





Belinda Fox

STORY LUCY STRANGER

Belinda Fox's art is arresting in its intricate layering of detail and colour. Her intriguing hybrid practice is entirely unique, incorporating an array of art styles from printmaking to watercolour, and recently experimenting with the three-dimensional aspect of sculpture. Interconnecting these different art forms in a collective dialogue evokes an exhibition that is laden with conceptual impact. As a result, her compositions - delicate balances of face-like patterns and earthy tonal washes, transport the viewer into meditation on moments of transition and transformation.

Since her move to Singapore, and recent success of a sell-out show last year at Chan Hampe Galleries in Singapore, Belinda Fox spoke with Artist Profile about the new experiences and people that shape her work.



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Tell me about your recent move to Singapore and its influence on your work.

We moved to Singapore when my husband was offered a job there, but it has proven to be a hugely exciting opportunity for me too. It has allowed me to continue to visit interesting places in the region, and entertain the idea of doing projects in Asia too. Exhibiting in Hong Kong and Singapore has definitely opened up a whole new international audience for me.

How did you respond to the spatial transition – from working in Australia with its large, open landscape to Singapore’s concrete and populous city spaces?

It was quite an adjustment going from a house in the bushy suburb of Eltham Victoria to a small high-rise apartment! I tend to think a lot about empty red dusty vistas from my childhood country town in Mildura. On this small intense island every square millimetre is accounted for.

It is very interesting how important green belt parks are for the human spirit. These precious nature reserves, the endangered or resilient bird life, the tiny moments of space you try to hold on to before another skyscraper blocks your vision. It has inspired not only paintings but also a new series of sculptures too.

Transformation is a recurrent theme in your works – images of a budding lotus, a flowering branch or birds in flight. What is its significance for you?

A lot of my work is about potential and transition. Whether something is opening up or dying, or leaving or arriving, it’s all connected to this balancing act of life. I also get great inspiration from the broader human frailties. Transformation is constantly a part of my everyday life, but also my journey developing as an artist. My work expresses this constant flux and desire for movement, improvement and change.

You initially trained in printmaking but your practice has expanded to incorporate watercolour and ceramics. How has your practice evolved and what influence has it had on this evolution?

I always think I paint like a printmaker! I love making things, I love materials, and how materials have intrinsic qualities that can be manipulated to create unexpected results. For me making is meaning. Ideas are formed through the hand. I am learning to value that intuition. I follow a hunch; I love to try something new.

I studied printmaking at VCA and later worked as a studio master printer at Port Jackson Press Australia. I think printmaking has made me value a craft and to be disciplined. Printmaking is a slow and often tedious journey. You must follow the steps to get the best result. Whether I am working on a ceramic form, a drawing, print, a painting or a sculpture it is often actually about line, form and intent.

What challenges did the extension of your practice present? How did you resolve these challenges – experimentation, collaboration?

I started painting for the practical reason I was pregnant and worried about the chemicals, the labour intensive act of large-scale printmaking and access to studio resources. Once Billie was born I had to find a new way to work. It was not easy until a friend put me onto clay boards. This surface worked with my style. It has a similar quality to paper so I had found familiar ground. As for collaboration I have always loved working with people. It is refreshing to have other ideas, opinions, and aesthetics to bounce off. You can learn so much from working with another artist.

More practically, can you tell me about your practice, what it involves from conception to reality?

Often past work will start me off for a new series, so something I liked from my past show will be the starting point for a new body of work. Through my experimenting, and once I have a title, a story starts to develop in my head about what I want to say. I often make models of the gallery spaces to get a feel of how a story might unfold as you walk around the space. This is important – how the work connects and feeds off each other. My ideas are never captured in one image – it’s the collective experience that gives you a true sense of the idea.

What initiated your development of sculpture into your practice?



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I have always been interested in 3D work. In 2010 I did a residency in Greece and was able to do a small ceramic pot with a local potter. It was so enjoyable that I looked to work in ceramics when I returned home, and have collaborated with Neville French for 3 years on ceramic forms. Making sculptures started out as practical solution but has been really interesting and exciting.

What's feeding your current work? Are you looking at any particular artists or periods to inform your current practice?

This year's exhibitions are titled 'Excavate'. Excavate relates so heavily to 'work' – digging, unearthing and finding new things from old relics. This is particularly relevant as the works are using collage on paper and past prints made into paper models, then cast into bronze sculptures. Both the works on paper and sculptures are often reconstructions of endangered birds from Singapore. By re-creating them from my own past artworks I feel like I am willing them back into being. Although the paintings do not include past prints they do reinvent a very old motif of mine – the web. It now represents my past, present and future.

I have been reading a great book on Brancusi and Serra that is most helpful for my sculpture works. Also in Hong Kong Basel last year I saw the works of printmakers Uwe and Gert Tobias, I love how they construct their exhibition spaces. ■

Belinda Fox is represented by Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, Scott Livesey Galleries Melbourne, and Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong.



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EXHIBITION

Excavate
15th October - 1st November 2014
Arthouse Gallery

www.arthousegallery.com.au
www.scottliveseygalleries.com
www.thecatstreetgallery.com
www.belindafox.com.au

- 01 Tumbler I, 2014, watercolour, ink, pen on paper, 140 x 123.5cm
 - 02 Belinda Fox in her studio in Singapore. Photography Fareez Ahmad
 - 03 Studio shot. Photography Belinda Fox
 - 04 Studio shot. Photography Melinda Schawel
 - 05 Belinda Fox in the studio. Photography lilreddotfolks.com
 - 06 Studio shot. Photography Fareez Ahmad
 - 07 A walk in the park v, 2013, watercolour, drawing on board, 92 x 62cm
 - 08 Excavate, 2014, watercolour, drawing, encaustic wax on board, 140 x 120 cm
 - 09 Belinda Fox in her studio. Photography lilreddotfolks.com
- Courtesy the artist, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney and Scott Livesey Galleries Melbourne.