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SURFACING

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by

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INTRODUCTION:

The intention of this essay is to enable myself to come to terms with and to understand my work through an evaluation of my print making produced over the previous two years, therefore helping me to determine my future and its directions.

This essay is divided into two parts. A general section containing Intent and Method acting as an introduction to the second section.

Intent also deals with Communication.

Method contains sections on Preferences, Working Methods and Ideas; Choice of Medium including Etching Lithography and Silk Screen. Finally Paper is dealt with. After an evaluation each print has a section on suitability to ideas and appropriateness.

The second section contains a representation of my work over the last two years, dealing with three different suites of prints. Each suite is broken down into Intent and Method in a general context and serves as an introduction to the two individual prints chosen out of each suite. The individual prints are discussed through Intent and Method and an evaluation of appropriateness of choice of medium undertaken as a conclusion.

An overall evaluation of the three suites of prints follows the previous section concluded by Future Development.

INTENT:

At the beginning of my printmaking career the physical and technical problems afflicting any student at this stage affected my intentions even the few that I possessed. The sheer hard work involved in learning the processes of the printmaking area were a constant headache. Until I reached a stage where the scales were more balanced between on one hand the technical and on the other the conceptual I was constantly unbalanced. Any ideas or imagery that I had were under the surface because of my technical problems and inexperience of my medium. When I looked back at what I had created I realised with a hindsight other influences and impulses which hadn't arisen at that time of printing that piece, that were now beginning to come through.

I now realise that I was lost in a world of sensual delights. The feel, the touch and the visual finished product were quite wonderful. I was involved more in sensory exercises setting up situations in the acid bath, aquatint box and with a large amount of experimental products. The finished result was quite uncontrolled quite accidental; whereas now I find I can control accidents to a degree.

I was aware, again afterwards that I was visually changing imagery after the initial thought process had come up with an idea. I was juxtapositioning images and because of my uncertainty in the medium I ended up fragmenting images. One; because of the controlled accidental happenings and two; the difficulty in controlling the loss of clarity of parts of an image.

Referring to 'Stars' and 'Bars' a copper etching this can be seen to be quite evident. The problem I was posed with was that my slightly fragmented and abstracted figure was losing clarity. I panicked, I knew my figure and print had to be kept alive. I reworked 'Stars' and other areas of that print to clarify certain areas. On a visual level I thought it was unbalanced. A stripe was introduced on the right hand side and has been a constant balancing device since in a number of my prints. The stripe was red. A colour derived from the red stripes of that flag that the figure was draped in.

This showed my first real thinking coming through. I was appraising the situation and realised that if I could have a conclusive colour and element in my print it might work. I already had the stars of the U.S. flag so the red of the stripe was used to add more reference to the flag.

As with that stage of my work the flag held no real significance to me other than one of the aesthetic beauty of its colour and design. I realised after that due to its very inclusion I had on my hands a very evocative image. It could be political, cynical symbolic of so many things not really apparent whilst working with that image at that time.

As with all my early work I lacked an awareness of my use of such materials. I know I lacked a language, an understand at that time to exploit my ideas in printmaking.

At this point I can trace back to my childhood. I spent the ages of four till six wandering around Quinton Common in England, in my spare-time. It was my secret hiding place. On the other side of the common was a barren field. I now know that I was engaged in my senses. I had at that time my first sensual experience or awareness of the wind, soil, life- I suppose. In 1977, I became interested in the occult and faculty 'X' a term used to describe the unexplainable. In a historical volume on the occult I came across a chapter on Quinton. In Quinton 1540, a witch was burned for performing with a toad in a farmers field and subsequently making it barren.

I believe that this field was one and the same that I played on as a child. In a mysterious way I feel fate completed its circle.

That intuitive instinctive feeling that I had as a child on that hill has carried on inside me up to now. Intuitive is a label used for a child-like response to my surroundings and feeling on Quinton Common. The unexplainable response to that area was instinctive. This came before the conditioning one gets in schools and I've only recently thought about it again. I still harbour an attachment for the mysterious, the unexplainable. The intuitive feelings that I have always possessed was brought to light when I read that book on the occult. The intuitive was used in conjunction with my printmaking. The acids waxes and other

substances used in etching added to the chance element created especially in etching. I had an affinity with the etching process because of that accidental area that can only be controlled to an extent.

The nearest I can describe my approach to my work in my first year is one of a limbo or as a zenith as the level reached in Zen Buddhism.

In the occult there is a faculty called vitalism which is not just a composite of time, place, intellect it lies outside somewhere. I know I calculate my way of expressing and the ideas I use, in other words, I intellectualise, but the intuitive and the instinctive are bordering on the periphery of that word. This is the difficult area to describe.

I am concerned about the faculty of 'vitalism'. Scientists and science according to my dictionary believe that atoms are the key to life. Yet the vitalism and vitality of life are unaccounted for. Theories and the unexplainable are often dismissed as Trivia. There are dangers that mankind treads.

This is the key to my way of working and approach to my work. This interest in the unknown has led to my fascination with life and death.

As an artist I realise I have the power to intellectualise and create. This area of intellect comes under question. You can only intellectualise on a level attained by oneself. I see my level as a gradually rising one, but question the validity of too much intellectualising. Primitive man created beautiful representations on his walls without too much intellectualisation.

Visually, I am a culprit of thinking too much of what other people think about its finish. I know I am guilty of adding a bit of colour here or adding something there.

Sometimes a colour or added area can enhance but very often I feel I can be superfluous.

As an artist I feel I have to be held responsible. Honesty is very important, but so is self respect. Therefore honestly when in company may be kept guarded for that reason.

Are there rules for such artists?

Artists like Gods have the power to create the power to possess ideas

and are obviously held responsible for their actions.

I find that my thinking is not just intuitive or one thing or another but a combination of the intuitive, compromises, sensory attractions concepts and instinct. Early conditioning as a child, as an art student. The mystery, intrigue, atmosphere an obsession with life and death all add up to a rather diffused intention early on, whereas, now the intent is more finally tuned.

The real problem is to throw out the superficial. To find an appropriateness of ideas and choice in the mediums available.

I find ideas are often spawnd after the initial thinking has put an image on paper or plate. I've quite often have a protracted lead up to the finished product.

To quote Jasper Johns:

"Sometimes I see then paint it. Sometimes I paint it then see it. Both are impure situations and I prefer neither".

I find being aware of the languages in art is perhapes the most difficult function of the mind. You difinately need a higher order of conciousness than the ordinary habitual use of language allows.

COMMUNICATION:

In communicating ideas and concepts visually I have come to realise a stumbling block. A visual language is open to more interpretations than a literal. A failing of mine is not communicating my original intentions. I like to hide some ideas and disguise them slightly so as not to be so blatantly obvious and so that I can demand some questioning from the viewer. This communicating is open to disruption. Confusion may arise when my intentions are so diffused and ambiguous at the beginning.

