

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Of Australia

Report by Winsome Jobling 2008 Churchill Fellow

Investigate innovative hand papermaking focusing on specialist papers for printmaking.

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Signed Winsome Jobling

Dated 22nd December 2008

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Introduction

The fellowship enabled me to travel to the USA and Singapore (via London) to study innovative hand papermaking techniques specifically looking at the making of specialist papers for printmakers. This report records my experiences and the new techniques and technologies I learned and finally some recommendations to further the development of hand papermaking in Australia.

I extend my appreciation to the Churchill Trust for the opportunity to pursue and expand my passion for hand papermaking. I met and worked with fabulous people and being asked to deliver a workshop to teach a technique I developed was a huge boost to my confidence and a personal recognition of where I stand in the 'world' of hand papermaking.

Thanks also to my husband, family and friends who encouraged and supported me to pursue this Fellowship.



Working on a large double dipped sheet at Pyramid Atlantic

Executive summary

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My Churchill Fellowship travel was undertaken between the 3rd October and the 29th November 2008.

The aim of the Fellowship was to investigate innovative hand papermaking focusing on specialist papers for printmakers.

I chose to do this in a number of ways; first to work alongside papermakers to gain practical insights and skills and second through research by visiting other professional papermaking studios and talking to relevant practitioners.

My research took me to state of the art paper and print studios in the USA and Singapore where they are pushing the boundaries of paper and print and where the collaboration between master printmakers, papermakers and artists was encouraged through residencies. Artists who may not have worked in these particular media were challenged and supported in developing new work. Visiting print and works on paper collections held by major galleries and museums further enriched the experience.

Highlights: Most everything was a highlight!!

- Working collaboratively on large scale works with Gretchen Schermerhorn, studio director and papermaker at Pyramid Atlantic.
- Working with and mentoring some of the key holder artists and interns at Pyramid Atlantic.
- Being asked to conduct a workshop demonstrating my wax watermarking and double dipping technique for Pyramid Atlantic members.
- Meeting Genevieve Wood from Johannesburg who was studying at Dieu Donne. We both work with similar fibres and in 'low-tech' situations and will continue to communicate.
- Attending an artist's talk at the Elizabeth Foundation of Arts in New York. Where four artists and their collaborators spoke about the process of collaboration between master printmakers and papermakers and artists.
- Meeting with Richard Hungerford, (one of my papermaking heroes!) master papermaker at Singapore Tyler Print Institute.

Recommendations:

- To further develop hand papermaking in Australia by maintaining contacts with papermakers and institutions in the USA and Singapore and building links with National papermaking groups such as papermakers of Victoria.
- To hold open studio days here in Darwin for local artists from all fields to promote the potential of future collaborations using handmade paper.

Implementation and Dissemination:

- Deliver papermaking workshops in Darwin in 2009
- Take samples of new techniques learned to the International Papermakers Conference to be held in Bernie, Tasmania in March 2009.
- Write articles for Papermakers of Victoria and other publications.
- Offer my studio and resources for visiting papermakers.
- Prepare a folio of samples of techniques in paper that can be offered to printmakers

distributed through Basil Hall Editions and Northern editions in Darwin.

Fellowship Program

3rd October – 4th November

Pyramid Atlantic Silver Spring, Washington DC Maryland USA

- Practical experiments with pre-processed fibres such as abaca, gampi and flax
- Use of a professional quality Hollander beaters
- Use aqueous dispersal pigments, retention aid and sizing
- Pulp painting
- Vacuum forming and pulp spraying.
- Visit galleries and museums in Washington DC

4th November – 12th November, New York

- Dieu Donne
- Carriage House Paper Brooklyn
- Efa (Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts)
- The Drawing centre
- Lower East Side Printshop
- Visit galleries and museums

13th November – 21st November, London (mainly own time)

- Ephemeral paper collection, watermarks and cut papers at the Victoria & Albert Print and drawing study room.
- Visit galleries and museums

22nd November – 25th November

- Singapore Tyler Print Institute
- Visit galleries and museums

Papermaking in Australia briefly

Since the first National paper Conference in Hobart, Tasmania in 1987 papermaking and paper art evolved and expanded significantly in Australia. The conference was held at the Papermill (originally Jabberwock founded in 1978), part of the Tasmanian School of Art. Other Paper mills were later set up in some universities and colleges such as ANU in Canberra and the South Australian school of Art from the late 1980's but due to funding cuts many of these have been dismantled. There are a large number of papermakers in Australia. Scattered far and wide though many are united by their state associations. Papermakers of Victoria has the biggest membership of around 400 members, Papermakers of Queensland continue to meet and the organization of Papermakers of NSW has disbanded while the well equipped Primrose Paperworks Cooperative in Sydney has a small fluctuating membership.

