Introduction

Cressida Campbell is a Sydney based artist working in the printmaking medium. This exhibition is a comprehensive survey of her woodblock painting from 1984 to 2008, a period spanning 25 years. Her work is based on observation as is evident in her subject matter which includes still life, landscapes and domestic interiors. Cressida Campbell is a private person, however she grew up in the public eye as her father Ross Campbell was a famous writer for the Bulletin and the Australian Woman’s Weekly. Her printmaking technique is innovative and drawing and painting are important aspects to her art making. The work shares similarities with Japanese prints in her use of colour, shadows and graphic precision. The artist’s print making process results in two finished works rather than the customary multiple prints. The finished works are one print and the woodblock from which she has produced the print. Since 1987 her prints have been made in editions of one.


Technique

The artist creates a composition which is drawn from life directly onto a plywood block using a linear drawing technique. The line drawing is then precisely carved out of the wood block using an engraving tool. The block is lightly sanded by hand, removing the pencil lines from the surface of the block. The colouring of the block takes place on an easel in her studio. Campbell uses watercolour paint which is densely applied to the surface of the block with a fine brush in two separate coats and the process usually takes from one week to two months to complete. The dry block is placed flat and then lightly sprayed with water before a piece of paper moistened with a sponge is placed on top of the block. A lino roller is used to apply pressure to the back of the Dutch Etching paper and the moistened paint transfers onto the paper to create a print. This process of printing onto paper reveals an image that is the reverse of the woodblock print. The mottled surface of her prints is the result of the spraying of the painted woodblock to subtly reveal the colour over a period of time. The resulting woodblock itself also becomes an artwork and the two complete works are exhibited together.

Still Life

Campbell’s imagery seems familiar to the viewer as it consists of recognisable objects from everyday life such as fruit, tableware, flowers and patterned textiles. This genre is referred to as still life. There is a long tradition of still life themes in art. The term refers to the depiction of inanimate objects which have been placed together.

Landscape

Campbell’s landscape or bush compositions possess a harmonious colour palette complimented with a thoughtful use of pattern, texture and shadow. The landscapes depict distinctive Australian flora from the countryside around her home city of Sydney.

Japanese Ukiyo-e Prints

Campbell has an affinity with woodblock printing and in 1980 studied at the Yoshida Hanga Academy in Tokyo, Japan. She developed a new way of printing from a woodblock which incorporates a combination of painting and printmaking. Her unique style of printing is reminiscent of the Japanese art of ukiyo-e. Ukiyo-e, which translates to ‘pictures of the floating world’ is a genre of woodblock printing and painting which was produced between the 17th and 20th centuries originating in the metropolitan culture of Edo (Tokyo). This style featured motifs of city life in particular scenes from everyday life in the entertainment district. Later imagery focused on landscapes inspired by the traditional Japanese love of nature. Ukiyo-e artists have had a great impact on the landscape painting genre internationally.

Themes

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Domestic Interiors

Cressida Campbell’s compositions of domestic interiors transform common everyday objects into environments of great beauty. The elements of colour, texture and composition are dominant in these works.
### ACTIVITIES

#### Making

Students produce a number of artworks using their everyday environment as a stimulus. Collect first hand observational material from their gardens, school or from their journey to school using photography or drawing. Include plants, trees, and objects and use collage to create a landscape environment to be developed into a print. Using a similar technique as Cressida Campbell students produce a lino print using their choice of composition.

#### Appraising

Write a page analysing Cressida Campbell’s, *Interior with black lacquer chair*, 2007. Describe the artist’s composition, her use of colour, pattern and perspective. Comment on the difference between viewing the work in a reproduction compared to seeing the actual artwork in the gallery. What do you notice in the actual artwork that was missing when viewing the reproduction?

#### Discussion

Take careful notice of the titles of Cressida Campbell’s artworks. How would describe the titles? Why do you think she uses this method of naming her artworks?

#### References

**Further Reading**


**Online Resources**

www.cressidacampbell.com


**References**


**Tour**

Free guided tours with a curator of *Timeless: The Art of Cressida Campbell* are available for all age groups and interests. Tours must be booked in advance. Phone 07 3138 5370 or email artmuseum@qut.edu.au to make your booking.

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**INFORMATION**

*Timeless: The Art of Cressida Campbell*

5 March - 19 April

FREE ENTRY

QUT Art Museum
2 George Street (next to City Botanic Gardens)
Brisbane Q 4000
07 3138 5370
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QUT Art Museum is proudly supported by

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**OPENING HOURS**

Tuesday - Friday 10am - 5pm
Wednesday 10am - 8pm
Saturday and Sunday 12pm-4pm