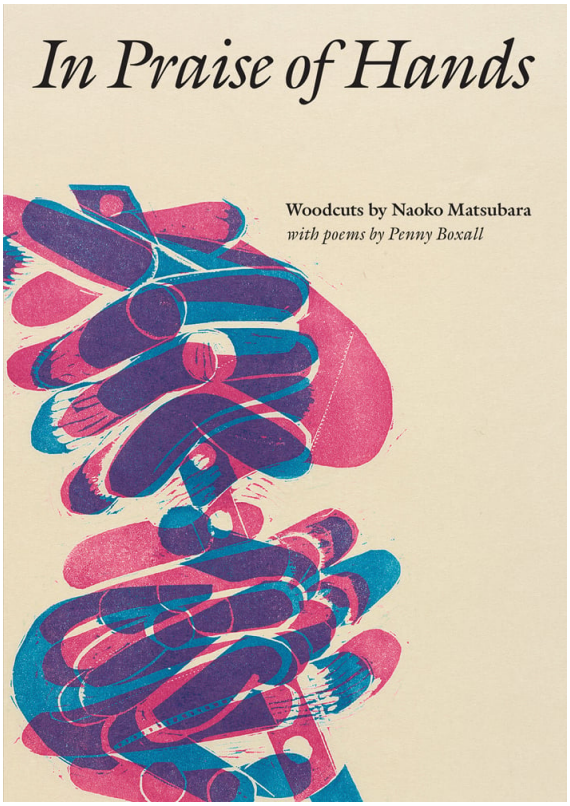
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In Praise of Hands

Woodcuts by Naoko Matsubara - Poems by Penny Boxall

Edited by Clare Pollard

ISBN	9781910807446
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- Vibrant woodcuts are paired with new poems, creating a special dialogue between image and text, each throwing light on the other
- This collaboration has found a new resonance during the current pandemic, with our heightened awareness of the power of touch. The artworks celebrate the ability of hands to make, do, and communicate

This creative collaboration between artist Naoko Matsubara and poet Penny Boxall celebrates in words and colors the beauty and variety of the human hand. The series of dynamic woodcuts at the heart of this book was initially inspired by the artist's wonder at the busy hand movements of her baby son and grew into a wider celebration of hands in all their extraordinary variety – hands engaged in music, sport, prayer, or creative acts. The woodcuts convey a sense of joy and energy, whether exploring the symbolism of gestures, playing with form and color, or expressing a mood or emotion. Penny Boxall's new poems were specially written to accompany the woodcuts. In their clarity and playfulness, their range of mood and their deceptive simplicity, they form a remarkable creative synergy with the art works. During the coronavirus pandemic the subject of hands – and the idea of touch or its absence – has taken on a new significance. Many of the images in the series have taken on powerful new meanings: healing hands, hands finding ways to occupy hours of furlough, or hands clapping in support of those working to keep us safe. We are particularly delighted that this elegant book has been designed by Yoshiki Waterhouse, Naoko Matsubara's son, whose baby hands were the original inspiration for the series.

Naoko Matsubara is an internationally renowned woodcut artist, whose works are in public collections across Canada, the United States, the UK and Europe. She is the recipient of numerous awards and commissions and has exhibited in four continents.

Penny Boxall is the author of two collections: *Ship of the Line* and *Who Goes There?* (Valley Press, 2018). She won the 2016 Edwin Morgan Poetry Award, the Mslexia/PBS Women's Poetry Competition 2018, and a 2019 Northern Writers' Award. She is Royal Literary Fund Fellow at the University of York, and has held residencies at Merton College, Oxford, Hawthornden Castle and Gladstone's Library.

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