

Sally McLaren RE

Retrospective at Sladers Yard

Sladers Yard Gallery in West Bay is hosting a solo retrospective celebrating the remarkable career of distinguished painter, etcher, and printmaker Sally McLaren. Now in her 90th year, McLaren continues to produce joyous, large-scale carborundum prints that radiate a youthful vitality, marking a journey that began at the Central School of Art in the late 1950s.

Born in 1936, Sally's deep connection to the English landscape was forged during a childhood spent in Somerset and Wiltshire. Her formal training began at the Ruskin School of Art in Oxford, where she received a disciplined, traditional grounding. It was at the Central School of Art in London, however, that she fell in love with etching. Under the mentorship of Tony Harrison and Merlyn Evans, she mastered complex intaglio techniques, eventually developing a more abstract style that allowed her images to "breathe."

In 1962, Sally won a scholarship to the prestigious Atelier 17 in Paris, studying under Stanley William Hayter. Upon her return to England, she taught at Goldsmiths College and became a Fellow and Founder Member of the Printmakers Council of Great Britain, as well as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers.

Throughout her career, Sally's work has been a response to the natural world. Rather than literal depictions of geography, her prints capture the "feeling" of a place—the wind, the spray of the sea, and the historical weight of the land.

"I don't paint place. I paint an atmosphere, which comes from absorption, of being in that place." — Sally McLaren

This pursuit of stillness and space has remained constant, even as her techniques evolved. In 1996, she began a fruitful collaboration with master printmakers Jack Shirreff and Andrew Smith at 107 Workshop. This partnership encouraged a more radical, ambitious approach, leading to the "fabulously colourful freewheeling work" she produces today at Andrew's Printworks in Poole.

Sally's work is held in prestigious public and private collections worldwide, including: The V&A Museum, The Government Art Collection, The New York Public Library and The National Print Collection.



Sally McLaren photograph by Sophie Bolesworth

Two recent monographs, *The Response of Landscape* and *In Search of Stillness*, document her evolution. The latter is held in the National Art Library at the V&A and is available at the exhibition.

Living and working in Wiltshire—where she converted an old bus garage into a studio at age 70—Sally remains dedicated to her craft. Her current exhibition at Sladers Yard offers a rare opportunity to witness the full trajectory of an artist who has spent seven decades simplifying the complex beauty of the world into radical, spacious forms.

Sally McLaren Retrospective: A Passion for Printing is at Sladers Yard Contemporary Art & Craft Gallery, West Bay, Bridport Dorset DT6 4EL until 2 May 2026.

For more information visit: <https://sladersyard.co.uk/>



Shimmer by Sally McLaren. Photograph by David Harrison



Earth, Air and Water by Sally McLaren. Photograph by David Harrison



Rock Refuge by Sally McLaren. Photograph by David Harrison