

LIST OF WORKS

Brook Andrew

peoples' movement 2001
stickers
15 x 100 cm each

Raymond Arnold

Body Armour or Char/Corps 1998
etching
138 x 69 cm
courtesy the artist & Australian Galleries, Melbourne

La Commotion/War Film Concussion 1998
etching
138 x 69 cm

Body Armour 1999
digital print
180 x 70 cm

Concussion 1999
digital print
180 x 70 cm

Nick Bleasel

CHEERFUL WHISTLING PERMITTED 2000
sericol screenprint on plastic
52 x 35 cm

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS SUSPENDED 2000
sericol screenprint on plastic
50 x 35 cm

DO NOT FEED THE KANAGAROOS 2000
sericol screenprint on plastic
45 x 22 cm

NO MUTTERING 2000
sericol screenprint on plastic
22 x 45 cm

VISITORS SHIELD YOUR EYES 2000
sericol screenprint on plastic
44.5 x 22 cm

Jan Davis

Horse (1) 1996
Iris print on Kadi lightweight paper
180 x 200 cm

Horse (2) 1996
Iris print on Kadi lightweight paper
180 x 200 cm

Mary Dorahy

Living things: a still life 1998-01
mixed print media on Formica, VISY board & paper
170 x 300 cm

Lesley Duxbury

High/Low 2001
inkjet & relief print on paper, silkscreen on glass, acrylic paint
16 @ 28 x 28 cm each

Neil Emmerson

(penance) 1999
15 strings of laser cut acrylic, plastic beads, lead & cotton thread
250 cm

(surrender) falling boy 1999
laser engraving on woollen blanket
6 x 160 x 230 cm

(surrender) red frame 1999
shaved/embossed woollen blanket
6 x 160 x 230 cm

Mirabel FitzGerald

Form and Variable 2001
etchings, stencil print, ink rubbing, woodcut
dimensions variable

Ruth Johnstone

In Restauro 2000-01
bound book of woodcuts, box, wall paper rolls, trestle tables
dimensions variable

Gary Jolley

Border Crossing: LandEScape #2 2001
mixed print media (drypoint, woodblock, transfer drawing, relief print on polychrome ground)
76 x 112 cm

Border Crossing: LandEScape #3 2001
mixed print media (digital print, drypoint, woodblock, transfer drawing, relief print on polychrome ground)
76 x 112 cm

Cultural Impact Study: Lismore Site - Invisible History (August 2001) 2001
discarded colour laser prints
23 @ 29.5 x 21 cm

Pia Larsen

Badges of Honour 2000
aluminium
2 @ 4x3.5cm, 2 @ 3x3.5cm

Roll of Honour 2000-01
drypoint on paper & screenprint on aluminium
115 x 76.5 x 4 cm

Helen Mueller

Water Books 2001
linoblock prints on spicers paper 'sheerprint'
five stacks of printed pages
14.2 x 12.5 cm each print, height variable

Patsy Payne

soma 1999
CD-ROM
in collaboration with David McDowell

Erica Seccombe

Luvamuncha II 2001
laser print on paper
290 x 464 cm

Kim Westcott

Blue Note 2001
drypoint & encaustic on canvas
80 x 120 cm
courtesy Michael Carr Art Dealer, Sydney

Blue Rose 2001
drypoint & encaustic on canvas
120 x 80 cm
courtesy Michael Carr Art Dealer, Sydney

Too late to turn 2001
drypoint & encaustic on canvas
120 x 240 cm
courtesy Michael Carr Art Dealer, Sydney

John Young

On Certain Solitudes 1999-00
digital scan & oil on canvas
212 x 158.5 cm
courtesy Sherman Galleries, Sydney

Pine's Edge 2000
digital scan & oil on canvas
212 x 158.5 cm
courtesy Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne

NO MUTTERING
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NO MUTTERING
10_{AM} - 5_{PM}
MON - FRI

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Mirabel FitzGerald
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Gary Jolley
Pia Larsen
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Patsy Payne
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Cover image: Nick Bleasel *NO MUTTERING* 2000

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NO MUTTERING

NO MUTTERING explores the exciting, inventive and sometimes unusual print processes being used by sixteen contemporary Australian artists. Printmaking has always embraced (and indeed has its roots in) many forms of innovative practice ranging from commercial uses to leading edge experimental techniques. Many of the 'new' technologies that have radically influenced the way we create and consume art have been print based. They include offset printing, litho processes, screenprinting, photography, computer technologies, photocopy, laser printing, and more recently digital photography.

