

Pressing Matter

Mark Johnsen

BFA, Photography, California College of the Arts, 2012

A thesis support paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Masters of Fine Arts

Emily Carr University of Art and Design

May 2020



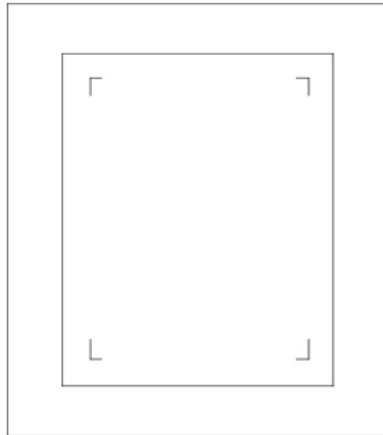
*All illustrations and definitions by Mark Johnsen.

©Mark Johnsen, 2020

Table of Contents

Matrix.....	3
Registration	5
First Impressions.....	10
Pressure.....	15
The Reveal.....	22
The Proof.....	27
Future Editions.....	34
Mirroring.....	40
Works Cited.....	43
Works Consulted.....	44

Matrix

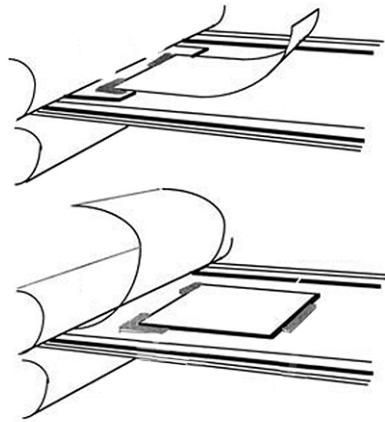


ma•trix: the source for impression, creating a print.

This thesis document is divided into eight chapters, each one representative of a step and/or necessary component within traditional printmaking processes. Serving as both didactic terms and metaphoric interpretations, the steps are essential parts of my explorative and reactionary print process, methodically formed through intuition and response. Shedding light on the under workings of my research based practice, influences, and inspirations, each section adopts the traditional vocabulary of print as a strategy to validate the historically underappreciated single impression (monotype) print. Using the method of “Registration”, I situate my practice in correlation to the land on which I work and live. My “First impressions” on the unique print are aligned with its infinitely distinctive and mysterious characteristics, which support the formulation of the core questions that drive my creative process. The most vital element of my practice, “Pressure”, is an entry point to write more specifically about the (physical) work, which

shifts from the outside world to my body, and to the printing press. Chance is unavoidable: It is through “The Reveal” that the diverse potentialities of mediums and materials, as well as the occasionally unexpected variations in the process, display their meaningful impact. “The Proof” is the unique print in all its various states and inclusivity. Inevitably, there are many “Future Editions” to come. Their dissemination and display are dependent on the cyclical elements that enkindle their creation: when one series of work ends, new understandings, gestures and formations unearth, informing the next state. Lastly, the mirroring that occurs when a plate is printed and is revealed in reverse, acts as a reflection. While not knowing exactly how events and decisions during the making process will eventuate, a resolution comes to light by rumination.

Registration



reg·is·tra·tion: the method of aligning layers of information to construct a print.

Deconstructed, registration refers to the alignment between paper and the printing matrix, facilitated by scribed marks or taped lines as a method to accurately guarantee precision placement. Within the field of printmaking, for a registration to exist, there must first be a separation: each layer of information is treated individually and executed separately, eventually coming together as a whole. This placement correlates directly to the clarity of the printed medium. I rely on the essential step of registration to better observe the built environment¹ and present material in the form of physical objects, recollected experiences, and/or photographic references for each work.

Outside of the studio I employ registration as a method to take better notice of my surroundings. Metaphorically, “registration” can be a tool

¹ Referring to the human-made environment that provides the setting for human activity and the work described in this thesis, more specifically, taking place in Vancouver, British Columbia.

to analyze my status, the work I make and the politically layered, geographical positions I have been occupying. Having previously worked as an independent printmaker in California for several years, reproducing countless landscapes of the Eastern Sierra;² the joyful memories and awe-inspiring sentiment that inspired the very motifs I depicted began to fade. Naively, I was representing a landscape without acknowledging my position as a settler and perpetuating the colonial romanticization of the land. My registration was “off”, detached from the subject matter, and not acknowledging any cultural or political perspective.

Since beginning my MFA, acknowledging the fortunate status I maintain has been both humbling and a revelation of genuine graveness. This acknowledgement has yielded a deeply conscious mindset, factoring in every action I take and the possible ramifications of those actions. Working in a communal studio environment has further reinforced an understanding of my position. I no longer view the act of making as a solitary endeavor, but instead, as one element comprised within an ecological framework integral to my practice. My behavior and how I treat the environment I work in, will have direct affects to those around me. Through teaching, learning, and by simply being present, an interconnected and collaborative approach to making has emerged.³ Progressively, I am working towards understanding my privilege, which

² A region in California comprising the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range, situated on the ancestral lands of the Central Sierra Miwok, Chemehuevi, Kawaiisu, Mono, Northern Paiute, Northern Sierra Miwok, Panamint, Southern Sierra Miwok, and Washo Nations.

³ This mindset has led to collaborations with other artists, a print specific research assistance-ship, international printmaking residences, and teaching fellow students in my cohort how to print, all influencing how I make and conduct myself within the space of the communal print studio.

has facilitated my movement across territories and through life in general. I am acknowledging my status as an uninvited guest on stolen and unceded Indigenous lands: previously on Ohlone land, living in the San-Francisco Bay area and today on the Traditional Coast Salish Territories, Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish, in Vancouver where I study and live.



Figure 1: Artists Arman Vahanyan, Lain Ng and myself work collaboratively on a monotype print at Druckwerk print studio. Basel, Switzerland, 2018 (Photo by Margarit Lehmann)

Relating my position to print is a mechanical way of approaching it, which is a statement in itself; it is never wholly, but a matter of layers. It is a work in progress. This comparison has provided a substantial shift in my subject matter, a more mindful perspective, and a fascination for the overlooked. What else may be gained from the spatial relationship between two elements once they are printed? Throughout my time in

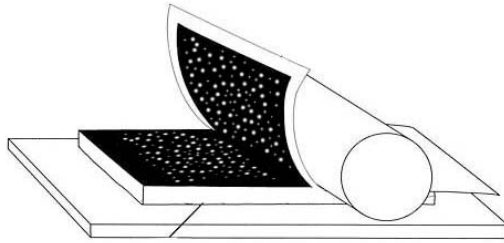
this program I have questioned what can the unique print do? This question has since developed into a larger inquiry of viewership. Namely, how can my monotype process serve as a method to slow down the comprehension of images in an era of over consumption? My research question attempts to highlight the fluid nature of the monotype process, which finds itself at the intersection of other disciplines such as photography, painting, drawing and hybrid printmaking.⁴ This versatility complicates its immediate recognition; through scrutiny and observation, the monotype is deciphered. My intention is to validate (slow) contemplation as a mode of examination that can reveal the forces at play in the making of a unique print and mimic the ways I register my surroundings.

