

EXPLORING MICROBIOLOGY THROUGH PRINTMAKING

Megan Daly

Completing the MA Multi-disciplinary Printmaking course has allowed me to push boundaries and explore my practice in unique ways. I have learned how to talk about my work with confidence and understanding, developing and building on my knowledge as a printmaker.

I would describe my work as 'Bio-art' the exploration of art and science. My work looks at Micro and Nano imagery exploring cells, fungi and bacterium through printmaking.

BEFORE THE MA

Before studying the MA, I completed a degree in Fine Art, specialising in printmaking, in Belfast. I looked at cancerous cells and how they mutate and change. I used etching to investigate this; deeply etching plates and layering to create texture and depth. I used black ink with various tints to reflect the use of coloured lenses used in the research lab.

My practice is predominately focused on science, specifically microbiology. It is integral to my practice to gather information and collate patterns from microscopic slides and imagery. I play with the idea of growth and the mutation of cells, creating unique and unusual prints. I experiment with all types of printmaking techniques, particularly screen-printing, and etching.

DURING MY MA

During my MA I explored combining microbiology and printmaking, primarily focusing on screen print. Experimenting with the aesthetics of microbiology; playing with pattern, scale and texture, to reveal the beauty that lies beneath the surface.

Within the microbiology or 'Bio-Art' genre I investigated the growth, mutation and change of bacteria and fungi. I found the colours incredible, using them as a colour pallet for my other prints. I generally used first hand imagery distorting textures, colours and opacities to construct a series of unique prints.



Figure 1

I became interested in the sublime and the connections between the micro and macro world. Looking closely at the growth of bacteria and the patterns it produced was incredible. Looking beyond the surface level of bacteria often leaves us feeling like a small speck on the universe, in awe of what is going on around us and the beauty we find in it (Fig. 1).

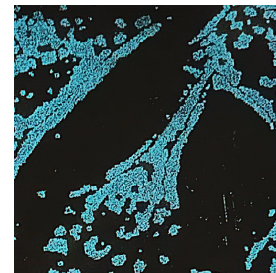


Figure 2

Some of the micro images for use with the laser engraving equipment. Once I screen printed on the acrylic I then etched onto them using the laser engraving equipment. Spacers were cut out using the laser cutter, to construct the pieces. These works were three layers placed on a stand which was made by line bending acrylic sheets (Fig. 2).

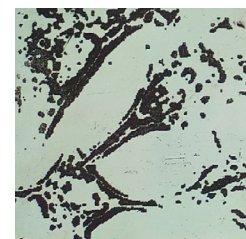


Figure 3

Figure titles and information:

- Figure 1: Collection of Cancerous Cells, etching, 2021
- Figure 2: Venule, layered etching, 2021
- Figure 3: Anomalous 1/1, etching and monoprint, 2021

I produced screen printed acrylic squares, experimenting with texture though laser etching, and playing with depth by layering multiple pieces. I added light behind the pieces to show dimension and reflect on the lights and filters used in the science laboratory. Looking at the piece from different angles showed different perspectives and details.

The pieces explore the sublime and what is below the surface. The use of acrylic reflects on the use of microscopic lenses and Petri dishes. The acrylic allowed me to display the details effectively, the lights below also helped with this.

AFTER THE MA

Since completing my MA I have moved home to Northern Ireland. Completing my MA in Bristol has allowed me to be a part of an alternative creative community. My goal now is to implement some of these ideas here in Belfast. I have continued to take part in exhibitions in London, and plan to continue to develop and show work. Alongside creating my own work my dream is to open a printmaking studio and gallery.

AUTHOR

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Megan began printmaking during her Fine Art degree at the University of Ulster. Going on to do her Masters in Multi-Disciplinary Printmaking at the University of the West of England. She has completed various residencies, most recently in the biology department at the University of the West of England. Megan's practice combines microbiology and printmaking, primarily focusing on screen print. She enjoys experimenting with the aesthetics of microbiology; playing with pattern, scale and texture, to reveal the beauty that lies beneath the surface. Within the microbiology genre, she investigates the growth, mutation and change of bacteria and fungus. She finds the colours incredible, using them as a colour pallet for her other prints. She generally uses first hand imagery distorting textures, colours and opacities to construct a series of unique prints. Megan became interested in the sublime and the connections between the micro and macro world. Looking closely at the growth of bacteria and the patterns it produced was incredible. Looking beyond the surface level of bacteria often leaves us feeling like a small spec on the universe, in awe of what is going on around us and the beauty we find in it. Going forward she wants to explore the transparency of inks and surface textures, creating unique and unusual prints, reflecting on the bacterium and fungus she has grown.

