

Aileen Leo

I received a Bachelor of Art in Visual Art from the University of Ottawa in 1983 and have exhibited periodically in the Ottawa area since then. I have also studied printmaking at the Ottawa School of Art, and encaustic mixed media at the Orange Art Gallery. Most recently I participated in the 2018 Seventh International Mini Print Biennale Exhibition held at the Ottawa School of Art. I am a member of the Ottawa Gatineau Printmakers Connective.

Artist Statement

In 2014, I travelled to Alert Bay, which is famous for its memorial totem poles. I knew this prior to my trip, but was unaware that Alert Bay was also home to St. Michael's residential school, which was razed by the community in a healing ceremony in 2015.

"Unspoken/Not Unheard" is part of a project on residential schools I am working on, and will feature work by Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists. (I am non-Indigenous.) The exhibition will examine what reconciliation means in Canada in 2018, over 10 years after the apology to survivors delivered in the House of Commons, and almost 3 years after the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. While there has been much discussion about reconciliation, thus far, only a handful of the 94 TRC recommendations have been implemented. Lack of action to address historic wrongs concerning Indigenous peoples has plagued Canada's history: it has been over 20 years since the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, with almost none of its 440 recommendations having been implemented, and over 110 years since the Boyce report exposing the conditions within residential schools, which was suppressed by the federal government. Recent high-profile cases (Colten Boushie, Tina Fontaine, Cindy Gladue, etc.) only amplify this tragic legacy. The exhibition will ponder if Canada has the will to fully acknowledge the legacy of residential schools and their impact on the relationship between Indigenous and non Indigenous peoples. It will frame reconciliation as an urgent task for all Canadians to realize our conception of ourselves as guardians of human rights.

Work Description

The erasure of Indigenous language was a defining feature of residential schools, which infamously sought to "kill the Indian in the child". While there are over 70 Indigenous languages in Canada, two-thirds are endangered. In the words of Robert Joseph, a survivor of St Michael's and a fluent speaker of Kwak'wala when he arrived at age 6. "By the time I left that school, eleven years later, of course nobody in the school spoke that language. There are only 100 of us now in the entire Kwakiutl Nation who speak the language." While language is usually construed as a verbal or written form of communication, art is also a tangible form of language. There was apparent to me as I stood in front of St. Michael's regarding in its ruined and decrepit state, including the remainder of the totem leading up to the school. Totems are integral to Indigenous culture, signifying a spirit being, sacred object, or symbol emblematic of First Nations families and clans. While this totem was severely damaged, it nonetheless had much to say about what went on at St. Michael's, where countless students were physically, psychologically and sexually abused, and many died. Similarly, the red dress, hung from a tree branch in front of the school in this etching, is without language but is nonetheless a powerful recent signifier of the intergenerational trauma of residential schools and other forms of colonization manifested as missing and murdered Indigenous women. My contributions to this project will be in the form of printmaking, photography, painting, and mixed media.

Charmaine Swain

Charmaine Swain is an Ottawa based visual artist who works primarily in mixed media painting and printmaking. She is a recent graduate (June 2017) of the diploma program at the Ottawa School of Art and studied in the Fine Arts Program at Algonquin College in the 1980's. During the gap art years, she raised a family, worked for 35 years as a Federal Public Servant in the Departments of National Defence and Human Resources. She worked whenever time allowed on her art. Charmaine is an executive member of the Ottawa Mixed Media Artist group since 2004 and has joined the Ottawa Gatineau Printmaker Connective as of Sept 2018. She has been juried into many group shows within the Ottawa area. Presently exploring the techniques and principles of Lyrical Abstraction, with an emphasis on fluidity of gestural mark making and brushstrokes in search of openly expressing her views and ideas.