There are several possibilities open to me in communicating an idea. I can be blatantly obvious and visually place an image on a square. I can hide an intention through a series of images acting as a reference only to a subtly suggested concept. Therefore, keeping them guessing and making the viewer question the original concept and the relevance of the many images that I often use in combination.

There is also an option open to use totally unrelated objects in print, creating a very abstract scenario. The final option is dismissed usually as I like a message to be inherent in any art work that I produce. Of course the exception is an art piece that is basically completed so as to use a surface for its textures and qualities inherent in a process.

Very often a print combines the four together and this is where a confusion and diffusing of an intention can happen both to myself my viewer. The four intentions can fight against each other or sit together harmoniously. This is the area that a print can either fail or succeed.

The public who may view your work may be confused by their own awareness though this is where art can be quite ambiguous. This visual imbalance between the artist and receiver needs analysing if an artist is to succeed in putting any message across. Obvious images can often be used to remedy this imbalance. Tutors and other artists have often expressed a better way of communicating, but I wonder if they are really objective enough due to the same problems that appear in their own work.

A tendency occurs with other artists to relate their own problems

with yours and therefore I don't think that they can be objective enough in trying to remedy other artists problems. Experience and another viewpoint can be helpful but than nagging feeling that somewhere they are being too subjective exists. Therefore, I need to analysis taking into account my views and other artist views in a complementary fashion to arrive at satisfactory conclusions.

A concluding question that could be asked is. Am I at fault if I fail to communicate my intentions in a print? If the viewer is tuned into a level of awareness that is required for an enlightened visual response and I don't succeed in communicating my intention then yes I am at fault. If the viewer doesn't have an appreciation on a visual level and he fails to respond to an intention and idea in a print then I am not at fault.

Sometimes, however, I am at fault for failing to understand my original intentions in some of the more ambiguous pieces and thus resulting in a failure in communicating such ideas. So once again I am at fault in such situations.

I am concerned that a sense of order, neatness and professional finish exists to communicate my seriousness in my medium.

SUITABILITY OF IDEAS TO MEDIUM IN PRINTMAKING:

The choices of one medium or another within the printmaking area are normally made out of the following considerations:-

- (a) Appropriateness of medium to idea.
- (b) The medium that I am sympathetic with.
- (c) Size limitations of plate and paper.
- (d) Likely problems to be encountered.
- (e) Economics.
- (f) Possible edition sizes.
- (g) Quality required with photo rendition.
- (h) Paper.

The medium that I choose must be appropriate to the idea in my work. For certain characteristics that I require in my prints such as blacks and grey tones then obviously these can be inherited from the characteristics of etching. Photo work especially halftone is decided by the choice of silk screen which is the only medium available that can reproduce qualities needed. Litho is chosen for other characteristics such as surface printing or for colour which cannot be achieved in etching.

For certain ideas I will be more sympathetic with one medium more than another. This attraction for one medium in preference to another is obviously a main consideration outside the others in the list.

The economics; economy of time, and money are an important consideration. Large plates are very expensive and so are photographic materials. These must be considered before printing is undertaken. Especially commercially where a customer has money limitations imposed on work that he requires. Time in printing means money in the commercial fields; but as regards student work the consideration is the fact that if too much time is devoted to one print then other prints will not be able to be worked upon.

Size limitations are especially imposed on etching and litho. This is due to the fact that paper and presses are only made to a certain specification. Silk Screen can be worked to any size within reason.

Problems likely to be encountered are usually colour considerations. Which medium is best suited to reproducing colours: Usually silk screen is the obvious choice, but if a textural quality is required then litho is chosen because of its ease of printing compared to etching.

Edition sizes vary with commercial work but I generally keep to an edition size of /20. Twenty is a number that will give me ample coverage for exhibitions, sales and is not an enormous burden to print. Time available limits my edition sales and also paper cost. Therefore the section on economics overlaps with edition sizes.

Photographic quality required in the commercial field is a main consideration. Halftone is obviously always produced by screen in preference to the other mediums due to its fine mesh and ability to produce fine reproduction. Etching and litho could be used adequately to produce drop out but they are very time consuming. Another consideration is one of aesthetics. If a faded soft photographic area is required which can blend with the qualities produced in litho or etching then silk screen is usually dismissed because of its hard edge crisp rendition.

Paper is an important decision to undertake. Depending on each artists requirements whether aesthetic or commercial or a certain medium requiring a heavier paper than another a choice must be made. Paper can enhance an image or can dilute its impact.

For example in my Etchings I use a soft heavy weight paper so that ink is forced into the paper creating rich blacks and picking up textural areas which would have not printed on hard paper. Cost considerations especially where screen is concerned limit people to the use of a cheap cartridge type paper.

METHOD:

It is not so much that I prefer printmaking to any other medium; but that I am working constantly in a printmaking frame of mind. Awakening to the range of possibilities in printmaking when I first entered art college has kept me interested in this area of art more than any other.

Printmaking carried a range of subtleties and qualities I've since come to enjoy.

Printmaking especially etching and litho also contained a way of working allied to my way of thinking. They both demand a series of proofs and changes to work up to a satisfactory result. I find I need options and chances to change which is closely allied to such processes.

Working methods and ideas are either the result of a reaction or a protracted collage of ideas coming together on a rectangle. Some ideas are arrived at quite by surprise. Scraps labels, pieces of paper lying around in factories. In Germany, I came across a label stating 'Beware Rat Poison' in German (Vorsicht Ratten Gift). Gift means poison and is a quite strange word to use because its obvious suggestions (See Slide) to an english speaking person.

I later took a photo of a dead dog and it struck me that I could link the two together. It was a protracted way of doing things that tends to occur quite often in my work. Due to the very nature of the process involved with etching this is a constant working device. Other times an instantaneous reaction will take place either with the series or my mind.

Very often images are tailored and doctored to suit the dimensions of a plate or paper size. If I have the images very often photographic in front of me I will juxtapose the images until I feel that they sit correctly and are well balanced.

My working method takes place more in my head than it did before. I no longer take the same amount of time proofing an image as I did before, because I am better tuned into working in reverse, upside down, negative or positive.

I can tell fairly accurately what will print and how on my stone

or plate. I tend to be more confident generally that I was before and of course the ideas are now far more important.

This confidence is also a bad trap to fall into as I have found to my peril; caused by not trying out everything from every possible angle before a permanent image is laid down.

In the dark room negatives and positives are scrutinised before being placed on the plate, for one; quality, which is important due to the successive break-down of quality every time an image is transferred from one process to another, Two; for contrast, a good contrast is necessary if the image is to read and finally whether a certain dot count per sq inch would be suitable or not suitable for rendering an image.

