known as: Design

The HumDrum Approach: Co-design

Layer 5 refers to the tools and manner with which we design the publication.

- *Defining the publication's target audience*
- *Identifying the intended feelings of the publication as an object*
- *Transparent design process and consideration of authors' wishes in the process*
- *Aiming for a graphic concept that allows the publication to stand on its own*
- *Enjoy the creation*
- *Accessibility over design*

Creating the graphic concept of the publication can be a very closed process, especially if the other parties involved are not practising designers.

However, it is important for us to open up the process as much as possible and involve everyone in the design thinking process. Even if someone isn't a practicing graphic designer, they have a clear idea of what they like and don't like. Therefore, we start every design process with a collaborative brainstorming session with everyone involved to gather as much (visual) input as possible and keep all involved throughout the process for feedback and input.

To ensure that our publications meet our expectations, we have four steps in mind that are critical to us

1. Target audience

We need to define who the publication is for and what feeling it should convey as an object.

2. The publication as a reading object

Something that is prior to the graphic layer is the accessibility of the publication. It must be assumed that the content can be read and assimilated.

However, it is important to us that each publication deserves a unique treatment, rather than creating copies of each other.

3. Production

Production plays an important role in the design process, in particular it is part of the main production layer 6.

Design cannot begin until the infrastructure around it has been defined, such as 'What is the budget?', 'How will we print?' and 'Where will we print?'

If these questions are not asked and defined, we do not need to start the design.

4. Design

Once we have addressed the production questions, the design process can begin. A key point in the process is to have fun and challenge ourselves to try out new formats and ways of doing things.

It is important to us that we work as openly as possible, which means, for example, using a lot of open source typography from websites such as typotheque.genderfluid.space/ and www.design-research.be/by-womxn/.

Of course, we do not necessarily act as graphic designers for our publications. We are happy for any contributor to engage a designer of their choice. In this case, we act as a design assistant and production manager to ensure that the above points are always discussed and kept in mind.

LAYER 6

Formerly known as: Production

The HumDrum Approach: Co-Making

Layer 6 refers to the making and producing of the publication, including the decision-making and coordination.

- Print in house / print externally
- Budget control
- Uploading as open access on website
- Colophon

The production of a HumDrumPress publication can be divided into three stages within the publication process: The before, during and after phases of production.

The before

As mentioned in Layer 5, Design, answering certain production questions before embarking on a new publication is crucial to the continuation of the publishing process.

As we live in a capitalist world, the budget plays an important role in this process. Therefore, it is crucial to consider the available printing budget before starting a design.

We need to assess whether we can afford to print externally, such as with an offset printer, or use another online printing service that offers digital printing solutions, or use our own A3 inkjet printer. Each of these solutions has its own advantages and disadvantages.

Offset printing

Printing with an offset printer is usually the most expensive way to go, but the cost per copy tends to go down as the run length increases.

This solution is suitable for larger print budgets, print runs and page counts. As this solution is likely to produce the most flawless publications with the least amount of labour from our side of the production.

Digital printing

Printing with an online printing service that offers a digital printing solution, the production budget does not have to be too high. However, digital printing results cannot be compared to offset printed publications, but here we have several scenarios where we can produce publications.

For example, we have found the service of buch.one, a professional online printing platform, to be very reliable and satisfactory in its results.

On the other hand, although we can print smaller editions for a lower budget, we can only work in a certain format and cannot produce publications smaller than 120x190mm. On the other hand, we have a wide range of options from soft to hardcover, a variety of different (sustainable) papers and the least amount of labour on our side of the production.

This solution is suitable for medium to large print budgets, print runs of between 100 and 300 copies and an approximate page count of between 80 and 300 pages. As this solution is likely to produce the most flawless publications with the least amount of labour from our side of the production.

If there is a much smaller print budget, it is beneficial to consider using other online print platforms that focus on the production of promotional materials such as flyers and posters.

This option allows us to think outside the box and consider different formats and

ways of approaching a publication. For example, how can we use a flyer to create a fanfold publication with inside pages? (As seen in the Topsoil publication. This publication consists of two flyers, one A3 that we cut to final size, folded and assembled with an inside page, of which we were able to fit two copies on an A3 flyer, cut to size, folded and glued inside the outside leporello).

