



Y?

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ARTIST STATEMENT

My primary interest is in Abstract Art and exploring how the intersection of different planes and line shapes can create illusions within distorted shapes, letters, and words. My work varies in size, from prints to paintings ranging from very small to huge (12 feet x 15 feet). I also do sculptures. I use many printmaking techniques in my work, including etching, aquatint, drypoint, woodcut, linocut, plexiglass and collagraph.

In my mixed media pieces I use oil paints, charcoal, pastels, acrylic paint, watercolor. In my sculptures and most of my work I use recycled materials such as wood, flower petals, leaves, metal, textile, plaster, resin glass and recycled materials. Photography is an important part of my process, I use photos to document my work in progress and to remember new techniques. This allows me to see the evolution of the piece later on and sometimes it also helps me confirm which direction to go with my piece to finish it. My photographs are also a base for other pieces. Another vital part of my creative process is music. I introduce and create lines that follow a particular rhythm.

My artistic style has been strongly influenced by Kandinsky, Picasso, Rauschenberg, Rodin, Moore, Dubuffet, DeFeo and many other artists. I prefer to work either on the floor or on flat surfaces. This enables me to view the piece from every angle so that I can create multiple perspectives in my work, giving the audience more than one way to view my work.

Layering is an intrinsic element in my work. My work evolves through each new layer of lines and geometric techniques. Each layer represents a time change in someone's life; the more intricate the layer the more complex the person. These layers depict the events they went through and the resulting change in their life and personality. For example, a work's first layer is like a baby that is untouched and pure, but as the layers build it represents this baby becoming an adult and the good or bad events that have shaped their lives. I use these layers to represent aspects of abuse and abuse survivors.

Each composition represents a person that survived and how beautiful they are. It is important to show that each composition is a unique one because each person goes through a unique trauma. I explore abstraction through a variety of media to shed light on abuse survivors. Nowadays, it is even more evident when injustices occur and this took me to another decision in my life, which is to also represent people that have been abused but didn't survive. Multiple perspectives, layering and symbols are used to represent the changes in those who experience abuse. The consequences they pay with ADHD, PTSD, dyslexia, fibromyalgia and other disabilities that are normal consequences of physical, sexual and psychological abuse. Symbols such as the destructive act of tearing or scratching my own prints, designs that mimic jail bars, feathers that represented bleeding wounds, and the layering of the different colors.

By addressing sexual, physical and psychological abuse and the relative consequences through my art, I strive to make people more aware of this taboo, so that they can better understand and talk about it. This is significant because you cannot identify and stop abuse or overcome this trauma unless you talk about it. For those who didn't make it my work is there to remember them and to denounce the injustice that they paid with their lives.

Keywords: Art, Composition, Psychological abuse, Media pieces, Sculptures

IDEAS

Finding satisfaction in destruction and reconstruction

I found satisfaction in destroying using recycled materials to construct new works. I thought to do the same with my work but I had mixed feelings because it was my own art I would be destroying. Why did I want to destroy my own art? It was an idea that I didn't like, but on the other hand it was a necessary step to experience the destruction

victims feel when they are abused. Once I managed to destroy a piece I wasn't ready for the reconstruction phase. I knew I couldn't destroy just one piece to be able to create a new work. The process of destructing my work took place over a long period of time. I felt so much pain. It was difficult to destroy good work just to be able to reconstruct a bigger piece that I didn't even know for sure would be successful. Little by little I found the courage because it was important for me to represent victims of abuse who suffer daily from what has been done to them. The consequences of their abuse add up to this hard, almost impossible reconstruction process. This idea is the foundation of my process when I destroy and reconstruct new compositions.

Listening and talking with other victims of abuse

Every person who has passed through the difficult experience of abuse encourages me to continue my work exploring the topic. I also found it is also important to talk about the people that abuse others because abusive predators hide behind a mask to be able to subjugate the ones they abuse. How do I represent those people? It seemed quite difficult but then the word "hide" made me think about layers in my work. But would layers only represent the predators? The problem is that abuse victims also hide behind a different type of mask trying not to talk about their past, trying not to think about what happened, and presenting themselves as being someone who is very strong when in reality they are fractured.

The importance in overlapping layers: abuse versus abuser

Both the abuser and the victim of abuse hide behind masks. The first hide so as to not be recognized and punished and to continue the abuse, while the later hide because of shame, or to avoid being hurt again. The ending result is that both individuals hide. I represent both sides of the coin by using layers that overlap each other. This part of the process was not only interesting, but I found in my work I could overlap processes as well as concepts. Initially I explored this idea in sculpture and later painting, and then discovered I could expand this process exponentially with printmaking. Each final print became a monotype. This was such a beautiful process that was more extensive and complex than my previous painting and sculpture processes. I expanded the destruction of my art to my prints. Destroying my prints seemed to be easier. After destroying my prints, I decided to use the many pieces to create first mixed media paintings and later sculptures. I was intrigued. How to create paper sculptures? Encouraged by my committee I would pursue that route too.

Abuse & survival, consequences of abuse, versus abuser; feelings expressed through shadows, illusions and layers

For the longest time I was pushed by my committee to unify my different types of art: paintings, prints, and sculptures, or to choose between them and specialize in only one. In reality I could not choose only one. Each was attractive to me and I would take turns doing one technique or another. I refused to give anything up. In the end, the only solution was to find a way to unify them all into one body of work.

Making the connection between all ideas, combining them into a singular body of work

I tried over and over again, nothing seemed to work. Trying different types of materials (plaster, foam, wood, metal, foam) to create sculptures, but the connection I was looking for was not there. When I did the paper sculpture (using parts of my prints) it all started taking shape, the sculpture was related to my prints. In parallel I was doing paintings that were getting closer and closer to my prints. This was a long process too.

After several failed attempts I came up with an idea, why not separate every layer and use a sculptural way of layering the different pieces? The process that involved painting, printmaking, sculpture, shadows and illusion. I had finally unified all the techniques in one piece and started looking at two new ideas that could be also explored in the work: shadows and illusion.

Themes / Inspirations / Content of the Work

During my youth I was exposed to dilapidated structures like those from ancient Greek and Roman architecture. Living in Europe has influenced me quite a lot in my way of thinking. Roman and Greek ruins are so beautiful in my eyes and in some sense they still serve our society, such as serving as proof of our past, our history. Life has changed a lot over time, but if we didn't have some proof of the past we would probably think that life has always been the way we know it. In the past people thought art was meant to be beautiful and pleasing, a philosophy that many of my professors in Europe taught me. This concept of beauty was a contradiction to quite a lot of the contemporary art I have seen in museums all over the world.

Making my way in the USA, I started realizing that beauty was not the only thing expressed in art. The more I studied the more I realized I could express any idea I wanted through my work. But what idea was I going to express through my art?

Environmental issues became the center of attention for many and word spread that it was preferable to use recycled materials. What an interesting thought, although to tell the truth it had already been something I did while doing my BA because I didn't have the money to buy all the art materials I needed. Very often I would use leftover materials from previous classes. I would even dig in the art department wood or plastic disposal bins, and often I found great treasures I could use for my next classes. It became my tradition at the end of every semester to dig through the material disposal bins. I tried not to get caught because it would not be nice to be found digging through garbage. One day a professor found me digging in the trash. I didn't know who I was talking to but it turned out to be the head of the Art Department of Montgomery College. He asked me what I was doing. I explained I didn't have the money to buy materials for my next classes. He invited me to stop by at the end of every class to pick up what I needed. They threw away so many things. He encouraged me saying I was actually helping the environment, and I should keep on doing it. Helping the environment? How was I doing that? Simple, by recycling materials and reusing them.. Showing that some material can be reused to express new ideas was interesting and a challenge and I decided to make it public so everyone would know I use recycled material in my artwork.

To reuse much of the material I often had to destroy parts of it, let it decompose, and reassemble it to make something new. I also added the recycled materials to other materials or used them as a base and added other layers to hide parts of the recycled base, letting it show through like a ghost. The process became a natural technique I embraced little by little over time in my artwork.

Every summer after a trip to Italy, I would return to my artwork and it would have drastically changed. Why? I wondered was I influenced by the lifestyle in Italy that I would change my expression drastically within a month? No, that was not it. I discovered within that time I would relax, and think of new ideas to prepare for my next semester. I wasn't changing because of the different surroundings, I was reflecting more deeply on what I had learned through-out the previous year of classes. Italy was a relaxed environment that allowed me to think. The title of my thesis is: Y? I distort words and sentences in my work to hide the personal content. I chose to write the letter Y and not the word WHY because when I create my work I use many symbols that are particular to my own art, like the feathers, which to me symbolize the action of cutting yourself, the straight light symbolizes the cut while the delicate part of the feather symbolizes the skin of the person.

Y? Is the only question to which I don't have an answer for the victims of abuse I interviewed when they ask me why they had to go through their trauma. I am not able to answer that question for myself when it comes to my personal past trauma. Symbols that are particular to my own art, like the feathers, which to me symbolize the action of cutting yourself; the straight line symbolizes the cut while the delicate part of the feather symbolizes the skin of the person.

I decided not to use a matrix as a signature but to sign my work either with my initials or my full name in order not to detract from my work and eliminate all other descriptions concerning prints especially.

When I began to explore the concept of abuse in my artwork I presented one of my first pieces and the audience went completely silent when asked for feedback. My attempts to acquire criticism were met with impatient remarks from uncomfortable students, and I felt as though I would never successfully represent the struggle of other victims. Disheartened, I intended to discontinue addressing my personal history of abuse in my work until my friend, an art historian and fellow sexual abuse victim, intervened. She said that very few victims have the courage to share their story, and the fact that I could do so through my art could help others overcome their pain as well; seeing others who are brave enough to address their abuse gives hope to those who still cannot. She helped me realize how important addressing abuse and other taboos is for those who have suffered through it. I decided to portray my pain through my work on behalf of those who haven't yet had the courage to do so. In addition, I believe artwork concerning abuse can also help those who haven't undergone such trauma to understand and empathize with the struggles of victims.

I thought of those struggling with the societal taboos that I could address in my work to create a sense of solidarity amongst victims. People struggling with societal taboos such as mental health and the aftermath of abuse often have no one to talk with about their issues they face. As a survivor of sexual abuse, I chose to incorporate these themes into my artwork to show other victims it is alright to ask for help because they are not alone in their suffering.

While my history with abuse differentiates my art from that of others, it is far from the only thing that makes it unique. I have learned to incorporate multiple aspects of optical illusion, trompe l'oeil, and shadow art into my prints (etching, screen prints, intaglio, linocut, woodcut), paintings (acrylics and oil), and sculptures in order to express myself. Additionally, I utilize recycled, non-toxic materials because I feel as though I have more creative freedom while working with the unique colours, textures, and shapes they possess. An example of this is the various techniques I use to express pain in my art, such as tearing up and scratching my pieces. Layering is also a fundamental element of my work. Creating multiple layers allows me to develop various ways to interpret the

meanings behind the piece, sparking critical discussions in the process. I utilize each layer to hide or emphasize those around it in order to represent how certain aspects of personality are hidden, such as the pain or fears a victim may hide or even how the malevolent intent of an assailant may be initially concealed. I use layering when portraying abuse. It is critical to convey the feelings of both the abused and the abuser as to spark productive discussion concerning why people abuse others. I often find myself using the floor as an easel so I can see my piece from multiple perspectives. When creating abstract art one must use many varied techniques to get their point across while maintaining a style unique to them.

I have developed my use of trompe l'oeil in order to create the illusion of a collage of photos or prints with acrylic paint. A few of the pieces I have in the thesis show use this technique. I have begun to experiment with overlapping different prints and collages. I began layering stenciled monotype prints over my etching prints before cutting and collaging them in order to create mixed media collages. In doing so, I was able to create the illusion of unity between the collage and the overlapped print, which is evident in the works. I am unifying the different types of media I use in order to create a unique combination of sculptures, prints, and paintings, erasing the boundary between the specific mediums and lifting the constraints they place on the expression of my ideas. My work explores how such different mediums are interconnected. I am discovering new ways to manipulate this to my advantage, such as in my 3D work. One such piece was a double-sided oil painting collage with an etching print on the backside, which I cut into various shapes and placed onto vertical slates of plexiglass in order to seem like any typical, unified piece at a distance. However, upon coming closer, it becomes obvious that the pieces are layered on the different planes, forming a 3D piece together. Each sheet of plexiglass is set in wood 2.5 inch intervals away from the others in order to achieve the optical illusion of singularity. This piece is further characterized by its shadow, which changes due to the angle and amount of light that passes through the individual sheets of plexiglass. As a whole, this piece symbolizes the multifaceted nature of life; everyone has experiences that define them. Many abuse victims often feel broken even as they try to take control of their life, yet some survivors are able to recover and emerge stronger from the ordeal. Another piece I have in the thesis show represents this stage of recovery, which I've depicted by tearing various 2D prints and collaging them back together in a stronger 3D sculpture.

Sexual, physical and psychological abuse is labeled a taboo in today's society and often swept under the rug in typical day-to-day conversations. I will no longer be confined to the same topics I have explored in my previous work. I use my art as a way to speak about my abuse. In order to recover from any type of abuse it is critical to express it in different ways, and depicting my struggle through my artwork has helped facilitate my recovery. I am invested in representing the stories of other abuse survivors. My abstract art has become a tool in initiating a discussion about the struggle of overcoming abuse by increasing awareness of the topic and creating an opportunity to address such issues.

Victims of abuse pay severe personal consequences. They try to live a normal life, but often it is just an illusion of a normal life. Victims of abuse hide behind a mask not to show how the abuse may have affected their character. They present themselves hiding behind a delicate mask. Even if they know their experience is not their fault they still experience shame, rage and other disruptive feelings. Through abstraction I explore a variety of media to shed light on the experiences of abuse survivors. Using multiple perspectives and layering I represent the changes in those who experience abuse. Some of my work also refers to ADHD, PTSD, dyslexia, fibromyalgia, depression and other disabilities along with survival. These are often a consequence of trauma, and are also part of the content in my work. As you may have realized I am a person who has been abused, therefore I do have some of those disabilities, but this thesis is not dedicated to my personal problems but to those like me went through what I went through and sometimes even worse than me and still faces huge challenges in living and understanding that they are beautiful and that it's not their fault. Some other traumas I have learned about while talking to those people, and that made me do some further research on the disabilities.

Abusers hide behind a mask that doesn't allow people to catch them. A few of my pieces refer to the abuser and how he hides behind a mask, while the vast majority of my pieces either represent a specific person that has been abused or a certain type of disability that is a consequence of the trauma that the victim has.

Through my work I am finding each abuse is different and particular. Each person copes with it a different way, things that unify victims are the acceptance process, the survival process and the consequences that can be both physical, psychological and mental. This is a consequence of me deciding to name my pieces with the general word composition and add a number to each piece, so that the person I would be referring to would not be recognized.