I navigate the world with a slow and attentive pace. Walking, cycling, and skateboarding have provided opportunistic vantage points, which invite a greater physical and sensorial relationship to place. Skateboarding in particular has granted me the ability to seek out alternative ways of interpreting line, topography, and physical expression. These forms of registration, a series of mental impressions, eventually turn into embodied knowledge and become the very layers of content in the print. These experiences are gathered (occasionally in the form of physical objects, recalled gestures, or photographic references)

⁴ The combination of multiple printmaking techniques in a single image. British artist and printmaker, Richard Hamilton combines methods as he sees fitting and further states, "A medium need not sit in isolated purity. It has always been my contention the first objective is to achieve a compelling image and that aim demands a felicity in its implementation." (Coldwell 175) Hamilton's method of bringing together techniques as he sees fitting has been instrumental in the evolution of my latest works: as illustrated in 'The proof' chapter.

and later rendered into impressions by my preferred tools of reproduction: paper, ink, and the press. While the fabric of my printing process is subject to variation between each series and though the subject matter shifts in and out of focus, the mechanized press and I are consistent throughout. Our ritualistic relationship, in which a series of automated and organic gestures are performed and repeated, remains uniform.

First Impressions



first im·pres·sions: the first time an impression is made, an encounter and the formation of a mental image.

A monotype is a unique, single impression print created by drawing onto a smooth surface and transferred under pressure onto a sheet of paper. Because the work has no fixed matrix, it cannot be replicated. It is the simplest type of print, a two-step process at its core. Yet, its diverse effects and iterative properties are multifaceted. Its one-off-ness and unpredictable behaviors have historically countered printmaking's procedural nature to the point that the technique has been labeled as a misfit⁵ within the discussion of print. Art historian, Carla Esposito Hayter writes: "Due to its difficulty of classification, the monotype had not received due consideration on the art circuits, in exhibitions or in the specialized studies on drawings or prints right up to the beginning of the 1970s." (Esposito-Hayter 27) I would counter in saying that critical recognition came much later. In 1985, The Chrysler

⁵ Print historian, Richard Field writes, "the monotype avoids all conventional modes of visual thinking. It is this that is the cause of the curator's dilemma, and it very likely explains, as well, why so few museums possess significant number of monotypes... Perhaps the problem is that curators don't know which drawer to place the monotype: it defies classification." (Field 3) This article illustrates the ongoing struggle of classification of the monotype that still persists today.

Museum in Norfolk, Virginia, opened a show of Contemporary American Monotypes. The exhibition and published catalog helped to contemporize the “painterly print” for an American audience.

All references to monotype (whether labeled the unique print or unique impression) in this thesis document aim to further complicate the position of the unique print in the realm of traditional printmaking and in doing so, bring justification to its distinctive contribution.⁶

An impression in the print world is plainly defined as an imprint on paper, or other substrates that derives from a printing matrix. In my printing process I prefer to appropriate French philosopher Georges Didi-Huberman’s definition of the imprint, or more specifically, his description of the transfer process at the moment when an impression takes place. Artist and scholar Dr. Ruth Pelzer-Montada expands on Didi-Huberman’s definition by writing that: “The specific nature of the contact remains hidden. Hence the imprint’s presence and authenticity are accompanied by the possibility for ‘fiction, deception, montage, and exchangeability’.” (Pelzer-Montada 3) Viewing the impression process through this lens not only emphasizes the medium’s spontaneous nature, it adds allure to its mysterious complexity. An impression is not merely an imprint, it is dependent on what is concealed in the making: chance, failure, time, and pressure.

⁶ It would not be possible to write about the unique contributions that the medium of monotype has brought to contemporary art without acknowledging the expressively wiped dry-point prints of Rembrandt in the 1650’s and the progressive and revolutionary monotypes by Degas in the 1870’s.

In my methods of making, the concealment exists quite literally. When running the substrate through the press to activate the impression, the process is hidden under blankets. The amount of time needed to produce such works and the number of passes an image has been processed is also hidden. Furthermore, clues of the print's construction become increasingly difficult to decipher with each trip under the press. Unseen factors are pulverized together, pressing matter, later evident in the print. Matrix fuses with paper, paper becomes index and all that remains is the proof: the printed object.

The printmaking methodology has provided me with a set of tools and concepts to further obscure the fabrication of an image, which aids to a slower reading of the eventual print. The unavoidable concealment of some parts of the process as well as the amount of layers, physical and conceptual, that form the image support this fact. Moreover, I make impressions in an era where the image itself is taken for granted due to its ubiquity.⁷

In a medium that has historically embraced precision and consistency, the advent and subsequent mastering of high quality digital printing processes has reduced the act of "printing" to the click of a mouse. Imitations of hand pulled aesthetics in the form of Inkjet printing have

⁷ I appropriate the term ubiquity in relation to author Luca Massimo Barbero's writing on abundant media, "In a world submerged by an unprecedented, undifferentiated and ceaseless flow of images – using every type of support and channel of dissemination in the media – inundated world of digital and virtual technology – this pathway 'around' and towards the monotype can be considered an opportunity to 'see' the image once again as a field of experimentation and manual dexterity, as a desire for the visual experience of the act of creation." (Hayter 9) Massimo Barbero's view aligns well with the personal significance I attribute the power of the unique print to hold, namely for its sensorial nature and physicality.

created the largest threat to the medium's sustainability. This is not a claim that print is dead: on the contrary, prints adaptability, resilience, and tangibility in the wake of such technological advances have only opened doors for the unique prints potential to be realized.

This thesis document and the corresponding artworks produced are partially motivated from the scarcity of the monotype print in the discussion of contemporary printmaking. Through research, I have found that a majority of the dialog surrounding printmaking's current state can be housed in two genres: the first, honoring traditional methods and processes with the inclusion of contemporary subject matter and the second, being a hybrid, incorporating digital processes with the hand pulled print. In 2006 the Museum of Modern Art held an exhibition of contemporary printmaking titled: *Since 2000: Printmaking now*. The press release proclaimed the new direction of print with a quote from former assistant curator, Judy Hecker stating that 'contemporary printmaking is flourishing, with artists turning to new digital approaches, renewing age-old techniques, and printing with alternative materials.' (MOMA) Out of the 89 works featured in the exhibition, a solitary monotype by Swiss artist, John Armleder was included as part of an installation of lithographs. A lot has advanced in print since 2006, *Forms of Enclosure*; a group show in 2019 at The International Print Center New York featured six unique works out of the 38 shown. When looking back through the exhibition archives at IPCNY, an average of 4 to 5 unique works appear in survey shows since 2012. (IPCNY) While there is no denying these innovative methods

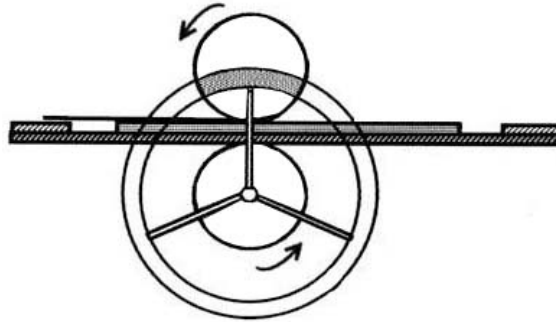
based in reproduction, I prefer to place emphasis on the single, personal, and unique impression: a result of pressure and chance working in sync, unattainable by and unlike any other means of recording.