NO MUTTERING showcases a sample of artists who are working with print in an innovative and creative manner, extending the boundaries of traditional print practice and creating challenging contemporary works. There are also many artists fitting this criteria who are not included here, due only to the usual restrictions of space, time and money.

The artists in this exhibition all stretch print to its limits in one way or another. Many of them incorporate the objects of print production in their works. Some like Raymond Arnold, Jan Davis, Lesley Duxbury and Erica Seccombe use digital technology combined with traditional materials and processes. Arnold juxtaposes traditional etchings with digitally manipulated prints of the same image. Davis uses text and image in an Iris print on delicate Japanese paper. Duxbury combines relief printed text with photographic inkjet images of clouds, and Seccombe presents us with a larger than life insect that has been created from a scan of a child's toy.

Others like Neil Emmerson, Mirabel FitzGerald and Ruth Johnstone work with installation. Emmerson engraves on woollen etching blankets and places them on the floor under streamers of red and white flags. FitzGerald creates architectural objects from rubbings, etching and collage that protrude from the wall into the gallery space, and Johnstone's large trestle-table-supported book has escaped the bounds of its cover.

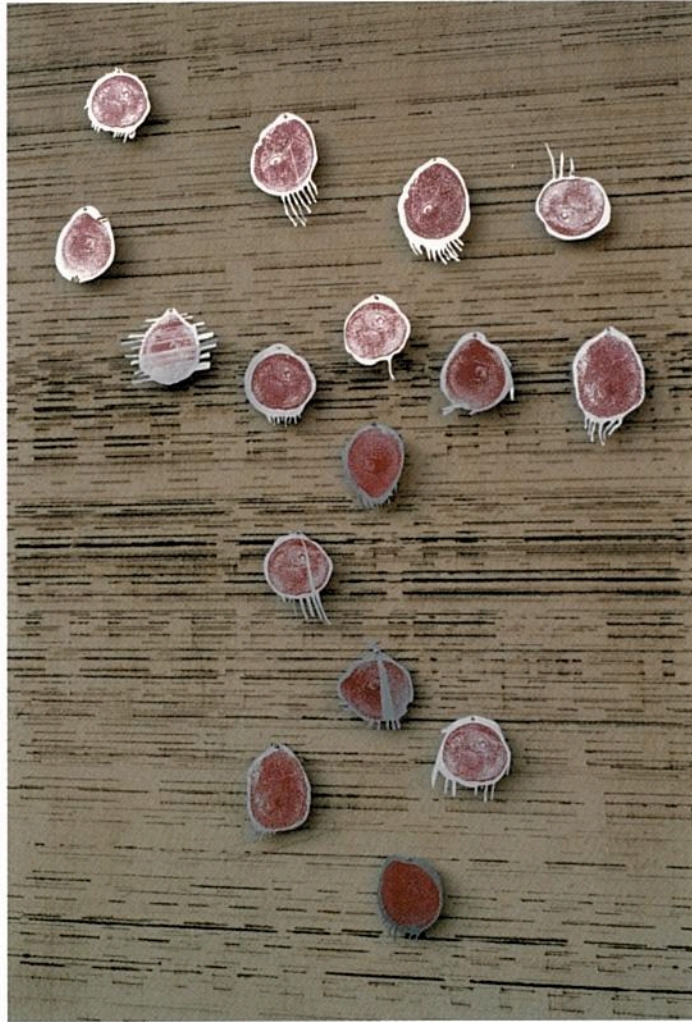
Mary Dorahy, Gary Jolley, Pia Larsen and Helen Mueller use sculptural elements in their work. Dorahy creates three-dimensional pieces from industrial materials such as Formica and VISY board. Jolley uses collage and various forms of traditional and contemporary printing to create books about 'place' that hang on the wall, sit on plinths or remain forever closed. Larsen juxtaposes the printing plates with the printed image, and Mueller creates an object out of a complete edition.

Kim Westcott and John Young are working in the realm of painting. Westcott has developed a process called encaustic intaglio, using ancient painting and printing techniques in a single work, while Young effortlessly combines digital images and paint on canvas.

