

Reviews

"I must be transformed in some way in order for a work of art to claim my heart, mind and vote. I am proud to have awarded Cleo Wilkinson the Cash Award because all of her entries moved me. They were solid, innovative, superbly executed and to create mezzotint prints is a challenge not many artists are willing to face today"

Renee Phillips : Manhattan Arts International NYC USA

"Your artwork is, in my opinion, some of the most brilliant I've seen in the mezzotint medium, as it is not only technically proficient, but the images themselves are thoughtful, and deeply profound visual statements.. they are truly magnificent - you have so mastered this medium"

Deborah Maris Lader

Founder/Director of the Chicago Printmakers Collaborative, Chicago USA

Cleo Wilkinson, a graphic printmaker from Australia exhibiting for the first time in Serbia prints realized in the well-known classic graphic discipline of mezzotint. I said well-known, but unfortunately rarely practiced technique, so rarely that those who have chosen to deal with it are considered passionate, something like ornithologist or devotees in some rare secrets. Interestingly, the prosperity of mezzotint occurred in the 17th century as a guild secret of prominent craft workshops dealing with copper-etching. It was before photography with its processing and possibility of high-volume printing, nearly sent the mezzotint into oblivion.

But fortunately, there are fans who have not forgotten the magic of mezzotint. Well known to them are replicas of Raphael's Madonna's rendered in this technique which were the privilege of the royal collections of prints and other treasures.

The human eye in relation from light to dark (*chiaro-scuro*) and vice versa has always found its inner peace and balance. Tender light sources that is born from the darkness of a plane and then swell to form a volume with all concealed yet constructive half shadows yield an overwhelming sight and satisfaction to the human eye.

Mezzotint plate is prepared, or ground using "rocker" a curved notched blade made of fine steel which makes the surface of copper or zinc plate pitted. Such prepared surface creates an absolute saturation of black. Then the plate is flattened by the artist using a *scraper* or *burnisher* to gain fine lighting effects. The modeling of volume is then built out from the harmony of light and dark. The possibility of finding the most delicate gray value difference makes mezzotint technique fully comparable with the highest quality photograph.

This is a starting point from which Cleo Wilkinson pursued the beauty of graphics. Her prints look as they emerged from the dusty corners of a glyptothèque of some sculptor. This genre is her attempt to in spite of all the expected capabilities of the camera to make this technique anachronistic --if not even meaningless ; challenges and clearly indicates that despite the technical capabilities of the camera, mezzotint still supremely dwells on a higher level - just above photography, which is called ART.

Mr. Miodrag Andjelkovic Serbia 2014

LIGHT OF REMBRANDESQUE SUBTLENESS

Cleo Wilkinson belongs to a small group of artists practicing mezzotint with a high success. Undoubtedly the most difficult among graphics techniques, mezzotint seems to be making no obstacles for this Australian artist to evoke any shade of grey she may imagine. In this way, Cleo synthesizes light like piano yields music. I think we are not far from truth by saying that she feels light under her fingers while handling rocker and burnisher. Overmastering such kind of manipulation leads to a fairy world of subtle interplay of light and shadow, which always was one of essential demands of visual arts. Without exaggeration, Cleo's *chiaroscuro* compares to Rembrandt's, but the psychological atmosphere it radiates is quite different. For example, her prints cannot be watched otherwise but in dignified silence. They insensibly hush us, imposing a special *stimmung* that contains something irrational or surreal. Lonely female dress on hanger, an egg or empty chair with its shadow on the wall, "cat's cradle" string figure over someone's face, shoes, emptiness of a corridor, eye-closed face immersed in silence, all of this rise a complex of emotions of a specific visual world. This is the same world, from which came, each by his own way, Max Klinger, Franz Kafka or Giorgio De Chirico, the world of deep melancholic metaphysical truth, permanently escaping from our understanding.

Ljubiša Kocić Serbia 2014

"The extremely complex and labour intensive process required for its creation has ultimately produced a work which is intimate and tender. We must credit Cleo for producing such a powerful work in a difficult medium".

Winner of the Hornsby Art Prize in Printmaking 2015 – NSW – Australia - Judges comment .

"In her mezzotints , Cleo Wilkinson shows a good classical technique . The figures on the pictures are portrayed from unexpected viewpoints . There is reflective melancholy which is amplified by the night-black background of the mezzotint. The highly controlled mezzotint shows a lonely, silent figure. The backward position creates a tangible tension. The intention is hidden and it makes this work larger than its size."

Miniprint International Print Show Finland 2010 –Awarded Judges Honourable Mention .