I was asked why my work is still beautiful if I am representing such a negative experience. The answer is very simple: each time I encounter a victim of abuse, and I take the time to get to know them, I realize their kindness and I want to represent the individual in the best way possible. I am expressing the beauty that they have in them and not the trauma they experienced. When the individual sees the beauty I see in them it encourages them to not hide behind a mask.

PROCESSES AND TECHNIQUES

Materials:

When you use mixed media you have to pay attention to the importance of what is archival and what is not. For instance, if you want to mix acrylic colors with oil, the acrylics have to be used before the oil or the work is not archival and can deteriorate over time.

There is a wide variety of different papers that could be used, but I have found that for the kind of work that I do and intend to continue doing the best papers are: Stonehenge paper, BFK paper, Domestic Etching paper, Arnhem paper, recycled paper, and Chinese paper. I prefer to use white, off white, and lighter shades such as light sepia or brown just because it is easier for me when I apply the colors to go from light to dark. I do though use some black paper sometimes but inverting the process gives me less satisfaction for the moment, maybe time will change that. I am sure when I am tired of the light paper I will turn to using dark papers. I have not tried using rice paper but I would still like to try it. Those are papers I will use when doing my 3D and 2D mixed media works.

I realized that when it came to my work the art needed to be archival because I wanted the individuals I represent to stay present in time. If the art isn't archival then the work representing them is temporary and would not give them the importance I attribute to each of them.

Most of my work involves some part recycled materials and/or found objects that I like to collect until I find the right use for them. The materials become part of a work of art or part of the process used to make the work of art or both, it all depends on the materials. I use a variety of materials and tools to create my work, including: wood, linoleum, copper, foam, sponge, brushes, carving tools, painting tools, plastic, pastels, charcoal, oil and acrylic paint, oil pencils, pencils, plexiglass, glass, metal, aluminum, aluminum foil, and sandpaper. I utilize everyday objects such as the net that contains fruits in groceries stores, and all types of plastics, even resins. In addition to the types of papers I mentioned before, I also use canvas that prepare with multiple layers of white or black plaster. I use natural materials including wood, the grain of which is very important to me, and more recently I have used leaves and rose petals in my work. Digital photography and digital work have become part of my process as well. For example I printed an enlarged print on canvas of Composition 35, and sealed it with a special sealer that allows me to paint over the print. Before doing the modifications on the print I put a transparent sheet on it and painted the modifications on the sheet. If I like the modifications I go back and print them directly. I also use plexiglass as a stencil to create a new plate that will allow me to print the same color on multiple prints. Since I do not want to reproduce the same print more than once the stencil is used to make the same lines in different colors for example. The possibilities are infinite.

Techniques:

My initial works were etchings, then I explored collagraph, linocut, woodcut, monoprinting, and screenprinting. Collages and sculpture have been part of my practice for years. I was not as familiar with printmaking processes except for etching and aquatint. As I explored various methods of printmaking I discovered the possibilities of creating mixed media works by painting over my prints. That led me to print with one method of printing and then print on top of it with another method of printmaking. This discovery drove me to explore how different types of prints worked together to achieve what I wanted to do. I realized to do successive prints of different techniques, I had started with the dry paper processes first and then completed the wet paper processes second. The reason for this process is that the paper becomes embossed and is no longer flat which makes the surface almost impossible to print on. The second requirement was that some prints can be done with water based ink and others usually are done with oil based ink. I knew that acrylic color had to be used first and then oil base color second to maintain the archival quality of the print. The third part of the process is that you have to figure out if you want some of the layers to be semi transparent or not. On top of that you can add collage or oil base paint. It took a long time to figure that all out and it was more the times when things didn't work out than when they did work out but slowly things started taking shape. During all that intensive experimentation process I also figured out that sometimes I could do a ghost print as one of my layers and revert the image of the print, and at the same time get a lighter print of the work. Once you figure out all those little problems, when the process becomes more clear, it is then that you also realize the potential of the possibilities available through the process of creating.

Initially with my paintings I was all over the place. I finally got some good results when I started applying the same type of process of layering to my paintings using a semi-transparent acrylic paint for some of the layers. Later I created my sculptures with paper trying to move away from the 2D flatness of the canvas by doing collage. I realized I could eliminate the canvas and bend the paper. My sculptures were particularly difficult to make because I had to tear apart my beautiful prints, and in some cases print more knowing that the only purpose of printing was to tear the prints apart for the sake of creating sculptures. That was quite a consuming process especially since I didn't know until the end if my sculptures would become what I expected them to become. After

much hard work I managed to succeed in that process too. I chose to work on paper rather than other materials because it was easy for me to access many types of paper. I also was pushed in that direction because a sculpture made of paper is light and easily carried. Since I suffer from Fibromyalgia it is very hard for me to carry around heavy materials and sometimes even to work properly. Using my hands to make my work has sometimes been really hard but I don't lose the hope to feel better some day. This is why the lighter the material I use the better it is. For example when I have to do an etching it hurts my joints so bad I have to use special overlapping bandages and then add one or more gloves to make sure that my bones don't hurt for weeks and weeks. This is also another reason why I don't do only printmaking. Moving is important for me and doing printmaking would mean that I would sit most of the time. Painting allows me to move way more since I paint standing and often with the canvas or paper on the floor. Sculpture also allows me way more movement than printmaking. So the three combined in a rowling system make my Fibromylgia have a lower negative impact over my work.

Examples of Thesis Work:

Composition 43 (Shock-Shameless):

Composition 43 (Shock-Shameless) uses a printmaking process, collagraph, in which many types of soft materials are glued on a rigid surface of cardboard or wood that will deeply emboss the paper in the printing process. The process can also involve the subtraction of part of the cardboard. When the plate is assembled it then needs to be protected with shellac on both sides multiple times (at least 5 times for each side) to seal all the collaged parts together. The shellacked surface prevents the glued parts of the plate from attaching to the roller during the oil-based printing. After each layer of shellac you need to wait twenty four hours for it to dry, and one side at a time needs to be done. All six sides need to be done. A press is used to transfer the image from the plate to the paper. The press roller comes into contact with the relief parts of the plate. The plate is wiped with a soft gauze or with a soft cloth to remove the excess ink that has been applied with a piece of cardboard. Before printing the plate, the paper is submerged in water for about twenty minutes and then patted dry for a better absorption of the ink and a better embossing of the paper. Before putting any ink on the plate, you can also choose to emboss the paper directly by running the plate through the press without ink, and a white embossing will result on the paper. Then you can add ink to the plate and print it. The resulting print is a collagraph that will be deeply embossed with thicker ink, especially on the deeper parts of the embossing. After printing the print needs to dry for about ten days, preferably between newsprint and under a light weight in order for the paper to dry and stay straight.

Because collagraphs deeply emboss the paper it is impossible to do other prints on that paper, therefore if you want to do a print that involves different types of printmaking techniques you need to use the other techniques first. Collagraph will be the last technique used. After that you can also paint on the paper, preferably with oil paint base paint, to make sure the work is archival.

Composition 43 (Shock-Shameless)



This print came about because the printing department needed someone that would do a collagraph to be exhibited in a printmaking exhibition held at the end of the semester. I was asked to learn about the collagraph technique and make a print for the exhibition. I attempted many collagraphs using different textures discovering what type of textures would and would not work. Finally I used some of the textures that had worked in previous prints and did a much bigger cardboard plate. I printed the plate without putting ink on it and obtained a beautiful white embossing. I came upon this idea after seeing the light prints of Mel Kendrick. Happy with the embossing I inked the plate with different colors. This is how Composition 43 was finally created.

Composition 43 (Schock-Shameless)

Size: 22"x 26"

Media: collagraph

**Towson University, History of printmaking 2020-21 century
2017**

This print is part of a series of collagraphs focusing on the effects of abuse. The title of the piece, Composition 43 (Shock-Shameless), describes the artist's views on the abuser's actions. The piece itself is a commemoration to all the abuse victims that were able to overcome what they had to go through. The jagged lines in the collagraph represent both the cords used to restrict a victim and the restraints a victim has to overcome to end the abuse. The grids represent the mental and physical imprisonment the victim is forced into by their abuser. Furthermore, the

tape in the collagraph symbolizes another way of restraining and silencing a victim, and the ripped pieces of tape represent breaking free and being able to talk about what happened.

Composition 27

After realizing I couldn't reproduce my prints if I overlapped them I considered overlapping the same print over and over on the same paper. The result was astonishing and completely different. What I came to understand was each print could give me numerous new and unique works. What would happen if I would overlap different prints? Composition 20 is an example of overlapping three different prints on one paper. I had just discovered how to create from a few prints multiple different works. I realized I now could finally represent each person who shared with me their individual traumatic past through one monotype print.



Composition 27
Size: 5 1/2" x 6"

Media: overlapping etching plates, mono-print
2019

Composition 20

This was the first time I overlapped plates in the printing process. It had taken a long time to discover and achieve this result. At this point I was overlapping only etching plates. Almost a year later I realized I could overlap different types of plates. I discovered this possibility when I printed over the prints left behind by other students in the garbage or recycled paper drawer.



Composition 20
Size: 12" x 5 1/2"

Media: overlapping etching plates, mono print
2019

Composition 35 (Intertwine)

Composition 35 is one of my favorite pieces. I was looking at Joan Mitchell at the time when I started this work. This work started off by putting oil on a paper using a roller and then overlapping other prints over it.



Composition 35 (Intertwine)
Size: 6" x 8"

Media: Monotype, etching & roller
2019

After many attempts I was able to achieve what I consider a beautiful evolution from cubism. Through the process I discovered new techniques and ideas. I tried to reproduce this piece over forty times at least, obtaining a different result each time. This print can only be reproduced digitally, but a digital print would not have the same impact on the viewer even if printed larger which of course I tried. This step helped me realize no one could reproduce my work, I knew with certainty the work was unique. Composition 37 obtaining the same result.

Furthermore I choose to print it digitally on canvas. Then I varnished the canvas with a special varnish that would allow me to either print on that surface or paint on it to add further layers to it. Before doing so I laid first one transparent sheet in front of the canvas then I painted the canvas, then a second one and a third one. The result would help me in the process of the 3D works that I was doing with plexiglass that unfortunately are not in this show. Those layers could be added by

hand or my printing on transparency sheets. This discovery was going to make me save time and money because I didn't need to print forty times to get a print. I could work on the computer overlapping layers, print each different layer and then transfer them to different plates and have one registration in the printing process.

Composition 37



Composition 37
Size: 6" x 8 1/2"

Media: plates overlapped, roller, monotype
2019

Composition 37 The print also can only be reproduced digitally, but a digital arriving to the same conclusion as of Composition 35. As a consequence I realized that one of my goals had been reached, because since I wanted to represent the beauty of each person that I would encounter in my life that had suffered from abuse, each of my work had to be unique. Printmaking was not the road but mixed media was the road to follow and mixing different types of printmaking techniques was one road to follow. To this road I would later on add painting and sculpture.

With both Composition 35 and Composition 37 I used recycled papers with marks and imperfections. The sheets of paper were deemed imperfect and not usable for printing. I added some paint with the roller, and added different layers of etching prints pushing the work further I had done previously with Composition 20 and Composition 27.

Composition 69 (Full Moon)

After each new print I would review my previous prints and found I didn't like them as much as the new one. I knew I had work to do but didn't know exactly what yet. So one day I cut one of my prints that was done using glass, in six different shapes. Then I glued three pieces on top of two of my less favourite prints. It resulted in two compositions: Composition 69 and Composition 71.



Composition 69 (Full moon)
Size: 10 1/2" X 10"
Media: Etching & collage
2019

Both Composition 69, and Composition 71 are two etching plates that were originally considered the final work. Later I printed an abstract monotype design done on plexiglass and cut it into various shapes. I glued the shapes on the original blue prints (Composition 69, and Composition 71). The two blue prints are initially the same but after the addition of collage elements they become unique. The final result is two very different pieces. Using the same shapes, but slightly different colours and changing the position has a different impact on the viewer.

The prints could be considered two brothers or sisters (not twins) from the same family who have suffered trauma. In fact they are dedicated to a friend and his brother that have suffered so much in their young age.

These two pieces above represent the initial step of Composition 120 (Stereo) where I started incorporating collage (of other prints) on finished prints with the intent of creating monotypes. I was turning the page and changing direction. I already sensed that I didn't want to do just printmaking, but I wanted to incorporate other techniques in my printmaking world. These were the first positive attempts to create some kind of illusion and overlapping in my work.

Composition 71 (Blood Moon)



Composition 71 (Blood Moon)
Size: 12" X 8"
Media: Etching & collage, Mono-print
2019

Composition 120 (Stereo)**Composition 120 (Stereo)**

Size: 10 1/4" X 12 1/8"

Media: Etching & collage, mono-print
2019

Composition 120 (Stereo) was done using one step further compared with the two Compositions 69 and 71. After seeing Rauschenberg and Frank Stella techniques in printmaking I considered how I might come up with something unique and innovative that would push the idea of printmaking using three different techniques assembled in one work. This composition is an etching, collage and glass print, here I am pushing the illusion so that the viewer has to go really close to the piece to discover that the parts glued on the etching print are the stencils used when printing on top of the etching print using plexiglass. I discovered another technique that gives great results and sets me up to make some unique work in the future.

After doing this composition I decided to see if I could do an etching plate that would overlap two plates at the same time. The idea was to do designs normally done on two separate plates both on the same plate in order to avoid the usual step of registration marks typically used when overlapping two prints over the same paper. So I took an etching plate and did the first design of the body of a woman and then through aquatint made the body appear. Then I proof printed the plate. Then I covered the plate with a coat of hard ground and did an abstract design on it that I etched on the plate, left it in the acid for 3 hours to make sure that the lines would turn out really dark and then I printed the plate a first time. After viewing the result I decided to sand down the aquatint sharpness of the delicate human figure by sanding down the plate delicately not to take all the aquatint away. I know that my etching would stay because it was so deeply etched on the plate. Then I printed it again. I had to do sand down 6 other times and print each time in order to get to the balanced balance of the two designs that I wanted. The final work is not in this show but this technique is a technique that I will for sure develop some more since it makes it possible to avoid registration and you get to print on the paper one time instead of multiple times.

Composition 29 (Roma)

Composition 29 (Roma) was created using pencil on paper. It represents a person I met in the USA suffering from depression. I decided to include him as a subject of my work because he also was abused when he was young. The piece was completed in Rome while I was thinking of him. I decided to keep it as is and not make a print or a mixed media piece out of this because originally I didn't have access to the material, and the more I would look at the piece the more I thought it represented him as he really is, delicate and fragile in character as are the marks of the pencil on the paper.

After discovering Stephanie Garmey and Jay DeFeo, I realized I could push my work further than just printmaking and painting. I was still in the process of finding how to incorporate my sculpture work and I asked myself is that it?