Brook Andrew and Nick Bleasel work with the popular, everyday mediums of signs, posters and stickers, while Patsy Payne has turned to the highly technical, presenting her PET scanned body on CD-ROM. Andrew uses text to illuminate social and political issues in the form of large stickers, and Bleasel uses street signs as a medium for parody. It was one of Bleasel's signs *NO MUTTERING* (2000) that inspired the title of this exhibition.

NO MUTTERING is a vibrant collection of print based works that engage the viewer and create a variety of dialogues about contemporary printmaking. The exhibition questions the boundaries of print and explores how far a print can be pushed before it becomes something else. Throughout contemporary art practice the boundaries of each medium are blurring – painting slips into photography while print becomes three-dimensional, sculpture is often monitor-bound while photography is sliding into the digital. The artists in this exhibition reveal that, although there may not be distinct edges anymore, print is integral to contemporary art practice.

Rilka Oakley
Curator



Pia Larsen *Roll of Honour* 2000-01 (detail)



Neil Emmerson *(surrender) falling boy* 1999 photo Kenneth Pleban

PRINTMAKING SHIFTS

In 1977, Rosalind Krauss radically re-appraised sculpture in a book on the subject followed by her essay two years later titled 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field'.¹ Here, the scholar explained a quantum shift which had occurred in sculpture, from its monumental status to the conception of sculpture as a "field" where heterogeneity is the norm and where artists no longer feel compelled to work within canons of defined practice. In turn, it can be argued that the often marginalised field of printmaking has similarly been open to fresh possibilities in practice and interpretation – reinventing itself, so to speak.

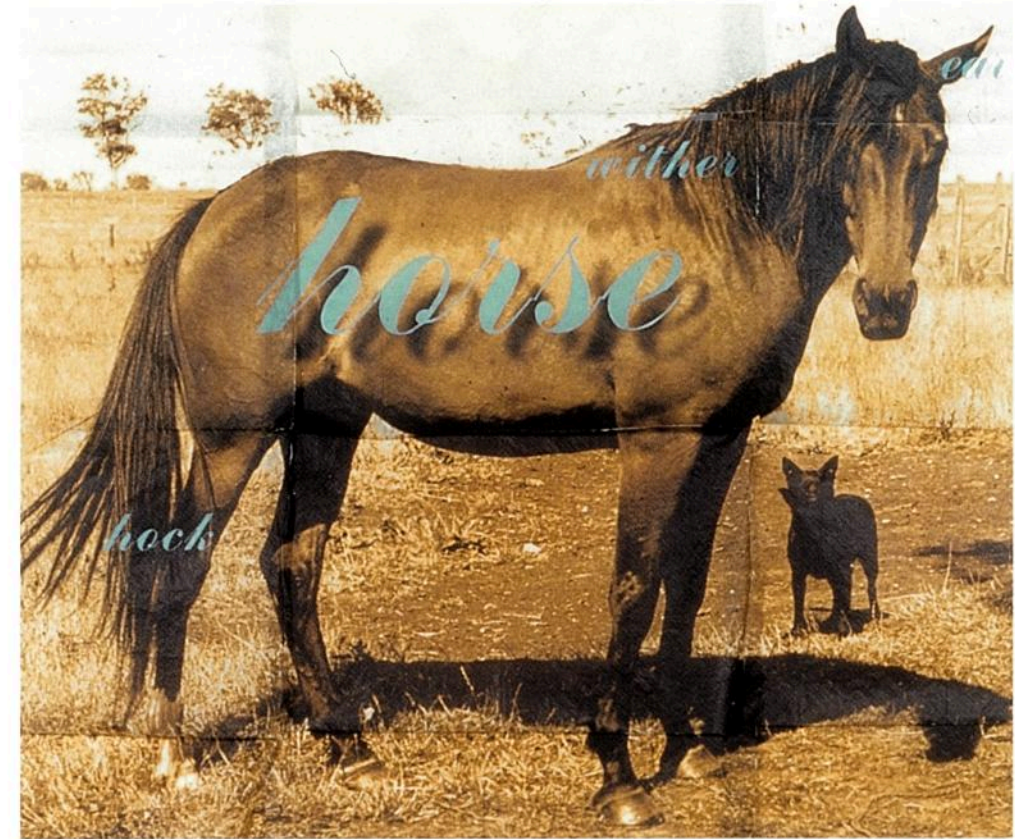
Many artists have contributed to transforming the print since the 1960s, when a revival of printmaking occurred worldwide. At that period, it was customary to edition prints and market them with the intention of reaching a wide audience. Prints fell roughly into two polarised camps. On one hand there were those produced by master printers in collaboration with painters or sculptors who regarded the print as an extension of their major activity and, in part, as a promotional tool. On the other hand, artist printmakers (those who had been trained as such) regarded their "craft" as a specialist activity which was conducted according to strict guidelines.²