The unique print sits at the center of my distinctively human⁸ methodology. Shaped by trial and error, my method is based on attempting to replicate the results of such experiments, and when I have successfully done so, a methodology is formed. From experiences outdoors that occur in everyday life, such as skateboarding down the street, to my interactions inside the studio with materials and others, I have become cognizant of the sequential events that inspire the prints I generate. These connections embody multiple narratives that manifest themselves through process. They are found in the production, in the repetition of gestures, and within my own physicality in the act of printing. I now question how can a monotype transform experiences of place (outside and inside) and turn the printed object and/or gesture into a static image that, through its abstracted qualities, speaks to the process of making? Internal and external places bring forth unconventional matrices⁹ I later use to print and are spaces where I perform. These gestures are evocative of a personal, physical existence.

⁸ Artist and founder of Paupers Press London, Michael Taylor, links printmaking to humanness, “The making of a print is a very human activity, necessitating the engagement with, or at least access to, a technical material language... Printmaking requires methods of manufacture and strategies for delivery in order to satisfy both our urge to record our lives, thoughts and beliefs and our need for communication and dialogue.” (Taylor 10-11) While I agree that printmaking satisfies social desires for communication and as means of personal recording, it also represents an imperfection that is characteristically human. Allowing time and room for imperfections in my studio practice, serve as the starting point for my idiosyncratic print process.

⁹ Found metal, window screens, aluminum shavings, and so on, all opposed to conventional matrices such as: copper sheets, wood blocks, lithographic stones, and plexi-glass plates.

Pressure



pres·sure: continuous physical force exerted on or against an object through contact.

Printmaking is procedural in its nature. Before the physical act of “printing” begins, many steps have already occurred. Paper must be measured and torn, surfaces cleaned and prepped, inks mixed, and printing plates altered through scribing or drawing. Still, one of the most crucial steps is the adjustment of the pressure. Over the years, these sets of preparatory methods have become so familiar that I hardly notice they are taking place. These repetitive and automatic movements can be translated as a way of warming up, similar to stretching before exercise.

Inside the studio, the pressure applied by my body’s physical ability is as equally crucial as the mechanized pressure of the press. This reciprocal relationship greatly influences the density, vibrancy, and overall effectiveness of the printed image. Bodily strength is essential to the turning of the wheel so the printing press can function. These

analogous¹⁰ ways of working are evident in the physical counterparts, the prints.

From research methods of observing¹¹ the outside world to the eventual print, pressure is evident in every step of the process. The labor involved in the crafting of the image is mirrored in its decoding, in the process of reading the steps an image went through. Past images or blemishes from previous marks leave traces of residual evidence on the plate, which often inform the next move. As opposed to the immediate and sporadic act of printing, unpacking the image after it has been printed and deciding it's next state offers a moment of reflexivity.

Determining if the next move is right is not always easy. Taking inspiration from the Argentinian poet and art critic Aldo Pellegrini has helped me alleviate and better understand this pressure. Pellegrini states: "All destruction releases an enormous amount of energy. It is through this dynamic impact, this driving action, that destruction lays the foundations for all future creation. Objects break down or are destroyed according to the internal laws of the materials that compose them: their destruction reveals the secret of their fundamental structure." (Pellegrini 72) Taking Pellegrini's principal into account, I fully embrace the forceful action of the printing press and my physical ability and in turn, revealing the previously hidden structure of the print. With each pass, new sequences of responsive marks emerge and

¹⁰ Referring to the rudimentary nature of the analog printing press.

¹¹ My years of skateboarding in the urban environment have conditioned the way I observe potential expression in everything. Viewing the world and my art process with this lens has influenced my mark making and redefined my definition of pressure and print.

that dictate the next action: some prints get set aside and others are re-worked.



Figure 2. *Untitled (Crushed Index 3)* Monotype on Basingwerk paper, Printed from a lithographic plate, 26"x40" 2019

Untitled (Crushed Index 3), (Fig 2) is a large scale print reminiscent of a piece of sheet metal that has been weathered, cracked, folded, and fractured. Shimmering from the application of metallic and glossy black inks and through its folded surfaces, the printed image is abstracted, somehow showcasing both matrix and printed form. Its origin and originality are impressed and intertwined, atomized then fused together, a gift from the resulting pressure of the mechanical press. Hints of its machine-driven transformation are evident in the repeated roller marks, stress folds from the blankets on the press bed, and

multiple layers of ink that have slipped under pressure, blending and bending. Lunar like craters form resulting from the dents in the metal matrix it was produced with. Deposits of water-based inks left from previous compositions, reticulate on the surface as illusionistic indicators of depth. A sculptural, particular palimpsest, drawing up associations of aged pavement, crushed automobiles, or petroleum spills: all helping to transcend the paper backdrop.



Figure 3. Wolfgang Tillmans, "*Lighter IX*" Chromogenic Print, 61 x 50.8cm, 2007

Through *Untitled (Crushed Index 3)*, I draw direct parallels to the work of German photographer, Wolfgang Tillmans. Before turning to

printmaking my practice was primarily photographic and I often merge comparisons between photography and print. Though Tillmans process is largely photographic, a similar exposé of chance given over to the machine is demonstrated and the evident pressure can be seen in *Lighter IX*. (Fig 3) This chromogenic print, a field of blue, riddled with chemistry and machine markings, showcases a dramatic fold breaking the regularity one third from the top of the image. To achieve this effect, Tillmans established a method of working that matches inadvertent outcome with control. Initially, a paper jam in his machine took place while working on another series of works. He never answered if he intentionally fed his machine with the likelihood of knowing another jam would occur, but he continued on, to create several similar “Lighter” works. The folds not only help to disrupt the plane of the picture, they distort the origin of the image.

I employ a similar balance of disruption (a jam) dependent on pressure and acceptance (re-creating the jam) through creation, response, and processing. To know if a print is under/overworked, I call back to Pellegrini’s definition; and rely on the material to reveal its internal structure, and in turn lay the groundwork for the next move.

When working in the studio, the factor of time represents another type of pressure. Density and detail of the composition can fade rapidly in the time elapsed between composing and printing. If exposure is too long, the reciprocal nature of solvents and inks reacting to one another can effectually deteriorate the image. This characteristic is namely unique to

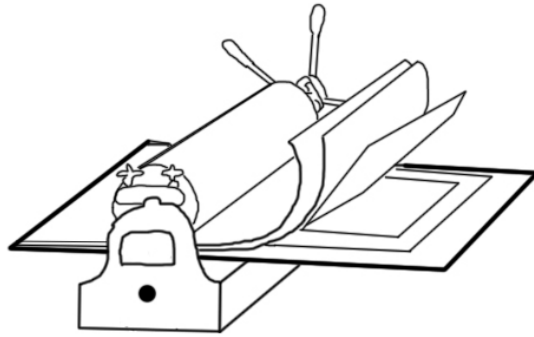
monotype, an ephemeral quality unattainable in other forms of planographic printing.¹² In order to capture an interesting moment as such on the printing plate, work needs to happen rapidly. The quick turn around time and ease of accessibility to materials is what makes monotype appealing; it is immediate, responsive and temporal. Time assumes presence as evidence by the machine folds in Tillman's photograph and by the folds caused by the press in my own work. These disruptions of time protrude from the two-dimensional plane like a topographical version of a seismograph, and agitate the straightforward deciphering of the image. Associate Professor of Philosophy at Dartmouth University (USA) and author, John Kulvicki writes in reference to the understanding of time through abstract photographs: "Experiences of such photos take time, but not in a way that mimics the time of the motion depicted...these photos fail, strictly speaking, to *depict* motion or things-in-time. And if they fail, then it is an interesting question what, if anything, they succeed in depicting. These timeless traces of temporal patterns are thus a challenge to how we understand pictures." (Kulvicki) Kulvicki's challenge is one facilitated by pressure, which I argue to be a significant factor in aiding to slowing down the consumption of images. The resulting abstracted representation of passing time in printed form can assume the position of both metaphor and physical remnant and serve as a tool for gradual comprehension.

