

Process Portfolio



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Media Types -Traditional Prints-

For traditional prints, I chose whether or not to make a block print or dry point based on if the lines are mostly thin, more accurate lines (upper picture) or thicker lines with more patches of solid color (lower picture).

Because block prints are a method of relief printing, they are better for larger patches of color, because less carving needs to be done to get a darker print. The carving tools are also thicker and less accurate than the engraving tool used in drypoints, partially because they're more bulky and require more accurate lines, but also because my carving tools are older and duller than the engraving tool.

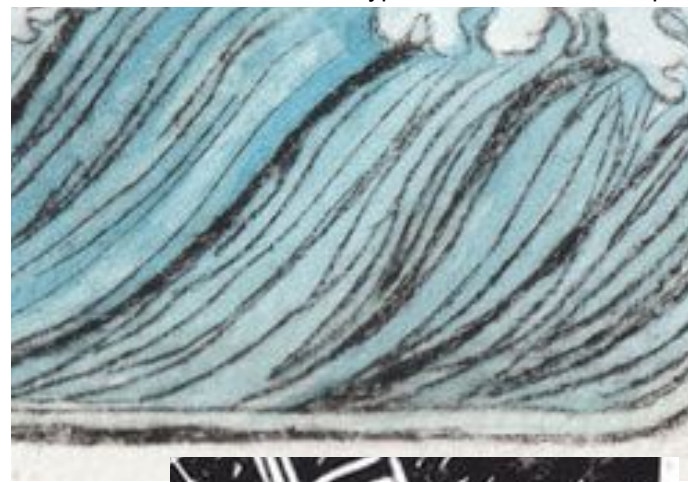


“Barrels out of Bond”
2017 - Oil-Based Block Print
on Watercolor Paper

The engraving tool comes to a fine point, so it creates very thin, fine lines. This makes it perfect for creating “sketchy looking” prints. The lines don’t need to be as accurate as on block prints, because the thin lines are less noticeable than bold ones.

There is one case where I broke this general rule, and used a block print to create the linework for an illustration piece. This was mainly done because it was the same medium my artist was inspired to use, and I wanted it to look as traditional as possible. But because I colored it with watercolors, and block print ink is water soluble, I used the oil ink for drypoints in a block print. It was a more experimental piece, but I think it turned out very well.

“Storm in a Bottle” - 2016 - Drypoint on Watercolor Paper



“Ship in a Storm” - 2016 - Block Print on
Watercolor Paper

Media Types -Digital vs. Physical-

Choosing between a traditional, physical medium or a digital equivalent can be hard. Most people have more experience with traditional mediums, and have built up a better understanding on the techniques needed to make a high quality piece with them.

Digital mediums can be more finicky, but they also can replicate traditional techniques if used right, and with less of a struggle. In the end, I chose based on 3 facts.

1. Do I know how to create the look that I want on MediBang or Photoshop?
2. Do I have the supplies available to make what I want physically?
3. How detailed do I want to get?

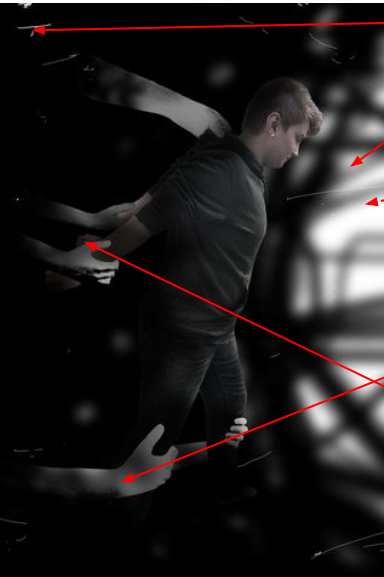


Developing the skills to make something digitally takes longer, because you need to learn the program you're using. However, some of the largest benefits is that it's cheaper, there's an undo button, and that you can zoom in to see what you're doing while making small, intricate lines. If I'm doing something very intricate, I'd rather use a computer than try and do it by hand in a painting or drawing.



Critical Investigation -Symbolism and Imagery-

When looking for inspirational artists, I first think of what I'm trying to convey with this piece. What is the theme, topic and mood of this piece? Do I want to portray a more positive or negative emotion? What am I trying to say *about* my topic? From there, I search a wide range of mediums and styles to find an artist that uses similar themes or emotions in their works. In *Gross*, I drew inspiration from a rather non-traditional source: a Panic! At The Disco music video. I wanted to cover a theme of anxiety, and feeling like you're being held down. I found the video for *This is Gospel* portrayed this feeling very well, and I used similar imagery of hands reaching out of the dark to convey a similar feeling, but a different theme and topic.



Body moving toward **light source**, away from dark background- **symbolizes running away from darker emotions / feelings**

Theme of **anxiety**, and how it affects one's motivation

Theme of **letting go and moving on** after the loss of a loved one

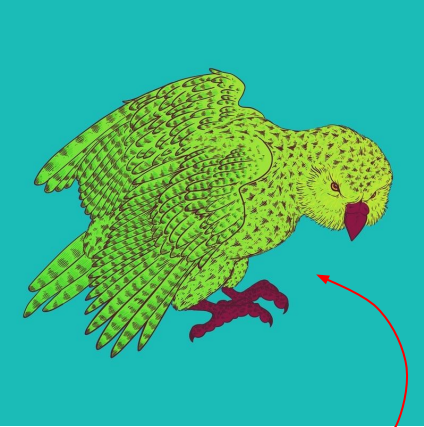
Arms coming out of darker background, pulling person back with them. Implies someone / something is attacking them

Similar imagery - hands grabbing at someone while they pull against them - **conveys similar meaning**

This is Gospel by Panic! At The Disco, directed by Jordan Bahat and Daniel Campos



Critical Investigation -Theme and Topic-



Theme of animal conservation, using bright colors and clean lines.



Bengal Tiger by Bartel

Jen Bartel uses a few types of art styles for different prints, but the style she uses for her pop-art inspired pieces. The use of solid lines and bright colors are closely connected to pop art, with a more modern twist. Do to the advantages of working digitally, lines can be recolored and palettes adjusted to take full advantage of the bright colors easily available to digital artists.

Many of Bartel's prints available are parts of series, one of which is on endangered animals. While looking for inspiration for a bright pop piece, her use of color and line caught my attention, really popping (pardon the pun) out from the more naturally colored pieces around it.

In this case, I found an artist with a style that I liked and wanted to replicate, and had a theme that I wanted to continue working with. I emulated her style, specifically her use of vibrant colors and smooth, intricate lines that are more common in digital art, while conveying the message of animal conservation. I focused on the Kakapo, a rare, highly endangered species of parrot that can't fly, and lives on the forest floors of New Zealand. In 2014, there was only 123 of them left in the world.

