

Sherida Charles – *Locations in Linocut*

Visual Description

This exhibit is of multicolour reduction linocut prints on rough-edged paper. I will describe 5 of the works. The prints are matted and framed in simple white or black frames. They are arranged mostly two to a panel on the large, freestanding gallery panels. There are four double sided panels, covered with a beige carpet-like material, stacked in a line, running north-south. The panel faces also point north-south. The panels are numbered 1 through 8, with 1 being the northernmost panel, 2 being the south facing panel on the rear side of panel 1, and so on, through panel 8 being the southernmost panel.

Sherida Charles is a New Westminster resident, former public school art educator and member of Printermedia, a collaborative Printmaking studio in Vancouver, run by Malaspina Printmakers on Granville Island. She has explored creating art in print, paint and mixed media full time since 2020, and has participated in the New West Cultural Crawl for the past 3 years. Sherida was born in Jamaica and has always been drawn to bright colours and bold shapes along with a keen interest in art history and iconography. Underlying all recent expressive work is a growing interest in compelling composition, abstraction and simplification of detail.

Sherida says of the exhibit, “The multicolour reduction linocuts exhibited are based on iconic signs or locations in our urban landscape, highlighting notable forms, shapes and colours with historic presence and neighbourhood character. Many are in New Westminster, but also in nearby Burnaby, Coquitlam, Port Moody and Vancouver.

“These works were all created during the pandemic when much time was spent walking or commuting downtown, putting my focus on the streetscapes. They also present a focus on simplified colour schemes stemming from an interest in the work of Mondrian, which has informed my work in other media as well. Mondrian tended to use mainly primary colours and neutrals such as grey, black and white. Thus my palettes have been similarly focused for these works.

“Size variations in the prints resulted from periods during the pandemic when the studio was closed due to COVID19 and other issues, and working from home without a press it was necessary to work on a smaller scale. The reduction linocut technique involves successively carving and printing from the same lino block; as the printing surface is reduced with each carving, previous relief areas can never be reprinted, meaning that the original number printed may drop over the course of the process due to variations in printing or registration. My use of waterbased inks with a shorter drying time also has affected the edition size of the prints, which tends to be under 6 prints for each edition.”

Panel 1 Left Side – Caps Wheel Goods (30”x24”)

This print shows a complex sign for Sapperton’s iconic Cap’s Bicycle Shop, viewed from below, so we can see the depth of the sign as well as the design on its face. The sign reaches from the very bottom of the print almost up to the top, but not quite. The top of the sign is a circle with a blue outline and a blue penny-farthing bicycle. Underneath that is a vertical rectangle with the word Cap’s in red text on a white background. There is a red vertical stripe on the right side of this segment which ties to the small red segment underneath which reads BICYCLES. The very bottom segment of the sign is a rectangle which reads ‘Wheel Goods Bicycles’. The Cs in the word bicycles are stylized to look like bicycle tire levers. Under the text is a row of wheeled ‘goods’ on a yellow background including a bicycle, a unicycle, a stroller and a wagon. Behind the sign is only sky, with two stylized thin yellow swooping and intersecting lines in an arch shape. The top of this arch extends beyond the top of the image. The entire image is in primary colours of red, blue and yellow, along with white and black, giving it an almost childlike feel.

Panel 1 Right Side – Lost in the 50's (16"x20")

This print features a sign for the Lost in the 50's Drive-In which is located on Edmonds Street near Canada Way. The text of the sign is black with blue highlights except '50's', which is in red bubble text. The sign has a yellow background and is essentially a rectangular shape with a slight indent on the left side. The vantage point is from below the sign looking up, and the whole thing is mounted to a black pole which reaches up, narrowing toward the top, running through the centre of the image. Behind the text of the sign is a great swooping, snake-like arrow that is pale red with smaller neon blue arrow shapes within larger arrow. The arrow goes from near the bottom of the print, up through the text part of the sign, then swoops around and points down to the left. In the background is a red square building on the bottom left, a two-tone blue sky, and the same two stylized thin yellow swooping and intersecting lines in an arch shape around the top of the sign.

Panel 2 Left Side – Tattoo (12"x16")

A large sign from Granville and Davie Streets in downtown Vancouver, with the word Tattoo in vertical, western-style lettering, is the focal point of this print. The letters are white with thin red outlines, and are on a black sign. The red of the letters is slightly offset from the white, giving the impression of depth. On either side of the sign, a dark grey and black square building is visible. There is some texture to the walls – to the left of the sign there are the tell-tale gouges from the carving tool in lino, and to the right, there are some vertical outlines in white and black. The building cuts a diagonal line across the print from the top left to near the bottom of the right hand side. A bright blue sky is behind the building and sign on the top right corner of the print.

Panel 2 Right Side – Weathered Sign (12"x16")

This print has a sign right in the middle with the text, Martins Chrome Custom Built Furniture. In real life, this sign is located on Lougheed Highway near Brunette. The sign has several segments or shapes and colours of text. At the bottom of the sign is a rectangular section with the yellow, all caps, CUSTOM BUILT FURNITURE. Above the rectangle, is an inverted triangle, with a small half-circle section on the top. MARTINS in yellow with a pink neon tube is over top of Chrome, which is in a stylized italic font in white. The C of chrome is very tall and goes up into the rounded space at the top of the sign. The sign has a red background with a light blue border. The sign is attached to a building on the right hand side of the print, and a small triangle of yellow wall is visible in the bottom right corner of the print. Behind the sign is sky, which is various colours of grey and white, punctuated by clouds.

Panel 7 Left Side – Local Colour (20"x20")

This square print shows a corner store with a red awning over a window with security bars right in the centre of the image, an empty white display stand below the window outside, and the store sign right at the top of the print. The sign says 'Marco Market' in all caps, with black text, and on its right is a red Coca-Cola sign with the distinctive white swoosh. The wall of the store beneath the awning is two-toned, with orange above and yellow below, as though the top half of the wall is shaded by the awning. On the left is a colour block in blue and green, echoing the shape of the awning. On the right we can just see the door of the shop slightly ajar and the street beyond. This store is located on Rumble Street in South Burnaby. This print is accompanied on the panel by two smaller prints on the right hand side.