¹² Relating to a printing process in which the printing surface is flat. A similar effect can be achieved in lithographic printing, capturing reticulated marks through evaporation by the use of Lithographic touche, however it is a much slower process and typically is etched to create multiple impressions.

The various timelines that define all activities of my artistic production speak to a fluctuating but over-arching pressure. Time and pressure are bound together, as a single unit. My intuitive and improvisational printing style urges me to react quickly, unlike my process of looking and collecting, which requires a slow (contemplation). Navigating the built environment to find inspiration is a life-long operation, yet working in the studio is immediate. My materials are exhausted, through destruction and creation in a rapid manner. I expend printing matrixes until they are ultimately dismantled through the press and in turn, the resulting prints aspire to an archival life.

Pressure, in the form of my body turning the wheel, my feet pressing to the Earth with every passing step, the mechanical press, compressing matrix and paper into an image, or ultimately in the destruction of matter, always results in uncertainty.

The Reveal



re-veal: the act or instance of showing, to make previously hidden information available to others.

A generally shared conception of the reveal in printmaking is the moment when a print is pulled up from the matrix, revealing the finished work. Commonly seen on social media platforms, artists stage the moment as a performance, showcasing the reveal as the ultimate surprise. These demonstrational videos capture the pinnacle moment of achievement and offer a behind the scenes look of the production. The reveal is always perplexing and half of the astonishment is attributed to the image being seen in reverse for the first time. It's the moment when labor pays off, or doesn't. It is an accumulation of hours of unseen work, unveiled for the first time as printed matter. Through such performances, myself and countless others are helping to shape and contribute to a new method of distributing printed media and offering a glimpse into it's creation. By the documentation of a moment previously only known by printmakers, the reveal of the reveal is experiencing widespread distribution via social media.

But what makes these performances so satisfying for both printmakers and general audiences alike? Perhaps it is the dependency on chance: the same principal on which I rely heavily to compose the work. How three-dimensional objects will render under pressure is uncertain. No matter how many times I pull a print, I can never accurately predict how an image will render or how the ink will react to the irregular matrices I employ.

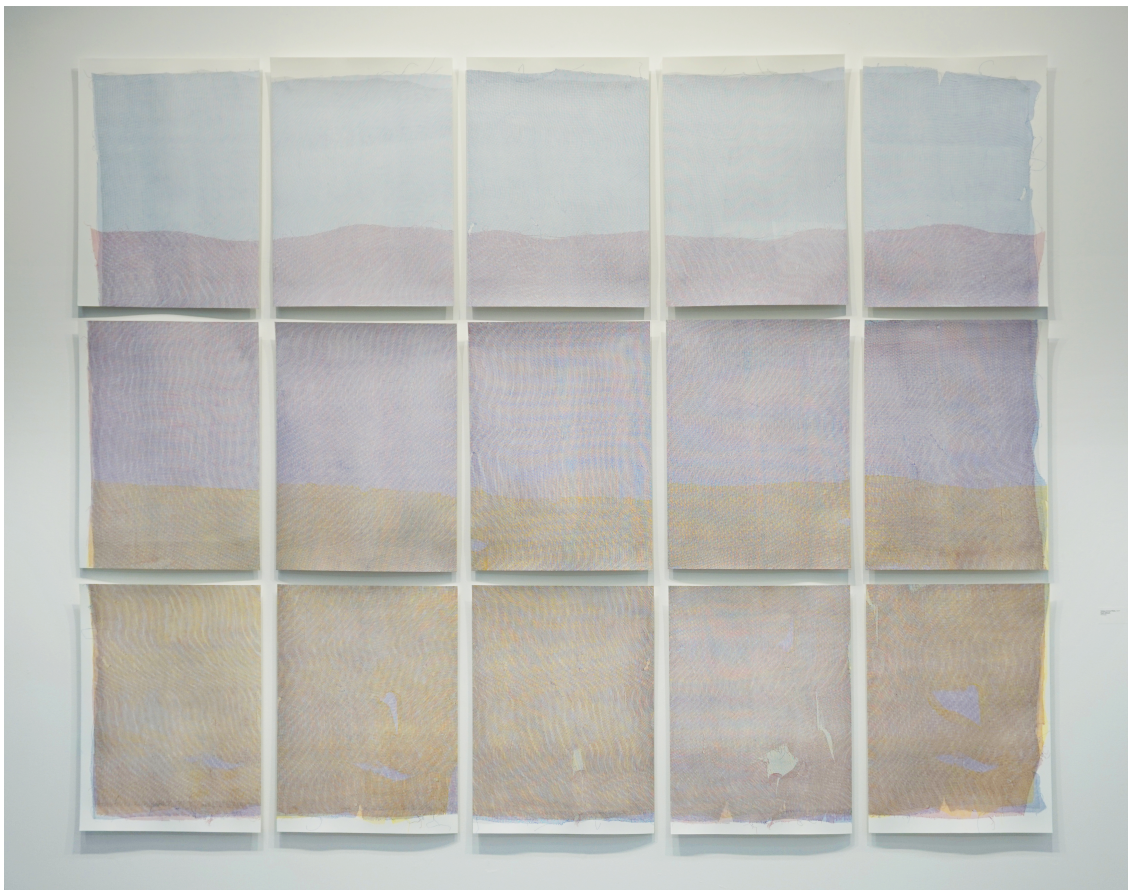


Figure 4: *Screen Print Sunset*, Monotype on Stonehenge paper, 9' X 7.5' 2019

An instance of unplanned actions accumulating to a reveal can be found in *Screen Print Sunset* (Fig 4). A grid of fifteen large-scale monotype prints, each displaying intricate, multilayered grids within. The prints

map together to become one, revealing each layer of a process color, framed with a varying border from edge to edge. The imagery derives from direct impressions of four separate aluminum mesh window screens, altered by each run through the press. Each pass reveals a new color of registration. Cyan, magenta, yellow, and silver ink work interchangeably to blend and give complexity to every subsequent layer, divulging a textile like pattern descending downward like a setting sun. The foundational application of cyan aluminum acts as an imperfect registration template, loosely guiding and altering each corresponding layer. Stretching the mesh to my best ability, the material constricts and contracts as it passes under the press, constructing a moiré pattern. Just as the mesh eventually loses its structure through repeated pressings, the imagery in the prints themselves begins to dissipate.

In referring to the grid based paintings of Canadian-born abstract painter, Agnes Martin, international curator Catherine de Zegher writes, “Martin’s paintings reveal sequences of illusions of textures that change as viewing distance changes. From an earlier materiality of the woven canvas, gesso, penciled or painted grids and bands, the paintings go atmospheric, or, rather they feel like mist. They seem to dissolve or dematerialize.” (de Zehger) Functioning similarly to the work of Martin, the distance taken in viewing these screen-prints¹³ alters their legibility, further exaggerated through embossed paper supports. The materiality of the mesh constructs a dimensionality that transcends their paper backdrop, appearing as an infinite dimension.

¹³ Not to be mistaken with traditional methods of silkscreen printing, these monotypes are direct impressions of inked aluminum window screens.

