

Clare Henry

**Glasgow Print
Studio exhibition
reviews**

1982

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24th March 1982

Glasgow

CLARE HENRY

Eric Marwick

PEOPLE carousing in pubs, teeming on to the underground, bored in Sunday church, engrossed in the cinema, walking their dogs — these earthy, humorous, satirical observations of the proletariat, (or less pompously "recollections of everyday life in South London") are Eric Marwick's theme in an exhibition of prints, drawings and books at the Glasgow Print Studio Gallery.

Like Bruegel, Gillray, Daumier and Hogarth before him, Marwick finds a wealth of material in the study of various types of people, and his characterisation is excellent.

Although trained as a painter at Dundee Art College and then at London's Royal College of Art, his gift for draughtsmanship has found a more sympathetic outlet in graphic prints.

His first series, rather like a

comic strip or vignettes, was expressed in lithographs. These date from the early 1970s and, despite a student preoccupation with lavatorial humour, are full of incident and accurately observed detail which avoids over-heavy caricature.

By the later 1970s, he had turned to the lino-cut, a simple but very effective means of communicating satirical images in bold colour and black line. His most successful production so far is a book of kerbside, often ankle-nipping-height views of the streets and parks of London called "Clapham Dogs."

Less successful is his latest work "The Last Fandangle," a nonsense tale of "the dweller of the peaceful plain" which, though inventive, doesn't quite come off, although it does work better as a book than as individual drawings.

Part of this exhibition was recently seen in Edinburgh at the Printmakers Workshop, but minus the all-important Lithographs. However, a complaint here is that there were not more drawings of the standard of "The Boxing Match."

The score is not an easy one to master, and there are cast weaknesses in both singing ability and projection. Nevertheless, the show does have its highlights: ensemble singing is generally good, from a lively if cramped opening through a delightful dream sequence — complete with eight-foot ghost — to the mournful prayer for Anatevka, the home town from which the Jews are expelled.

The principal roles are capably handled, with a spirited performance from Helen Jeffrey as Golde. M. W. Dickson, as Tevye, is unusually low-key, but with a nice line in dry humour. Tevye's daughters are prettily played and sung, especially by Louise MacDonald as Hodel, if somewhat underpowered. Gilbert Wedgewood as Motel the Tailor was unable to cope with the difficulties of "Miracle of Miracles." Supporting performances are competently played and usually well thought-out, although James Jack's Innkeeper tends to be over-fussy.

"Fiddler" is a complicated musical, and long, too, at nearly three hours, but certainly worth a visit for this lively production which runs until Saturday.

3rd May 1982

Glasgow Print Studio

CLARE HENRY

Canadian prints

SEEING this Canadian print show reminds me how well Scottish printmakers can now stand up to international comparisons. For, as with the recent Australian and Dutch shows, there is nothing here to set the world on fire.

Surprisingly, the exhibition (mounted by the Canadian Cultural Affairs Division) contains some work as much as 20-years-old and nothing more recent than 1975.

All is representational with 'a fair smattering of ethnic Red Indians and diagrammatic cut-outs, and manipulative photography is used in a proportion of the works.

This does not always make for visual excitement and Carl Heywood's photo silkscreen of a crumpled piece of paper with the revealing slogan "Today the whole day I accomplished nothing" would not even make a good poster, much less a good original print. But then again it is certainly superior to David Gilhooly's ugly plague of devil frogs climbing up Jacob's Ladder!

Sadly, Michael Snow, the one big name present, also fails to shine. Luckily Eugene Ouchi has more style and gives us a clean embossed print with coloured paintbrush trails.

15th June 1982

**Glasgow Print Studio
CLARE HENRY**

Mark Gertler

PRESCIENCE must be alarming. In 1918 the 27-year-old Mark Gertler said: "I am terribly, terribly rich in spirit just now. I live in a world of wonder from morning to night. It dazzles me and makes my blood run cold. I must control myself or I shall destroy myself through abundance of feeling."

By the 1930s it had all come too true. After a precocious start followed by impressive professional and social success in his mid twenties, Gertler's late years were dogged by ill health and eclectic work of uncertain direction — a bit of heavy Renoir here, a touch of synthetic Cubism there. He committed suicide in 1939.

Yet, in the 1920s he was one of the best known modern painters in Britain and this exhibition at the Glasgow Print Studio is a welcome opportunity to see the range of his

His precociousness is apparent in his 1911 portrait of his mother. This conspicuous picture, which now belongs to the Tate Gallery, is a fine piece of observation and is complemented by other sensitive family portraits (and some still lives). They are in traditional style and show the influence of his Slade School training.

Two years later, however, his style had changed. His mother is no longer romanticised but is seen with tough directness as an east European peasant: Dora Carrington appears stylised and precise; "Harry Holding an Apple" is angular and distorted.

