

# FUMPSTON WORKS: TEACHERS' NOTES

These notes are intended as a companion to the *Fumpston Works* DVD, providing information on each scene and a glossary of printmaking terms.

## Starting the DVD

*Fumpston Works* is a PAL DVD. The film can be played using a DVD player or computer. Insert the DVD disc into the player. (If using a computer, you may need to start a program that can play DVDs first.)

The film can be started by pressing the **Play** button on the DVD player or DVD remote.

## Using the DVD menus

A DVD remote will be required to use the menus. Use the remote **Up**, **Down**, **Left** and **Right** arrow buttons to choose an option. Click the **OK/Enter** button to select an option.

### Main menu

**Play feature:** Play the film once, then return to the Main menu.

**Loop feature:** Loop the film once every 15 minutes. The film is nine minutes in length with a count-down making up the remaining six minutes.

**Scene selection:** View the Scene selection menu

**Extra: On collections:** Play an additional scene not featured in the film. This scene explores Fumpston's interest in the 'multiple' and the edition. Includes images of *Memento Studies*.



MAIN MENU

### Scene selection

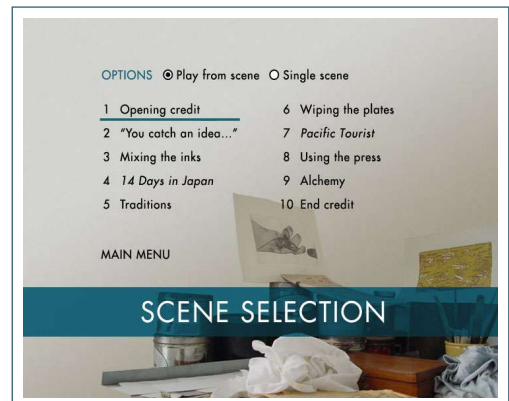
The Scene selection menu can be used to start the film at a specific scene.

**Play from scene:** Start at the selected scene and play through to the end of the film. For example, start at *3 Inking the plates* and play through to *10 End credit*.

**Single scene:** Play the selected scene then return to the Scene selection menu.

**Scenes:** Use the DVD remote to select a scene, press the **OK/Enter** button to play.

**Main menu:** Return to the Main menu.



SCENE SELECTION MENU

### Moving between scenes

The **< Prev** and **Next >** buttons on the DVD player or remote can be used to step backward and forward through the scenes.

### Menus

Clicking the **Menu** button on the DVD remote will return the DVD to the most recently viewed menu. For example, if the **Play Feature** option has been selected, pressing the **Menu** button will return the DVD to the Main menu screen.

# SCENE NOTES

The following provides a description for each of the key scenes of the film, detailing the prints featured and the techniques demonstrated.

## The printmaking journey

The film is intercut with scenes that follow Fumpston as he prints *See*, one of the *Memento Studies*. (The film does not demonstrate the process of making plates.)

The following scenes feature the printmaking process:

- 3 Mixing the inks (including inking the plates)
- 6 Wiping the plates (including cleaning plate edges and rolling the ink)
- 8 Using the press (including registering the plates)
- 9 Alchemy (including comparing prints and soaking the paper)

## Scene 1: Opening credit

Views of the exhibition *Fumpston Prints 1973-2003* at the Sarjeant Gallery, Wanganui (2004).

Print series featured, in order of appearance:

MEMENTO (1999-2003)

EGYPT (1980-1981)

14 DAYS IN JAPAN (1986)

MEMENTO

## Scene 2: "You catch an idea..."

Details from the *Sky-Marble Arch* and *Garden Evening* prints.

The *Sky-Marble Arch* prints draw on Fumpston's time in London, where he used to cycle through the city to art school, looking up through the buildings to catch a glimpse of the sky above. The *Garden Evening* prints also reference buildings; however the square and industrial forms of London are substituted by the pitched roofs of suburban Auckland.

Prints featured, in order of appearance:

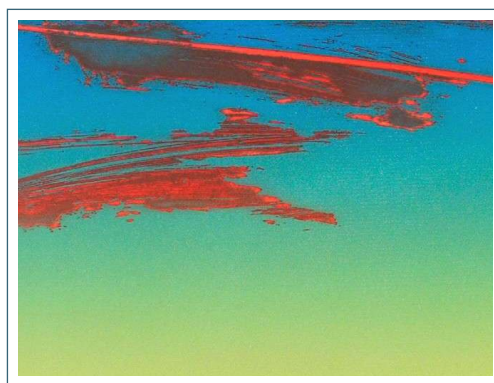
EVENING (1979-1981)

*Garden Evening One*

SKY-MARBLE ARCH (1975-1976)

*Marble Arch 7*

*Marble Arch 11*



MARBLE ARCH 7 (DETAIL)

### Scene 3: Mixing the inks

With the plates prepared, the inks are mixed.