Artist Statement

My work is inspired by my homage to nature and to the abstract compositions that can be observed within our environment and revealed through telescopic or subatomic views of our ever- expanding universe. I delight in the search for natural abstracts and my work is usually non-representational but strongly linked to a landscape theme. I create multi layered mixed media paintings and prints. These mediums allow for expressive, spontaneous and liberated experimentation and enhance my enjoyment of the artistic process. I especially enjoy exploring the many different techniques that can be employed during the printmaking process and I prefer creating monotypes.

I am attracted to and researching into Lyrical Abstraction, Minimalism and Colour Field. The objective is to simplify my compositions and to render subtle, expressive art. I hope to let the colours create the forms and to use the principles of colour theory and saturation to reveal depth.

I will continue to work with a press creating monotypes in the largest format the press allows. I would like to share my vision with viewers in a quiet manner permitting entry into a landscape of imagination and emotion. I would like my viewers to explore a space without boundaries. Quoting George Braque, "Art is polymorphic. A picture appears to the onlooker under a different guise."

Work Description

I have specifically planned and printed my image within the theme of language. I used a zinc plate and etched using the methods of sugar lift and aquatint. The sugar lift was applied using a fine paint brush for the rock images and a toothbrush for the fine speckled areas in the sand. My idea for the print image circled around interlanguage and how it can be used to communicate with others who do not share a common spoken or written language. My first thought was with traffic symbols and how they are used internationally to guide and indicate resources available to the general public. My second thoughts centered around the human placed stones of inukshuks and how they are used as a marker to guide others in a landscape that can be devoid of natural markers. The inukshuks also say you are here and I was here.

The placement of rocks on the beach fall within my idea of interlanguage. The rocks were selected and arranged by a person who had previously walked along the beach and spent a few minutes communicating to others that may follow along the same path. If nothing else, it communicates "I was here."

Ottawa Artists

Katie Argyle

Katie Argyle is a member of the Ottawa Printmakers' Connective. She lives in Richmond Hill, Ontario after moving from the Ottawa area several years ago. She has strong ties to Ottawa and enjoys meeting her friends and using the lovely presses at the Connective's studios a few times a year. Otherwise she prints large scale woodblocks by hand, and is currently involved in a print exploration of the suburbs. She is fascinated by the overlooked and the ordinary everyday occurrence. Her work often crosses several mediums: printmaking, painting and ceramics. She takes pleasure moving ideas through materials.

Artist Statement

In terms of my work, I am very interested in ideas and what gets traction in our culture. Things that become popular or trendy, whether it is the words we say, the clothes we wear or the types of houses we build, all fascinate me. Who decides these things and how do they get popular, become desirable, accepted and passed on.

Work description

My print is a lino block print hand-carved from a soft linoleum block. My prints are hand-pulled using a wooden spoon as my baren. My paper is Fabriano Accademia.

Two figures face each other and engage in conversation. One person is talking about a square while the other thinks of a circle. The speaker may be getting the idea across, the listener may not have understood, may be thinking he understood or may already be onto the next thought. A message has been given and one has been received. Language requires us to hang a word upon a description or an idea of a thing that we know, or think we know, and if we don't know, we ask the speaker to describe it to us until we understand. All of these attempts at communication assume we are getting our ideas across. We check, and check again with each other if it's unclear, but basically we just assume we've got it. Message given and received. I am always amazed that, most of the time, we get it.

Laurence Finet

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Laurence Finet (Mons, Belgium, 1976) graduated in the Fine Arts Diploma program at the Ottawa School of Art in June 2018. In 2014, she decided to concentrate on the development of her artistic practice. She has participated in various group and solo exhibitions. Her work has been recognized by several awards of excellence including scholarships from the Ottawa School of Art along with prizes outside of the school. She currently resides and works in Chelsea, Quebec.

Artist Statement

My current work originates from a will to develop my stories and to further build meaning. Recently, through several media, I have been exploring the idea of “Cyborgization”. More and more, we become disconnected to nature, and more dependent on technology. Technology is turning into a part of us; we are becoming technology as it is changing our minds and bodies. The resulting series focuses on the sensuality of cyborgs and questions the nature of their reproduction. Presently, robots are still incapable of gaining a consciousness, but for how long? The opposition between reality, authenticity, and emotions versus illusion, cyborgization and artificiality is what has been fueling these works.

