



China has become the leading international market for red wine— but not just for its flavour. The colour red is favoured by the government, and also is considered lucky.



The Art of Printing

Printmaker and artist John Moore has been drawing for as long as he can remember. Today, his finely detailed printmaking is quite extraordinary, and it's found in collections worldwide.

Edited by **Anne Schaffner**
Photographs supplied

printmaking

John was born in Johannesburg, a twin, into a family which loved travelling: "We'd travel extensively, at least one large annual trip, whether it was the Namib coastline, Kruger National Park, or the coast." For John, it was a memorable childhood in that, as children, they came into contact with a wide range of fauna and flora, the biodiversity of plants, animal and birdlife. He says it later extended into reptiles and insects, and this had a powerful impact on his life and art.

"I always liked drawing," he says. "When I was very young, my father would draw pictures for me to colour in – I didn't really like his, so I drew my own."

John studied art at high school, and was accepted into the Graphic Design course at the University of Johannesburg. Six months into the course, he transferred to Fine Arts: "I did that because I loved the different classes - painting, drawing, perceptual studies (creative



thinking) and, most importantly, printmaking.” He completed his Fine Arts diploma, continued on to Honours...and then his teaching degree... while holding down seven jobs, one for every day of the week.” He laughs, “It was a crazy two years.”

Today, John is well known for his very detailed, large, well-printed images: “I have one of the largest etching presses in South Africa – one of three presses in my studio. I love traditional printmaking, namely woodcuts, linocuts, etching and lithography.” He’s happiest when making highly detailed images which take weeks, sometimes months to create – he describes them as ‘images where the viewer has to sit and take their time observing the detail in the work.’

John didn’t hesitate when asked about inspiration: “From all sources of my life. My life is art, I don’t separate the two. I’m always open to ideas and inspiration, be it books, movies, experiences in daily life or in nature, poems, literature and songs. There is a never-ending source of inspiration if you open yourself up to its influence.” John teaches creative courses, and it’s certainly something he teaches his students: “Always have a diary to record an idea, and allow yourself to be in the flow, to find ideas everywhere.”

Is his work always wildlife? “I don’t only deal with wildlife images, I look at the energy, soul of the work and animal. I am a shaman who interacts in some way with the animal which is being represented - the image must have meaning for me, otherwise I wouldn’t work on it. I get visual images which I write down in journals...my ideas come far faster than I can create them. These journals allow me to remember themes and ideas I need to pursue. The more detailed, the better.”

John is a strong conservationist: “I work with wildlife to show their side to the human world, in a language of symbols and signs interpreting their message and reflecting it to the human consciousness. We are not alone, we share this planet with beings. In sacred texts, we are their protectors. As human beings, I believe we’ve become blind and





Generally, European wines are named after their geographic locations, while non-European on the other hand, wines are mostly named after different grape varieties.



arrogant - we need to take a step back and reflect. Time will tell if we have learned the lesson that nature, no matter what, will win. There is still time to change, but it's getting close to the point of no return. I believe there can be that tipping point, and my work tries to reflect this to the viewer."

John is a full-time artist, based in Fourways, Johannesburg. He sells both locally and overseas to individuals and major galleries, holds a solo exhibition once a year, and spends his time building up a collection of work in preparation for the next exhibition. He still travels as much as possible, always submerging himself in nature: "I look at the space and interact with all beings - they dictate to me how my next series of work will go. We need to take time out to return to nature and see the macrocosm in the microcosm. If we can tap back into nature, we relax and tune into the planet. In a world of fragmentation, we need to

ground ourselves, and become community based again. My work tries to ground you, back to the source where the world exists as one being, all connected."

John's solo show of etchings opens at the In Toto Gallery in Sandton, Johannesburg, on November 21. It showcases the fine detail he captures in his work, and there'll be one of his etching presses to show the etching process. In addition, he'll be teaching an Art & Creativity course in Knysna in November – all details on his website.✦

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