

FREMANTLE ARTS CENTRE

31st

**FREMANTLE  
PRINTAWARD**

9 SEPTEMBER – 22 OCTOBER 2006

## Winner Major Acquisitive Prize \$7,000

**Neil Emmerson**

*wood nymph triptych (the heart is a lonely hunter)*  
screenprint

## Winner Non-Acquisitive Prize \$3,000

**Billy Missi**

*Links*  
linocut

## Commendations

**Peter Burgess**

*Art & Letters pt.1 vs.5*  
inkjet on photorag

**Christine Christophersen**

*The balance of men and women*  
screenprint

**Dianne Longley**

*Threads drawn from the past, towards a digital future...*  
artist book

**Tom Müller**

*Sectional Chart*  
digital ink on archival paper

**Jandy Paramanathan**

*Dog*  
woodcut

**Justin Trendall**

*Section 5*  
screenprint on silk



Dianne Longley

*Threads drawn from the past, towards a digital future...*  
artist book, 11 x 34 x 25 cm  
Highly Commended



## JENEPIHER DUNCAN

The Fremantle Print Award reverted back to its original format in 2006, after the successful 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibition by invitation in 2005. That was the last year of the Shell sponsorship which was such an enduring and productive creative partnership for the City of Fremantle. Shell sponsored the Award from 1976 until 2006 and thanks to its support, the City of Fremantle Art Collection is now a major resource for contemporary printmaking.

The sheer breadth of the selection field for this year's Award was what impressed me as I entered the Fremantle Town Hall, a fondly restored building with suitable space for laying out all 338 works for the three judges to look at and consider. Figurative content was perhaps the most popular vehicle for expression with a high representation of computer generated images.

Dennis Nona, Jasmin Stephens and I brought quite different perspectives to the process of selecting an exhibition which was our first step in the business of arriving at agreement. Dennis was a particular source of expertise around the printing process and the technical quality of the prints. Jasmin was our guide and a source of reference for many of the entrants.

Firstly, we reduced the number of works by eliminating those we did not consider were sufficiently resolved in idea, image and technical competence. Then the exhibition selection started to take shape with two prize winners and six commendations emerging by mutual agreement.

For me, Neil Emmerson's wood nymph triptych (*the heart is a lonely hunter*) screenprint was an immediate stand-out work and the decision to recognise his achievement with the major award was the judges' unanimous choice. This commanding work is both conceptually intriguing and technically adroit. The wood nymphs derive from the artist's research around the nature of camouflage patterns and techniques arising from his investigation into men in war outfits. Emmerson incorporates the paper grain into the surface of the work, layering his colour palette through screenprinting and sequencing the layers from light to dark. The highly animated surface resulting from this elaborate layering process has a sensual materiality that enhances the intriguing presence of the work. Emmerson has always been able to achieve a fine sense of the absurd in his work which includes both sculpture and printmaking, and he is nationally recognised for his outstanding technical mastery as well as the subtle engagement of his art practice with the issue of identity and the implications of socio-political disguise.

There was an impressive range of prints by Indigenous artists but again a clear winner was Billy Missi whose *Links* linocut traced the trade links between Northern Australia's Torres Strait Islands and New Guinea. Totemic symbols of the rituals of two cultures are set out along with the trading currency of head hunting, boats and fish shells. It's a complex narrative of historical and productive exchange between two Indigenous societies, who traded in commodities - what they had for what they did not have, such as shells and boats.

The judges' commendations included Tom Müller's three part *Sectional Chart* with different latitudes that map his ongoing interest in global design, universal signs and markings, the business of global travel and more specifically in this work, the graphic, geographical locations of various airports. Again, Müller's work achieves a persuasive balance of a constructing idea and technical ability that attracts and draws in the viewer.

Dianne Longley's artist's book, *Threads drawn from the past, toward a digital future...*, is a finely rendered and presented personal history through memorabilia, boxed postcards of images and narratives, family artifacts and miscellaneous family documents plus a website. It is an affectionate and revealing tribute to her family's history recreated through questions put to her mother who now suffers from loss of memory.

Peter Burgess was one of a number of artists using text to create the printed image. His inkjet print, *Art & Letters pt.1 vs.5*, tracks through the alphabet with a word in one colour, then its anagram in another, a juxtaposition of word and meaning structured by colour and line length. These pairings could be ridiculous or reasonable and included such couplings as: alienation/alone ain't I; democracy/can comedy; history/shy riot; unemployment/my opulent man; ecology/coy ogle and violence/once evil. A complex word piece, this work requires the viewer to actively detect its order and logical structure.

The Fremantle Print Award has provided a valuable cultural expression of contemporary print practice over many years and we can only hope that with appropriate support from the corporate and municipal communities, the Award will continue productively into the future, in its existing form or a revamped one.