This particular print comes after an extensive exploration around this theme and examines it at a more symbolic level. The cyborg shapes are still present but in a deconstructed form and they are facing their human counterpart. They each meet with their specific materialized forms of emotions at a point of contact, a line of communication where they can attempt to find a form of equilibrium, perhaps an understanding, and a language? My work can be interpreted as a playful exploration bringing about works fully integrated with a process that convey an idea and its range of emotions in a poetic and unexpected way.

Work description

In this etching plate, I used line etching and several layers of sugar lift and various depths of acid bites to create transparencies and to allow the superposition of shapes while using burnishing to further convey a sense of atmosphere. I may add another layer of sugar lift and some line etching however the image will not be significantly transformed. I explored the theme of language in various ways. I inserted coded messages and used a personal symbolic visual language in order to communicate a universal emotion. This work follows an extensive exploration around the theme of the “cyborgization” of the being; the regular shapes representing bones of cyborgs. In this work, I decided to examine cyborgization at a more symbolic level. Orderly letters, regular shapes exploding in all directions and personal symbols converse on the image. Somewhere, a connection between two worlds is taking place, the cyborg’s rigid algorithmic language and the human’s fluid and obscure language. Will a new form of communication between cyborgs and humans be created? These signs will eventually become language as long as there is understood meaning by the two entities interacting. Indeed a sign is polysemous, as is a word, as is poetry and as is a work of art, this is where its richness comes from, when it contains the ability to overflow with meanings.

Mark Glassford

Mark Glassford is a professional architect, has been printmaking since 2015. Commenced a career at Riding Mountain Sketch Camp. It was offered as part of the University of Manitoba Bachelor of Environmental Studies. Drawing and sketching has continued to inform subsequent education at Carleton University, including a B.Arch. 1985, and M.A, Canadian Studies, Conservation 1996, as well as professional practice.

Artist Statement

“And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven” Genesis 11:1–9. The idea of this tower manifests the power of language while is also a cautionary reminder. One image from the 16th century, illustrates the form of the Tower of Babel. Imagining that alternate options could have been prepared for approval, the plate proposes options.

Work description

Mixed technique etching of the image including hard ground line work, drypoint, aquatint, and sugar lift. Images produced as part of my work tend to start from plein-air sketches which are translated to plate using soft or hard ground techniques and various tonal strategies. The images unavoidably start out representational. They end up in a middle ground where etching techniques 'repurpose' the image into something more abstract. This image ties into the above approach as it imagines a setting with objects, representing potential tower icons.

Deidre Hierlihy

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I am a founding member of the Ottawa Gatineau Printmakers Connective; I am the curator of OGPC community gallery wall. I am also a member of Graphein and CABBG. I am an instructor in printmaking at the Ottawa School of Art. I also coordinate the Children and Teen Program at the Ottawa School of Art, and give workshops to children and seniors through MASC.

Artist Statement

I am a printmaker; much of my current work is in linoleum. Linoleum encourages a simplified graphic vision, where I can express my attention to the patterns that surround us. I also work in lithography, drypoint and collagraph. The media I use to create the printmaking plate is dictated by what captures my visual imagination about a subject: lithography expresses my love of colour: both real and imagined, and my love of the drawn mark. Drypoint expresses line and encourages play with thick and thin, soft and solid. Collagraph is about colour and texture.

The subject of most of my recent work is landscape/cityscape. I have been pushing printmaking medium by printing as large as I can: 36” and 48” plates and life sized Canada Geese.