There are two 'commercial' hand paper-mills in Australia. Creative paper is located in Burnie, Tasmania and Blue Lake is in Mt Gambier South Australia. There are also two indigenous paper-mills Euraba Paper at Bogabilla NSW and Arilla Paper in Mt Isa Qld. Bogabilla uses cotton waste from the plantations and Arilla mixes local plants with pre-processed fibre. Working as a papermaker in Australia requires dedication, determination and innovation. Professional equipment is expensive and has to be imported as do processed fibres, additives and other specialist supplies.

Distance restricts opportunities for working together but the newsletter published by POV and conferences such as the upcoming IAPMA Conference in Burnie are opportunities Australian

papermakers devour!!as are opportunities to travel overseas to learn more.

Papermaking at Pyramid Atlantic Silver Spring Washington DC

My first email home started with 'I am in heaven!'

Pyramid Atlantic is a non-profit art studio specialising in papermaking, all forms of printmaking, letterpress printing and book binding. Part of Pyramids mission is to 'promote and nurture artistic excellence through programming in the mediums of handmade paper' Gretchen Schermerhorn is the Director of the paper and printmaking studios and also teaches papermaking and printmaking. Jose Dominguez is the Executive Director.

Pyramid offers artist residencies, workshops, one-to-one tuition, outreach programs at schools and community centres as well as an exhibition and events program. Works can also be commissioned. For my four weeks at Pyramid. For my month long visit I was treated as an unofficial Artist in residence.

The Pyramid studios are also made available to artists, called key holders who can use the studios at any time enabling them to continue their art practice and work at the same time. They have access to all the facilities and equipment and just pay for materials used. A great idea and I think similar in a way to the Darwin Visual Artists Association. Interns also work on different days and are usually students who have graduated and are developing skills before Post-Grad studies; they work on general studio operations and some commissions.

I loved working at Pyramid and being in Silver Spring. Gretchen was always supportive and helpful and we worked together to produce some large pieces of paper.

I worked in the Pyramid studios every weekday (and some weekends) from 9am to around 6pm (sometimes later). Each day I learned something new! I tried fibres I had never used, a drying method far more appropriate for preparing printmaking papers, learned more about the intricacies of using the Hollander Beater. I was disappointed to find out that the beater I have will not over beat pulp to make a high-shrinkage, transparent paper – I had beaten Manila Hemp (abaca) in Darwin for 4 hours in my beater and wondered what I was doing wrong!! In the Pyramid "Valley" beater it took 1 1/2 hours. High shrinkage paper is good for sculptural pieces and I have always wanted to make paper intestines to combine with some drawings I had done. We beat some flax for over an hour in the Valley beater until it was a fine and 'plastic' slurry. I made a tubular armature of fine curtain mesh, filled it with sand and wrapped it with wax dipped cotton thread. Making the over beaten sheets was nearly impossible' I called it invisible paper it was so fine. The hardest part was lifting it off to place on the armature. The final piece was worth it and looked just as I wanted. I wish I could I do it in Darwin but will need to import a new beater.

I was asked to give a 3 hour workshop demonstrating my wax watermarking and double dipping technique, what I call East meets West. I had 12 participants for the evening workshop and started off with a short talk and slide show about my work and where I come from which was really well received. The workshop went well and the participants really enjoyed the process though it took a bit of time to master the technique of dipping the second colour without disturbing the first layer. I had beaten 3lbs of cotton and 5lbs of abaca using a range of different pigments for the workshop, a very practical learning experience.

I learned a new way of pouring big sheets. Gretchen lined the mould with 'Tyvek', poured in the pulp and evened it out by hand. Then the Tyvek was pulled out as evenly and quickly as possible. We tried this technique for a really large sheet of 1.5m x 2m and then tried to add

another colour layer, similar to my double dip technique. It nearly worked and I think I could perfect it with a few more experiments.

Another technique I learned more about was pulp painting and Gretchen told me they used methyl-cellulose rather than the formation aid I had been using in Darwin. She also showed me how you could paint on very finely beaten fibre.

I also recorded a demonstration in the use of a vacuum table, which is used to produce sculptural paper pieces. With my detailed diagrams and photos I would love to make a table in Darwin.

Gretchen gave me the 'recipes' for mixing aqueous dispersal pigments and retention aid as well as some ideas on sizing paper. While there I also worked on new work that I hope to exhibit at the International Papermakers Conference in Burnie, Tasmania in March 2009. I made some really great friends and we will hopefully remain in contact sharing ideas and planning further collaborations. The working environment was always inspiring. There were always other artists in the studios working on their own projects, commissions were being completed and individual tuition being given. Gretchen was also working on her own solo exhibition, which opened on the 11th November. On Wednesday 29 Oct Pyramid held their regular artists swap night where 30 of their workers, artists, interns and others made an edition of work and everyone received a set. Each artist talked about their piece and the materials and techniques they had used to make it. I am really glad I was asked to participate in the swap as it makes a great souvenir and memory of the people I have been working with as well as being excellent examples of paper and print.