The process of using a pencil can be very similar to etching a plate because you can trace lines the same way and get etching and cross etching lines to build your different tones. The only difference is the end result and the fact that using a pencil makes the piece automatically unique while doing a print instead you can get editions.

**Composition 29 (Roma)**

Size: 10.8" x 7.8"

Media: pencil on paper
2019**Composition 23****Composition 23**

18" x 24"

etching, aquatint overlapping acrylic paint
2019

I had already done some work where I had added painting after doing a print but I could only add oil paint at that point in order to be sure the print would be archival. I wanted to find a way to keep my work archival but have water color or acrylic on it too. Composition 23 is one possible solution. But after looking at Rauschenberg's overlapping works, and completing Composition 20 and 120, I thought to combine the ideas of those two compositions on top of adding another painting process in the mixt.

I started off with acrylic paint and then tan etching and aquatint plate print were added. To do this print I had to wet the paper from the back because if I would have saturated both sides of the paper the acrylic paint, which is soluble in water, would have faded away before I could print the

etching on the paper. I put the acrylic on the paper first, then cut the paper in half, wetting only one side, and put the papers on the plate in a way that the print would result as if there were two separate prints on two separate papers. By looking closer you can see that the acrylic paint connects from one paper to the other as does the design of the print from one side to the other, yet there is so much space between the left and right sides of the piece. The discovery of this technique was important to my process, one I would not forget and would often use in my future works.

Composition 12 (The Circle Of Life)



Composition 12 (The Circle of Life)

Size: 4 feet length x 4 feet width X 13 inches height

Media: torn prints and glue

2019

the pieces in a different way as a collage - possibly a 3D collage. I started thinking of how I might do that, finding the right glue, making a design. Folding the paper so that it would take the shape I wanted was the hardest part. I realized certain shapes would require tools to secure the paper while the glue dried and the shape was formed. This was the hardest part of the puzzle. Once I figured out how to glue pieces together everything else came easily. It took almost a year to finish this piece and it was a very slow process. It would take even longer to find out how to hang it on a wall. For ideas about the scale and how to hang the piece I looked at the works of All Loving, Elizabeth Murray, Jim Condron and Frank Stella.

This wall sculpture was completed after seeing some of the works of Frank Stella and Belkis Ayon. The title of the piece describes the artist's view of how a person who has been sexually, physically and mentally abused can be destroyed, but they can also find ways through tough reconstruction to become a much stronger person. The piece has been created by tearing apart different types of prints and reattaching them together in a new way to construct a larger work with a strong impact on the viewer. This work represents a person who has been able to reconstruct him/herself to become stronger. From another point of view one could imagine that each print represents a single person, and together all those people are helping each other to live and make a stronger society.

Composition 15

Composition 15 started off using a plate recycled plate where someone else had done an abstract aquatint. I decided to do an etching over it and see what would come out. After etching my plate I made sure to get some strong dark lines that would show on top of the previous aquatint, just like I had done with the overlapped print described in the section of Composition 120, leaving the plate in the acid for 3 hours. I had to go through sanding the plate again a few times to get to the final result that was first printed on a BFK paper. Happy with the result I printed it on my recycled paper. Knowing that I couldn't damp that type of paper in the water because even if I had layered rice glue on both sides of the paper it could break by using that process I decided to spray a little bit of water on the part that was going to be facing the print. That worked but I can say that it doesn't always work because later on I tried printing other plates on recycled paper and if the lines are not as deep they do not show up on the paper. Some other times it happens that part of the paper gets detached while you are pulling up the paper from the print after printing the plate.



Composition 15

Size: 9 1/2" x 9 1/2"

Media: etching, aquatint recycled paper

2020

After doing Composition 12, I thought of how to express the same idea but going the opposite size: infinitely small. Composition 15 is very delicate, as delicate as can be recycled paper. This etching print has a very special meaning to me, it has been done on recycled paper that I made from previous prints, this choice was to show that in some cases people that are abused get completely destroyed but that even something that has been completely destroyed and reduced to microscopic pieces can still be useful to others.

If you imagine that a print represents a person that endured a severe trauma, while the paper represents another person that has been abused, you can then envision that the first person really manages to survive by the effort done by the other person that was completely destroyed. The person who did not survive represents the recycled paper and is the base for the survival of the other person. Furthermore, a person that has been abused feels insignificant and can therefore be represented by the recycled paper. The delicacy of this paper also represents the delicacy of the character of the person that went through a trauma.

Composition 25



Composition 25, Geared To Win

Size: 6" x 10"

Media: etching

2019

On a larger view each box can represent a section of our brain, like the language can represent a box, the mathematical section can represent another box and so on. In a person that has ADHD those boxes can work at the same time creating confusion and hyperactivity of the brain connecting those parts a different way with the consequence of not being able to concentrate or focus on other occasions. Therefore this piece is dedicated to those people that suffer from this disability due to trauma.

Composition 10 (Solstice / PTSD Kills)

Composition 10 (Solstice / PTSD Kills), an etching and aquatint print, represents a person who suffers from PTSD I met when I was in Italy. We talked for a long time and after meeting the person I researched PTSD. PTSD is a disability that kills many people and not only people that have been sexually abused, also veterans. This helped me understand I could enlarge my vision to include other types of disabilities and consequences of other traumas. The piece has words and sentences written in different languages to convey the issue is not unique to a specific region, county, state, or nation. This was a further confirmation that I could and should use different languages in all my work for that specific reason.

I have often seen other texts written in other languages, living in different countries made it easy to have direct access to so many languages, as for example Arabic. Therefore I already know other languages have letters that are totally different that I will explore in my future to add a variety of lines and shapes to my work.



Composition 10 (Solstice / PTSD Kills)

Size: 9 1/8" x 6 1/4"

Media: mono-print etching & aquatint

2019

The concept that is behind the general design though came about after thinking of Composition 68, I could push the idea of planes a step further. How could I push the design so that the viewer could see in between planes and make the planes interact with each other? How could I reach that step that would make the viewer see a 3D design that would at the same time be abstract? This plate also represents my answer to those questions. Here Nuam Gabo influenced my line of work in the concept of space and how to represent it.

Composition 68 (New York)



Composition 68, New York
 Size: 9" x 3 1/4"

Media: etching aquatint viscosity mono-print
 2019

Composition 68 came to be after Composition 30 and Composition 31. When doing this print I wanted to make sure that people would see the different planes so I had to really push myself when drawing the design and concept of overlapping shapes. I would push this even further with the print that I was to develop late, Composition 10.

With Composition 68 (New York) I reached a new level in my design. The work has depth and my 3D design work was taking me in a new direction which I continued to explore in my next two pieces: Yin and Yang. At this point I didn't want to do editions of 10 any longer. Ten prints was too many and the piece lost value if there were too many prints. I reduced the edition number first to an edition of 7, then to an edition of 5.

Later on I decided to keep just one print and to use the remaining prints for my future sculptures. After working the etching and aquatint further, and printing the plate, I added paint using a roller. The result looked like I had done viscosity, while in reality it was painting. I created this effect by adding transparency to the paint before adding it to the print so to preserve the printed lines of the etching.

Composition 30 a (YIN)

Composition 30 (Yin) was the first piece with a very irregular plate. I wanted to see if I could adapt my work to a different type of shape. I was very pleased with the result and thought it was finished. It reflected the type of work that I was doing in my paintings at the time but in miniature.

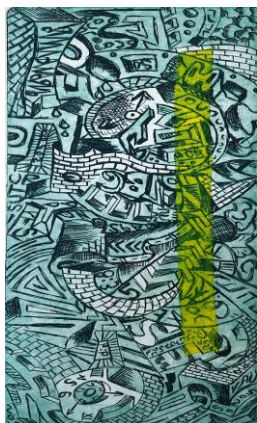
Composition 31 a (YANG)

Composition 31 (Yang) confirmed for me I could find balance creating works in a non-rectilinear format. After finishing this second work I went on to complete a third work that would be very similar in design (Composition 68). After completing a few more pieces I would return to Composition 30 (Ying) and Composition 31 (Yang) to add aquatint and transparent yellow rolling, pushing to a further step those pieces.



Composition 30 (Yin)
 Size: 9 1/2" X 3 1/2"

Media: Etching, aquatint, roller
 2018



Composition 31 (Yang)
 Size: 9" X 3 1/2"

Media: Etching, aquatint, roller
 2018

The two Compositions 30 and 31 are etchings and aquatint plates completed using the same technique used in the piece called New York. I was perfecting the technique. I completed the prints together, yet they are opposites and complement each other, thus Yin-Yang. Some prints have the "a" after the same composition number to identify they are printed with the same plate but without aquatint and are a different color. Each is a unique print. Many printmakers would consider the first print as a proof print before the final print. I do not think of it that way. I think each print is unique and deserves to be considered as such, therefore the previous prints have the same value for me as the ones that I have exhibited.

Composition 70 (Prison)

Composition 70 (Prison)
Size: 6" x 6"
Media: Etching & aquatint
2018

Composition 70 was done when I first discovered Naum Gabo and his transparent sculptures were particularly inspiring. It shows an enclosed space from which you might think you can get out but the road made of stairs that would allow you to get out is impossible to reach and takes you back inside, just as if you were in jail, or when you suffer a trauma the road to recovery is long and seems impossible for many to reach.

Living in the USA, little by little I got aware of certain types of injustice that I didn't really see in other countries at such a high level. This made me realize that maybe I wasn't paying the right attention when I used to live in other countries. But that was not the answer, what was happening in the USA was exactly the same as what was happening in other countries except for the fact that in Europe it was geared to other ethnicities.

This piece was done while thinking of all the people in the USA and in the world that are found guilty of crimes for which they are innocent. They are in jail just because their skin color is black, or latino or just simply different than the majority of the population of the country. I decided to do this piece after seeing many injustices that have happened in this country. Not much is done to prevent youth from going the wrong direction and this is a real tragedy. This is the type of abuse too as far as I know from society to a certain type of people. The percentage of people of color that are in jail is far bigger than all the other races, this due to the fact that from the start they live in poor areas.

Composition 26

Composition 26
Size: 6" x 12"
Media: etching, viscosity
2019

Composition 26 is part of a series of 4 pieces that represent 4 different people. Naum Gabo was the artist I was looking at when I started this work and in particular his use of space in his transparent 3D work. This one represents a person that is a drug addict that came to that after having been sexually abused. The name of the person is not on the work but you can see some details of what the person likes as for example the person likes to play piano and chess. Only after doing this piece I decided to go further with some descriptions and describe people that have lived injustices like the next print that is also part of this series. This work talks about a person that used to take drugs and unfortunately still uses it, he loves to play piano. He is so angry against society because he can't find a job at his level of education simply because he came from another country when he was younger with his family and doesn't have an American nationality. He has tried so many times and at the end just gave up turning to drugs to find a profit to live.

The following section of this work where I talk about another specific person and in this case I give the name of the person George Stinney because he was unjustly convicted to the electric chair for a murder that he didn't do. I added his date of birth (1930) and death (1944). He was just 14 years old. I also added the state where it happened, South Carolina. I chose to denounce this form of abuse. George Stinney

was declared innocent by a judge in the same state over 70 years later. The aim of my work is to keep the memory of this type of injustice and abuse alive to help make sure that it never happens again.

This second part of the work was still in process at the time of the thesis show so I couldn't show it. I haven't decided who will be the next two people that I will represent in the following two works. But I already have started the base of the shapes that connect all four of those pieces.

Composition 11

Composition 11 is particular; it is a collage. In this collage you even find red rose petals that have been used on a previous print as stencils, those are the white parts on the collage. This print then has been torn apart to be glued onto a woodcut print. Then I also added other etching prints and another one in particular also had black ink on it. The red roses used as stencils also had the design on them so I decided to use them on this piece. It took forever to do this work and the construction came about little by little. The woodcut was done almost a year prior to the additional layers. This was very important because it made me realize that sometimes you have to put aside some work and then go back at it later on.



Composition 11
Size: 22 3/4" x 18 1/4"
Media: collage of red rose petals, woodcut, etching, aquatint, black ink
2019

This work represents my father who has been suffering from a particularly rare lung disease. In all his years of suffering he was a guinea pig for the medicine. That tried all types of things on him. What made me do this piece is that doctors refused to let him go in peace and would try new things on him, but by doing so his disease progressed at a faster pace and caused his health due to the faster deterioration of his lungs.

In this case the abuse was not only what he went through with the trials but that he was kept alive till he looked just as one of those people that came out of the concentration camps in 1945. This image will stay in my mind forever and I really cannot accept what was done to him and like him there are many other cases that live through the same trauma and families that have to see what I had to see. In pushing science, society has abused its power in not allowing that man to die when he wanted to die.

Composition 28

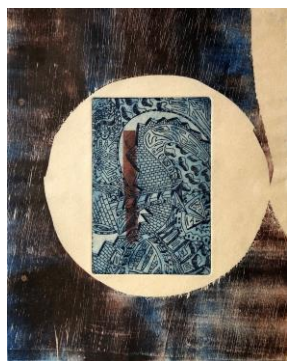
The piece is created using collagraph embossing, acrylic paint and hard ground. This technique would expand my horizon as you can see in my next piece, Composition 6. In fact those two compositions have a lot in common even if they are completely different in the process and in the material used.

Composition 28 was the first piece where I applied the theory opposite to my way of thinking: less is more. After seeing Mel Kendrick prints and Jay Defeo paintings I left untouched spaces in my this piece to let it breathe. This process would have me adding different techniques and plates in order to create the empty spaces. Using just one color and different tones in the first layered collagraph, but the color was hard ground it wasn't ink. By doing so I expanded my research to other materials that were not generally used as paint.



Composition 28
Size: 10 1/2" x 5 1/2"
Media: Etching, embossing, acrylic paint & hard ground used as paint
2019

Composition 6



Composition 6
Size: 9 3/4" x 12 1/8"
Media: woodcut etching aquatint viscosity mono-print
2019

Composition 6 was done again thinking of creating untouched spaces so that the piece would not overwhelm the viewer. Since the etching plate had a lot in it I decided to print the woodcut over without doing any lines to it, using just the natural texture of the wood.

This was the second time that I would use materials that came from nature without modifying them. That made me ask myself how many more materials could I possibly find in nature that I can use in my work? In fact the answer is probably infinite, if you consider only leaves or flower petals there are so many species of plants in nature. Now there is still the need to try to see if the material works.

This work is done with a recycled woodcut, and etching aquatint viscosity. It's a mixed media monotype work. The etching is of one color while the viscosity is of another color and the woodcut print contains both colors of the etching and the viscosity. This study made me realize that the plate combinations were infinite and it marks a turning page for me on how I can represent people.

Composition 7



Composition 7
Size: 7 1/2" x 11 1/2"
Media: woodcut, etching, aquatint & black oil applied using a roller
2019

Composition 7 is based on an etching where I was asking myself why do people suffer abuse. That being the only question that I haven't been able to answer and where there is no real answer. This is why the etching plate has a big question mark. The question mark is done in reverse because when I decided to do the design like I previously pointed out I transform or distort letters and words and in this case the transformation consisted in inverting the letter.

