

3D 2D object and Illusion in Print

Prints from the Centre for Fine Print Research, UWE Bristol

Curated by Paul Thirkell

This exhibition traces a trajectory of visual investigation that has emerged from the studios of the Centre for Fine Print Research, Bristol. It reveals work from a number of artists who have collaborated with the Centre to produce - with the assistance of cutting edge imaging technology - artworks that can be seen to speculate and extend upon the notion of object and illusion in image making. The show includes Richard Hamilton's 2003 schematic topography of Marcel Duchamp's Large Glass in wide format print, moving through to Lesley Dill's laser cut and interactive multidimensional print pieces to more recent works such as Katie Davies / Peter Walters digitally processed interpretations of the sounds of distant galaxies recorded by scientists at Jodriell Bank rendered as a 3D printed object. The show seeks to explore the close relationship between the second and third dimension in the field of fine art print where the rich surface qualities of (for example) the etched emboss, the raised trace of the relief block, or the layered impasto of a screen print have traditionally been used to enhance the impact of a 2D image, creating something more akin to an object than a mere visual illusion on a flat surface.

In recent years new digital technologies for print have enhanced the scope of the fine art printmakers palette, however, despite their often-rich surface qualities they produce, the output has remained largely in the realm of the 2D. Currently a new era is dawning with print based, Rapid Prototype technologies gradually coming within the reach of the fine artist. As well as being able to render photographic quality images in 2Dimensions artists and designers can now simulate 3D shapes and environments on screen and then build them in 3D through the use of what is essentially a multilayered inkjet printing system. While this technology has been used for some time by engineer's architects and product designers to produce prototype models its level of technological maturity is beginning to suggest that it may also be able to assist with the production of more permanent and functional objects.

A recent 3-year AHRC funded project at the Centre for Fine Print Research has made inroads into exploring the application of such technology for the production of printed artworks. For this exhibition a number of artists have been invited to tap into the CFPR expertise gained in this area to explore its creative possibilities. To make a direct link between the 2D printing technologies (also the subject of CFPR research), a number of the artists in the show have made both 2D and 3D works that specifically relate to one another. Katie Davies and Peter Walters' piece for example uses audio data collected from outerspace by Jodrell Bank Centre for Astrophysics to form the basis of three dimensional and two dimensional printed pieces. Jeremy Gardiner and Anthony Head's piece however, is based around satellite images looking down to earth to map through virtual environments and 2D and 3D renderings an exploration of a section of the Dorset coast. Conor Wilson also explores links between 2D and 3D rendering through a systematic loop of referencing, using a William Cookworthy porcelain piece— *Infants with Goat* (c. 1770) from the Bristol Museum as the inspiration and starting point, Wilson uses basic elements from his garden – Laurel wood and clay to make a crude interpretation of the piece which through the use of a digital 3D scanner was able to be dematerialised and refined in a digital environment to explore the narrative suggested by the original piece. The process resulted in a full colour 3D printed form and three printed images revealing the multiple perspectives of Wilson's creative exploration.

As well as invited artists a number of artistic explorations from CFPR research staff are featured. These include works by Research Associate Paul Laidler that explore and test the illusory nature of photography with a series of prints that weave between the idea of object and illusion in relation to photographic truth. CFPR PhD student Brendan Reid breaks down the components of a 3D form

into pixellated abstractions with his Voxillated Fox series of 3D prints. Paul Sandammeer investigates exchangeable and encapsulated forms while Paul Thirkell uses resin encapsulated reliefs to boost the illusion of depth in a photographic image.

About the Centre For Fine Print Research

The Centre for Fine Print Research is a unique research facility based in within the University of the West of England's School of Creative Arts in Bristol UK. Its research focus - over its 11 years of existence - has stemmed from the rapid transition from analogue to digital that emerged in the print world and now dominates all aspects of making in the arts and industry. Its programme of research has consequently developed to interrogate a broad range of issues surrounding image making and output in the digital age: Specialist areas of research activity include artist publishing, high quality print production, colour rendering, photography and 3D construction. The centres work engages with everything from high-end fine art creation through to developing new approaches to industrial production. Over the years, through its cutting edge engagement with all forms of print technologies the Centre has developed collaborative relationships with a broad range of artists who have worked with the centre to produce major print works. These include Richard Hamilton, Lesley Dill, Paul Hodgson, Susan Collins and Joe Tilson. The Centre also maintains strong links with high tech imaging industries including Hewlett Packard -who contribute sponsorship toward the centre's activities-, Z Corp, Roland and Canon to name but a few. The Centre has also been responsible for instigating what has been described as the world's leading event for contemporary print culture - IMPACT Multidisciplinary Printmaking Conference- which started in Bristol in 1999, travelled biannually to four countries before returning to Bristol in 2009. The conference will next be held in Melbourne, Australia in 2011.