

DIANNE FOGWELL

*ALTERED PROVIDENCE*

AUSTRALIAN GALLERIES – SYDNEY – 23 APRIL 2024 – 11 MAY 2024

I'm not a printmaker, but I know the smell of ink, the incessant noise of making, the texture of handmade paper, the weight of a thousand small and large linoleum blocks sorted and crammed into every available draw. I know these sensations because I am Dianne Fogwell's eldest son and have lived my entire life inside and around her art. I experience Fogwell's work as a living and breathing process. It covers every available surface; a constant explosion of colour, mess and lino dust, created in the hard-fought gaps between everyday life, signed on ironing boards in the kitchen and lining the hallways in packing boxes.

I'm not a printmaker, but I know my tools, that compulsion to be in the studio, the creative tension that builds and releases in my body as an idea works its way into existence. I rarely experience Fogwell's work as a completed artefact, even less so inside a gallery. I understand and recognise her work through her *alphabet of images* more so than a timeline of exhibitions. I map the chronology of her works through vague sensory memories of cleaning, alphabetising and sorting those blocks, or catching late night glimpses of them pinned between a hand tool or carving gouge and Fogwell's measured eye.

I've had the (unique for me) experience of viewing Fogwell's work episodically since departing the family home 13 years ago. Every few months I'll find myself in mum's studio, weary after a long drive from Naarm/Melbourne with a home cooked meal in hand, glancing at the latest offerings on the wall as she oscillates between family updates and musing on whichever body of work is working its way out at the moment. Visits during the making of *Prescience*, her fifty-six panelled tour de force, were particularly intense. The family knew she was doing something big, because she told us at every moment, but none of us were prepared for seeing that epic work as a glorious panorama inside the Geelong Gallery for the first time.

*"These images are my remembering's of familiar landscapes from my childhood to now. For over 45 years I have driven back and forth from the sea, over the Illawarra escarpment, through Macquarie Pass to Canberra to where I live now. My most important memories were made during those journeys."* - Dianne Fogwell

The otherworldly scale of *Prescience* has embedded an expansiveness to Fogwell's work that remains in the exhibition *Altered Providence*. These works are vignettes that probe my memories for moments with those surreal landscapes and demand a moment of reflection. The sheer intensity of detail and abstraction creates a timelessness to these spaces that seem to draw the viewer simultaneously deeper into Fogwell's history and that of the landscapes themselves. A landscape carefully nurtured by the *Wodi Wodi* people of the Dharawal Nation for tens of thousands of years, and cut into by white settlers in 1898 to create the Macquarie Pass. In front of these works I find myself meditating on the timeless, powerful, yet perilously fragile landscapes that in Fogwell's words are *"made up of layers of memories that are sensual, pictorial and emotional"*.

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March, 2024

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*I live and work on Wurundjeri Country*