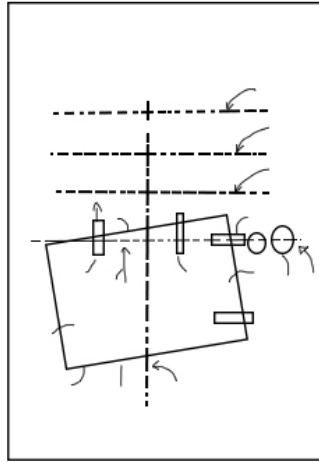


Figure 5: Agnes Martin, *Untitled* Ink on paper, 11 7/8 x 12 1/8" 1960

Inviting closer inspection, the everyday object-ness of the window screen slowly evaporates as dizzying networks of pixels emerge. The work is not easy for the eye to render and functions similar to the prints included in the 2018 exhibition, *Edge of Visibility*. Curated by *Art in Print* editor in chief, Susan Tallman and showcased at IPCNY, the highly intricate and multi layered works were selected because of their common theme: they were hard to see. Various apparatuses such as magnifying glasses, special lightning, and computer technology all aided to the closer examination of the printed works. If such tools were applied to *Screen Print Sunset* (Fig 4) the window screens might appear closer to an LED screen. While their unsystematic intricacy renders them digital, a deeper examination provides a purely physical, non-virtual explanation, adding a final hovering layer of tension.

The reveal is both a moment of contemplation and response. Deciphering what transpires during the act of printing is a way for me to reflect and learn from each pass under the press. If the pressure is too low or high, the image can result in failure or an unexpected revelation. Through each unveiling, I am adding firsthand knowledge to an ever-expanding vocabulary of mark making, which will lead to future compositions and the refinement of my techniques. This responsive approach comes through repeated trial and error and with the close examination of the printed proof.

The Proof



proof: a preliminary version of a printed piece, evidence.

Historically, an artist's proof is a print reserved for the artist and not included in the numbered edition.¹⁴ It signifies that it has been worked and altered over many states and represents a satisfaction held by both printer and artist. As I label myself as both artist and printer, the proof holds an alternative meaning. Working exclusively with monotype, I consider all of my impressions proofs. Labeling the work in this manner has allowed for a more adventurous, and less precious approach to working in the studio.

Instinct and problem solving have encouraged the introduction of the multiple techniques I employ to build a print. The willingness to add on to previously thought to be completed pieces has established openness

¹⁴ Susan Tallman defines the function of the multiple to be, "the compound of linkage of art, economy, social reform, and spiritual content." (Tallman 80) Numbered editions are an economic solution to owning original art and in the making of an edition, proofs are made along the way. Typically there is an artist proof, printer's proof, and a final proof.

to experimentation and the newest development of my practice. This transient quality suggests a durational quality to the work, and brings forth the proof as a contemplative pause between each state. These versatile possibilities broaden the unique prints enigmatic nature and the rudimentary process of monotype is given another layer to conceal its origin and to slow its perceptibility.

I employ multiple techniques in the making of *Re-paved parking lots*. (Fig 9) In addressing and taking inspiration from Ed Ruscha's 1964 publication, *Thirtyfour Parking Lots in Los Angeles*, (Fig 6) my own lots are built from the ground up. Ruscha's volume showcases a series of aerial photographs, banal squares of empty parking lots in Los Angeles, possibly inspired by László Moholy-Nag's 1938 photograph. (Fig 7) Seen from a rarely viewed vantage point for the time, the every day scenes transform into flat graphic renderings, their utilitarian functions fade and an illustrative typology of capitalist culture remains.

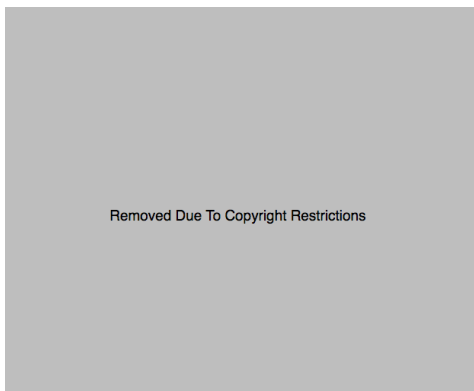


Figure 6: Ed Ruscha, *Century City, Avenue of the stars*, Silver gelatin print on paper, 394mmx394mm 1967

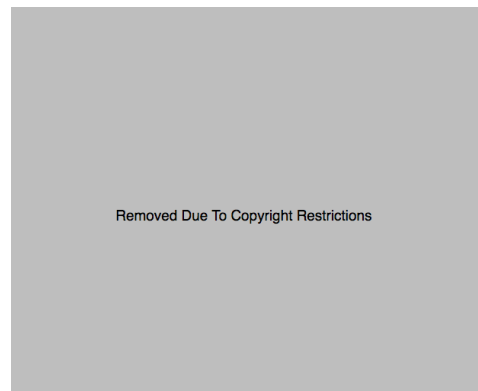


Figure 7: László Moholy-Nag, *Parking lot in Chicago*, Gelatin silver photograph, 29cm x 34cm 1938

I credit spending many hours of my life skateboarding in parking lots and my upbringing in Southern California to the fasciation with Ruscha's subject matter. The terrain is familiar and ever present. The *Re-paved parking lots* series satisfies a desire to construct a personalized version entirely printed by hand. It incorporates stone lithography, silkscreen, photographic, and monotype techniques. Source materials for the line work in the prints are assembled from actual locations in Vancouver, temporary spaces soon to be or currently up for development. Careful examinations from my daily commute are collected by photo documentation and satellite imagery via of Google earth (Fig 8), a luxury not yet present when Ruscha hired a helicopter and photographer for his publication in 1964.

