

## Vecchi, Laura

Laura Vecchi Ford was born in Italy and studied Art at the Academy of Brera, Milan. Her first solo show, in a surreal hard-edged style, took place in Novi Ligure (Piedmont) in 1967 - the year she moved to Ireland. She has taught Modern Art History, Etching and Engraving, and Italian Language and Literature at NUI Galway for more than 30 years, while simultaneously developing her vision as an artist. Her work has been widely exhibited in Italy- including engravings at the Milan Biennale-England and Ireland.

In 1976 she received a grant from the Art Council and founded the studio GRAFICA 2 IRELAND, producing editions of work by Italian and Irish artists for the first time, as well as her own graphic work. One of her engravings was used by Ted Turton for the very first poster of an Art Festival in Galway in 1976. Health, family and work pressures bring about the closure of her graphic studio in 1983. In 1986 took part in the Independent Artist Exhibition in Galway Library.

Since then, her paintings are often textured with wording. This developed gradually in fully formed poems which were published in two collections in Italy: Nova Romantikela, Bergamo 1992- Gabbia aperta, Ragusa, 1996,- A third bilingual collection (which was supposed to be ready for this exhibition,) will be published by Rong4Matt Edition of the Mill, Tinahealy, Ireland. Other solo exhibitions were held in Cork, Galway, Dublin, Longford, Tortona (Italy), San Fedele d'Intelvi (Como, Italy).

Based in Galway, Laura works full time on painted and written surfaces of mahogany, and canvas while maintaining a more than an academic interest in the fictional writing of the art critic Michele Spina (Messina 1923-London 1990). An exhibition of her work relating to the writings of Michele Spina took place at the Istituto Italiano di Cultura in Dublin in November 2001. In 2001 a retrospective exhibition covering 4 decades of her work was hosted at the very first MUSCAILT Festival in the Galway University Gallery.