

## Text for the catalogue 'Andrew Browne – Six Intaglios'

Robert Rauschenberg once explained, “I actually had a kind of house rule. If I walked completely around the block and didn’t find enough to work with, I could take one other block and walk around it in any direction—but that was it. The works had to look at least as interesting as anything that was going on outside the window.”

Andrew Browne adopts a similar approach in constructing his images. He uses everyday urban detritus found in his neighbourhood and in the midst of his travels; photos of random graffiti, branches washed up on the banks of inner city creeks, discarded wooden panels adorned with construction company logos and ripped pamphlets littering the streets. These images all find their way into Browne’s evolving collection of source material.

Many of these disparate components have been drawn together in the intaglio prints Browne produced at the Australian Print Workshop as part of the APW Collie Print Trust Printmaking Fellowship. Working under the guidance of APW printers Martin King and Simon White, Browne demonstrates a remarkable ability to exploit a wide range of techniques in order to achieve his gritty urban landscapes.

Rich, velvety tones of aquatint draw the viewer through a tangle of branches into the murky depths of a lair in the large print ‘A HOLLOW’ 2013. These branches, which also appear in the suite ‘FICTIONS #1–#5’ 2013, are constructed with painterly hard ground lines that twist and turn, revealing faces and bodily parts in the midst of their gnarled forms. Subtle tonal gradations are attained through the careful use of sprayed acid resistant grounds and repeated applications of aquatint. The resulting seductive imagery is almost sculptural in its description of three-dimensional forms and imbued with a sinister, psychological undercurrent. Stray marks litter the surfaces of the prints - these incidental textures are the result of foul biting and remind the viewer of the physicality of the etching process. They also recall the texture of the streetscapes from which the images were derived.

Through this project Browne, primarily a painter, has broadened his practice and clearly enjoyed the multilayered processes required to complete each print. The alchemy of turning a piece of copper into a print matrix filled with dense textures and gleaming smooth surfaces is a revelation, especially as the freshly printed paper is pulled away from the inky depths of the plate.

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