

VISA 483 RESEARCH PAPER

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My work this year has largely been centred around exploring printing techniques; first through linocut and then finishing in screen printing. While the techniques lend themselves to a different style of rendering, I have kept a consistent colour pallet, composition style and story telling method. The main colour I used was an ultramarine blue which I chose after learning a bit about the history of creating blue from Victoria Finlay's book *Color*. Previous to the first synthetic blue, which was discovered by accident and then used to make blueprints, blue was incredibly hard and expensive to make. It was used only for the most important and revered parts of an image such as the Virgin Mary's robe. I also used orange, the complimentary colour of the blue I used and then gold to imply value and the refinement process that goes into working with gold foil. My work tends to be detailed and fairly time consuming which lends itself to having a plan and following it, not so much to experimentation. Some examples of this are Cathedral Blueprints I drew last year and the linocut series called *Play* which I completed for the end of last semester. This series was a six piece series in blue, orange and yellow in different composition styles which talked about aspects of childhood and adulthood. I also completed a triptych depicting Canadian Immigration History, drawn on a computer and meant to be printed on vinyl. This past semester I decided to build on the *Play* series with some changes; using gold instead of yellow and screen printing in order to go larger scale. Instead of discussing childhood and adulthood specifically, in the screen print series *Awakening* I am discussing how idealism exists through the child to adult transition.

I typically begin design or artwork by mapping out what ever topic I am aiming to discuss. Over the course of the semester this ended up with another 30 feet of paper roll covered

in mind maps trying to get around the subject. Building on last semester, with the subject of idealism and ambition in mind, I looked to works that I felt embodied those feelings such as *Tomorrowland* and *Up* by Disney and Pixar. Besides watching them, I read about the story behind making each of those films in *Creativity Inc.* This book describes how the directors started with a big story idea and worked through finessing it so it engaged viewers.

I was inspired at how these movies could present such a captivating message which could easily apply to all ages but they told it through a simple and childlike story with adult humour sort of dispersed throughout.

In order to infuse a recognizable narrative I also read *Design Anarchy* by Kalle Lasn. This really broke apart the building blocks of design, advertising and common symbols in society. This was helpful in order to better think about what medium I would choose to work in.

Another artist who creates an interesting experience for his viewer is jr. He is basically a street artist, putting up massive prints, usually of people, around the world in the streets. He recently was in Rio installing during the olympics. I came across his working in the Documentary *Ellis (Ellis)* and just admire how simple the story he tells is but so impacting. His imagery is not complex.

Last semester I was struggling with how heavy the imagery I was working with felt. I felt that adding another fear based, fear inducing reality to the images we already see only adds to the problem and so I started to explore how I could display issues in a form that feels light and optimistic. I read *The Art of Shepard Fairey: Obey Supply & Demand*. His imagery isn't necessarily light can cheery, but its a step that way to being serious in theme but feels light

because of how he renders his figures. Here I took my illustrative images and added symbols representing things like corporate power dynamics and wealth gaps in *The Encounter* image.

While sifting through all these ideas and mediums I was also sifting through many thematic ideas and approaches. I was struggling to really nail down exactly what I wanted to say. The way my work is interpreted is important to me. I have huge admiration for work done like Van Eyck where there are symbols, colours, shapes that all mean something that is meant to be read one way. That type of interpretation is what I often aim for and so experimentation around different ways of talking about ambition and idealism in my final work ended up being helpful.

Some of the initial critique I was given was that the style of rendering throughout the series was too different. Styles from the linocut series definitely carried over into the screen print look. To fix this I redid a few of the prints to all have the crosshatch style of drawing and then carried patterns from all the first 5 images into the last print to tie it all together.

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