

Hot off the press 7

Curwen and New Academy Gallery, London

10 January – 3 February

'Hot Off The Press 7' showcased new printmaking postgraduates who demonstrated how digital advances have infested this medium, presented in fresh dialogue with traditional techniques. This displayed a dense and distinct choice of works, showing the differing nature of the London art colleges in a palatable, retro temperature.

Adam Bridgland from the Royal College raised this to a stuffy heat synonymous of nostalgic holidays pushed onto screen print, to divulge in "the holiday as object". Here, travel ephemera were funny but also ironic and thoughtful. We might laugh at an embroidered patch that says 'Help Me Escape The Days That Never Seem To End'; but at the same time, as Adam says, "my girlfriend thinks it's completely morose". Sarah Bridgland cut and pasted prints into boxed collages. These neat, tight vitrines evoked Rebecca Warren's Turner Prize wall hangings, and were sanitised to show something clinical but complicated. "The miniature crystallises time heightening our sense of wonder at the world."

Whilst we pondered on that point, George Morris's elastic *Futopia* prompted a cyber sense of digital space in Giclée print, at the (hot) cutting edge of high-tech in printmaking. But another piece, *Unfolding Un-navigable Space*, showed just how disorientating this virtual world is. As if to mock it, opposite were Victorian etchings manipulated into intriguing inkjet prints that seemed to laugh at technological advances which twist space into nonsense. In these, Anne-Laure Ponsin brings Lewis Carroll into Photoshop and emerges with curious, quaint and comical images. Upstairs was some complex wallpaper, where shapes slid and stretched like a Rorschach inkblot pattern; here toned and turned Modernist by Vita Gottlieb's sleek, chilled lines.

Rob White summed up the temperature with a flat, simple plug, which seemed to switch off the technical and turn back to the real, in cool but appetising disdain.

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Adam Bridgland, *Forward Conquer, We Have a Car and Can Picnic in the Country!*, screen print and enamel on paper, 55x55cm, 2006.