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## Evocative impressions and images of Venice in Sophie Layton's *Building Space* at Eames Fine Art Gallery

Never mind if you don't know your monotype from your etching, visions of light and colour await you at Eames Fine Art Gallery with artist and printmaker Sophie Layton's captivating take on her time in Venice in her exhibition *Building Space*.

Christine Holley 14th November 2013



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Hop off the tube at London Bridge and head for The Shard. Then navigate your way along all the improvised walkways around Guy's Hospital and you'll find yourself in a neighbourhood with a marvellously "village" feel. Amid the extensive construction and roadworks in this area, Bermondsey Street is helpfully sign-posted. The street is a gem, casually sporting architectural features left undisturbed from decades ago. Here you sense a real sense of community, with artisans, craftspeople and studios galore, plus the White Cube's largest gallery space.

### Original listing details

And so to surely your most colourful destination this November: the new home, since May this year, of Eames Gallery at no. 58 Bermondsey Street, and Sophie Layton's *Building Space*. Sophie is an artist and printmaker and the show comprises works on paper: monotypes, monoprints, screen prints and photo etching to be precise, all techniques which Sophie has mastered with great élan.

The art on view was made in, or inspired by the artist's residency in Venice at the Scuola de Grafica where she enjoyed studio space early this year. Works that may catch your eye immediately are, to your left as you enter the gallery, three of four large monotypes (*A1, A3 and B2*) in the series *Constructing Light*. The iridescent tones of these shimmer and pulsate in a filmic yet painterly way, colours merging, blurring, converging and diverging in almost Rothko-esque style. These are based on sculptures the artist saw when visiting the Venice Architectural Biennale.

Colour and light are major creative concerns for this artist. And when you learn that her father is a glassblower (with an outlet just two doors away) and that her elder brother is a filmmaker, you experience that light bulb switch-on moment in your head. Picture, for instance, the effect of differing colours of glass caught in light, as well as light captured in celluloid. Now, your understanding of the exhibition and the artist's influence and sensibilities are illuminated, if you'll pardon the pun.

Specialising in the work of established 20th- and 21st-century masters of modern and contemporary art, Eames Gallery deals mainly in works on paper and spotted Sophie's skill and talent early on in her career. A Brighton University 2009 graduate, the artist exhibits regularly with Eames, her work also having been included in a number of national exhibitions, fairs and collections including the Mall Galleries, Royal College and the Royal Academy. After her residency at the Scuola de Grafica in Venice earlier this year, sponsored by Eames Fine Art, she describes the extraordinary light, colour and atmosphere of this experience as inspiring and feeding hugely into her work.

And this, dear exhibition-goer, is what you also experience as you continue your viewing. Overall, there is a geometric, architectural feel to the exhibition, the exceptions being *It's Not a Chicken I* and *II* and *III*. These small, intricately worked etchings with aquatint featuring flamboyantly feathered birds in the foreground of architectural space, have a back-story. On her Italian sojourn the artist was in a museum in Rome commenting to a friend that many of the images around her had chickens displayed in them when an imperious voice behind her said: "They're not chickens, they're doves." These two pieces are the artist's response to the put-down! The second reason *Not a Chicken I, II* and *III* are exceptions in this exhibition is that their sepia tones stand as a contrast to the luminous hues of the exhibition as a whole.

### Update!

We regret to announce that from January 2014, One Stop Arts will no longer be maintained. The site will remain live for at least a year from that date, but new listings will not be approved and it will not be possible to edit current listings.

Backtrack.com (the parent site of One Stop Arts) continues to go from strength to strength, expanding into the global cultural tourism sector.

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The exhibition runs until 30 November, so why not get down there and – in the increasingly leaden days of gathering winter – give your eyes a chromatic feast with the work of a young artist who's going places and is indeed already well on her way.

Date reviewed: Thursday 14th November 2013

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