



mid america print council

The Mid America Print Council Journal
Volume 21, Numbers 3 & 4, 2013
Printmaking as a form of social practice

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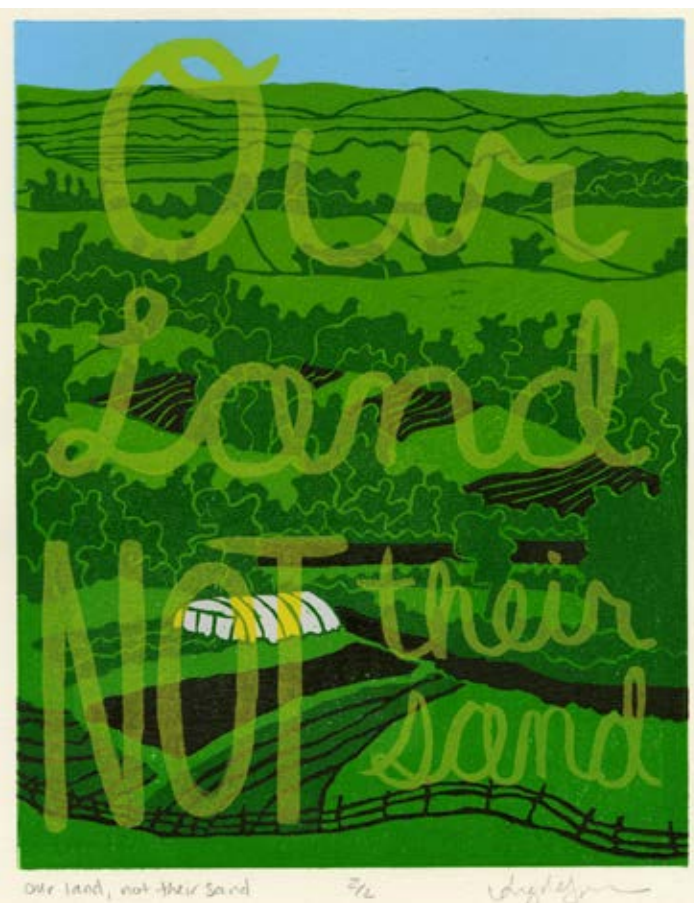
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ON THE COVER:
Angela Sprunger,
Our Land Not Their Sand (detail),
Medium: screen print on reductive linocut
8 x 10", 2013
Courtesy of the artist

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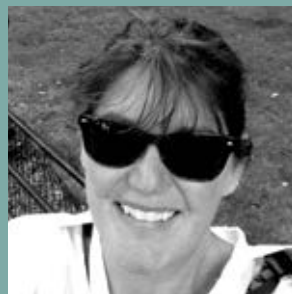
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Catherine Chauvin is an associate professor at the University of Denver. After earning an MFA at Syracuse University, she trained at the Tamarind Institute and has collaborated with artists such as Gladys Nilsson, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith and William Wiley in New Mexico, Texas and Anderson Ranch Arts Center in Colorado. These experiences as a collaborative printer and artist combine in several ways in her artwork and teaching. Catherine uses artwork to examine what is done to the environment in the name of progress.



Jennifer Ghormley received her MFA in 2006 from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She exhibits internationally through juried exhibitions, exchanges, and invitations, and hung a solo installation in 2012 at Liv Aspen Art, in downtown Aspen, Colorado. Jennifer has taught printmaking classes and workshops for CU-Boulder, Anderson Ranch Art Center, CO, Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, TN, Peninsula School of Art, WI, and Ah-Haa School for the Arts, CO. Currently, Ms. Ghormley telecommutes as the Programs Coordinator for the Venice Printmaking Studio, in Italy. In order to embrace all of her creative urges Jennifer creates artwork under her own name, as well as Jen G Studios.

Letter from the President:

One time, I was wondering out loud about "what do normal people do on weekends?" as I was thinking about being in the studio, fixing a press instead of 'having a weekend', and my friend Susan Meyer said, "Isn't having art in your life the point of this whole thing?" I've thought about this comment a lot.

Print studios demand this kind of social interaction – that's where I approached this Journal topic – that's where everyone I asked about the topic started – from this beginning, individuals whose ideas expand in many directions. The variety of Social Practice in Printmaking ranges from a print studio's social interaction, to making prints. It covers a broad spectrum, from Marriage to Giveaways and from Oregon to Mumbai. In a time where viewing is less passive because of media, it seems printmaking is reaching out in as many ways as there are artists. This is reflected in how many different forms of social practice are addressed in the articles in this quarter's Journal.

Letter from the Editor

In considering the topic of Social Practice, this urged me to reflect on my own studio practice. I tend to spend large amounts of time alone, hunched over a table, organizing my supplies, tearing paper, carving, inking, printing, and thinking. During formal education years I was always envious of the outgoing social printmakers who were so expressive, not only in their personalities and artwork, but in their ability to gather the masses and create an interactive event. Much of this kind of dynamic energy is reflected in the array of articles in this issue of the Journal. What I have noticed is that my relationship to social practice comes through experiences in teaching, but also in attending printmaking conferences over the years. Feeling a common bond with complete strangers, having a starting point for a conversation, bearing witness to how others approach the same media, techniques, and even subject matter – this is where I find myself grounded within the social practice of printmaking.



Letter from the Co-Editor:

I am so lucky in life to be part of this amazing print community. I have found that it's always going to be the printmaker that offers help first, that doesn't hesitate to share information and studio practice, that courageously stands up for a cause while everyone around them is sitting down. I've never known a more social, rowdy, communicative, steadfast, caring, dedicated, awesome group of makers and thinkers.

Social Practice is a theme that easily lends itself to the printmaker way of life. Ink and paper is a powerful combination. Human beings have always felt compelled to share their stories. Through the simple, yet transformative, process of putting ink to paper, we are able to share each other's experiences and dreams. There are always new stories to tell and a community of engaged print artists to connect with.

Letter from the Co-Editor:

Anita Jung is an artist whose work is imbedded in feminism and strives towards discussions of social relevancy. Anita's materials reference the heritage of printmaking, but through unexpected combinations Anita celebrates the roots of contemporary art while citing their modern influences. Her work contemplates materials that re-contextualize themselves through these unanticipated relationships. Often materials in the work are comprised of the ephemeral, overlooked, covered over or discarded debris that belong in the backgrounds of our lives. Through reactivation they transform the mundane into something that is familiar, yet allows for new discovery. Her current body of work is a site-specific collaboration with the material debris of makers and occupiers of a particular place.

Anita is a professor of print media at the University of Iowa. She previously taught printmaking, drawing and installation courses at Illinois State University, Ohio University and University of Tennessee. Anita is committed to study abroad opportunities for students and directs an annual service/learning art course to India. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Arizona State University where she majored in painting & drawing. The Master of Fine Arts was awarded to her from the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she worked with Bill Weegee as a printer at Off Jones Road and Tandem Press. She has been involved with MAPC and SGC for many years as a participant, officer and host.



Kristine Joy Mallari was born and raised in the desert of west Texas. She studied printmaking at the University of North Texas and moved to Portland, Oregon after graduating in 2011. Joy has done work for Oblation Papers and Press letterpress shop, Flight 64 co-op printmaking studio and the Museum of Contemporary Craft. She is currently the Printmaking Product Manager at Gamblin Artists Colors.



Anita Jung is an artist and the Professor of Intaglio and Printmedia at the University of Iowa. Her work is eclectic and investigates the everyday occurrence of being a human being engaged in the world. She freely moves in and out of various art practices. She is organizing a 2014 summer seminar investigating art as a form of social practice.

Contributors



Collaborators pitch in to attach the peace dove's feathers on the evening before the parade. Photo by Beauvais Lyons. 2011. (See "We Have a Dream" page 16)



Stefanie Dykes is a co-founder of Saltgrass Printmakers. Established in 2003, Saltgrass Printmakers is a non-profit printmaking studio and gallery located in Salt Lake City, Utah. Stefanie has taught relief, screen and etching printmaking classes at the University of Utah, Westminster College, Snow College and Saltgrass Printmakers. Dykes has been awarded two 2013 artist residencies; Anderson Ranch Art Center, Snowmass, Colorado and Surel's Place, Boise, Idaho. Dykes received her MFA from the University of Utah in 2010.

Dykes has exhibits nationally: McNeese National Works on Paper, 2012; IPCNY, New York, 2011; Ink&Clay, California, 2011; Harnett Biennial of American Prints, Virginia; and internationally, including: Digital Aesthetic 3 (DA3), University of Central Lancashire and The Harris Museum and Art Gallery, UK, 2012, International Print Biennale, Newcastle, UK 2011.



Diana Eicher received her MFA in printmaking from the University of Hawaii, her BA in painting from the University of California, Santa Cruz. She spent a year studying in Venice, Italy, at the Accademia delle Belle Arti, and has also studied at Tamarind Institute, Albuquerque, NM. She coordinates the Printmaking and Paper Studios at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. She has taught at the University of Hawaii, the Honolulu Printmaking Workshop, the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, The Textile Center of Minnesota, Honolulu Academy of Arts. In 2012, Diana had a solo exhibition at Donghua University in Shanghai, China.



Ruthann Godollei is a printmaker and Professor of Art teaching printmaking at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. Her prints incorporating political and social commentary are in many international collections, such as KUMU National Art Museum, Tallinn, Estonia, the Centre For Fine Print Research, Bristol, UK, and the Minnesota Museum of American Art. She has sponsored and participated in numerous print exchanges and giveaway projects. She is the author of a 2013 book on DIY printmaking, "How to Create Your Own Gig Posters, Band T-shirts, Album Covers, & Stickers, Screenprinting, Photocopy Art, Mixed Media Collage and Other Guerilla Poster Styles."



Emmy Lingscheit is an artist and printmaker from South Dakota. She earned her BFA from St. Cloud State University in Minnesota and later worked at the Highpoint Center for Printmaking in Minneapolis, MN, where she received a Jerome Emerging Printmakers Residency in 2006. Emmy received her MFA in printmaking from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville in 2012, and is currently teaching printmaking at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. Her work has been included in several recent juried and invitational exhibitions both nationally and internationally.



Ashton Ludden is a meticulous printmaker and engraver. As both domesticated and wild animals were always in close existence for Ludden, our subordinate beings (particularly meat animals) are the driving force behind her work. She received her BFA in Engraving Arts and Printmaking from Emporia State University in 2009 and her MFA in Printmaking from the University of Tennessee in 2013. She is currently an artist member of the Vacuum Shop Studios and the graphic designer for Larry Newman Printing Company in Knoxville.



Traci Molloy is a Brooklyn based artist and education activist. She's presented her artwork in over 150 national exhibitions, including solo shows in New York, Chicago, Kansas City, Nashville, and participation in the Atlanta Biennial. Her art has been reviewed in national and regional publications.

