

CYNTHIA-REEVES

January 28, 2016

CATS IN THE CRADLE



Cats in the Cradle, 2007, collagraph and acrylic on Japanese paper, 17 x 7 ft

CONCEPT

“Cats in the Cradle” was developed during a very productive month long residency at the C.C.P in Westport, Connecticut in 2007.

I had already been working on large scaled prints for the past five years. However it was during this Residency where I had access to a large press that a significant body of work was to be produced working by myself and in total seclusion. Looking back now with hindsight I consider this time in my career as an extremely fertile time where a strong sense of direction was guiding each and every decision. It was in this incubator that “Cats in the Cradle” was conceived as a bookend to this large project that I had been working on for the last year and was determined to finish with one more challenge. “Cats in the Cradle” was the very last piece made in this series as it encapsulated the whole of my experience during that time and it involved many elements and over printings that were used throughout subsequent prints. During this time I had been having a particular satisfying experience with all of the work up until this point so I decided to try to make a piece that reflected a new scale but with the accuracy and intimacy of the smaller prints. I had never made a print this size and had always wanted to see if I could translate one of my images successfully. I was



particularly concerned about whether I could work the rich layers of the Collagraph technique, the dimensionality of the textured plates and the graphic snap that had become my signature in earlier work but on this monumental stage. To this day I have not attempted to make another Print this large, but this is not to say that I will not in the near future as the scale still continues to excite me on many levels.

INFLUENCES AND BACKGROUND

I had long been interested by a suite of prints called the “Tokeido Highway, 52 Stations” which were made by the Japanese Artist Ando Hiroshige from 1855 in the Ukiyo-E Woodblock Printing tradition. The Tokeido Highway depicted the route that linked the Feudal Japanese city of Edo with Kyoto in 1833-84. At the time the Japanese population were advised not to travel into the landscape because of this path being fraught with danger, marauding bandits and unfriendly geographies. So Hiroshige made the trek himself documenting his path by creating 52 stations or images of the towns, rivers and geographic abnormalities that he encountered. He then marketed these prints to those who were not so brave, but who wanted a visual token of this real and embellished experience. An idea was hatched.

These colorful woodblock prints became My inspiration for this new body of work in 2007. What I loved about his prints was that he had the ability to distil the landscape into detailed architectural and organic elements giving the sense of a much larger landscape. It was this idea that I was responding to and the ability to work with the suggestion of a

larger landscape depicted through minimal areas of intense detail and organic forms overlapping and intertwined. Representing the landscape Hiroshige simplified and distilled its forms into a highly personal language of symbols, motifs and exquisite ornamentation that were repeated in subsequent images.

I then decided to make my own version of the 52 Stations of the Tokaido Highway, but on a much smaller scale. My idea was to create a fictional Highway from the East coast of America to the east coast of a my native Australia and everything in between.

There are 19 images all in total all 7x 8 ft in this series and all depicting my interpretation of this real and imagined voyage that spans landscapes and oceans and memories both real and forgotten. "Cats in the Cradle suggests a Station one of chaos, entanglement and repetition found in a Southern landscape one of deep roots, complexity, and isolation set against a night sky in a Southern Hemisphere Constellation and of course mirrored to represent the duality of this North- South experience.

-Sarah Amos



Cats in the Cradle on the set of *Black Swan*, Fox Searchlight Pictures