

Glint: Glass and Print Canberra Glassworks review

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Glint: Glass and Print

Canberra Glassworks until August 3.

Glint is an exhibition by eight artists - Scott Chaseling, Emilie Patteson, Annika Romeyn, Ben Rak, Dionisia Salas, Mark Thiele, Annie Trevillian and Melinda Willis. These artists participated in a two-month residency project, a collaboration between the Canberra Glassworks and the Megalo Print Studio. Megalo has recently moved into the Kingston art precinct and this collaboration is hopefully the beginning of many such projects between the two organisations.

These eight artists, who were either printmakers or glass artists, were selected as participants in this project which saw them working across territory that was in many cases unfamiliar.

What is enjoyable and challenging about the exhibition is the question posed by the *raison d'être* of its inception - in what way does the work of these eight artists in the exhibition reflect their residency? For Patteson and Romeyn and Willis and Trevillian for example, the collaborative links between them were obvious. Direct links were not so apparent in the work of the other four artists involved.

Patteson is a Canberra glass artist. She is inspired by the cycle of nature, its growth and decay, as part of the life process. In Romeyn, she found an artist who had the same interest as she did in the natural world.

Romeyn is a young printmaker working in Canberra. A group of mushrooms they discovered near Megalo print studio provided a subject they both felt confident they could work with. This interest took them into new ways of exploring both glassmaking and graphic investigation and resulted in some beautiful imagery and glass objects. Both artists made lithographic drawings of the original mushrooms. Both drawings had similar sensitivity but Romeyn's work was distinguished by more of a life force and energy. Both artists developed this life force in a larger lithographic print that they drew together starting at opposite ends of the image. The result is a seamless collaborative effort.

A series of experiments using the actual mushrooms and hot glass resulted in interesting clusters of small glass paperweights that include incinerated parts of the mushrooms. The group of paperweights that are in the Smokehouse Gallery are particularly successful. The blue heads of the mushrooms encased in small glass globes radiate with an incandescent glow – magic mushrooms indeed.

Trevillian, a Canberra textile artist and designer, has embraced the actual processes of glassmaking. Her length of textile called *Tools of the Trade* has a pleasing pattern of glassmaking tools arranged against a concrete wall (the glassworks?). I always admire the skilful way this artist can bring together different shapes of objects and arrange them into such harmonious designs. As an addendum to this design, the artist has fused some of these images onto glass plaques.

Willis is a South Australian glassmaker who has studied and worked here in Canberra. She and Trevillian found a common bond in the history and architecture of the Glassworks with which Trevillian's family was particularly involved. They both embarked on a series of experiments in working with different techniques of printing and glassmaking. Willis's works are based on windows in the Glassworks. She encased manipulated photographic images and pressed them like mementoes between layers of glass in small black framed glass boxes. The mesh screens that cover some of the windows provided the subject for two attractive prints.

Rak lives in Sydney where he lectures at the College of Fine Art (COFA). His primary interest is printmaking. However in this exhibition he has used the glass object as a vehicle not only for his graphic skill but as reinforcement of his creative concepts. Rak's images of trophy homes and trophy apartments in Sydney are sandblasted onto clear glass blocks and a glass plaque. I like this witty take on the house and apartment as a status symbol emphasised by the current fashion of living in glass cubes open to public gaze.

Thiele is a glass artist from South Australia. He has transferred everyday scenes of Canberra such as the artists at Megalo, the wetlands at Kingston, bicycles and balloons onto glass panels as well as onto two tall glass vessels. They are strong graphic images that have transferred very successfully to the glass medium. Thiele's glass has always had a strong abstract graphic element reflecting his interest in patterns, shapes and textures. The successful use of the graphic images of Canberra may add a new source of material into his glass practice.

Chaseling's installation *Flat Paddle* has two parts. Chaseling uses glass circles made into long chains as a symbol of water. These chains flow into a bucket that is part of a complex constructed design of wooden struts and bunting. This installation is partnered by a more sophisticated and refined companion work where the paddle of the title rests in a pool of glass chains against a series of digital prints that mirror the structure of the companion installation in a strong and linear way. This layering of levels of visual perception fits into a very personal narrative the artist is constructing about his exploration of the dissemination of knowledge and about the importance of water acting as a symbolic conduit.

Drama is present in two prints by Salas, a printmaker who moves between Canberra and Europe. Salas manipulated the surface of her prints so that they represent many layers of texture and colour. The actual long glass rod that accompanies the prints seems to have been used as an instrumental scourge eating into the paper - a disturbing use, perhaps, of glass and a reminder of the searing power of fire.

This story was found at: <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/glitz-glass-and-print-canberra-glassworks-review-20140716-zt4sk.html>