Gretchen Schermerhorn and Winsome Jobling making a large sheet at Pyramid Atlantic

Since my return Gretchen is planning to come and work with me in my Darwin studio next year for a month. I hope she gets here -I will have to get her to give a workshop!

New York

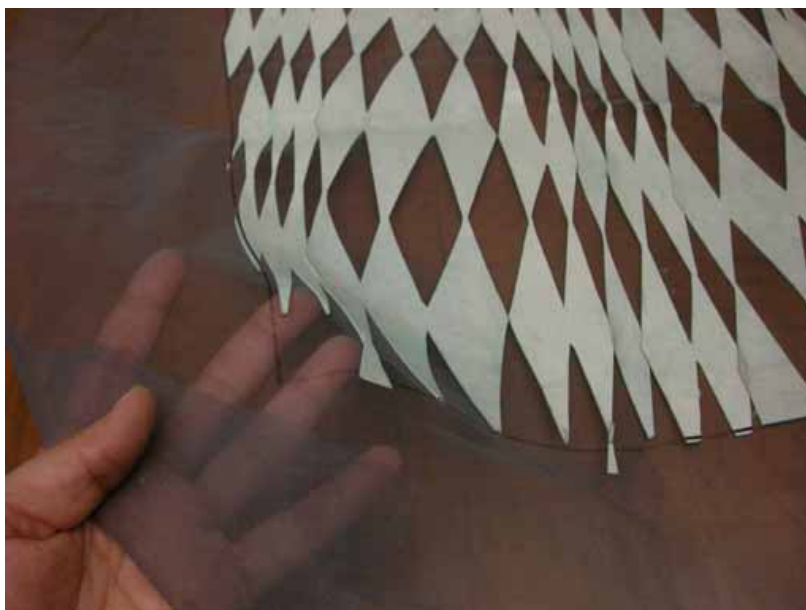
Dieu Donné Paper-mill was founded in 1976 and is a non-profit artist workspace dedicated to the creation, promotion, and preservation of contemporary art in the hand papermaking process. Both public and private funding supports it.

The facility is at 315 West 36th Street and has a huge ground-floor paper-mill, offices, gallery, and archive. The paper-mill has state of the art equipment and boasts a walk in cool-room, for the storage of prepared pulps, something I would love as I work in the tropics.

Dieu Donné offers opportunities to produce individual works and editions with print shops and publishers through collaborative artists' projects. Their workshop staff works with artists and 'print' publishers to develop innovative methods of production, which often incorporate other printmaking techniques or processes. While I was there they had produced the biggest sheet they had ever made at about 2metres x 4metres commissioned by an artist.

Artists can rent the paper-mill and staff at US\$1000. per day.

Catherine Cox is the Residency and Studio Programs Director and she was my contact at Dieu Donne. I had a guided tour of the facility and then we mainly talked about the materials and techniques used by some of the artists held in the archive. I learned so much and could see first hand how they had made particular watermarks and stencil patterns that I had puzzled over in the black and white images in Hand papermaking magazine. She gave me lots of hints and tips.



prepared mesh used to spray out areas of pulp at Dieu Donne

I also met Genevieve Wood, a papermaker from Johannesburg who was working studying contemporary studio practice in the paper-mill at Dieu Donne. She works at Phumani paper, part of the University of Johannesburg. Genevieve and I had many things in common as papermakers such as our use of local plant fibres especially banana and our low-tech attitude to papermaking. It was interesting to hear her views on the differences and she felt that in the USA the technology is the lynchpin while in the southern hemisphere the papermaker is the key, which is a more Japanese view of papermaking. I don't think this is quite the reason and maybe the difference could be to do with the early stage of development of papermaking and

the influence of the local environment.

Genevieve and I will keep in touch and keep the discussion going. We are also going to see if we can import fibre from the Philippines. There is no shipping from the Philippines to S Africa so we are looking at getting it to Darwin and then sending it on. I will work on this in the new year.

I was invited to attend an artist's talk held at the EFA project Space at 323 West 39th St (Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts). The topic was 'Converge and Conquer: A conversation about the trials and victories of Collaboration' and was in conjunction with their current exhibition 'Beyond a Memorable Fancy'.

