

VISUAL ART

Clever visual narrative of the Aegean

"Aegean Journey"

Madeleine Winch. Beaver Galleries, Deakin. Until October 16.

Reviewed by Stephanie Scroope.

A REGULAR on the Beaver Galleries exhibition program, Madeleine Winch's work has proven to be popular and some works of her current exhibition sold before the show opened on September 28.

For these works on paper, the Melbourne-born artist has gathered her inspiration from all over the world including Paris, Italy, New York, and, more recently, Greece, from which most of the work in "Aegean Journey" has derived.

Each of the 31 medium-sized collagraphs and monoprints were made after the artist spent a year living on the Cycladic island of Paros. She says, "It was an idyllic life, living in a 300-year-old white-washed stone farmhouse on an ancient vineyard overlooking the crystal blue Aegean Sea". The rich blue tones she describes are what hold the work together. Most of the prints are dominated with truly brilliant, deep blues ranging from lapis to turquoise which cleverly describe the physical environment Madeleine is so passionate about. This passion flows into her choice of subject matter which suggests the ocean's influence, depicting fish and swimming figures.

Most of the works contain an element of the human body, while portraiture, figurative subjects and landscape have



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been fused together in single images. Madeleine has referenced ancient Greek ceramic art forms with some of the images contained inside a traditionally shaped urn/jug silhouette. "Amphora I" is one of the feature pieces which depicts a sleeping figure floating into the frame who is immersed in a blue/green background. The viewer notices subtle textures in the work similar to that of fish scales that behave like a decorative pattern. This work, along with a few others is highlighted by small flecks of gold leaf which look great against the turquoise and red hues.

"Aegean Journey" has allowed the artist to explore comparisons between herself and Chairman Clift, an Australian writer who also lived and worked out of Greece. She has also briefly touched on concepts including femininity and memory while capturing her more intimate and personal moments and thoughts. There is something endearing about the work of Australian artists who visually document their travels in terms of memories, stories and places instead of photographs.