Both of use used pop art for it's focus on consumerism, both of it's topics and itself. Many animals are endangered due to consumption of resources they need to live, and the art itself is meant to be consumed to bring awareness to others about endangered species they may not have even heard of.

Critical Investigation -Techniques and Processes-

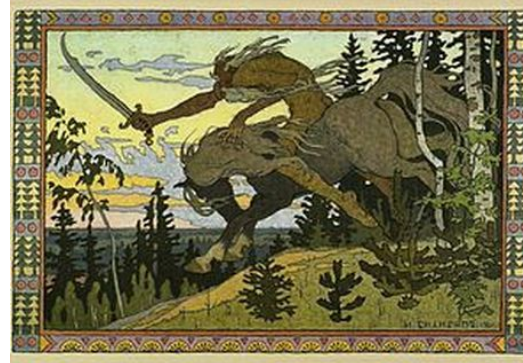
Sometimes the medium determines the style, and sometimes the style determines the medium. Bilbin adopted block printing styles from traditional Japanese artworks, using the block to print the line work directly onto the paper, then coloring it by hand using watercolors and gouache.

While the fact that his illustrations are block prints are important for his purposes, where he needs to reproduce the images to sell copies of his books, they also provided him with thick, noticeable lines.

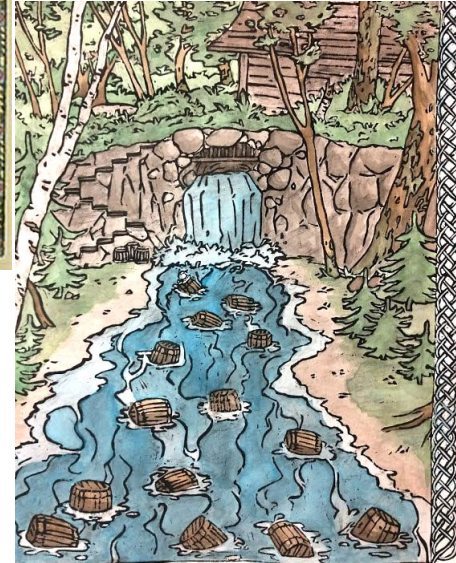
The painting techniques also gave in vivid colors, while still producing a soft painting effect. Using water colors with higher amounts of pigment gives stronger more vibrant colors, while still producing a softer style, and being quicker to repeatedly paint.s

While making *Barrels out of Bond*, I made a block print to get thick lines, and used inks to get vivid but soft colors. I watered the inks down if I needed a softer or lighter color, but working without a white paint was a struggle.

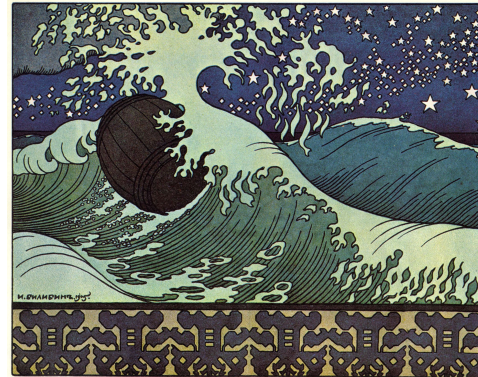
Koshchey the Deathless by Ivan Bilbin, 1901



Diversity in trees creates a more natural looking forest, with deciduous and pine trees, trees growing on different planes and at different angles



The Barrel by Ivan Bilbin, from *The Tale of Tsar Saltan*, 1905



Clearly defined lines that aren't affected by colors.

Color is vibrant with a lot of pigment, but still muted from being watercolor.

Development of Techniques and Skills

I've had to develop my skills in painting over the past few years, to a point where I'm comfortable displaying my work. I started by practicing painting spheres over summer, so I could get a better understanding of how light affects color. Rather than just lightening the base color with white and darkening it with black, I used 2 colors to make the base, and added more of the darker or lighter color for the highlight and shadow.

In my first large painting, I used black to darken skin tone, which made the skin look muddy and dirty, rather than shadowed. Preferably, I should have used brown, with a amount of red or yellow.

I also should have worked *much* faster, so the paint blended. Because I wasn't used to working over such a large surface, I took too long between each layer, and the shading didn't blend at all. It would have been fine if I was making a piece that didn't need to be blended, like a van Gogh inspired painting, but my self portrait was based off a more realistic style.



Conceptual Qualities

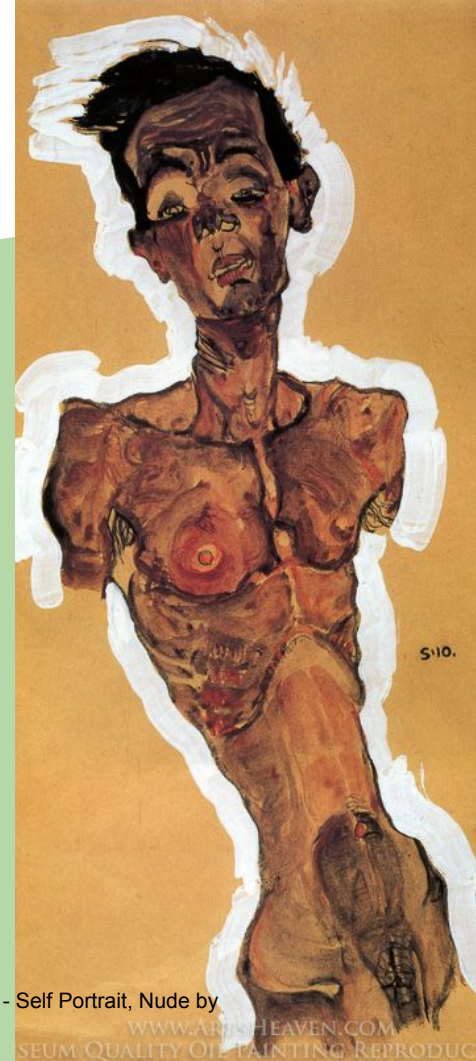
Expressionism was a major turning point in how art was created and viewed. Rather than being purely a depiction of what they see, artists tried to depict the emotions they felt while making the piece. The viewers also shifted how they consumed art. "Good" art used to be realistic and beautiful. Impressionism led to people appreciating less realistic, but still visually appealing art. The art still showed what the piece was physically based off of.