This solution is suitable for small to medium print budgets, print runs of between 30 and 100 copies and around 10 pages. As this solution is likely to produce a flawless print outcome, the publications require production labour and will be more likely to be more of a pamphlet.

Inkjet printing

If your printing budget is tight, you may want to consider using our own A3 inkjet printer.

This option allows us to print and produce within the confines of an A3 page. However, we have had to face limitations in printing as we find it very difficult to achieve sufficient results in colour.

This solution is suitable for small budgets, runs of between 30 and 50 copies and around 30 pages. The publications require a lot of production labour and are more likely to be a D.I.Y. result.

There are, of course, various printing techniques available, such as the use of a riso. However, so far this has not been available to us personally, and the above three printing techniques are the ones we have worked with and been able to evaluate so far in our HumDrum journey.

In terms of sustainability, we aim to use as much recycled paper as possible and to make the best use of each available resource.

As mentioned above, it is important to consider these three options before starting the design process and to be aware of what options are available within our budget and timeframe.

During

Throughout the production process it is important to keep track of when we need the publication to be ready and when we need to send our files for printing. If we choose a process that involves post-production, such as assembly, we also need to keep this in mind.

Colophon

Part of the production process is the compilation of our colophon, for which we have created a common style that we use in all our publications.

Publication Title

HumDrumPress is a collaboration-based publisher. Roles and responsibilities are

therefore shared by all parties, within their capacities. The following persons contributed in a multitude of ways to making this publication possible:

Names of those you would like to acknowledge/thank (will be presented in alphabetical order) Amy Gowen, Wibke Bramesfeld

Paper: (HumDrum to fill out)

Typeface(s): (to fill out, preferably Name of Font + Designer + Foundry)

Print run: (HumDrum to fill out)

Funding Acknowledgements: (If you received any extra funds that support your project, please name them here:

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Other specifications

In addition to the colophon, we will ensure that the HumDrum logo appears on the back of our publication, as well as our publisher's name on the front cover and, if available, on the spine.

The after

All our publications are available as open access downloads from our website, and as soon as a publication is ready we make it open access.

LAYER 7

Formerly known as: Project Check-Ins

The HumDrum Approach: Co-Maintenance

Layer 7 refers to maintenance of the project, including the management of key milestones and decisions made along the journey of the making of the publication.

Collective maintenance includes:

- *Logbooks*
- *Activation: newsletter bildungsroman*
- *Sending to reviewers in ecosystem*

- *Option for a second event/open book*

Collective maintenance occurs throughout the publishing cycle, and acts as check ins for the overall project management/relationship building/outreach structure. Some of these check-ins focus on more intangible features: checking in to see how the author is doing, how the collaboration is going, and if any tweaks need to be made to timelines, needs and requirements, the process and the care/care rider.

Other features of the check in and maintenance are more documentation-focussed. One example is our logbook, which we create for each publication we make and publish on our website on each book page. The logbook accumulates and documents each process, however small (this could be an email, a zoom call, a decision being made, etc.) to show the entire process that goes into making a publication. These logbooks are collectively maintained between HumDrumPress and authors, and check-ins provide the perfect opportunity to go through these together.

During these checkins we also offer the possibility to start publishing the content of the publication, bildungsroman style, through our newsletter to already gather a readership and initial feedback, whilst simultaneously making the content public. The final documentation point of our checkins is to check to see if any further public events (such as a second open book) are necessary to support the project.

LAYER 8

Formerly known as: Communications

The HumDrum Approach: Connection and Correspondence

Layer 8 refers to internal and external communications surrounding the process and production of the publication. This included how we communicate as a team, with our collaborators, and to a wider public of readers.

- 'Guerilla' communications: stickers, posters, pull off strips
- Lots of public events and public moments
- Dedicated long-form newsletter

LAYER 9

Formerly known as: Book Launches and Events

The HumDrum Approach: Making Public

Layer 9 refers to how we activate our publications physically and digitally with a public aka. "Making public", this includes book launches and book releases.