In the photographic process halftone can sometimes replace drop out or vice a versa. Drop out can succeed in giving a black and white rendition without the subsequent halftones that are inherent in halftone thus creating better contrasts of creating moods.

To conclude; decisions are arrived at by (a) knowing the size limitations of the plate, screen or stone, (b) choosing the best possible medium to express the idea, (c) the expertise needed to produce a certain print and whether one medium or another is more suitable to render it, (d) appropriateness to end result, (e) photographic considerations. (including ^{ek} aesthetic finish of eith drop out of halftone). and (f) colour considerations and the best possible medium to convey colour schemes.

Aesthetical considerations are a major pre-occupation. The aesthetics are expounded in sections on Etching, and Litho. Screen is hard edge and very clinical and where photo methods are concerned tend to lack and aesthetical beauty. As stated in the 'Screen' section; screen for this reason doesn't hold too many attractions for me except the fact that ti is economical on time and cost.

CHOICE OF MEDIUM:

ETCHING:

I have regularly chosen etching as my means of expressing an image of feeling. Its tactile qualities, chance elements, accidental happenings unpredictability, subtleties of tone, open bite richness of its blacks and an overall sensual attractiveness attract me to the medium. Infact I choise to work with etching in preference to litho and silk screen.

Copper shows an affinity with etching better than any other metals. Copper by using Ferric Chloride Acid yeilds textures and paterns in print that Zinc or Steel will not procure. If areas are bitten by Nitric Acid on Copper clean areas bitten deeply will show an overall smooth bite and yeild. Because of the sedimentary qualities of Ferric on unclean bite ensures leaving behind those beautiful bitten areas previously talked about. Copper is a smooth molecular metal which retains a good smooth surface most of the time. The difference with Zinc and Steel especially is that they are very granular metals in composition.

Because of this grain Zinc and Steel yeild a black much quicker than copper. Due to the hardness and composition of Steel and Zinc a Nitric Acid bath has to be used. Therefore, subsequently both metals miss out on the subtleties obtained with copper in Ferric.

Copper has the ability to hold a good colour rendition. Zinc tends to want to leav Sinc deposits in yellows and light colours making them very dirty. Steel, though, has good properties in colour and is the best conveyor of colour of the three metals.

Copper has been used in all my etchings except the Hotel Utopia series completed in the States. The main consideration besides aesthetics is economics. Zinc is far less expensive than Copper in the States whereas its the other way around - Copper is cheaper than Zinc. The textures subtleties, sculptured levels obtainable in etching yeild really rich areas, both photographically and hand drawn. The metal is tough but pliable and demands physical contact with such a hard substance requires certain masochistic tendencies to get the best out of the plates

the size of twenty inches by thirty inches or more.

That feeling of being tired after printing makes you feel fulfilled. Its really an intoxication with the medium the feeling that chance elements can come in at any time, and that excitement as the damp paper whispers off the plate revealing the print for the first time.

In my case decisions to do anything on an etching plate can be an attraction more often than not. An image can be worked on a stone or silk screened but because of etching's sensual qualities I tend to give in to the former.

Working on large plates is hard work but more enjoyable than any other medium. Infact as regards other mediums its the closest to sculpture. The many different levels bitten out by the acid create a very rich two dimensional area. The paper is risen in a relief due to the indentations on the plate, it is stripped where there is an aquatint or textured due to the surface inherited by the paper.

The blacks can be different from each other. Besides the ink which can create a stark or warm black the aquatint can be course or fine. The black resulting from the course is very textured and light plays around the textures. Fine aquatint which falls on the plate evenly is chosen if a fine photo area is needed. Its black rendition is not as black as the course due to the smaller amount of ink it holds.

When aquatint areas are melted onto the plate, the areas around each small partical being closer together in fine aquatint than their course counter parts, results in an underbiteing and a lifting off of the resin particals. If a large ammount of time is devoted to achieving too rich a black with fine aquatint a dirty grey ensures. The course aquatint being large resin deposits and spread apart a bit more, usually withstands a large ammount of biting thime and is very resistant. An aquating applied by hand is much more irregular. Whereas a spray painted area is much more uniform but it does render the same effect.

The various tools in etching are used quite often to render grey tones and blacks. Roulettes which are spikey wheels leave a very

mechanical series of stripples.

The more compressed the marks the better the black. With a Metzzotint Rocker a fuzzy black can be achieved which has its own perculiar character unlike aquatints.

Being a relief print etching is a language of its own. Etchings could be read like a 'braille' for the blind on Copper, Zinc and Steel as well.

All the previous section applies to Zinc and Steel as well. Zinc has most of the qualities of copper and is very similar in rendering a print. Steel is the exception. Its surface always yeilds a distinctive grey tone however much you polish it.

To conclude this section on copper would be to say, for etching no other metal has the same variable qualities and versatility.

SILK SCREEN:

Silk Screen is a surface print medium. It is purely surface like litho. As a medium I've never been able to handle screen due to its crisp hard edge qualities although I realise that it depends on the artist using the medium and what he does with it that counts.

I've my doubts about its instant rendition photographically as well as hand drawn. I tend to work in areas of tone without definite outlines which is defeated in silk screen.

Very often the choice of medium is dictated by the use of colour. If more than four or five colours are used or required by the very nature of the image then screen is the least demanding physically and mentally to the task. Being more economical has its disadvantages. Silk Screen has a rather slick appearance very clean and hard edge.

Due to the fact that I work in black and grey tones the very nature of litho and etching demands more attention than screen. Litho and etching display stretching tendencies within the paper and are difficult to register. Whereas, screen never uses water to dampen the paper therefore, no stretching occurs and it can be very precise.

In screen you are limited to paper with a flat surface. If the paper displays a tendency towards texture or has a textural surface it is extremely difficult to take a solid print. The texture remains in relief causing a break-up of that solid area. The other two mediums tend to be time consuming so silk screen is the obvious choice for instantaneous work. Due to the fact that silk screen has such a fine mesh, very fine accurate photo work can be accomplished. Litho and Etching are too clumsy for this due to the metal being granular - same goes for stone litho's whose texture is inherent throughout the stone.

The photowork done in the commercial field pays tribute to this fact.

Silk screen meshes come in many varieties, coarse to fine mesh counts and almost textural effects can be achieved especially if photo areas are broken up into dots.

LITHO:

The tactile surfaces of litho stones are akin to etching. Colours can be quite reasonably be achieved and seen to sink into the damp paper like etching and unlike screen whose ink sits on the paper surface. The litho stone is made up of lime and calcerous deposits which leaves a very granular finish on the surface. This grain can be utalised or hone down to a smooth surface finish.

There is a same sensual feeling about stones qualities similar to etching.

