



BIRDS, BIRDS, BIRDS, WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

Anne Beresford resembles the broadsheets she produces: she's out-front and articulate about how and why she makes art. From this it might even seem to follow that she rarely thinks about an audience for her work, at least that's what she claims. Perhaps this fact is also reflected in her images that present modern ecological consciousness in old fashioned, circus-like ways. Her typography recalls a more innocent, bygone era of advertising while the message may actually have present-day urgency. Does she hope to rise above the political demands of the moment?

What's going on here? Birds, birds, birds, words, words, words. She's an admitted Shakespeare queen as well as a history of printmaking buff. So a small print that proclaims "Birds, birds, birds" will have as part of its title "(for Hamlet)." But will her large handwritten version of Albrecht Dürer's *Triumphal Arch of Maximilian I* titled "Another Thousand Words" also include a notation about its relation to the Emperor Maximilian? (it does)

There's a conflict here not only between quaintness and urgency but between style and verbal or visual source. The point of making an image is because it interests her, she says, there's an intellectual interest or pleasure in it for her. And she's a playful wordsmith (just check out her imaginary record albums). But she wonders how much of this should be explained to the viewer. On the one hand she feels it would be smug or uncharitable to hide the stories, visual references or frequent Shakespearean inspiration for her works. She also doesn't want to turn people off, appear pretentious by withholding information—or by offering too much of it. (Somehow the rarely considered audience has come back to haunt her.)

Why does she appropriate from an earlier art and typography? Because she can. She doesn't have to limit herself to a 21st century vocabulary. Still the issue of nostalgia for the past is elusive for her. There is something shared, universal here at the same time that it remains intensely personal, and just plain funny.

She's trained as a master printer. Paper is extremely important to her as a printmaker. Yet she has little or no creative interest in what might be called the traditional printmaking material of heavy rag paper. Her current paper of choice is a thin, handmade Chinese drawing paper which could not be used for heavy pressure printing jobs. She says it's a middle of the road paper, not antique but not new in appearance, above all it lets light come through the image made on it—she likes that. She draws or even xeroxes on a piece of paper that is then glued to a firm surface and moistened so that when the paper is inked, the oily ink only sticks to the oily drawing (or xerox) and can then be pressed or printed onto a piece of delicate Chinese paper—in turn the drawing progressively disappears as multiple impressions are made. At times she turns to painting on canvas. If she's only printing, she misses the visceral quality of pigment on a textured surface. She wants to play off mat vs. shine-y areas, and subtle layers of color too.

The clarity and precision of her chosen typography can hide an acknowledged geekiness. She produces many images that, she says, only their mother could love—they are ungainly, full of flaws, cringe-inducing silliness. She's fighting the impression of being over-wrought. She rebels equally against any suggestion that her work might be lightweight—she hates it when viewers wonder if something was put there on purpose. She is not an accidental artist. She believes in the strength of her intentions, however whimsical or childlike they may at times appear.