



Elizabeth Barnett



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Elizabeth is a professional printmaker/artist/illustrator, working with many different techniques and mediums. She kindly shares a look into her studio (shared with our IA member Anna Walker and others!) and beautiful work.

Outline: You have a multi-faceted practice, with works painted, printed, collaged, watercoloured and drawn. Could you share with us details of your different work practices, and studio?

Elizabeth: My practice is very diverse. It has moved through different phases over the last 10 years of practicing as an artist/illustrator. At the moment my practice is mainly painting with the addition of printmaking (etching and drypoints) and collaged commercial illustration. I have always made little drawings and watercolours in my

sketchbooks and I think this process is really important to my practice and forms the beginnings for a lot of my personal work.

I work in a studio which is really close to my house. It is beautiful space housed in a gorgeous old shirt factory set on a hill in Richmond. I share the studio with Anna Walker, Ellie Malin, Louise Jones, Becky Jones. It is inspiring to work with these talented ladies.

Outline: What is your educational background?

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Specifically, we'd love to learn more about your experiences studying a Masters of Illustration in London.

Elizabeth: I studied Fine Arts printmaking at the Victoria College of the Arts 2002-2004 followed by a year of making prints at the Australian Print Workshop (APW). In 2006 I received the Collie Scholarship at the APW and also undertook my honours at RMIT in Printmaking. I went on to work in a few different studios around Melbourne before deciding to pursue my love of illustration at the Camberwell College of Arts in London. The course in London was so much fun and having a year to really focus on my practice in a supportive environment was excellent.

Outline: I can imagine there are quite different mindsets needed to create the different forms of works that you do so beautifully. For instance, painting can be a fluid process



of building a work as you go, while I can imagine printmaking involves a fairly concrete idea of the work you hope to create. Could you tell us more about these differences (and similarities?).

Elizabeth: I work pretty intuitively and I don't think my mindset changes too much between printmaking and painting. My sketchbook forms the basis for a lot of where I pull my ideas from for both. I carry my sketchbook everywhere and jot down little ideas all the time and then I develop these drawings into larger watercolours or drawings. These then become paintings or prints. The paintings at the moment are based around domestic environments with a lot of plants and chairs! The prints are tighter in composition because of the directness of an etched line. I like seeing the way ideas are translated into different mediums. It is endlessly exciting! My illustration work is usually a bit more structured again as I work from someone else's brief. I like this process a lot because it forces me to draw things I wouldn't normally tackle!

Outline: We'd love to learn more about your print making process. How does one create an etching, and what appeals to you about this process?

Elizabeth: My printmaking process is a little bit restricted by the facilities and time available to me at the time of creating a work. I usually book processing time at the APW and spend half a day to a day applying hard grounds to plates or aquatint. My etchings have a lot of tone so I like to use the aquatint that APW have. (It is the last access studios to have this facility available in Melbourne). I have my own press so I print in my studio. I don't use any toxic chemicals in the studio because I am really sensitive to them these days (I use veggie oil and plant based sprays to clean up).

I love the process of printmaking. I like taking time to produce an image. I am pretty impatient person sometimes. I like to work quickly so the laborious process of making etching plates slows me down.



image credit: Paul Philipson



More recently I have been making stamps and dry point prints in my studio so that I am not reliant on using the access studio which can be hard to co-ordinate with my limited studio hours. This has been a liberating process for me as I can construct prints in a more direct way and with more of a collaged finish. It is also easier to integrate into my illustration work too.

Outline: Could you share with us a bit of a behind-the-scenes- look at the Australian Print Workshop? What are the aims of this gallery/studio, and which artists operate from there?

Elizabeth: The APW is an open access studio for people with a bit of printmaking experience to use. The studio also has a gallery and editioning arm to it. Students who graduate from printmaking courses and people who participate in the APW workshops can use the studio. It is an invaluable place for Melbourne printmakers to create work. Some days you'll be working alongside some pretty famous artists!

Outline: We'd love to hear details of your printmaking classes.

Elizabeth: I run my own workshops in printmaking and illustration mostly from The Art Room in Footscray. I also do some workshops in rural NSW and in schools.

With my printmaking classes I mainly focus on techniques that you can do at home without a press or an access

studio. I also use all non toxic materials. My illustration workshops vary from collage classes to storyboarding for children's book

Outline: Are there any upcoming plans for 2015 you'd like to share?

Elizabeth: I'll be teaching some more classes at The Art Room for sure and I plan to work on my children's book to get it out there. I have a few exhibitions planned for the year too, but nothing concreted in yet!

Outline: Finally, it would be great to learn about your own artist heroes and illustration inspirations.

Elizabeth: I have so many heroes! At the moment I am loving illustrators Laura Carlin, Jon Klassen, Mark Hearld, and of course Anna Walker!

Painters and printmakers; I just saw Marise Maas' new work at Flinders Lane gallery and loved it, my friend Rob McHaffie (who just won the Geelong art prize), and Dane Lovett. **o**

{CLICK!} Elizabeth Barnett

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