

PRESS RELEASE

JULIA FARRER :: VISUAL MISCHIEF
Etchings from 2001 to 2025

23 January – 6 March 2026

PRIVATE VIEW - Thursday 22 January, 6 – 8 PM

Catalogue with an essay by Anthony Rudolf [view online](#)*BRIDGE I*, diptych; etching & aquatint, 38 x 114 cm

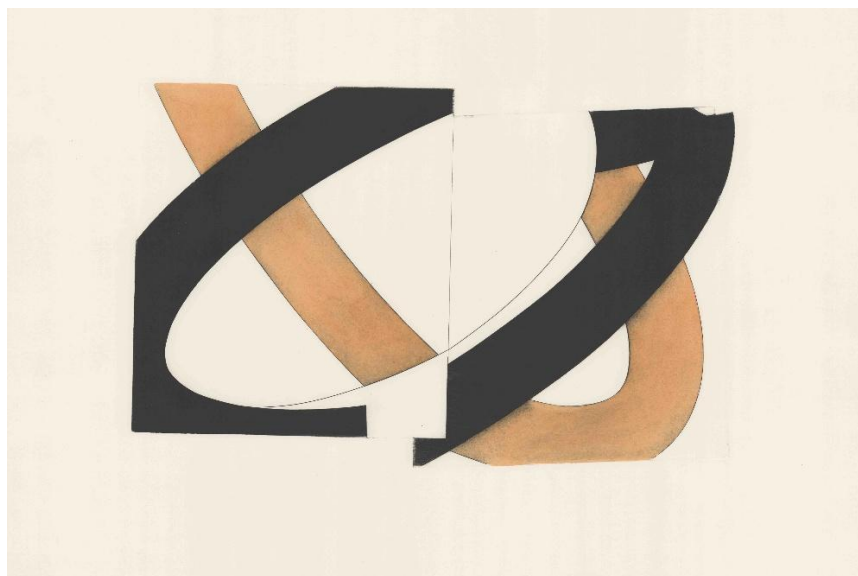
Though pre-eminently a painter Julia Farrer's practice has, over a long and distinguished career, embraced printmaking and the making of artist's books. Each is a highly specialised discipline in its own right but Farrer treats them as interrelated activities that inform and reinforce each other. This exhibition is devoted exclusively to her etchings and will bring together for the first time works that span quarter of a century.

The late historian and art critic Mel Gooding wrote *...in the work of Julia Farrer the world is pictured as marvellous process*. And herein lies the essence of Julia Farrer's art; an art where every aspect of its making is carried out by herself. Over many years she has set herself the challenge of mastering the technical demands of the medium in order to be in complete control and able to embrace all of the unforeseen creative opportunities that arise during the entire process. In Gooding's words again, *The beautiful clarity of her work ... begins with an idea and ends with an epiphany*.

The process starts with a rough geometric idea: a sequence of drawn forms often derived from specific and concrete things: a dovecote, a circus act, a bridge, a collapse. These early sketch ideas are then refined, sometimes using a 3D computer modelling program, and, once the composition is resolved a final drawing is made that is in turn transferred to a metal plate with a drypoint needle cutting through an acid

resistant layer that coats the plate ready to be etched in an acid bath. It is here Farrer says *...that the magic begins, the permutations are endless. Etched lightly the lines appear silvery when printed and when deeply etched they are an intense black. Then there is aquatint, a process using powdered resin as a resist where the range of tone is from the palest grey to the deepest black.* With this limitless range of line and tone inherent in these processes a new image of a different character is coaxed into life. *...what emerges ... she says ... is always a revelation when the first proof is pulled. The original drawing has become a distant memory and decisions going forward are based entirely on the print.*

And in this way she guides the image through a metamorphosis from the early fragments of the idea to one of absolute clarity, order and balance. This is highly objective printmaking; a statement of extreme refinement but there is *visual mischief* at work too. Farrer is invariably involved in a degree of visual game-playing that presents the viewer with different degrees of interpretation. What is line and what is shadow? What is solid and what is void? This playful use of Illusion and ambiguity teases our perception and even extends to cutting holes in the plate so that the space flows through as well as around the image.



Circus Act III, etching & aquatint, 47 x 64 cm

Julia Farrer (b. 1950) studied at the Slade School of Fine Art (1968-72) and has exhibited widely, not only in London where she lives, but on the Continent and in and the USA. She's been a Harkness Fellow at the University of New Mexico and in New York. Her work has been included in the '78 Hayward Annual and is held in public and private collections worldwide including those of the Arts Council, Yale Centre for British Art, British Museum and Tate.

Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 11 am – 6 pm

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