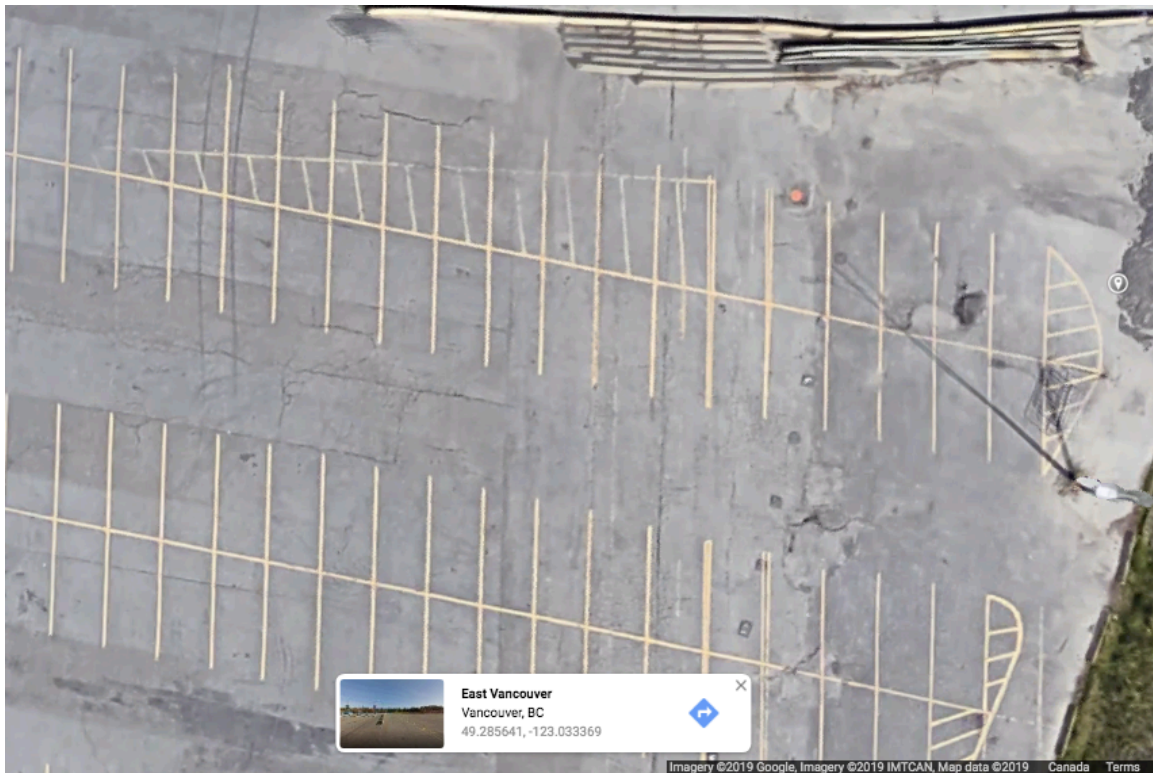


Figure 8: A screenshot from Google Earth: a repaved parking lot in East Vancouver, 2019

In a process that mirrors human made construction of real lots, each print begins with a lithographic layer of marble or limestone, providing an asphalt texture. With unconventional inking techniques ranging from drawing with a toy car to dripping motor oil into specific stalls, the lots are systematically “re-paved” layer by layer through an interleaved rolled out application of black ink.

Water based silkscreen lines stand raised and resist over each pass of the oil-based ink, creating a chartable history of the design lineage. Fictional depictions of real spaces are conjoined on a single plate, covering and uncovering new and old marks. The plate becomes



Figure 9: *Re-paved parking lots*, Lithograph, Screen-Print and Monotype on Basingwerk paper 26"x38" 2019-Present.

synonymous with human memory, wearing out materially through use.¹⁵ If mistakes are made while printing, they will be paved over. If not the print rests, is presented, or is stored until the next state.



Figure 10: Tire marks from a toy car on a marble lithographic stone, a foundational layer in *Re-paved parking lots*.

When thinking about the implementation of multiple print techniques to decelerate viewership, I draw one of the most ambitious examples to date in the work of American artist, Ellen Gallagher. Gallagher's Deluxe Series (2004-05) (Fig 11) combines traditional methods such as:

¹⁵ Mathematician, computer scientist, and pioneer of computer art, Frieder Nake compares human memory to the printing matrix, writing, "Long term use makes the printing plate 'forget' (the impressions fade). The iconic form of the printing memory, its analogous character, is quickly worn away and can efface the memory of form almost completely. Form is what the material of the printing plate 'remembers'." (Pelzer-Montada 178) Through Nake's example, I am speaking to the literal memory of the physical locations I depict, having been 'paved' over, past layers remain present but never fully legible and to the material nature of the printing plates I use as they wear out. The connection of subject matter to function, provide form and abstraction, clouding the rendering of a clear picture (memory).

photogravure, silkscreen, digital printing, and hand drawn elements with nontraditional additives such as: toy ice cubes, googly eyes, hair gel, Plasticine, and gold leaf. Exact instructions were provided to Two Palms Press to complete the massive edition of nearly 1,200 prints.¹⁶

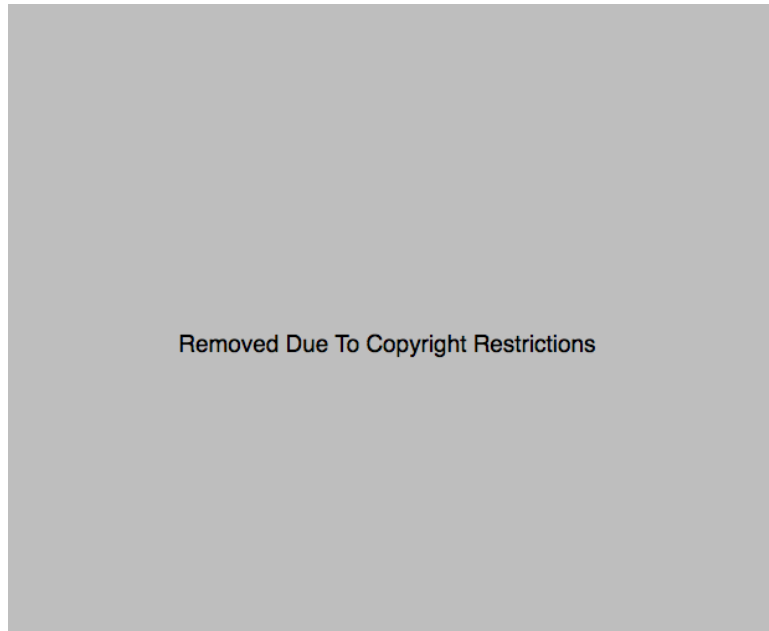


Figure 11: Ellen Gallagher, *Valmor*, from *Deluxe*. Photogravure, screen-print, Plasticine, gouache, graphite collage, and toy eye balls. 10 ½" x 13" Edition of 20. 2004-05

While my hybrid work does not parallel the considerable volume of techniques and unconventional materials exhibited in the work of Gallagher, my intention for a longer examination of the printed result

¹⁶ Sarah Suzuki, Curator of Drawings and Prints at the Museum of Modern Art writes "the kind of porosity demonstrated by Gallagher's project: it simultaneously relies on and explodes tradition; welcomes the incursions of other mediums and materials; and adopts traditional techniques into a larger practice to suit formal, technical, or conceptual concerns." (Suzuki) The pioneering efforts of Gallagher's edition both expand the vocabulary of contemporary printmaking and redefine the notion of the edition. The labor is evident in the piece itself, especially in viewing the complete series of 60. While my hybrid work does not parallel the shear volume of diverse techniques and materials in the work of Gallagher, my intention for longer examination remains central, as similarly demonstrated in *Deluxe*.

remains central and the inclusion of multiple techniques prolongs the viewing.

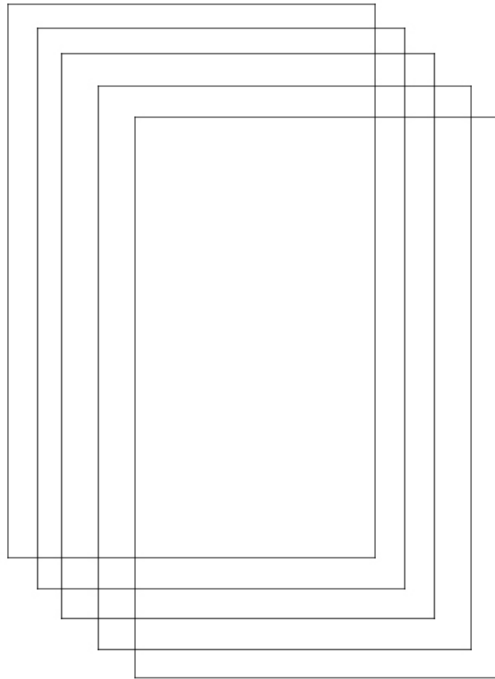
The unique proof exemplifies characteristics true to photography, abstract painting, and through the hybridization of other mediums, can depict multiple modes of printmaking in one static image. My process allows for gestures, objects, and depictions of place to be captured through pressure, yet still encapsulate a pictorial presence. The pressed matter is reminiscent of photograms, long exposures, and lens-less methods of photography. The silver gelatin palette I impose is not confined to a photographic discussion; it rather aids to the delineation of image and form, referential of minimalist and abstract painting.