Composition 7, was one of my latest pieces done partially by chance. On a regular basis I check the wood scraps in the theatre department. I found a few pieces of wood with a circle cut off in a suitable size to make a print. I had just printed two equal etching plates in black so after a few calculations I determined I could put the etching plate under the woodcut.

I printed the woodcut using semi-transparent red so that the etching design would still be visible under the woodcut print. Both prints came out identical, So to make them different I added the black oil colour roller. The second print that came out of that process is *Composition 8*.

Composition 8

Composition 8 is almost identical to *Composition 7*. It differs from the previous composition by just a line. This shows how with just one line you can get a completely different effect. The etching was originally conceived for a totally different purpose, since I wanted to expand on the question why people suffer abuse. This idea can always be expanded later. What came out from doing those two pieces is that things can overlap in real life too.



Composition 8
Size: 8" x 11 1/2"
Media: woodcut, etching, aquatint & black oil applied using a roller
2019

The time frame when I did this piece was when I had just come back from Italy this past summer and I saw two of my friends that are identical twins and suffer so much from a genetic disease since so many years that has caused them to have such trauma and this since they were little. Their lives have changed drastically because of that disease, and their bodies have some physical consequences due to this disease.

Both works have been done with a recycled woodcut, etching, aquatint and a roller, that could be the genetic trace, the parents. The works are almost identical but in reality they are quite different just as twins can be, that's why seeing those two works finished made me think of them. This is the reason why it made me decide to dedicate these two particular works, *Composition 7* and *Composition 8* to represent them, because that's exactly the way I see them.

Composition 72 (Pearl)

Composition 72 is a sculpture collage made with paper that has a pencil drawing on the inside. The outside is made with prints that are etching, aquatint, drypoint, to which I added oil paint, pastel, and black ink. This is the first sculpture I completed using this type of material. It is a self-portrait and has a self-portrait drawing inside the piece.

Although originally I did not want to talk about myself in my art I realized that it might be an important step that I would have to take in order for the public to understand that I truly understand the subject of my thesis. It took me almost two years to finally point out to the viewer that this was a self-portrait. A necessary step had to be done in order to explain to the public that my choice of talking about sexual, physical and psychological abuse was also due because I know the subject extremely well having had to deal with it myself.



Composition 72 (Pearl)
Size: 10" W x 10" H x 18" L,
Media: sculpture collage, pencil, etching, aquatint, drypoint, pastel, pencil
2018

I am empathetic when people talk to me about their trauma, how they can feel and what they have gone through. The idea of self-portrait was at first a thought but I realized that some artists like Belkis Ayon, Jay Defeo and others that I was researching did follow that route so I decided to do the same, but it took a long time probably because like many I didn't want people to know that I was part of those who have gone through this trauma. This step can be taken only when you are really over what has happened in your life. In reality you are never really over it, you just learn to deal with it, and the more the years go by the better you are able to do so. This is why it was important to reach that step, so that people can see that it is possible to survive and later to live.

Composition 73



Composition 73
Size: 11" W x 19" H x 11,5" L
Media: wood & print collage,
2019

Composition 73 is a woodcut covered with prints. I paid a lot of attention in the composition of this work since I wanted to play with shadows too. The angle of the light that goes on the sculpture is important in this work. In fact I had to turn the piece different times to find the perfect way to show the work and to show the angle I wanted to show as you can see in the photo.

This composition followed Composition 72. It was originally all white and didn't have much impact when first presented to my committee. I decided to go ahead and glue my prints to cover the wood completely. I discovered that in this case too I had to print way more pieces to be able to finish the work the way I wanted taking care of every single detail with the same tones of colors, but at this point things were taking a turn. I had definitively finally incorporated sculpture in my work, making a logical and physical connection between the two techniques.

Jim Condron was one of the artists I looked at when first starting this project. I had gone to one of his exhibitions and saw that his sculptural wall pieces had a nice shadow that to me were part of the work. After talking with him, I realized that I could push this idea further in my sculptures and decided to try it out. So I researched other sculptors and Mel Kendrick more flat sculptures probably would have a nice shadow too. But in order to do that type of work I would discover that you need to construct the work and use the light as part of your process while building the piece, otherwise it makes things way more difficult. I am in the process of doing this while constructing other sculptures.

Composition 74 (Challenge)

Composition 74 (Challenge) is acrylic on canvas. This piece was done after doing Composition 75. This piece is an homage to Cubism that I love. Originally when I first entered my MFA I was told my work was too close to this artistic period and that made me angry and happy at the same time. Happy because I liked Cubism and angry because it was considered copying a style that was from the past. Picasso work like many other works of that time



Composition 74 (Challenge)
Size: 24" X 58"
Media: acrylic on canvas
2019

frame had accompanied me throughout my life and it seemed to me important to pay an homage to Picasso and his work entitled Guitar. This piece is an open discussion with his work, a response to it. In fact to do this work I decomposed the lines that he used to make his guitar, replacing them in my multi layer piece.

The piece was completed after my committee members agreed to let me do what I wanted when it came to cubism. When my committee finally gave up on that thought realizing that I would not get away from cubism they told me to embrace it but to make it mine in some way.

I had already changed the line of work and that's when I realized I was altering my lines to my own unique design and style. My committee members had reached their goal by pushing my exploration further, I had reached my own expression and could never go back.

Putting this piece in context with the rest of my work was not complicated viewing that people abuse hide behind a nice appearance. Consider the first layer as the real character of the person and the other layers being there to hide the person's true character and beauty. We can consider the same when it comes to interpret the first layer as the abuse perpetrator.

Composition 55 (Memories 3)

Composition 55 (Memories 3)
Part of a Tryptic
Size: 30" X 58" (174")
Media: Acrylic on Canvas
2018

Composition 55 was done prior doing Composition 74. It represents a big step forward in a new direction in my painting. This piece is part of a Tryptic, acrylic on canvas, here I play with the viewer, as you can see it seems that those are photographs glued on the canvas when in reality it is all overlapping acrylic paint layers. Frank Kline was the artist I was looking at when I first started doing the first layer of this Tryptic.

This is to show once again the two points: the one of the abuser that presents himself one way while he is not, and the victim that hides not to show what they went through. How did I get to this piece though is a totally different story. It was really by chance. I had originally tried to do a print that would incorporate many different etching plates. So I had lined up the prints on a paper and then printed them all together on a big press.

The result wasn't great because I had not realized that each plate had a different thickness and even one sixteen of an inch can make a difference when printing. So I took the result and cut off each print since by that time I already knew I could use those prints in a future collage. I threw the leftover white paper on the floor pretty angry that I had lost all this time but then realized that I could do it again better since I had understood my mistake.

The paper fell on top of a painting I was doing. You could see just part of the painting that was under the wide paper. So I decided to move that paper that had become a stencil at that point till I found the perfect match. Then I took the prints that I had just cut out and covered the respective open spaces by Taping those prints temporarily on the canvas. Then I painted the second layer on the canvas with a transparent acrylic light color. I took the taped prints off and used tape to do my edges straight for each square. I wanted to make sure that I could really master this technique so I checked if I had some left-over of that original canvas. I flipped the original stencil on the canvas until I could find the parts of the canvas that I wanted to keep. Obtaining like that a final tryptic or three pieces that are very different but so similar in technique and colour.

Composition 16

Composition 16, originally was supposed to be a glass print overlapped by an etching or a woodcut or a linoleum plate. But life decided otherwise. My dad was back to the hospital once again and this time he was in a coma. So I had to rush back there and didn't have time to take any material except for the glass prints that I had just done and black ink.

This piece is the first of a three part composition. The other two parts are Composition 17 and Composition 18. This first composition, just like the other two I created were, done by creating a design on glass and then printing it on a paper. All three have the same base color. The second part of the print was done in black ink, only material I could use when I was at my father's bedside hoping he would wake up. This print represents one of his attending nurses, since when I was there I talked with the nurses and got to know each one of them better day after day.



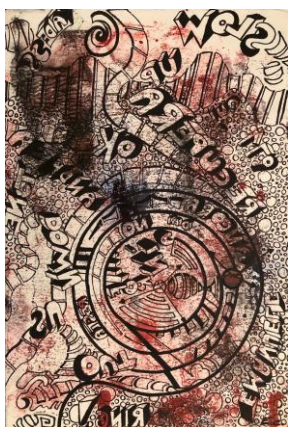
Composition 16
Size: 11 3/4" x 6"
Media: color glass print & black ink
2020

Composition 17

Composition 17
Size: 11 3/4" x 6"
Media: color glass print & black ink
2020

Composition 17 is the second part of the tryptic. This piece refers to another of my dad's nurses who would try to make my dad do some rehabilitation therapy. This nurse came every day at the same time. I could see my dad's face change, and he would get angry when that time would come. I don't know if he did it on purpose to hurt my father that way but the fact is that he left many bruises on him trying to do good, he was to some extent abusing the fact that my dad could not answer and tell him he did not want to do the therapy and to leave him in peace.

Composition 18



Composition 18
 Size: 11 1/4" x 7 1/2"
 Media: print from glass & black ink
 2020

Composition 18 is the third print in the tryptic. My dad had a particular nurse who was very nice. I discovered during this time my father had suffered a lot in his life. My father’s name is on this plate, written in Italian and in reverse as an homage to his beautiful interior.

If you look attentively, Composition 16, 17 and 18 even if they have been framed separately, the works belong together in the sense that the first design follows the second and the second is the continuation of the third.

I originally wanted to frame the pieces together but later on I framed the pieces separately because I realized that they represent three different people that worked at the hospital where my father was hospitalized before passing away. I had talked to each one of the nurses while staying close to my father, and I represented a part of them in each piece. The fact that they work together was a good reason to connect the pieces but being three different people was more important.

Composition 14

Composition 14 is the combination of what I had learned overlapping plates and adding black ink when I was at the hospital caring for my dad. Originally this multilayer print was going to have a final print over it to finish the work, but then I said to myself why not continue with the black in and see what happens? This is the pleasant result. It represents a young person that went through verbal and physical abuse perpetrated by his father and is overcoming it day by day, slowly slowly. He likes to surf and the color orange is his favorite.

This work is a collagraph, and multiple etchings and has black ink on it to unify it all. This is the following technique that I developed because I wanted to be able to use multiple etching plates at the same time and then overlap other printmaking techniques like collagraphs. In other pieces I also added linoleum or woodcuts. The system is simple, you can do multiple prints overlap as long as you use etching as your first print and only later collagraph and as final you can use the black ink.

Collagraphs should be the last technique used when you do printmaking layering, while etching should be the first one. Woodcut and linoleum can be anywhere in the process but cannot be done after collagraphs because when you print a linoleum or a woodcut the paper doesn't



Composition 14
 Size: 11 7/8" x 6 3/4"
 Media: collagraph etching & black ink
 2020

get to have embossing that both the etching and the collagraph do get transferred on the paper. The embossing that we get from the etching is only around the borders of the plate so depending if you want that to be visible or less visible you will print the etching before or after you will have printed the woodcut and the linoleum. If you print the etching first when you do print the woodcut and the linoleum you will see that the ink will not transfer where the embossing of the plate is on the paper. If you print the woodcut and the linoleum before the etching the embossing will show and it will not change anything on the part printed with the woodcut or the linoleum. So it really depends on what you want the viewer to see, when you decide what type of print will go first.

CONCLUSIONS

Looking ahead I will continue to investigate the concepts and processes of this body of work. I will add works focusing on people that have died because of those different types of abuse. I still would like to expand my scope of process and materials to include more digital work which would be combined with my current mixed media work. I have already started exploring digital media in some of my new work. I will certainly keep on working with all the techniques I have learned in printmaking, painting and sculpture.

Sources: Artist Influences

All those artists have influenced me in a subconscious way, there is no specific date where my art has changed due to one artist specifically, after viewing them over and over I can say that they have shaped my art slowly but definitely in a great way.

Albrecht Dürer is one of the greatest printmakers of all centuries. I was given the opportunity to see the collection at the Contemporary Art Museum in Washington DC. My favorite piece is the “Melencolia I”. The details of this print and the symbols used behind each object depicted is astonishing to me. The way he used the diamond to engrave the copper, the thin lines to do the darks. This is when I discovered how far etching and cross etching could lead. I decided to see if I could get anywhere close to his mastery when doing my abstract prints. I also discovered seeing those etchings that already at his time they added colorful pigments on the prints, which gave me ideas of doing the same once my prints were done. Instead of water colors though I decided I would use oil paint. I discovered that normal oil paint would leave an oil mark on the paper when it would dry so I had to use the same paint that I use in printmaking when I want to paint over a print. The other thing I also tried was using watercolor printing paint, so that I could use other materials when painting over my prints. This second method dries too fast so it is somewhat inconvenient when I have huge copper plates I need to print. Any kind of material can be used before oil paint but the other way round doesn’t work because all the other types of colors don’t last when added to oil paint, on top of not being archival. Therefore it is very important that the oil paint is the one on top of any other material when it comes to color.

When seeing Durer’s print so close I also discovered that he used letters and words, this was very interesting, because I distort letters and words in my pieces, I can for example write a full sentence and no one could discover what it is because the letters of the words are modified, or alternate or changed in whatever way I feel like at the time I do the piece.



1. Albrecht Dürer, *Melencolia I* (1514), engraving. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1943 (43.106.1). Image ©The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



2. Albrecht Dürer, *Saint Jerome in His Study* (1514), engraving. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1919 (19.73.68). Image ©The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Louise Nevelson was a sculptor that impressed me because of all the types of materials she used, including transparent materials, and then unified everything with one simple color being black, or white or gold. My favorite pieces are “*Tainted Love*” (painted black), another one is “*Royal tide*” (painted gold), but the one that talks to me the most is “*Bride + Groom*” (painted white). This thought of painting everything with one color to give unity was a very interesting idea that I was definitely going to apply to my sculptures. Therefore when I finally did one of my biggest paper pieces “*Composition 12, The Circle Of Life*” I had to use all types of prints that had the same tone of blue, so when I ended up needing more prints in order to finish that piece I had to recreate that same type of blue. This was a very important decision that would influence not only this sculpture but also all my future sculptures. In some ways it has also influenced my choice of color in my prints. It has influenced my paintings because from that point on I started using way less colors when painting. The third photo of this artist made me realize that I could use other medias to do my art and more specifically transparent materials, in fact I did do that for some of my

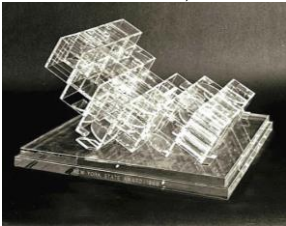
pieces I have used plexiglass and made a 3D sculpture with painting and printmaking that was then cut and glued on different sheets of plexiglass. You could see the full design from far away and when coming closer you would realize that each piece was at a different level. Her bas relief made me realize that I could use different materials and mix them when creating my work.