But expressionism made it harder to understand what was true, and what was the artist's feelings. Common physical traits of expressionism artworks include swirling colors and sketchy line work. Colors are either more or less vibrant than would be realistic, and figures are often warped and stretched.

This made expressionism a perfect style for depicting internal conflict. Egon Schiele's paintings use disproportionate or missing limbs and emaciated bodies to visibly show how self image affects how one views themselves. In my digital drawing, *Impulse Control*, I used Schiele's style to portray my own internal conflicts with intrusive thoughts.



Right: Oil on Canvas - Self Portrait, Nude by Egon Schiele



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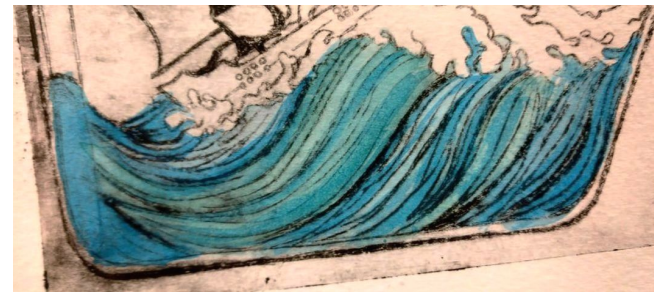
Experimentation -Barrels out of Bond-

I did some experimenting with my tools and linoleum blocks. I was worried the block print would be way too complicated, and I wouldn't be able to make all the fine lines. I used a smaller piece of linoleum from an earlier attempt at a project, which I redrew a to-scale drawing of one of the barrels, and carved it out to practice the fine lines. I was surprised this worked so well. I also tried carving one of the trees, which also worked great. If I couldn't get all the detail I wanted, I would have needed to buy a piece of Plexiglas that was big enough, and do a dry point, instead of a block print.

As for the ink wash, there were a few different types of ink in our art room. I tried them at different amounts of water added to it, so I could see how opaque they are. I made a small chart, so I could compare them, and did a bit of practice blending the colors as well. I did this on some lightweight mixed media paper, and it wrinkled and tore in some places where I put more water, which showed me that I would need to use some heavy duty water color paper to keep it from warping.



Lastly, to make sure the printing ink would hold, I put some water on a misprint of a block print, which smeared horribly. I then tried inking a misprint of my drypoint from the year before, which didn't smear at all. Not only did this confirm that I would need to use the drypoint ink, it also gave me the idea to color my drypoint.



Experimentation -Still Lifes-



Over summer vacation, I drew some life drawings to help develop my skills. I didn't have anyone to model for me, and I didn't want to go to an open night at MIAD, so I drew things and animals around me.

I drew some of my family's pets, which was an exercise in drawing quickly while still accurately drawing. I preferred to work in color, mainly because I always smeared the graphite. I also drew some taxidermied waterfowl and some antlers I own, which let me focus more on accurately replicating the image, rather than finishing the drawing before my animals decided to get up.

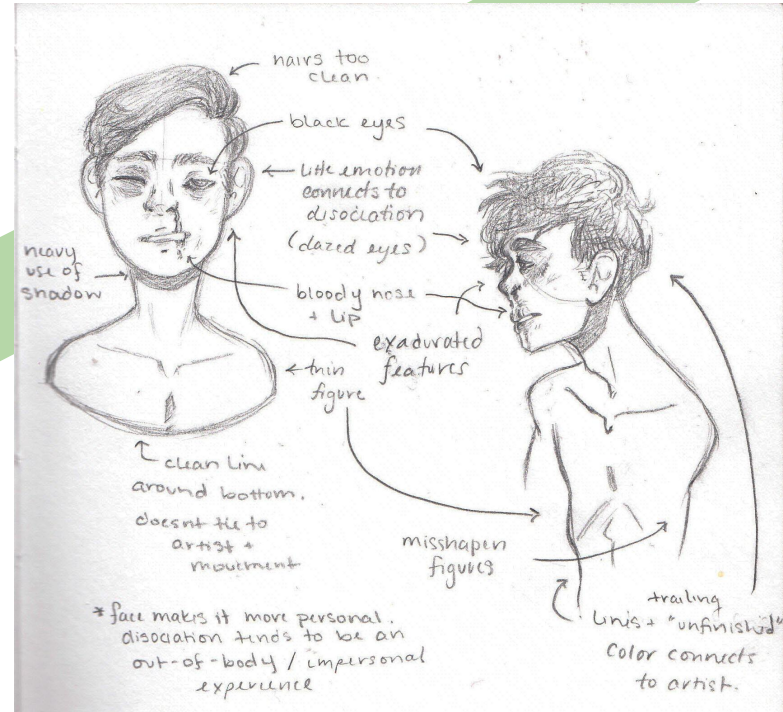
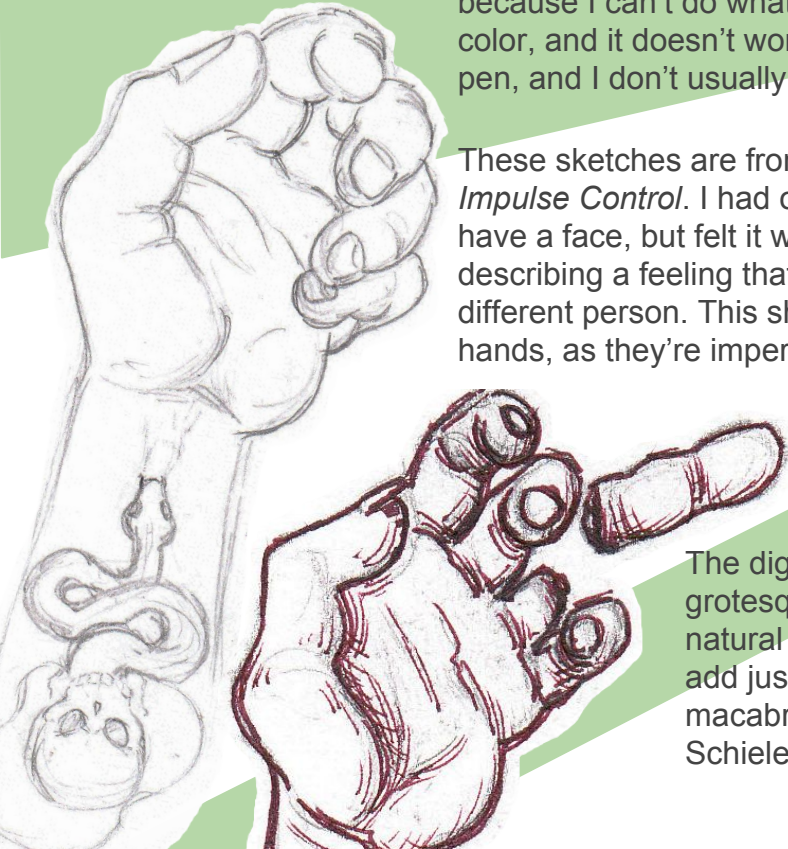


Planning -Sketches-

Sketches are used to determine what type of imagery presents the theme in the intended way. I use them to get ideas onto paper so I can decide if I like the layout and general shapes, but I know it's not exact. Sometimes the plan changes, because I can't do what I wanted with the medium I chose, or because I changed the style or color, and it doesn't work with the imagery as well. My sketches are almost always in pencil or pen, and I don't usually color them.