When Fumpston started printmaking, coloured inks were mixed from pigment (powder). Traditionally printmakers worked with black ink on white paper.

Linseed oil is added to the ink to achieve the correct thickness (viscosity). At this stage, coloured inks may be combined, or finishes, such as varnish, may be mixed with the ink. The viscosity and finish of the ink creates particular effects when transferred to paper.

Ink is applied to the plates using a rubber squeegee (more commonly used in screen printing).

*See* is printed from two plates (three surfaces) and employs both intaglio and relief techniques. The blue intaglio plate features a half-tone, digitally manipulated photograph of tree ferns.

The gold plate has two print surfaces; the deeply bitten areas and the unmarked plate surface.

Fumpston uses a rubber squeegee to force the thick opaque gold ink into the bitten areas. A thin transparent film of ink, mixed with varnish, is rolled onto the surface of the plate (Scene 6 shows Fumpston preparing the roller).



INKING THE BLUE PLATE

### Scene 4: *14 Days in Japan*

Images in this series draw on time Fumpston spent in Japan in 1985.

Japan has a strong woodcut tradition (a relief technique). In *14 Days in Japan*, Fumpston has recreated woodcut effects using a range of intaglio techniques. Fumpston has used intaglio techniques as they are familiar, and also recognise his status as foreigner exploring culturally-specific imagery.

Prints featured, in order of appearance:

#### 14 DAYS IN JAPAN (1986)

*Buying Cloth*

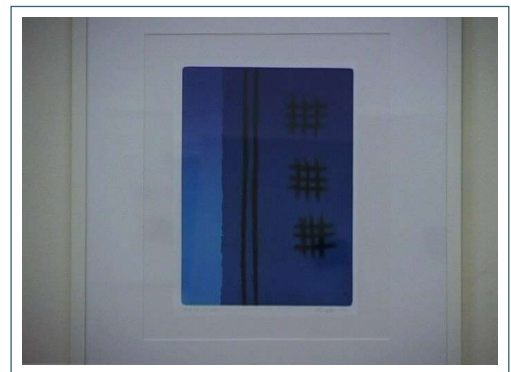
*Kiwi Ice Cream*

*Gold Leaf*

*Lunch Box*

*Volcano*

*The Empress's Iris*



BUYING CLOTH

## Scene 5: Traditions

Fumpston's work often explores ideas of cultural representation; either the images that a culture chooses to represent itself (as in the *Kiwiana Lithographs*), or those imposed upon a culture in the form of kitsch or the 'souvenir'.

Fumpston's take on the iconic silhouette of Rangitoto island is to have the distinctive collapsed volcanic cone 'fall between' the plates.

The three-part image (triptych) is printed from 5 separate plates. The unprinted paper between the plates creates a series of swooping 'sails'. The sails perhaps reference the city's identity 'Auckland – the city of sails', or, less generously, reference the late 1980's boom in waterfront property development.

Prints featured, in order of appearance:

*Roundabout (1990) (detail)*

*Roundabout, Goingabout, Out and About (1990) (from left to right)*



FUMPSTON'S TAKE ON RANGITOTO ISLAND'S ICONIC SILHOUETTE

## Scene 6: Wiping the plates

Excess ink is wiped from the plate surface, leaving ink in the bitten areas. Traces of ink are also left on the plate surface (plate tone). The edges of the plate are also cleaned with a cloth.

A roller is used to apply a thin transparent film of ink to the surface of the gold plate (not shown). The roller ensures an even flat layer of ink.



CLEANING THE PLATE EDGES

Note: As the ink applied to the surface of the gold plate is transparent, when transferred to paper, it combines with the underlying blue ink to create a vibrant green.

## Scene 7: Pacific Tourist

Fumpston was born in Fiji (his great-grandfather moved to Fiji in the mid-19th century). He moved to New Zealand with his mother when he was seven. He has extended family in Fiji and returns regularly.

The series *Pacific Woodcuts* deals with ideas of cultural tourism, a personal take on symbols associated both with Fiji and the Pacific.

The woodcuts are created from a variety of different woods; plywood, MDF board, veneer, etc. As a relief technique, ink is transferred to paper from the wood surface (usually without a press).

Fumpston has used a range of tools to cut away and distress the wood block surface. Although the surface of the matrix may hold some wood grain, Fumpston has worked over these areas with a hand grinder and wire brush to enhance the texture so that it will be transferred to paper when inked.

In some prints, Fumpston has employed collagraphic techniques, building up the surface of the matrix with pieces of veneer and paper.

