



Pressing for change

Nat Dyer speaks to artist Rosanna Morris



Clockwise from top left: 1. Morris in her studio 2. Wheelbarrow by Rosanna Morris. Photographs by Konstantinos Noulis
3. Morris at her allotment. Photograph by thesourceimage.com 4. Cato Press participants at work. Photograph by Dean Ayotte

When artist Rosanna Morris set up a new community printmaking studio in Easton, Bristol two years ago, she faced a dilemma. To create the huge woodcut prints she loves, prints so big they demand attention, she needed an enormous printing press. This would normally mean, for her and her two co-founders, an enormously expensive machine beyond their savings. What could they do? The solution came from her partner, Konstantinos, who designed and made one from scratch, in part from an old factory wheel.

Now standing in the centre of their Cato Press studio is an elephant of a press, two metres long, affectionately named Bouboulina after a female, naval hero from

Konstantinos's native Greece. The real Bouboulina was an “amazing woman” from the 1800s, Morris told me: “She has this huge unibrow, these big boobs, she’s really powerful. She was a 40-year-old single mother fighting for Greek independence.”

Bouboulina the press is the beating heart of the community print nights Morris runs, which attract people from all cultures and professions, from skilled printmakers to those who have never carved. On these nights, everyone works on the same huge woodblock, all their hands making countless tiny cuts that together make up the whole image. “There is a metaphor in that,” she says. “Everything I’m doing is about bringing community together.”