These sketches are from my digital drawing *Impulse Control*. I had originally planned to have a face, but felt it was too personal for describing a feeling that makes you feel like a different person. This shifted to focusing on hands, as they're impersonal enough for this, while still fitting with the theme and artist inspiration.

The digits can be moved into grotesque positions, and the natural wrinkles and lines add just enough detail to look macabre enough for Egon Schiele's art style.



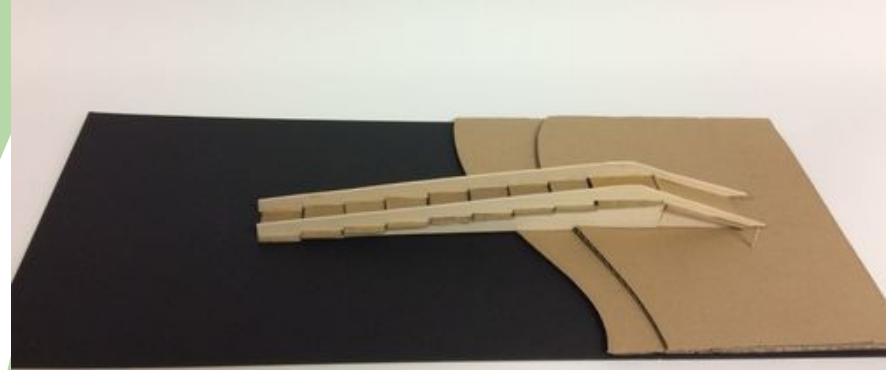
Planning -Architecture-

My main goal was to allow people to get as close to the water as they want. I love going down to the lake, but there is no safe way to get closer to the water without wading down in the water. Climbing on the wave-breaks can be dangerous, especially on windy days when the waves are stronger.

I planned by making models using card stock paper and chipboard. I could plan out what I wanted to do without needing to completely redo the model. The paper models that needed to be held up vertically could be done by cutting a line into the corrugated cardboard that makes up the land. Some models don't even need this, which makes creating multiple models using the same board easy.

I liked my first model the most, because it had a strong connection to real life, a purpose and it was structurally sound. The walls were a bit bent from being man-handled, but since the final piece would be made of basswood, this wasn't really a problem, but the pieces were too far apart.

I fixed this on the final piece by cutting the walls all the way through, and hot gluing them, rather than just wedging the pieces in place. It was slightly less sturdy, but a lot safer than trying to cut such delicate shapes into already fragile wood.



Planning -Photography and Improvised Pieces-

There was little planning involved in *Quick Clouds*. The goal wasn't to create a hyper-realistic piece, just to capture how the light interacts with the scene. The nature of this means there was very little planning involved, and the paintings are more spontaneous than my other works.

My photography was much the same way. I didn't go out of my way to set up a scene, partially because I prefer to photograph landscapes, but also because I like playing with how light affects a scene. Most of my landscape photos are taken at sunset, when the lighting has more warm colors. I can move myself, which changes positions and angles, but times limited, and I need to take the shot.

Spontaneous pieces are interesting, because I had to learn how to accept that I can't control everything about my pieces, but that they can still turn out well.



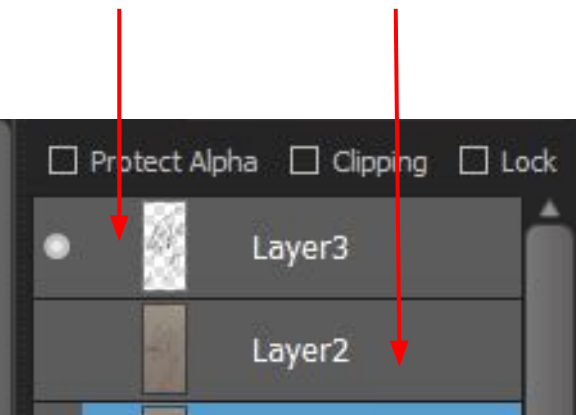
Planning -Digital Sketches-

Sketches are extremely important as part of both planning and creating the final piece in digital artworks. Because digital art can utilize multiple layers, you can line the work directly over the sketches without trying to hide or erase them.

I tend to use different colors for different parts of the sketch. The general shapes are in one color, while the detailed sketches for each part are in different ones. I also change the background color to something that displays the colors better. In *Kakapo*, I changed the background to a medium blue, so the brighter colors I used in my sketches, and the black finished linework would be easy to see.

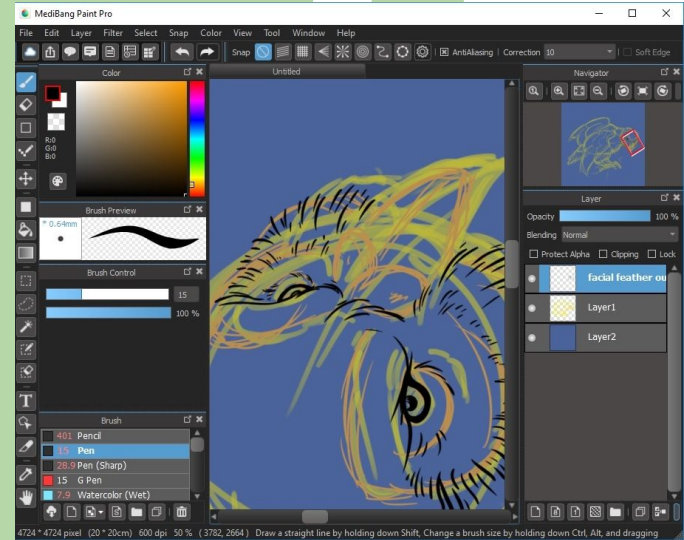
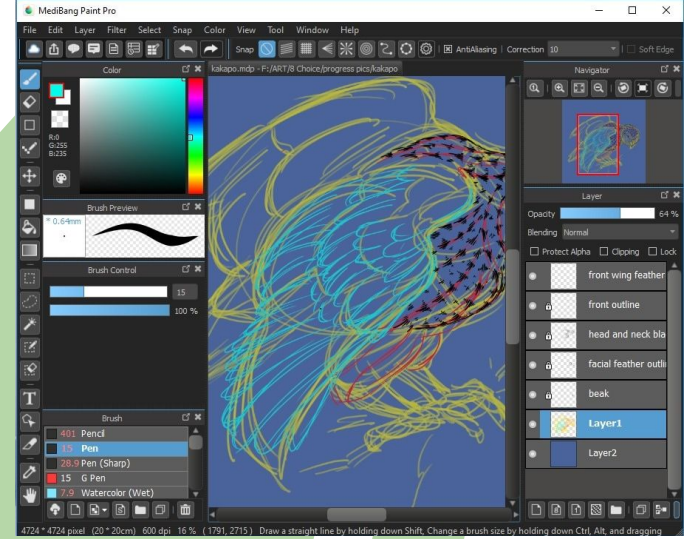
Digital linework for *Impulse Control*.

