



Exploring the 'archaic arts'

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What better day to open a show called "Unintended Consequences" than on Friday the 13th.

The show, involving eight devoted practitioners of "archaic arts", will be bringing their work to the gallery of the Cambridge Centre for the Arts for a month-long show, running to July 13.

The exhibit features works from Waterloo Region's only full-sized printmaking press, put together by members of the Riverside Print Group.

"In an era of computer-generated art and computer-assisted drawing, traditional printmaking and its techniques may seem a bit of an anachronism," said D.B. (David) Scott of the Riverside Group, in a release. "It is slow, time-consuming and requires patience and an exacting set of skills. Even then, the outcomes can be surprising and unexpected, but also beautiful and inspiring."



Unintended Consequences opens tomorrow night at the Cambridge Centre for the Arts. Seen here with some of the work are (left-right) Donna Stewart, Betty Praught and Kari Mullin.

Fellow group member Heather Franklin refers to the print process as "old school" and "very tactile".

"You have to be prepared to go with the flow because you never quite get what you planned, no matter how careful you are," she said. "It results in a lot of happy accidents."

The Riverside Print Group is a loosely organized but devoted group of enthusiasts who work out of the printmaking studio of the Design at Riverside Gallery at the University of Waterloo School of Architecture.

Printmaking combines drawing, painting, metalwork, chemistry and hard physical labour to produce art. Prints are generally done by etching onto zinc or aluminum plates, or producing "drypoint" images on zinc, aluminum or copper. These plates are then inked, wiped and printed by hand, using Waterloo Region's only full-sized printmaking press. Only rarely is the work produced in more than very limited editions; sometimes only once.

The River Print Group began as participants in a class where printmaker Brian Musson taught etching. The process was so enjoyable and held such promise that many of the class members re-enrolled. It has progressed to become a passion and the instructional course morphed over the last few years into a workshop or "atelier".

"It's a great group to work with," Franklin said. "Very diverse, all different personalities, but we've become a little group of friends with a common interest."

Not only does the group meet weekly at the Design at Riverside gallery, it ramped up the work time to use the printmaking studio once a month. The group has already had two shows and the forthcoming show at the Centre for the Arts is its largest and most ambitious to date. Participating artists include: Heather Franklin, Kari Mullin, Darryl Nunn, Betty Praught, Bill Praught, David Scott, Donna Stewart and MÈlanie Verret.

The opening reception for "Unintended Consequences" takes place June 13 from 7 to 9 p.m.

In addition to the show at the Cambridge Centre for the Arts, the Riverside Print Group will be demonstrating its craft at a Printmaking Fair June 21, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Design at Riverside, 7 Melville St. S.

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