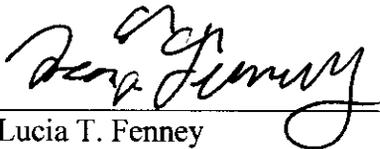


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(Date)

ABSTRACT

SHATTERED EPOCHS: A DESIGN OF IMAGINED REALITIES

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This paper describes my senior thesis body of work, done in the Art Studio Department. It defines the overall goal of my screenprints, through my philosophies on time and space relationships. The paper also provides background to the creative process behind my screenprints, detailing my interest in color choice, mark-making, and stenciling. Also, it outlines the photo emulsion process that I partake in when creating my prints, as well as the inspiration behind them. Basically, the paper conceptualizes the steps and thought process that I go through in creating my work.

SHATTERED EPOCHS: A DESIGN OF IMAGINED REALITIES

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Art Studio Honors Thesis
2007

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I thank my family for supporting me throughout my endeavors, as well as the Art Studio Department for aiding me in my creative process.

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My senior thesis project consists of large-scale screenprints.

Screenprinting is the means through which I layer and create imagined space through the levels of opacity that the ink provides. For me, the process is what defines my work. I work intuitively and improvisationally with multiple overprinted layers, using the steps to create the work as a whole. My prints employ the use of evocative, abstracted, repeated shapes to explore the odd relationship between the time and space that they construct and destroy. I think of these images of epochs of conceived realities.

The images that I create are formed through organic lines and repeated shapes. I create these shapes intuitively through stenciling processes. Typically the first marks are made with large cut paper stencils, or found objects. Then I take elements from these marks and transform them into smaller lines made with marker on acetate. The dialogue that these marks create is what is used to emphasize the environments that they illustrate.

The inspiration for my forms is from imagined objects to which I am strongly drawn. These objects are not necessarily items that are explicitly seen in day-to-day life; rather, they express abstract concepts that illustrate movement and sound through space and time. These marks are created in a horizontal manner in order to describe how I feel abstracted movement of sound would move through a specific space in time. I see these marks as a way to diagram how sound relates to geologic forms, mapping time in an abstracted visual sense. It is a process of marking time in a visual manner.

Especially significant to the imagery in my prints is color. I have made many discoveries about color during the past year. Color creates and destroys the unconventional space in my work. Color brings objects forward on the two dimensional plane or, in the same instant, fades them back into space. The colors that I choose really depend on what feeds my artistic appetite at a given moment, and I typically do not let other factors dictate my decisions, such as what other people would like to see in my work. Interestingly, as my senior year comes to a close, I have become keenly aware of the sensibility of the patterns in my color choices. I am mostly drawn to shades of greens, pinks, blues, and oranges of varying intensities. Through this, I have learned that I am strongly attracted to complimentary colors, and how they relate to one another. The use of bright colors in big strokes combined with heavier desaturated color is used to create tension and movement in many of my pieces. The colors are also used to illustrate the visual rhythm of sound that pulsates throughout my prints. The bright colors are a way to visualize the unseen. An example of this is an intense hue of orange representing throbbing sound moving through space. These colors have their own personalities that add to the quality of the spaces that I create.

The manner in which I approach this method is spontaneous. I start with a general idea of what I wish my project to suggest, taking into account each stage of the process. Screenprinting is a method of creating layers through stenciling, which is integral to making my work. Lately, the stencils have played an essential part in the visualization and creation of stencils that follow. I am particularly

interested in the conversation between large and small marks, and how they interact. While the stencils are mutually exclusive and can stand alone on their merit, they borrow from each other in order to function as visualizations of time, space, and implied sound. To create the forms represented in my prints, I expose simple stencils onto the screen, through a method called the photo-emulsion process. The emulsion is applied to the screen in such a way that when exposed to the light it hardens in areas that are left uncovered: “The basis for all screen photographic processes is the *positive*, such as a photographic positive image or hand-drawn, opaque image on transparent acetate . . . This positive is placed either on a special sensitized film or against a screen coated with sensitized emulsion”¹. The areas covered with ink or objects, when on the exposure unit, later wash out with water to create a stencil to print from.

The photo-emulsion process is fundamental to the creation of my work, as it provides order to the imaginative chaos. The ordered part of the process requires that I follow a strict, regimented procedure in the creation of my stencils, which is confined by the careful timing and articulation of the screen’s exposure. The chaos occurs when they are applied to the paper; they envelop and define bursts of energy, moods, and movement, in a completely unprompted way.