Molloy's multi-media collaborations with adolescents have been exhibited in Johannesburg, the United Nations, Tokyo, the Pentagon, and the CDC. They are the subject of two books, and have been featured on Good Morning America, and news stations in New York, Boston, Atlanta, and Washington D.C. For more information, please visit: www.tracimolloy.com and www.tracimolloycollaborations.com



Nicole Pietrantonio is an assistant professor of art at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington, where she teaches printmaking and book arts. Her artwork explores the complex relationship between human beings and nature, culminating in installations, works on paper, and public art. Pietrantonio has been granted numerous awards for her work including a Fulbright grant to Iceland, a Leifur Eiriksson Foundation grant, the Margaret Stonewall Wooldridge Hamlet Award, and the Elizabeth Catlett Fellowship. She received her MFA and MA in Printmaking from the University of Iowa and her BS in Human and Organizational Development and Art History from Vanderbilt University.



Cayla Skillin-Brauchle (b. 1984, Vermont) is a visual artist whose practice spans printmaking, installation, performance, and social practice. Her work has been shown at venues including Future Tenant in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; JKD Gallery in Burlington, Vermont; the Rotunda Gallery in Bangkok, Thailand; ROY G BIV Gallery in Columbus, Ohio, and most recently at the Sir JJ School of Art, Mumbai, India. Skillin-Brauchle earned a BA from Beloit College (2006) and her MFA in Printmaking from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio (2012). In 2012-13 Skillin-Brauchle was Fulbright-Nehru Fellow in Mumbai, India.



Patrick Vincent is from Minneapolis, Minnesota and is the operator of Twin Bee Press. He received his B.F.A. from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (2007), and his M.F.A. from Arizona State University (2012). He has worked for the design/letterpress workspace Studio on Fire, the Minnesota Center for Book Arts, and Pyracantha Press. Recently, he was the Lawrence Arts Center Printmaking Artist in Residence in Lawrence, KS. Patrick is the Assistant Professor of Printmaking at Minnesota State University in Moorhead, Minnesota.



Ms. Yazzie has exhibited widely, both in the United States and abroad. Her works are in the Phippen Art Museum, The Australian National Gallery and the Museum of Art at the Rhode Island School of Design, Print Collection, Providence, Rhode Island. She has been reviewed in Focus Magazine, Santa Fe, the Los Angeles Times, New Zealand Herald, and she is mentioned in Printmaking in the Sun by Dan Welden and Pauline Muir, Native American Art in the Twentieth Century by W. Jackson Rushing III, and The Lure of the Local: Sense of Place in a Multi Centered Society by Lucy Lippard. She has had over 150 group and solo exhibitions combined. Yazzie makes prints, sculptures, paintings, and mixed media works. Her work can always be found at the Glenn Green Gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Ms. Yazzie is a Professor and Head of Printmaking in the Department of Art and Art History at University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado. She can be contacted at melanie.yazzie@colorado.edu

Art & Social Practice

Traci Molloy

As I write this essay on art and social practice, I am thinking about some of the events that transpired in America this summer - the end of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), the Paula Deen scandal, and the George Zimmerman/Trayvon Martin trial and verdict. When the Supreme Court announced DOMA's demise and vacated California's Proposition 8 case, I felt relief and disbelief. Could the America that so many of us dream about be coming to fruition? It is naïve to think that repealing DOMA is going to expand closed minds or change bigoted opinions overnight, but June 26th was a good day.

The Paula Deen scandal and the Zimmerman/Martin trial, two events intimately tied to race, gender, class, and oppression, demonstrated exactly where our society is. We are still two Americas, a nation unable to come to terms with its history of discrimination and racial profiling, and a country divided by the romanticism of gun violence and "freedom." My June dreams for social progress and justice were shattered by the reality of July's not guilty verdict.

So we protest. We march as citizens. We get angry, feel frustrated, react and respond with words, actions, boycotts, and art. We must do something because doing nothing would mean we accept the verdict. It would mean we are complacent and compliant with an America that is "good enough."

This leads me to the crux of the essay. What is our role as artists? How should we use our artistic expertise to better society? What does it mean to engage in art and social practice? How does printmaking, and its richly layered history, factor in? To paraphrase 19th century German sociologist and philosopher, Max Weber, as well as French writer Andre Malraux, "Art is the real history of nations." Art is the mirror for societies ills and successes. It celebrates the best and worst of humanity. Artists make work to satisfy needs: the need to communicate, to comprehend, to process and personify, to beautify, to expose, and to echo. If art is a reflection of the reality of modernity, how will today's art world be viewed in the centuries to follow? People will look back on our generation and see art fairs and biennials, blockbuster exhibitions, record auction prices, and an art market exploding with money, power, and greed.

It is also possible that future generations will view today's art world as one that was filled with artists who engaged their respective communities, who made art that challenged conventional practices, that worked both collaboratively and independently to create social change. This art world is not currently celebrated in the media, but it does exist. LaToya Ruby Frazier, graffiti artist JR, and Natalie Jeremijenko are a few individuals who have received critical attention and success.

"When you are actively involved in art and social practice, you do not work in the isolated bubble of a studio."

However, there are countless under-recognized artists working to create social change. Artists such as Addi Somekh, Sarah Alford, Paul Harfleet, Laura Anderson Barbata, Dan Wang, Annette Rose Shapiro, Kalup Linzy, Kim Sholly, Suzanne Rosenblith, Miller & Shellabarger, Azame Kazie, Josie Mai, and Delanie Jenkins are worth researching. They are collaborating on projects with and in their respective communities, using the tools they have available to them to educate, reform, and bridge inequities in society.

When you are actively involved in art and social practice, you do not work in the isolated bubble of a studio. You engage others, are present, ask questions, listen carefully, and create art in partnership with your community. For 16 years, I've worked as an artist and education activist in Atlanta and now in New York City. My art explores themes of adolescent culture, violence, and grief. I create multi-media collaborations with adolescents in underserved communities, as well as with youth who lost a parent or guardian on 9/11/01. I've worked with incredible professionals in fields outside my own - psychologists and sociologists, researchers and death row investigators, as well as doctors, educators, and health care professionals. Their knowledge, conversations, and expertise have influenced my art in profound ways. These experiences deeply inform all that I am.

In writing this essay, I am using the same techniques I employ when collaborating - to solicit the input and advice of others. I asked artists from around the country to respond

to the same set of questions regarding art and social practice. They are individuals whose work I admire and respect, people who create both in and outside of traditional art practices.

In response to my question, whether you think art can actively create social change, Chicago based multi-media artist, writer, and curator Melissa Potter said the following:

"I do, but I think there are parameters and requirements. Artists need to engage effective research methodology, collaborations, and project goals in order to create change. It is a massive responsibility, and one that requires artists to be more effective about maintaining their relationships with people they engage. Far too many social practice art projects do a little media blitzkrieg, and then step out. When I enter a community, I basically recognize these collaborators become my extended network and family with all the requisite rights and responsibilities. The more interdisciplinary the projects are, and the more experts in their respective fields brought to the table, the better. What artists do well is break rules, create new boundaries and connections, and institute unexpected conversations. They create new metaphors with disciplines and intersections. This is their strength. Their weakness is as a group they tend to be arrogant and assume they can take on being artist/anthropologist/activist/NGO leader/scientist/teacher/etc. all at the same time."



Photo courtesy of Patty Mitchell, 2013. It shows Alfred working on his painting/quilt at Access Point in Cranston, Rhode Island. Access Point provides services for adults with disabilities. This piece was exhibited in: "Exposicion textil", Galeria Elqui, in Vicunas, Chile (Summer 2013).



Photo courtesy of Traci Molloy, 2013. It shows relief prints made by adolescents at Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School in the Bronx. The prints depict expressive portraiture related to the Holocaust. Each print is 16"x20". The prints were exhibited at FLH in the Bronx in 2013.

Potter explores gender in its relationship to individual expression, social interaction, and power dynamics. She has done extensive collaborative work utilizing craft and papermaking techniques in the Balkans and Caucasus. Atlanta based writer and artist, Joey Orr, also focuses on themes of gender and identity. He is a founding member of the idea collective, John Q, which (thus far) focuses on issues of queer memory by temporarily intervening into public/institutional spaces to explore matters of historical and institutional critique.

Regarding the ability of art to create change, Orr states: Art does not exist in a vacuum. That means it both influences and is influenced by a myriad of cultural forces at any given moment. One reason for the social turn in art is our realization of how quickly the visual can be subsumed into the very institutions it sometimes aims to critique. This is what Nancy Spector (Deputy Director and Chief Curator at the Guggenheim) has referred to as an "anti-ocular" impulse in particular forms of contemporary art.

If socially engaged art is taking modes of living, or even political formations such as democracy, as form, then the potential actually exists for social change to be either catalyzed or collapsed. How do we as artists become catalysts for change? Students often ask me how to engage in community-based projects. Sometimes they want to broadly understand what the role for an artist/activist is, while other times they seem to be looking for simple bits of practical advice. Responses differ depending on the specifics, but there are a few universal truths worth mentioning. Artists who wish to stimulate social change should always ask themselves the following: Who is the audience and does said audiences want this project? Artists are often filled with wonderful intentions - they want to create powerful pieces that will inspire and provoke, but sometimes they don't think about the direct impact of their work. For example, an anti-violence mural on a dilapidated wall may make the street look "better", but will it really help curb neighborhood brutality? If an

artist truly wishes to do something to make a difference, chances are they are going to have to work outside traditional venues.

Ohio based multi-media artist Patty Mitchell, founder of Passion Works Studios and now programming consultant, has been working "outside the box" for decades.

When describing her work Mitchell states: "I am on a mission to change the culture of sheltered workshops (supported work programs for people with developmental challenges). The common perception is that "these people" are unemployable, described primarily through their disability. Expectations are so low - few employment opportunities are offered beyond light assembly work and janitorial jobs."

In offering a person the opportunity to explore their art process, people come to life. Interests and talents are discovered. The conversation shifts from what people cannot do to what their passions and abilities are. Developing programming/art studios through the interests

of persons being served creates engaging spaces where fabulous art is created. This art can prompt dialogue around the abilities of people with cognitive challenges, the power of art, and the celebration of the human spirit.

Mitchell also offers a piece of practical advice to young artist collaborators – “Photograph and document everything. Don’t wait to be asked to make art in your community. Just start.” Like Mitchell, Kansas City based artist Hugh Merrill has worked in his community for decades. He is the Executive Director of Chameleon Arts and Youth Development (CAYD), which designs arts projects in collaboration with individuals who are socially invisible. Merrill states: Art is no longer separate from society. It must play its role in social and environmental change. What we do (as artists) matters. It has an impact on our community. There does not have to be a firewall between your private studio voice and your social engagement. You do not have to give up one for the other. Remember, style is less important than engagement.

New York City based video artist and photographer Carol Saft also collaborates with urban adolescents, providing them with traditionally inaccessible rural experiences. Saft states: Art can be empowering, driven by purpose and good will. Our studio practice can be particularly alive when there is confluence of deeply held beliefs with contemporary events in which we can participate. Through art we can witness the building of community and public good.