This dichotomy, although still in effect, is virtually ignored now in circles where the mainstream art market is deemed inappropriate and where there is an unquestioning acceptance of postmodernism. It is a situation which has urged plurality of expression, the eradication of boundaries between art disciplines and a renunciation of the "original". Paving the way, photography entered the lexicon of traditional print processes (namely relief, intaglio, planographic and screenprint) as a seductive force in the early 1970s. When printmaking appropriated mass-media imagery or "straight" photography, it introduced a readymade collage alternative to strictly hand-drawn effects. In this country, Bea Maddock was an early practitioner in the use of photographic source material for printmaking. The photo-aided print offered the possibility of repetition, superimposition and enlargement, qualities that were chiefly demonstrated through photo-screenprints and photo-lithographs. Nowadays, laser-copy imagery and that which has been generated largely through electronic means, has become widely accepted. Here, Phillip George, is an artist who has worked consistently in this vein. There are now also artists (albeit these are usually non-specialist print artists) who employ the materials and devices of commercial image production, such as offset printing.

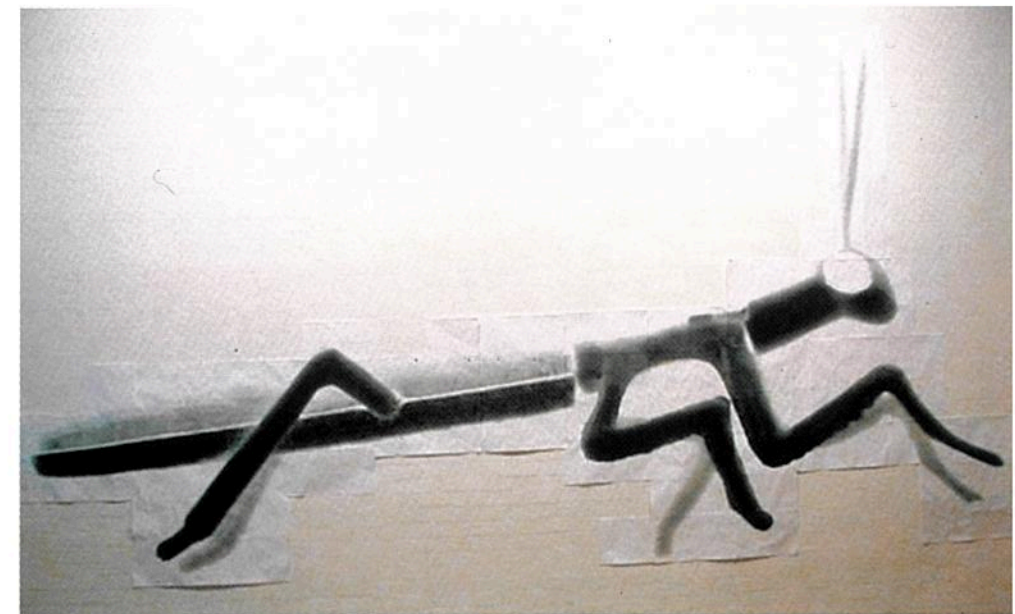
Oscillating between the "hand-crafted" and the "machine-made", the innovative print in the early 21st Century is a flexible, hybrid entity. It may not be part of an edition of identical multiples on paper, nor be wall-based for presentation. It may combine hand-painting, collage and direct drawing to create a multi-media result. Print installations are not uncommon and sculptural qualities often come into play.

In this climate of change, it is worthwhile considering what remains, as central principles, of printmaking. What are the creative and critical premises that continue to attract artists to this field? How does it interact and intersect with salient art ideas today?