The aluminium plates used in litho are also granular up to smooth in grades. But the plate has a much harder quality due to its metalic make up. You can tell the difference between stone and plate straight off. The feel and yeild of tones is quite unmistakable to a printmaker.

Size limitations in litho have been a problem for me in Dublin. Until I found the opportunity to use large presses in the U.S. I have never really felt the urge to use the medium very much. The problems involved in working with antequated machines are too frustrating to attempt to work with in the present litho area. Litho renders an almost completely similar rendition on the paper as you can originally see on the stone or plate unlike etching which is so unpredictable.

The choice of stone or plate for rendering images is very often a question of which image requires how many printings, due to the fact like in etching colours have to be added seperately litho can be very tedious.

By using plates it is quicker to render an area and to clean off the image and start on the next area. To clean off an image on a plate is simply achieved by counter etching with acid.

Wheras a stone requires laborious and time consuming grinding away of the image surface.

Suitable for short printings of two or three colours like etching I have to consider economics of time and may often choise screen for large printing jobs.

PAPER:

Paper is an almost as important consideration as is the choice of medium. It is the conveyer of whatever medium chosen and has to be considered very carefully. Size limitations, quality, surface feel including texture and durability, colour suitability to litho, etching or screen and once again economics.

Size can often limit etchings and litho's but this can be overcome by making your own paper. The general size of sheets are 30" X 22". Silk screen cartridge comes in rolls so there is no real size problem there.

The quality of the paper is probable the factor concerning me the most. Rag paper rather than pulp renders a better quality of blacks and tones for litho's and etchings whereas pulp paper made of wood is too hard and unyielding for the ink to take completely to the paper.

The texture and surface feel is an aesthetic choice. I prefer Somerset, Arches and Cupferdriick. All are very soft and yield a textural, rich print. They are 100% rag content paper and are suitable for litho, etching, and silk screen.

Somerset is made in England, Arches in France and Cupferdriick in Germany. All have an off white colour which I prefer due to its rendition of a deeper more sympathetic black compared to bright white whose intensity seems to shine through black.

All the above are durable to ink and time and are deckled around the edges.

All three are costly so often a cheaper paper such as Bockingford (a hard watercolour paper) or cartridge is chosen.

In my prints the paper is considered as much as the blacks.

In visually balancing images and areas paper must have the correct hue and shape to compliment the rest of the print within its borders. Very often where a white area comes through the darks it can make or break a print due to either its size shape or position.

Prints also have to be balanced to sit correctly on the paper. There is nothing worse than a badly placed print.

Finally because of the use of embossments in several pieces completed, all three papers mentioned are heavy weight and produce a good embossment. This is partially due to the soft puply rag content which embosses well under pressure and the heavy weight of the sheet.

A SELECTION OF PRINTS:INTRODUCTION:

The Flag series has been chosen as a representative of my early printmaking work. It covers both photographic and hand drawn images.

The Hotel Utopia series is a suite of entirely hand drawn images, etchings and lithos.

The Regal Suite is the most recent of my work and is a combination of the hand drawn and photographic.

These three suites are fairly representative of my work over the last two years and offer an insight into my way of thinking and the way it has changed.

THE FLAG SERIES:

INTENT:

This series was unique to my way of working because I had to create situations rather than awaiting their arrival. The first location was Dollymount strand Dublin. A pair of stepladders, a U.S. flag and a friend descended by car on to Dollymount. The day was very blustery, cold and quite bright.

I wanted to use the flag for its sense of design in black and white and its ability to wrap and suggest what it was wrapping. As it turned out I found a way of attaching the flag to the stepladders so that it flew in the wind.

It seemed to sculpt the wind, the ripples of movement were evident in the flag. There was a lot going on in that busy rectangle. It was at first a sense of amusement that turned into a sense of awe at what I learned from that rectangular piece of cloth. The stepladders were solid against a flowing tide and chafing wind but the flag followed its every command.

A friend was paddling around in the water and had left his boots behind at the base of the stepladders and by accident they were left in the same photograph that I had taken. It was remarkable because when I looked at the photo again they were a fundamental part of the image.

The boots were without a figure and seemed to demand an existence a reality of justification of being there.

Around the flag and ladders were many footprints and I felt that by tying together of the footprints as another physical element in that piece would add to the overall concept.

The wind blowing, the flag being sculptured by the air around it; and the bootprints walking away from the scene were seen and appreciated on a visual level. The print was approached on a purely visual level at that time. By adding a corny title ("Those boots were made for Walking") I felt I had the finishing touch.

The suggestion of wind through the ripples and folds and the suggestion of form through folds drapes and hollows was an element

I was searching for. I took photo's of the model and flag as I did with the flag and used them as source material for my prints.

Both of these situations led to a series of prints dealing with the time spent at Dollymount and at the college.

The Flag series was started in 1978. Four black and white etchings on Cupferdiick paper and three photo etchings/embossments were completed. The black and white etchings were on copper 15" x 12". The embossments/photo etchings were arranged on 22" x 30" paper.

The series completed on the U.S. Flag was a way of expressing a number of things; one print would not have contained enough of my intentions.

METHOD:

The series completed with the U.S. flag were all approached in the same way by using photographic source material as a start.

The smaller black and white etchings had a general license to operate a free ranging textural, sensual and tactile approach to the open large white areas. Of course the half tone photo etchings were limited to just a photo reproduction only and the only additions were colour ones.

Embossments were the added element used in the three photo etchings, and was to spell the beginning of a series of embossed/photo etching combinations.

All basic drop out and hand done etchings used blue black ink and only the first of the series had any element of colour.

The red in the stripe of the U.S. Flag.

Editions were limited due to inexperience at printing and also cost of high quality paper.

Roulettes, mezzotint rockers, acids, aquatints, panel beating, cutting out shapes with fret saws, and engraving by dry point were tools and methods employed for the complete series.

Ferric was mainly used as an acid although nitric was used to obtain clean areas of the plate.

Paper was Cupferdriick for the main editions. Saunders and Bockingford for not very successful prints and proofings.

'STARS AND BARS'

(Etching (drop out photo) on copper. Printed on Cupferdiick in 1978.)

This print was the first of a series of seven prints completed in editions of 10. Stars and Bars was a direct result of those photo-sessions with the flag and model. The stars area of the flag molded the head, the stripes, the body. Due to my technical problems at the beginning of my printmaking especially at trying to handle etching controlling it in the acid, photo processes constantly breaking down and my overall lack of understanding of the processes I eventually arrived at a print somewhat guided by my inadequacies.