Further exaggerated by the combination of techniques, the unique print is difficult to classify. My slow and methodical collection process is offset ¹⁷ by my immediate (rushed) style of composing works. Ultimately, the reduced speed that initiated the work is echoed in the experience of viewing. The proof is evidence of a varied timeline, condensing and expanding. The awareness as described by my 'registration' habits, is the starting point for my next 'edition'¹⁸, which could be anywhere, including in the cyclical nature of process itself.

¹⁷ In a similar fashion as the method of offset printing, in which an inked image is transferred or 'offset' from a plate to a rubber blanket, then to the printing surface.

¹⁸ I refer to a new type of edition, challenging notions of the past, as exemplified by the work of Ellen Gallagher.

Future Editions



fu·ture e·di·tions: work to be made, inspired by process and previously made work (the end as beginning).

Looking to the monotype process as subject has brought about fortuitous outcomes. Such is the case in *21 Unearthed States* (Fig 12), a series of works that compositionally derive from the residual traces innate to the process of monotype. Over a month long period, I intentionally set out to suspend the rhythmic and necessary gestures of an essential task: cleaning up. The documentation produced, 21 unique prints, representative of 21 days in the studio. Through the development of a method that implements solvents as a mask, I captured the traces of my body's limitations. A 24" x 36" matrix, measuring just beyond my arms length defined the parameters of the

series. Using a shop rag saturated with solvents, I instinctively repeated the familiar motion of cleaning the day's leftovers from the matrix. Permeating a composition not visible to the human eye, my drying time for the solvents was adjusted and governed by several factors: the temperature of the studio, the saturation level of the rag and the thickness of pooling solvents all accounted for the amount of time before my next move.



Figure 12: 21 *Unearthed States*, Monotype on Stonehenge paper, 92"x160" 2019

Using a large roller, the day's palette of used ink was applied on to the semi-evaporated plate with a single pass. Similar to a silver gelatin print developing in a chemical bath: scratches, monochromatic ink, and

residual textures gradually shaped the perimeter of my physical trace. An outline emerges, seen for the first time only to be concealed once more by the contact of paper and is carried forth under the press.

The essential task of cleaning up signals the end of a prosperous or not so prosperous day in the studio and allows that start of another. I welcome the work, knowing it will enable future editions. It is through this process that I call to a logic that mirrors my movements in the outside world- finding solace in everyday actions while going about the necessary tasks of life. With that logic in mind, several ideas and concerns surround the future editions to come. Aesthetic decisions involving display and formal qualities can always be pushed further and at what point can the restrictions of the rectangular print dissolve? If the viewing process can be slowed down, what is (actually) gained from achieving this? And how can audiences further engage in careful contemplation with the work?

In October 2011, The Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (Germany) opened an exhibition titled: *The Art of Deceleration, Motion and Rest in Art*. The core of the exhibition credits modern art with the conscious capacity of reflecting on the dialectic of motion and rest.¹⁹ Through slowing down, an understanding is gained. Not just of the material aspects, but also of the high-speed world we inhabit.

¹⁹ Didactic panel from the exhibition: "Today, in the age of globalization, turbo capitalism and the Internet which accelerate our sense of time pressures, fragmentation and burnout, not only is the yearning for deceleration—for relaxation techniques, slow food or slow communications—growing but also the insight that process has to be decoupled from the link to acceleration: In order to move forward we must decelerate!" (Hartmut)

Up to this point, I have identified key traits of the unique print that embody photographic, sculptural, painterly, and adaptive properties, setting it apart from other means of recording. I also stress that the rise of competing technologies has increased the value of the hand pulled print. Photographer and author, Alexis Gerard describes film as once being the uncontested medium for recording images. He claims that digital technology has now largely relegated film to one time use cameras and bridges that comparison to the physical print, writing, "Physical displays where the image is not separable from its support are in effect becoming one time use displays... Far from becoming obsolete as a result of these trends, physical printing is taking on a whole new dimension of value that is based precisely, on its physical, tangible, non-virtual nature." (Pierce Lhotka 9) The physicality that defines the unique proof and of which Gerard speaks to is meant to be experienced first person. Though the image can be disseminated through infinite methods (this document), the sensorial qualities that prolong observation described in this thesis are intended for physical, in person viewing.

The medium of print holds a long-standing history embedded in political, personal, and production purposes. To make a (analog) print today is an intentional choice, labor and deconstruction, involving chance and a sentiment for the palpable. Staying within the parameters of printmaking, has allowed the content of my work to evolve freely, as direct response to the position I hold. Building off mistakes is an

essential part of my methodology; making a mistake, reverse engineering it, and trusting on instinct to let it happen again.

The procedural nature of printmaking folds over and onto itself when process becomes content. (Fig 13) I apply the familiar step-by-step approach taken in the studio to my perception and consequential interactions I have to the outside world. My art making takes place throughout the entire day: from looking, collecting, printing, and in the eventual contemplation of pressed matter. The ebbs and flows are maintained through viewing, assessing, and deconstructing. The exhaustion of one object and the excitement of potential new gestures it produces, inspires the next.

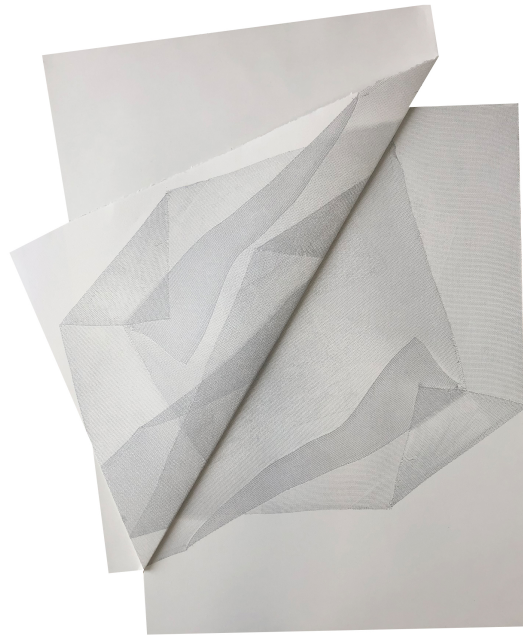
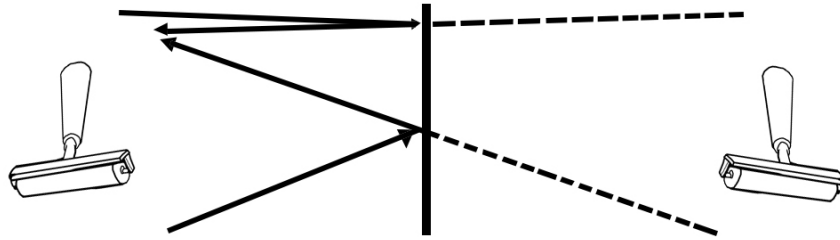


Figure 13: *Two-Fold*, Monotype, 27"x34" 2020

Governed by a need for immediacy and instant satisfaction, modern expectations of daily life can bear an immense weight. I attempt to intervene these assumptions through a greater and more tactile connection to the material that surrounds me. Slowed and deliberate modes of transit propel my search for something unique. As a result, the hard drawn lines between awareness, physicality and art making have since been erased.