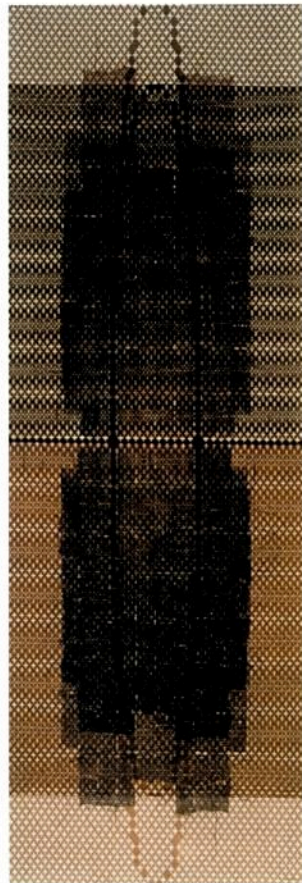
Firstly, there is the indisputable fact that no other media can replicate the tactile, sensuous qualities of the traditional print and the bonding, through pressure, of ink on paper. Furthermore, prints are likely to continue to be regarded in terms of connoisseurship, where signed and numbered impressions from an edition are a marketable commodity under the rubric of the "fine arts". However, there are increasingly artists who operate within a "deterritorialised" zone as printmakers. This term was used by Charles Green for his *Art Monthly Australia* 1993 article on 'Art as Printmaking'.³ Here he addressed the topics of 'Printmaking, Photography and the Postmodern', 'Performance Artists and Printmaking' and 'The Print as Body: A New Technological Paradigm'. American academic Hugh Merrill wrote the same year on 'Post-Print: Staking Claim to the Territory' for *The Journal of the American Print Alliance*. In his essay he saw postmodernism as creating a paradigm for



Jan Davis *Horse (1)* 1996



Erica Seccombe *Luvamuncha I* 2001 photo Dainie Mellor



Raymond Arnold
Body Armour 1999
photo John Farrow

enabling new conceptual possibilities for the print, whereby 'its original and reproductive roles become complementary possibilities rather than opposing categories'.⁴ In my own assessment of the situation, outlined in an article for the Print Council of Australia's journal *Imprint*, in 1991, I wrote on curating prints as a 'field of expanding interpretation' and recognised the validity of both the productions of prints by non-specialists and those artists who 'have consistently developed their art production through print media alone. They toe an individualistic line rather than tailoring their imagery to an internationalist discourse'.⁵

American print artist and academic Ruth Weisberg, is a further commentator to broach new criteria for evaluating the print as an art form, removing the discourse from a fixation with the technical towards a theoretical framing. It is the issue of "seriality" that she believes 'is the operative core of printmaking's critical dimension'.⁶

As a print practitioner herself, seriality means not only the process of manufacturing multiple identical impressions of an image for a print edition, but the way a matrix is subjected to successive stages of working and manipulation to produce the "final" print image. I would suggest that "paradox" is also a fundamental characteristic of printmaking as it turns on the opposition of "uniqueness/reproducibility". Furthermore, the "indirect" transposition of an image from one surface pressed against another invites serendipitous results beyond the conscious will of its creator.