The dropped out image of the figure was dropped out due to half tone being indistinct due to the poor photo taken originally. The image became somewhat fragmented and became lost in the flag area which I liked. I panicked and had to rescue areas that had seemed to disappear at an early stage. I had to redraw stars and limbs just enough to suggest the images used. The figure was purposely fragmented and made to read in and out of the flag. The fragmentation was also an easier way of controlling the figure due to the fact that accidents and the unexpected could be used to their best advantage. A red strip was added as a further reference to the U.S. Flag and to complement the stars. It was also an intentional balancing device to balance up the composition.

The etching was chosen as a ways and means of carrying the idea. In 'Stars and Bars' a dropped out image photographically reproduced was burned away with acid. To reproduce the subtleties of contrast in the figure I preferred to use photographic methods to show this. Hand drawn areas would not have worked due to a clumsy copy of the photo which needed due to its textures and intricities a photo copy.

Accidents such as foul biting through the bitumen was ground and aquatint lifting were used to their best possible advantage. The fragmenting of the image also helped. Each area of fragmentation could be kept for its own peculiar area to be attacked by the acid. The red stripe was a cut up litho plate rolled up in red

and layed upon the copper sheet as it ran through the press. Blue black ink was used to create mood and effect, contrasted with the bright white highlights of the paper.

The open bite areas were buffed down and created rich textural areas in the Ferric Acid. For the first time I was really intoxicated by the medium.

The subtleties of difference between the course and the fine aquatint was major quality in the blacks.

The ranges of tones and risen areas were beautiful to touch and to look at.

Because of my sympathy for the medium I approached this print in my usual etching frame of mind. Its size was limited due to the lack of confidence I had at that time. 15" x 12" seemed very large to me at that time, and its only recently that I have worked much larger.

Due to the nature of etching, immediacy of image was ruled out. I was able to play around with and alter the image quite a lot until the final result was competent.

I don't think that this print could have been achieved by any other medium. The range of qualities is exclusively etching. Litho may have been a good second choice due to the tactile qualities it could produce on a print. Silk screen would have not been able to deliver the qualities I've always looked for (Refer to the sections on Etching, Silk Screen and Litho).

With this print I was more concerned with its finish rather than its content. I felt a need to produce an attractive print visually and wanted a well balanced piece.

The sense of design and balance is evident in the arm and stripes relative positioning.

The definite criticism is not so much with the technique but with the content. I used the flag rather whimsically with little regard for its symbolic nature. Due to the U.S. Flag's evocative nature I felt I should have used a neutral piece of cloth. I never realised at that stage that I was stating or evoking more than I wanted to. With hindsight, I now realise that was so but it didn't strike me at the time as anything more than a beautiful visual object.

'THOSE BOOTS WERE MADE FOR WALKING'

(Photo etching and Embossment on Cupferdriick. Printed in 1978. Size 30" x 20").

This print was the fifth print produced in the series and was printed on Cupferdriick paper due to its weight and good rendering of an embossed area.

The print consist of a flag, boots and stepladder's on the right handside in blue. On the left and leaving the papge are several footprints.

The idea with this print was to express the situation that I was confronted with on the beach. The elements combined to link all the objects together and with some sense of purpose. The elements of wind, water, time were evident in the flag flying and the wind causing ripples in the cloth which are very evident. The boots left on the beach have been taken off because of the water. Time is shown in the incoming tide and footprints dissappearing off the sheet.

The boots were linked to the footprints walking across the paper. They were another element in the print and added more dimensionality to the piece, as well as physical reality. The footprints embossed into the paper could have gone on for a huge stretch but because the paper size I found myself limited to two steps.

The image was photographically reproduced on copper with a dot size of 50 dots per sq. inch. Fairly course because of the contrasty nature of the original photo. If a smaller dot had been used I would have lost definition due to an overall bombardment of tiny dots even in the white areas.

The plate was cut around its borders due to my unhappiness at the rectangular shape of the plate contrasted with the irregular shape of the boot prints in the paper.

The flag and the footprints were now reading as a combination rather than seperately.

The plate was hand inked in dark blue to provide a contrast with the light blue of the rolled on ink. Blue's were chosen due to the blue nature of water and the colour cast on the day in

Dollymount. The stripes were inked in red to pick out the U.S. Flag. When the plate was completely inked it was run through the press on a base plate affixed to the bootprints made of cardboard and in relief. A students footprints were inked up in black and made to walk across cardboard which was then cut up.

The end result was an inked up plate and bootprints embossed on one sheet of paper.

The quality wanted obviously dictated a using of halftone but even silk screen would have done, yet even its good quality would not have made up for the loss of subtle areas of blended ink and colours, accidentally wiped into each other and forming luminous varient in the flag area.

The real problem with this print is to achieve a good embossment and a good strong print of the flag image due to different materials being used. The different materials one card; the other copper; necessitate a compromise pressure.

As a print I know etching was very appropriate medium for what needed to be expressed. I could not have achieved an embossment of plate and footprints in Litho or Screen and of course the embossments are an essential part of the print. The photo rendition was equally as good as silk screen.

The paper was the medium needed to convey/carry the embossed boot-prints as they had looked in the sand, and so important to the overall print, that I can safely say that in no other medium could it have been achieved.

Because of the totally well utilised elements available to me at that time I feel it is one of the most successful prints completed both in technique and method used.

The failing is once again in my intention of using the U.S. Flag. I could be dishonest and say that it was there for one of twelve different reasons but I know that it was there for its aesthetic qualities of colour and design only.

This one failing has offset the success of using the elements available on the beach and in the techniques available in the print department.

The overall aim was to present the elements of time, wind, and water. I succeeded in the expression of these alone.

HOTEL UTOPIA SUITE:

Hotel Utopia was symbolic of a hotel that I stayed in at New York City on route to my stay at the University of Massachusetts.

After a terrifying journey from the airport by underground harassed by a Puerto Rican and an attractive Swedish girl I ended up cold and drained at the Hotel Utopia foyer.

Very expensive for the cheapest room in the house I shared it with two girls also there for the firsttime.

Cockroaches, dirty linen, 30° below freezing outside and just about barable inside. It was a real whore house. Women strolling around the corridors with bright red nail varnish and tones of make up. It was quite an arrival at N.Y.C.

After stepping outside after an initial 'real' American breakfast of hash browns, waffles and eggs easy over, I began to wander around the city.

Fifth Avenue was a destination set in my mind. Fashionable stores, erotic stores, famous personalities. Next to Rubensteines was an incredible window display. A series of windows all displaying different female forms.

Mannequins almost human trying on fish net stockings, glaring red nail varnish, glittering clothes and back drops, neon lights and anonymous faces, psychotic staring eyes all added up to a stunning impact.

The culminating effect was quite traumatic. Not that I hadn't seen anything like it before and not that I was doing a Mary Whitehouse of N.Y.C.

It was a combination of everything thrown together in 24 hours after a long initial flight from London and a grotty room in a hotel. Impersonal and devoid of emotions they stared glaringly at passers by.

