

Overview: R&T Day 2014, Printmaking

What a busy November day! We had 4 speakers and 2 demonstrators who covered a wide range of printmaking techniques and purposes. Hazel Dolby set the scene with a masterly survey of printmakers and their techniques in the 20th century. Rubber stamping of alphabets and symbols from Joan Iverson Goswell, Ann Hechle and Veiko Kaspersaks, plus Sally-Mae Joseph's and Donald Jackson's work with gold on the rubber stamps in the St John's Bible. Linocutting from Paul Peter Piech and Jenny Howells: Edward Bawden's wallpaper prints: Tamara McKinney's linocuts on tissue, Hans Schmidt's and Will Carter's capital letters cut into wooden blocks and the inimitable Joachim Burghert's combinations of line and letter. Did I mention Picasso? It was interesting to realise how many print makers used their techniques in pursuit of political aims, obviously in order to reach wide audiences but perhaps also because of how the strength of the resulting image impacts everyone who sees it.

Our other three speakers, all calligraphers and ATS students or graduates, confessed to having been seduced away from the pen. Chris Corser first fell in love with a tree, which led through her ATS experience to producing a book of linocuts called *An Amusing Alphabetic Arboretum*, complete with her delightful personalised Latin. Angela Holland began using hand-cut rubber stamps also during her ATS days to produce large works on fabric, and has moved on to linocuts on paper which she puts through a roller press to emboss at the same time as printing. She now describes herself as a calligraphic printmaker. Michela Antonello has become fascinated by large linocuts for which she also creates modules which can be put together to generate large patterns. She loves the slow process of drawing letters which produces less clichéd work as thoughts come and go, and prints powerful texts in monochrome.

After lunch, we saw Juliet Banks and Lin Kerr demonstrate how differently they use printing techniques. Juliet uses a traditional roller press to produce monochrome colographs, using relief and intaglio techniques together. It's very effortful, physical work, preparing the surface of the block: and each run through the press will produce a slightly different intensity of the image. Even though she uses a water-based ink it becomes somewhat messy, and all surrounding surfaces must be well-protected. As well as the printer herself.

In contrast, Lin loves colour. She demonstrated her use of a hand roller to pick up colour and transfer it to a chinese paper surface - first creating an impression of something placed beneath the surface (a piece of string, a feather), and then showing how the "negative" so created on the roller itself can create a reverse image when applied back to the paper. Mixing and remixing of colours on the glass plate before picking them up on the roller gradually creates a rich texture on the paper - which you can then write on, too. So we finally got back to pen-based calligraphy! It was almost restful