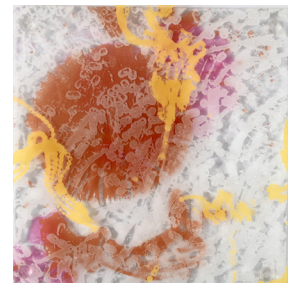


Figure 4



Figure 5

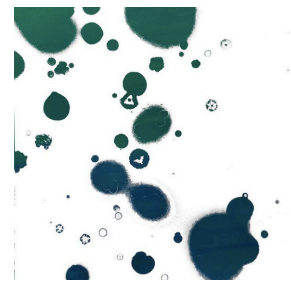


Figure 6

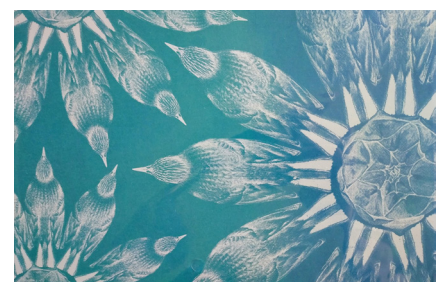


Figure 7

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Figure 4: Enzyme, screen print on acrylic, 2023
 Figure 5: SAB, Key-Koch, Enzyme, final show, etched screen print on acrylic, 2023
 Figure 6: 'Predetermined Culture', 1/20, half tone screen print, 2023
 Figure 7: 'Flew', 2/20, screen print gradient, 2023