From Goya to Sandow Birk, printmakers have been functioning as social muckrakers for generations, disseminating editions to their respective audiences. Whether the medium is zines, etchings, Xeroxes destined for wheat pasting or silkscreens, printmakers have long explored difficult subject matter, utilizing a multitude of arenas in order to share their agendas.

Ben Rinehart is a Wisconsin based book artist and printmaker whose work follows that trajectory. Rinehart states: The ease of making multiples is a powerful aspect of printmaking. The ability to spread propaganda to a wider audience is something I’ve always enjoyed. Through image, language, and physical interaction, I strive to produce multi-sensory works with which the viewer is compelled to participate. As an advocate to the LGBTQ community, I use this approach to attempt to bring positive social and political change, to raise questions about love, insecurities, social injustices, and values in contemporary society.

The inherent nature of a printshop and its cooperative practices provides easy access

to group discussion and collaboration. Joey Orr states: The Mexican Taller de Gráfica not only produced images invested in revolution and social change, but also used their print workshop as a space for political organizing. Or think of Castro Camera in San Francisco. Run by Harvey Milk, it became a center for gay rights in the 1970s. The reality of sharing equipment means sharing spaces, and sharing spaces means gathering together like-minded individuals. There is always potential there.

The world needs artists to dream, consider, evaluate, question, and maybe most importantly, to capture the expressionless emotions of life. The world also needs us to

be vocal, to express our concerns, to educate, challenge, provoke, and prod, to take viewers outside their comfort zones, and to work in harmony with its citizens to create change. It is our job and our social responsibility.

As Pittsburgh based artist and curator Jill Larson so succinctly states: Art can definitely create social change. It has for eons and I can’t imagine why it wouldn’t continue to do so.

Art is a powerful weapon; it has the ability to make people stop and think and to manipulate emotions. It can disarm as well as call to action, thus, making it feared by many and loved by others. ■



Photo courtesy of Melissa Potter, 2013. The three women are wearing felt masks made in collaboration with Potter for a project titled, Feminist Felts. The women are: Ida Bakturidze, Melissa Potter, and Miriam Schaer. They are on the border of Daghestan. The felt masks were used for identity protection during protests.

Negotiating the Truth in Mumbai

By: Cayla Skillin-Brauchle



‘Certifying the Truth,’ multi-lingual interactive event, Sir JJ School of Art in Mumbai, 2013

For the last year I lived and worked in Mumbai, India. 361 days of rattling rickshaw rides, deep-fried chilies, samosa snacks, and crammed local trains (Crammed like sardines. No, more like crammed anchovies. I mean, crammed until you float and your feet don’t touch the ground). 361 days doing research, making artwork, and learning to speak Marathi. With my culture thoroughly shocked on my first trip to India, I found that this time I slipped back into my former life there quickly; I visited friends and took delight in eating all my favorite foods.

However, as time passed I longed for a deeper connection. At first it felt as though I could understand the city as an observer in the train or visiting diverse neighborhoods, but soon I saw that my observations were constantly filtered through my biases. I never really knew what was going on until I asked, and luckily for me months of studying Marathi finally paid off. Through a pair of social practice and printmaking projects about ‘the truth,’ I challenged myself to engage with my new community.

Since social practice is a tricky concept, let me give you my definition: Social practice is

a framework to develop studio practice and execute projects. Social practice is not about ethnography or observation or community service. Social practice relies upon collaboration. Social practice values individual people as experts on their own lives and experiences and creates a forum to share. Artists are responsible for curating these ideas and responses that may not be their own. Artists must recognize that it is impossible to join a community and not have an effect on it or be affected by it. Social practice is often about community organizing, using tactics that maybe only artists are crazy enough to come up with.

Often my best ideas come in the shower, but in India they generally came while waiting in line, waiting in line, and waiting in line. In fact, the motivation for Certifying the Truth was just that, waiting in line for the coveted verification of important documents in a country filled with stamps and seals.

Staged at the Sir JJ School of Art during their Annual Exhibition, Certifying the Truth was a 3-day interactive Marathi/English event, in which I offered to certify examples of the truth presented by community members. This

project had three specific inspirations. First, the continuous bureaucratic procedures necessary to maintain visas and affiliations that seems endless. Second, as a recent arrival in Mumbai, I had to trust strangers constantly. From small exchanges like buying vegetables or boarding trains to larger negotiations of housing and livelihood, I depended on the honesty and goodwill of my neighbors. Third, I believe truth is subjective. I decided to construct a situation that would push participants to contemplate the subjectivity of truth for themselves. With all these inspirations, I engineered this project to create a platform through which all participants could find a voice without shouting to be heard. This project was crafted to meet my neighbors and provide a forum for us to share our most important ideas.

Dressed in a uniform (complete with an English/Marathi nametag), I certified any truth presented to me by a participant. I validated all manner of opinions, feelings, and musings of Mumbaikars (as Mumbai residents are called). Certifying the Truth relied upon a shared vulnerability between the audience and myself. Community members trusted me with their versions of the truth, and I duly affirmed and verified their opinions and convictions.



Everything is the truth. Handmade box, rubber stamp, 24 screen printed pages 6 1/2" x 6 1/2" x 5/8". 2013

They filled out "Certificates of the Truth" in duplicate, I stamped one as "ORIGINAL" and the other as "DUPLICATE." Normally, the issuing authority retains the original while the supplicant goes home with only a duplicate. In my performance, however, I gave the original to the participant and kept the duplicate for myself.

The language used to record the truths was undoubtedly political. However, during the performance we shared a fluidity of language; the use of language was not acutely political, but rather a means to communicate. The personal and political function of language worked hand-in-hand.

Lines in India are a loose concept. So is privacy. Minutes into the performance folks started crowding the table, reading over their neighbors' shoulders, and initiating larger discussions. Conversations erupted about politics, religion, the recent rape case in Delhi, bureaucracy, and the city of Mumbai. My services were glaringly performative and my signature and stamp held no official weight. Yet the combination of having one's voice heard and the familiar process of verification kept participants interested. When asked about the validity of the certificates, I encouraged their use anytime the participants wished to present their version of the truth; I pointed out that our combined honesty was undoubtedly worth something.

The printmaking utilized in Certifying the Truth was rudimentary but essential. The "Certificates of the Truth" were hand drawn and then photocopied in the winding streets of Bora Bazaar. Each endorsed certificate was embellished with 4 custom stamps in a combination of English and Marathi. Ultimately, my familiarity with the multiple made this project possible. Instead of thinking that completely unique experiences must transpire in

order to make a unique impression, I understood the power of the multiple and how it facilitates shared experience. This project was about being heard and validated within a community, rather than celebrating individuality in a vacuum.

Certifying the Truth provided me with 100 truths in English, Marathi, and other Indian languages. Translated and transcribed by retired college professor Vinod Kambli, this stack of truths revealed a rare glimpse into the psyche of Mumbai. Faced with the question of what to do with this quirky and rare written information, there was one plausible (and printmakerly) answer: I made a book.

Leafing through these truths, one stood out: "Everything is the truth." Bingo. This project was about just that – the idea that even though your version of the truth and my version may differ, they are both fundamentally 'true.' As an American abroad, I remembered this every time I encountered unfamiliar customs. As an American engaged in national politics, I observe this concept daily through the increased polarization between the left and the right. In many ways India and America are similar. Both are home to a populace that spans a wide swath of religions, regions, and social classes. You can imagine the variety of opinion expressed in those 100 truths. Tasked with such a large editorial job, I chose 24 distinctive and often-contradictory statements for the artist's book Everything is the truth.

Conceptually I knew that I wanted to design a bilingual book that neither valued English more than Marathi nor valued any one truth over any other truth. I wanted a non-hierarchical form that could honor multiple authors simultaneously. I decided to make a box with 24 loose cards that have each truth in Marathi on one side and English

on the other. This format allows viewers to freely read either or both languages, easily rearrange the truths, or pullout one they find particularly pertinent.

Before production began, Clark House Initiative approached me, a Mumbai-based curatorial practice founded by Sumesh Sharma and Zasha Colah. Clark House Initiative's promotes and engages in art practices without a caste or class bias. My use of Marathi, public opinion, and the democratic nature of my process made us a good fit. As part of our collaboration, I screenprinted the contents of Everything is the truth with the assistance of graduate students Sachin Bonde, Prasad Nikumbh, Mangesh Kapse, and Nikhil Raunak in the Sir JJ School of Art printmaking studio. We found common ground, sometimes in Marathi and sometimes in English. Our conversations were concerned with the idea of the truth, the politics of language, and, of course, the international language of printmaking. The same feeling of fluidity that emerged at the performance marked our time in the studio as well.

With book in hand, I finally shared Everything is the truth with the public. The reactions from viewers clearly demonstrated its value as a viable extension of the initial performance. The book acts as a catalyst for conversation and welcomes a plethora of opinion. Readers express camaraderie and discord, creating an environment for the generation of fruitful conversation.

I found it remarkable how often bilingual people would first read in Marathi and then read in English to confirm what they had read, switching between the two freely. While this wasn't a design intention, it reveals an interesting fact: While there is always something lost in translation this experience suggests there is also something gained in translation. For me, this project positioned Mumbaikars as the experts on their city, their country, and their lives. These crowdsourced truths meshed perfectly with the democratic nature of printmaking and bookmaking.

In the end, I learned that most people shared my observations about Mumbai – the quagmire of bureaucracy, the constant negotiations, and the intimacy between strangers. At the start of this project I felt I was doing this project for myself. However, the moment I set up my Certifying the Truth shop, everything changed. My foreigner status and Marathi skills quickly attracted attention, and just as quickly the focus of the event shifted to those 'truths' that occupied the minds of the participants. Throughout the performance, the bookmaking process, and the book's reception one truth persisted:

Despite our different opinions, the opportunity to share and debate made us feel more together than alone. ■

The MCAD Minnesota Marriage Equality Poster Project

Kate Mohn & Diana Eicher



Harvey & Phil, Marriage Equality Event at Minneapolis, City Hall, MN. 2013. Photo credit: peggysuephoto.com

For the past eighteen months, Minnesota (like multiple other states in the nation) has been having a spirited debate about marriage equality for its GLBT citizens. In November of 2012, a ballot initiative that would have created a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage was narrowly defeated at the polls. Two months later, with both the state house and senate having flipped from a republican majority to a democratic one, marriage equality bills were introduced in both houses of the state legislature. What followed was an intense four months in which both pro- and anti-equality forces lobbied lawmakers hard.

During this time, the bill was a hot topic of conversation among the faculty, staff, and students at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD). Early in the session, when the bill's passage still seemed doubtful, MCAD staffer and grad student Kate Mohn had an idea. Through her work in MCAD's office of the president, she had been helping the college launch a major new initiative called MCADWorks, which would serve as an umbrella for the work MCAD does in collaboration with community partners. The potential of Minnesota taking a major step forward for gay rights seemed like a ripe opportunity for the college to undertake a related design-for-good project - but what kind?

