

Mychael Barratt Q&A

'Map, Myths and Muses'

Sarah Wiseman Gallery

4th-18th November 2017

1. SW: Can you start by telling us what visitors can expect to see in 'Maps, Myths and Muses' at Sarah Wiseman Gallery?

MB: I will be showing an eclectic mixture of paintings and prints that all in some way respond to my interests in art history, history in general, maps, theatre and literature. This exhibition will be technically and thematically diverse but hopefully all of the works will share an autographic mark of the maker and a sense of humour. I am also planning a couple of Oxford specific pieces and one very large-scale painting based loosely on the works of William Hogarth.

2. SW: You've lived in London for over thirty years. Can you tell us what appealed to you about the UK when you first moved here, and how does it continue to inspire you?

MB: I arrived in London for what was supposed to be a fortnight and was immediately struck by what a truly unique place it is. It is a city replete with stories and as a narrative artist this is something that provides constant inspiration. As subject matter, it shifts in and out of my work but will never disappear. I find it ceaselessly compelling.

3. When did you discover printmaking and what drew you to the medium?

MB: I was walking along the South Bank when a sudden rain storm drove me into the Royal Festival Hall. There was an exhibition of etchings in the foyer that I loved so much, I signed up for an etching course at Central St Martins the following week. I was already an artist but that course was my proper introduction to printmaking. I now employ every different printmaking technique imaginable but still have a great affection for etching.

4. What sorts of challenges to you encounter when making your work?

MB: Printmakers should constantly look for their work to be challenging or they run the risk of it becoming too slick. I do less preparatory work and allow for the possibility of happy accidents with more abandon to try to avoid the work becoming too polished.

5. SW: What memorable responses have you had to your work?

MB: Standing beside your work at art fairs and exhibitions, you hear a great range of opinions and comments. The ones that have stuck with me the most have been the occasions where someone has bought my work as their first ever art purchase. This always feels special and like a real honour.

6. What's next – any dream projects you'd like to tackle?

MB: I want to do some a couple of large linocuts that I may or may not have ready for my show at the Sarah Wiseman Gallery. I am also making another trip to New York and a trip to China later this year so very much hope that these adventures influence my work.

- Mychael Barratt, August 2017 for Sarah Wiseman Gallery, Oxford