

ARTISTIC POLICY - **DRAFT**

VISION

Leicester Print Workshop (LPW) is the regional development centre for printmaking; in terms of artform, artists and audiences.

We develop artistic practice through:

- Supporting and enabling the production of high quality and innovative work
- Commissioning interdisciplinary and collaborative activity
- Sharing our resources, knowledge, skills and specialisms
- Enabling all artists to develop their printmaking ability

MISSION

Leicester Print Workshop is a repository for knowledge and expertise, working within a national and international printmaking network. We promote, sustain and advance fine art printmaking:

- as a contemporary visual art form
- as a craft and skill
- as a focus for exhibitions, commissions and projects
- in schools, with community groups, to artists and to the general public.

We develop talent and make a meaningful contribution to contemporary visual arts in the Midlands and beyond.

'CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING'

Leicester Print Workshop is a Studio for contemporary visual artists to create high quality print based artwork. Based on its etymology, a print is:

"an impression made by any method involving a physical transfer from one surface to another"
(Tate Gallery).

From the Online Etymology Dictionary:

print (n.) c. 1300, "impression, mark" (as by a stamp or seal), from Old French preinte "impression," from Latin premere "to press, hold fast, cover, crowd, compress"
print (v.) mid-14c., prenten "to make an impression" (as with a seal, stamp, etc.), from print (n.). Meaning "to set a mark on any surface" is attested from late 14c

Our shared printmaking Studio provides the context for our Artistic and Education programmes. According to artist Alan Kane, 'Context is Everything' and this perspective informs LPW's Artistic Policy and the resulting fundraising Strategy.

The Policy frames our entire artistic and educational programming and other activity, both within the building (including exhibitions and presentation of work; courses, workshops, demonstrations, talks and other events) and outside the building (such as our garden; exhibitions and interventions in public spaces across Leicester; off-site courses, workshops and events).

LPW also exists within a historical context. As a centre of excellence for a skills based visual artform, LPW is a custodian of printmaking techniques, processes, knowledge and resources and it has a vital role to promote printmaking practice and theory. However, for printmaking to continue to develop and thrive as an artform it is important that it also remains relevant to and informed by wider contemporary visual arts practice and its context. As a result, LPW will ensure that all new activity supports the development and diversification of printmaking and artists who make prints.

Curatorial Approach

- We will present a wide range of ideas and print based media (as defined on page 1) from the traditional to the experimental, support the production of new work, and act as a catalyst to test the parameters of printmaking through initiating dialogue between artists, artworks and artforms. As a result, all exhibitions (including the annual Members' exhibition) will be curated thematically according to standard curatorial approaches, not according to process alone, and will be of the highest quality, in terms of concept and execution. In order to facilitate discussion between artists we will only present exhibitions of work by living artists or invite artists to respond to work by deceased artists.
- As a fine art printmaking Studio, projects around socially engaged work will be led by professional artistic practice, rather than developed solely to address social issues.
- Events will focus on providing opportunities for artists, writers and curators to develop new ideas and ways of working, and to examine contemporary printmaking practice and theory.

Collaboration

- Printmaking has traditionally been a collaborative activity, since it requires sharing equipment, knowledge and experience; however, collaboration has tended to occur largely within the printmaking community. LPW will explore collaborations between printmakers and other artists and art forms. Exhibitions will demonstrate ways in which printmaking is not just a method of production but also a way of thinking, through an engagement with cross disciplinary artforms and ideas; ie how printmaking thinking and processes inform and are influenced by other art forms, such as drawing, animation, sound, performance, film, digital
- LPW will teach artists how to create and print their own plates so they can make editions of their work, or propose LPW Members who could collaborate with them to achieve this, rather than focusing on the development of the technical skills required for printing identical editions.

- LPW will provide a neutral space for conversations, enabling us to continue to work with a wide range of partners and address difficult issues.

Proposals

- All exhibition and project proposals from external partners and artists should be directed to LPW staff. An LPW panel (made up of LPW staff and external advisors), will review and respond to the proposals in light of this Policy. LPW staff will also meet all prospective Artists in Residence before they are confirmed, to ensure they are a good fit with this Policy.

Yasmin Canvin
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