

## My Process

I often wondered what I will do with my life. Should I attend college? I did not know what to do with myself. The reason I did not go straight into the workforce is my daughter. She was my epiphany, my awakening; I was responsible to provide for my daughter. I decided a college degree would be my goal; an education to advance myself in society.

I began college not seeking a degree; I took 12 credits to be full time. I attended all art-based classes and realized my affinity for fine arts. I transferred to a different school and enrolled as a degree-seeking student with Art as my emphasis. I found it odd to do what I loved and get a degree for it. My dream was coming true. I spent many, long hours in the art lab for each course working out problems, finding new and exciting mediums, as well as meeting strange and interesting students.

Many of the courses included teachers within the class. Of course the professor was leading the classes, but the students contributed their knowledge, talents and ideas; thus giving me an opportunity to look at pieces with differing points of view. Constructive criticism is essential for an artist to develop. I wanted to know if a piece I created was terrible, and my fellow students would say so. Through our critiques I was able to expand my skills as an artist and determine my most proficient techniques.

My main focus has been Printmaking. Printmaking includes Serigraphy, etching, and relief. My body of work displays more work from this area. Serigraphy or silkscreen is the art of placing ink on a silk screen that has a particular stencil affixed to it, and using a squeegee pushes the ink through the screen only in the areas that are not covered by the stencil. This produces the image. The use of many layers of ink via different stencils provides the depth and colors of the print. There can be as little as one stencil or as many as one hundred to achieve the desired outcome of the print. My most intricate design was about fifteen stencils.

One technique within Serigraphy is the ability to use a variety of colors on one “pull” with the squeegee with using only one screen. This is called a rainbow pull and allows the artist to achieve a subtle gradation of colors. This technique is used in my work primarily for backgrounds.

Etching is the art of using plates that are etched either by hand or by a caustic material to achieve lines that are then filled with ink and transferred to paper via a printing press. Plates that are used vary from zinc and copper to Plexiglas.

Dry point is a technique used to obtain lines on the plate. This is most commonly used with the Plexiglas and the copper plate due to the relative ease in which they can be scratched. Ferric acid is used to etch a zinc plate giving a deep and solid line. The longer the plate remains in the acid the deeper the line becomes. A resist is used to protect the rest of the plate so that only the desired area of the plate is exposed.

Aquatint is a technique where a resist is sprayed on the plate. The areas that will not be exposed to the acid are covered with the resist and the plate sits in the acid for a pre-determined length of time. This achieves

tonality on the plate. The process is repeated many times to give the plate a range of tonality. I have done this process on one plate 7-8 times to get the desired affect.

Other techniques for Etching plates are Chine Colle and Viscosity prints. These techniques allow a different effect on the final products that are pulled from the plate. Chine Colle is a process in which other papers are placed in a pattern on the pre inked plate with a type of adhesive on the exposed face. The plate and the paper are then layered with another thicker piece of paper, the final print, and then sent through a press. When the print is pulled from the plate the adhesive sticks to the other paper and the ink transfers as well. This allows a black and white line etching to become a colored print.

A Viscosity Print is where the ink is applied to the plate and wiped off filling in the lines with dark ink. Next, using a brayer (ink roller) a brighter color is applied to the plate in an even coat. The plate is layered with paper and sent through the press, and when the print is pulled a colorful line design is formed. This process is best used with copper due to copper's ability to hold color, unlike the zinc plates. I have experimented with both of these techniques, as shown in my displayed works. I have found using these techniques allows a broader range of what can be done with a black and white print without the hassle of adding stress to the process.

Relief printing is a process where a design is carved into a substance that maintains a basic form such as wood, linoleum or a potato. I have found this type of printing is the way to achieve my desired results. Another technique used to create an art piece is when lines are carved out leaving a negative image when printed or the opposite a positive image. Prints can be pulled by hand or run through a press. Ink is applied via a brayer to allow an even coat of ink over the entire block.

Embossing is another technique used with a relief block print. The effect is the carved block and a damp piece of paper are run through a press and when the paper is pulled away the carved area is impressed into the paper leaving a raised design. It creates a high relief print that does not use ink to display the print.

