

Prague Through the Light

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My prints were inspired by photographs I took while traveling with my family. I was very interested in the beautiful architecture in Europe, and discovering the history and stories behind the buildings was fascinating.

Suzy Mackenzie is a collagraph block printmaker who uses a interesting old buildings in her drawings and prints. Her work inspired me to use this style for my prints.

Mary Pulford, a member of Bittondi Printmakers Association, visited our class to show us her prints and discuss the forth coming exhibition 'Bears and Blooms', that I was a part of in 2016. Pulford works with lino and photopolymer blocks. Her photopolymer prints use fine line work combining delicate hand colouring to enhance and add interest. I knew my work would benefit from a stronger effect and possibly hand colouring.

I experimented with several different types of printmaking including copper etching before deciding on a collagraph print for my final. I had not tried this type of printing before but it took my interest when I discovered Australian painter/printmaker Jet James. His works were different from anything I had seen before and it made want to see if I could produce similar textures and effects with my work. This type of printing is unique, and "hands on" as it requires the artist to cut, carve and glue different surfaces onto a cardboard base.

For my prints I choose to use a photograph I took in Prague, Czech Republic just outside of our hotel. I focused on various colour schemes to create the mood and convey the an 'old world' theme. I experimented with different techniques including intaglio, relief and top roll. It was possible to combine these techniques to add depth and contrast.

For my final, I chose to present a trio of prints to represent the lighting conditions in which I saw this scene: morning, dusk and night. My first print is called 'Rise'. In this print, which is my favourite of the three, I wanted to capture the golden sun rising over the buildings. I was fascinated with the diminishing shadows and warm glow. My second print is called 'Twilight'. This print was inspired by the buildings at dusk, when subdued light fell, giving the city a dark mysterious aura. I chose to work with only two shades of brown to develop this required effect.

My third print is called 'The Night'. I distinctly remember when I was there how the night silence was so complete and the moon glistened off the old dark buildings. I wanted to replicate the austerity by using a pure black ink and for this I used the relief technique. I chose to add watercolour to my final print sometime after completion to enhance the work.

Printmaking is an enjoyable, highly experimental and satisfying process. I am always excited by the subtleties and random beautiful textures that can be achieved with collagraph block printing.