Scan of final sketch for *Impulse Control*.



Another method I use for planning digital pieces is sketching it out on paper, scanning the image and opening it into MediBang, my digital illustration program of choice. I find planning the sketches easier on paper, and the sketch can be directly lined over on another layer, the same way I can with regular digital sketches.

Either strategy works well. The main important part is that the sketches can be directly lined over.



Process -Acrylics and Ink Washes-

Painting has never been a strong suit of mine, but that means I tried to get plenty of practice with it over the last few years. I had studied different painting techniques and styles, but I had never felt like I was improving much until I had to just accept that my art wasn't going to be perfect, but that I needed to accept it as it is and keep going.

While painting with acrylics, I'd first mix up enough of a color to paint the entire canvas with it. I'd usually mix in some other colors as I went on, to make a slight gradient. For pieces with more blended colors, like *Quick Clouds*, I'd use thinner paints before that first layer could dry, then use a dry brush to lightly blend the colors together. I learned this technique from watching Bob Ross, as well as that thinner paints hold to thicker ones better. I try to keep these tips and tricks in mind whenever I paint, as I find it really helps me use proper techniques.

On acrylic pieces with little to no blending, however, I threw these rules out the window. Paint was layered on in thicker streaks, which produced a texture on the surface of the canvas, and the paint was sometimes allowed to dry between layers, since it didn't need to blend.

Ink Washes are a favorite of mine, because of how easy it is to create and blend colors. Inks can be diluted with water to make less vibrant colors, or applied directly to make near opaque ones. The technique was to simply let the colors blend as they wanted to on the page. Because they're so watered down, I had to put them in cups, rather than on a palette, and adding any inks would mix right away, so they had to be blended entirely, or left to blend on the paper.



Process -Carving Blockprints-

Carving the block prints can be time consuming, especially if the print has a lot of light parts, or if the lines are overly intricate. It probably took me about 4 hours in total to carve *At sea in a Storm*, and 15 to 20 hours to carve *Barrels out of Bond*. I used a much smaller blade on my carving tool, and had to be very careful not to accidentally carve something I didn't mean to.

In both projects, I held the handle of my tool in my right hand, and directed the blade with my left fingers. This was especially important in *Barrels out of Bond*, as it gave me much greater control than holding it like a pencil.

For maps with thinner lines and more white space, I used a permanent marker to color over the uncarved places, so I can easily see how thick the lines are, and adjust from there. The thick Sharpies can be used on their sides, so I don't color the carved parts, only the parts high enough to be touched by the pen tip.



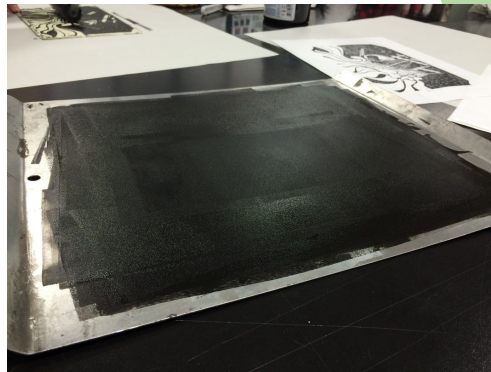
I used a few types of carving tools. I'm using a mushroom handle tool on the right, and a pencil grip tool is sitting on the table in the same photo. On the left, I'm using a Speedball tool with an interchangeable blade, which has a handle that's a mix between the two. I personally prefer the mushroom handles, because the handle can be rested in the palm of one hand, and controlled with the forefingers of the other, giving more control over the cuts.



Process -Printing Blockprints-

The first step to printing is to gather all of the supplies and set up. I laid one piece on newsprint on the table and placed my block carved side up. Using the paint knife, I spread a decent amount of ink onto the cookie sheet, and then used the brayer to evenly spread it across the sheet. When the layer of ink was thin enough, it started to stick the brayer to the sheet, making it squeak when it was moved. I then used the brayer to collect some of the ink from the sheet, and rolled it onto the block. I found it much easier to judge how much ink i had on the block, and if it was fully covered while it was clean.

Once everything is evenly coated, I carefully pickup the plate and set it face up on a new sheet of newsprint, so there was no ink on the paper. I then carefully centered the sketching paper over the block, and covered them with a third sheet of paper, so the baren wouldn't tear the final print. I rubbed the baren into the paper in small circular motions to transfer the ink from the block to the paper. Pressing the baren into the block as hard as I could, and spending around 10 minutes on each copy got me darker, more consistent prints, while not pressing enough can leave more patchy light areas.



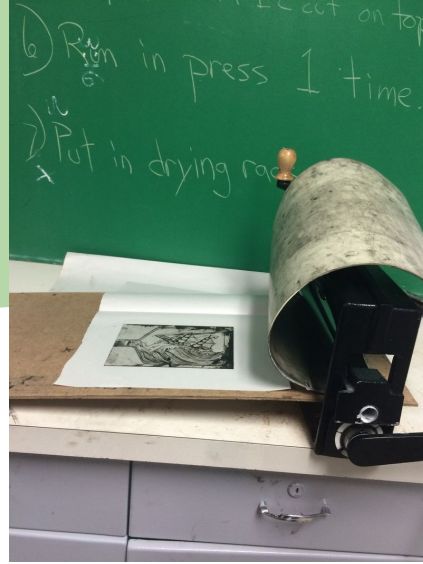
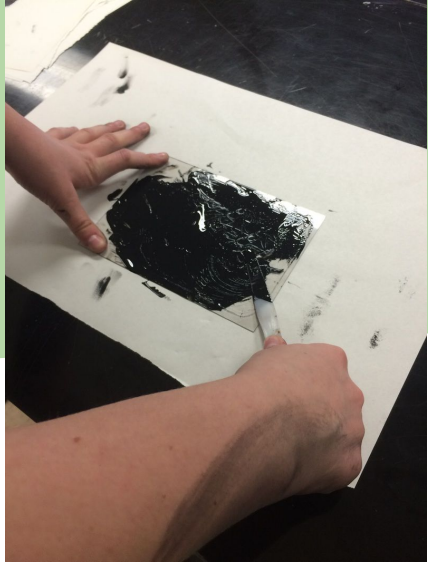
Far left : Pressing the final print using a bamboo baren. The ink and palette knife are sitting off to the edge of the photo.