The femaleform inviting exciting but quite forbidding when displayed that way. The neon strips were warnings. The red nail varnish threatening. It was quite late at night with not many people around.

The black corsets and boisery that they were wearing reminded me of that negative feeling created in the dark-room of

positive images. They all seemed to have an X-ray quality about them. By the time I arrived at Hotel Utopia for the second time the whole experience had been imprinted in my mind.

The outlet of my experience there was an expression of what I had encountered. An expression in print making.

If I went back to puberty I could trace my feelings. An instinctive sexual response to naked form was followed by a questioning of the hard core porno magazines that were flashed around boy's schools playgrounds. Some revulsion occurred then and has lingered today.

The blatant use of the female form as in N.Y.C. to attract males and females alike is quite frightening.

The response by people to that visual stimulus is like one of a hysterical riot. Quite uncontrollable. I see my rectangular plate or stone as a vocation. Its a black world all of its own. An area sealed off until images are born to visualise my thoughts and attitudes on this subject of eroticism.

There is a definite X-ray quality in my work due to the subject matter and my response to those X store fronts.

X-ray quality is a visual feeling I receive from black and white positives and negatives. Reversing images such as ordinary photos and viewing them in negative gives an impression of the silvery blue black that X-rays produce.

The store fronts created this sense of forboding of the mysterious the same response I get from looking at an X-ray.

'Faculty-X' is also a term used for the unexplainable. The intuitive, the instinctive is not enough to explain such a feeling that I walked away with from New York.

I felt I needed a series. Almost cinema-graphic. The store front display was about 10 or 12 different window displays in a row.

I was faced with a feeling of revulsion at the displays. I needed to physically be able to respond to the situation. I needed an outlet for my feelings on Hotel Utopia which covered all my experience in N.Y.C.

A series of 4 hand drawn images on Zinc 20" x 26" were completed. 3 lithos were completed all had editions of twenty on Arches buff paper. Started in January 1979 completed May 1979.

METHOD:

I started working from source material of photos and drawings collected in N.Y.C. The mannequins were the key to the subject despite everything else going on. Drawings were made for each of the series.

The material used was all hand drawn, a big change from in Dublin where all my work was previously for almost a year photographically reproduced. This change-over to hand drawn images was basically due to the unavailability of the photo processes at the University of Massachusetts. I was forced into a radically different approach than what I was used to at the time of Stars and Bars.

Because of my pre-occupation with the photo processes I had let my sketching fall behind. Now in U. Mass., I was forced into approaching my ideas from a really personal level which really worked. The sketches and photo's were transferred to Zinc etching plates. Zinc was more readily available and cheaper than copper. Zinc has the properties similar to copper so it is a good second choice. Working large was the only way to be really forceful and bold with the imagery.

Roulettes, mezzotint rockers, scrapers, foul bite, open bite, aquatints (course for textural material areas of the figure and fine aquatint for the shadows on the skin area) were used to build up these figures.

I gave myself a freedom to experiment and doodle inside the dimensions and main divisions of the figure.

Nitric was used with zinc due to the quickness of biting time in the bath. Nitric is stronger and therefore attacks the metal more forceably which is tougher than copper.

Due to the nature of nitric acid the open bite areas were more even than ferric. To achieve more interesting open bite areas with more texture and patterns similar to Ferric Acid, grease

and aquatints were added.

A blue black ink combination was used for the moody effects and X-ray qualities wanted.

Carborundum was used for glittery backdrops and the clothes worn by the mannequins. The carborundum twinkles and catches the light rather spectacularly and was used because of this reason. Glue was sprayed onto the paper and carborundum sprinkled onto the glue and run through the press.

'HOTEL UTOPIA WITH STOCKINGS'

(Etching on Zinc. Editioned 20 on Arches buff paper. Size 20" x 18").

This print shows a mannequin dressed in black corset and wearing fishnet stockings. The head that was impersonal anyway, disappears over the top of the plate. She is seated on a background of blue black with two horizontal lines made up of carborundum running through.

The image originally came from a store front window in Fifth Avenue.

The back drop in the window was sprayed with a glittery disco type tinsel. The cold forboding feeling was what I wanted to put across so I approached it likewise. The only element of sensuality was going to take place in the textural, accidental areas, occuring through foul bite, scratches etc..

The drawing was completed with a diamond point and then divided up into areas of corset legs, stockings. After the main divisions were completed I let quite uncontrolled happenings take place on the plate. Areas were filled in with many different tones using roulette mainly. Roulette achieved a uniform stipple across the corset and was needed to suggest cloth. Wrinkles and creases were burnished out of the rouletted areas. The stockings were made with a real pair of stockings being impressed into the soft was ground of the leg area. The acid only attacks the soft was ground that has come off on the pressed on stockings. Thus leaving a realistic impression. Open bite areas were burnished in the skin areas and the pubic hair region is blatantly displayed.

The Arches buff paper was used and the off white made the black and its various tones very rich, whereas, the white paper that was tried didn't really succeed being too brilliant.

This series of print had no real size restrictions placed on them. The size was suitable in fact as large as I wanted to go. This print was one of that series.

Not being as immediate as screen helped the image build up into a rich textural area. Areas were added and taken away at will. Being very sympathetic to etchings qualities helped with the choice of the medium in this series and in particular with this print. It didn't really matter what medium I employed to communicate my feeling, photographs or otherwise. The main idea was to put across this forboding feeling of the eroticness created in the store front windows. I succeeded in that. I also succeeded in getting as much as possible out of the etching plate as regards acids, textures and marks. My choice was appropriate on the level of sensuality and apt also for intent. Its like a confrontation of two opposites playing on one figure to put across a message.

The body is sensually linked with sensuality of the process. But the figure which is shocking in impact has a cold unemotional stance to it also. Which also relates to those window front displays.

My criticism is that I should have used real tinsel rather than carborundum. I used the two strips to balance up the figure on a visual level. I like the crudity of the image. The figurines were just like those in the windows.

Whether I liked it or not I was in the U. Mass. Dept., to work at printmaking. I was under obligation to produce work for my scholarship organisation and back home. I may have decided otherwise to have attempted the suite in photographic silk screen as a medium. But because of the success I achieved with the hand done approach I have no regrets.

There was no way I could have achieved that physical abusing in silk screen or litho to achieve my intent. Silk screen would have been too clinical, lacking the personal touch required and litho too flat in surface not quite able to achieve the effects wanted in textures and levels. Whilst people pass them off as crude as they mean it; I question the validity of the work crude. The series is certainly very bold, and were meant to be obvious in the windows so why not on the plate. Some artists I know shy away from the images impact, a cover up is consistently used to make the print more

acceptable and seductive.

By cover up I mean a disguise of intention or imagery due to an embarrassment of the imagery such as naked women and the obvious awkward impact it makes on an audience.

