

State of the Art

Faced with lockdowns, closed studios and virtual degree shows, graduating students **Aiu Kitayama, Anna Mays and Maya Stern** created formidable work in unprecedented circumstances



Dim Light in Darkness (2020) Japanese woodcut, 45.5 x 60.5 cm. Edition: 6



Hall J (2020) Etching, 36.3 x 12.5 cm. Edition: 22

Aiu Kitayama, Camberwell, UAL

Inspired by the view from the stage playing the violin in my childhood and the philosophical thought of Maurice Merleau-Ponty: to see and to be seen, I have created a series of artworks whose theme is the auditorium. Ordinarily, we are more concerned with actors on the stage in the theatre, but through my works, I aim to show things the other way round from the performers' perspective.

As a metaphor for the transient nature of life, I conceive the auditorium where the audience come and go anonymously, like unknown ancestors and individuals in the past and future. Further, I have developed my ideas into the notion of anonymity, equivalency, and ambivalence. Currently, the empty

theatre may connote the environment of lockdown and represent the impression of the situation. However, I started this series as the expression of the invisible human body several years ago. Instead, I intend to depict a glimmer of hope in the reflected light from the stage, based on traditional Japanese aesthetics that value dim light in the darkness.

In addition, I research the influence and difference of aesthetics between the West and Japan since the 19th century, for example, Bauhaus and artists in St Ives, associated with Modernism. I attempt to behold culture from various perspectives. In my recent series, I have engaged myself in lithography, etching, and Japanese woodcut print, also photography, abstract, and sculpture to inquire what the contemporary print is.

Left 4T28 (2019) Stone lithography, 34 x 25 cm. Edition: 40

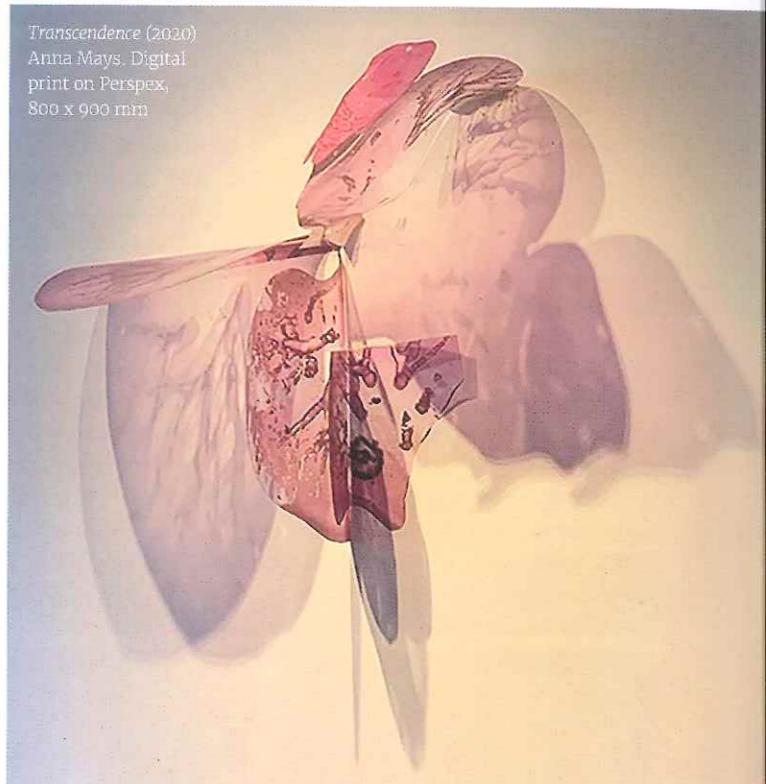
AIU KITAYAMA, ANNA MAYS AND MAYA STERN

Anna Mays, University of Brighton

Building upon technical skills and pushing the boundaries of print mediums are what stimulate my practice and love of printmaking. A current focus of my work is installation, often involving sculptural elements, which allows me to enable specific contextual and emotive responses. My interests are around how the human body is perceived in contemporary western society and how it is constantly being shaped by rapidly advancing technologies and medicine. As a society we are generally less active

and are becoming more dependent on these technologies. I am interested in how our contemporary lifestyle may lead to a sense of disconnectedness between ourselves and the flesh of the body and a deterioration of the intuitive understanding a person has of their body. I see this as a breakdown of the relationship, which consequently results in a fear of what is going on within us –

Transcendence (2020)
Anna Mays. Digital print on Perspex,
800 x 900 mm



Maya Stern, Syracuse University

My ancestry is rooted in German-occupied Austria, and my family, like many others, was forced to act upon beliefs they did not hold. Through my practice, I employ archival imagery and personal mementos of those subjected to the abuses of power to preserve personal narrative. Researching, investigating and rediscovering lost histories, I use the evidentiary nature of photography to lend legitimacy to personal narrative and explore the veracity of memory, its slippage and distortion over time. Ultimately these works become a mnemonic device in themselves, retelling the narratives of those who, whether through political or social forces, fear or distress, remain unable to tell their own story. It is through the viewer's interaction with the work that these lived experiences of wartime trauma undergo their second life and death. As the story of the Holocaust becomes erased from the public consciousness, it is imperative that we continue the widespread education of this worldwide catastrophe.

Left *Isadore* (2020) Maya Stern. Weaving, screenprint, bleach, 914 x 518 mm