I use found pieces of cheesecloth and ripped and cut paper to create the first layer for the prints. Unlike some of my earlier stenciling methods, the cut paper stencils obscure and conceal more effectively through their layering,

¹ Sacilotto, Deli and Donald Saff. Printmaking: History and Process. United States: Wadsworth Thomson Learning, 1978. 319

creating very dense areas, through which the movement of things such as sound are concealed and revealed, depending on the fluidity of the specific situation. These shapes help me to form other stencils, often repeating patterns, helping to reinforce my original concept. I also use these shapes to create a conversation between the images I create, as marks used earlier later reappear in my other pieces. I create many of the smaller marks by drawing with pit pens on acetate. These marks are much finer than the cut paper stencils, and typically emulate the movement defined by the larger stencils. All the stencils are registered multiple times on the page, adding density to the overall outcome. The initial, stenciled forms are what dominate the odd environments defined by my work.

Screenprinting is ideal for constructing these time-and space-sensitive environments. The different layers pose as fragmented time. Time is a concept that is not completely linear. Ideas and events, along with sound and movement, are often forgotten or remembered in ways that are not true to their original forms. Literally, the stencils are the vehicle for the mutations. They are crafted and created so that each layer, each new stencil meshes with the previous. Each new stencil both takes from and repeat elements and movements from the original stencil, while becoming arelated but morphed, mutated, new imagery.

Important to any artwork is its audience; it provides the framework around which the artwork is developed. I believe that my work reaches a wide audience. All artwork elicits a reaction, whether it is good or bad, defining the artist's original intention or constructing new meaning. My prints depict colors and

objects that present a sense of familiarity. For example, most people can relate to the grid form that a screen makes, and may even find it familiar. The ‘screen’ can be taken as being strictly as being a screen, or it can have a more metaphorical function or definition, as Webster’s New World College Dictionary states: “anything that functions to shield, protect, or conceal”².

Although some of my earlier work illustrated feelings that Mount Holyoke students can relate to, I firmly believe that I do not have an exclusive audience. Art is a medium to which most people can at least react. Unlike written material, visual art does not require a college education to evoke appreciation and understanding. I strongly feel that all people can react and appreciate my art. All that they need is the ability to partake in a visual dialogue that involves reaction and interpretation. Time and sound are concepts that a large audience ought to be able to relate to and appreciate. In my pieces the audience can react to the application of lines, which transcend the space and time that they experience, breaching their traditional dichotomy.

My most recent work has been geared towards a larger audience; an audience that can relate to the abstracted values and thoughts that my work embraces. Rather than just pinpointing very specific thoughts and feelings, my current work is about trying to evoke more universal ideas. This goes back to my philosophy on epochs, as I create and illustrate imagined time periods. The use of line is what suggests how I imagine sound to interact with specific spaces.

² Agnes, Michael. Webster’s New World College Dictionary. Cleveland Ohio: Wiley Publishing Inc., 2002.

I am particularly interested in the impact of human beings on the earth during their lifespan. This concept relates to my idea of time and space. I like to think about how as a human I relate to the physical, geologic time of the planet, and how I can create, through my own work, an individually crafted sense of time. For instance, making a print takes time, and each layered stencil I make is constricted by time. Historically, there is a conversation between screenprinting and time; screenprinting is an approach to constructing a work in time.

Throughout my education as an artist, my skills and ideas have been sharpened by teachers, museums, and books. Experiencing artwork at places such as DIA Beacon, in New York, has opened my eyes to a greater understanding and appreciation of large-scale contemporary art. Likewise, there are two artists from the part of Maine in which I grew up, who have been particularly influential in my artistic development. David Estey and Alison Rector are both painters and printmakers with whom I have worked and have viewed and critiqued art. Both Alison and David have helped to sensitize my appreciation and analysis of art in a way that has been formative in the development of my notions of space and time in printmaking.

An analysis, or self-critique, of my work reveals a metamorphosis. My initial, timid mark-making has been transformed into assertive use of stenciling to create complexity in my prints, deeply infused with information and meaning. This semester, in particular, I have had the opportunity to take a huge leap to be bold, in the sense of scale, dramatically increasing the size of my prints. The use

of large paper has enabled my stenciling decisions to be freer and less restrained. This increase in paper size has allowed me to map the movement of sound in a cartographic way, by extending and transcending the traditional boundaries of the page. The larger scale prints have allowed me to break free from the typically restrictive margins to create a greater sense of lyricism in the work. I have worked hard to control the specificity of the linear movement in a manner that makes my work speak to the audience in ways that words cannot. By approaching my use of stencils in a hierarchal manner, I have come to understand how the individual stencils relate to and build on one another.

My images are built from simple lines and shapes, which over the year, have evolved into a complexly articulated form of organized chaos. It is a chaos that is confined within the page of the print and is strongly dictated by time. My work is my way of visualizing time, space, and sound relationships. Through this process I create epochs, abstracted environments, illustrating the idiosyncratic correlation between colors and forms, creating a unique bond between time and space.

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