Kate had long been a fan of the printed ephemera of the early 20th century – such as early movie posters, playbills, vaudeville promotions – and its ability to evoke specific times and places. At the same time, working at MCAD had piqued her interest in the processes used to make fine art prints in limited editions. She wondered if, in the unlikely circumstances that the bill passed, it would be possible to combine the concepts of ephemera and fine art to produce a run of serigraphs to celebrate the civil rights victory. To be able to do this seemed to exemplify the college's mission of combining creativity with purpose.

Not being an artist herself, Kate knew that if she wanted to make her idea into a reality, she'd need a team of skilled collaborators who would be as passionate about the project as she was. She began thinking about who at the college would be willing to help her try to get the idea off the ground. Her first stop was MCAD staff and adjunct faculty member Diana Eicher. As an artist, Diana had for years been fascinated by the ubiquity of bridal imagery in popular culture and the exclusion of gay couples from mainstream portrayals of weddings. Diana also had a longstanding commitment to combining her art with social practice; her work had been distributed for free at marriage equality events in the past and featured by Minnesota's Family Equality Council. Diana, in addition to being a respected teacher and printmaker in her own right, oversees the operations of MCAD's 5,000 square foot printmaking studio. She was on board with the project immediately.

Thus began the process of trying to hustle up enough funding to make the project happen. Kate, who works in the president's office, convinced MCAD president Jay Coogan to allot up to \$1,500 in discretionary funds to hire artists, pay them a modest stipend, and cover logistical costs. The college's Fine Arts department offered to cover the cost of paper for the prints, and the campus bookstore (the Art Cellar) discounted paper for the project. The Printshop scraped together several hundred dollars to cover supplies. By mid-April, they knew they had enough funding to potentially produce a run of prints, but the future of the bill in the state legislature remained uncertain.

Meanwhile, across the state, the ground-level efforts on behalf of marriage equality were slowly starting to have a noticeable effect. The political scuttlebutt surrounding the fate of the bill began switching from open skepticism to a sense that it might be possible to pass the bill through the Minnesota house on the narrowest of margins. Both the pro- and anti-marriage forces kicked into overdrive as the legislative session entered its home stretch. On May 9, the Minnesota House managed to pass the marriage equality bill on a wider margin than anyone expected, clearing the way for its passage in the senate (where it had been confirmed there were the votes necessary) and signing by the governor.

The day after the house vote, the MCAD team called the office of Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak and asked if there were plans brewing for an event at City Hall upon the bill going into effect on August 1. Unbeknownst to MCAD, Mayor Rybak had been at the state capitol the day before. Upon the bill's passage through the House, the mayor (much to his staff's consternation) impulsively began shouting to the assembled crowd that he would officiate any weddings for same-sex couples interested in getting married as soon as it became legal. As a

result of the mayor's outburst, the groundwork was laid for a massive celebratory marriage event at City Hall, starting at midnight on August 1.

Almost immediately, local businesses and organizations began offering donations of good and services to help make the event a celebration to remember. In addition to MCAD offering to donate roughly 550 prints, local florists donated arrangements for the City Hall rotunda, local musicians offered their services for free, and even Betty Crocker (a division of Minneapolis-based General Mills) joined the fun



"Freedom to marry" Artist: Diana Eicher
20"h x 30"w Screen print 2013

by donating wedding cake for all the couples to be married.

With only two-and-a-half-months until the big night, there was no time to be lost in hiring artists and beginning to explore design concepts for the prints. It was decided that three prints would be produced; each with a run of 175 hand-signed and numbered prints plus ten artists' proofs. Diana set about recruiting artists who would be willing to sign on the project for the small amount of pay the college could afford to underwrite. The first artist was easy – she volunteered herself to create one of the three designs.

With no time to put out an official call for artists to fill the remaining slots, Diana began tapping into the network of students she had worked with in the past. Two students in the college's Print, Paper, Book major, Kara Gregory and Christopher Alday, had a history of collaborating together with impressive results. When Diana first asked them how they would feel about creating a print for the project, they were both excited and enthused by the idea. A third student artist named Ben Proell from the graphic design program rounded out the crew of students. With the team assembled, designs were drafted, revised, and approved, and by late June the artists were in the shop engrossed in the meticulous work of making their designs a reality.

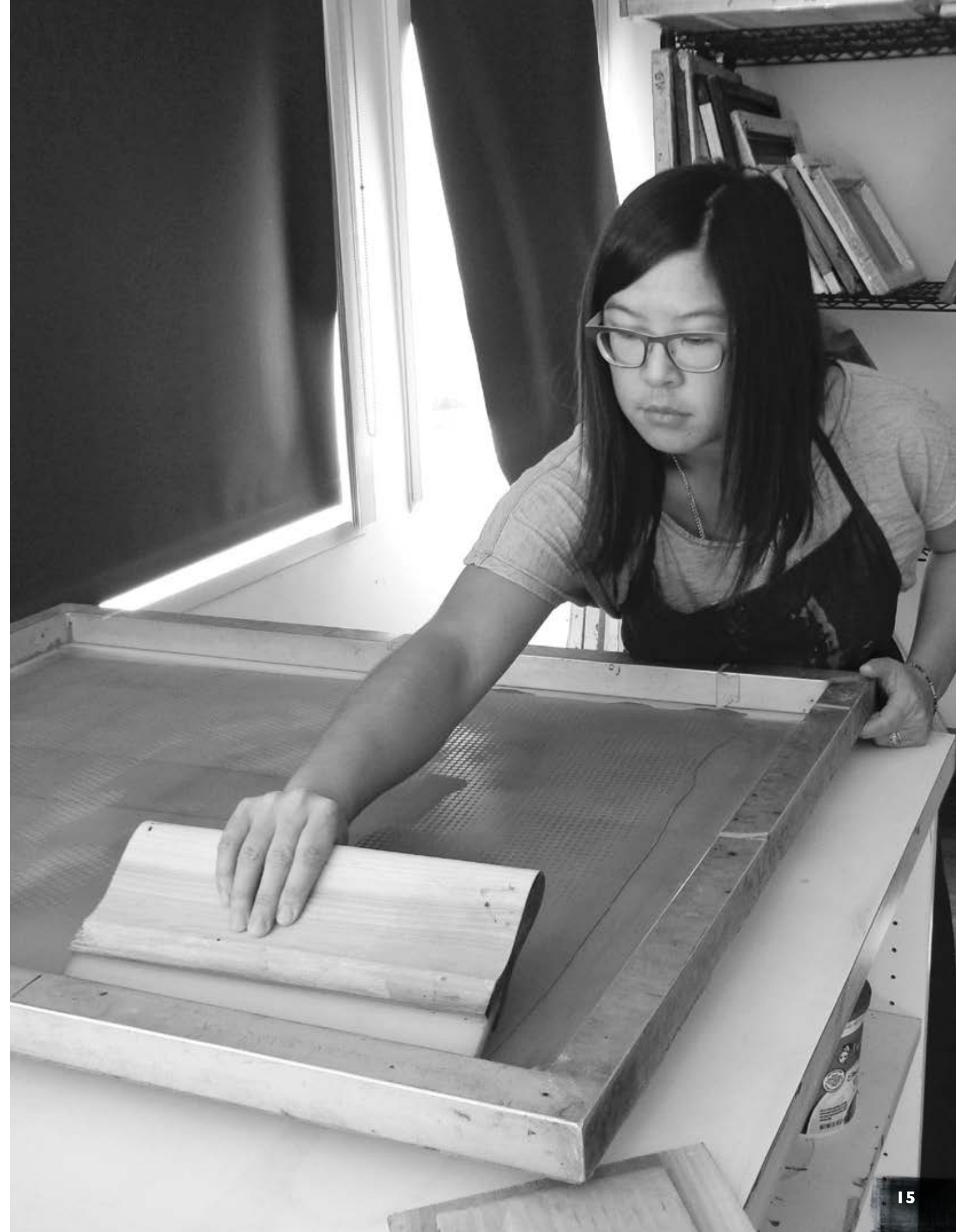
Meanwhile, Kate was wondering if there was a way to further increase the design-for-good aspects of the project. As part of her studies in MCAD's Master of Sustainable Design program, she had just enrolled in a summer class focused on designing for global change. It struck her that while giving the posters away to the happy couples and well-

wishers at City Hall on the night of the event was a lovely gesture, it didn't address the continuing issues the GLBT community faces, especially in areas of the country that still actively discriminate against same-sex couples. Eventually, she hit on the simple solution of setting aside a certain number of prints to be donated to local and national GLBT advocacy organizations. Since each print was hand-signed and numbered by the artist, they were easily worth \$100 apiece and would be great items to be used in silent-auction fundraisers. Kate began calling around to gauge interest; in advance of the August 1 event, the college distributed sets of prints to Twin Cities Pride, OutFront Minnesota, The Minnesota AIDS Project, Lavender Magazine, and the Human Rights Campaign.

With August 1 rapidly approaching and the artists hard at work producing the prints, MCAD's communications team began publicizing the project. Primarily through social media and word-of-mouth, the marriage equality print project slowly started garnering public attention in advance of the big night. The week prior to the weddings, MCAD received a call from the Tretter Collection of GLBT Studies at the University of Minnesota. The archives, which are among the largest collection of items related to queer history in the country, specifically requested a set of prints to include in its permanent collection.

By the time the day of the event arrived, Diana and her crew of artists had produced 550 truly gorgeous prints and city hall was being descend upon by a legion of florists, musicians, members of the press, and roughly a thousand friends, family, and well-wishers of the soon-to-be newlywed couples. In addition to each couple receiving a commemorative print as well as all the volunteers that helped make the evening possible, a crew from MCAD began distributing the remaining prints to guests just after the doors opened for the event at 10:30. By 11:00 the prints were gone. The first couple walked down the aisle at roughly 11:45 and was pronounced legally wed by Mayor Rybak just after the stroke of midnight made the enactment of marriage equality official. Over the next seven hours, a total of 62 couples exchanged vows.

The media coverage of the event was tremendous, and photos of the event appeared in both local media as well as national entities such as BuzzFeed and The Boston Globe. But for the MCAD crew, the most poignant image of the evening was a simple snapshot caught by a local photographer. In the early hours of the morning, two men in matching tuxedos exchanged vows while standing under a chuppa, surrounded by their family and friends. Just afterwards, they unwrapped the print given to them as a wedding present by MCAD and grinned at its simple message. After 38 years together, Harvey Zuckman and Philip Oxman were legally married. Finally. ■



We Have a Dream

Emily Lingscheit

On a chilly day in mid-January, a small group of graduate students and faculty from the printmaking department at Ohio University arrived in Knoxville and met up with their colleagues at the University of Tennessee. None of us yet knew how hard we would be working over the ensuing weekend, and the scope of what we would accomplish together. As printmakers, we are practitioners of a medium long associated with the struggle for social justice. We are accustomed to working in close proximity, yet a collaboration of this kind was something new to many of us. We convened on that Friday evening with the bare bones plan to create an art project celebrating and commemorating the great civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in observance of the national holiday. During the brief span of time from January 14 to January 17, 2011, this collaboration took shape in unexpected and serendipitous ways, through working methods that encompassed printmaking, book-making, sculpture, and performance. It would be seen by thousands of people and touch the larger community in ways that artists always hope to, but rarely achieve.

