Printed Forms , Invalid Geometry and Contemporary Printmaking Practice.

“Out of this stony rubbish ? Son of man,

You cannot say , or guess , for you know only

A heap of broken images ,where the sun beats,”

The Burial of the Dead-The Waste Land . T .S .Eliot . 1922.

What is Printmaking ? is it merely a reprographic function, a process of propagating skilled multiples , an impress , offset or stenciled form on to paper or a flat surface. A crafted autographic process or a very particular conversation in the visual arts where processes of contemporary practice meet the world of possible , the world of “ What if ? “ The world of action lead construction ,of chance ,reaction and application. A freeform act of composition without a predictable end .

Printmaking has sat secure in it ‘s certainties , rules and conventions . A reasoned position serving a public perception crafted production of conventional subjects “nicely” rendered .Yet Printmaking historically has been associated with the radical , the inventive , the application of new technologies and processes. Often lead by the need to express complex new changes in both society , it various means of production and the changing status , activity of artist in their time . To give or assign values to the artist printmaker harking back to a long lost romantic past where the rendition of recognizable forms in a soap opera version of modern life would seem strange .The recent remembrance of the First World War is dramatic reminder of a primary drive that still drives many questions that burn brightly in the mind of contemporary artists. We are no longer in Eden nor do the beliefs or certainties of ages a guide to examine or understand the modern world .Only the lack of predictability ,our conditional sense of the world allows for a testing world where the experimental ,the challenging and questioning nature give a rational edge to our perceptions .

My first desire over many years was to wrap images around a printed form and if possible mould that form at the same time . Over the years I experimented with many approaches . Printed work was sourced in interests in Primitive European Art particularly from the North , African art , the collaged (and Montage ) .the overworked photographs , fertility symbols , outside art ,memories of pass heavy industry machinery , engineering constructions and biological forms. All have fused together in the new work ,in the production of three dimensional prints.

My approach to the drawings that would translate to the 3D printed form was like a freeform musical script , drawn within the limits of a engineering CAD package but pushing ,breaking the internal rules and intention of the software. This improvisation within the original drawings is a strange procedure to someone used to the predictable ends and work that followed a pattern of production .I went through a process that produced an print by a series a restricted limits open to an unpredictable course.

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Many problems arose through trying to understand the 3d form in virtual imagery –it does not fully encompass the total form-it easy to believe that a fully connected form has been constructed but without careful review it is easy to make constructional mistakes of a couple pixel size that end in a disjointed object once sent to the printer . Once processed to remove the support material which is printed at the same time one can find a pile of disconnected pieces .

The printing is achieve by the production of a finial drawing in a CAD software which is reprocessed by the printer software to the right sited orientation and position so that the main object plastic and support material are printed by a heated head at the same time. The object is built(printed) in thin layers in a cross pattern which gives a grained directional pattern to the surface of the printed object .This is a process that takes hours and may take a day or so to print depending on its complexity .The simpler or smaller the object the faster the printing . You can also vary the density and proportional size. Objects can easily distort or break with weight of different aspects of the printed object once the support material is removed .Until the last minute it is possible to be sure of the results.

After year of working with extended conventional means I feel as though I am back at a start point where the magic of producing a print has returned. The computer like photography before has radically changed the nature of printmaking .The 3D print is a means of wrestling a printed object from a virtual geometry of the mind eye and memories.