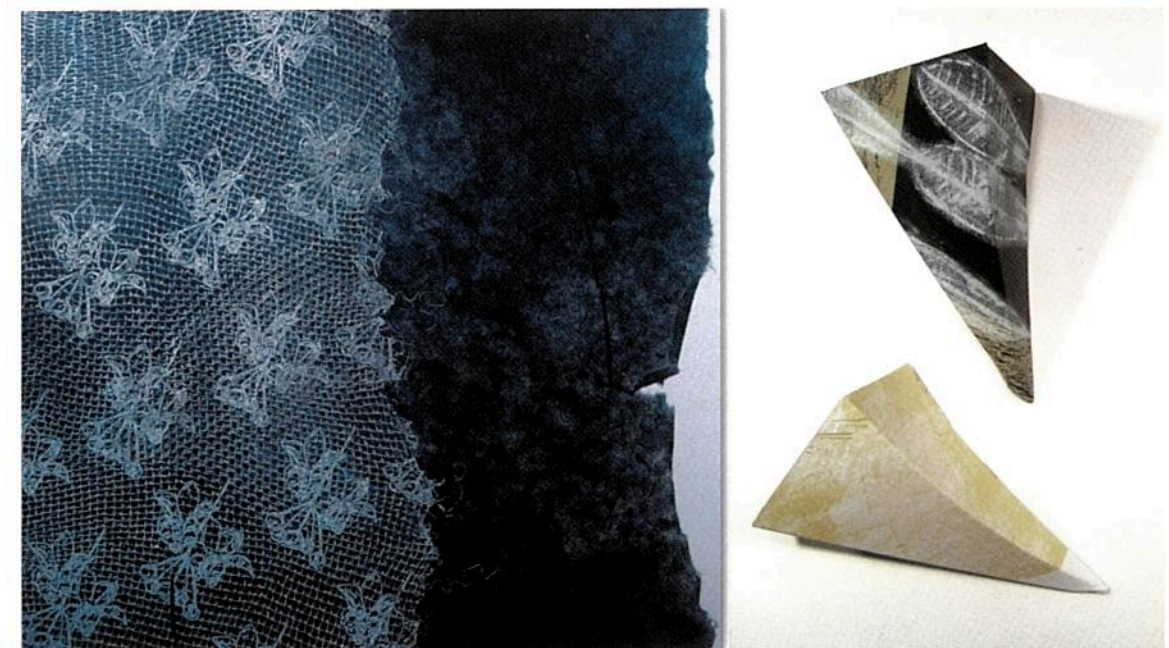
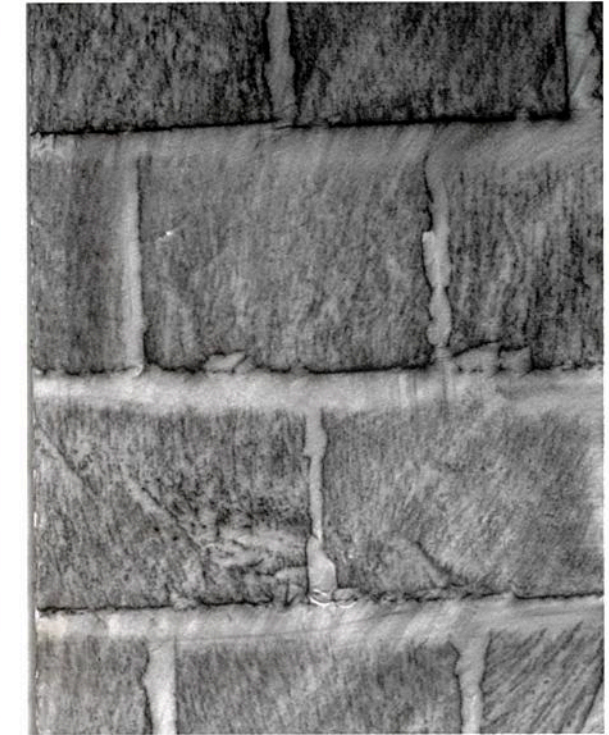
Such observations are intended to background the current exhibition *NO MUTTERING*.⁷ This project comprises recent work by Australian artists who regard the print as a major, if not sole, aspect of their practice. Most of them have trained as printmakers and all have in highly individualistic ways pushed the boundaries of traditional graphic processes to serve content – the mainspring of their work. None have adopted procedures which are merely "novel" attempts to rescue the traditional print from the threat of obscurity, rather these artists use the print to articulate private reveries, to reveal social and political issues, to re-quote and deconstruct modernist tropes, to mark a given physical space (whether floor or wall), and so forth. Postmodernism has allowed these artists to range freely in technical and conceptual terms.

Some, like Raymond Arnold, have addressed the paradoxical nature of the print, in his case, juxtaposing a "hand-made" etching with a digital version of the same image. Placed side by side, this symbiotic relationship between the original and the reproduction, between old and new print technologies can be seen as perhaps the *leitmotiv* of printmaking for this century. Lesley Duxbury combines in a single print, the oldest form of printmaking (relief printing) with the newest, namely the laser copy, to express themes based on aspects of weather.