Left : A cookie sheet being used as a palette, with ink evenly spread on it from the brayer. I'm inking another print in the background.

Above : A good print. The Color is fairly even, none of the lines smeared or blotted. The only thing that could be done better would be if the ink in the top right transferred better. Pressing hard and using enough ink helps get better prints.

Below : A bad print. The ink didn't take to the paper very well, and some of the lines were darker than the rest. This print didn't smear, but it still didn't come out clearly.

Process -Carving and Printing Drypoints-



Carving a drypoint is much different than a block print. For starters, drypoint is an Intaglio method of printing, meaning the part that is carved away is the part that will be darker once printed. The plates were also clear, so I could draw the sketch in my sketchbook and tape the plexiglass plate directly to the page and trace it with the carving knife.

The carving process was just tracing, using a three sided knife with tape wrapped around most of the blade let

wrapped around most of the blade let us be more exact with our cuts, and the lines were much thinner than the ones of a block print. The hardest part was the knife was a bit hard to control, and the clear plexiglass made seeing what you had already cut hard.

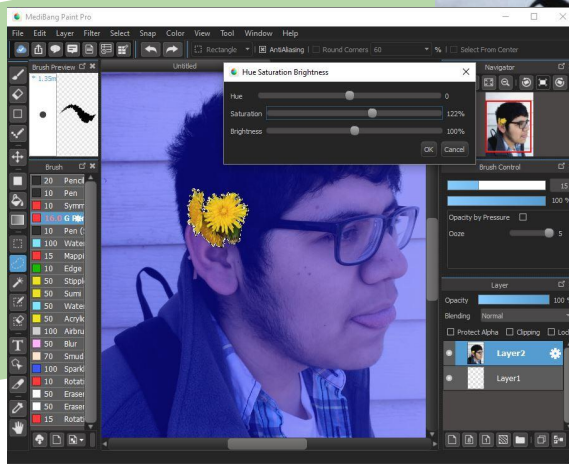
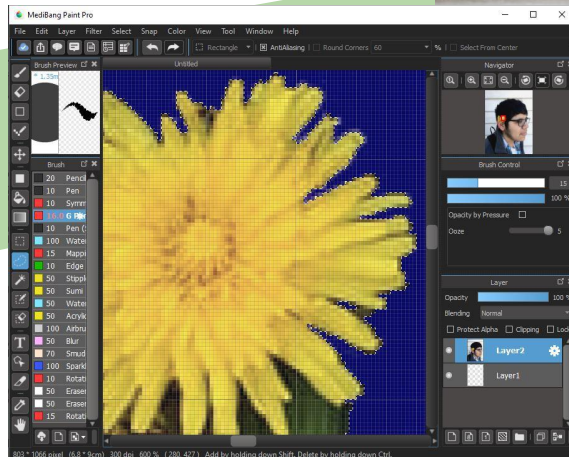
Printing with drypoints is also much more time consuming. The ink needs to be worked into every nook and cranny you cut, and then carefully wiped away with newsprint or cheesecloth. The edges need to be carefully cleaned to avoid an obvious edge to the print. The paper itself also needs prepping, by sitting in a tub of water for about 10 minutes before it can be printed on. Rather than using a baren to print by hand, we have a printing press that's under a lot of pressure, which presses the wet paper into the plate with so much force, that the paper fibers push up into the cuts, and absorb the ink.

Process -Photography-

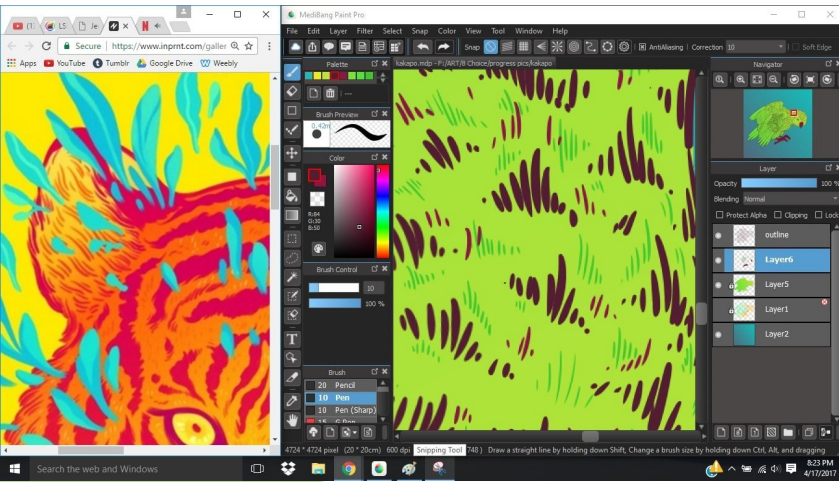
I don't own a good camera, but when I got my phone, I chose one with a good camera built in so I would have the option to use it if I needed so decent quality photos. It takes high resolution photos, and the colors are very vivid for a phone camera. I usually prefer candid shots or landscapes, which means there is almost no planning in my photography.

However, I do clean up my shots. Usually I prefer to use Photoshop, but MediBang works well too. The first things I play around with are contrast, hue and saturation. Sometimes the lighting's too harsh, or certain aspects of the piece should look brighter than the rest. I'll select certain parts of the photo and edit the saturation to be brighter than the rest.

I did this in the photo to the left. I edited the entire piece to it was lighter than the original photo, since he was standing in the shade of the building, then carefully selected the dandelions. I played around with the filters, turning the saturation up, so they pop with the lighter background.