Work Description

“Margaret, 1918-2011” is part of an ongoing exploration of family roots. As my children grow up and move away, and as the generation before me pass on, I reflect on the legacy that is passed down: the culture, the values, the stories. This print celebrates one of my mother’s odd turns of speech. The woman holding a laundry basket is a combination of two images: a photo of my mother taken when she was a teenager during the depression, she is holding a shotgun in one hand, and has a large jackrabbit dangling from the other. (Yes, she was out shooting with a dress on...) The second: an iconic painting by Alex Colville, Woman with Laundry Basket. This is a stone lithograph.

Mary Lowden

Maryblowden.com

Mary Baranowski-Lowden has been working primarily in etching for over twenty-five years. She was born in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. Mary received her Bachelor of Fine Arts (with distinction) and Specialist Diploma in Art Education from Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec. She studied printmaking at the University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta. Mary was awarded an Alberta Foundation of the Arts Award. She has done two artist's residencies at the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica in Venice, Italy. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally most recently in Toronto, Portugal, England, Cuba, Australia, Scotland and Taiwan. Mary's work is in museum collections in Canada, Australia, Portugal, and Romania and many Canadian corporate collections. Mary was awarded the Gordon J. Wood Print Purchase Prize from Carleton University Ottawa, Ontario in 2015 and 2016.

Artist Statement

Much of my work has been influenced by my travels -- the different people, places and cultures have expanded my artistic vocabulary. Cultural elements and historical reference gently probe my choices of composition, technique and printing when they interplay with elements of nature, textiles and decorative arts. I work to explore and exploit the unique qualities of printmaking to further develop the image and to bring concept and process into balance.

With my move from an ultra urban setting to a pastoral river's edge, my points of reference have changed. My recent works are studies of the nature that surrounds me. I am an artist not a biologist. Art and nature are bound together in my work through the elements of line, form, pattern, texture, light and shadow. Aristotle said, "Art takes nature as its model". My observations of nature happen within a small radius of my studio. I process what I see through drawing. I collect and press items. I record details that intrigue me. Focusing first on the smaller elements helps me to create a larger picture. In essence I am composing my personal river diary.

Work Description

For a number of years I have been drawing animals, birds and nests in the Collections of the Canadian Museum of Nature, as well as in my own studio along the Gatineau River. My work has been informed by these many natural elements. Recently, the ornithologist at the museum has shown me use of sonograms as a visual recording of the sounds of the birds. I find this to be an intriguing avenue to pursue and incorporate into future work. The theme of this print exchange offered the opportunity to use this idea of birdsong as a visual element. This lithograph is entitled "Duet," which refers not only to the two Northern Cardinals depicted in the image as a duet or twosome but in relation to the theme of language. The graphic element on the bottom is made up of four sonograms of the Northern Cardinal. The one on the left side is a male and female duet. It is a visual representation of an auditory language and evokes a musical score. The function of the song or language has many purposes. The most relevant to this image are courtship behavior, to maintain a bond, and to signal changes in domestic duties such as trading feeding or incubation duties. The image of the eggs and the nest represents this domestic component. The language of colour also plays an important role for the males to attract the females and is shown in the hand colouring of this piece.

Murray Dineen

I began with printmaking at Don Flack's print shop in Edmonton a number of years ago, where the coffee was brewed fresh on Monday mornings and poured out, thick as syrup, on Friday afternoons. Introduced to the smell of ink (and rich coffee), I recognized the odour seeping through downtown New York City in the 1980's, where I did graduate work in music history. I came upon the smell again while studying printmaking and the print arts in Ottawa (with Rob Hinchley, Deidre Hierlihy, and Guillermo Trejo) and Montreal (at Atelier circulaire with Carlos Calado).

Artist Statement

This print is in what I call the "crude style," although that term does not imply lesser quality. It echoes work seen in Montreal recently as well as the spirit of Low Tech Print (for example, the Peruvian Chicha Poster tradition). Many of the niceties and conventions of printmaking are ignored or broken: plates are misaligned or mis-registered; ink spills over or blotches, or runs faint; the image is uncentered on the page; and (much maligned) Akua inks are used since they run liquid and refuse to dry but merely absorb. These oversights are half intentional, half accidental. The style is aimed not as a counterfoil to infinite subtleties of detail in modern printmaking. Instead, like improvised music, the crude style in printmaking offers new avenues for spontaneous and unintended creation – places where precision cannot go.

