

Interview with the artist

Those who receive our newsletters and brochures will have admired the intimate, spontaneous sketches of students and teachers created by our 'artist-in-residence' Geraldine van Heemstra.

Geraldine has visited the School regularly over the past few months to sketch pupils and teachers in their lessons and in performance. The resulting line drawings, etchings and oils will be exhibited at the A and D Gallery in London in June, and then moved to the Yehudi Menuhin School for the duration of the Menuhin 100 Festival at the beginning of July.



A visit to Geraldine's website (www.geraldinevanheemstra.com) not only shows the breadth of her skill, but also reveals a commitment to using her art to support good causes. We asked Geraldine a few questions about her work:

What motivates you to donate your time and expertise to these projects?

I am passionate about what I do so giving up some of my time for a good cause whilst doing what I really love seems a very positive and natural way to 'give something back'.

What do you get out of these collaborations?

I believe one should support charities or causes that mean something important to you. A 50/50 energy flows to and from that. In the case of the Yehudi Menuhin School, I love music and it is a real treat to be a 'fly on the wall' and listen to such young talent play whilst sketching. I have to capture the movements of the young musicians very quickly and this is definitely strengthening my 'hand-eye' coordination. I feel it feeds back into all other aspects of my work too.

How did the idea for your residency at the School come about?

During a small informal concert some time ago, Malcolm and Richard spotted me sketching and asked to have a look. Some time later I asked Malcolm for some feedback on oil paintings I had done inspired by these sketches. One was of a fiddle-playing clown and two others were of the students. I wanted to know whether the hands were holding the bow correctly and if their posture was right. The idea to come to the school and study the young musicians during rehearsals and lessons evolved out of these discussions.

What advice would you give to others wishing to offer their skills in support of a charitable outcome?

For me, it is important to get to know the organisation. If there is a mutual interest and you believe in the cause, there is a wonderful sense of fulfilment in contributing in whatever form is right at the time. No one can judge that for you, it is very personal.

Can you tell us something about the pieces in the exhibition?

With these sketches I am trying to capture the energy of the musicians, their character and characteristics in their movements and posture with a few simple lines. In the studio I work from my sketches and memory to create new images in the etchings, monoprints and oils. In these works it is very much about the texture and the play of the different lines that one can create. I always listen to music in my studio, so when I work in situ at the School I feel immediately inspired just by hearing the music and I'm off! I'm miles away responding to music and movement and trying to capture what I see in simple pencil lines on paper.

Geraldine's work will be exhibited at the **A and D Gallery**, 51 Chiltern Street, London W1U 6LY from Tuesday 21 June until Saturday 25 June. Opening hours are Tuesday – Friday 10.30am – 7pm Saturday 10.30am-4pm

The exhibition will be shown at the School during the Menuhin 100 Festival running from 1 – 10 July.