Gertler was at the start of his endless search for perfection — a chopping and changing which was to continue all his life. It was a creative ferment, a conflict of aims which dominated his personal life as well as his art.

**Glasgow School of Art
CLARE HENRY**

There are imaginative woven textiles by Sarah Sumsion and Karen Borland, fashion garments from Adriana Klapwijk and Claire Heminsley, notable jewellery and silver (Irene Halliday and James McDougall), theatre designs by Linda McKay, stained glass by Shona McInnes, and ceramics (David Norman and Irene Bell).

In the Fine Arts the painters look on top form with a welcome breadth of approach from Steven Campbell's audacity to Adrian Wiszniewski's linear classicism while Sculpture provides controversy with Irene Tierney's hard-hitting feminist harrangue (and that's no criticism).

These Art and Design exhibitions are open to the public (evenings included) until June 23.

**Hopetoun House
MALCOLM RAYMENT
Scottish Baroque
Ensemble**

"HAYDN at Hopetoun" is the title

though the acoustic of the ballroom at Hopetoun House proved somewhat unkind to her voice by imparting to it a booming quality.

The Scottish Baroque Ensemble were very much in form throughout the evening, and consequently these two little known examples of early Haydn, as well as pieces by Jan Stamic and Tartini, were heard to exceptionally good advantage.

**Black Bull, Milngavie
ELLIOT MEADOW**

**Kai Winding/Adrian
Drover's Slide Rule**

SPACE limitation makes it impossible to go into verse and chorus of the music a capacity audience heard at the Black Bull on Sunday night. On this occasion the verse alone will have to suffice.

Veteran bop trombonist Kai Winding played two sets with the

4th August 1982

Baer and Basis

"FRANKLY, with respect to printmaking, there is no one way to go to Heaven or Hell," the prestigious six British International Print Biennale told us in 1979. Certainly variety was rampant then, with particularly memorable prints from Japan, Italy and Peru. Among the British contingent (along with Ackroyd, Caulfield and Patrick Hughes's ubiquitous rainbows) was a black and white etching entitled "Potters Bar to Barnet" by Peter Baer. Marks of differing size and density formed areas of patterns which in turn made up fields of foliage or railway track.

Baer has continued to be selected to exhibit at the Bradford Biennale and now some of his prints — including "Potters Bar" — along with those of a second Biennale artist, Mati Basis, are on show at the Glasgow Print Studio.

Baer's other work also involves bold, big marks and patterned areas but too often in a less successful way. More interesting is the work of Mati Basis. He was born in 1932 in Tel Aviv, where he began his art studies before completing them in London.

He too uses texture and pattern but in a completely different way as we see in this show of work from 1969 onwards. There is a progressive editing out and simplification of image until recent prints involve only a mere black and white stylization of, for instance, a tree or barn repeated many times. "Trees and Figures" (1981) is reminiscent of the well-known bird's eye view of people thronging Parisian streets which the Impressionists were so fond of.

Best of all are the photo etchings which play with combinations of the textures and patterns of ploughed fields and regularly spaced rows of trees. Which way to Heaven, then?

Park school murals: 6th September 1982



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Sept 6th
1982

Press Release - Park School Murals

For the pupils of an Oban Primary School, Opportunity Knocks for four weeks in the shape of an exhibition at Glasgow Print Studio Gallery from September 6.

The children, aged between nine and eleven, attend Park Primary School where project organiser John McPhee spent last year working on a mural project with them. They went out and about the town, and their sketches and working drawings eventually became ten large murals which are the main works in the exhibition. The drawings and photographs of work in progress are also on display.

Catriona Clark, Gallery Administrator at Glasgow Print Studio said: "We have never had an exhibition from schoolkids before, and few galleries ever do. Most school art is relegated to doting parents or sponsored competitions; but when we saw the sheer scale of the work - and the murals are big ones and the quality of imagination that had gone into them, we thought they deserved a wider public. It is a bright, maybe even brash show, but Oban comes out of it not as a sleepy tourist town, but rather bustling with energy. John McPhee has obviously opened the kids' eyes to the town they live in, but he has also given them some great ideas in the use of materials, which they have adopted wholeheartedly.

"We had, as a "legitimate" gallery, always avoided children's art, but the quality of the work justifies itself as part of our educational programme - we run evening classes in printmaking and have tutors permanently on call in our workshop, which is why we held it until the schools returned.

"In its five years it has always been Studio policy to encourage young artists, but we never expected them to be this young."

For further information please contact Catrina Macdonald at Glasgow Print Studio
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1st November 1982

Glasgow Print Studio

CLARE HENRY

Contemporary German Prints

A 100 prints from 1966 to 1976 by 33 of Germany's best-known artists at the Glasgow Print Studio, (courtesy of the Goethe Institute) make an impressive showing.

