

FIRE!

INK!

Ceramics and Prints.

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1. Introduction

Fire is essential for survival. Fire is most like the first “tool”. It started the human species on the way to dominating the planet. Fire was essential for civilization. Fire is one of the classical “Four Elements”, along with Air, Earth, and Water.

Ink is a product of civilization. It allowed for the processes of art, record keeping, advertising, and criticizing to develop. Ink was used to write the first classics of Chinese literature. Ink, as part of Calligraphy was one of the “Four Arts” of a Classical Chinese Gentleman, the others are Music, Strategy, and Painting.

2. Artist's Statement

Ceramics and Printmaking are related processes. Both add and subtract. What remains is as important as what was taken away. These two processes produce work that is related but does not have to be physically together.

For my ceramics, shape and layers of glaze are very important. With the variations that can take place in the kiln there is an element of unpredictability. My abstract ceramics are based on Japanese, Korean, and Chinese historical forms.

Printing can create multiple images that are layered and varied. These images are based on shape, depth of color and a feeling about the ceramic inspiration.

I make my art by creating the ceramic work then interpreting that work into a print which echoes the spirit of the original ceramic. The finished ceramics and prints give me personal satisfaction.

3. Summer Ceramics at Alfred University

I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to take a 4 week long open studio class at Alfred University in Alfred, New York. It was quite a drive up through the middle of Pennsylvania and into western New York State, not at all like the landscape around St. Mary's. Alfred is a small college town that was founded to take advantage of the local clay deposits in the late 1800's. The class was run by John Gill who has ceramics in museums from Taipei to Brooklyn. During my time in class I got to talk with In-Chin Lee, a visiting potter from Los Angeles. In-Chin Lee has several works in the permanent collection of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. In-Chin Lee was leading a class of visiting Korean and Chinese ceramic students. Another great benefit from having In-Chin there was the Korean barbecue (which included homemade Kimchee!) that we had near the wood fired kiln shed. ceramics museum and ceramics library. I was able to experiment with various types of clay and different types of firing methods. Here are some examples of what I did up at Alfred.



Blue Earthenware Vase with Black Slip and Blue Glaze, 2017



Half Moon Form, Earthenware with Green Glaze, 2017



“Kaze”, Earthenware with Soda Ash Glaze, 2017



“Altar”, Stoneware with Blue and White Glaze, 2017

4. Prints at St. Mary's College

I have taken several print classes at St. Mary's. My first class, which was combined with drawing, got me hooked on printing. I began to experiment with different techniques of printing such as linoleum block, stencils, and cut out shapes that I inked on one side. I moved from making a single image to layering my work. I find I get good results if I overprint three or four times. I have experimented in printing with wire screen, fabric, gesso, and applying ink directly on paper with a palette knife. I find that working on a larger sized piece of paper helps me compose a design. Like working with ceramics, taking away or overprinting part of the print sometimes works out better compositionally. Recently I have been working with a long scroll-like format that I'm getting good results with. Here are some of my prints from this Fall 2017 semester:



Tan, White, and Brown Composition, 2017



“Bottle Print”, 2017.



Tan, White, And Brown Composition II, 2017



“Kaze” Print, 2017

5. Questionnaire

Alan Frampton Questionnaire # 1

Question #1 What context does your work fit in?

Nature, The Sky (Stars, Moon, Sun) Trees, Plants, Sea and the Seashore

Question #2 Why are you interested in these particular contexts?

I find I get the best inspiration from the Sky and Nature. When I see the patterns of clouds or stars I get ideas. Flocks of birds, woods, the shoreline, leaves and mushrooms have all sorts of patterns and forms that make a great starting off point to make something.

Question#3 Name 5 artists who fit in with your work context.

Fredric Edwin Church Nature, Sky

Georgia O'Keeffe Nature

Fumio Fujita Nature Plants Sky

Micah Schwaberow Nature Sky Plants Fish

Question#4 What materials do you plan to use?

I plan to use Paper, Ink, Paint and fired Ceramics

Question #5 List some historical materials and symbolism that relates to your work?

Ceramics: One of the earliest human developments in manipulating natural materials. Ceramics have been dated to 14000 BC in Japan (cooking pot), 18000 BC in the Czech Republic

(figurine), and 20000 in China (food steamer). Ceramics have always been associated with cooking, storage, trade, and prestige.

Paper: Paper has been around, depending on a definition of paper as being formed from screened pulp, since 200 BC in China. Paper technology spread to Korea and Japan, and through India and along the Silk Road to Arabia and the Islamic cultures of Asia, Africa, and Spain. The Crusades brought paper into the northern Europe. Paper has been used in almost every human activity from art to bookkeeping to packaging. Paper makes up about 40% of the solid waste in the US each year.

Ink: Ink is another old invention. Mineral and carbon inks stabilized with glue started in China and India around 200 AD, but weaker vegetable based inks had been around several thousand years before that. Ink has always been linked with paper use.

