KdMoFA
關渡美術館
Kuandu Museum of Fine Arts

A New Vision of Printmaking



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【INTRODUCTION】

This exhibition explores some of the current practices by artists working with printmaking who are approaching the form not specifically as printmakers but are in many cases using print as one of a number of forms of expression or in combination with other media. They represent new forms of engagement that is informed by current art practices and the impact of digital media, the relation to drawing and photo based media, as well as in some cases, durational, installation and performative practices. This is represented in the different cultural traditions in Taiwan, London and Madrid where most of the artists gravitate to or are based. It is possible to recognise some of the specific cultural conditions that inform the work from each country and the extent to which traditional forms of printmaking have been embraced or even rejected. The exhibition therefore highlights how these artists apply the concepts of print to their artistic expression. By presenting the prints created from different aspects and in different forms, the viewers will get a grasp of the new vision of printmaking which comes along with the departure from old traditions.

A key question is why such an exhibition as this is needed. Does it represent some form of paradigm shift and a new departure for printmaking and an attempt to amplify its relevance, or is it fueled by an anxiety about the status of printmaking at a time when new inexpensive technologies are being fully and enthusiastically embraced by artists and traditional methods are becoming less popular or being marginalised by education and consigned to a historical position?

As with many such debates about what might be broadly defined as craft based activities, such as printmaking, the progression is not necessarily linear with an inevitable trend towards obsolescence. There is clearly a more elliptical cycle of engagement that to some extent re invents a process such as printmaking by linking it to and embracing new forms of expression in experimental and innovative ways. The invention of television for instance did not kill the radio and the internet did not see the end of printed books, as there have never been so many radio stations as there are now and book sales are extremely healthy. Neither did the democratised medium of photography herald the predicted end of painting by virtue of its superior ability to render more life like portraits, landscapes and the capture of urban and rural scenes.

There are of course always challenges to all forms of established creative expression as we are not just entering into but are already fully immersed into an unprecedented age of faster and more graphic communications and dissemination that penetrates deep into our individual and collective lives. Artists have however always retained a healthy and cautious approach to innovation, when things move at a fast speed we find some artists re asserting the need for slowness. The rampant, relentless and instantly gratifying digital environment sends artists back to pencil and paper and the time

consuming haptic activities such as drawing and painting. What is clear however is the need for a continued dialogue in a rapidly changing world of visual cultures and this exhibition seeks to promote and keep alive the debates around printmaking in what many consider now to be a post format era.

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