'HOTEL UTOPIA WITH REAL RED NAIL VARNISH'

(Etching on Zinc. Editioned 20 on Arches buff paper. Size 20" x 18")

This was another zinc etching same format and paper as the previous. Two legs stretch across the rectangle surrounded by a black chasm. Fishnet stockings a trad mark in the field of prostitution and erotic mannequins. Red nail varnish shines out forbodingly from her finger nails. That real glaring; warning red was so often seen on the prostitutes wandering around Hotel Utopia.

The subject was a mannequin viewed from underneath with the ominous hands holding onto her thighs. The crotch was just visible at the edge of the chair. Glittery edges adorned the seats so once again carborundum was added to create this cheap artificial effect.

After the initial drawing was completed, heavy lines were drawn in stocking like patterns. The same approach as the previous print was used. The main divisions of the image were adhered to allowing controlled accidents to take place within these areas.

Real red nail varnish was given to me by another student and it was I felt much better to put the real thing on paper than to pretend. I am not achieving prints in the traditional mould but that doesn't effect me in the slightest. I prefer to add other objects to my prints in a type of collage. Anything added is always a fundamental part of my print.

Again any problems caused by immediacy were quashed due to the large areas that I could play around with and change to suit the composition.

There were no problems with this print except the difficulty in getting the carborundum to stick on the paper which was eventually overcome by using a heavy duty spray adhesive.

I was very happy with this print. Due to the introduction of real red nail varnish which was not planned I felt an added element had been added to strengthen the image. The evaluation on the surface

would show that two legs, two hands were the major image on the plate. Red nail varnish and stockings were added to put across the forboding quality against the black background. I feel the forboding effect required was achieved. Putting the hands into shadow added to the mysterious quality. Whose hands are they?

The etching was a physical textural print with various levels evident in the plate. Again I don't think that any other medium could have been used to achieve a relationship between the aesthetics of etching and the concept together. Screen could offer a good reproduction of legs but not a tactile feel to it.

The seductiveness of the process is inherent in the supposidly seductive quality of the mannequins and both are thus linked to etching which I feel is the only process that can communicate the seductive in the two contexts.

THE REGAL SUITE:

The Regal Suite is the most recent set of prints to date. Whilst in London at the National Museum I came across copies of letters sent by monarchy of old to their lovers, friends, and enemies. The monarchs were Mary, Elizabeth I, Charles I, Louis and Richard III. After reading the letters that I have collected for a while an amazing world of intrigue, revolution and mystery was evident. Letters that were sent a day before a poison attempt showing a foresight, an intuition on the part of the victim.

A love letter sent to a secret admirer who was shortly to beheaded. Plots, assassination attempts created a world of intrigue.

The beautifully written letters adorned with seals and royal marks are so divorced from the reality around them. Even though the writing has a personality all of its own it is very difficult to link up that personality with the personality of the character who schemed and lived at that time.

It seems so out of place to be writing plots and scheming yet at the same time producing a work of art in a letter.

I have a fascination with the fact that the writing is so beautifully written whilst in contrast the scheming and murderous intent is evident. This combination is a strange contrast to sit together on the same page and totally at odds with each other.

How can a person write so beautifully yet write about ghastly deeds? It seems ridiculous.

The ambiguous feeling that I recieved from the set of images of X-ray and letter was with difficulty conveyed through the medium of etching. The old haunt of blacks and whites, accidental happenings was my favourite way of expressing ideas even the ambiguous ones such as the Regal Suite.

The ambiguity of a suggested communication through letters which I purposely wanted to destroy in the acid and the symbolic use of a child's skull created a dramatic effect that wasn't going to just revolve around Royalty but also the emotions conveyed. The writing and reference to Royalty was subtly left to a signature or a couple of words. The association with such people is not the main idea of the art work.

The skull was used purposely so that the mood conveyed of life and death would be brought into the forefront.

The viewer would have to respond on his own level to that black rectangle. Taking out whatever can be grasped.

There is a strange brooding look within the skull. Its dark sockets peer out unfathomably and devoid of life. I decided to only hint at Royalty either through a signature or Royalty Seal.

My intentions have obvious been affected from childhood with regard to the suite. The occult and its vitality that is so often dismissed. My schooling and teaching by history tutors who either made it boring or interesting.

The Monarch who was interesting such as Richard III, a supposedly hunch-backed figure dark evil and sinister. Elizabeth I who was quick to anger, slow to reason, spoilt and ruthless. Both of these monarch come ready to mind because history has made them entertaining figures.

I wanted a black rectangular area capable of playing out all the elements talked about so far.

A series of 5 etchings have been completed. Started in April 1980 all on Somerset Paper. White and buff.

The letters and skulls after a lengthy process of trying out different positions on the plate were reproduced on copper photographically.

A series was completed to deal individually with different monarchs.

The layout suggests similarity and this is precisely what I wanted.

A stable platform to express the same intuitive feelings with each monarch but in different contexts. Elizabeth's life is laid out by 3 letters at different stages of her life. Mary has a poison attempt letter at her disposal with an X-ray of her large intestine. All are in different situations but with a similar statement 'Life and Death'.

After a try out of a loose collage of the images that I felt I needed to work life size with to achieve a forceful effect. They wouldn't have worked as powerfully if they were scaled down. The impact would have been dissolved.

The skull areas were worked with open bite, roulettes and aquatints to add depth and richness to an otherwise flatish area.

The letters of the three prints used so far were also destroyed in their written content and a decayed effect with the acid wanted. The readability would have focussed unnecessarily on the plight of the

royalty. Life and death (the skull) take prescedant over them. pure nitric acid was dropped onto the letters to form stains of the letters. The sheets of off-white paper resulting from the buff - Somerset was more acceptable than the bright white was. A thin film of ink was left unwiped in a 'retrosage' of the letter areas. The choice of ink for the series was a blue black ink. Once again, I wanted the forboding quality only achieved by the blue black cold colour. The aquatints were sprayed to achieve a rich dark background. Each image used has been lifted by a touch of light blue just to add a bit off dimensionality within the area.

ELIZABETH R

(Etching on copper. Editioned 20 on Somerset buff paper. Size 26" x 20").

I chose three letters in a different stages of her life. One a letter from a lover, one a plot by a court attendant against her life and the third a letter by herself before her death.

Elizabeth was a moody, spoilt child who was later to become ruthless, unreasonable and caught in a web of contradictions. The innocent child became an orge - a Queen of murderous instinct. It was the child I wanted to portray - thus a childs skull was used. My interest in Elizabeth as aschool kid and from reading novels of herself culminated in her inclusion in the series.

I knew if the writing was made readable a pre-occupation with the content would take place. I did not want this so I felt the need to destroy the letters legibility. The feeling created by the skulls and letters communicated the most desired idea. The oneof life and death.