3. Louise Nevelson, *City on the High Mountain*, 1983, Painted steel, 246 × 276 × 162 in, 624.8 × 701 × 411.5 cm



4. Louise Nevelson, *Dawn's Presence - Two Columns*, 1969-1975, Painted wood, 116 × 67 × 31 in, 294.6 × 170.2 × 78.7 cm



5. Louise Nevelson, *Transparent Sculpture IV*, 1968, Plastic, 8" x 12" x 11"



6. Louise Nevelson "Bas-relief", ca. 1960, Wood, steel

Lee Bontecou, astonishing sculptor and printmaker, when I saw her piece "Sublime/Transparent" I could not believe it. I couldn't take my eyes off that piece, and all I could think was that it was so perfect and that it must have taken her so long to do it. I decided to do a print having that image of her art piece engraved in my memory. When the piece was done I decided to dedicate it to her as a thank you for the change she helped me achieve in my prints. Through that print I discovered how to make negative space become the positive space and vice versa. This is very hard to explain and it would be much easier to explain by showing the piece I am talking about.

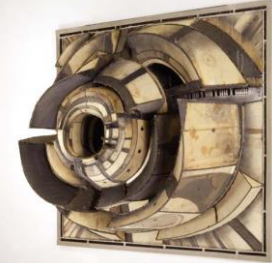
The other thing I understood from seeing her art was that it doesn't matter how long it takes to create something, it takes the time it takes but the ending result is very often worth the work and in the process you discover so many new things.



7. Lee Bontecou: *Drawn Worlds*, "untitled", a sketch made of graphite and soot on paper, " at the Princeton University Art Museum, 1963



8. Lee Bontecou: *Untitled*, 1966, graphite and soot on paper, 19 3/4 x 27 1/8 inches



9. Lee Bontecou, *Untitled*, 1962, welded steel and canvas, 68 x 72 x 30 in



10. Lee Bontecou, *Untitled*, Detail work of 1980-98, from MoMA's permanent collection

Judy Pfaff was one of the first artists that I encountered during my long road in my MFA, at first I thought she was a mixed media artist that did installations. Then I discovered that she covers not only installations but sculptures, paintings and printmaking. Some of her prints have collages, becoming monotypes. That pushed me to explore the road of collages. Her installations are amazing, it would be a dream if I could follow her path, or other artists like her and do massive installations like hers. I guess it is another road to explore later in my life, when I will have the money to buy the materials in order to do so. The photo here under is one of her installations that inspired me as far as material used and how she did her installation. I will in the near future do an installation too possibly with recycled materials. Like me in many of her works she uses circles. One of her traits is that her installations are unique and after they get destroyed. This made me realize that prints might not be the way I wanted to go since I wanted my work to be just one non reproducible. The second work made me think of less is more and that was an eye opener for me, with simple shapes, forms and colors she transforms the space like no others. The third photo inspired me to do some work with natural materials like rose petals, in *Composition 11*.



11. *Gu, Choki, Pa*, 1985. Steel, wood, plastic, organic materials, bamboo, lattice, signs, veneer paneling, Formica, steel grating, and paint, 20 x 40 (diameter) feet. Installation view: Spiral / Wacoal Art Center, Tokyo, Japan.



12. Judy Pfaff, "... all of the above", 2007, two different views, mixed media.



13. Judy Pfaff, "Vegetation of Tangled Shrubs and Thorn Bushes", cut and dyed file folders, artificial flowers, 13.25 x 72.75 in. (33.7 x 184.8 cm.)

Paul Jenkins. He was important towards the end of my research for his use of transparencies. I have learned from him how to create my sense of transparencies. I had to see over and over again his work that at first I loved but could not quite understand his techniques. The more I would work the closer I got to understand his work, till at the end I managed to master how to do the transparencies that I needed in printmaking and in paintings. The second design also gave me the idea of doing triptychs, and to create designs that would be divided in different papers on purpose as in *Composition 23*.



14. Paul Jenkins, Phenomena Mandette Turn, Acrylic on canvas, 1974



15. Paul Jenkins, Anaconda, Oil and enamel on canvas 63.75 x 51 inches, 1956



16. Paul Jenkins, Phenomena Galileo Galilei, 1963, 70 x 55 inches acrylic on canvas

Vassily Kandinsky Russian leader of the avant-garde artists of the 20th century, is so well known for being one of the founders of abstract art and yes he is one of my main long term references. His abstract simplify synthesis in abstraction and the idea that through art you could evoke emotions and sounds as in a symphony stimulating multiple senses was an incredible accomplishment. He worked in a wide range of materials (wood, plywood, glass, canvas, board, just to name a few) using vivid pigments and colors such as oil, watercolor gouache, tempera mixing these media together.

His innovative theories in abstract art are still valid today. As part of his theories abstract colors and forms can express "inner life", the feelings of the soul. This brings me directly to my thesis, if abstract colors and forms can express "inner life" then abstract colors and forms can also express "inner feelings" and the true person hidden in people that abuse others, in those that have been abused and all the steps of reconstruction done by those abuse to live a symbiance of normal life, therefore it can express the true feelings of the soul that has been hurt or the one that can hurt. He chose music and emotions through colors. While my thesis by choosing destruction and reconstruction, overlap, and a specific subject of abuse that is still considered tabu in today's society, it nonetheless touches and confirms his original thesis.

What I also admired was that you could see his 2D pieces in whatever sense you wanted and they looked good. How could I achieve that same balance in my own pieces? Well the way I solved that problem was to turn my art every single way until adding and subtracting materials from it would make the piece talk in whatever way I would look at it from. Looking at his art helped in the construction of the balance of my art, but looking at the techniques he used, layering one technique over the other like in the last piece made me think of doing the same as you can see in many of my works as for example in the compositions 72, 14, 18 and many other ones.



17. Wassily Kandinsky, *Transverse line*, oil on canvas, 109.8 × 75.7 cm



18. Wassily Kandinsky, *Yellow, Red, Blue* 102.4 x 64.3 cm, 1925, Oil on canvas



19. *Composition VIII*, 1923 by Wassily Kandinsky, 55.1 × 78.7" (140.0 × 200.0 cm), Oil on canvas



20. Wassily Kandinsky, *The Bir*, Watercolor and ink on paper

Elizabeth Murray was an artist that I had to revisit quite a few times before grasping my interest. I was told to look at her huge 3D pieces but when I first saw them they didn't make such a huge impression on me. One day though I went and did a deeper research and found out about her life and reading about her life made me appreciate her art more because she had suffered just like I did through her life and I could see a connection with what she had gone through and my personal life. This made me start analyzing her work and looking at it I was more and more intrigued by it until I found some works that I could stare at for hours and not be tired of it. This pushed me further to try to figure out how she made that work, what was the process and this actually helped me in my own research by giving me hope that I could maybe manage to make it till the end of my Masters. Yes that was the time when I was losing hope that I would see the end of it. I was a little over half of my classes and the road was still so far away. I was tired and couldn't see clearly yet regarding how to present my thesis. How to talk about it. I was totally insecure and was losing hope of finding the answers to the questions that I was looking for. She gave me the hope that I could make it, just like she did. She mixes materials too like wood and painting and collage, liking this idea I applied it to my sculptural *Composition 72* (wood and prints) and *composition 73* (prints, painting, and drawing). The first two photos go along with the tryptic and diptic done as for example *Composition 7* and *Composition 8* and *Composition 55* that is part of a triptych.



21. Elizabeth Murray, *Art Part*, 500 × 375, 1981



22. Elizabeth Murray, *Breaking*, 300 × 225, 1980



23. Elizabeth Murray, *Dust Tracks*, 1993, Painting, Painted wood collage 172.7 x 119.4 x 25.4 cm



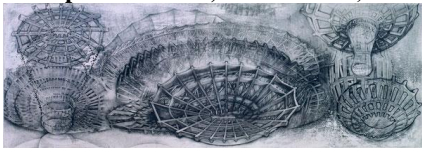
24. Elizabeth Murray, *Untitled*, Paintings, Painted wood collage

Stephen Talasnik's impressive drawings talked to me about infinity. Beauty versus utility, what was more important? Almost like an obsession. In some sense his art reminded me of my own prints, where I did lines until there would be no space left possible to create more lines. When I see my pieces and compare them to his I feel the same kind of obsession, obsession for infinity, small or big.

An example of his drawings is the “City is Framed with Art”, where he constructs and deconstructs imaginary globes. Interestingly he did expand his drawings to massive sculptures. This made me ask myself how to do the same but at that time I wasn’t really sure about the road to take in order to do that. I would discover later on that I would do right the opposite, I would first do sculptures and from there create drawings, paintings and prints. Another interesting thing to me was that the material he used for his constructions was plain wood. The sculptures were massive but only one type of material. Sometimes a semi transparent paper was used to cover part of a sculpture but that was it. This made me think that I could maybe use some simple materials too instead of metal or bronze or all those traditional materials. I had to find the type of material that would fit my projects and those could also be simple materials. His work deals with infinity, that to some extent to me relates to PTSD because of the repetition of shapes, looking at him I worked on different pieces, Composition 10, 15 and 25.



25. Stephen Talasnik, *Rococo-Loce*, Pencil 14 x 5”, 1996.



26. Stephen Talasnik’s work “Ancient Human Knowledge” graphite on paper, reflects the influence of structures from the 1964 World’s Fair in Queens.



27. Stephen Talasnik, *Pioneer*, 2016, Installation, yellow cedar with corten steel casing, 35 x 45 x 35 in. (88.9 x 114.3 x 88.9 cm.)



28. Stephen Talasnik, "Ribbon Candy," basswood and bamboo, 2005.

Robert Rauschenberg was also an artist I discovered during my second year at Towson University. I went simply crazy analyzing how he did those mixed media prints and paintings. Overlapping layers and textures really caught my attention and stayed engraved in my brain all along my MFA, but I was able to start developing this type of processes, only later toward the end of my third year in my Masters. Why ? Because I had to create prints that could be combined and overlapped and that was quite an adventure, not all etchings can overlap, then you have to figure out the colors, which ones will be having transparent colors, which ones will be the first one to be printed and with what color, which one comes next and so on. The more layers the more complex it gets, but this is a wonderful adventure that had for consequence made sure that each print would become a monotype. At this point I was researching to produce unique pieces I was not into doing editions of prints any longer. So thanks to this artist work analysis I was able to figure out all that. This took over a year to master this part. His pieces inspired me to do mixed media compositions prints with paintings like composition 6 and composition 26.



29. Rauschenberg, Strawboss (*Stoned Moon Series*), 1970 Lithograph on paper 30 x 22 inches



30. Rauschenberg, Waves, 1969, *Prints and multiples*, Lithograph, Edition: 22/27, Framed: 89" x 42"



31. Rauschenberg, *Guardian* (Foster Cat. #58), 1968, *Prints and multiples*, 106.7 x 76.2 cm.



32. Robert Rauschenberg, *Yellow Body*, 1968, Solvent transfer on paper with graphite, watercolor, gouache, and wash, 22 1/2 x 30 inches (57.2 x 76.2 cm), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York Gift, the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, 1998, 98.5219, Art © Robert Rauschenberg Foundation/Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, Work on paper.

Frank Stella Italo-American contemporary multimedia artist was one of the first artists my committee members told me to look at. He started off with 2D pieces and then his pieces slowly became mixed media and 3D to finally become great sculptures. I didn't realize at first how important this artist would be for my thesis but it is nonetheless thanks to him that I discovered what I would talk about.

He started off as a minimalist too. This was a problem because I was not a minimalist at all, if I ever was something in art it would have been considered the opposite of minimalism. So why did my committee keep on showing my work and telling me to look him up? Yes, he used all kinds of mediums and had fantastic techniques that all together would take a lifetime to learn. Those two things could have been enough for me but on top of that I discovered that he did a series of sculptural pieces called the "Polish Village" that referenced towns and villages synagogues in Poland destroyed by the Nazi. So many questions came to mind. Since I was a kid having studied many wars and in particular WW1 and WW2 I wished I could have talked about a subject of such importance to leave a trace in our society and change people's mind through my art. That is what Frank Stella did.

I finally understood what I had to do, and discovered my subject for my thesis. I had so many ideas, so many things I could choose and yet none of them seemed to have such an importance that they could change the world. Things would get together slowly like a puzzle. So I decided to work on two themes. The two themes that were so important to me to follow me through my intricate masters program were illusion and abuse. At first they seemed to be completely different themes. I would fight with my committee that would tell me you have to choose one subject not both for your thesis. To which I would answer well we need to change the rules then cause I have no intention of dropping one subject for the other. Only later I would discover how they would relate to each other. Of course looking at Frank Stella's infinit types of work and studying his technique was a great help to find this connection. How? By analyzing his processes I would search on how to create my own processes starting with printmaking and then expanding it to painting and sculpture. The last photo gave me the idea of making huge paintings that unfortunately I could not put in my thesis show. Also he was originally a printmaker that became little by little a sculpture, and I do believe I am following the same route.



33. Frank Stella, POLIN Museum in Warsaw, View of "Frank Stella and Synagogues of Historic Poland," 2016.



34. "Kandampat" (2002).Credit2015 Frank Stella/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York; Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times



35. Frank Stella, "k.359" (2012), mixed media, 124 x 111 x 77 inches (installation photos by the author for Hyperallergic)



36. Frank Stella, "k.305 (ABS Red)" (2012), mixed media, 94 x 75 x 33 inches



37. Frank Stella, *Die Marquise von O...*, 1998, mixed media on canvas, 10 feet × 43 feet 4 inches (7 panels, various sizes). Photo by Steven Slomon.

Mel Kendrick is an American contemporary artist known for his prints and sculptures. His sculptures are in different materials (wood, bronze, rubber, paper and cast concrete. What was most fascinating to me was the processes he used and how with simple shapes managed to make great pieces. An example would be his concrete cast such as "Markers" and "Jacks". The Jacks are done from massive cubes from which he extrapolates shapes and reassembles them on top of the same cube. His ideas seem very simple but in reality they are not, they not only show how to use negative and positive space in an innovative way but also how to recycle materials within the same piece. With very simple forms adding black and white he manages to create stratification that could remind us of the soil stratification.

After seeing his work I realized what my committee had asked me for a few months was actually right, I had to make a connection between my prints, my paintings and my sculptures, just like Mel Kendrick did, and like him so many other artists. For some reason with this artist I could feel the connections between his prints and sculptures much more than with other artists that I had seen in previous occasions. I decided to enlarge the distorted shapes I use in my art and incorporate smaller shapes within the bigger shapes and make them look as if they were 3D. I did this both in my prints and my paintings. How to connect my sculptures was a longer process to reach. The first two photos show how he presents the same pieces in two different locations and how this influences how the viewer sees the work. This helped me in my choice of which pieces to pick for the thesis. Each piece needed to have a special impact with the viewer and they needed to connect to one another. Also his prints connect to his sculptures and through his prints I realized for the first time that I do like the idea of less is more in some cases. I would try this road with a few of my compositions like Composition 8, 7, 6 and 28.