Recently I have been fascinated with the notion of congestion, and the present-day advancements in transportation that have presented an unintended reversal of their original role. In this interruption there is room for contemplation: A rest. My intention is that the interactions between the unique print, time and the viewer can echo the process of their creation. From drawing (collecting) to printing, to viewing the final print, moments arise where time becomes immeasurable: a limitlessness that will nourish the future editions to come.

Mirroring



mir·roring: the reversal of the matrix when printed or unconsciously imitating something without knowing.

The reflective nature of the print to matrix relationship organically shapes a reflection of my process at large: a reversal that reveals an accumulation of decisions and actions, viewed upended for the first time. This new way of looking at familiar or seemingly ‘regular’ things has become an apt comparison to the ways in which I make and understand. The process of mirroring grants further inquisition into the approaches I formerly held to research, method and creation. By allowing my process and the emanating physical objects to look back at themselves, the limits of western knowledge I’d inherently implemented come to light. Through a willingness to challenge conventions I previously thought absolute of printmaking, I’ve personally redefined what a print can be and am working towards broadening that definition even further.

In my thesis defense, I stated that pursuing my master's degree has been a formative first step in starting to understand what it means to become educated. The deep-seated awareness I adhere to every action I take, my openness to collaboration and by acknowledging my position, I have experienced revelatory developments as an artist and being.



Figure 14: *Trial trails*, Monotype, 22"x22" each, 2020

Leading up to and as shared in my defense, I began working on a series of prints made outside and not dependent on the mechanical printing press. Inspired by an alternative appropriation of the built environment and its forms, these latest prints (Fig 14) are indicative of a new direction. These impressions embody the key characteristics I employ while making and help to fold the procedural nature of printmaking together. Matrix, registration, pressure, chance, and edition fall onto a single surface: a mirroring of sorts.

Similar to my methodology, the marks are both representative of successes and failures. Experimenting, failing and finding a way to replicate those missteps has become conditional for creation. The lines, created rhythmically by gestural tracings are formed through a repeated exercise. These invisible gestures of immediate actions are made possible by pressure and the transfer of matter. I cannot take credit for the entire composition; the prints are made in collaboration with others and are part of an open edition. Open to future marks and variations, the dimensions, hues, and composition are not fixed. Previous layers of matter are concealed, covering a well-worn path and with every pass, their material make up is chipped away. Chance propels the work forward and the hidden impressions underneath the rollers are only revealed when lifted. They rest until the next pass.

The lines are actualized by the transfer of pavement onto urethane wheels and once again transferred vertically with the pressure of human bodies. The force of gravity slides downward directly on the paper, firmly capturing the trials and trails of a skateboard trick known as a “wall ride”.

The slower ways I navigate the environment, using the very vehicle I later use for expression (I.E. the skateboard/myself) are the preferred tools I apply to create unique impressions. Today, I approach every matter and encounter with the same pressing question: could this be a print?

Works Cited

- Coldwell, Paul. "Hybrid Practices within Printmaking." *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, vol. 14, no. 3, Sept. 2015, pp. 175–78, doi:[10.1080/14702029.2015.1094241](https://doi.org/10.1080/14702029.2015.1094241).
- Esposito Hayter, Carla. *The Monotype: The History of Pictorial Art*. Skira Editore S.p.A., 2007.
- Field, Richard. "Print News." *World Print Council*, vol. Volume 1, no. Issue 1, Mar. 1978, pp. 2–15.
- Gallagher, Ellen. *Preserve*. Des Moines Art Center, 2001.
- Hartmut, Rosa and Böhme. *The Art of Deceleration: Motion and Rest in Modern Art from Caspar David Friedrich to Ai Weiwei*. Hatje Cantz, 2012.
- INTERNATIONAL PRINT CENTER NEW YORK. *PAST EXHIBITIONS*. <https://www.ipcny.org/past-exhibitions>.
- Museum of Modern Art. *MoMA PRESENTS ITS FIRST EXHIBITION OF RECENTLY ACQUIRED TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY PRINTS AND ILLUSTRATED BOOKS*. 2 May 2006, https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_press-release_387106.pdf.
- Pellegrini, Aldo. "Foundation for an Aesthetic of Destruction//1961." *Destruction*, Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2017, pp. 72–74.
- Pelzer-Montada, Ruth. "Deceleration Through the Imprint: Photo/Graphic Interactions in Contemporary Art." *Photographies*, vol. 11, no. 1, Jan. 2018, pp. 3–30, doi:[10.1080/17540763.2017.1399290](https://doi.org/10.1080/17540763.2017.1399290).
- Pelzer-Montada, Ruth. *Perspectives on Contemporary Printmaking, Critical Writing since 1986*. First, Manchester University Press, 2018.
- Pierce Lhotka, Bonny. *Digital Alchemy: Printmaking Techniques for Fine Art, Photography, and Mixed Media*. New Riders, 2011.
- Suzuki, Sarah. "Print People: A Brief Taxonomy of -Contemporary Printmaking." *Art Journal*, vol. Vol. 70 Issue 4, no. Winter 2011, pp. p6-25.
- Tallman, Susan. *The Contemporary Print from Pre-Pop to Postmodern*. Thames and Hudson, 1996.
- Taylor, Michael. *The Mechanical Hand, Artists' Projects at Paupers Press*. Black Dog Publishing, 2012.
- Tillmans, Wolfgang. *Abstract Pictures*. Hatje Cantz, 2011.
- University of California, Berkeley. *Indigenous Peoples of California: Related Resources at The Bancroft Library*. <https://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/IndigenousCABancroft>.

Works Consulted

- Bennett, Jane. *The Force of Things: Steps toward an Ecology of Matter*. Sage Publications, Inc., 2004, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4148158>.
- Brown, Bill. "Thing Theroy." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. Vol. 28, no. No. 1, 2001, p. 4.
- Brown, Kathan. *John Cage - Visual Art: To SOBER and QUIET the MIND*. Crown Point Press, 2000.
- Byrne, David. *Bicycle Diaries*. Penguin Books, 2010.
- Castleman, Riva. *Printed Art - A View of Two Decades*. The Museum of Modern Art, 1980.
- Coldwell, Paul. *Printmaking A Contemporary Perspective*. Black Dog Publishing, 2010.
- Cronon, William. *The Trouble with Wilderness; or Getting Back to the Wrong Nature*. 1995, https://www.williamcronon.net/writing/Cronon_Trouble_with_Wilderness_1995.pdf.
- Davis, Bruce, and Jean Milant. *Made in L.A.: The Prints of Cirrus Editions*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1995.
- Friedman, Martin. *Tyler Graphics: The Extended Image*. Abbeville Press Publishers, 1987.
- Gilmour, Pat. *The Mechanised Image*. Arts Council of Great Britain, 1978.
- Orenstein, Nadine. *Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669): Prints*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Oct. 2004, https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/rembp/hd_rembp.htm.
- Solnit, Rebecca. *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*. 2006.
- Thompson, Michael. "Time's Square: Deriving Cultural Theory from Rubbish Theory." *Innovation*, vol. Vol. 16, no. No. 4, 2003, p. 322.
- W. Haxthausen, Charles. *The Well-Tempered Grid*. Williams College Museum of Art, 2012.