Paint (Gouache): Gouache is an opaque watercolor paint. Gouache paint has a higher content of pigment than watercolors. Modern Gouache paint is a 19th Century French product, but Indian and Persian painters starting in the 1400's also developed a gouache type paint stabilized with gum.

Question #6 Find some academic journals that fit in with your interests.

Astronomy <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.proxy-sm.researchport.umd.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=10&sid=27da9cd7-ea87-4ad3-bea2-cefc1dbe83a7%40sessionmgr4007>

Nature <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.proxy-sm.researchport.umd.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=11&sid=fea1670d-749d-49bc-98d6-b4eea66f3993%40sessionmgr4010>

6. Essay

Concept of my Work

I've always been interested in the additive and subtractive quality of ceramics, the creation of volume and negative space. When I came to St. Mary's I discovered that printing had the same ability to add and subtract through areas of ink and areas left untouched. I've drawn inspiration for my graphic work from my earlier work in ceramics. Using shape, layers, and color I try to capture the personality of my ceramics. I found that shape was the easiest way to capture something of the ceramic 3D object in a 2D representation. After shape, I moved to color to capture the basic glaze color and then modified the color to get an idea of the thickness of the glaze. Building on this idea, I have made prints that have departed from the original ceramic shape and color.

Materials and Production Method

I'm going to concentrate here on work that I have completed at St. Mary's.

Printing gives me the benefit of instant results. Once you peel back the paper from the plate you have your design. You can reprint over it or add to, but the basics are there right away. I find that the technique of the Collagraph works best for me. I take a cardboard shape or shape and fix then to a flat sheet of cardboard. All of this gets covered in a waterproof adhesive. Using this plate, I can rotate or mask part of the design prior to printing. I've found that multiple overprints of the same collagraph slightly offset gives a depth to the composition.

I recently started using stencils over my prints. The ability to place a stencil directly on the printed surface gives me a great freedom to create a sense of movement.

Ink can be applied or taken away to vary the surface. Different effects in thickness of ink can be made by using a roller either loaded with ink or made very dry to pull ink away.

Critical Analysis with Robert Motherwell.

Robert Motherwell tells a story with his paintings and collages. Motherwell worked in a large format, which I like to do. Motherwell was influenced by Classical European Mythology, Jungian analytical psychology, and poetry. I am working on prints with a Classical theme for next semester. Motherwell puts together shapes and color in a plane that takes the viewer through a sequence. The Voyage is named after a poem by Charles Baudelaire concerning modern art (Arnason 26).



“Stacked Form”, 2017



Robert Motherwell, *The Voyage*, 1949

Charles Baudelaire, *Le Fleurs de Mal*, *Le Voyage III*

Amazing travelers, what noble stories
We read in the deep oceans of your gaze!
Show us your memory's casket, and the glories
Streaming from gems made out of stars and rays!
We, too, would roam without a sail or steam,
And to combat the boredom of our jail,
Would stretch, like canvas on our souls, a dream,
Framed in horizons, of the seas you sail.
What have you seen?

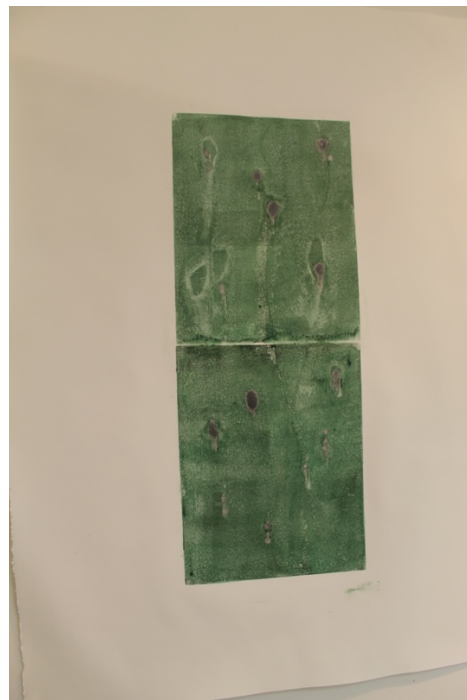
Critical Analysis with Mark Rothko

I like the way Mark Rothko builds his color blocks. You can imagine them as cement blocks being cemented in place to make a foundation. I think blocks of color are easy to understand they come at you or fall back. They also have emotion. On the simplest level red is anger, yellow is happy, black is the unknown. Rothko can weave more into his colors than just one emotion.

Black can be a foundation or an ending, yellow can be inspiration, red can be love. Rothko as he developed his unique message began to “replace imagery with color” (Waldman 55). In building blocks of color, you have to be very sensitive to the influence of one color on another as Albers proved. I put color on top of color to generate another color or shade of the underlying color block.



Mark Rothko, untitled, 1950-1952



“Cherry Bark”, 2017

Critical Analysis with Casimir Malevich.

