

Press release

**15 SHADES OF GREY. Celebrating the life of Frank Connelly,
Printmaker and Painter (1948-2021)**

A tribute to a man well known and well-loved in printmaking circles, *15 Shades of Grey* exhibits prints, paintings and drawings by Frank Connelly and many of the artists he influenced as a colleague, friend, and teacher.

As a printmaker, Frank had a masterly command of etching - his early prints bring his figures and unlikely perspectives alive, skilfully inviting the viewer to create their own narrative.

Later prints reference his immediate surroundings and streets in west London and Plumstead. These prints reward scrutiny – their subject matter is both real and surreal, detailing everyday life and drawing out its absurdities.

Similarly, while Frank's paintings explore the ordinary, the attentive observer witnesses the extraordinary. An example, which features in the exhibition, is the painting of the graveyard of his local parish church as it is demolished to make way for a supermarket.

There are also a series of intimate life studies in pencil of family and friends.

The exhibition includes work Frank created with artists Maggi Hambling and Jane Joseph, who were his lifelong friends, along with pieces by some of his many students who went on to become artists and teachers themselves.

Frank taught printmaking at Morley College, where he was head of department. He also taught at City Lit for many years, building up a loyal following of students in both colleges. Michelle Avison, current head of printmaking at Morley says:

“More than anyone, Frank defined how printmaking was taught in adult education in London. Many stayed on for years just to be part of the Frank experience. We are proud to include work by current staff at Morley College and City Lit who gained so much from him.”

“Frank was a joy to know and a privilege to work with. He had a wicked sense of humour. He adored opera, was bookish and more widely read than anyone else in the room. It’s an honour to host this exhibition in Morley’s newly refurbished gallery.”

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*Exhibition dates: Thursday 24 February –
Saturday 12 March. Weekdays 10-5. Sat 1-5pm
Private View: Wednesday 23 February, 6 - 8pm*

*Morley Gallery & College
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