We kicked off the weekend with dinner, introductions, and the renewal of old acquaintances. Printmakers might be said to have a natural inclination towards artistic collaboration due to the physical and material demands of the medium, which predispose them to annual workshops, conventions, and gatherings. In this way, relationships are often forged between university programs and individuals alike, and this reunion was happy, its purpose exciting. Nourished, oriented, and energized, the group disbanded for the night.

The following day the project began with a viewing of Dr. Martin Luther King's 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech from the National Mall in Washington, DC. Moved by the eloquence of Dr. King's speech and inspired by the power of a group coming together with a united purpose, we began our brainstorming in silence. A long sheet of butcher paper ran the length of the front of the room. It soon filled with writing and sketching as individuals added ideas sparked by the speech. Then the group organized into six collaborative teams to delve deeper, sifting these broad offerings and negotiating the tension between ideas and imagery. The discussions were wide-ranging and of various emotional hues, acknowledging both Dr. King's living legacy and profound effect on society, as well as contemporary battles in the ongoing struggle for civil rights equality. Within the hour, the teams

had generated several project ideas. The resulting work would be shared with the community as part of Knoxville's 2011 MLK Memorial Parade on the following Monday. The challenge was on. The teams spread out through the UTK print shop, rounded up tools and materials, and went to work.

The first morning of the project, dubbed "We Have a Dream," was a flurry of activity. One group wielded box cutters and glue guns, earnestly consulting as they designed the cardboard-over-wood internal support structure of what would become a dove-of-peace



Ohio graduate student Bobby Howsare carves one of the relief print matrices. Photo by Beauvais Lyons. 2011.

puppet/float with an 18-foot wingspan. Another group drew oversized images of clasped hands onto four soft plastic boards of Sentra and began carving these, from which multiples would be relief printed and worn by participants in the parade to signify unity and brotherhood. Other groups designed and printed two small artist books. One of these books was given to people along the parade route, along with screen-printed and laser-cut feathers produced by yet another group. The feathers were also used to attire the dove. People moved freely between teams, sharing supplies, problem solving, contributing technical knowledge, and taking turns with tasks. Continuous interaction between groups had a cross-pollinating influence, keeping creative production dynamic and unexpected as we worked and responded to one another's evolving projects. Through the power of diversity, each team's project became more

specific and unique, and yet somehow more related to each of the other projects, as all were focusing their talents towards one common goal. The result was a powerful, unified statement that pleasantly surprised all participants involved in this creative process.

Momentum grew quickly as the components of the project took shape more and more clearly. The collaboration required a full commitment from each of the participants, who rallied for work sessions each day at 9 am and often continued working until midnight. Coffee flowed. Meals were prepared in the Art and Architecture Building using crock-pots, a camp stove, and a charcoal grill. Art making transitioned smoothly into meal preparation, with a handful of people volunteering twice a day to duck out in advance of meals to chop vegetables or fire up the grill. Someone discovered that the clean reverse-side of recycled litho plates could be folded up into tidy serving dishes, and papermaking tubs were repurposed to collect dirty dishes as well as to store food provisions and beverages. After dinner, participants who had brought musical instruments circled and played together. Ohio Professor Art Werger offered juggling pointers to interested pupils. The atmosphere was part workshop and part church lock-in, a short intensive interlude from the busy world during which participants drew closer to each other not only through creating art together, but also by sharing time during meals, engaging in play, and temporarily foregoing sleep for a common cause.

For many participants, the collaboration offered inspiring new approaches to take back to their own studio practice, and perhaps even to apply to other areas of civic life. "The quantity and quality of work produced was only made possible by the amount of people joined together and committed to this project," commented UTK Print Studio Technician Jessie Van der Laan. "For one weekend, we put aside our own work, our own agendas, and made something together. The act of making this work was, in itself, a testament to the power of a community." Ohio University Professor Melissa Haviland seconded this sentiment. "I think that the most beneficial result of our weekend was the proof that we could work together and produce such a large project. All of us from Ohio University found fluidity in working with our fellows from Knoxville. And we successfully logged in over 815 people hours in two days. Amazing! I am very glad to have had the experience." The print shop was abuzz with activity until late on the night before the parade.



Participants in the "We Have a Dream" collaboration march in the 2011 MLK Commemorative Parade. Photo by Beauvais Lyons. 2011.

Bobby Howsare, an Ohio graduate student, designed an emblem to screen print on aprons for each participant to wear in the parade, a visual pattern of words from Dr. King's speech which resonated with the group: Progress. Justice. Soul Force. With the books printed and folded, the relief-carved hands ready to carry, and capsizing stacks of hand-printed feathers at our disposal, everyone pitched in to finish dressing the enormous dove in rows upon overlapping rows of the delicate paper feathers. Professor Beauvais Lyons of UTK constructed an olive branch for our dove of peace to hold in her beak—the finishing touch.

In the brisk morning chill on Monday, January 17, the group unloaded the dove onto Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, amid much attention. By 10 am several hundred parade participants had gathered outside the Tabernacle Baptist Church, the parade's starting point, which also offered a warm basement and hot beverages. Inquisitive people warming their hands over Styrofoam cups of hot chocolate drifted by to chat with us and admire our big bird as we made final adjustments, tied on aprons, and devised a formation. When the procession began and our turn came to join in, our group was led with two people to circulate among parade onlookers, passing out our hand-printed gifts. Behind them marched a semi-circle of people linked by the relief-carved "holding hands." From the center of our group arose the dove of peace carried by five people, three of whom operated the moving wings and tail. This spectacle drew an enthusiastic reaction from parade onlookers, who clapped, cheered, shouted blessings, and asked questions as we

passed. Of the estimated 150 entrants in the parade, many were church groups, and one onlooker inquired which church we were with. After a moment of consideration, someone called back "The Church of Printmaking!" The atmosphere was one of upbeat celebration, with pageant queens smiling and waving from cars, children scrambling for candy at the curb, and marching bands adding their rhythm and flair to the day. During the parade we met a group from the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance who were also marching with oversize cargo —12-foot tall puppets representing Mahatma Gandhi, Sojourner Truth, and Dr. Martin Luther King. Also amongst the puppets was a paper-mache Myles Horton, founder of the Highlander Center, an organization that assists communities in working for justice, equality and sustainability throughout Appalachia and the South. A man who had brought his two young daughters to see the parade and who was quoted in a local news article the following day, tried to sum it up. "You can't get this out of books. Whites and Blacks coming together with enthusiasm about one common goal — you know, this is what it's all about."

The reaction and participation of the community was by far the most rewarding aspect of the project for the students and faculty involved. As a social practice, printmaking has traditionally been a powerful agent of social change. Putting aside our individual ambitions and projects in order to put these ideals into practice turned out to be tremendously gratifying. It was exhilarating to interact with the crowd and witness their reception of the work we'd done over the preceding days. Many people appeared deeply

moved and delighted. During this collaboration, the sometimes rarefied atmosphere of graduate school was refreshed and enriched for us students, as the "real" world coalesced with the academic world, and community members from all walks of life came together for a common goal. Reflecting on the experience as a whole, UTK graduate student Ashton Ludden commented, "This was my first real collaboration. I had many predictions of what the experience would be like but I never thought we would have executed so much in such a short amount of time. The parade was very fulfilling after the intense weekend. I felt very proud walking down the road with such an amazing group of artists sharing our creations and being a part of the celebration for the Dr. Martin Luther King Day." Her enthusiasm was shared by Greg Daiker, another graduate student from UTK, who said, grinning, "Who would have thought it would be so much fun to walk two miles on an early, rainy and cold morning?"

After the parade, we installed an exhibition of the project in a gallery on the UTK campus. This included a slideshow of photographs of the celebration and of each stage of our production, as well as a display of the actual items we created during the "We Have a Dream" project. Advance publicity of the event brought approximately fifty people from the campus and local community to the reception to learn about the collaboration. Reception attendees ate cookies and conversed while the peace dove rested precariously on her support posts, wingtips touching opposite walls, greeting visitors with her perky, hopeful olive branch. The project was also covered in one local television newscast, and was featured with a photograph in the Knoxville News Sentinel the following day. A week later when the exhibition was taken down, the peace dove found a home with the puppet makers from the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance, who adopted her for appearances in future community events. Other materials from the project reside in the archives of both University of Tennessee and Ohio University. The active legacy of the collaboration, however, is lived by the participants, who were each a little bit changed by the experience. ■

The Social Swarm: A Social Practice Experiment in Print

Patrick Vincent



"Stigmergic" Installation exhibition detail. Rubber relief carvings and screen printed contact paper. 4" x 6" (approx). Lawrence Arts Center Gallery, Lawrence, KS. 2013.

Printmaking is often defined as a social discipline. The communities that form in a print studio are reflected in the larger networks of academic councils and on-line forums/blogs. For me, print communities have been ways of connecting to artists and educators that I would have little or no way of interacting with otherwise. It is with this frame of mind that I approached my yearlong residency at the Lawrence Arts Center in Lawrence, Kansas. I created a print project through my contact with the people of the local community. This was a

way for me to engage printmaking as a form of social practice art – an art form that I define as a discourse that derives its meaning from public and/or interpersonal relationships. I created an open call for individuals in Lawrence (including some from beyond the area) to submit a picture of his or her face to be placed on a "bug" of their choice. The images were submitted via e-mail, which I then drew and carved into rubber tiles. The carvings were printed as reliefs and given back to the respective participants as gifts; I kept the carvings to document the exchange and

to display at the end of the residency. I called this the "Bug Project" and it took shape as defined by the participants in the Lawrence community.

The Lawrence Arts Center hosts two artists-in-residence, one for printmaking and the other for ceramics. One year is the perfect opportunity to create such a project because it allows time for the organic growth of a project defined by social interaction. The residency provided a stipend, housing, and teaching opportunities. The residency also required social outreach,

presentations to schools, galleries, and other art-affiliated institutions. I used this time to present my project as a way of solidifying these encounters—freezing and documenting my time and place through print and social practice. The residency culminated in an exhibition in one of the Arts Center's galleries; with this in mind, I coordinated my project so that my print work and social encounters throughout my year in Lawrence would be on display to the community that helped to form it.

The final exhibition was titled "Stigmergic," which can mean "swarm intelligence" or a way of communicating whereby the individuals involved affect their local environment. The title reflects my attitude toward the project, letting the visuals unfold within the parameters I had defined for social engagement. The exhibition featured 160 carvings of the participants as well as a 60-foot accordion book with an impression of each bug/person carving. Two larger carvings of E. O. Wilson, the social biologist, and Louise Bourgeois, the late French artist, cordoned the insect/human inquiry as one that is researched in art and science alike.

The exchange aspect of the Bugs project suggests the sort of exchange that is inherent in the portfolio exchange, common to many printmaking communities (particularly in academia). The exchange created a positive reinforcement for engaging with a social practices project vis-à-vis gift giving. Furthermore, the exchange component explores ideas of value as well as expanding the art ownership and collection to individuals who would not normally do so. The Lawrence Arts Center focuses on the community as a whole, with a particular emphasis on providing arts experiences to under-served children of the area. In this way, the project cuts across obscure class boundaries that bar some individuals from collecting new and original works of art. This ability to reach a wide range of individuals through art and art making is the shared strengths of social practice methods and printmaking.

I would be remiss to discuss printmaking and social interaction without mentioning the Just Seeds cooperative. This "de-centralized network of 24 artists" founded by Josh MacPhee is a model for how printmaking collectives and individuals impact a place and compel a social conscience through print.² Similarly the organization the ILSSA (Impractical Labor in Service of Speculative Arts) uses the structure of a labor union to create social networks that connect people through art and making.³ While the ILSSA is not print-specific, it attracts book artists and printmakers because of the social nature of the respective disciplines. While I would not claim that my project has any connection to Just Seeds or the ILSSA I believe it reflects the same appeal to the print as a vehicle for community engagement in both groups.

The Bugs Project and the resulting Stigmergic exhibition also reference the conceptual underpinning for much of social practice art methodology: relational aesthetics. Relational aesthetics is often defined by Nicolas Bourriaud's treatise *Esthétique relationnelle* (*Relational Aesthetics*).⁴ While I give credit to Bourriaud,



"Stigmergic" Installation exhibition detail. Rubber relief carvings and screen printed contact paper. 4" x 6" (approx). Lawrence Arts Center Gallery, Lawrence, KS. 2013.

I am inclined toward the trajectory of social practice art historicized by art historian Claire Bishop: Bourriaud's argument did not precede these art forms or practices but did indeed give a language that made them more "amendable" to broader audiences in museums, galleries, and criticism.⁵ More specifically to printmaking, I would like to paraphrase an argument made by one of the ILSSA co-founder Bridget Elmer in her presentation "Relational Continuum: The Book as 'Lasting Encounter'" at the College Book Arts Association 2011, conference in Bloomington, Indiana: the term "relational aesthetics" is a theoretical and academic way of describing the social and public dynamics of arts that have existed for hundreds of years in craft traditions. Nevertheless, the advantage to an art form and project that is derived from interaction and public engagement is that it has the ability to demystify the viewer/artist separation because they are more closely intertwined in what is produced.

"I decided that insects were an appropriate platform for my social art experiment."

With respect to my own project, I felt that the Bugs project and the Stigmergic exhibition was as much my own project as it was the project of all 160 people involved.

The Bugs project used insects as a way of reflecting human societies and groups. This insect/human parallel was a way of reifying the idea of the multiple that is inherent in printmaking as well as the community that develops the identity of the final exhibition. Much of my work prior to the Bugs Project was exploring installation and the relief carving as sculpture, focusing on animal-

human hybrids. In the previous work, I sought to use the installation format to immerse individuals in my research and presentation of animalist folklore. The questions I was investigating in these other works surrounded how we, as humans, negotiate a sense of identity and place in the natural world—how do we see ourselves as a part of or apart from animals. With the Bugs Project, I moved my research from an insular practice to a collaborative one. When I came across some of the ideas of social biology, stemming from E. O. Wilson's investigation into ants, I decided that insects were an appropriate platform for my social art experiment. In provoking an imagined insect-human connection, I was eager to see how people received the project and was pleased to see the varied reception. The mixed reaction of identifying with insects ranged from disgust, fear, joy, and curiosity. For me, this interaction allowed me to let the viewers correspond in how they psychologically connect to the animal/insect world instead of presenting it to them.

The potential pitfalls that I tried to avoid in my project were in the parameters and control. With parameters too loose, a socially defined project is in danger of being an aimless garble of information; parameters too narrow is hardly a social project at all. The latter danger of parameters also leads into the dangers of a social practice project being overly controlled by the artist, where the artist can be a micromanager for interested participants. Furthermore, an overly directed project can be tethered to positivist results instead of allowing for organic growth and realization. In designing this project I wanted to give participants focused agency: enough personal engagement that they felt individual ownership, but restrained enough to keep the integrity of the project cohesive. Also, the project was entirely voluntary, with a free and original piece of art as the enticement. Whether or not I have completely avoided these issues is debatable but is within the conversation stimulated by the project and exhibition.

One tenet of the printmaking as a conceptual discipline, is the notion of transfer or imprinting. Just as a print matrix – be it a lithographic stone or digital printer – translates an image to paper; the social dynamics of art spectatorship and interaction transfers the experiences and perceptions of its viewers and participants. In this way, the print is always social in how it affects people; the project/exhibition I have recounted has been one attempt to make this impact visible and tangible. ■

1. One of the delightful surprises of the project was to see what individuals consider a "bug," as not all were strictly insects.
2. Just Seeds, "Who We Are." Accessed August 12, 2013. http://justseeds.org/about/who_we_are.html.
3. ILSSA: Impractical Labor in Service of the Speculative Arts, "Home." Accessed August 12, 2013. <http://www.impractical-labor.org/>
4. Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Relational Aesthetics*. Trans. S. Pleasance & F. Woods. Dijon, France: Les presses du réel, 2002.
5. Bishop, Claire. *Artificial Hells*. New York: Verso, 2012. P. 2
- 6.

Social Practice: Out of the Studio & Into the Fields

Ashton Ludden

As many of us know, the role of art can be to share new perspectives. Many artists create as a means to educate, provoke, share stories or even simply hold up a mirror to their viewers. I use printmaking to discuss our relationship with animals raised and used for human food. In order to talk about this subject, I felt I really needed to know it. The Internet has a vast amount of information, but a majority of it is inaccurate or skewed. So, I sought professionals in my current surroundings, got out of the art department, out of my studio, and into my local community to meet real people. Whether in a small town in Kansas, or a large university in Tennessee, I sought those who could provide me with the most genuine knowledge.

This all began when I was eating breakfast with printmakers Larry Schuh and James Ehlers, during the Frogman's Print Workshop in 2007. Larry shared a story of when he worked at a slaughter plant as a teenager and recalled his memories of moving barrels and barrels of dead male chicks. That was the first time I ever gave a second thought to meat.

When I returned to Emporia, where I was attending Emporia State University for my undergraduate degree, I immediately called the closest butcher, about 25 miles outside of town. After repeatedly explaining that I had no plans to exploit them but just wanted to learn, they allowed me a visit to talk, see their facilities and ask questions. This first visit initiated enough trust that I was invited to come back and eventually one of the four employees invited me to return on a Tuesday, which was slaughter day.

This was back when I still ate meat. I returned to that butcher exclusively to purchase meat because I knew exactly how they slaughtered their animals and it was as humane as killing can be. This was a beneficial relationship for both of us; I knew the people who killed the animals I ate, and in turn, they taught me what it's like to work as a butcher. They shared their moral dilemmas while I helped them understand how an artist tends to think. This coupling of very different people sharing knowledge happened simply because I asked.

I enjoyed this type of "homework". Unfortunately, just when I was getting into printmaking, I was also graduating. Not feeling ready to leave academics, I immediately applied for graduate schools and accepted an offer from the University

of Tennessee in Knoxville. I wanted to continue my hands-on research and was excited to find that UT has a reputable Agriculture College and Veterinary School. For most of my electives, I took classes in Food Science and Animal Science rather than studio courses. This is where I met my "meat professor", Dr. Dwight Loveday. Dr. Loveday taught a lecture course called, "Fresh Meats," which covered everything from how muscle tissues developed, to meat packaging. He was intrigued by my interest in his classes.



Brisket Double Chop Entrée(Olivia) Wood engraving, 5x7, 2013.

In addition to being an educator, he was also a lamb producer and allowed me to visit his farm to show me the system he uses during lambing season. The following semester, I also took his "Meat Processing" class. Most of our time was spent in the lab learning how to prepare, render and cook various processed meats. I found the meat lab operated similarly to the printshop in regards to process and community. We made boneless ham, a variety of sausages, boneless wings, bologna, double flat iron steaks, and jerkies. It was the first time I ever thought of how many pigs might be in a single sausage or cattle in a

beef patty. It was also about the time when I began printing with raw meat.

Dr. Loveday was a vital part of my experience in graduate school and was a member of my thesis committee. He helped me find new resources through his colleagues, such as his good friend Allen Benton and the Food Science technician, Eric, who allowed me on the food science field trips to industrial slaughter and rendering plants. I would bring my sketchbook and draw as much as I could, but I'm sure this was only allowed

because they thought I was a Food Science major, not an artist.

I also took a course called "Ethics of Animal Agriculture," which had discussions on all sorts of topics relevant to my work. The most interesting thing about this class were the other students - most of them saw nothing wrong with rodeos, cropping/docking, or using animals for entertainment. I found myself writing quotes from the students more than the professor.



The Meatimal™ Engraving, aquatint 6x6, 2013

My network of animal colleagues grew when I received an email from a law professor asking if I'd like to be a guest exhibitor at the Animals, Ethics & Law Symposium held at UT. Of course I accepted the offer and heard diversely interesting lectures and panel discussions from lawyers, veterinarians, philosophers, anthrozoologists such as Dr. Hal Herzog and many others working in professions to aid animals. This exposure led me to later being a guest exhibitor at the International Veterinary Social Work Summit, where I was able to meet (and even have lunch with!) Dr. Temple Grandin.

All of this outside research shifted my focus to the process, the science and simply the business behind the meat industry. It highly influenced and developed my work to discuss these ideas in a more intelligent way. Researching didn't affirm what I thought I knew, but rather made the answers more complicated and pushed me into a deeper moral dilemma, which is what fuels my drive to create.

It's amazing what you'll find outside your studio, I would never have had such an insightful learning experience if I had just sat in front of books and a computer all day. It seems art often times is about everything but itself, and in my case, the subjects I'm interested in are political, debatable and the truth is often distorted by the industry, the public and the media.

Seeking the people working in my areas of interest was a way for me to acquire genuine information and gain personal experiences within these fields, which in turn brought my practice to them. I was able to educate others about printmaking and what all it entails. Crossing disciplines bridges gaps between different fields and builds relationships with people, who never knew they had so much in common. ■

Giveaway

Ruthann Godelli

I have participated in, organized and presented dozens of print exchange portfolios. I have also directed and taken part in several live performance print giveaways. I find them enjoyable and rewarding, in varying degrees, but my non-printmaking colleagues find them quite puzzling: "You're doing all this work? And you're giving it away?" "Yep, that's what we do.

When I became the printmaking professor at Macalester College, I inherited a decades-long print exchange for the Printmaking I course and kept the tradition. In an exchange, students create an edition, and trade with others in the class, one copy of each print is retained for the archives. We hand typeset a colophon of their names in Century Schoolbook, working from the same metal letters used for portfolios dating back to the start of the art department. It's a nice tradition, certainly for their labors the students who produce a print edition get a big stack of their colleagues' art to take home. They also get practice with editioning a print, a motivating purpose (peer pressure makes them want to make extra nice prints), and the college has a fantastic record of art from each student who has taken Printmaking I. Participating students also get to keep one of their own prints too, so we have the pleasant paradox of keeping while giving away.

I recently co-organized "Print Central Station" a print giveaway project for the Northern Spark Festival, an all-night art extravaganza in St. Paul Minnesota. With Jenni Undis of Lunalux Press, Peet Fetsch of Big Table Studio and my volunteers from Printland Press we transformed the Union Depot Amtrak waiting room into a working printshop for one night. In the theme of the locale, we printed paper arrows with letterpress destinations and aspirations, free and on-demand for a public audience. Captions were preprinted on the arrows: "Take me to..." "Buy me a beer in..." "Visit beautiful..." and "Get Me Out of...". The public queued up to tell us places and concepts as we set type, inked and printed on small table top presses at a breakneck pace. Each visitor received their own freshly printed arrow with a copy posted on destination kiosks around the festival site. Our crew printed and gave away 1100 arrows over the 10 hours of Northern Spark, and we retained a few copies as an archive to document the project. The receiving line rarely diminished,



Peet Fetsch, Andrew Gramm and Erin Holt sort wood type at Print Central Station, Northern Spark, St. Paul, MN 2013. Photo by Craig Upright.

strangers chatted with one another about their favorite places, and expressed excitement to see their ideas in printed form. We met and interacted with people from Japan, Ghana, France, Belgium, Davenport, Iowa and Bemidji, Minnesota. "Hogwarts" was a popular location requested by children, while "cancer free" was a conceptual destination with power and pathos. If you have jumped into one of these marathon print-o-ramas you know it has the potential for creating exhilarating transformative experiences, both for the makers and the receivers - and you know how much labor is involved.

Marx theorized three kinds of value for a manufactured item traded in a capitalist market, and Labor-Value clearly plays a role in making a print. Unlike Marx's theoretical workers, however, most printmakers are not alienated from their art labor; rather we enjoy what we do and take pride in our work. His idea of Use Value is a bit trickier to apply here, as many people amongst the general public see art as fundamentally useless. I am not one of those people; for example, the history of apartheid documented by John Muafangejo or the call to action incited by Occupy posters strike me as art with good use. I also dislike the idea of art reduced to utilitarianism. Expressing human emotions and ideas seems supremely useful to me as a human being. But in trading prints, part



of the use value is facilitating the Exchange Value, the third of Marx's three Vs. The exchange value present in an organized print-trade project is the main point. Even craven capitalists see the good in trading prints because you get something back. Although not recommended for a retirement strategy, prints traded with unrecognized artists might potentially become monetarily valuable as careers progress. Occasionally museums acquire portfolios, so participants may receive recognition or at least encouragement to continue. The lack of gallery venues in the recession-hit art industry is a practical reason to participate. French sociologist Marcel Mauss examined gifts that gave rise to such reciprocal exchange. Mauss discussed social obligations and status gained by gift giving and reciprocal practices amongst Kiriwina islanders in his early 20th century book, *The Gift*.

What about the act of "the giveaway"? Mauss had a harder time explaining certain generous acts considered irrationally extravagant by Western social standards. He marveled over a "magical" connection formed between the giver and receiver as, "the objects are never completely separated from the men who exchange them."¹ Mauss noted that gifted objects mysteriously retain something of the personhood of the giver. More so with gifts of art, I would argue, is something we look for and value in artworks today as retention of a piece of the artist, their spirit or their mind. Keeping while giving away was explored in Annette Weiner's 1992 book *Indalienable Possessions*.² She critiqued Mauss and other Eurocentric, capitalistic analyses of indigenous gifting practices. Her work in turn has come under fire for failing to identify distinctly different cultural ideas regarding objects, personhood and possessions in the groups she studied.

In the Pacific Northwest Coast, particularly, the potlatch is an indigenous people's festival and ceremonial practice of gift-giving that so threatened capitalist social order it was banned by the governments of both the United States and Canada in the 19th century. In Canada, Section 3 of the Indian Act of 1884 read:

*Every Indian or other person who engages in or assists in celebrating the Indian festival known as the "Potlatch" or the Indian dance known as the "Tamanawas" is guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not more than six nor less than two months in any goal or other place of confinement; and, any Indian or other person who encourages, either directly or indirectly, an Indian or Indians to get up such a festival or dance, or to celebrate the same, or who shall assist in the celebration of same is guilty of a like offence, and shall be liable to the same punishment.*³

Apparently gift-giving ran contrary to "Christian" values such as the Protestant work ethic as well as undermining laws (and thus governmental control) over productivity, disrupting commerce, taxation, and profit. The ban was only rescinded in 1951. Today the potlatch is a thriving part of sustaining cultural identity (and economy) in numerous first nation communities. It doesn't surprise me that many Native American printmakers I know are avid participants in and frequent organizers of print exchanges and giveaways. Melanie Yazzie's tireless instigation of innumerable portfolios that travel the world come to mind, as well as John Hitchcock's projects like Satisfaction Town, Moving Targets and Air, Land, Seed with Marwin Begaye, Ryan O'Malley, Emily Arthur and others. But to avoid cultural reductivism, let me first acknowledge the truly generous spirit of these magnanimous members of the print community.

"Gifted objects mysteriously retain something of the personhood of the giver."

Freud only proposed a few psychological motivators for artists, popularly phrased as "fame, fortune, and better lovers." He actually wrote "...the artist is impelled by...the (desire) to achieve honor, power, riches, fame, and the love of women."⁴ Knowing many printmakers personally, rest assured few of us have achieved the fame and fortune and artists may be some of the least powerful people in contemporary society. Unfortunately, improvement of one's love life does not seem to correlate to more trading of prints, despite the notoriety of the line "come up and see my etchings." Freud, a bourgeois, late Victorian member of capitalist Viennese culture might not have been able to imagine other motivating factors. What about the generous human impulse? After all, prints and all artworks freely share the maker's ideas and concepts with every observer, paying customer and impoverished bystander alike. The nurturing impulse fosters print communities and includes newbies in portfolios of established artists. Addressing the urge to share, isn't it usually more fun to show work than lock it in a closet? The challenge to make one's ideas manifest engages most artists regardless of sale-ability. Some say we have an inner need to make these things, far surpassing any potential gain. Lewis Hyde's book *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* addresses extra-material aspects of art's ability to share.⁵ Many of us donate prints to fundraise for homeless shelters, unions, schools, disaster relief, and healthcare.

But it is the logic and ethos of generosity, as opposed to one of rip-off and profit at someone else's expense, which strikes me as a truly

subversive cultural aspect of the print bonanza. Printmakers take ordinary paper and ink and transform it into valuable artwork - what a magic trick! Partly because these materials are cheap, and sometimes donated, such projects are feasible. However, in reality a dollar bill is merely ink on paper. So we might see these print exchanges as a little wedge in the wall of totalizing late capitalism. Not a fully open door, but at least a little crack. We own the fruits of our own labor and get to dispense of them how we please. Many artists are poor, most are by no means rich, but print givers know firsthand the living large pleasure of sharing generously.

The IRS would like to have it both ways. On one hand, artists can only claim the value of materials used on tax losses, whereas on the other hand, artists must declare income on the retail value paid upon sale. There was a government debate over whether artists should be charged retail rates on the unsold inventory in their studios for tax purposes - what artist could afford that? Luckily, current tax rules settled for reporting only the income on cost of goods sold. Popular logic says that until somebody pays money for it, the printed stuff piling up under your bed isn't worth anything - or is it? Antiques Roadshow appraisals thrill audiences with the idea that some pieces of paper are more valuable than others. Somehow, somebody besides us thinks this stuff is valuable, but printmakers - more than anyone else - can appreciate the value of the technique, love and labor that went into these projects. Martha Rucker et al found that "gifts tended to be rated positively if they represented a commitment to the relationship, be obviously expensive, or were a good match for the recipients' wants, needs, and interests."⁶ Check, check and check. If you're a printer opening your highly anticipated grab bag of prints sent to you by other printers this act of printing and trading has also made a uniquely rewarding social bond.

So we recognize and have a good gauge of just how generous our colleagues can be, not only with skill, materials, and labor but also with fantastic ideas, and this is truly amazing. It's not like every piece in each portfolio blows me away, and sometimes artists who are late with the editions or get cute with oozy non-archival materials can be annoying. But the frequency with which I'm delighted and surprised by a wonderful print in one of these gift bundles is enough to make me want to continue sponsoring them and participating when invited. "The perfect gift is marked by sacrifice of money, time or effort, altruism, luxury, appropriateness, surprise, and delight."⁷ Count me in. ■



Arrow selection: Choose an Arrow, Talk to a Printer, Print Central Station, Northern Spark, St. Paul, MN 2013. Photo by Craig Upright.

Melanie Yazzie



Melanie Yazzie is up to something fishy...

As a printmaker, painter, and sculptor, Melanie Yazzie's work draws upon her rich Diné (Navajo) cultural heritage. Through her art, Melanie works to serve as an agent of change by encouraging others to learn about social, cultural, and political phenomena that shape the contemporary lives of Native peoples in the United States and beyond. Ms. Yazzie's art incorporates both personal experiences as well as the events and symbols from Diné culture, and strives to tell many stories about things both real and imagined. While her early work focused on bringing the harsh realities of Native peoples to the forefront (i.e., racism, identity conflict, poverty, abuse, etc.), Melanie's recent imagery has transitioned into more positive and uplifting content. In an effort to live a calmer life style as well as battling personal health issues, her focus is on quiet and balance, and her prints reflect this shift.

Ms. Yazzie pulls from her travels around the world to connect with other indigenous peoples. Her visits to New Zealand, the Arctic, the Pueblos in the Southwest, and to indigenous peoples of Russia have been the impetus for continued dialogue about Indigenous cultural practices, language, song, story-telling, and survival. Meeting others and sharing stories guides her and feed her soul.

Part of Melanie's practice for over the past ten years has been organizing print exchanges and exhibiting these projects in the many places she travels to. These efforts have provided hundreds of artists with opportunities and much broader exposure than can be found in mainstream outlets.

In Ms. Yazzie's own words:

"I was led into print exchanges as another way to unite with like-minded people, and to create bridges across communities and countries. The work is about helping everyone make a connection that is beyond what one person can do, building many bonds within the print world at large. This expands on the history of print being mobile, an inclusive process that can reach much further than a singular work of art. The friendships and themes addressed in the print exchanges have brought many together in a way that I once thought impossible."

One print exchange was featured for a year at the Denver Art Museum in Denver, Colorado, and was an amazing experience for many involved, both participants and viewers. Numerous other exchange portfolios have traveled far and wide to places like Japan, England, Estonia, Spain, Finland, and New Zealand, just

to name a few. Yazzie feels she has been very fortunate over the years but at the same time she works incredibly hard to gain exposure for many artists.

For Melanie, organizing print exchanges has been very rewarding and has opened the door to worldwide friendships and cultures, building lasting connections to people that is very unique. But it also comes with many challenges and it is a lot of work, so be warned!

The following is a few words of advice to those interested in organizing print exchanges:

- *It comes with a large responsibility, coupled with a sense of inner pride that must carry you through the tough spots.*
- *Keep to your deadlines and herd your art cats with tough but gentle love!*
- *If you are participating in a print exchange, make strong work and be sure to meet the organizer's given deadlines. This is huge.*
- *Know that it is a lot of work and takes more time, money, and commitment than most people think. Shipping costs, colophon printing costs, reshipping due to wrong address, lost packages, etc.—so many unforeseen events...*
- *Complete projects on time, and ship works out fast to participants - this helps keep everyone happy. Too many projects take way longer than needed to complete, and this leaves both sides feeling a bit slighted. Remember, these projects should be fun and rewarding for all, so please be sure to do your best!*

Become a Member of Mid America Print Council

- The Mid America Print Council is a community of printmakers, papermakers, book artists, art historians, curators, collectors, and anyone who loves works on and of paper.
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- Calls for participation in MAPC Members Exhibitions.
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- Monthly MAPC Newsletters and weekly columns on our website to keep you in touch with our membership and the current goings-on in the print world.
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Include a photocopy of your student ID if applicable.

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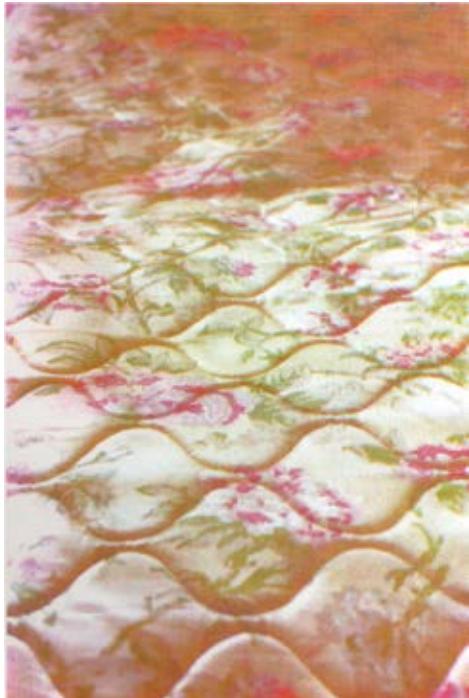
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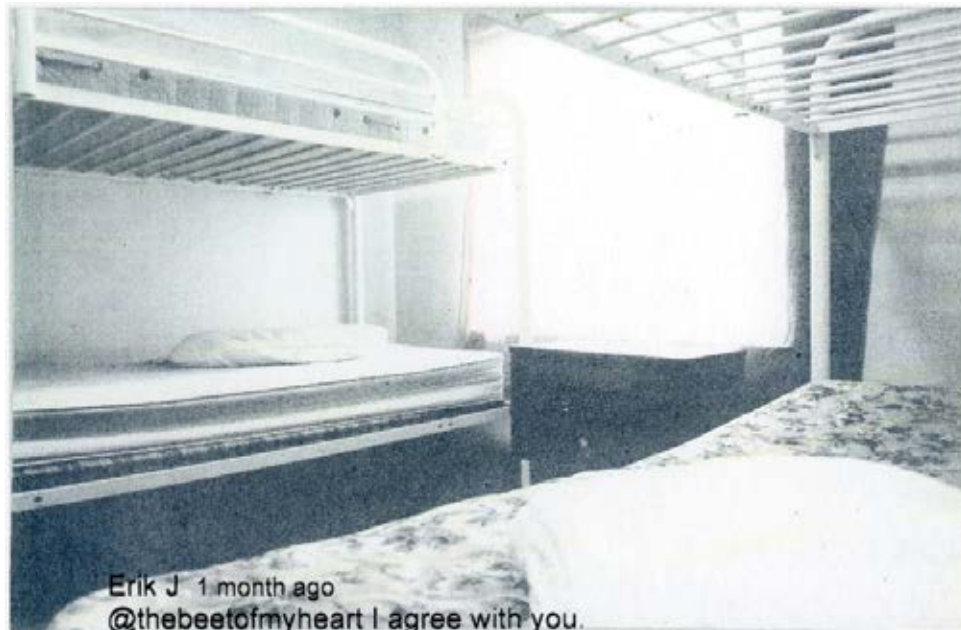
website

- Yes, please sign me up for the MAPC Listserv.
- Please remove my name from the MAPC Listserv.
- This is a new address. My old address is:

New Work from our Members



"Iowa", Amanda Lee. Silkscreen. 22" x 30". 2013.

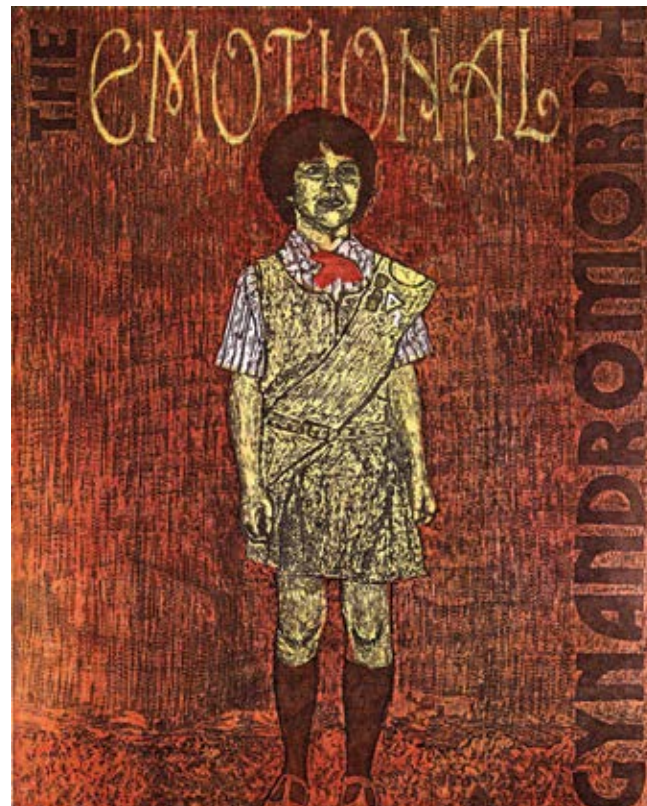


"VAWA", Amanda Lee. Lithography, Silkscreen. 22" x 30". 2013.

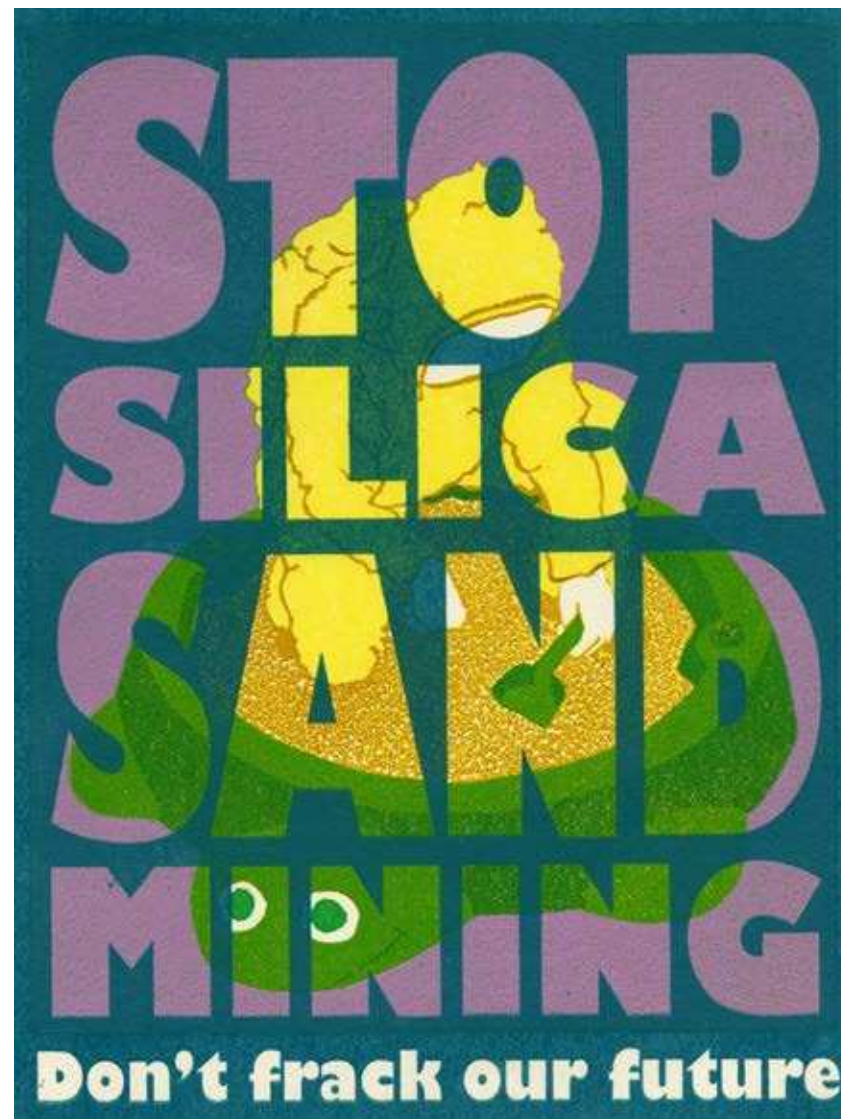
Erik J 1 month ago
@thebeetofmyheart I agree with you.
Fucking bitches only want equal rights when it's convenient.



"Half Truths", Benjamin D. Rinehart. Pressure print, collagraph, and reductive woodcut on handmade paper. 15" x 15.25". 2013.



"The Emotional Gyandromorph", Benjamin D. Rinehart. Pressure print and reductive woodcut. 15" x 19". 2012.



"Stop Silica Sand Mining", Angela Sprunger. Screen print on reductive linocut. 8" x 10". Image by Angela Sprunger. 2013.



"Token Portfolio – Installation View", Stefanie Dykes. Exhibited in conjunction with Impact8 International Printmaking Conference in Dundee, Scotland. September 2013.



"The Housing Project. Shingles Installation – Valencia Alternate View", M. Robyn Hall. Woodcut on Cotton. 10" x 28". Photo by M. Robyn Wall. 2013.



"The Housing Project. Shingles Installation – Valencia Detail", M. Robyn Hall. Woodcut on Cotton. 10" x 28". Photo by M. Robyn Wall. 2013.



"Pocket Tokens – Displayed with Token Portfolio Installation", Stefanie Dykes. Exhibited in conjunction with Impact8 International Printmaking Conference in Dundee, Scotland. September 2013.

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