38. Mel Kendrick, from the series of 4 pieces called jacks, concrete



39. Mel Kendrick, 4 pieces jacks, concrete, 2011, Mary Boone Gallery New York, NY



40. Mel Kendrick, untitled, 2015, Bronze 48 x 39 x 12 inches



41. Mel Kendrick, untitled, cast paper, 59.25 x 49.75 inches, 2013



42. Mel Kendrick, Untitled, 2008 Cast Paper, 31 x 21 inches, 2008

Belkis Ayon was a Cuban printmaker specialized in collographs that were allegorical and very detailed. This printmaker had a huge effect on me. Originally being taught that art should have a positive image and should be something that transmit a nice feeling she did everything except that. My favorite piece is circular; “Dejame salir (Let me Out!)”, this print along with “Temores infundados (Groundless Fears)” and “Acoso (Harassment)” transmit a sense of fear, paranoia and terror. She worked with symbols, and the viewer learned to understand the meaning of those symbols. This made me really think that an image didn’t have to be nice after all, the most important thing was the idea behind it.

How to express something as negative as abuse with a nice image? That was impossible so I decided that like her I would express the true feelings that the word abuse makes me think of, and the consequence was that my abstract imagery changed drastically, I wasn’t looking for something balanced any more. I was looking for symbols to express all types of feelings that relate to that word abuse. After seeing that artist I knew that I could talk about a subject that had haunted me for life time, a subject that had changed my life for the longest time, that subject that I had learned to live with, from which I had to learn to adapt from. A subject that had changed my character. But a subject that I had managed to overcome. Now it was time to use that same subject to help others in that same situation. This artist gave me the strength to open myself to this idea. I was going to use that subject in a positive way. If she was able to give her life for hers why couldn’t I give mine for my idea? After all, my idea wasn’t political even if it touched all levels of society, therefore my life wasn’t really at risk compared with the one of Belkis Ayon. With only black and white she manages to express all what is needed in her work, that made me understand that not many colors are needed, sometimes even just one color is enough to pass a message, this helped develop the design and give a better sense of what to express and how. She wasn’t rich so she used many recycled materials, for the same reason I find myself using that type of material. After seeing the courage of this artist I had the courage to do Composition 72, which is a self-portrait. The last photo shown about this artist is also a self-portrait. She uses many symbols and that pushed me further to find my symbols. She talked about a subject that was dear to her that attacked the society where she was living. That gave me the courage to talk about the subject I choose, I am not attacking society though but the whole world, because my subject is a problem in every society.



43. “La Sentencia” (1993)© Estate of Belkis Ayon, Courtesy Landau Travelling Exhibitions



44. Belkis Ayón, “La cena (The Supper)” (1991), collagraph, collection of the Belkis Ayón Estate



45. Belkis Ayón, “Dejame salir (Let me Out!)” (1998), collagraph, collection of the Belkis Ayón Estate

Joan Mitchell was an abstract printmaker and painter. She did huge impressive paintings. Her work impressed me for the same reasons as Frank Kline, she was able to use the negative space in her colorful 2D works so that my eye would float through the canvas and get lost in it. Her prints are also quite impressive, some of them have just one or two colors and with only that and a few abstract lines she manages to express a variety of emotions. This abstract artist is very important because of her unique use lines in space especially when I was creating a certain type of etching by using stones that would fall on the copper plate and mark it. Then I would rework the plate etching it to get the final result. This pushed my research towards finding more and more tools that I could use in the construction of all my futur works. For example I ended up at some point deciding to use the diamond (which is the tool that you use for etching) in my paintings creating some very thin lines on the last layer of my paintings that would permit you to see the previous layer of paint, unfortunately this piece is not in the thesis show though.



46. Joan Mitchell, Hudson River Day Line, 1955, Oil paint on canvas, 79 × 83 inches.



47. Joan Mitchell, Untitled, 1953. Oil on canvas, 52.5 x 55 x inches (133.35 x 139.7 cm). Walker Art Center, Gift of the T.B. Walker Foundation, 1956. © Estate of Joan Mitchell.



48. Joan Mitchell, Untitled, 1954. Oil on canvas, 72 x 68 inches (182.9 x 172.7 cm). Collection of the Joan Mitchell Foundation, New York. © Estate of Joan Mitchell.



49. Joan Mitchell, *Untitled*, 1954. Oil on canvas, 36 x 28 1/2 inches (91.4 x 72.4 cm). Private collection. © Estate of Joan Mitchell.

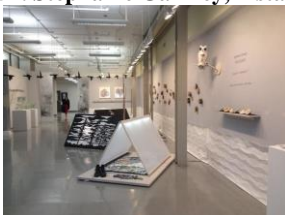
Stephanie Garmey is an astonishing artist too. With barely any color she can fill a room with sculptures, drawings and mixed media pieces. She was very important in my research because if artists like her could use any type of tool and object to create their art so could I. I realized at that point that even if I was pushed to concentrate on printmaking my interest was way broader than just printmaking, the reason was that painting, printmaking and sculpture feed one another in my mind. If I had to do only printmaking without collages, without overlapping of paint, without playing with space doing sculptures my prints would stop existing. They feed one another simply because I have always done all of that since I was little. I found out that my brain needs to have some days dedicated to 3D creations and some other days dedicated to a variety of 2D creations, and my research to find different approaches to express what I truly wanted to express needed that type of mixed media approach. Seeing her work relate so much to nature pushed me to explore nature, and without realizing nature became part of my work, as for example rose petals, leaves, pieces of wood, and I am sure that there is much more to come. Most of the material that I use though is material that is found or recycled and that includes part of my paper. What seems to be simplicity with this artist gets to be very complicated. Just one color and most natural materials to create fantastic installations is what strikes me from her work. Following her steps I did collagraphs, for example *Composition 11* (using rose petals), *Composition 70* (using one color) and *Composition 43* (using textile materials).



50. Stephanie Garmey, *Graphite on Cut Paper* 27 x 27 inches



51. Stephanie Garmey, installation from the exhibition *Wetlands*



52. Stephanie Garmey, installation from the exhibition *Wetlands*



53. Stephanie Garmey, installation from the exhibition *Wetlands*

Jean Du Buffet exploration of material was simply incredible, not to say insane. He went to the extreme. I realized watching his art and reading about it, and not only thanks to him, that I was not the only one that was using all kinds of materials to create my works, that strengthen my wish to continue in that direction, thinking more is more while less is more was at a certain point disappearing from my thoughts temporarily to reappear later again tormenting me over and over. This is why at the end I applied both theories : more is more for some part of the process and less is more for some other parts of the process of my work. I manage to unify both things by the choice of colors or by the choice of materials or by the choice of lines. His work and the one of Larry Poons helped me because I was often thinking that I would overwork my pieces and then I realized that overwork equal: to more is more, which is not necessarily a bad thing. Most of my works follow that idea. It is a very slow process for me to go in the opposite direction.



54. Jean Dubuffet, "Site habite d'objects (Site inhabited by Objects)" (1965)



55. Jean Dubuffet, *Rocks and Brushes*, 1952, oil on isorel, 114 x 152 cm



56. Jean Dubuffet, *Soleil san Vertu* 1952, oil on masonite, 36 x 32 x 2 1/2 in



57. Jean Dubuffet, *La galante poursuite (The Gallant Pursuit)*, 1953, oil on masonite 8 3/8" x 51"

Larry Poons was an abstract landscapist but used, just like Jean Du Buffet, many types of materials in his line of works. This was an eye opening too. If you really want to you can express anything in all kinds of ways. This made me realize that I could really choose the direction I wanted to go. The subject I was to pick for my thesis and how to represent that subject, it all depended on me at the end. Whatever my committee would suggest was one thing, what I would choose was another. At first, when I started my MFA I thought that I had to follow my committee

when they would advise me, but slowly I learned that not all was to be followed. I could pick what I really preferred and what would be more likely to help develop my ideas. My committee did a great job and it is all thanks to them if I am writing my thesis today. But I can say I was torn apart quite a few times from what I would hear, realizing that it would hurt deep inside. But without suffering you don't get your best art out. Your feelings need to pass through that chosen tool to get on the work of art. Basically I felt like they were destroying me and at the same time reconstructing me a better way through their continuous support and help. It sounds like a contradiction but it really isn't. Those two parts work hand in hand, suffering is part of the development and part of the creation. Just like I would suffer each time I would tear apart one of my prints. I would still do it hoping that I could construct a bigger stronger work. The result was great but can you imagine tearing apart a nice print and doing it so many times that you have no prints left to tear apart and then you need to print more of those prints and this knowing that you have to tear them apart right away? That is a mental disaster !!! But it was all worth it, seeing the slow progress and then the final result was astonishing to my own eyes. It is a completely different sensation when you compare it with just putting together found objects, it takes way more out of you.



58. Larry Poons, *To Speak*, 1987, acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 49 3/4 x 72 1/4 in (all images courtesy of Loretta Howard Gallery)



59. Larry Poons, *Cry Le June*, 1990, acrylic and mixed media on canvas, 72 3/4 x 78 1/4 in



60. Larry Poons, *Giordano Bruno*, 2011 and "Untitled", 2012, Both Oil on canvas, (Image courtesy Jason Andrew)

June Leaf was probably the artist that made me discover how to use photography and digital art to create my works. Which is probably incredible to say. I fell in love with her huge paintings and mixed media drawings, later on discovering that her subjects were everyday objects I was quite confused. Did she do enlargements of objects? So I kept researching to find out, and realized that yes that was exactly right. So if she did it I could try it too. So I started taking photos of my own sculptures and then enlarged the ones that had part of my sculpture that I really loved and transferred the design on paper or on canvas and finished the works with charcoals or mixed media. This was a very important step that opened the horizon of how far I could go with my art. It has become part of the process I use when creating some new pieces that could be 2D or even 3D. This process took me a step further to explore even shadows made by my own sculptures, which is something I will further explore after my thesis is done. I had to concentrate at this point on my thesis and my thesis show so I could only show works that were finished and not in progress, but this is one of the directions I will explore for sure in due time. She also has done many sketches, after discovering them I realized that some of sketches (photo 65) were actually to be considered finished pieces in my mind and that is why *Composition 29* is part of my thesis show, originally it was a sketch for an etching plate but later on I decided to keep it as a drawing.



61. June Leaf, "Untitled (Theater)" (2010–2011), mixed media, 53h x 23.25w x 36d (image courtesy the gallery)



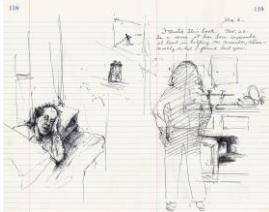
62. Detail of “Untitled (Figure Cranking)”



63. June Leaf, “Second Skeleton” (2009-10), mixed media and paper on canvas on tin, 36 x 47 1/2 inches (all images courtesy Edward Thorp Gallery, New York, unless noted otherwise) (click to enlarge)



64. June Leaf, “White Scroll with Dancing Figures” (2008), mixed media, 17 x 17 x 11.25 inches (click to enlarge)



65. Record 1974/75. Mabou Coal Mines by June Leaf published by Steidl /

Willem De Kooning was a very important artist to me. He was an abstract expressionist. I remember seeing a museum dedicated to him in The Netherlands, when I used to live in Europe and not understanding why he painted like that, I remember though that he had such an impact on me and I loved his art. I rediscovered some of his pieces like the “Acrobat with a Paint Brush” where I could see all the fantastic gestures he used while painting. Viewing his art again helped me liberate that anger on the canvas, not being afraid of doing big gestures with any type of new tool I would think of using.

Painting helps my anger get out and it has to be free from rules, therefore gesture is extremely important. This sets the first layer in my paintings, therefore if the gesture isn’t what I expect it to be I have to keep on going till I find the gesture that talks and only after that comes the second layer. Originally my prints didn’t incorporate gestures, but this changed too. Printing involves a different process where that same gesture is added on top of the print with oil paint. I also have discovered how to use different techniques where I am incorporating the gesture while doing the print.



66. *Woman I*, 1950-52, oil on canvas, 75 7/8” x 58”, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Purchase (478.1953), Digital Image © MoMA, N.Y.



67. **Figures with Bicycle, c. 1969, graphite pencil on paper, sheet: 11 1/2 x 13 1/4 inches**



68. **Willem de Kooning, Composition, 1955, Oil, enamel, and charcoal on canvas, 79 1/8 x 69 1/8 inches (201 x 175.6 cm), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 55.1419, © 2018 The Willem de Kooning Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, Painting**

Rachel Whiteread has been another great influence. I discovered her art through a committee member that saw one of my sculptures and it reminded her of this fabulous artist. Why ? Because of the stairs. For some reasons stairs had become an important symbol that I often use in my art. Rachel Whiteread did a piece untitled that we could call “*Stairs*” that represents a staircase going up and another one that is upside down. Well in my sculptures I often do stairs that can be seen both ways. So of course as soon as I saw her pieces I was so impressed. The second piece that was impressive and stayed in my mind was the “*Holocaust Memorial*”. Once again I would find myself thinking of which subject I would put in doubt my thesis subject and then make a piece with it.

Her unconventional sculptures, that represent everyday life size objects and the techniques she used are quite innovating. This once again pushed me to try new techniques to express myself. This is when I asked myself what would happen if I would cover my foam staircase sculpture with Chinese paper. It has been a process that has taken me over a year and is not yet finished, hopefully by the end of my thesis it will be finally done. But this was the time when paper started taking a new space in my sculptures. I went to see her exhibition at the contemporary art museum in Washington DC in 2018 and it was one of the best times I had. I remember I didn’t have enough, I would look at a piece, then another, then go back. I looked at the exhibition for hours and when the museum was ready to close I remember telling myself that if I had a chance I would go see the exhibition again. Her pieces were so massive and impressive. She also had some small pieces that I thought were 2D but that in fact were 3D. I didn’t give it the right importance then since they didn’t have the same impact on me compared with the big monumental pieces that were exhibited but I think that in my memory those small pieces were very important because of the technique she used. Basically there was a piece of paper with holes and you could see something else drawn behind it. It was the first part of the future process I would use to create my own double sided 3D sculptures. Thinking of her work and specifically the ideas covered in her work I did *Composition 12* and *Composition 43* both compositions refer to injustice in our society.



69. **‘Untitled (Stairs)’ (2001) © Dinendra Haria/i-Images**



70. 'House' (1993) © Dinendra Haria/i-Images



71. Rachel Whiteread, Cabin, 2016, with Lower Manhattan in the distance. Photo by Philip Greenberg



72. Rachel Whiteread, An overview of the Judenplatz in Vienna and the Holocaust Memorial monument created by Whiteread in commemoration of the 65,000 Austrian Jews who died during the Nazi regime. 2000. Photograph: Martin Gnedt/AP

Jay DeFeo, had a very difficult childhood. After embracing abstract expressionism, she won a fellowship and could travel to Europe where she would find a new kind of imagery for her art. Her exploration of imagery and material was very interesting. She used plaster and also mixed her media to experiment the effect that those would have on her art. She made drawings, paintings on paper, photographs, collages of all kinds of sizes.