SPACES OF REAL AND IMAGINARY

From the biography of Cleo Wilkinson, an Australian artist, we learn that she used to incline to sculpture by nature but still decided to study graphic, because she felt great similarity between sculpture and mezzotint graphics. Where is this similarity? "The relations between the light and dark areas" reveals Wilkinson in one of her interviews. One might add that this similarity also lies in the way how a work of art is created. Namely, a sculpture, especially classic ones, rendered in natural materials (stone, wood), and works in mezzotint technique, come out on day light from the closure of matter from its natural undefinedness, that is, from its dark womb. Therefore, the final result in classical sculpture and mezzotint technique is darkness and light play.

There are two dominant motifs in works of Cleo Wilkinson. Primarily, it is human being, then surrounding objects. When it comes to the first motif, it is primarily women as a human, in many cases her face, particularly eyes expressing fear emphasized by astonishing and touching light in them, rather than curiosity and joy. And hands of course, interlaced fingers again in fear or despair, in any case in weakness and in premonitory danger or uncertainty. As far as objects and things are concerning, there are separate pieces of clothing, airy and light, as part of women's intimacy, footwear, then these we like to keep, such as a cup or seashell, or to touch by hands or by glances, due to their specific appearance, such as egg or fungus. Featured is the space through which the artist moves and who calls us and introduces us, the area with pronounced atmosphere and mystery as we find in De Chirico in the compounds of the real and the imaginary.

Physical movements are very rare on Cleo Wilkinson's graphics. If they anyway are present, they are stopped and repose quietly. And the scream at one of graphics is not Munk's scream making sky echoed over the bay, but scream in closed space, the cry that is not heard, causing yet more pain due the knowledge that help will not arrive.

It is hard to imagine, and even harder to state, how much Cleo reveals and conceals herself, her sensitivity and fragility, her silences her hopes and calmness, but what is certain is that she found a way to each of us.

Zvonimir Kostic Palanski Serbia 2014

"Cleo Wilkinson (Australia) also combines skill and empathy, giving her everyday objects(a mushroom, a pair of children's shoes, two eggs) a larger meaning, the eggs evoking the beginning of life; the shoes, growth; and the mushroom, perhaps survival..."

Judith K. Brodsky Distinguished Professor Emerita in the Department of Visual Arts at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey USA - Judges Comment 8th International Miniature Print Exhibition 2011 , Centre for Contemporary Printmaking , Norwalk, CT USA

"I very much appreciate the opportunity to exhibit your wonderful and conceptually demanding work. Your print was very well received in the exhibition with many visitors commenting on the quiet surreal dimension between subject and process. Also it is a rare treat to exhibit your work as the mezzotint is practiced by very few artists internationally .. it is a rare pleasure to have a mezzotint with such extraordinary conceptual impact". It is with pleasure to receive your exceptional work into the Pacific Rim International Print Collection. All the best with your future artworks.

Cathryn Shine Associate Professor - School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury , Christchurch New Zealand – **Pacific Rim International Print Exhibition 2014**

"Mezzotint works by Cleo Michelle Wilkinson emphasize an absolute dedication to traditional printmaking, while integrating modern imagery into classical technique".

New Prints 2014 /Summer – International Print Centre New York & Christies Showroom NYC , USA

"..the materials and treatment of space in Cleo Wilkinson's *Abeyance* exist between the formalism of Vermeer's interiors and the iconography of French symbolism – peculiarly sustained by a purposeful and commanding ambivalence."

The Pacific Rim International Print Exhibition 2013

Dr. Warren Feeney PhD, MA, Dip. Teaching

Director at Centre of Contemporary Art **Christchurch New Zealand**

<http://chambers241.wordpress.com/2013/11/20/the-pacific-rim-international-print-exhibition-2013/>

Dear Cleo Wilkinson

I am glad to tell you that your work *Arcane Message* has been selected for Fifth Beijing International Art Biennale 2012, This Biennale is a very important Biennale in the world for fine art. Congratulations!-With our director Mr. Li Kang's nomination, Guanlan Original Printmaking Base recommend your work the Biennale. And now your work was showing on the wall in October 2012 in the highest art Museum of China in Beijing -- The National Museum of China. Thank you very much for your great support for Guanlan Original Printmaking Base. We will try our best to do what we can for you and for the printmaking world.

Zhao Jiachun
Director of Academy & Exhibition Depart.
Guanlan Original Printmaking Base
Guanlan International Print Biennial / China

“..This work displays great technical expertise , and expresses a deeply resonant sense of quietude and transcendence , finding a delicate balance ...”

Cancer Council Arts Awards – Australia 2013 – Commended Prize Judges Comment

“The Australian Cleo Michele Wilkinson presented mezzotints with intimate frames of human figures . Tranquillity and modesty of these compositions , their simplicity and reference to art of the past attract and thrill”

Boguslaw Detula (judges comment) - 15th International Triennial of Small Graphic Forms - Poland Lodz 2014 (Winner of Distinguished Honorary Medal 2014)

“The mezzotints of Australian Cleo Wilkinson are classical, serene, intimate and wonderful..”
(International Juried Printmaking Exhibition 2013 – New Grounds Print Workshop)
New Mexico Art Review USA- <http://nmartreview.com/reviews/>

“Cleo Wilkinson achieves a velvety softness with a fairly monochrome canvas and focuses on the shadows that give form and substance to her subjects. Added text intertwines and adds interest”.