Making publication includes:

- *Activation moments focussed on making the information public, accessible, reproducible as opposed to selling book copies*
- *Multiple book launches in cities/countries*

When the content of a publication is complete (and during the creation process) we are interested in engaging with multiple forms of "making public" aka bringing the content and the ideas to an audience and readership in an accessible, interesting and interactive way. In the writing/creation process of a publication we publish segments/chapters/extracts (depending on interest and availability) bildungsroman style via our newsletter so readers can already begin to access the content.

Once the book has been put together we like to think of different moments and formats to activate the publication with a public. The first step is always to publish the publication on our website via Open Access format so the book in its entity can be accessed, read, printed, and circulated. We then like to play, if possible, a series of different book launches in different cities (both in the Netherlands and elsewhere) that are based around workshop-style, collective reading or discursive activities.

The aims of our book launches are not necessarily to market or sell the publications (although this of course naturally happens) but instead to use this as the first physical moment of connection since the Open Book to activate and converse around the publication.

LAYER 10

Formerly known as: Sales & Accounting

The HumDrum Approach: Collective Pot

Layer 10 refers to how we manage the finances of each publication, as well as our publishing project as a whole.

Our current (and future planning) for collective pot maintenance is as follows:

- *Sales go into collective pot and fee is agreed upon for author (Work in progress)*

- *Number of copies that goes to the author is agreed upon per author and per needs. Author can keep the sales from these copies (Present)*

As currently stands we set each financial agreement with our collaborators specifically with their needs and requirements in mind and with the finances at hand, both from the collaborating party and from HumDrumPress. In some cases (mainly institutional) this means we are able to produce the book with their finances, and we agree to split the copies, with no agreement made regarding royalties. With other, usually smaller scale agreements, we split the book copies and agree that all royalties will go back to HumDrumPress so we can continue to host events to activate the books and to cover the costs to reprint the publication when necessary.

Our working-in-progress future vision is to establish a fully functioning collective pot economic system (we are working with a series of mentors to think how this could work with the specific function and structure of HumDrumPress) where, alongside public funding and institutional support, HumDrumPress is able to support authors, events, reprints through the collective management of this collective pot economic model.

LAYER 11

Formerly known as: Distribution

The HumDrum Approach: Access and Circulation

Layer 11 refers to the ways in which the publication is circulated and distributed to a wider readership.

Access and Circulation includes:

- *Book fairs*
- *Distributors*
- *Book shops (dedicated)*
- *Workshops/events/lectures*
- *Website*
- *Open Access*
- *Afterlife - reading groups*
- *Book launches*

- *Open Access alternative reference lists (for our publications)*

We are very interested in distribution, access, and circulation networks for publications and are always seeking new ways to ensure readers can gain (free, or if not, accessible) access to our publications.

Our main circulation output is through our Open Source publications which can be found on our website. Beyond that, we try to create as diverse a circulation and access network as possible for our publications. This includes: hand-selecting and sending to like-minded and interesting bookstores and art/design/architecture/cultural spaces, working with small, scale relational-based distributors, such as [Jesse Presse](#) who we are very proud to be represented by, events hosted by ourselves such as Open Books, workshops, reading circles, book launches, and publication afterlife activations, as well those we are invited to including book fairs, workshops, teaching at schools, panels, lectures, etc.

As an aside, we also encourage all of our authors, in their publication reference sections to include open access versions or alternative content streams for references that may be behind academic or media paywalls, or in books that require the physical buying of. These alternative reference systems we include on our website.

LAYER 12

Formerly known as: Project Completion

The HumDrum Approach: The Afterlife of the Publication

Layer 12 refers to the continued activation of the publication, its ideas, contents and context, after the publication has gone to print and been released and distributed.

The afterlife of a publication includes:

- *Publication aftercare: reading groups around 6 months after the publication date*
- *Workshops*
- *Revising newsletter focus: around 6 months after the publication date*

As mentioned in "making public", we are very interested in the continued activation of a publication beyond the book launch and publication date. This we call the "after life" of the publication where we intend to reactivate and revisit the publication, its contents, its context and its ideas long after publication. For this

we have a few set formats in place, but as our first publications were only published in November 2023, we are interested to see how ideas, methods and formats surrounding the afterlife of the publication can continue to grow and blossom.