The child is really anyone of that age not just Elizabeth. I can also be related to that skull. Thus the skull neutrality is a mode for communicating that idea. A cross which was an accidental happening in this print appeared in the black and was used as a symbol reference to christianity.

ELIZABETH R

A skull and three letters were reproduced onto the plate

photographically. No dots were used; a drop out of blacks and whites was preferred. Once halftone is used the use of the open bite and sweeping gestures are severely limited due to the fact that the dots in the photographic areas tend to look scruffy and too irregular to really work as a photo rendition.

A life size skull seen from the front and three letters connected by a cross shape in the darks are a visual description. The letters one of which is severely destroyed are bitten by nitric acid as well as ferric to deepen and blur the writing.

Pure nitric was used to deepen the cross shaped caused by a build up of sediment each side of a trough at the bottom of the acid bath.

The sediment prevented the areas outside of the cross shape being bitten by acid resulting in a deeper bite taking place on the cross.

Course aquatints were layed on the surrounding areas of the letters and skulls with spray paint to achieve a rich black.

Roulette and rocker were used around the leading edges of the letters to create less crisp paper edges. The inside areas of the skull were textured by roulettes also.

Somerset buff was used to create a parchment effect. Using a white would have been too dazzling and crisp. Blue black ink and blue oil painted cross areas on the letters was the colour used for the print.

Evaluation and Appropriateness of Choice to Medium:

The problem confronting me in this print as with the series is the one of communication. The reference to royalty is not very evident. The viewer cannot relate to the fact that there is a regal influence.

I assume that I am creating more confusion than I at first realised. If a more obvious seal or regal reference is used the issue of life and death would also be more strongly emphasised. The media chosen I feel may have been a wrong choice. I would have preferred to work larger but due to a printmaking frame of mind, I manipulated my images to suit restrictions and the dimensions available in paper and plate.

I will consider a continuation of the series in the coming months in either printing or collage. Etching was used for its characteristics and subtleties adding up to an end result quite tactile and acceptable as a conveyer of the idea.

Once again the blacks lend themselves to the choice of etching and

due to the fact that I prefer to work in black and white, I again have to choose either litho or etching.

With my choice of layout I could have chosen the possibility of mingling and overhanging images and letters to achieve the same effect less obviously. But its my choice and I prefer to work more directly to achieve a bold and hitting impact.

THE TWO PRINCES IN THE TOWER

(Etching on copper. 20 Editioned on Somerset buff. April 1980
Size 18" x 15").

Richard the third a cruel, dark sinister monarch, who had his two nephews, the two princes murdered and then had the murderers executed to hide the evidence was the motivation behind this print.

This is the first of a two-part print aimed at portraying 'The Princes' and their plight and instigator of their murder Richard III.

The feeling of being locked away shut off from the outside restricted in every way prisoners of a king must have been a very unpleasant experience.

This feeling was one I wanted to convey through a relation to the two princes locked in the tower, locked behind a brick wall. The print was a continuation of the royalty idea but could well have been anyone or any animal caged in behind a wall. That feeling of being locked away and the emotions that ensue apply to anybody. Isolation and confinement.

Two X-ray heads are placed behind a wall peering over looking at life going on around them. The X-ray's give a feeling of viewing into their minds trying to experience their emotions.

As a school kid, I could quite easily relate to their predicament due to the fact that I was of a similar age to them at the time, and could quite easily found myself in the same situation with a little imagination.

Two X-rays of a head were photographically reproduced by half tone onto copper. The half tone was ideal due to its ability to reproduce a beautiful subtle suggestions could not have been achieved other than by X-ray.

The head could have been screened but the quality is equally as good on copper.

The plate was cut into two directly below the noses of the heads. A solid brown wall was suggested by rolling up one plate in brown the other carrying the X-rays were inked in blue black ink.

The X-rays were enhanced by using coarse aquatint, which gave a very textural effect to the patterns created. Because of the medium a very textural effect was achieved overall. This in particular worked with a suggestion of a wall which is also very granular.

Etching certainly gave a granular feel the the surface which also had to express a wall shape. In this the print succeeded.

The feeling of isolation and confinement works well. It could be possible the expression of their faces or because of a solid brown wall shape that looms up in front of them.

Silk screen would have lost the earthy feel and texture of the wall. Although I know the screened photo area would have succeeded in reproducing fine rendition and quality.

Because of the simple statement a wall and two heads peering over, I feel this is one of my most successful prints to date.

The size was ideal yet a larger format may be tried using the same idea.

CONCLUSION TO THE THREE SUITES OF PRINTS:

The fairly representative selection of prints in the 3 suites gives an insight into my way of working over the past two years. In my first series "The Flag" series this was an unintentional series that blossomed. They were the basis for my early understanding of the technical processes in printmaking.

At that stage in my development the scales between on one hand the intentional and on the other the conceptual were unbalanced. The technical element in my work had at that stage taken precedence over the intentional conceptual. This was due to a developing awareness of the medium at that stage and not being able to grasp all its problems, most of my energies were directed to exploring them.

Gradually the scales shifted from an uneven to a more evenly balanced level. In 'Hotel Utopia' that series was undertaken with a good awareness of etching and litho in particular due to an over emphasis on photo reproduction. The conceptual was a very strong feature of that series, due to a powerful impression made on me at that time.

In the final suite chosen, a recent showing of my work explores the idea of life and death through the processes available. A mixture of hand drawn and photographic is used in conjunction and complementary combinations. The pattern created now that I have an awareness of the conceptual and technical is one of communication. Even though I am conceptually on a high level the complexities of thought and approach to overcome, as regards the communication of ideas to the viewer.

My approach and communication of my concepts are the next stepping stone. I need to be better able to put across what I am thinking.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT:

As a measure of importance that I have placed on this essay I can safely say that my future directions have a good foundation on which to build, due to an awareness of my development in my work that I knew existed, but was never brought to the surface before.

The deficiencies that I have learnt about in this essay due to an evaluation of my work has given me clues on how to remedy the situation.

My ideas, influences, choices of expression and directions are now more clearly laid down for me.

I see my development as a battle to overcome the difficulties of communication of a visual response to my work. The balance between on one hand the technical aspects of printmaking and on the other the conceptual is a situation I need to be acutely aware of.

I will continue to delve into the difficult to explain with words, imagery and concepts. I would hope to offer a language more meaningful and understandable than it now is at present.

I see myself experimenting and expressing more intricate responses to the unexplainable. The mention of Occult and Faculty X at the beginning of the essay will begin to take an importance in my work now that I am better able to communicate. Up until now I've found it very difficult to respond visually on that subject.

With a better visual language now available, I will be better able to evaluate and express on a more aware level than I previously held before.

Typing: Caroline Bond: