



Making an *Impression*

Karol Kulik reveals some of the techniques showcased at the Printmakers Open at the Town Mill Galleries in Lyme Regis

Intaglio printmaking dry point, Paula Youen's image showing the tools and plate for making 'Hilltop Farm'



Relief printmaking: Hand-coloured linocut by Liz Sommerville 'The Land of Nod'

As anyone who has ever tried it knows, printmaking is a highly skillful art form that offers its practitioners numerous ways of working. This ranges from the exceedingly detailed and time-consuming to the immediate and serendipitous. Whichever process is used, the resulting image will be very distinct from what drawing or painting alone can achieve.

For three weeks in February, the Malthouse and Courtyard Galleries of Lyme Regis's Town Mill play host to a whole gamut of printmaking techniques, as both emerging and well-established printmakers from across the southwest – including Exeter's famous Double Elephant Print Workshop – showcase their work in the fourth Printmakers Open.

Amongst the many different

printmaking processes on display, there will certainly be some monotypes. These are created by drawing or painting directly onto a rigid plate, and then transferring the wet image onto a sheet of paper by pressing the two together - using a printing press or, as I have done in the past, the back of a wooden spoon! Having absorbed the applied picture, the resulting paper print, like Anita Reynolds's atmospheric 'Low Man II', is unique.

Pretty much the reverse of each other are relief and intaglio prints. Relief prints is where you cut into the surface plate to rid it of the areas you don't want to appear in the print. You ink the remaining surface, transferring it onto paper using pressure. This technique produces bold graphic monochrome woodcuts like Carolyn King's 'La Glace',



Monotype: Anita Reynolds 'Low Man II'



Relife printmaking: 'La Glace' - a woodcut by Carolyn King

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but it can also create vivid polychromatic linocuts like Liz Somerville's 'The Land of Nodd' which was hand-coloured after one pressing.

An intaglio print is created by scratching lines into the solid plate, inking the whole surface and then wiping the surface ink off, you are left with ink only in the 'lines'. A good example of this form of printmaking is Paula Youens's 'Silent Orchard', in which Paula has used laminated paper as the plate which she has scored, cut and peeled to create the image. Etchings, drypoint and engravings are all types of intaglio printing.

Richard Kaye and Terry Jeavons are two of the printmakers whose work at the Open will be represented by screen prints. In this technique, there is no direct contact of plate



'Silent Orchard' intaglio print by Paula Youens



Screen printing: 'Oliver's Wharf' by Terry Jeavons uses photographs as a starting point

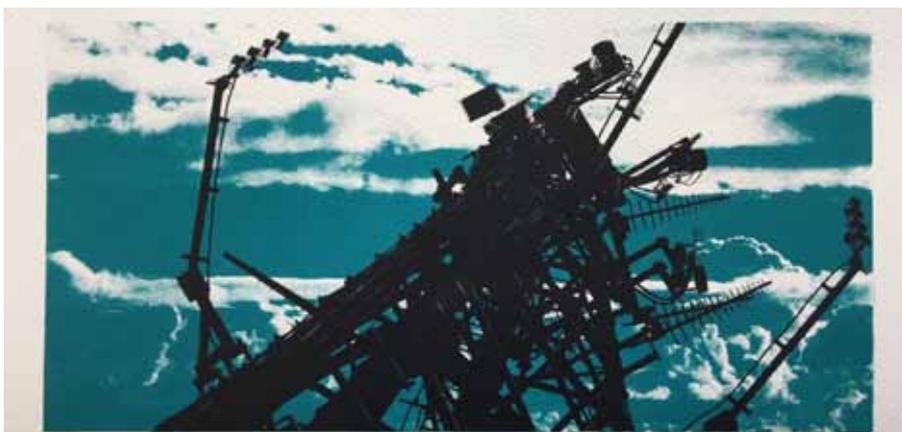
and paper, but rather a screen mesh intervenes and inks are 'squeegeed' in layers through the mesh unless stopped by stencils, paper or liquids that block off areas. Terry's 'Thameside' prints use his own photographs as a starting point; similarly architectural are Richard Kaye's hand-tinted screen prints of bold silhouettes against the sky.

Printmakers are always keen to point out that a print is not like a Xerox copy. Even when you

re-use a plate to make subsequent versions, each 'print' is original due to variables in the hands-on process of printmaking – such as the mixing and application of inks, the wiping off of surfaces, or colours added by hand after the impression is made.

Remember that in most cases, as visible in the opening image of Paula Youens's drypoint 'Hilltop Farm', the image worked on the plate will be printed in reverse...which keeps printmakers on their toes! ♦

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Hand-tinted screen print - 'Communications Mast' by Richard Kaye

LET'S GO!

The Printmakers Open is at the Town Mill, Mill Lane, Lyme Regis from 7 - 27 February. Find more at townmillarts.co.uk.

If these images have stirred an interest in printmaking, you might want to consider a workshop or course at Double Elephant in Exeter. Find more details at doubleelephant.org.uk.