

MOTHERLINE

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Private View Thursday 11 July, 6-8PMpress@flowersgallery.com
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GLENYS BARTON
 CHARLOTTE EDEY
 AMANDA FAULKNER
 REBECCA FORTNUM
 NICOLA HICKS
 ALICE IRWIN
 ISHBEL MYERSCOUGH
 FREYA PAYNE
 PAULA REGO
 ALISON WATT

Flowers Gallery is pleased to present *Motherline*, a group exhibition of ceramics, tapestry and printmaking. *Motherline* explores the emergent expression of identity and memory, visibility and the unconscious, fantasy, myth and the uncanny within the sphere of female experience.

The longstanding traditions of ceramics and tapestry have historically been characterised by a silent, but relevant female presence, despite the ideation and design processes being often overseen by their male counterparts. Printmaking, with its technology-driven nature and training required, was not always accessible to women and women's contribution to the artform has been undeniably overlooked. *Motherline* observes the role these techniques and materials hold today within the practice of the exhibited artists in this intergenerational exhibition of powerful female voices.

Artist **Glenys Barton** has focused largely on ceramic sculpture throughout her career. *Lady with Three Faces (Self Portrait)*, 1980, is Barton's first self portrait, produced in bone china. Other works of this period incorporated the theme of identity, consciousness and multiple aspects of the self, such as *I will Know*, in which a foetus-like form appeared implanted in the brain. Barton developed and consolidated an interest in the human form which led to challenging portrait commissions as well as multifaceted self-portraits and idealised, solemn figures. Glenys Barton (b. 1944) studied at the Royal College of Art. Her work has been exhibited internationally, and is in the collections of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; Contemporary Arts Society Collection; National Portrait Gallery, London; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia; Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh; and Victoria & Albert Museum, London amongst others. Barton's sculpture has featured in the screen adaptation of Ian McEwan's *Enduring Love*, and Woody Allen's *You Will Meet A Tall Dark Stranger*.

Charlotte Edey is an artist and illustrator working across print, tapestry and embroidery. Her work explores identity, spirituality and the politics of space, creating oneiric, mystical worlds and fluid symbolic landscapes. Based on her drawing practice, Edey's large-scale tapestries represent dramatic vistas and idealised architectural spaces inhabited by solitary women. She has described defining her own space within her work as a 'quiet radicalism' addressing the visibility and representation of women of colour. The exhibition includes *Open* and a new tapestry *Dust*, seen for the first time, which are embellished with unique hand-embroidery. Her work has been included in



Paula Rego, *Ecstasy*, 1996-98,
hand-coloured etching and aquatint.
(c) Paula Rego, 1996-98

exhibitions in the UK, USA, Russia and Europe.

Amanda Faulkner's work is concerned with interpersonal power relations, framed specifically from a feminist point of view. Faulkner's intensely expressive personal works draw from her own life experience, where fluctuating figures expose emotions and the most intimate bodily matters. The landscapes imagined by Faulkner are absurd and sensual manifestations, displaying "*frighteningly familiar thoughts*" on motherhood, sex and relationships.¹ Recurring symbols in her work include female breasts and phallic forms which appear in her compositions as active peripheral characters. Amanda Faulkner (b. 1953) studied at Chelsea School of Art, and has exhibited widely internationally. Her work is included in many notable public collections including Arts Council of Great Britain; National Museum, Budapest, Hungary; Tate, London; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester.

Rebecca Fortnum's etchings from the *Dream* series depict children with their eyes shut, as though blocking out the intrusive gaze of the adult world. Deliberately ambiguous, these small, intimate works invite speculation on the hidden inner spaces of fantasy and dream, capturing what Graham Music has described as the "*complexity, power, fragility, potential and unknowability*" of childhood.² Rebecca Fortnum (b. 1963) is Professor of Fine Art at The Royal College of Art, where she leads the School of Arts and Humanities Research Programme. She has recently completed a Visiting Research Fellowship at Merton College, Oxford where she developed her project, *A Mind Weighted with Unpublished Matter*, that includes paintings and drawings of known and unknown female subjects from sculptural portraits in Museum collections, including the Ashmolean. Fortnum has had solo shows at the Freud Museum and the V&A's Museum of Childhood and edited a book of interviews with British women artists, *In their own words* (2007) as well as *On Not Knowing; How Artists Think* (2013), a book of essays that examines contemporary artists' processes. Her new book, *A Companion to Contemporary Drawing*, which she has edited with Kelly Chorpene, will be published by Wiley Blackwell later this year.

British artist **Nicola Hicks'** characters frequently resemble figures from common myths and shared stories, using a distinctive personal vocabulary to establish a connection between ancient and contemporary worlds. The monotypes presented in this exhibition involve themes of childhood and coming-of-age from the perspective of the maternal gaze. Her dynamically rendered portraits of children *Buffalo Bill* and *Edith* from 1996 emerge from the rich darkness of the dense black backgrounds as though unearthed from below the surface. Nicola Hicks (b. 1960) was awarded an MBE for her contribution to the visual arts. Her sculpture and drawings have been presented in numerous international museums and galleries, including St Paul's Cathedral, London and the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, USA; and her work was included in *The Universal Addressability of Dumb Things*, curated by Mark Leckey, as part of the Hayward Touring series at venues across the UK during 2013. She has completed several public commissions, including the recent . A major monograph *Keep Dark* was published by Elephant in association with Flowers Gallery in 2017.

