

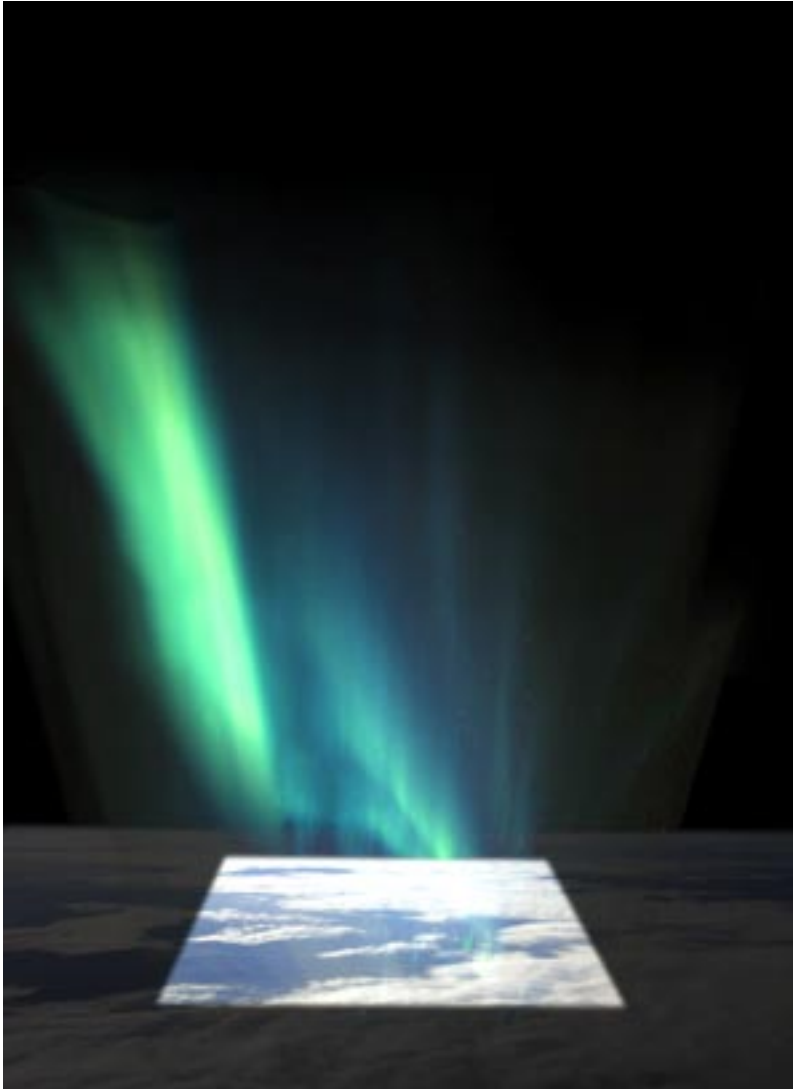
**Edinburgh Printmakers**

Exhibition Information

Galleries 2 & 3

**Alastair Clark**

*Skylights*



22 March to 10 May 2008

## Skylights

Inspired by the experience of witnessing of the *Aurora Borealis* or *Northern Lights*, this exhibition explores the luminous energy of this phenomenon through works in a variety of media from screenprints, digital prints, light boxes and animation.

*Aurora Borealis* employing different vantage points that offer an unnatural perspective and thereby a transformed or heightened experience of this exciting spectacle. Observed as gestures of light flashing across the night sky, these works convey the luminous glow of monochromatic colour harmonies inherent in this wonderful natural phenomenon.

As an elusive subject, rarely seen in Scotland, the works have been created as visualisations or reconstructions of the northern lights, employing different vantage points and representing them as though seen from both above and below.

“In 2004, I created several pieces including an animation based on the Aurora. These works stemmed from my first-hand experience of witnessing the northern lights in Edinburgh during what was an amazingly strong display, being visible overhead, despite the streetlights. When seen in the sky, the Aurora appeared to move as gestures of light flashing across the sky. I became intrigued by their almost primeval, timeless quality and fascinated by their evocative mystical and luminous energy.

The works were created by initially drawing with pastel and painting gestural brush marks onto paper. These marks were scanned and combined with photographic imagery and then digitally manipulated extensively, transforming them into light motions on the screen. Many of the prints were then developed further as original prints using the traditional printmaking processes of screenprinting and lithography.

*Skylight* is a large format digital print, created at *The Centre for Fine Print Research*, University of West England as part of *The Perpetual Folio, 2005*. Although I had been using digital imaging as part of my working practice for over 10 years by this point, this was the first time I produced a work where the digital print was the end result. This led to the series of digital prints that became the *Skylights* series. That a skylight can also be a small window or opening seemed fitting in making reference

to the small area near the magnetic poles where the Aurora enter into the Earth's atmosphere.

I am intrigued by this phenomenon of energy that takes on such a physical form, materialising as a curtain of light suspended and moving in the sky. This led to the *Veil* prints which were constructed from pastel drawings, digitally assembled, to suggest a solid three-dimensional form, reminiscent of idealised 3-D modelling.

The rarity of the Aurora adds to the intrigue surrounding it, as does the realisation that its origins link our physical world to the intangible and astronomical world; it could be said that this phenomenon is a physical manifestation of the mysterious and mystical that we all yearn for.

