

Olivia Wells

Education:

Print MA, The Royal College of Art, 2020-2022

Intensive Drawing and Painting, The Florence Academy of Art, 2017 – 2019

Archaeology and Anthropology BA Hons, Durham University, 2010 – 2013

Exhibitions:

2023 *The Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts, London

Bainbridge Open 2023, ASC Handbag Factory, London

Windows and Thresholds, Bell House, London

Verdant, North Coast Asylum, Cornwall

2022 *Clifford Chance Post Graduate Printmaking*, Clifford Chance, London

Woolwich Contemporary Print Fair, The Fireworks Factory, London

Act One, Noho Showrooms, London

Royal College of Art Graduate Show, Royal College of Art, London

Impressions, Southwark Park Galleries, London

2023 *Art for Youth*, Mall Galleries, London

Art Refuge; Wish You Were Here, Yorkton Workshops, London

Dyscorpia; Future Intersections of the Body and Technology, Online

Royal College of Art WIP Show, Online,

Southwark Park Galleries 26th Annual Open Exhibition, Online

Prizes and Awards

2022 *Clifford Chance Printmaking Purchase Prize (Shortlisted)*

Travers Smith Award (Shortlisted)

Global Design Graduate, Arts Thread (Shortlisted)

Stanley Picker Print Tutorship (Shortlisted)

High Everyday Couture SS22 Collaboration

Olivia is a multimedia artist currently living and working in London. She graduated from The Royal College of Art in 2022 with an MA in Print. It was there she developed her technique of rubbing graphite through silk screens.

Born in Tokyo, Japan in 1991, Olivia received a BA in Archaeology and Anthropology from Durham University before studying traditional drawing and painting methods at The Florence Academy of Art, Italy.

With an interest in different cultures, Olivia is intrigued by our learnt and primal responses to environments. Her current work focuses on digital and natural landscapes, the impact we have on these spaces and vice versa.

Olivia has exhibited in London and the wider UK and has been shortlisted for a number of awards including the Travers Smith Award, Arts Thread Global Design Graduate Show, Stanley Picker Print Tutorship, and Clifford Chance Printmaking Purchase Prize. Her work is held in private collections internationally, including the UK, USA, China and Europe.

Artist Statement:

Olivia's practice oscillates between printmaking, painting, drawing and photography. With an interest in our learnt and primal responses to environments, she considers our engagement with digital and natural landscapes, the impact we have on these spaces and vice versa. The importance of touch in an increasingly digital landscape is a leitmotif within her work. As such, mark-making provides an important lens of inquiry in her practice, particularly when combined with a digital image.

In her silk screen drawings, Olivia combines traditional screen-printing processes with intuitive mark-making. For these works, Olivia explores the woods, often revisiting the same location. To walk in the woods is a moment of refresh, away from the screens and digital interruptions. She uses her film camera while walking, often looking for rhythms of light among the trees or other chance encounters. The process is meditative and she has come to think of it as a kind of Shinrin Yoku, the Japanese process of forest bathing. By using film, she is distanced from knowing whether she's captured a moment she thinks she'll work with until the film is developed. Once the image is selected, she exposes her image onto a silkscreen, rubbing graphite through the screen until the image builds density. The process is gestural and relatively blind since the image is obscured by a layer of graphite. It is not until the screen is removed that she can see which parts of her gesture have been captured and which areas of digital image have transferred. The graphite provides a subtle, iridescent, fragile quality, while oscillations in texture add a feeling of movement, mementoed gesture. The final works combine a digital image with traces of touch, and demonstrate the symbiotic nature in which we interact with environments, both impacted and impacting.