

First night

Visual art: Ink at Glasgow Print Studio

Print studio's alumni make their mark

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Pebble Bank, a lithograph by Barbara Rae, is part of the show

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Glasgow Print Studio, set up in 1972 as part of similar projects across Scotland's cities, has worked with some of the country's best-known artists, with a focus on the west.

The studio, which combines exhibition space, technical expertise and facilities, and a shop, has created an archive that includes examples by almost all of the artists who have worked there.

Sam Ainsley, David Harding and Sandy Moffat, all former teachers at Glasgow School of Art (who work collaboratively under the title AHM), were invited to select works from the GPS archive by its director, John MacKechnie. The result, which comprises work by more than 50 artists, proves the significance of the archive and the importance of GPS as a "go to" destination for artists of different generations and widely differing philosophies.

The fact that the work of stalwarts John Bellany, Philip Reeves and Elizabeth Blackadder can be found alongside that of a younger generation of artists, such as Hanneline Visnes, Ross Sinclair and Richard Wright, is significant. It shows the adaptability of the print medium and how successive generations have embraced new technologies without abandoning older ones. As one of the most gifted artists in the show, Jacki Parry, says: "If you can ink it you can print it."

Parry's delicate, black-and-white photo-polymer print, made in collaboration with Glasgow Women's Library, shows the city remapped in honour of women — a

powerful protest to the “city fathers”, past and present. One of those mentioned in *Women in the City*, Christine Borland, now a professor at Northumbria University, has explored some of the darker issues around medical and bio-ethics. Here, a relatively early work, *The Quickening*, a photographically derived screen print, shows a mirrored image of a female figure firing a gun. There is a real sense of conflict here, derived from deceptively simple subject matter.

Sam Ainsley’s screen-print *Red Cocoon* depicts folded and knotted fabric against a starkly contrasting blue background. The image hints at the domestic but suggests that there is strength, and darkness, within.

There’s little of the decorative, or serene, in this visually gripping show. The imagery is confrontational, imaginative and powerful. Ian McCulloch’s etching, an untitled triptych in typically expressionistic style, shows classical mythological figures in conflict — metaphors for contemporary violence and struggle.

The show’s timing is significant because the arts complex of which GPS forms a part, 103 Trongate, is under significant threat because of withdrawal of public funds.