Artrom Gallery Rome Italy

“Cleo Wilkinson delves into the deeper aspects of the human condition in her works "Trust", "Third Farewell" and "Seek". The warm earth tones help to portray these heartfelt emotions. Her facility to work in various media is certainly a mark of talent.

Cleo Wilkinson has a virtuosity of skill and expression, especially strongly felt in her drawing "Neville Bonner Portrait". The interesting facial characteristics of the person played against the soft and even glowing hair makes for a deeper message than just a portrait".

Cleo .. masterfully positions the figure in a dark environ. "Clandestine" is not an expected view and is sensitively done. And "Discarnate" is also significant. Both are wonderful achievements as mezzotint prints". Cleo creates a strong statement in her "Discarnate" mezzotint print. The subtle texture and the stark black setting sets a striking mood enhancing the contemplative nature felt in the face. All of her works are quite strong with deep messages.

Larry Bradshaw Curator, Professor of Art University of Nebraska, Omaha USA

"Cleo came to us as an undisputed master of this difficult technique, bringing with her several innovative applications which she had developed over her years of practice. While she was at Malaspina, she worked daily in close cooperation with our local artists, generously sharing her expertise with those around her. In all, Cleo was considered one of the greatest participants in our long-standing Artist in Residence program. Her commitment to her art, dedication to excellence and sense of exploratory growth left a strong and lasting impression on local artists".

Carol Nymark past Executive Director Malaspina Printmaker Studio Vancouver , Canada

"When I first learned of your work two years ago I was immediately struck by your unique handling of the mezzotint process, which can be very difficult and time consuming. That you designed your own roulette to grind the plate, creating a very unusual stippled texture, proved to me your dedication to the mezzotint process".

Cara Forrler

**Director, Contemporary Print Center Davidson Galleries
Washington , USA**

"The Old Print Shop has been in business for over 110 years and we are always on the lookout of talented new printmakers who are not only creative but use the printmaking medium as their main source of expression. I was pleased to meet and see the work of Cleo Wilkinson several years ago as her work fits into the criteria of contemporary printmaking that the gallery is promoting"

Robert K. Newman

The Old Print Shop, Inc Manhattan New York USA

"You can see how extensively we used your work. Your works are brilliant".

**Nikita Korytin, Director of the Publishing House "Artifact" -Mezzotint Festival
Travelling Exhibition Yekaterinburg ,Russia**

"..and once again I thank you for being part of SW09 and congratulate you on creating such exceptional work. "

Mark Jamieson Director Brunswick Street Gallery Melbourne ,Australia

“..Brunswick Street Gallery just loves your work , I heard so many visitors oohing and awing over your miniatures. They are so delicate and intricate- people find it astounding that you work in mezzotint...”

Miriam Arbus – Director/Curator Brunswick Strett Gallery Melbourne , Australia

..”Your work is exceptionally beautiful..”

Leah Crossman Assistant Director Brunswick Street Gallery Melbourne ,Australia

“...as all your works -it makes you tremble since you can see it comes from the very depth of your heart...”

Gianfranco & Stefano Gorini – Venice Printmaking Studio – Venice Italy

“Your mezzotints are awesome. I know it takes a lot of time to do one.. Your work is beautiful. There are always very strong comments from your two prints 2008 and 2009. Thank you for participating.”

Dra Guadalupe Victoria

Segunda Convocatoria Internacional Grabados por la Paz Mexico 2009 IMNRC

“So your prints were so distinct from others in terms of including some feelings into your work - mostly anxiety or indecision (that's what I found there...), whilst most of others simply picturized the ambient nature... The one work attracted me particularly - "Then" - it is so tiny in size and in the same time so deep and huge...” Well, thank you for what you're doing in your life! **Irina Kostyleva. Mezzotinto Exhibition Tyumen - Russia**

“Your work is amazing”

Barbara Mason

PAN – Print Arts NorthWest Portland Oregon ,USA

“ Those prints are awesome!”

Rahman Mohamed Penang International Print Exhibition 2010 Penang State Art Gallery, Penang, Malaysia

“Today we have received your beautiful prints to the VII International Small Engraving Exhibition "L'Arte e il Torchio / Art and the Printing Press" Cremona 2011..

Thanks for your precious participation..

Vladimiro Elvieri

General Curator "L'Arte e il Torchio" Cremona ,Italy

“I very much enjoyed viewing your selection of mezzotints . You've worked the medium well, accomplishing a beautiful array of dark and light tones “.