IMAGE GALLERY

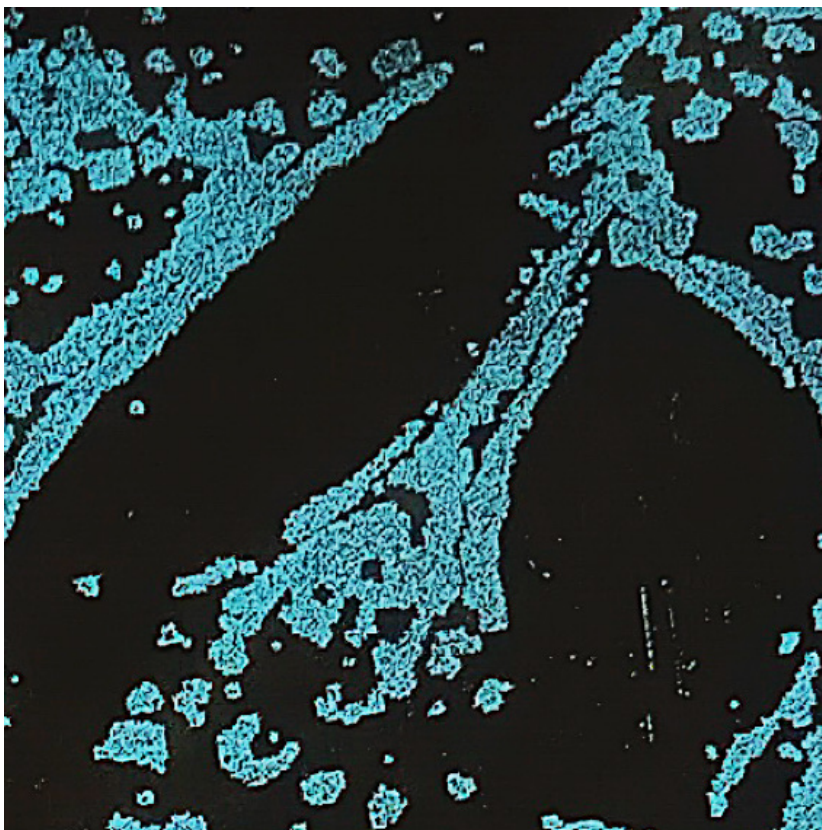


Figure titles and information

Figure 1: Collection of Cancerous Cells, etchings, 2021

Figure 2: Venule, layered etching, 2021

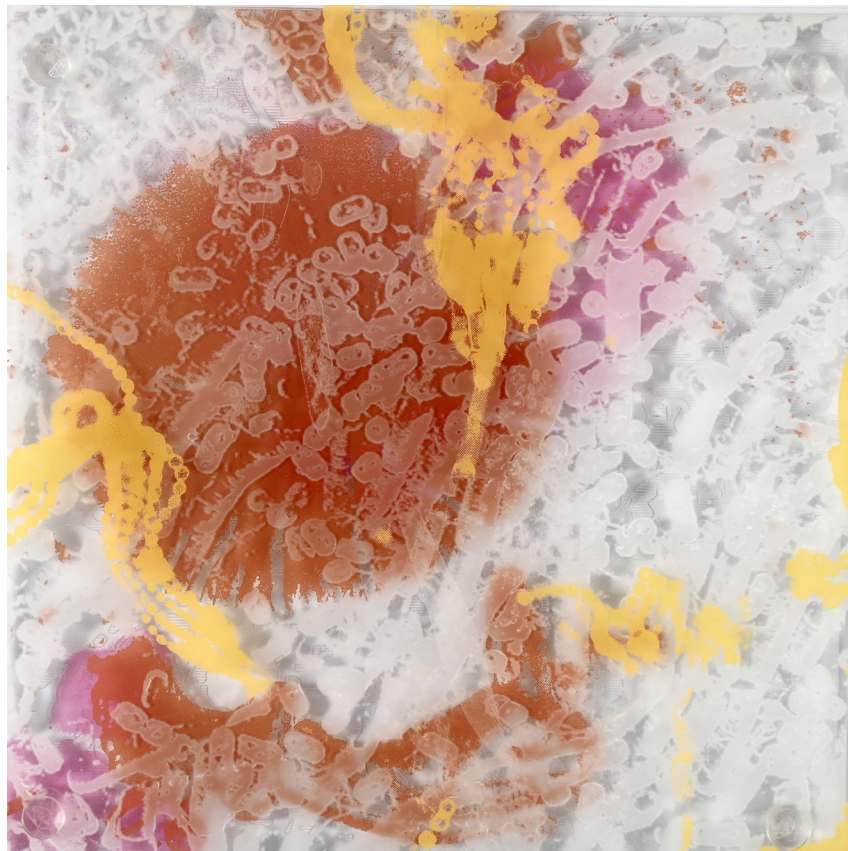
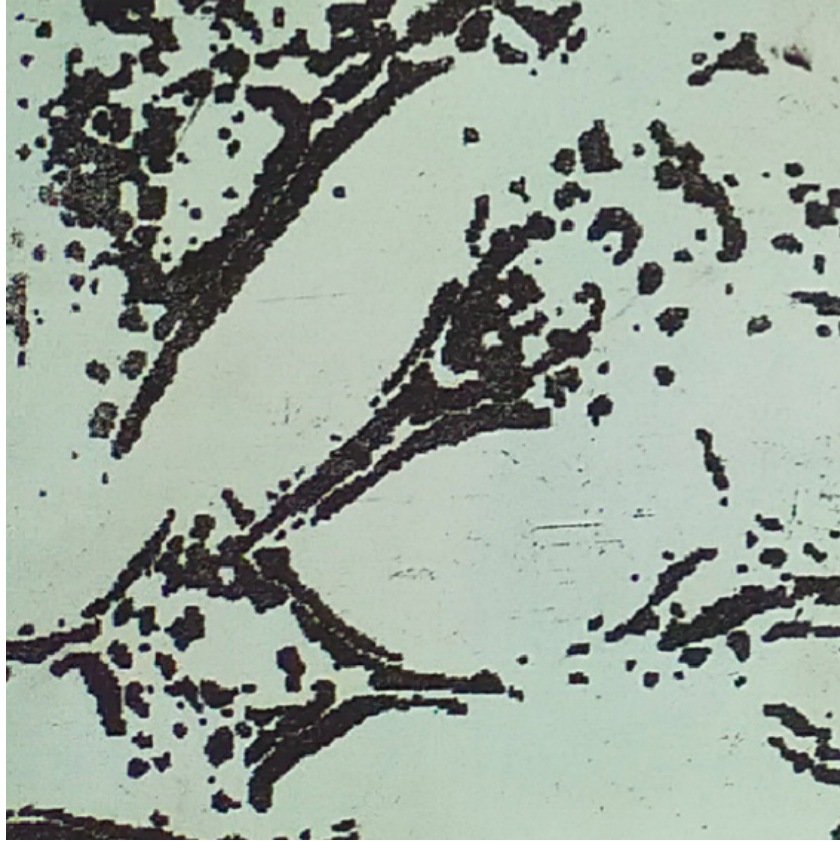


Figure 3: : Anomalous, 1/1 , etching and monotype, 2021

Figure 4: Enzyme, screen print on acrylic, 2023

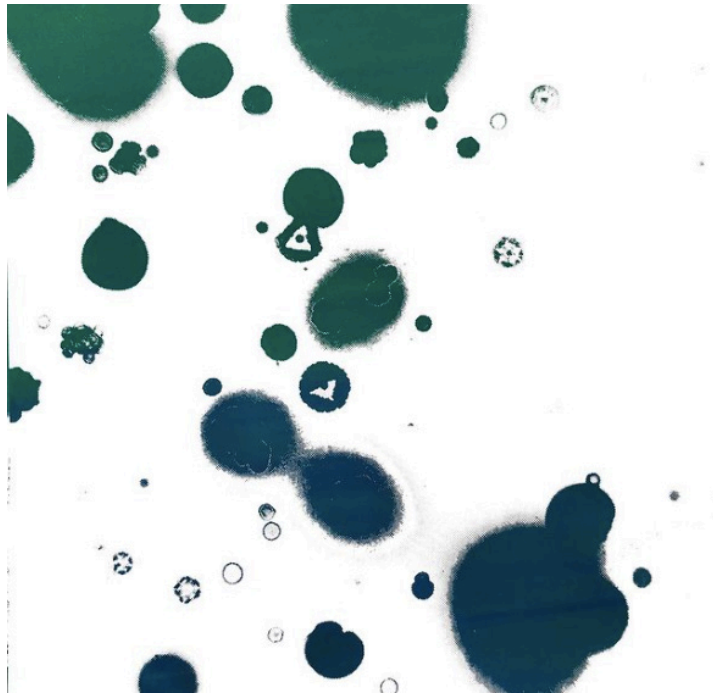


Figure 5: SAB, Key-Koch, Enzyme, final show, etched screen print on acrylic, 2023

