

BELINDA FOX: "at the still point"

ARTHOUSE GALLERY

26 JULY - 16 AUGUST 2003

*"At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
but neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.
I can only say, there we have been: But I cannot say where.
And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time..."*
T.S. Elliot

To walk in to Belinda Fox's exhibition is to be struck by a certain silence, a stillness, but one that is constantly in flux. The work is enticing; one finds one's eyes, and body, compelled to move around the space to see it on a more intimate level.

What is it that engages us? Why are we drawn closer?

Stains, stamps, drips, embossing, layering, opaque film, textured paper... The works are like fragmented poetry. Everything shifts. It's all soft, beautiful, misty; atmospheric moments that are perpetually transformed and transforming.

Images are captured, abstracted, fleeting memories and moments are suspended in time and space. Positioned on top of, or beside, each other, somehow everything fits; distant mountains are suspended in mist, Buddhist flag-poles move like a ship's sail in the wind, abstracted rice balls resemble lotus flowers as they shift into the picture plane, pieces of architecture float across the surface, images of Buddha's face emerge from a miasma of ink stains and hover in abstract space, gently sloping lines embossed into the paper suggest contours, or are they mountains reflected in a lake's rippled surface...

It all comes together through the movement the artist encourages the audience to follow – in a clockwise direction – to emulate Nekorwa, the spiritual journey one makes around the base of holy Mount Kailas in Tibet.

This artist is remarkable. Not only does she present us with an entire cultural appropriation, inspired by her desire for hope and peace, but there are no holds barred in the production of her work. A printmaker extraordinaire, she stops at nothing. Her strong desire to understand everything allows her to go forth with her knowledge. Her work encompasses everything across time, from ancient Imbutsu (Buddha stamp) techniques, using lino rather than wood to "acknowledge her present position in time"¹, to etching, embossing and using fabric overlays that suggest femmage, perhaps acknowledging her position as a female artist. Occasionally it resembles painting, where her more contemporary method of dripping ink flows over ancient imagery and print techniques.

Time past, time present and time future. It is all here.

Kirsten Rann © 2003

¹ Fox, Belinda, email to me on 13 June 2003