Work description

The Rosetta Stone serves as a key to deciphering certain ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. In my print, I have used keys as image, since a key resembles a question mark. But all language is like the Rosetta stone: words are displaced, transformed into chains that lead away from the text, lead away from one enigmatic fixed reading. By pushing keys into printing plates in chain-like series, I have made the key into both an image and process of repeated pressing.

Roger Sutcliffe

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Roger Sutcliffe is a Nepean-based painter and printmaker, and was the recipient of the David and Nicole Henderson Fine Arts Scholarship (2016), the Ted Marshall Memorial Award (2017), and the Ottawa Mixed Media Award (2018). He is a graduate of the Ottawa School of Art Fine Arts Diploma Programme. Roger intensively studied printmaking through mentorships with Robert Hinchley, and has been encouraged in his artistic practice by John Leonard RCA and Otis Tamasauskas RCA. He has exhibited in solo exhibitions in Old Chelsea PQ, Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal and over 60 group shows including juried, group shows, and touring exhibitions.

Artist Statement

Ultimately, I am inspired to explore processes and create abstract images that allow me freedom of expression to respond to ideas that stimulate or engage my academic curiosity. Patterns, symbols and gestures emerge from my experiences, subconscious or imagination, and the works capture my response to my physical, intellectual and emotional environment. In creating through printmaking, the processes and media allow me to react to the developing image using intuitive and multi-layered processes. I would like viewers to experience their own visual and emotional response. My work has been described as being rooted in abstract expressionism and colour-field painting. I am influenced by Harold Town and his "single autographic prints," in which he employed as his matrix a lithographic stone. Other influences in my practice include abstract artists Ben Nicholson, Lyubov Popova, Jack Bush and Terry Winters.

Work Description

"Universae linguae" contains intertwined concepts of language, including: the double helix DNA, the language or genetic code that carries information in life-forms; Morse code, a method of communication based on a binary system, spelling out the word language; and, Language spelled out in letters, which are used to represent the basic sounds of a language. Electro-etching processes were used to prepare the thin 20 cm x 20cm copper printing plate. A hand-drawn image is applied to a copper plate, and then electro-etched as the anode in a copper sulfate bath. Inking of the prepared anodic plate is as for etched plates from other processes and printing uses Legion 300 gsm all cotton paper.

Shirley Yik

Shirley Yik is an Ottawa artist whose practice includes drawing, painting and printmaking. Her interest in how we shape our environment is informed by having been raised in Hong Kong and living in Canada. She holds a Diploma of Fine Arts from the Ottawa School of Art, and has Master of Science and Master of Management Studies degrees from Carleton University. Yik is a founding member and the principal organizer of the Ottawa-Gatineau Printmakers Connective Print Studio.

Artist Statement

The significant impact of humans on Earth was surely fueled by our invention of language. Language enables us to develop complex ideas and accumulate knowledge. It is also a powerful medium for transmitting culture, affecting our choices and values, and shaping the world around us. Language affects culture; culture affects language, in continual co-evolution.

Work Description

This print titled “Language” is both a celebration of human accomplishment, and an invitation to humanity to work more together, East and West. In the image, the English word “Language” is “spelled out” using English-like letters written in Chinese-like calligraphy. It reads from top to bottom, in the tradition of Chinese, and left to right, in the tradition of English. Though English has become my primary written language from living in Canada for the past 30 years, I like the aesthetics of Chinese calligraphy, an art I practiced since childhood. The Chinese artist Xu Bing, who spent time in the United States, has created works using a combination of English and Chinese calligraphy writing to connect East and West. He believes: “Language is a fundamental part of culture. If you see the world through language, you observe that it focuses your thinking, your thought patterns. Mao changed language. For his revolution, he changed this fundamental element of culture so that people would change.” The language system of the proposed print represents a fusion of East and West.