Samantha Rippner

Metropolitan Museum of Art NYC USA

“Finally , a little jewel : the enigmatic and tender portrayal of a young boy's back in the mezzotint “Then” won Cleo Wilkinson the Jamie Evrard prize”.

Joseph Montague – Jurors' Statement Biennial International Miniature Print Exhibition VI 2010 ,Canada

“Congratulations for your work that has been highly praised both by the jury and visitors “

Finalist Award ADOGI Mini Print International Spain Barcelona 2012

"Your prints arrived safe and sound. They are quite stunning. Thank you so much for participating in our exhibition"

Robert Peters -Seacourt Print Workshop – Centre for contemporary Printmaking – Ireland 2014

".. three small mezzotints by Australian Printmaker Cleo Wilkinson , those printed visages emerge from a velvety black with tonal richness and striking subtlety .."

Press Release 2014 Winter Contemporary Show – Old Print Gallery -Washington DC- USA

"The mezzotints Cleo Wilkinson

A notable participant in the latest round of the small group IEC was the Australian Cleo Wilkinson . Her art training she received in the UK (Oxford) , in the United States (New York) , New Zealand (Auckland) and Australia (Queensland) . She was more than thirty international locations artist in residence , her mezzo tones were presented in more than two hundred international exhibitions and won dozens of times . In the last two years alone , she was awarded in Argentina , Australia , Bulgaria , Canada , China , Argentina , United States , Serbia and Spain .

In her graphic work she strives to portray. Disturbing and fleeting moments with delicate nuances of hope The play of light that makes the mezzotint technique possible , she thinks this is best suited . Even though she has specialized in mezzotint , she paints, photographs , draws and sculpts . Whenever she tries to retrieve it objects out of the darkness like a thought in someone's memory may emerge.

She calls herself an explorer of twilight zones and ambiguous spaces . Her most recent work examines situations in which understanding and doubt , hesitation and conviction compete with each other , in short : the difficulty of existence . She gives moments of isolation and dislocation again , stillness and silence, where introspection and alienation are constantly present . The most disturbing images are those where people are waiting in the dark , caught between hope and fear . Because she has verified constructed to create thumbnails in mezzotint she is fascinated by the power of the small chart, more intimate and more exclusive than other disciplines and lots of control and concentration demands , because you only have a limited space for visual impact to reach . Wilkinson tries to emphasize that by transforming something banal into something deep . Individual silence and solitude of a form Her main sources of inspiration are her memory and her subconscious , which again are assigned shape in her visual language .

Her big challenge , claiming Wilkinson , just what is to portray what is suggested in the twilight , but is not available. The " manière noire 'that the mezzotint is , requires patience , perseverance and precision . The technique requires much time and is extremely labor intensive and meditative : the artist disappears as it were, in his work and is completely absorbed by the process of creation. Often there are in the preparation of a plate over a hundred hours before an early proof can be made . Ultimately it is the mezzotint technique to a contradiction : you go from absolute black (instead of white emptiness) , traveling from the darkness to the light and you create by deleting . It is her aspiration to the light to understand and to travel there . Because she was so intrigued by the mezzotint , her admiration initially goes to artists who art in almost perfect manner have made their own : Peter Ilsted , Yozo

Hamaguchi , Mikio Watanabe , Konstantin Chmutin and Fred Mersheimer . For the Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi she (like Melanie Geray) much appreciated . For her , the ex libris - according to our correspondence - a total unknown medium that really fascinates her nonetheless . She would like to hear about features, procedures and conventions , and is considering to design when she has a less hectic schedule . A book mark When it comes to financial aspects , she startled especially if they put in front of the labour- intensive nature of its work and the price that is common for a small sheet of graph her hand . That price would they initially also apply for (individual) book marks , making a run would be unseen. Duration Maybe she is still there to back ? “

**Karl Vissers translated from “De Mezzotinten Van Cleo Wilkinson” .
Boekmerk –tijdschrift voor ex-libriskunst (Belgium): 2014 : 43 (1) : 34-35**

“..It is utterly sublime , mysterious, fragile and silent in its presence... a beautiful example of your work.”- (comment on “Inception III” mezzotint)

Queen of the Mezzotint ! - But it is your image sense that prods at the beach rubble...

*“You have an undertow pulling at your work,
a narrative that hides under the bed in the dark with door slightly ajar,
a dream-like stillness that pervades the air and a disquiet that causes
one to feel the little hairs on the neck and arm to raise as you check over your
shoulder. “*

**Derek Michael Besant RCA
Professor of Fine Arts ACAD
Alberta College of Art and Design , Canada**

“Pledge” is absolutely stunning – thanks for entering it into the prize and good luck!

**Simon Gregg
Curator Gippsland Art Gallery , Australia**