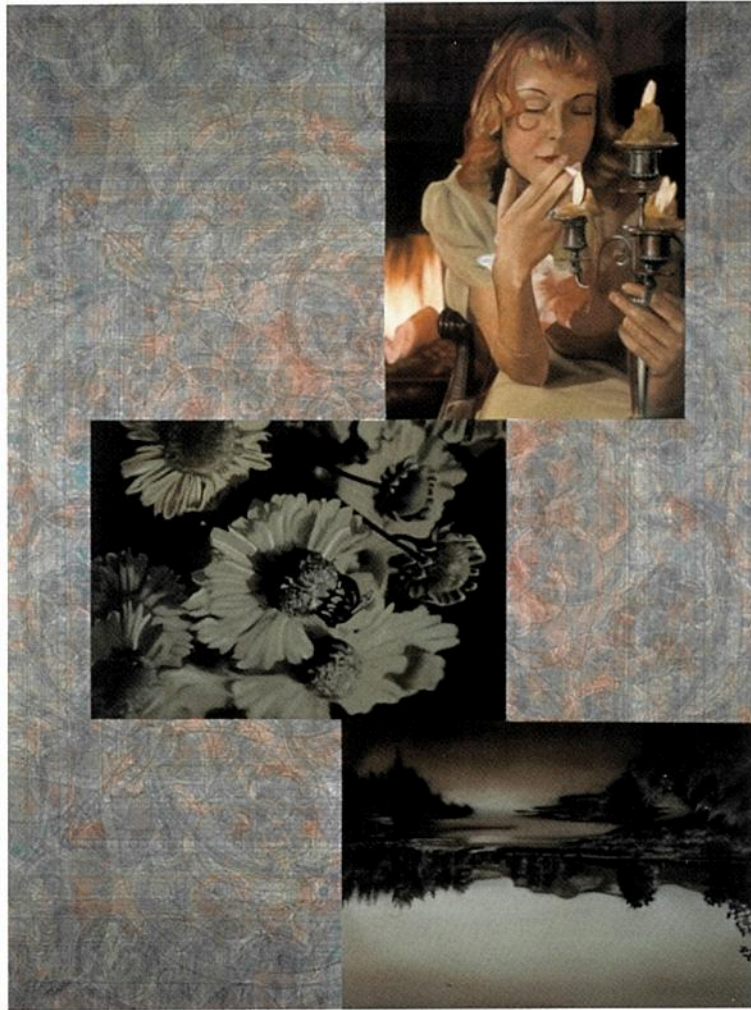
Others, such as Mary Dorahy, whilst displaying an assured understanding of printmaking and paper production, moves away from traditional usage of these fields to embrace industrial manufacturing. Thus in her wall panels, handmade cottonweed paper is laminated as "Formica" and aluminium is digitally cut and etched. More recently, she is using "VISY board" for screenprinted cardboard structures. In collaborating with industrial outlets to produce aspects of her imagery, Dorahy has created a nexus between the private creative domain of the studio and the factory. An artist in this exhibition who works exclusively with digital imagery is Jan Davis. Through her artist's books and computer-generated prints she matches text in a "concrete poem" formula with fragments of photographic source material based on a particular place or on fragments of the natural world. The printed slogans of Nick Bleasel are interventionist socio-political statements, existing by themselves or in conjunction with found objects. Randomly placed, he invests his signs with barbed humour. A humorous "take" on the enlargement potential of laser copy imagery and the way this technology can assume the appearance of the "handcrafted" is demonstrated by Erica Seccombe.⁸



Mirabel FitzGerald *Form and Variable* 2001 (detail)



Mary Dorahy *Living things: a still life* 1998-01 (detail)



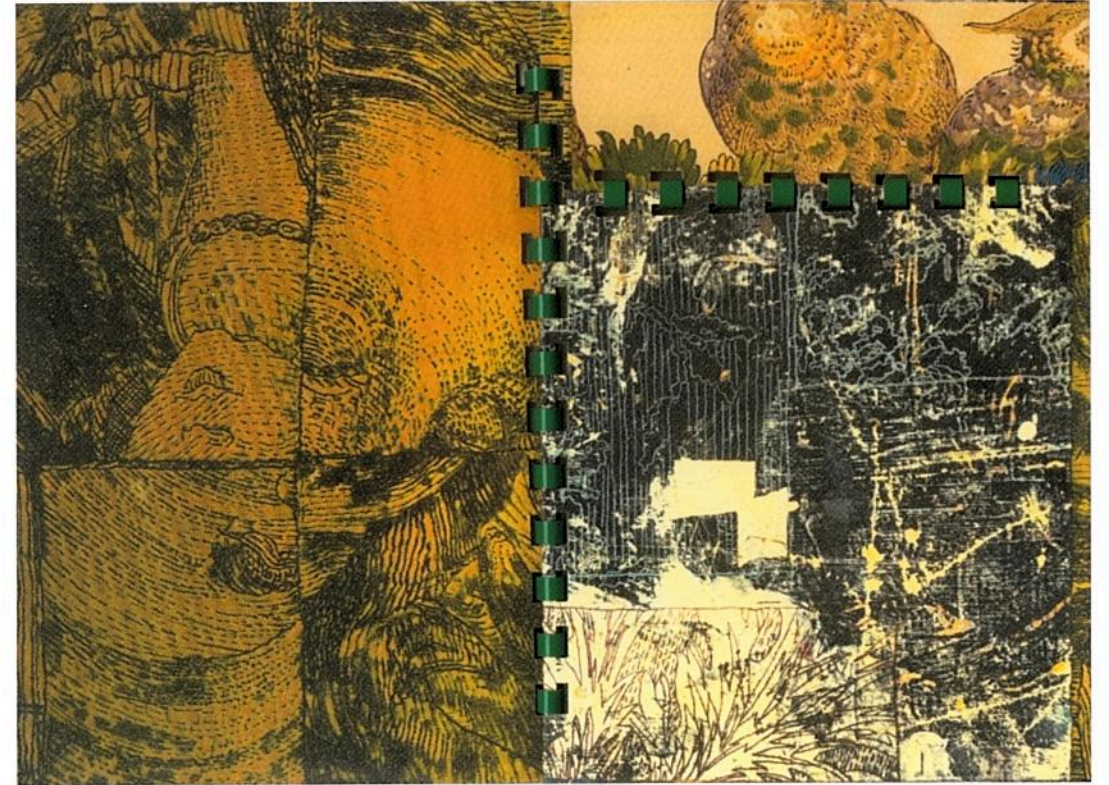
John Young *On Certain Solitudes* 1999-00 photo Robert Colvin