Beyond a Memorable Fancy focused on the transformative aspects of printmaking, exploring the current trend of artists experimenting with print techniques and materials to manipulate and appropriate information. Many unconventional formats were included in the exhibition including film, signage, stencil graffiti and lasers. Many of the artists represented were on the panel as well as artists Jon Kessler and Dieu Donne papermaker Rachel Gladfelter who had collaborated on the exhibition I had seen at Dieu Donne. All participants talked about the need for trust and respect between the collaborators and for a true collaboration both participants should be challenged, enter new territory and that the ideas generated should live beyond the production of the work. I see that as being that all participants share equal importance in a collaboration as opposed to seeing one as a paid facilitator.

Carriage House Paper is a professional hand papermaking studio and a major provider of papermaking supplies and equipment, workshops are also offered on all aspects of papermaking and paper art.

The new space at 245 Kent Avenue in Brooklyn houses their showroom for handmade paper, papermaking supplies and equipment and is their major teaching and papermaking facility. Shannon Brock is art director of Carriage House Paper and maintains the papermaking studio, called Gaptoothed Studio. Her pulp paintings and sculptural work has been exhibited nationally.

During my visit they were just setting up their new gallery space for an exhibition called "Before Paper" a display of Tapa cloths from around the world and Donna Koretsky, co-founder of Carriage House had just returned to the main gallery in Massachusetts. I was sorry to have missed meeting her.

Shannon showed me around and I ordered some supplies to be sent to Australia. We talked about equipment and papermaking materials. I also saw another way of building a paper dryer. Shannon also put me in touch with Eileen Foti from New Jersey, a master printmaker and papermaker who is willing to answer any questions I may have on my return to Australia.



the paper dryer at Carriage House

The Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI) is an international publisher and dealer of fine art prints and works on paper. STPI collaborates with artists from around the world to push the technical and aesthetic frontiers of printmaking and papermaking, creating edition prints and unique works on paper. STPI is funded primarily by the Singapore Government.

Richard Hungerford is one of my papermaking heroes. He studied in Hawaii and Illinois. He joined Tyler Graphics in New York in 1999. (Ken Tyler worked as a print and papermaker with artists in the 1970's such as Robert Rauschenberg and David Hockney). Ken Tyler then set up the Singapore Tyler print Institute in 2002 and Hungerford re-located and helped set up the studio. Richard's papermaking is very experimental but supported by his deep understanding and technical knowledge of paper as a medium. He is also one of the most knowledgeable papermakers on the use of pigments and suggested I get a copy of Elaine Kortesy's book on the subject to start with.

Richard gave me a tour of the amazing facilities, all the equipment for both print and paper is purpose built and cost a fortune to set up. There is a paper-mill – with a walk in dryer! a print studio, an artists work space, a gallery, offices and artists accommodation. The work they produce here is constantly pushing the boundaries of paper and print. I saw 3D papers for printing, torn layers showing images in between and fluffy flocked prints. This visit was very inspiring.

Richard was interested my work and the images of projects I had done in Timor and the Barkly in the Northern Territory and gave me a few tips for my own work. We talked about collaboration and his role in the process.

He sees himself as a facilitator. His role is to stimulate the artist into finding something that will work for them in a short space of time. It can be hard for the artist who has only six weeks to understand the materials at his fingertips and produce the final works. Richard said he hadn't done any of his own work since he had been at STPI as he saw it as a conflict of interest since he has to work with artists to achieve and expand their own visions.

The studio was very hectic when I visited as they were just finishing off a residency, starting another and getting the new exhibition ready.

I purchased a number of really informative catalogues of past exhibitions which will be a valuable resource.

Recommendations

- Hold workshops at my studio in 2009.
- Approach Charles Darwin University Visual Arts Faculty, Darwin Visual Arts Assoc. and Basil Hall Editions about combined workshops of paper and print.
- Approach some Darwin artists to work on a collaboration project that will highlight the potential of hand papermaking. I will also look at applying for funding support through the local Government.
- Continue to offer my availability to present workshops Nationally.
- Develop a website to disseminate information.
- Continue to write for Papermakers of Victoria newsletter and Imprint magazine.
- Participate in the International papermakers Conference (IAPMA) in Tasmania in 2009.
- Produce annotated samples to be made available to papermakers and artists.
- Promote the innovative possibilities of handmade paper through production and exhibition work.

In 2009 I return to full time work as an art teacher with the aim of dropping back to part-time

during the year. I will be attending the IAPMA conference in March and will sign up as a member. At the conference I will catch up with lots of papermakers I have met or been in touch with. I am looking forward to seeing Loreto D'Apilado and Asao Shimura who I met in the Philippines and Lyn Sures who I met at Pyramid Atlantic. The conference will be a perfect vehicle for sharing what I have learned. The most exciting outcome of the Fellowship already is that Gretchen Schermerhorn from Pyramid Atlantic is planning on coming to work with me in my studio for a month later next year. I am so excited and looking forward to all that 2009 holds.



working on the first big sky sheet at Pyramid