Susan Cartwright

susancartwrightart.com

Since retiring from full-time employment, Susan continues to work part-time, is an active board member, volunteers in several capacities, and pursues art studies at the Ottawa School of Art, currently in printmaking. Susan makes relief (from wood cuts, lino cuts and Sintra blocks) and intaglio (from zinc plate etchings, drypoint plates, collagraphs and Sintra plates) prints, as well as monoprints and monotypes. In addition, Susan sketches, and paints (in acrylics and watercolors). She exhibits and sells her work and undertakes commissions. Susan also works with wood, fibre and textiles, and enjoys combining media and re-cycling objects and materials of beauty.

Artist Statement

As a printmaker I draw my inspiration from the countryside, where we own an old and unproductive farm in the Ottawa Valley, and from the urban spaces of Ottawa. In the latter, I am particularly interested in structures that have disappeared or are in danger of being lost, and which are in the process of decaying or being demolished. On the farm, I delight in the artistry of nature, exhibited by the birds, animals, plants, trees and the rock, which is everywhere.

Our house is built from the same stone that bedeviled successive generations of farmers and denied them the chance of growing crops of any value. Yet it is beautiful and a direct connection to the Canadian Shield, an element which defines so much of our country and heritage. I enjoy observing the seemingly endless variety of colour, shape, pattern and texture around me in both my urban and rural worlds, and looking for ways in which to interpret it and share it with others through my prints. I also want to use my printmaking as a form of storytelling, about generations past and what the future may hold. I am also keen to share knowledge and appreciation of the art of printmaking, the variety of processes used, the materials (new and traditional) and that inexplicable alchemy of the press.

Work description

Language and how we communicate with each other changes over the generations, as the media of communication change. At the end of our country road, 2km from the farmhouse, between the railway and the much newer road, is our rural mailbox. It sits on a leaning wooden frame, almost submerged in grasses at summer's height. The owners of our house would have travelled on foot or on horseback to collect their mail, which might have travelled long distances in what seem to us now as inordinately long periods of time. But the news was treasured nonetheless, perhaps more so. Much else came by mail: catalogues for mail order of seeds and sewing materials, parcels tied with string, journals. The daily trek to the mailbox might have been a sought-after chore – to be the one returning with treasures in hand! Now, our mailbox rarely contains anything but flyers, junk mail and an occasional bill. Emptying it is a chore accompanied by no sense of anticipation or excitement. For how much longer will we have mail delivered? Will we go full circle to travelling into town to pick up our mail, this time making the journey in comfort in a matter of minutes? “Dear”, “Yours sincerely”, or “Yours faithfully” have been shouldered aside by “To Whom It May Concern” and “To The Householder” – impersonal and disengaged. Am I the only one to mourn the passing of letters, the civility of our salutations and the joy of getting news this way?

Valerie Bridgeman

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Valerie Bridgeman was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan into an Air Force family. The family travelled extensively throughout Canada and Europe during her childhood. Valerie Bridgeman has lived in the Pontiac region of West Quebec since 1974. She is a member of the Pontiac Artists' Studio Tour and the Pontiac Artists' Association, the Canadian Bookbinding and Book Arts Guild, the Ottawa Gatineau Printmakers Collective, and is an instructor at the Pontiac School of the Arts. Valerie exhibits and sells her work in Ontario and Quebec.

Valerie Bridgeman loves to make beautiful and unique objects and prints that reflect her relationship with nature. Her mediums are rooted in nature as well, working with clay, paper pulp, and printmaking.

Valerie has taken many courses in printmaking at the Ottawa School of Art and at the Pontiac School of the Arts. Her most recent shows were at the Stone School Gallery in Portage-du-Fort where she is one of seven artists in a juried travelling show, now on display in Chelsea Quebec. She also is showing work currently at the Deep River Gallery and with the Ottawa Gatineau Printmaking Collective in Ottawa.