Prints featured, in order of appearance:

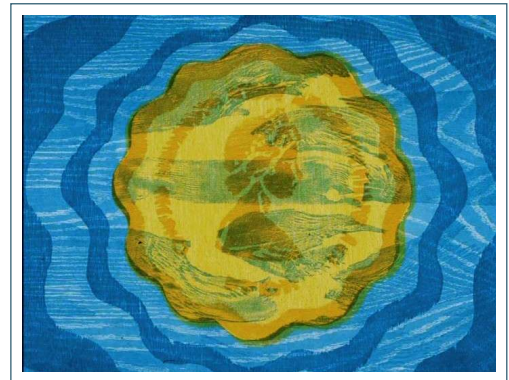
### PACIFIC WOODCUTS (1996)

*Pacific Born*

*Pacific Journey*

*Pacific Artifact*

*Pacific Tourist*



PACIFIC ARTIFACT (DETAIL)

## Scene 8: Using the press

Each plate is positioned on the press using marks made on the press bed (registration marks). The paper (previously soaked in water to soften the fibres) is laid on top of the plate. Blankets are placed between the paper and roller of the press. Pressure between the roller and the press bed is adjusted using the gauges on either end of the roller.



PARTS OF THE PRINTING PRESS



Turning the press wheel moves the press bed under the roller. The blankets force the paper into the bitten areas of the plate. Ink is transferred both from the bitten areas of the plate and the plate surface to the paper. Where paper is forced into the bitten areas it becomes raised (embossed).

## Scene 9: Alchemy

Each print goes through all stages of the printing process.

The number of variables means that not all prints are successful. Ink colour and thickness must be right. If the plates are not positioned accurately on the bed of the press, the image will misregister. Too much pressure and the paper can tear; too little and the image will not be fully transferred to the paper. Of the seven prints completed over the course of filming *Fumpston Works*, only one met Fumpston's specifications for inclusion in the edition.

Fumpston typically works to an edition of 30 prints. Each print is signed and numbered. If there is not sufficient demand for a print, an edition may be left incomplete. (The DVD extra *On collections* has more on Fumpston's interest in the 'multiple'.)

## Scene 10: End credit

*Fumpston Works* was commissioned by the Sarjeant Gallery Wanganui with the support of Suspect Productions for the exhibition *Fumpston Prints: 1973-2003*.

## Extra: On collections

Printmaking has a strong association with the commercial arts. It is considered by some, a means of mass production rather than artistic expression. Fumpston enjoys the tension between these two readings. Similarly, his collections comprise of objects gathered and arranged on merit of colour, form or utility rather than exclusivity.

Prints feature, in order of appearance:

**MEMENTO STUDIES (1999-2003)**

*Gift*

*Detritus*

**MEMENTO STUDIES (artist's proofs)**



FUMPSTON COLLECTS

# PRINTMAKING GLOSSARY

This glossary provides descriptions of printmaking terms, and makes reference to techniques used by Fumpston and the prints featured in the film. The glossary also include non-printmaking terms used in *Fumpston Works* that may be unfamiliar to students.

**acid:** a corrosive liquid that eats into the surface of a metal plate. Different metals require different acids, for example, zinc plates are bitten using hydrochloric acid.

**aquatint:** an etching technique that creates a finely textured tonal area of colour/ tone by sprinkling powdered resin on the plate prior to being bitten by acid. The *Sky-Marble Arch* and *Garden Evening* prints include aquatint techniques.

**bed:** the bench that passes under the roller of the press (and under the blanket).

**bite/bitten:** the action of acid on metal plates / the area of a metal plate that has been eaten away by acid.

**blankets:** sheets of woven felt or rubber used on the press; placed between the roller of the press and paper. Blankets force the paper into the bitten areas of a metal plate to pick up ink.

**blotter:** material, typically a porous card, used to absorb moisture. After passing through the press, prints are placed between blotters to be dried and flattened.

**collagraph:** a relief printing technique where the surface of the matrix is built up through collage. Aspects of the *Pacific Woodcuts* are created using this technique.

**Crown Lynn:** (1948-1989) the brand name adopted by Auckland-based ceramic company Ambrico Ltd (Amalgamated Brick and Pipe Company) for its domestic ceramic range. Crown Lynn produced both hand crafted and mould-made ceramics.

**edition:** a number of prints created from the same source plate(s), typically with minimal variation in image quality (colour, ink density, etc.). An edition may be completed either at the same time (as is necessary with lithographs) or on demand. Fumpston's editions typically run to 30 prints.