What excited me was that she took photos of her own dental bridge. Everyday objects became shapes that would enrich her art. She would do collages of recognizable objects that she photographed or drew to create new pieces. After analyzing what she did, I decided to use photography to my advantage. I was in the process of doing a sculpture and decided to take photos of it, then I enlarged the photos and did a painting of a photo that I really liked. From there came a charcoal drawing and later on I also did a print. I even considered some of my own photos as art that was new and interesting. The intent of unifying all my different types of processes had finally reached a new level and it had also expanded to photography and digital art, processes that I had never really looked into before, my journey took a turn for the better. This artist had a huge impact on me, after seeing all the types of techniques she used I decided that this was the way I was going to do things too. Also learning about her techniques helped me develop mine, and from there I started using photography as part of the process in my work and soon after I did enlargements of my photos and from there I moved towards digital design. None of that type of work is in this thesis show but for sure in my next show there will be.



73. Jay DeFeo, Untitled, from the "Water Goggles" series (1977). Synthetic polymer, charcoal, ink, grease pencil and graphite on paper, 15 x 20 in. (38.1 x 50.8 cm). Private collection. (© 2012 The Jay DeFeo Trust / Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York; photo by Ben Blackwell)



74. Jay DeFeo, "The Eyes" (1958). Graphite on paper, 42 x 84 3/4 in. (106.7 x 215.3 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of the Lannan Foundation 96.242.3. (© 2012 The Jay DeFeo Trust / Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York; photo by Bill Orcutt)



75. Jay DeFeo, "Crescent Bridge II" (1970–72). Synthetic polymer and mixed media on plywood, 48 x 96 in. (121.9 x 243.8 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase 2002.329. (© 2012 The Jay DeFeo Trust / Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York; photo by Sheldon C. Collins)



76. Jay DeFeo (1929–1989), Hawk Moon No. 2, 1983–85. Oil on canvas, 96 × 60 in. (243.8 × 152.4 cm). The Jay DeFeo Trust, Berkeley. © 2012 The Jay DeFeo Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photograph by Ben Blackwell



77. Jay DeFeo (1929–1989), Summit Ridge Drive No. 2, 1980–81. Synthetic polymer with collage and tape on canvas, 75 × 83 3/4 in. (190.5 × 212.7 cm). The Jay DeFeo Trust, Berkeley. © 2012 The Jay DeFeo Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photograph by Ben Blackwell



78. Jay DeFeo, Crescent Bridge I, 1972. Synthetic polymer and mixed media on plywood, 48 × 66 1/2 in. (121.9 × 168.9 cm). Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase with funds from Daniel C. Benton 2002.279. © 2012 The Jay DeFeo Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photograph by Jerry L. Thompson



79. Jay DeFeo, Masquerade in Black (Loop System No. 4), 1975. Synthetic polymer and mixed media on Masonite, 96 × 96 in. (243.8 × 243.8 cm). San Francisco Arts Commission. © 2012 The Jay DeFeo Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photograph by Ben Blackwell

Naum Gabo was a Russian abstract sculpture of the 20th century that moved to different countries escaping the Russian war first and then WW2, and found new contexts for his creations. He was one of the pioneers of Kinetic art and Constructivism, criticizing Cubism and Futurism for not being fully abstract. He thought that the viewer experience was fundamental when creating art. He used materials of all types (nylon, wire, metal) including transparent materials (glass, plastic). His creations give a sense of spatial movement. He also did prints. He combines geometric abstraction that is very organized. His exploration of space and time were particular, he

expressed the thought that art needed to be seen in 4 dimensions, the fourth one being time (expressed in space with kinetic sculptures that would move in time). He was very interested in how to represent negative space. He gives up the use of color in favor of a new element which is the viewer perception and experience through time.

He made art to express his feelings to his audience. In some sense we all do, but what I express is the feeling I receive from people that tell me their stories on top of my own feelings to the audience. This artist made me ask myself why I didn't use transparent materials yet when creating my art. I had already seen other artists use transparent materials but this artist had a different way of using space and transparent materials that made me think that it could possibly help me. This is the time when I first thought of overlapping plexiglass with my art on it but I didn't know how to incorporate my art or how to transfer my art on the plexiglass yet at that time. This artist also gives me the idea of how to treat the idea of tangible and intangible, of the impossible to be represented, of infinity. His first wood print was done on toilet paper, later he preferred doing more elaborate compositions that would be all identical, doing editions.

As many other artists he also uses patterns but his are very simple and easy to find, this also helped me simplify my own patterns since they didn't have to be complicated to be nice. They just needed to be unique to me in order to be recognizable. His solid constructions being so simple though give a sense of fragility, fragility of feelings that reminds the viewer of the fragility of the time in which he lived. This takes me to my next point, materials also play a big part in what you want to express. To express the fragility of a person that is abused I would end up using paper, because compared to all the natural materials this is one of the most fragile and at the same time less fragile materials we can find. It can be light and heavy at the same time.

When it comes to prints, his first attempts using toilet paper reminded me of Chinese paper. I knew that some papers were more solid than others and some of them were even semi transparent so I decided to use the semi transparent paper and see if I could print on it.

The result was that I could see my print straight and when I would turn the semi transparent paper I could see it in reverse, therefore the same way it was originally drawn on the copper plate. After doing an edition of ten prints, I decided that it would be more interesting if my next editions were smaller editions. At the end of this process I would find that I would prefer to do editions of maximum three, or just monotypes. My next problem was how to frame those new prints so that the audience could view both sides, I decided to create double glass frames. This artist was particularly interesting to me due to the material he used and how he interacted with the space, after seeing his work I started doing the sculptures that I previously talked about that had plexiglass involved.



80. Naum Gabo, Column, ca. 1923 (reconstructed 1937), Perspex, wood, metal, and glass, 41 1/4 x 29 1/2 inches (104.5 x 75 cm), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 55.1429, Naum Gabo © Nina & Graham Williams, Sculpture



81. Naum Gabo: Construction in Space: Arch, 1937, Plexiglas, 18 3/4 x 31 7/8 x 9 1/2 inches (47.6 x 81 x 24.1 cm), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection, 47.1103, Naum Gabo © Nina & Graham Williams, Sculpture



82. Naum Gabo, 1890, Bryansk, Russia; d. 1977, Waterbury, Connecticut, Construction in Depths, 1944, Oil on board, 15 x 18 inches (38.1 x 45.7 cm), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection. 47.1100, Naum Gabo © Nina & Graham Williams, Painting



83. Naum Gabo, *Linear Construction in Space No. 1*, ca. 1945–46, Perspex with nylon monofilament, 17 5/8 x 18 x 3 7/8 inches (44.8 x 45.7 x 9.8 cm), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection, 47.1101, Naum Gabo © Nina & Graham Williams, Sculpture

Arnaldo Pomodoro was one of the latest artists I discovered. Specialized in sculpture he pays a lot of attention to the light, may that be natural or artificial light. Arnaldo Pomodoro in conversation with Tim Marlow in London was extremely important to me. When he was asked if he had always wanted to be an artist. He is particularly known for his bronzes but I discovered that he also did a few prints that recall his sculptures. Very simple shapes (arrows, lines and circles). With very few details he is able to create some elegant sculptures, what I loved in his case was the simplicity and elegance of his abstract pieces. He reminded me of Wassily Kandinsky for his abstract simplify synthesis. It made me think less is more, so I went ahead trying to simplify some of my pieces and that was really a hard task because my process is at the opposite end. So I started doing smaller pieces so that I wouldn't have so much space for overworking the piece and the results were very interesting and took me to a completely new direction with *Composition 6*, but before getting to do that piece I had to go through the stage of *Composition 25* (where obviously more is more). This took me in paintings to do *Composition 74*.



84. Arnaldo Pomodoro, sculpture, Courtyard of the Pinecone at the Vatican Museum, *Sfera con Sfera* (Sphere within a Sphere), bronze, 4 meters (a little over 13 feet) in diameter.



85. Arnaldo Pomodoro, sculpture, Courtyard of the Pinecone at the Vatican Museum, *Sfera con Sfera*, bronze, 4 meters (a little over 13 feet) in diameter.

Franz Kline was an expressionist artist, his lines on the canvas were so inspiring because with just the use of black he could express so much power and strength, that was the feeling I would get when I saw his black and white abstract pieces. Simple and powerful. Taking me back to questioning if less was more or if all this was just a fairytale (because my brain had not digested this part yet). His colorful pieces also were simple overlapping shapes. This forced me to think further more about simplifying colors, shapes and leaving some space to make my pieces breathe, but none of those theories were put in place till later. I could not figure out how to do that yet. One day though I finally did by creating pieces with multi layers where one layer would have a heavy amount of lines and the next would have lines done by Mother nature (wood) and in between those spaces there would be the white color of the paper. I had found my less is more balance for some of my pieces. Other pieces found that balance through the way I would frame them by leaving a lot of white space around the piece itself so that the white empty space would balance out the heavy intrigued piece. Some other pieces found that balance by the use of colors intense and violent over calm, by that I mean for example red over black (I admit not very calm, but calm to my eyes), or blue over brown, or light over dark or the reverse. Other pieces found this balance by the intense lines of prints partially covered by pieces that had no lines but just colors or colors and collage. *Composition 55* and *Composition 74* have the first layer that has been done after seeing this artist, after that layer I added another layer on *Composition 55* and two other layers on *Composition 74*.



86. Franz Kline “Untitled 1957” (1957). Oil on canvas. (© 2013 The Franz Kline Estate / Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York)



87. Franz Kline, “Painting Number 2” (1954). Oil on canvas, 6 feet 8 1/2 inches x 8 feet 9 inches. Museum of Modern Art (© 2013 The Franz Kline Estate / Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York)



88. Franz Kline, “Untitled-Locomotive” (ca. 1945–47). Ink, double sided, on 2-ply illustration board, 3 1/4 x 4 15/16 inches. (© 2013 The Franz Kline Estate / Artists Rights Society [ARS], New York)



89. Franz Kline, “Composition” (1957-60) oil on paper, 11 3/8 x 8 5/8 inches (image courtesy Jill Newhouse gallery)

Al Loving was another artist that had mixed media art created in a way that made my mind float and dream. I finally understood why. His works were colorful wall sculptures that had empty spaces within the piece itself. Those were sculptures to me not wall paintings, just like Frank Stella and Elizabeth Murray. Those three artists attracted my attention for that particular reason at first. There was a retrospective of his art in one of the Baltimore Museums, and I was able to see the back side of his works that seemed so complicated when you would first see it from the front. So I decided to sneak on the side of each of his pieces and take a look. There were wires, pieces of wood, metal supports. None of those materials could be seen from the front and that was to me incredible. That’s when I realized that if I wanted to hang some of my 3D pieces on walls I had to find my own way to do so without disrupting the view of the work itself, this was not an easy task to achieve at all. I tried over and over, my committee members would suggest other artists or techniques like building wood parts that would support the pieces from the back but I had a problem with that type of support, it was not possible to have a big piece of wood or more on the back of my fragile paper works. The point of working with paper or foam was that it is a very light material and since I have fibromyalgia I can’t lift heavy materials like I used to. I couldn’t find a proper way to hang my works till just a month before the thesis show where I had the idea of adding small parts of paper glued to the work from the back that would have transparent pins. This worked perfectly, the maine wall paper piece was up on the show and no one could figure out where the pins were unless they would go really close to the work and attentively look in the back. And since the pins were transparent it was even harder for the view to notice unless you were really looking at the piece with the intention of finding out how it was hung. Now I have a new idea which consists of double sided hanging strips but the problem with those is that they have to be attached on the art

piece and since my work is in paper, when it comes to removing the strip it could break the paper and I really do not want that. So I will probably have to seal the back of the paper with glue before using the strips. But that would be a good solution too. Both Frank Stella and Al Loving have helped me find the solution on how to hang Composition 12.



90. Humbird, 1989, Mixed media on board, 72 x 100 inches



91. Untitled, c. 1975, Mixed media, 66 x 74 inches



92. Al Loving, "Self-Portrait #23" (1973)

Jim Condron, a great professor at Towson University, was also one of my committee members when I first started my MFA. I discovered that he used recycled materials and was astonished when I saw one of his exhibitions. I thought maybe I could interview him as part of the artists that inspire me because like him I use a lot of recycled materials in my creations. In June 2019 I went to his opening *Trash Talk: History in Assemblage at the Delaware Contemporary Museum*. He allowed me to take pictures of his pieces and accepted an interview at a more appropriate time. His assemblages are astonishing, I discovered that he collects all kinds of trash that talks to him, I do the same, seeing that he did that too gave me courage, there is a meaning behind what we decide to keep and collect. We might not know right away what we will use those things but in time all comes into place.

Something that was also very interesting was the titles he used for his pieces, basically he writes down sentences that he reads or hears and then associates them with each finished piece. This gave me the idea of doing a similar thing since I always had a problem of giving a title to my pieces. I am very interested in sayings that are used in Italian, French and English so I decided that I would name some of my pieces like that. Another idea came to mind and it was to name my pieces with the cities that I was when doing the piece or with cities that I have seen. So I would have to think of those places while doing the art piece, the emotion that I recall, the memories and images like *Composition 68* (New York) and *Composition 29* (Rome). He also pushed me to move forward in finding recycled materials that I could incorporate in my art, especially for my collagraphs as for example in *Composition 43*. Talking with him was extremely instructive and it gave me courage to keep recycled materials that I would find, knowing I wasn't the only one that did that was important since for the longest time I thought a part of me was being a little crazy, I couldn't explain to family and friends the reasons why I would keep some materials especially when I first started doing that.



93. View of Is it art? Or gluing? James Condron's 'Trash Talk' at the Delaware Contemporary. (Photo by Tatiana Michels.)



94. Diminish returns, Vintage General GG tractor, fur, paper, acrylic, oil, 72x120x54 inches, Installation at Goucher College, Baltimore, MD, 2018, (Silber Art Gallery, Goucher College)

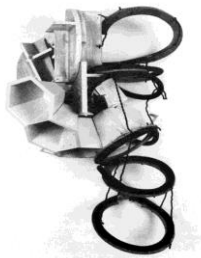


95. On the edge of the prairie, where the sun had gone down, the sky was turquoise blue, like a lake, with a gold light throbbing in it. 98 x 144 inches, oil, acrylic, spray paint, plaster, wool, vintage fur coat liner, plastic, paper, phone book, cotton, (Silber Art Gallery, Goucher College)



96. Jim Condron, The trouble with post-cult is that you lose your link to the fate of mankind

Kenji Fujita uses a variety of materials in his abstract geometric works creating a spatial visual game that is reflected in the shadows created by his works and I thought that both the work and the shadow were very interesting. His more recent work in white stone and other materials painted white are appealing to me because it reminds me of less is more. He also works in painting and drawing. I discovered when looking at him that the artists that I like best are mixed media artists that work in multiple disciplines. That is another thing that made me keep exploring multiple disciplines too. His use of one or two colors in sculpture especially really resonates with the idea less is more, even if the sculptures are quite complicated at times and resonate with the opposite idea of more is more or even order in chaos.