Artist and Printmaker **Alice Irwin's** etchings are part of her ongoing investigation into the concept of the playground and its awakening of early memories. She explores the playground as a field of social interaction incorporating play, but also what she describes as "psychological trauma". Similarly, her recurring characters, figures and motifs display a playful attitude concealing a sombre message. Her experimental approach to printmaking often incorporates a wide range of materials and processes, using layers of drawing and mark-making to obscure and reveal the image. Alice Irwin (b. 1994) graduated from the MA in Prints at the Royal College of Art in 2018. Her work has been exhibited at CGP London, Platform Projects at the Alternative Art Fair, and a solo exhibition *A Life Lived with Play* at Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Irwin was awarded the Contemporary Art Trust Prize, Bankside Gallery in 2017, and the Norman Ackroyd Etching Prize in 2016.

The work of painter **Ishbel Myerscough** is concerned with every mark, imperfection and physical trace encountered in the detailed study of her subjects. Over the past three decades, Myerscough has painted herself, her close friend and fellow artist Chantal Joffe and their families, following a journey of self-examination from young women to motherhood. The etchings in this exhibition are closely cropped portraits (including a self portrait) exploring ideas of familial intimacy. The fine marks evoke feelings of tenderness and closeness between artist and subject, while also potentially transmitting discomfort or unease in the proximity of the gaze. Ishbel Myerscough (b. 1968) studied at Glasgow and the Slade Schools of Art; she won the National Portrait Gallery's annual BP Portrait Award competition in 1995 and as a result was commissioned to paint Helen Mirren's portrait for the collection and subsequently Sir Willard White. Her work has been exhibited across the UK and internationally, including the Fine Art Society, London; National Portrait Gallery, London; the Royal Academy, London; and Turner Contemporary, Margate.

Intimate and intricately detailed, **Freya Payne's** work is a poetic and symbolic response to the observation of the everyday, charting the ways in which we mark and narrate life's meaningful and emotional moments. In her black and white etchings Payne depicts macabre domestic scenes, which have been described as 'Goya-esque'. Images such as *Ladder* are overlaid with urgent notes and scribbles, creating a disturbing psychological portrait of motherhood. Freya Payne (b. 1968) graduated from the Royal College of Art, London in 1994 and now lives and works in Scotland. She exhibits both nationally and internationally, and has won awards such as the Insight Investment Image of the Year Award 2007, Royal Academy of Arts; Cuthbert New Young Artist Award, Royal Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts in 2005; and the prestigious Villiers David Prize in 1999.

Described as a 'painter of stories', **Paula Rego's** enigmatic and often disturbing prints are drawn from folk-tales and literature, using narratives focusing on women and girls to explore the social and political currents of our time. *Ecstasy* from *The Children's Crusade* (1996-1998) depicts the sinister history of the legendary 1212 crusade. *Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary II* is an etching from Rego's first major set of original prints, the Nursery Rhymes series (1989), produced for her granddaughter Carmen on her second birthday. This is one of two works representing the well-known nursery rhyme, believed to be based on the life of Mary Queen of Scots, with the 'pretty maids' representing nuns, and the cockleshells emblematic of Catholic pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela. Paula Rego (b. 1935) DBA, RA, was the first associate artist at the National Gallery in London and has exhibited across the world. Her work is represented in the collections of the Arts Council, British Council, British Museum, National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery and Tate among others. Her work is currently on view in the exhibition *Paula Rego: Obedience and Defiance* at Milton Keynes Gallery until 22 September.

Alison Watt is a Scottish painter renowned for her depiction of the figure and drapery. The monoprint *Nude 10- Nude 2* from 1995 demonstrates Watt's focus on the nude female body in her work during that decade. Alison Watt (b. 1965) studied at Glasgow School of Art and won the National Portrait Gallery's annual award in 1987. Her work has been exhibited in solo exhibitions across the United Kingdom, including the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, UK; Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Perth UK; and Dulwich Picture Gallery, London; and in group exhibitions internationally. From 2006-2008 Watt was the Associate Artist at the National Gallery, London, culminating in a solo exhibition in 2008. She was awarded the OBE in 2008.

For more information and images please contact Hannah Hughes: 0207 920 7777 / hannah@flowersgallery.com

1. Leslie Dick, *Amanda Faulkner: Wishful Thinking*, Small Mysteries Catalogue, 1998, Flowers Gallery, London
2. Graham Music: *Reflections on Dream and Imperative*, two series of portraits of children, Rebecca Fortnum: Self Contained, 2013, Cornerhouse Publications, Manchester.



From Left: Alison Watt, *Nude 10 - Nude 2*, 1995, monoprint; Amanda Faulkner, *Day Bed*, 1996, monoprint.

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Exhibition opening hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 6pm.