

BIRMINGHAM PRINTMAKERS

BY JILL WARREN

Birmingham Printmakers have recently moved into a workshop at the Jubilee Centre in Digbeth and are keen to attract more creative members to enjoy these new facilities. Sharon Baker, Company Secretary, discusses the benefits for both established and emerging artists of using a shared work space.

Birmingham Printmakers is a not for profit company limited by guarantee. It is an artist-led, membership organisation which provides facilities for printmakers and artists to work with specialised equipment to produce original pieces of art. Sharon has been a member since the early 1990's when she graduated in Fine Arts and needed space to carry on her specialism, printmaking. Now Company Secretary of the newly formed company and part of the committee that runs the facility, she and a dozen others enable the 40 or so members to use the dark room, screen printer beds, water

bath and other equipment around the clock and 7 days a week. Members pay a monthly fee for use of these facilities and while a part time technician is employed, all the committee give their time freely.

Many of the members exhibit their work locally and further afield either as individuals or in conjunction with other artists. Sharon said they are currently looking for venues to create a group exhibition in the local vicinity to promote both the unique work they do and to encourage others to join them.



ABOVE:
Sharon Baker
BOTTOM LEFT:
'SV Red Stripe'
Sharon Baker
BOTTOM CENTRE:
'Atlanterra'
Tim Southall
BOTTOM RIGHT:
'Robot Monolith'
Sharon Baker
OPPOSITE:
Birmingham
Printmakers



Birmingham Printmakers run courses for adults at their new premises in the Jubilee Centre and also offer bespoke courses off-site to colleges, schools, private companies, community groups, museums and art galleries. Courses include: Introduction to Reduction Lino Printing, Autumn & Winter Screen Printing and Safe Etch Technique.

The Printmakers produce a wide variety of work, a selection of which can be seen on the website. Sharon herself is doing a solo exhibition later in the year entitled *'Manhole Covers: Pictures Beneath Your Feet'* exploring the imagery found in popular culture and the urban environment, a part of her current creative focus. In 2015 the Birmingham Printmakers members worked with a number of community groups on a record breaking lino print commemorating the Rugby World Cup completing around 3 metres of the final 33.51 metre print!

Sharon enjoys the creative side of sharing ideas with others and trying out different techniques plus the reward of supporting new members who discover a hidden talent or develop their artistic practice.

While a certain level of confidence and competence is required because of the use of machinery at the workshop, there is an induction session available for new members. When more experienced print-makers are in the workshop they will also give help and advice. The members work with a wide variety of clients ranging from galleries to illustrating agencies which recently include Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and the Barber Institute. Sharon and the committee of the Birmingham Printmakers welcome enquires regarding the facilities available and on the different courses they run. Please see the website below for more details and an informative video showing the range of opportunities on offer. Birmingham Printmakers are proud of the contribution they make to the creative life of the City. ■

For more details of the courses, to view the artists' work or to find out more about membership please visit: www.birminghamprintmakers.org

Birmingham Printmakers, Unit 312 Jubilee Centre, 130 Pershore Street, Birmingham, B5 6ND.

