

Printmaking is one of those artistic mediums that is inherently social. Many processes in printmaking require specialised equipment, so it is almost inevitable that printmakers will access shared facilities, seek advice on a new technique, or collaborate with other artists. To me these are some of the benefits and advantages of choosing to make prints. Print workshops can offer advice, tuition, access to facilities, a place to exhibit, and possibly most importantly – a place where artists and the community can connect with a shared sense of camaraderie. Megalo has been one of these vital hubs of activities for more than forty years.

My connection to Megalo began when I was a recipient of a studio residency which was a crucial stepping-stone from art school towards forming an independent and professional art practice. The residency introduced me to many artists working across different printmaking techniques and also demonstrated a viable way to develop a sustainable print practice beyond the support of university facilities. My link with Megalo strengthened when I became a workshop coordinator around 2000. This was at a time when Megalo Access Arts expanded its scope from being a predominantly screen-printing access facility in Hackett to incorporating etching, relief printing and lithography with a second workshop in Kingston (formerly known as Studio One). Megalo Kingston was a hive of activity, located in the midst of Leichhardt St Studios, with Artspace 71 downstairs. I really enjoyed facilitating many print projects by a diverse range of access artists and students.

It was during this time that I made the two prints featured in this exhibition. These small burnished aquatints depict miniature landscapes, contained within darkened rooms or boxes. These works emerged from a series of prints that featured surreal, imagined landscapes representing human interactions. These days my work depicts more literal landscapes, that are intuitive, emotional responses to my environment.

Working at Megalo was a formative experience and led to a career in the arts with a print focus. After moving to Melbourne and completing a curatorial degree, I curated a print exhibition of Pop Art for the National Gallery of Victoria before spending six months studying the British Museum's print collection as a Harold Wright Scholar. For the following 13 years I managed the Monash University Collection in Melbourne and had the opportunity to curate a number of print exhibitions during that time. Now my affiliation with prints has come full circle and I find myself again working in a print workshop, albeit a little further away. Two years ago I relocated to Denmark with my family and I'm currently cataloguing the print archive for the Niels Borch Jensen print workshop in Copenhagen. I really enjoy being back in the midst of the familiar sights, sounds and smells of a printworkshop, and watching the master printers making work by Georg Baselitz, Tacita Dean, Olafur Elisasson and Julie Mehretu, among others.

For me, Megalo fostered a deep appreciation for printmaking, and for the multiplicity of techniques and approaches that are made possible by this art form. Access facilities such as this one play an important role in enabling a multitude of artistic practices as well as provide a place where the wider community can engage with art.