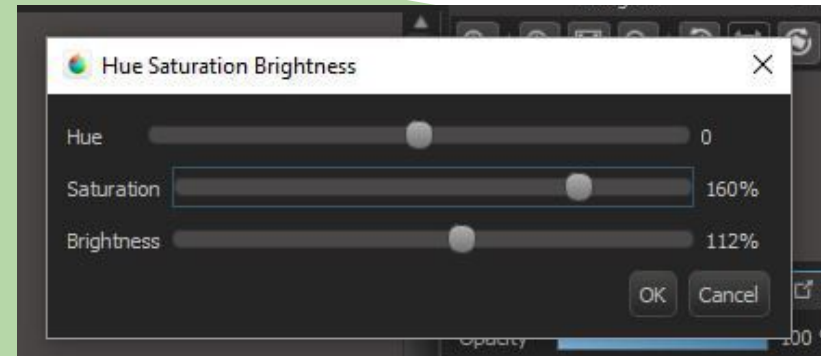
Process -Digital Drawings and Paintings-



Using digital illustration tools lets me use brighter colors than I could easily make with paints, and more intricate lines than I could comfortably try with traditional means. Being able to zoom in on a section of the drawing means I can be far more accurate with line placement, and using a color picker gives me far more options on color without having to carefully mix each color every time I need more paint.

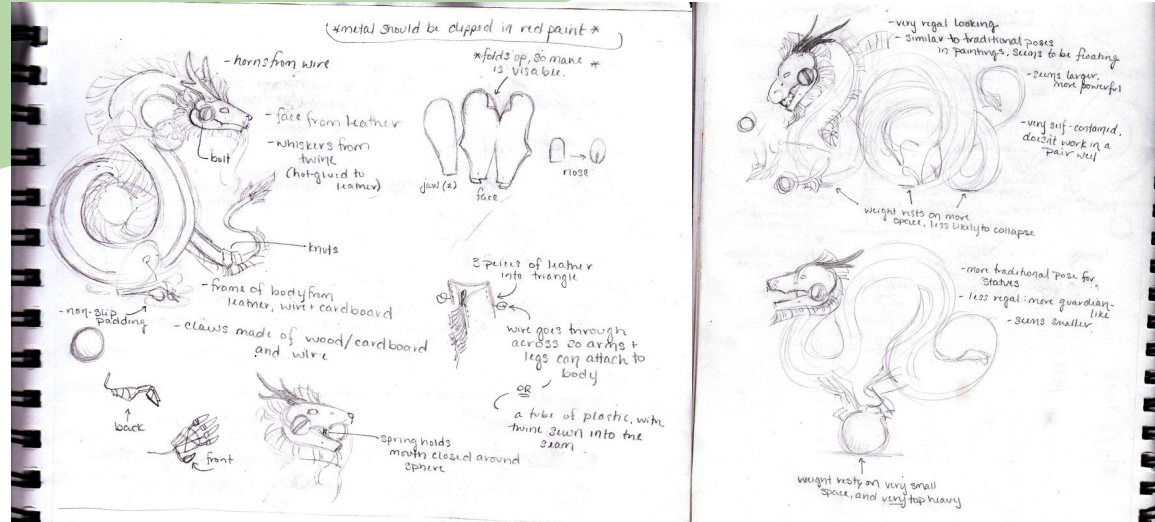
Once my sketches are done, I use a solid opacity brush to do the main line work, then start coloring the piece. Another benefit of digital art is being able to recolor sections of a piece, or edit the saturation or brightness of the piece at any time. I can change the color of the background layer at any time. Everything I do is far less permanent than traditional versions, which lets me just put stylus to tablet and get some work done, without worrying about messing something up.

I can also reference my artists work easily by opening MediBang on half of my screen, and my reference in a web browser. This helps me focus on the style and techniques I'm trying to use, so I don't get as off track.



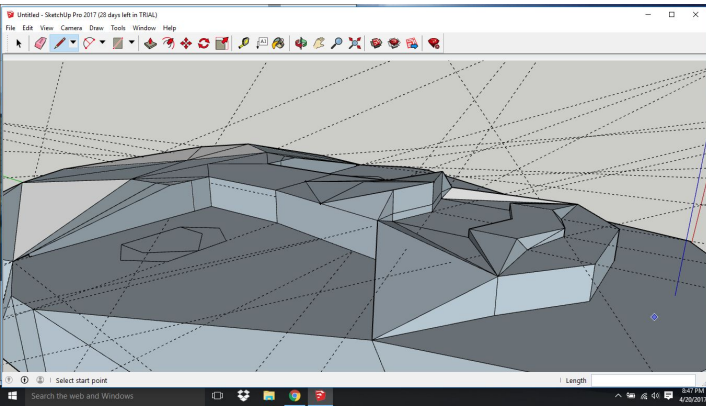
Process -3D sculpture-

When planning and designing 3s pieces, I'm especially careful to have an understanding of how the piece would look from different angles. If something is being made of a 2d material, like the head of the dragon in the planning sketches, I drew out the net I would need to cut out and stitch together. Unlike 2d pieces, I need to plan out the materials a bit better. If I'm planning a painting, I know the materials used will be paints and the size is the same as the canvas, but in found object and 3d pieces, you need to think of the qualities of the materials, and how you can manipulate it.



I also tried a 3d digital piece. I used SketchUp, a 3d modeling program intended for architectural planning, though I used it to create a sculpture. I used the guidelines to make placing lines along the x, y and z coordinates easier, and started from placing a solid shape on the ground. I used an additive technique to build up the shapes I needed, rather than building a solid shape and chipping away at the shapes. This technique is far more useful in digital sculpture, especially because of how SketchUp determines which lines form a solid plane.

