

Big Winners

City of Fremantle Art Collection

22 September - 4 November 2012

Big Winners

Big Winners brings together four exquisitely crafted award winning prints from the Fremantle Print Award of the last twenty years. The works are produced by artists whose primary art form is printmaking and who have investigated ideas about representation of women and womanhood.

Contemporary printmaking is defined by a myriad of digital and 'hybrid' print technologies offering artists high quality and affordable processes in the production of richly coloured, textured and layered prints. Coupled with the computer, images sourced photographically can be manipulated freely, copied and interlaced with text elements and over printed to locate the printmaker at the forefront of contemporary art. *Big Winners* include a selection of large format and multiple sheet artworks that realise the potential of representational art and digital print making while tracking the progress of the Fremantle Print Award and expansion of digital print media in the development of printmaking in Australia.

Marion Manifold and Heather Hesterman both appropriate the familiar image of a renaissance nude masterpiece in Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus*¹. Both artists adapt the associated meanings of this 'loaded' artefact to interpret aspects of their self image and life roles paralleled with the deconstruction of the mythology associated with the representation of an idealised female body.

Hesterman's nine sheet linocut carries an image of Botticelli's Venus overlaid upon an embossed list of words which read as a call to woman for action. The same words are printed onto a small stack of sheets installed at the foot of the work to further reinforce the dedication and audience participation. Hesterman navigates spectators to consider alternative contexts for interpretation of a women's place and roles in society. In providing the 'tools' for removing the stereotypical image associated with the consumption of an objectified woman, Hesterman claims the authority to take control of her own destiny and prompt other women to consider the same.

Marion Manifold's dark and richly coloured digital print series represents with sensitivity and compassion the segmented body of an anonymous mature woman. Manifold constructs a representational device of nine details to focus upon a fragmented reconstruction of Botticelli's Venus 'to make something beautiful' and subvert the typical exclusions and stereotypical imaging of feminine beauty².

Rebecca Beardmore's muted figurative print *Seeing between II*, 2008 evokes a painterly sensibility in an exploration of boundaries of perception. Beardmore creates an ambiguous and elusive feminine presence in her finely layered pictorial space, which defies recognition, to play on the limitations of visual experience, setting up

¹*The Birth of Venus* is a painting by Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510); a popular painter of the Italian Renaissance. It depicts the naked goddess Venus (Roman god of sexual love and beauty), emerging from the sea as a fully grown woman in an open seashell – a metaphor for a sexual maturity.

²Manifold in conversation with the Curator said she aimed to essentially make a sensuous and beautiful image, September 2012.

a subtle interplay between image, text and materiality. The details of the female subject are obscured, however scrutiny of the print reveals lines of miniscule type embossed into the surface of the work, which suggest further clues and entry points to the conceptual dimension of the image and artist's oeuvre³.

In the reflection of each pupil there are elements of the environment, revealing the current setting. Just off to the right there is a bright square of light, a window or maybe a television monitor. The left side is fairly indistinct save for a small desk lamp and the vague interpretation of a table or desktop narrowing into the distance⁴.

Michelle Hyland produced *Statement of Identity* 1988 following completion of her studies when she was beginning to consider a future after art school. "Statement of Identity was a snapshot of where I was at twenty", according to Hyland, who produced this psychological self portrait, a haunted archetypal figure, racked by competing influences and transfixed by an outward and inward gaze⁵. For Hyland the intersecting expectations and demands placed upon a young woman, finding her own physical and intellectual voice in the world, was a source of consternation and subject for this powerful emotive work.

City of Fremantle Art Collection and the Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award

The City of Fremantle Art Collection established in 1958 comprises over 1300 works and is the largest municipal Collection in Western Australia. The Collection's focus on Australian prints and works by Fremantle artists and subjects reflect the historical and enduring importance of the visual arts to Fremantle.

Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award was inaugurated in 1976 offering attractive prize money and an acquisitive award, where the winning print is entered into the Collection. The Print Award was fundamental to the creation of a national focus for print in Western Australia and a mechanism by which the Collection could source Australian prints for acquisition. Fremantle's print holding has over 530 works, a quarter of which were acquired from the Print Award. Collectively these prints define the strength of the holding; representing examples of print by many leading national practitioners and demonstrating the considerable success by which the partnership with Little Creatures Brewing has contributed to create an Australian print holding of national significance.

For more information about the City of Fremantle Art Collection visit fac.org.au

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City of Fremantle Art Collection Gallery

September 22 – November 4, 2012

³Beardmore is interpreting ideas associated with French literary figure Alane Robbe-Grillet (1922-2008), a provocateur of Nouveau Roman and French New Wave of the 1960's which espoused a depersonalised objectification of subjects.

⁴Excerpt of text embossed into the surface of *Seeing between II* 2008.

⁵A comment made by Hyland in conversation with the Curator, August 2012.

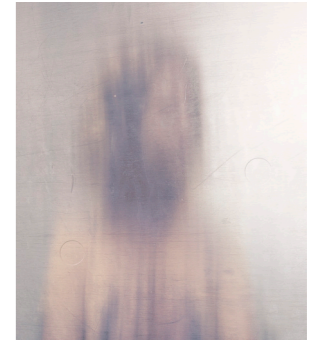
List of Works

Artworks are from the City of Fremantle Art Collection and installation dimensions are given as height by width in centimetres. Reproductions © Courtesy the Artist.

Rebecca Beardmore (1974-)

Seeing Between II, 2008
digital print and blind embossing edition 5/5
118.5 x 107.5 cm
no. 1297

Winner: *Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award 2010*



1297

Heather Hesterman (1967-)

1. *Cut on dashed line*, 1992
six sheet linocut and omnicroming edition 2
242 x 237 cm
no. 876.1-6

Winner: *Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award 1992*



876.1-6

Michelle Hyland (1968-)

Statement of Identity, 1989
nine sheet carborundum ground collagraph edition 1/10
270 x 207 cm
no. 75

Winner: *Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award 1990*



75

Marion Manifold (1954-)

'a finely boned, beautiful face Botticelli would want to paint...', 2001
nine sheet digital print edition 1/10
56 x 41 cm each
no. 1038.1-9

Winner: *Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award 2001*



1038.1-9 (detail)