As stands, we plan to initiate reading groups/workshops/activation activities for our publications around six months after their initial publication date, this is to give people the opportunity to read and digest the content before we begin to build, upon, (re)contextualise and activate. For book fairs and other presentations we always choose an older book (and a newer book is available) to discuss, to revisit and re-highlight its place in our catalogue and within our publishing cycle. We also plan a dedicated newsletter also around six months from the first publication date of our publications to revisit, revise and reactivate the content alongside the authors.

Alongside these public events, there is also a more behind-the-scenes relationality that continues. We stay in close contact with our authors, both for practical things such as sending books and planning events together, but also to check in to see what they are now working on, and how the content they published with us is part of an expanded lineage of their work. We like to create durational relationships with our authors and, if appropriate and possible, publish again and again with them.

LAYER 13

Formerly known as: Administration

The HumDrum Approach: Maintenance

Layer 13 refers to the continued administration that surrounds the making, producing and circulation of a publication, and the wider publishing process.

As with any project, initiative or organisation there is a tonne of administration and maintenance that goes on behind the scenes. Wibke and I try to share these responsibilities as equally as is possible, with attention paid to where our interests, passions and curiosities lie. Luckily for us, Wibke loves budgeting and working out the details of finances, and I am interested in the language and concept building of funding applications. These of course are just two tasks amongst many: sending invoices, sending book packages, emailing bookshops, updating our inventory, and applying for book fairs.

Wibke and I have a set weekend meeting on a Tuesday where we cover all of the above and set tasks for the week where we can collectively hold one another accountable to ensure the smooth (as much as possible) running of HDP. Most of these tasks admittedly take place in our evenings, weekends and free time, as

they are difficult to balance on top of working on the fun-side of things (meeting with people, events, design, editing, publication concept-building - writing this manual!) but we understand them as integral and important elements to our overall work and building healthy, sustainable collaborations and networks.

LAYER 14

Formerly known as: Meta Research

The HumDrum Approach: Porosity & Model Maintenance

Layer 14 refers to the wider, meta research we conduct around publishing as a practice, and how this feeds into our publishing model and publication cycles.

For our model maintenance we:

- *Revisit the manifesto, manual and model after each publication completion to showcase learnings and findings*
- *Have debrief meetings with authors where we discuss the publication process, but also the overall HDP model, which by this point the authors know extremely well*

Alongside individual and collaborative publications, our publishing model (and manual) is always maintained in the background. It is mainly maintained by Wibke and I through our weekly meetings, through our P.A.P. conversations, through funding dedicated to building upon and refining the model, but it also requires integral “external” or public feedback and shaping. At the end of each publication cycle, we ask our collaborators to reflect on the process and the model within which the publication was made. Each collaboration is different and completely tailor made, so there are oftentimes experiences and periods in the process that help us to already tweak or shape something within the model, but we always like to have a dedicated milestone moment (usually the publishing date) with our collaborators to consciously reflect upon the model, what worked, what didn’t work so well, what parts could be adapted, and what could be change further. This allows the model to be consciously evolving and adaptive, whilst simultaneously remaining porous to the knowledge, experiences, perspectives and practices of others.

END

As can read from the above, a lot of our model is based upon maintenance duties. Our aim is that all of the knowledge and learnings we gain from each of our publications and collaborations feeds into the wider model. The aim and the challenge of HumDrumPress is to ensure we are committing to healthy,

sustainable and balanced collaborations, whilst also investing in the overall maintenance of a responsive publishing model. Our publishing model sits in direct relation to societal shifts and movements, as well as the collaborations, communities and publics we work with through our publication outputs, it is therefore vital that it does not sit in a vacuum, but is constantly maintained, revised, and remodelled in accordance to the new knowledge we are constantly encountering and (un)learning from.

If you have questions, comments, suggestions, feedback or notes for where our publishing manual can be further evolved, morphed and improved, we would love to hear from you. You can directly comment in and on this document with your critique or ideas, or you can contact us directly at hello@humdrumpress.com.

This document is full Open Access and you are very welcome to share, borrow from, and build upon. In the case you do either of the latter two options, we would again love to hear from you in order to continue to learn and shape the model.

Thank you very much for reading and engaging!

With warmth and appreciation, Amy Gowen and Wibke Bramesfeld
(HumDrumPress)

This manual could not have been produced without the invaluable help and support of Florian Cramer, Marea Hildebrand, Andy Nörstrom, Yin Yin Wong