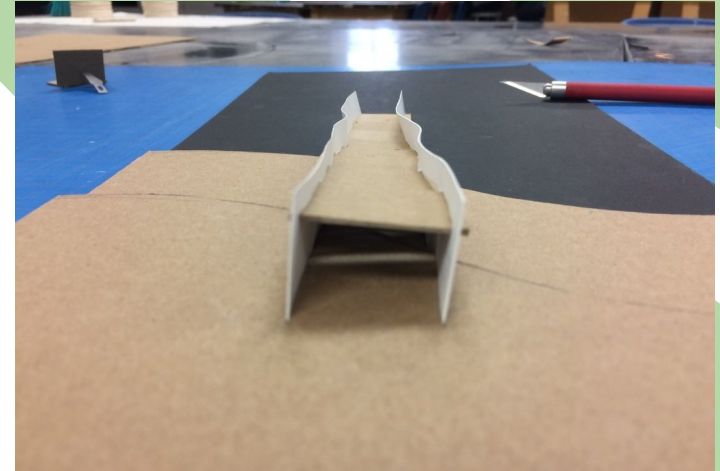
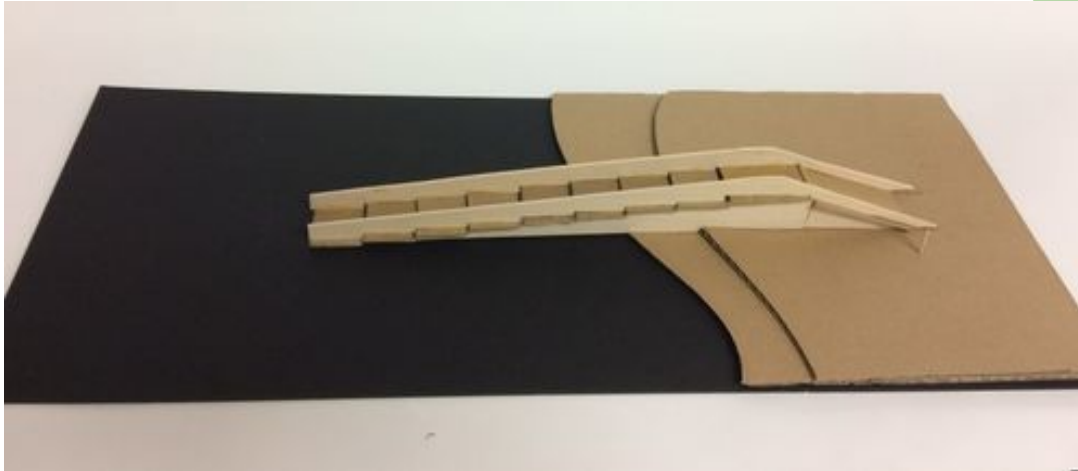
In the end, I feel this program is still best for architecture, because the program uses lines that are on the axis' to make shapes, and can't make curved shapes well.



Process -3D Architecture-

The planning of my architectural piece with the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design required a planning model, rather than a sketch. We used slightly different materials for each of these models. We started by making the shoreline with corrugated cardboard. We needed to use an Exacto-knife to cut everything, and, if we needed it, a hot glue gun to glue everything together. I had to be very careful while cutting the basswood, because the wood was very thin, and basswood tends to break and splinter, because it's soft enough to easily cut through.

When making the planning models, I used cardstock instead of basswood, and, rather than cutting each wall into multiple pieces, I just wedged the floor panels into the slits I cut, which caused the paper to warp and bend from being manhandled. It was important that the walls were strong, and the basswood would break if I treated it like the cardstock. So instead, I tried cutting the walls into a top and bottom part, so I could glue the floor to the bottom half, then the top separately.

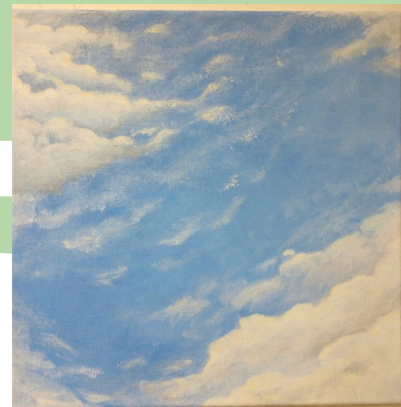


Reflection -Painting-



Sometimes, I notice while I'm painting that my style reverts from the style I'm trying to emulate to my go to style. The photo to the left was meant to be a van Gogh inspired piece. While I think it started out fairly close to a post-impressionist piece, I stopped focusing on the style I was meant to be using.

When I made *Quick Clouds*, I made sure to focus on the styles I was trying to use, and not go into auto-pilot mode. I didn't let myself zone out, and kept a photo of Monet's *Water Lilies* up on my phone, so I could see the techniques I should use. I found that helped a lot more than just trying to remember to use a certain style.

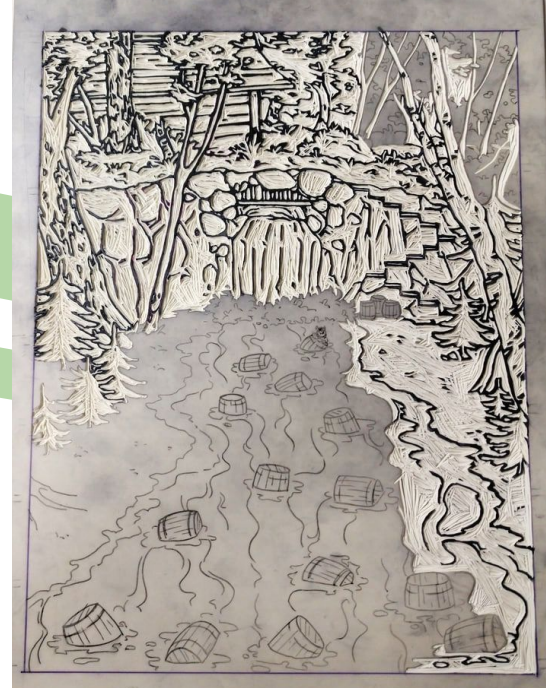


Reflection -Blockprints-

When I was making *At Sea in a Storm* in junior year, I wasn't really sure how to work with relief printing. I only knew what my teacher told us to get us started, but I didn't have any experience. Some of the problems I ran into was not being able to control the carving tool accurately, not being able to see what needed to be carved and what should be left alone, and forgetting to flip the image before transferring it to the block.

When I started making *Barrels out of Bond*, I had enough experience in block printing to fix these problems. I used tracing paper to flip my sketch, so the image would be flipped back during printing. I also figured out I can color the parts that were raised as I went, so I could see how much I'd already done, and I lined the transferred image with permanent marker so it wouldn't smear.

Controlling the carving tool came to me while making my first print. I never fully figured out how to control the pencil style tools, but I did find a mushroom-handled one, which I found much easier to control. When I started making my new print, I had a tool that was more similar to the mushroom-handle one, but let me replace the blades as needed.



Reflection -Storm in a Bottle-

I always reflect upon my art as if I will be doing it again. Some styles of art aren't really my strengths, and I doubt I will be doing it unless required for a class, but I always reflect on how I could improve it.

One of the pieces I did come back to is my drypoint. Over summer, one of my friends took a summer course on printmaking, where they taught her how to clean up the edges of drypoints. She showed me how to do this, and I wanted to use the ink washing methods from *Barrels out of Bond* to color it. It felt like the piece was too plain without any color.

Rather than using super vivid colors, like in *Barrels out of Bond*, I used more watered down inks, and only needed blues and browns to color the full piece. I didn't need to worry about smearing ink, because the drypoint ink is oil-based. The paper is also watercolor paper, because it needed to soak in water before I could print.

Then I used the blade of an Exacto-Knife to carefully scratch away the excess ink from the edges of the plate, so it looked much cleaner.