They are split into two sections, constructivist and realist, and very different they are. On the one hand abstract purist exactitude of form, objective precision, rational and measured shapes — patterns almost clinical in their geometry; on the other total involvement, emotional representations of dream or nightmare, full of critical protest and violent reaction.

One group of artists use line, rhythm and tone to comment on the modern world; the other tears its guts out and displays them before you.

The best-known of the constructivists is Joseph Albers. His famous and endless series, "Homage to the Square" (1966), is an investigation into colour harmonies that can be set in motion by placing one square within another square within another . . .

It seems a puritanical restriction that could schackle the imagination, but, the three on show here seem to prove his point. From this it is a small step to the Op-Art vibrations of Silva Maviglier, or the fluorescent lime green and shocking pink sock colours of Gunther Fruhtrunks.

The realists are the younger generation. Obsessed with distortions of the human figure. They have a perverse slant on things which transforms ordinary life, the Human Comedy, into an unreal, macabre, grotesque irony. Several recall the biting scurrilous and suggestive works of such 1920s Expressionists as Otto Dix and George Grosz.

Print studio faces identity crisis: 28th December 1982

By CLARE HENRY

rough passage in recent months. Like many things in the Scottish context, what is Glasgow is big — therefore full of potential, but vulnerable to criticism. So, predictably, in the world of print studios, Glasgow's has been the subject of review.

The Scottish Arts Council, its major financier, had decided, after much heart-searching, that radical changes were necessary. Was the public getting value for money? The answer was "Yes — subject to reforms," and to the credit of all concerned both sides reacted well.

A new Studio Board of Management has accepted the criticisms and is determined to respond in a serious and responsible way; the Arts Council has reaffirmed its commitment to the Studio ("We are committed to providing professional printmaking facilities in the West of Scotland") and everyone is rallying round.

There is no danger now that Glasgow will lose its Print Studio —

and that is a relief. But too often things are only valued when in danger. For the rest of the time they are taken for granted — and the GPS has been taken for granted by too many artists, students and art lovers in the West. No organisation can flourish without a large body of support but perhaps a better-informed support would have been more advantageous.

However, all that is past and now that the GPS has obviously reached calmer waters, it is worth recounting the history of the Studio, perhaps learning something thereby. It makes a most interesting story.

The Print Studio has come a long way from its foundation in 1972 — when it was the second such studio in Britain. It helped to set a standard nationwide, albeit from the cramped ground floor rooms of a Victorian tenement in St Vincent Crescent. The accommodation

was never ideal (elbow room was non-existent) but it was a small miracle to many printmakers.

At the time Bill Buchanan, who was Art Director of the Scottish Arts Council and was closely involved in the foundation of the GPS, wrote: "Why, year after year trained students in printmaking techniques, when, after leaving college, they have no further access to printmaking facilities? A place to work, with presses and other specialised equipment is needed." The Print Studio provided this place and many were grateful.

But it was a workshop with a difference. Much of the work produced in the early years was of a very high quality despite the cramped conditions. Exhibitions were held regularly on the walls around the presses and it was a squash to get about and view everything. Evening classes and demonstrations suffered the same tight squeeze, yet it all contributed to the lively pioneering spirit.

In 1975 the studio moved to its present large premises in Ingram Street, in the commercial centre of Glasgow. It was a mammoth undertaking. Lithographic presses weigh several tons and getting them up to the third-floor workshop involved cranes and the removal of whole windows. And perhaps this set the tone. As time progressed expectations rose: a photographic dark room was built; an exhibition gallery was constructed; the number of staff increased; grandiose schemes were floated.

Some of these came off. The Lowry, Paolozzi and Gertler exhibitions were marvellous; the various Midsummer Balls were electric but, with hindsight, the studio's brief was getting more and more unwieldy.

It had subtly changed in character — and few could acknowledge this. The change was from amateur (in the sense of unpackaged) to professional; from itinerant to permanent, from minor to major. From modest beginnings the

charge outgrew its keepers and the level of optimism was unjustified. And it came to finance in the end: there was a time when £250 was considered a large grant (printmaking tutors were paid their bus fares — if they were lucky) — this year the grant was £40,000. Something had to give.

But to turn to the future. Bill McNamara, the new chairman, aims to pare things back to the manageable and controllable. "We'll keep things as simple as possible. Once we've got everything under control, we'll see which direction to take."

The direction matters. The GPS must take a long, hard look at itself and sort out its priorities. Does the workshop facility come first? Is teaching the important part of the studio's responsibility? Can ties with the School of Art be strengthened? Is there a place for prestigious editioning? Where does the gallery exhibition programme fit in? Do sales matter?