Artist Statement

Living close to nature inspires me. The Pontiac region of West Quebec offers a rich variety of resource material. For those who look for creative inspiration in their surroundings, land, sky, and water are abundant here, along with verdant forests and quaint villages. I call upon my printmaking skills to honour these influences. I try to reveal the depth of feeling I have for the various facets of my chosen home. These feelings are expressed through various representations of my natural environment, incorporating a variety of printmaking techniques. I particularly enjoy linocut because it has a forthright impact on the viewer and also features dimension and texture which is so important to me. As well, I have been exploring adding another facet to my work through the use of other media, such as chine colle, paper pulp castings, found materials, and real objects, such as the envelopes in the image submitted for "Language".

Work description

Spoken language, body language, sign language; there are many ways more than these to communicate ideas. My proposed print draws from the Victorian custom of using flowers in their daily lives to communicate ideas and feeling with others, but the Greeks were the first to do so. They used different flowers to represent emotions and ideas and called it Florigraphy. I decided to use a linocut of a floral heart-shaped wreath and an envelope in my representation of language. The envelope symbolizes the sharing of feelings and emotions which are represented by the flowers in the heart shaped wreath.

I have been enjoying incorporating dimensional items in my work for a few years now, and the addition of a real envelope seemed appropriate, adding interesting depth to the print, with the wreath emerging from its interior. This print is an extension of my work in general because it deals with subject matter that is close to my heart. I live in a rural area and love gardening, flowers and plants. They are a big part of my life, my activities, and my art. Carving wood or linoleum is a favourite technique because of the tactile nature of the print, and using mixed media in my work is a new love. I have recently been using paper pulp and cast paper in conjunction with a variety of printmaking techniques.

Villia Jefremovas

Villia Jefremovas is a Toronto-born printmaker living in Ottawa, who holds a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Toronto. She began studying printmaking part time through the general program at the Ottawa School of Art in 1993 and has done master classes with artists in Ottawa, Colombia, and the Philippines. She has exhibited in numerous juried shows and has also been part of two three women shows at Café by the Ruins DUA, and the print gallery at the BenCab Museum in Baguio City, Philippines, a two woman show in Ottawa at the Rockwell Gallery and is preparing for a one woman show in 2019 in Baguio Philippines.

Artist Statement

I have been a printmaker since 1993. My work grows out of two dominant threads in my life. The first thread is my love of knowing how things are made. I began as a weaver and papermaker, and then became an anthropologist focussing on labour processes. Printmaking allows me to engage with tools and materials in a visceral way. There is a surrender of total control over the process, because printmaking is an interaction between the artist, the materials and the technique. The techniques are partners in the transformation of materials and ideas to achieve the finished artwork. The second thread is how my themes are informed by my experiences as a child of immigrants and refugees. My working-class neighbourhood was dominated by a myriad of languages, of different races and historical experiences.

Like most members of my neighbourhood, I have always experienced myself to as an outsider. Anthropologists are also often liminal people, straddling many worlds and positionalities. I attempt to document my encounter with other peoples, cultures and landscapes, both personally and professionally. I do not claim that I am 'representing' other cultures, peoples or landscapes, rather I am documenting my imperfect understanding as an outsider. My perspective is always mediated by and limited by my outsider position.

Work Description

In this image I incorporate aquatint and hard ground etching using electro-etching. It is printed on off-white Revere paper using oil-based inks. Prayer wheels and prayer flags in Bhutan, Tibet, Ladakh, Sikkim and Nepal are used by Buddhist worshippers to send prayers out into the world to bless others as an act of merit. As an anthropologist I am intrigued by the idea that prayers are not just spoken, written or sung, but also can have a material representation which can be used on behalf of others. Much of my work reflects my interactions with cultures outside my own and my attempts to understand different ways of knowing and living. This image is meant to focus on language as an artifact that embodies culture.