**embossing:** areas of a print that become raised as a result of being passed through the press. Blind embossing is where paper is embossed without inking the plate. The rice grain texture in *Lunch Box (14 Days in Japan)* is an example of blind embossing.

**etching:** a means of incising an image into a metal plate. The plate is first covered with acid-resistant ground through which the artist scratches a design with a stylus or needle, revealing the metal below. This plate is then placed in an acid bath. The acid bites into the exposed areas of the plate; the longer the plate remains in the acid, the deeper the bite.

**Faberge egg:** intricately designed, precious metal and jewel encrusted Easter egg(s) created by goldsmith Carl Faberge for the Tsars of Russia between 1884-1912. (Only 56 were ever created.)

**gauge:** used to adjust the pressure between the roller and bed of the press.

**ground:** an acid-resistant material (a mix of wax, resin and asphaltum) applied to the surface of a metal plate. Areas of the plate, not protected by ground, are eaten away (bitten) when placed in acid.

**hard ground:** a firm acid-resistant material; hard ground must be scratched away to expose the plate.

**soft ground:** an acid-resistant material softened with grease; soft ground is used to create an impression of an object through direct pressure. Plates used in the *Memento* series were created by pressing fern leaves and roots into soft ground.

**half tone:** a method of reproducing a photographic image using a pattern of dots to create tone, for example, shades of grey. Plates used in the *Memento Studies* and *Memento* prints feature half tone images, initially transferred to the plate using screen printing techniques.

**impression:** a print or proof.

**ink:** (typically a liquid) that is transferred from a matrix to paper during the printmaking process. Ink used in printmaking must be the correct thickness (viscosity); if too thin it will run, too thick and image detail may be lost. When applying the varnish to the gold plate, Fumpston checks ink viscosity by listening for a particular sound as he rolls the ink.

**intaglio:** (Italian: variously 'to cut in', 'engrave', 'incise') any of the techniques where an image is printed from lines or textures scratched or etched into a metal plate (etching, mezzotint, aquatint, etc.). The plate is covered with ink, then wiped clean, leaving ink in the incised lines or textures of the image. A press is used to force paper into the bitten areas of the plate, transferring the image onto the paper.

**lithography:** (from the Greek 'lithos' meaning 'stone') a printing technique where the image is drawn on a flat slab of limestone. The stone is treated chemically so that ink adheres only to the drawing. During printing, the stone is continually bathed in water to wash ink away from areas not to be printed. Ink is transferred to paper using a high pressure press.

**matrix:** a material that transfers ink to paper in a printing process. Wood (blocks), metal plates and stone can be used as a matrix.

**mezzotint:** an intaglio printing technique. The surface of the metal plate is first uniformly roughened (burred) with a tool called a rocker. Lighter areas are created by rubbing (burnishing) the roughened surface so that it holds less ink.

**plate:** a sheet of metal (Fumpston typically uses zinc) used as a matrix for a print. A print may be composed from one or multiple plates. The *Memento* plates are created from the largest commercially available zinc sheet size of 500mm x 1000mm.

**plate tone:** the layer of ink that is left on the surface of an intaglio plate after wiping.

**registration:** the exact placement of plates in relation to the paper. Registration marks ensure that the image is placed correctly within the paper surface and, if an image is made from multiple plates, that the areas of colour are in the right place.

**relief:** a printmaking technique where the image is transferred to paper from ink rolled onto the surface of the matrix. (Areas not to be printed are carved away.) Relief techniques include woodcut, wood engraving and linocut. The *Pacific Woodcuts* are created using this technique.

**roller:** (hand roller) used to apply an even film of ink to the surface of the matrix.

**press roller:** a cylinder used to apply pressure to the press bed. Turning the press wheel passes the press bed under the roller.

**rubber squeegee:** used to work ink into the bitten areas of a plate. (For *See*, Fumpston uses a rubber squeegee. The cardboard favoured by most printmakers would disintegrate when working the ink into the deeply bitten areas of the plate.)

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## Acknowledgements

The *Fumpston Works Teachers' Notes* were compiled by Andy Kirkwood and Justine Flanagan from Suspect Productions in conjunction with Rodney Fumpston, to accompany the short-form documentary *Fumpston Works*. To download an electronic copy of this document or to purchase copies of the DVD, see: [www.suspect.co.nz](http://www.suspect.co.nz).

A catalogue created to accompany the Sarjeant Gallery Wanganui exhibition *Fumpston Prints 1973-2003* is available from publishers Magazzino. See [www.magazzino.co.nz](http://www.magazzino.co.nz), keyword 'Fumpston'.

Exhibition enquiries should be directed to the Sarjeant Gallery Wanganui: [www.sarjeant.org.nz](http://www.sarjeant.org.nz).

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