

## **PRINTING PRESS(MENT)**

**By Catherine Lindberg**

I was mesmerized by the repetitive movements of the printing press snapper as I watched it again and again imprint the same word in large black letters on rectangular postcards.

In the next room loomed the now inert Ramage Press, a long powerful lever jutting out as if begging to once again control the weighty rectangular metal snapper that in years past had slid inexorably in and out of the oily black ink before pounding words with such permanence onto sheet after sheet of rectangular paper. Words perhaps composed by John Menaul as he created a written language to convert the Laguna to Christianity. Or words carefully set by the poet Janet Rodney as she strived to impart not only the struggles of a woman's soul but also the visual aspects of words on a page.

I envisioned the printing press snapper pulling in men's minds, not unlike blank pieces of paper, then stamping, stamping, stamping new ideas, thoughts or beliefs in black and white permanence before spewing them out in orderly fashion.

The awareness of so many souls being forcefully imprinted with words and ideas created by others worried me at first. Then I realized that the mind is more powerful even than the mighty Ramage Press. We, unlike pieces of paper, have the power to allow the black ink to be absorbed and assimilated or to simply refuse the imprint.

I now saw the printing press as a very opinionated advisor, much beloved to be sure, but an advisor whose inked words I could either accept or reject at will. This idea pleased me immensely.

Museum As Muse

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