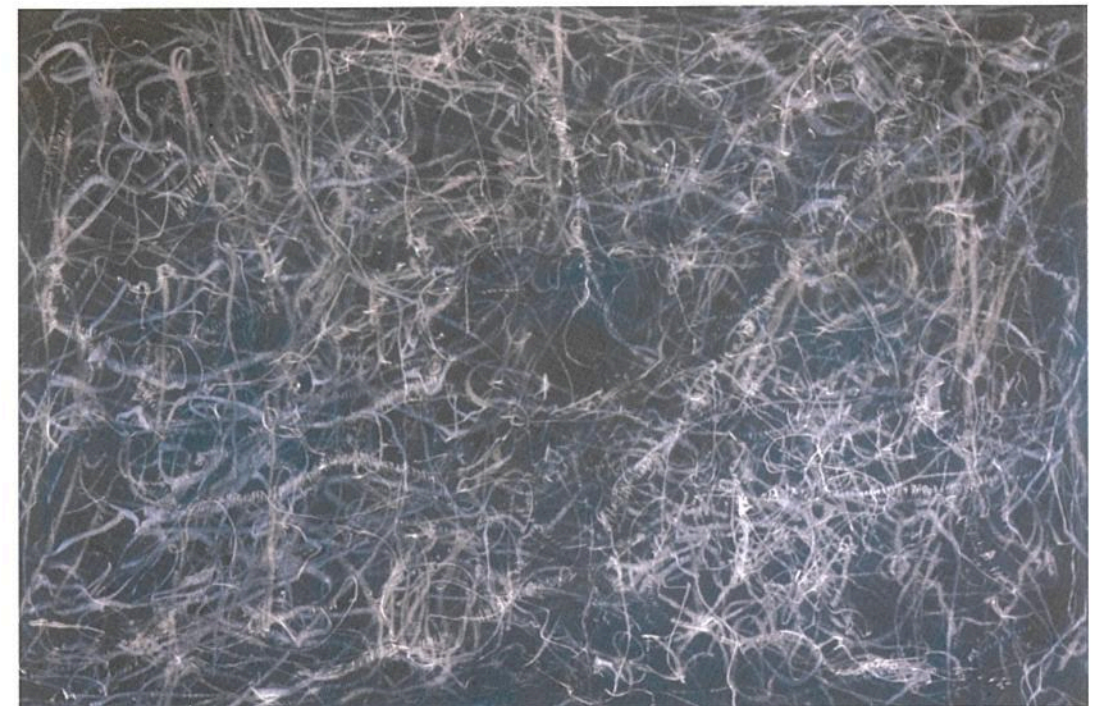
Lesley Duxbury *High/Low* 2001 (detail)

CONTROL THEORY

Brook Andrew *peoples' movement* 2001



Gary Jolley *Border Crossing: Nolan, Blois & Dunoon* 2001



Kim Westcott *Blue Note* 2001 photo Graham Barring