School: Bath School of Design

Researcher: Paul Minott

Project Title: Pretty Abstract

UOA: 32 - Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory

300-Word Statement

While digital technology has made many inroads into the practice of printmaking, it is still largely defined by the traditional methods of serigraphy, intaglio, lithography and relief. Each of these involve messy, costly, potentially hazardous and time-consuming materials. Addressing these anachronistic limitations, Minott's research asked: Can a method of generating matrices for relief printing be developed which reliably provides clean, safe and affordable alternatives to traditional approaches?

Experiments in 2015, using vector-based drawing and laser cut plastic, resulted in the creation of reusable matrices which could be inked and assembled in infinite permutations to generate large scale monoprints, using multiple colours without complex registration and maintaining crisp edged juxtaposition of clean bold shapes.

Aligning with the modernist sensibility in his printmaking practice, Minott adopted this method to create a new series of prints, entitled *Pretty Abstract*, which were exhibited at the Black Swan Gallery, Frome in 2016. This led to a workshop and talk at the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts in China, where the method was tested with a new set of shapes in response to a different graphic culture. These were exhibited at the Xi'an International Printmaking Conference in 2017.

Further recent research has replaced the laser cut plastic with magnetised vinyl, cut with a hobbyist vector cutting machine, ensuring easier inking, greater precision in the placement of elements, and a quicker cleanup with no printable surface deterioration.

Minott's research has developed a new safe and economical approach to physical print making at scale, prohibited by laptops and small screens. The potential of this methodology for the education sector and graphic designers at all levels is currently in the early stages of being explored.