97. Kenji Fujita, Entrenched Meander II, 1988, mixed media, 39 x 25 x 18 inches.



98. Kenji Fujita, "Accumulation 5" (2016) (all photos by the author for Hyperallergic)



99. Kenji Fujita, “Accumulation 6” (2016)



100. Kenji Fujita, “Accumulation 4” (2016) (click to enlarge)

Dan Colen is once again a mixed media artist that uses all kinds of materials. He searches how to create meanings in his work through concept and the process of making the work. Making change become part of his work, exploring even digital work. His work often explores loss, interesting to me because you can view abuse as making you lose who you were in your past. His variety of interpretation of loss through the use of different mediums and disciplines is a never ending exploration and pushed me even further in that direction too. In reference to my work, when someone is abused they lose a lot, physically and psychologically, feeling like if they are in prison, as you can see in *Composition 70* that was the feeling I was expressing.



101. A 2015 installation by Dan Colen is indicative of And Now's ambitious programming. Photo courtesy of And Now



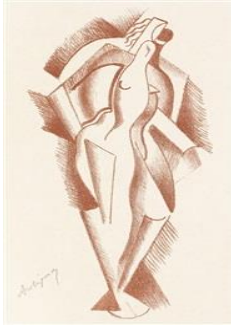
102. Dan Colen's "At Least They Died Together (After Dash).", Ruth Fremson/The New York Times



103. Dan Colen's “Waiting on a Friend.”, Ruth Fremson/The New York Times

Alexander Archipenko was an American avant-garde artist specialized in sculpture and graphics. I really love his sculptures, they reminded me of Cubism, that is a period in art with Futurism that I admire and always end going back to. I could relate to his sculptures very easily and analyzing, how he uses the space and how he simplifies his subjects. With a few lines he is able to make us understand what he is representing, suggesting in my mind that less can sometimes be more. I think this was the third time I had gone through that sensation of less is more, the other

two times were when I had encountered Mel Kendrick, Franz Kline and Kenji Fujita. But I didn't realize that it would affect my latest work at this point, only the semester just before my thesis I could see that taking form in my pieces. Delicately appearing and gradually taking position over my usual work that I always considered to be more is better. This also had a drastic consequence on my thesis show, where after long debates with the person in charge of the gallery and the head of my committee I ended up taking 34 pieces out of my show. What a reduction and a selection. It hurted my heart to see all those pieces not being part of my show but at the same time I have to agree that the show was telling the same exact story without those pieces. I even think that people were able to better concentrate looking at each art piece. Then I realized that the pieces that I had taken out were of duplicate techniques, I mean that the same technique was used in one or another piece that was in the show. I felt relieved because I wanted to show all the different processes that I had managed to master but not bore the viewers with repetitive processes.



104. Alexander Archipenko, Frau, 1922



105. Alexander Archipenko, Walking, 1912



106. Alexander Archipenko, Composition Cubiste



107. Alexander Archipenko, Standing Figure, 1916



108. Alexander Archipenko, *Untitled (Stylised Standing Figure)*, 1925

Joseph Cornell wooden boxes have influenced me on my final framing of the 3D sculpture. Originally I wanted to do wooden boxes for two of my pieces, the ones with plexiglas because in the long term I thought the open system wouldn't work, but then the shadows would become slightly reduced because of the box. I decided at the end to just use a nice wooden base created especially for each sculpture to avoid any loss in the shadows. This artist made me think further on how to trick the eyes of the viewer. I also saw a new potential in my painting projects using stencils. This artist was very important for some of my 3D projects since I wanted to create a box or a frame for them. On second thought though I just ended up creating a frame because I wanted the light to hit on every side of the work so enclosing the work in a box would have meant to lose the shadow that the work can make on the wall through the light.



109. Joseph Cornell, *Space Object Box: "Little Bear, etc."* motif, mid-1950s–early 1960s. Box construction, 11 x 17 1/2 x 5 1/4 inches (27.9 x 44.5 x 13.3 cm), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 68.1878, Art © The Joseph and Robert Cornell Memorial Foundation/Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, Sculpture



110. Joseph Cornell, *Andromeda: Grand Hôtel de l'Observatoire*, 1954, Box construction with glass, painted and paper covered wood, metal rod and chain, and cut and pasted photograph, 18 5/16 x 12 15/16 x 3 7/8 inches (46.5 x 32.9 x 9.8 cm), Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York Partial gift, C. and B. Foundation, by exchange, 1980, 80.2734, Art © The Joseph and Robert Cornell Memorial Foundation/Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, sculpture.



111. *A Parrot for Juan Gris*, 1953-54. Courtesy of Quicksilver/The Joseph and Robert Cornell Memorial Foundation/Vaga, NY/Dacs.

James Rosenquist overlapping things in his paintings was so incredible that it influenced me in my latest works. I did a background, then I created boxes using my copper plates as stencils. Those boxes were semi transparent to allow the view of the previous layer of gestures. Then I added lines that remind of cubism, and when those lines encountered a box it would change color when inside the box. This created an interesting vision, trompe l'oeil. This piece opened a discussion with cubists and futurists artists. The pieces were Composition 55 and Composition 74.



112. "Women's Intuition, after Aspen," by James Rosenquist, oil on canvas, 5 by 12 feet, 1998, collection of Marvin Ross Friedman, Coral Gables, Florida



113. "The Swimmer in the Econo-mist (Painting 3)," by James Rosenquist, oil on shaped canvas, 13 feet 2 inches by 20 feet 3/16 inches, 1997-8, commissioned by the Deutsche Bank in consultation with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation for the Deutsche Guggenheim Berlin

Sigmar Polke, I saw the piece *The Large Cloth of Abuse* of 1968, I couldn't stop thinking why does my committee members want me to depict things that are violent, I try to see life positively and depicting abuse literally or depicting the negative part of it would just get me depressed and what I wanted to do was transmit a positive feeling to the viewer even if I was talking of a brutal negative subject. This question would remain partially unsolved till my thesis show, when all of a sudden one of the viewers asked me that question: How come you are stating that you are talking about abuse and survivors of abuse in your work and yet your work is an expression of beauty? Therefore it didn't really represent such a negative aspect of life. Obviously I had already stated that each work of art represented a person that had gone through some kind of abuse and therefore my work was representing people anonymously and that's why the name of each piece was the word *Composition* followed by a number. What I had forgotten to mention all this time to all my committee members included was that I represented the positive parts that I saw in those people that came to talk to me about their brutal trauma and that got to know them and I could see the beauty in each one of them therefore I was representing the beauty of the person that survived the abuse to give them hope to make them feel that someone has heard their story and that they are not fighting alone against what happened to them, that they have my support. That was the reason I could not depict the negative side of the subject, because I could see the positive side, the side that sometimes those same people don't even think they have, and that's why they tend to hide behind a mask. After I saw this piece I decided to represent the positive side of people that had suffered from any type of abuse, to show them that they are beautiful. Yes what happened to them is indescribable but for those who survive and can't see how beautiful they are it is important that they know, because knowing this can help them feel better and not hide them, but most of all it also can help them get over the trauma they went through. Any of my pieces could be a comparison with this piece, since all my works have some words and sentences hiding in there.



114. View of the exhibition "Alibis: Sigmar Polke 1963-2010," showing (left to right) *The Large Cloth of Abuse*, 1968; *The Berlin Window-Galerie Block*, 1969; and *Bamboo Pole Loves Folding-Ruler Star*, 1968-69. Courtesy MoMA. Photo Jonathan Muzikar.

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<https://www.skilpe.com/profile/531d8b5d9ca5bc0ba22691fa7b859f407a3af52222af61293136c9e2fe4658fe>

EDUCATION

2016-20. Towson University, Towson, MD. Masters in Fine Art, Studio Art, graduated May 2020.

2014-18. University of Maryland College Park, MD. 2016. BA Honors Cum Laude in Fine Art. 2018. BA in Art History. 2021 Italian translation & interpreter (current: 6 credits left for BA).

2010-16. Montgomery College, Takoma Park, MD. AA Fine Art (Honors Cum Laude - GPA3.9).

2001-03. Italian Institute for Art & Restoring Art, Rome, Italy. MA High Distinction in Restoring Paintings on Canvas & Wood.

1098-01 Atelier Constantin Meunier, BA Honors Cum Laude in Fine Art

EMPLOYMENTS:

01.19.2021-present hire eligible: Temporary Substitute Teacher/Teacher Assistant at Anne Arundel County Public Schools.

Independent: tutoring in person & online / online art group classes

2020-present: Online art group classes through Skilpe.com

2019-present: Online and in person private tutor in Art (drawing, painting, printmaking, art theory, sculpture), Italian, French.

Towson University, Towson, MD

2019-20. Part time adjunct faculty: Online Printmaking & 3D foundation for non-majors (ART 117).

2019-20. Workshops for Towson University for non-majors ARTH 105 & ARHT 107.

2020. Assistantship to Laura Amussen for the open air sculpture project at Ladew Topiary Garden.

2016-18. Graduate Assistant for the Art Department Director MFA Studio Arts.

2018. Printmaking teaching assistant: for majors (ART 211) with Prof. Tania Ziniewicz.

2018. Printmaking Teaching assistant: for non-majors (ART 117) with Prof. Seonju Townsend.

2017-18 Printmaking teaching assistant for Intaglio process II (ART 450-180) combined with Graduate Intaglio and relief I (ART650-180) with Prof. Tonia Matthew.

2017. Coordinator/Monitor Printmaking department. Prof. Tonia Matthews.

2016-18. COFAC Graduate Student Representative for the Art Department.

University of Maryland College Park, MD

2015-16. Printmaking teaching assistant: Elements of Lithography (ART 344) (ARTT 389). Prof. Humphrey Margo.

2014-16. Coordinator/Monitor Printmaking department. Prof. Justin Strom.

2015-16. Italian Tutor (ITAL 399T). supervisor Prof. Stefania Amodeo.

Montgomery College, Takoma Park, MD

2012-14. Student worker for Dr. Harold Williams, Head of the Astronomy Department. Creation of outdoor sculptures & painting for The Model of our Solar System.

2013. Phi Theta Kappa: High school teacher in woodworking of the Solar System parkour project at MD. Restoration and conservation of original artworks, created by prisoners of Washington DC.

2014. Honors Internship - partnership with AHCMC (Art and Humanities Council of Montgomery County), Silver Spring, MD. Overseen conditions of public art. Evaluate safety & repair requirements to preserve & display artwork. Update of database for inventory & survey of all Indoor and Outdoor Public Art, MD.

Montgomery Art Association, Silver Spring, MD 2007-10. Volunteer exhibition staff (presentations & hanging).

Europe: (1995-2000) Secretary at the European Union & Parliament. (1993-1995) Security agent for the European Union & Parliament. (I am knowledgeable in Karate Shotokan and French boxing, I also did some Jujitsu).

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2020. *Y?* Thesis Show, Towson University, MD.

2019. *How So?* Carver Gallery, Carver Center for Arts & Technology, Towson, MD.

2018. *Rhythm and Blues*. Painting and Engraving Solo Show at Roland Park Gallery, Baltimore, MD.

2018. *Rocks*, Sculpture Solo Show at 8000 Towers Crescent Dr., Tyson's I shopping center, Philip Johnson Building, Vienna, VA.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2020. Three shows selections: *Binary / None-Binary*, *Art On Paper* and *Focal point*, Maryland Federation of Art, Annapolis, MD.

2019. Venice Biennale International Art Fair, 3 exhibitions (Vision; Consciousness; Rituals, May-Nov. 2019), Italy.

2019. Art in the Garden: 19th Annual Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition, Botanic Gardens University of Delaware, Newark, DE.

2019-18-17-16. MFA group exhibition exchange between Towson University and: University of Maryland, MD. Howard Community College, Columbia MD. Blue Streak Gallery Inc., Wilmington, DE. Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO.

2018. *Full Court Press North American International Juried Print Competition*, Texas University, Austin, TX.

2015-16-17. *Annual Exhibition*, University of Maryland, paintings and screen printing & Dean's List.

2014. *Annual Exhibition*, Montgomery College, linocut and etching, & Dean's List.

2014. *Formality A Regional Student Exhibition*, National Sculpture Competition, Area 405, Baltimore, MD.

1990-2000. approximately 40 group and solo shows around Europe.

SELECTIONS, PRESS RELEASES, & AWARDS

2020 Semifinalist at the Bethesda Printmaking award, MD.

2020 *Y?* Article in Towson University Newsletter, Towson, MD

2019. Artist of the Year Award Finalist & Grant, Circle Foundation for the Arts, UK.

2016-17-18. GSA Research Award, Towson University, MD.

2016-17. Juror's Choice Award, "Stormy Weather", MFA, Annapolis Maritime Museum, MD.

2017. *National Small Works*, Washington Print Foundation, Washington DC, Publication.

2017. *Printfest Works By Over Go Artists*, Masters of Contemporary Print, Prints and Printmaking in the 20th & 21st centuries, Towson University, MD.

2016. *Excellence in Printmaking*, Washington Print Foundation, Washington DC, Publication & Flyer.

2016. Research Scholarships in Fine Art, "ICS Awardees – ICS Scholarship Award Winners *Cesarina Horing Award: – Patricia Segnan Award for Art or Art History*", Italian Cultural Society, Washington DC.

2015. Exhibit & Press release: *Galleria 360, Arte Contemporanea, Florence, Italy*.

2014. *The Sligo Journal Arts and Letters*, Exhibition and press release, Montgomery College, MD.

2014. Press release & Exhibition: Silver Spring Artist Edelweiss Calcagno: *Putting Many Media Service of Truth*, NYC, Kensington & Silver Spring Patch, MD

LECTURES, VIDEOS, & COLLECTIONS

- 2019-2020. Lecture on Printmaking techniques at Towson University ARTH students and MFA students. (Lecture)
2020. *Y?* Towson University Art department Gallery. (Lecture & Thesis show). Thesis *Y?* is in the Special Collections and Archives of Towson University & in the Library of Towson University.
2019. *How So?* Carver Gallery, Carver Center for Arts & Technology. (Lecture)
2018. Baltimore Sculptors at BCAG, Baltimore, MD (Lecture)
2017. Printfest Works By Over Go Artists, Masters of Contemporary Print, Prints & Printmaking in the 20th & 21st centuries. (Video)
2017. Tonhua Art Ink Collection, at Shenzhen TongHua Education Management co., LTD, Shenzhen, China. (Col).