Exquisite Gorge

Based on the idea of the exquisite corpse drawing game, where each person draws part of a body, folding down the paper to hide their contribution, 11 artists have been working with local communities to produce a 66-foot long steamroller-printed piece depicting 220 miles of the Columbia River in the Pacific Northwest of the US. The river will be the unifying body of human activity with many of the artists sectioning of the final print, flowing through the communities they have worked with. Each artist was given a 1800 x 1200 mm plywood panel to carve. Washington DC-based artist, Steven Mahnot said simply, ‘My panel tells the tale of what we have and what we can lose and what we have lost.’ He depicts the symbiotic relationship between a native plant, Meadow death camas, and the particular species of bee needed to pollinate it. Portland-based artist Roger Peet depicted the big-horned sheep, the condor, the salmon and the Columbia River Tiger beetle, all either endangered or already made extinct by human activity. He welcomed the collaborative nature of the project, saying, ‘The stories, symbols and characters that communities contribute to projects like this provide their depth.’

Grant

Ways of Making

Sir Peter Blake CBE RA has been working with researchers, artists and academics at the Centre for Fine Print Research (CFPR) at the University of the West of England to explore emerging print technologies in his ongoing survey of print editing, Ways of Making, Blake has set out to recreate the same simple image of a primrose in every available print technique to celebrate both the traditional and cutting-edge technologies. Blake sought the expertise at CFPR for techniques such as 3D printing, laser etching and robotic-arm printing.

And there’s more to celebrate for CFPR, as the department has just been awarded a £67 million grant from Research England in recognition of their pioneering research. The money will be used to develop work into transformative technologies, reconstructing historical methods and digital printing. CFPR are busy recruiting for new researchers and technicians. We look forward to seeing how the centre expands and develops.

Exhibition

Hanging room only

For this year’s RA Summer Exhibition, there were 16,000 submissions of paintings, prints, drawings, sculptures, mixed media works, artists’ books and architectural models. After four days’ selecting from jpegs, then another day reviewing shortlisted entries – 11 Royal Academicians had the huge task of hanging the show. Gallery 5 was hung by Barbara Rae and Hoghie O’Donoghue, Gallery 7 by me. Both rooms focused on artists’ prints. Conscious of how significant to a printmaker’s income showing in this exhibition can be, I determined to hang as much as I could, achieving some 240 pieces – nearly 100 more than the norm. Amongst the many standout prints are Bella Easton’s vast, complex lithograph and multiple porcelain panels Angel Heart – winner of the Jerwood London Original Print Fair Prize of £10,000; Emily Allchurch’s Baby Britain photographic lightbox; Isabel Rode’s huge, humorous woodblock prints; and John Mackie’s monumental woodcut Chicago Hieroglyphics. Anne Desmet RA RE said simply, ‘My panel tells the tale of what we have and what we can lose and what we have lost.’ He depicts the symbiotic relationship between a native plant, Meadow death camas, and the particular species of bee needed to pollinate it. Portland-based artist Roger Peet depicted the big-horned sheep, the condor, the salmon and the Columbia River Tiger beetle, all either endangered or already made extinct by human activity. He welcomed the collaborative nature of the project, saying, ‘The stories, symbols and characters that communities contribute to projects like this provide their depth.’
The Royal Academy of Arts’ publishing arm has released two books of drawings by RA printmakers: Anne Desmet: A Greek Journey, a follow-up to Italian Journey, and; Emma Stibbon: Fire and Ice, featuring some of the most inhospitable and environmentally vulnerable parts of the world.

For his latest show at Equinox Gallery in Vancouver, contemporary painter Kim Dorland produced an open edition of a woodcut Last Light (2019). The prints were sold for only $20 each with all proceeds going towards Plastic Wise, an initiative created to raise awareness of plastic pollution in the world’s oceans.

A year-long, free exhibition Making an Impression: The Art of Relief Printmaking runs at the V&A from 9 September 2019-13 September 2020. The exhibition will include blocks, plates and tools alongside artworks stretching back over 600 years.

The appropriately named Poster House, exclusively dedicated to posters has opened in New York and is currently showing Art Nouveau posters by Alphonse Mucha, and from mid–October will feature predominantly handmade posters in Three Years Later: The 2017 Women’s March & Where We Are Today. Also in New York, at the MoMA they are displaying their recent print acquisitions Since 2000: Printmaking Now until 18 September.

Current Turner-prize nominee and visual poet Helen Cammock made print integral to her Max Mara Art Prize exhibition, which explored lament and hidden women’s voices. The prints were created with the help of artist-researchers, Tracy Hill and Magda Stawarska-Beavan at Artlab within the University of Central Lancashire. Tracy enthused, ‘We have been working with Helen since 2015 exploring her unique vision through screenprint and relief, expanding her professional practice and potential for disseminating her artworks. The challenge and joy of working with artists from other disciplines is that they push boundaries in a way other printmakers would not. Helen’s projects sought to communicate ideas drawing on traditional skills but which were equally dependent on technological innovation in order to fully realise her concept and research.’

Helen equally values the collaboration with Artlab, ‘From my first visit, I haven’t produced prints anywhere else. This working and creative relationship has taken me through pivotal and breakthrough moments in my career to date. I have asked myself what is so special about this experience and fundamentally it is the ethos of Artlab – its openness to experimentation and dialogue. But also because Magda and Tracy as well as having tremendous expertise as printmakers are also artists themselves – this ensures the process is supportive and nurturing of ideas and thus the place of dialogue is as significant as the mechanics of printing.’ The Turner Prize winner will be announced on 3 December 2019. Insta: @artlabcps

How do you say “printmaking” in your language?” asked @justprintmaking on Instagram and had an incredible response. The hash-tagged answers act as little portals to find new print work from all over the world: from #druckgrafik and #gravure in Germany and France, to #grabado in Peru, #طريقة حناء in the Middle East, #baskiresim in Turkey, #гравюра in Ukraine, #акраamm in Russia and #कृतिय चित्र in India. There are so many more hashtags to explore, and so much new work to discover – take a look.

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