

## Miller, Prue Bella Bellissima Australian Art Review

Issue 12 November 2006 – February 2007, p 25

From the hamlet of St Andrews east of Melbourne to central Florence in Italy, Debra Luccio and husband Marco (see ARR Issue 9) can be found literally traversing the earth working towards the perfect print.

Who on earth would not be drawn to Florence to work? Centuries of magnificence glaring from every visual plane, and the chance to tread where art immortals have paved the way. Debra and Marco will be taking those same steps on their next trip to Florence in 2007 where they have been invited to work at the Edi Graficar Studio, creating work upon a stone used to finish lithographs for artists such as Henry Moore, Tamayo and Carra. Marco Luccio will find this especially intriguing, as he is himself a most highly regarded printmaker in his own right. To have access to one of the finest print studios in Italy is a chance a craftsman such as Marco would once only have dreamt about. A few blocks from the river Arno, on Via San Niccolo the Edi Graficar studio can be found, surrounded by the twisted streets of a bygone era. Graficar may have a profound effect on the Luccios' work. The impact will be twofold – it will combine the physical characteristics of the circa 1800 press, and the input from one of the most esteemed master printmakers, Felippo Becattini.

For Debra, it is another step in the process she finds fascinating and wondrous. An artist of the human form Debra works towards seeing bodies pushed to extremes, into shapes and poses that reveal newness to the form – the model and Debra working as a team to find what satisfies the criteria. "I am truly grateful to them [the models] as they twist themselves into all sorts of positions for me to work with. My models understand that I want my work to be universal, not about one thing or another." Indeed, Debra cannot even think of herself as one thing or another – questioned as to whether she considers herself a sketch artist or a painter or a printmaker she just laughs.

"I don't know. People always try and categorize other people don't they? But I don't mind because it makes me look at myself and that's a good thing." Her honesty about herself is not at all surprising when you consider she is an element of the work she strives to create that abounds in truth. "Drawing the nude from life is a great experience. The sense of connection I feel with the model whilst drawing is wonderful. It feels instinctive – uncensored and without design. I always feel it is such a privilege."

To many, including myself, her lifestyle is a privilege afforded to so few. She and Marco travel the world, etching, drawing, absorbing beauty and energy and translating that into a tangible experience on generous Velin Arches paper for all to see. A curious artistic relationship – Marco famous for his depictions of the industrial, build environments and Debra for her nudes, it is nonetheless a jigsaw of ideals that fits together perfectly to form a strong bond – intrinsically involving the drawn line. It is this transference of lines and energy that makes their forthcoming journey so important: to see if something more can be added by this master printmaker and his ancient press. Debra is looking forward to her work with Felippo transforming her drawings and photographs of the surrounding sculpture of Florence into rich prints of tone and line. She will be using the traditional lithographic process by drawing directly onto the large smooth stone with oil-based crayons. Felippo will then etch and print the image from the stone. And then to the printing.

This is the most exciting part of their business – both Debra and Marco find this the point, when their prints are revealed to them, almost heart stopping. It is the moment of when their expectations can be met, dashed or surpassed. It is the same experience whether at Baldessin Press Studio in St Andrews or in Florence. The moment of truth. Before the Edi Graficar experience Debra will be exhibiting her next show Light & Shade in Hobart and Marco will be exhibiting his show Pentimento – Images of Paris and Florence, at the Steps Gallery in Lygon Street until the end of November, before it moves to Canberra and Hobart.