Figure 6: 'Predetermined Culture', 1/20, half tone screen print, 2023

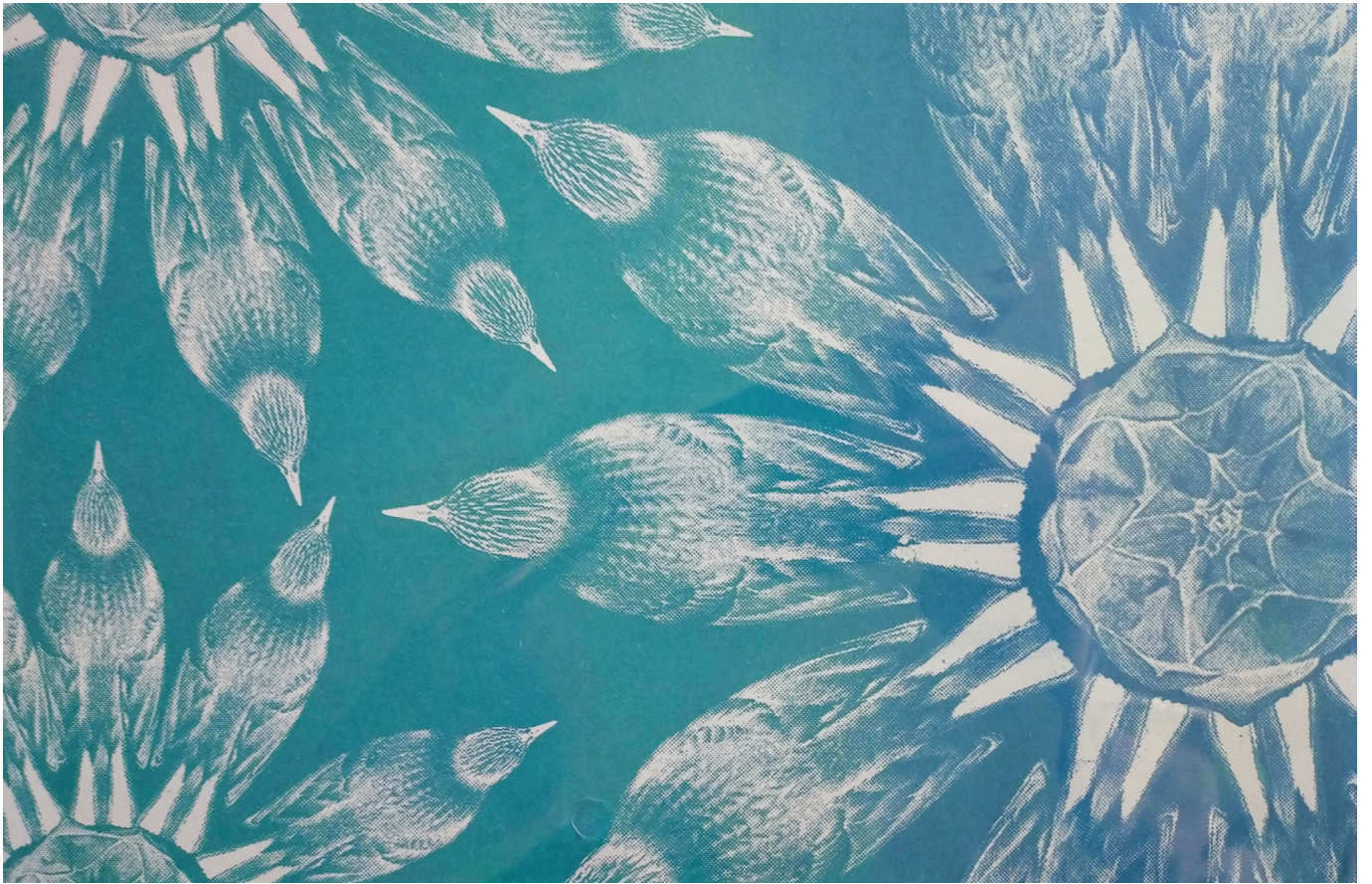


Figure 7: 'Flew', 2/20, screen print gradient, 2023