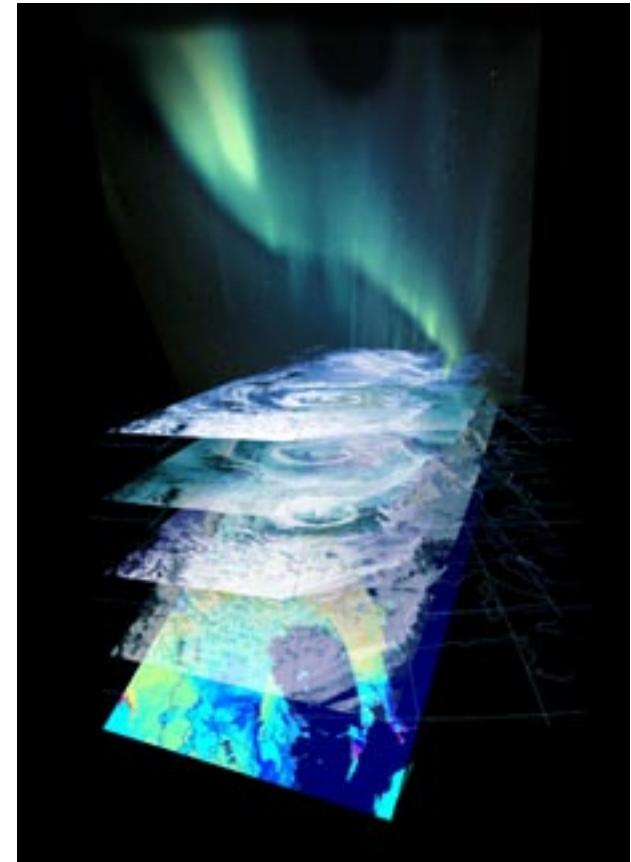


Image: *Into the Ether*, Pigment Inkjet, © Alastair Clark 2008

The Aurora has led to many different explanations in folklore throughout the world, the Canadian Inuit people, for instance, believe them to be messengers from the Gods. In Shetland, a lively Aurora display is known as *The Time of The Merry Dancers*. Current scientific understanding links the Aurora with sunspot activity causing solar flares of charged particles which are directed by the earth's magnetic field, *the Magnetosphere*, towards regions around the earth's magnetic poles. Thankfully, for the romantics, there are still many aspects to this phenomena which is not fully understood, or can be fully predicted, ensuring that it remains as a rare, elusive treat.

The Aurora animation was developed from the same source material as the prints, expressing more about the energy of the lights. As a new departure for me, working with the possibilities of animation was very exciting, enabling me to explore the themes of movement and sequence in a way that I had only previously represented in still imagery. Each frame for the animation was created individually. I came to think of the piece as a series of moving paintings. The luminescence of a lit screen or projection also felt appropriate considering the subject matter and this led me to consider making lightbox pieces.

I often work in series to express movement, change, the passing of time and the interconnection of different elements. I find myself drawn to how nature is represented by science, through this filter of plan-like views and diagrams it has become our modern way of comprehending the abstract organic systems of the natural world. The series of prints '*From the Atmosphere*', 2003, explored a response to climate change using



Image: *Flicker*, Screenprint, Copyright Alastair Clark 2008

the reference of meteorological satellite images. Adopting various diagrammatic representations of weather patterns to create sequences combined with abstract forms suggestive of weather fronts and cyclones. The work '*Into the Ether*' takes the form of a diagrammatic cross section representing a landscape as several distinct layers. At the bottom, is the sea followed by layers of the atmosphere with the Aurora as the top layer. This idealised, schematic view is continued in the series of prints *Skylights* that appear to depict the aurora as seen from space."

**Alastair Clark, 2008**

## Biography

Alastair Clark trained in drawing and painting at Edinburgh College of Art, working with mixed-media and printmaking, where he became increasingly involved in printmaking. In 1995 he trained at the Tamarind Institute of Lithography, New Mexico. Since 1992 he has worked at Edinburgh Printmakers, and is now Assistant Director. His position often involves working collaboratively with other artists, initiating projects and assisting each artist in the generation of their image. He also produces and prints their work as part of the Edinburgh Printmakers' print publishing programme. Alastair exhibits widely and is a professional member of The Society of Scottish Artists.

*Thanks to Paul Laidler & Steve Hoskins, The University of West England & Murray Robertson, Glasgow Print Studio*

## Gallery Event

**Artist Talk** on 26 April 2008 at 2pm, Gallery 2

**Admission Free**

Alastair Clark will discuss the work in his exhibition and his artistic practice.



Image: *Radiate*, Screenprint, © Alastair Clark 2008

## Price List

Title	Date	Medium	Paper size cm	Unframed Price	Framed Price
Northern	2005	Screenprint	56 x 64	£240	£295
Cascade	2008	Lightbox	-	Price on application	
Skylight 1	2005	Pigment Inkjet	74 x 55	£265	£335
Skylight 2	2005	Pigment Inkjet	74 x 55	£265	£335
Skylight 3	2008	Pigment Inkjet	74 x 55	£265	£335
Skylight 4	2008	Pigment Inkjet	74 x 55	£265	£335
Skylight 5	2008	Pigment Inkjet	74 x 55	£265	£335
Radiate	2008	Screenprint	100 x 66	£380	£470
Skylight	2005	Pigment inkjet	89 x 119	£380	£520
Into the Ether	2008	Pigment inkjet	76 x 55	£265	£335
Shimmer	2008	Screenprint	36.5 x 88.5	£380	£450
Veil 1	2008	Litho/Screen	82 x 64	£420	£510
Veil 2	2008	Litho/Screen	82 x 64	£420	£510
Borealis	2008	Screenprint	57 x 76	£325	£395
Aurora	2008	Screenprint	57 x 76	£325	£395
Aurora	2004	Animation	-	Price on application	
Night-Light	2008	Lightbox	-	Price on application	
Flicker	2008	Screenprint	36.5 x 88.5	£380	£450

*There are more works available to view by Alastair Clark, please ask a member of staff for assistance.*

*All prices shown include VAT.*

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Opening times: Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 6pm  
T 0131 557 2479 gallery@edinburgh-printmakers.co.uk  
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