Casimir Malevich uses shape and color in movement. I think that Malevich's use of movement is his best characteristic. You can imagine shapes of color sliding across an ice rink. Malevich was after art without objects. Malevich was in the right place historically to get his object free artistic ideas going, until Stalin and Soviet Realism came along in the 1920's. In a

letter Malevich said of his Suprematist work, “a plane of painted color hung on a white sheet of canvas imparts a strong sensation of space directly to our consciousness. It transports me into an endless emptiness, where all around you sense the creative nodes of the universe” (Douglas 86). Malevich sometimes divides his plane into two. This gives the feeling of shapes that have ascended and shapes that are on their way to achieving flight. I try to create the same sense of movement with the arrangement of my shapes.



Casimir Malevich, Suprematist Composition, 1915



“Stacked Form”, 2017

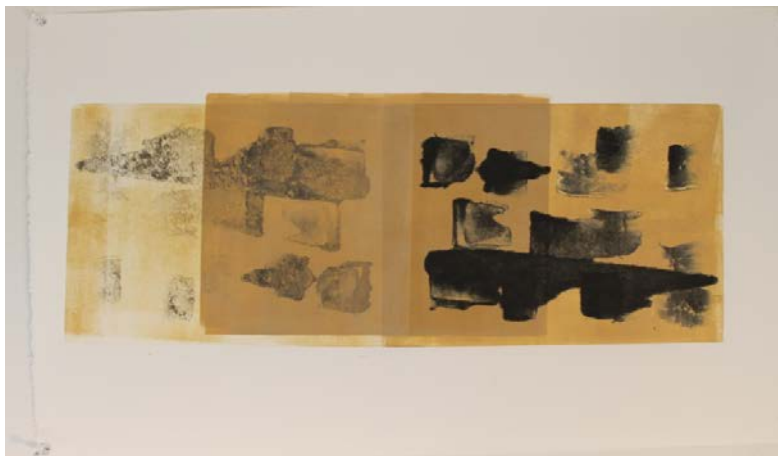
Inspiration from Japanese Prints

I get a lot of ideas for subjects and format from Japanese prints. The Japanese Rinpa style started in the 1600’s and continues today. Rinpa has a strong emphasis on color, natural forms, and a degree of abstraction that has inspired European artists since Japanese prints became recognized as a distinct art form in the 1860’s. Rinpa uses bold colors and unusual points of view to create

unique works. Rinpa also uses the Japanese art principle of Notan, a balance between positive and negative. I like the horizontal format of these works.



Korin Furuya, 1907.



Tan, White, and Brown Composition, 2017

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Arnason, H.H. Robert Motherwell. Abrams. New York, 1982.

Carpenter, John. Designing Nature: the Rinpa Aesthetic in Japanese Art. Yale University Press.
New Haven, 2012.

Douglas, Charlotte. Kazimir Malevich. Abrams. New York, 1994.

Terenzio, Stephanie ed. The Prints of Robert Motherwell. Hudson Hills Press. New York, 1984.

Waldman, Diane. Mark Rothko: A Retrospective. Abrams. New York, 1978.

7. Bibliography

Ross, John. *The Complete Printmaker: Techniques/Traditions/Innovations*. New York: The Free Press. 1990.

A technical guide of various printing techniques including linoleum, collagraphs, and collage relief printing methods. This book gives a clear written and illustrated description of techniques I have used in my work. Includes paper handling and storage suggestions. Historical background in the Western tradition of Durer and Goya to contemporary artists such as Escher and Warhol.

Saff, Donald. *Printmaking: History and Process*. United States: Wadsworth. 1978.

A historical review of famous printers and techniques. Later chapters concentrate on applied techniques of printing, using formed and cut paper, collotypes, monotypes, and plastics.

Vollmer, April. *Japanese Woodblock Print Workshop*. New York: Watson-Guption. 2015.

While this book is about the specific Japanese method of woodblock printing there is plenty of information for general western relief printmaking. Vollmer goes into detail about registration of prints for multi-color printing.

Till, Barry. *Masterful Images: The Art of Kiyoshi Saito*. Portland, Oregon: Pomegranate. 2013.

In pre-WWII Japan an artist, agent, woodcarver, and publisher all got together to produce a print. Kiyoshi Saito believed that a print artist should do all his own work. After WWII Saito opened a gallery with a few other artists and began selling prints. His first customers were US servicemen stationed in Japan as part of the Occupation. Saito used local scenes and traditional Japanese forms in an abstract way as subjects for his prints.

Sandler, Irving. *The New York School: The Painters and Sculptors of the Fifties*. New York: Harper and Row. 1978.

A history of the unique characters of the New York art scene in the 1950's. Starting off with the first generation who were able to take advantage of the Post WWII GI Bill, artists like Rauschenberg, Kaprow, and Franz Kline, Sandler moves to the social life of the Abstract Expressionists in 1950's New York. As the 1950's started to approach the 1960's the world and the artists of the New York School began to change. The optimism of the 1950's changed into the unrest of the 1960's. In the closing chapters Sandler notes how younger artists began to challenge the "established" New York School. They wondered if there was anything left to say using the "gesture painting" of the New York School artists. The world was open for the likes of Warhol and Lichtenstien.