My goal has been to incorporate these three types of printmaking into one piece of art. I have been able to use two styles and even in some cases all three. In works such as "Pussy Willows" I used both etching plates as well as a linoleum block creating an image with an attention-grabbing visage. I find etchings are striking pieces by themselves but to add an embossed border of a similar design can bring additional detail from the print as seen in my "Happy Hollydays" or the "Castle" print. Both have embossed borders allowing the viewers eye to take in the relief aspect of the paper while moving on to the actual inked etching.

The possibilities are endless when using the various techniques gathered from all areas of Printmaking. As an artist, I will explore how to extend past my current boundaries that constrict the artistic flow and create a more riveting body of work with many techniques merged together.

Another area I have studied is Photography, not only used as a tool for documentation purposes. It can be used to capture moments of great sadness, ecstasy, triumph, disappointment, or simply an abstract thought. Photos can be subject to endless interpretation by anyone. People who look closely and examine what

consideration went into the photo can appreciate the art form's intricacies. I have taken classes that were primarily learning how to use and manipulate Black and White film.

I was rewarded with having a professor who appreciated the business of photographs. He specified that the words cute, nice, and pretty for example did not belong in the classroom, and when we critiqued each other's work the goal was to do this with a professional eye. Composition is the key to taking a successful photo. We were taught the rule of thirds, which allows the photographer to position the subject in such a way that the recipient of the photo will be lead through the image instead of being distracted.

To my absolute enjoyment we hand developed all of our film in the university darkroom lab. I was able to complete the film process from the beginning, when the photo was taken, to the finish by putting the print on mat board for display. I learned the correct way to use a Single lens Reflex camera, and I was able to understand how to use an enlarger that would give my picture a visual story and incorporate the knowledge and skills of film photography into the digital realm.

Photography has many uses that transfer to other art forms. It has been a beneficial tool to document and archive my other works. I stop to understand a scene before I release the shutter. It has given me a new understanding of how beautiful the world around can be and the notion that I am able to transfer that onto a negative, slide, or memory card.

Three-dimensional art is the other area of my artistic focus in the form of ceramics and sculpture. Ceramics is the art of creating an object or objects from material such as clay that are then fired at high temperatures to make them rigid and in some cases functional. I spent countless hours hunkered over a pottery wheel creating cylinders. This form is the basis of any other form that you would wish to create on the wheel. Once that had been mastered I was able to move to cups with handles, bowls with feet, lidded jars, and pitchers.

The hardest element of the wheel and creating functional ceramics was to be able to discern when my pots were ready for the next step in the process. If I moved prematurely onto the next step it would prove disastrous to what I was working on, sometimes to the point work would have to be discarded and started from the beginning. Trial and error is a major part of the process. Failure is inevitable however, from the failures blossomed grand successes. I had great inspirations spring forth from a failed project then from a well formulated plan.

Glazes make pottery functional as well as esthetically pleasing. Glazing a piece of pottery is an art within itself. It takes time to develop the skill. An artist must find the ability to understand the chemistry and the intricacies of how the glazes react to the clay as well as with each other.

Sculpture is similar to ceramic art whereby expressing the intent through the use of a plethora of materials to produce three-dimensional work. The media I used was a low fire clay coupled with low fire colored glazes. I also incorporated other media into the sculptures for example I created a rotary telephone out of clay. The base of the phone and the rotary dial were composed out of the clay. In addition, utilizing everyday items such as a phone cord and telephone receiver I was able to create a life like object. A person walking by

on the street may think it is the actual object and not the sculpture it was intended to mimic. Art that can be viewed from all sides is the artist's way to express intention and create the view for the world.

My college education has spanned eight years. It has been a long and arduous process. I have been required to take courses in my weakest subject areas. Surprising to me, I excelled in some. I discovered for myself anything worth deserves to be done accurately. It has taken time to achieve my goal of graduation. After weathering financial crises, artistic blocks, full time employment, bureaucratic injustices, and what ever else the world threw at me, I have accomplished what I set out to do. I will go out into the world as a college graduate. I will continue to expand my horizons into the future. I do not know what to expect, however, I have arrived at this point in my life with the familiarity and awareness of who I am and a glimpse of what I am capable of doing.