

CNTRL+P

Printmaking in the 21st Century
by University of Tennessee Alumni



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Printmaking in the 21st Century by University of Tennessee Alumni

Ewing Gallery of Art and Architecture
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

March 11 – 24, 2015
Reception: Friday March 20, 2015, 6-8:30pm

Curated by Sarah Suzuki
Associate Curator, Department of Drawings and Prints
Museum of Modern Art, New York

This exhibition presenting prints by twenty-one University of Tennessee alumni was organized in conjunction with the 2015 SGC International Conference. Artists selected for the exhibition completed undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Tennessee between 1994 and 2014 and include Bryan Baker, Tim Dooley, Wade Guyton, Mark Hosford, Liz Klimek, Shaurya Kumar, Lauren Kussro, Eun Lee, Emily Minnie, Josh Minnie, Katie Ries, Clifton Riley, Hannah Skoonberg, Josh Smith, Veronica Siehl, Meredyth Sparks, Jessie Van der Laan, Crystal Wagner, Ericka Walker, Kelley Walker, and Ashlee Weitlauf.

“What Makes a School?”

Beauvais Lyons, Chancellor’s Professor
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

“All artistic work, like all human activity, involves the joint activity of a number, often a large number, of people. Through their cooperation, the artwork we eventually see or hear comes to be and continues to be. The work always shows signs of that cooperation.” Howard Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley, 1982), 1.

All schools and departments of art establish learning communities, and within these the well-run printshop is a unique place that nourishes its larger community in particular ways. While the sociologist Howard Becker makes the case that the teaching and practice of all art forms is intrinsically a social enterprise, printmaking in particular has always drawn on the collective aspects of the democratic function of the work of art and the collaborative processes that give it form. But like any social enterprise, learning requires an infrastructure that is comprised of people, facilities and resources.



PLATE 1
Crystal Wagner (center) works with University of Tennessee printmaking students Anna Clark and Katherine Wagner in January 2015 on her piece for the alumni exhibition “CNTRL+P.”

Certainly an engaged and creative faculty is a key ingredient in the creation of a learning community. At the University of Tennessee faculty members in printmaking do much of their creative work in the same studios where the students are working. For several decades our faculty members have been invested in making sure the studio is a safe and efficient setting conducive to making art. In our printshop creative research and teaching often overlap.

The University of Tennessee Printshop was designed with an open floor plan in the late 1970s with the guidance of our former colleague Byron McKeeby, who died suddenly in 1984. The current Art and Architecture Building, which houses both the School of Art (in the College of Arts and Sciences) and the College of Architecture and Design was completed in 1981. While the design of the print studios preceded the incorporation of computer methods in print education, McKeeby advocated for the integration of traditional and photo-based processes. The open plan encourages a climate of experimentation and the use of all techniques. The faculty has sought to expose students to a broad understanding of printmaking, one that is expansive and bridges the fine arts and design.

The students themselves form one of the most vital resources for the program. They offer each other and the faculty opportunities to reexamine some of the basic principles and assumptions that define a discipline. For nearly two decades the students have maintained an active print club, and through funding from the UT Cultural Affairs Board, the UT Print Club has hosted lectures by, and collaborations with, visiting artists. Curators and scholars have also been invited to share their perspectives on prints. In fact, Sarah Suzuki, curator of this exhibition, was a recent

visitor. Fundraisers, staged each semester by the UT Print Club, help finance travel for undergraduate and graduate students alike to MAPC and SGC International Printmaking Conferences.

For nearly a decade our students have been enriched by the Betsy Worden Endowment in Printmaking, which in recent years has helped to support our linkage with the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wroclaw, Poland. The linkage allows us to host two printmaking students from Poland in our studios each September with two of our graduate students working there each May. This extends our learning community in significant ways.

Graduate students, in particular, are encouraged to be accountable not only to printmaking traditions but also to the ever-increasing set of tools in print media and to their expanded applications. Theory and practice have always been taught side-by-side, and students have been challenged to position their own work in a larger context. Equipped in these ways, students are challenged to contribute to the profession through exhibitions, presentations, and participation in conferences. The goal is to prepare them to enter the world beyond the studio, ready to establish a creative practice and lead a creative life.

This exhibition offers a window into the work of some, but certainly not all, of our alumni who continue to make prints. It is exciting for us to present this exhibition in conjunction with the 2015 SGC International Conference and to welcome so many of our returning alumni and friends to Knoxville. This exhibition provided an opportunity for Crystal Wagner, an alumna, to return to campus in January 2015 to work with our Intermediate Print Workshop course in creation of her piece for the exhibition (plates 1-3). Connecting former students with current ones is an especially meaningful learning resource.

I am very grateful to Sarah Suzuki for taking on the task of curating an exhibition that presents both the quality and breadth of work currently being done by UT alumni. I am also very grateful to all of the alumni who submitted work for consideration by Ms Suzuki. Thanks also go to Sam Yates, Director of the Ewing Gallery and gallery staff Sarah McFalls and T. Michael Martin for their work in support of this exhibition. I am also grateful to Dorothy Habel, Director of the UT School of Art, for her support and encouragement.

So, what makes a school? While a school is made possible through an infrastructure that includes people, facilities and resources, its legacy is in the contributions of its alumni, many of who have gone on to have active careers as artists, designers and educators. This alumni exhibition showcases the work of some of our alumni, but its aim is to celebrate the achievements of all.



PLATE 2
Assisted by graduate student James Boychuk-Hunter, undergraduate Alizabeth Patterson pushes a large inking roller to make a blend roll for printing on the reverse side of Crystal Wagner's screenprints.



PLATE 3
Alyssa Gauci and Cloe Lane print more 250 screenprints for Crystal Wagner's exhibition project.

CNTRL+P: Printmaking in the 21st Century by University of Tennessee Alumni

Sarah Suzuki, Associate Curator
Department of Drawings and Prints
Museum of Modern Art, New York

In his introduction to this catalogue, Beauvais Lyons, Chancellor's Professor in the School of Art, who, along with his colleagues has been a driving force behind UT's stellar printmaking program poses the question, "What makes a school?" and resolves that its alumni are its lasting legacy. The alumni whose work is discussed here represent a microcosm of the larger print world, displaying a depth and breadth of practice, and positing an expanded conception of what print can and might be.

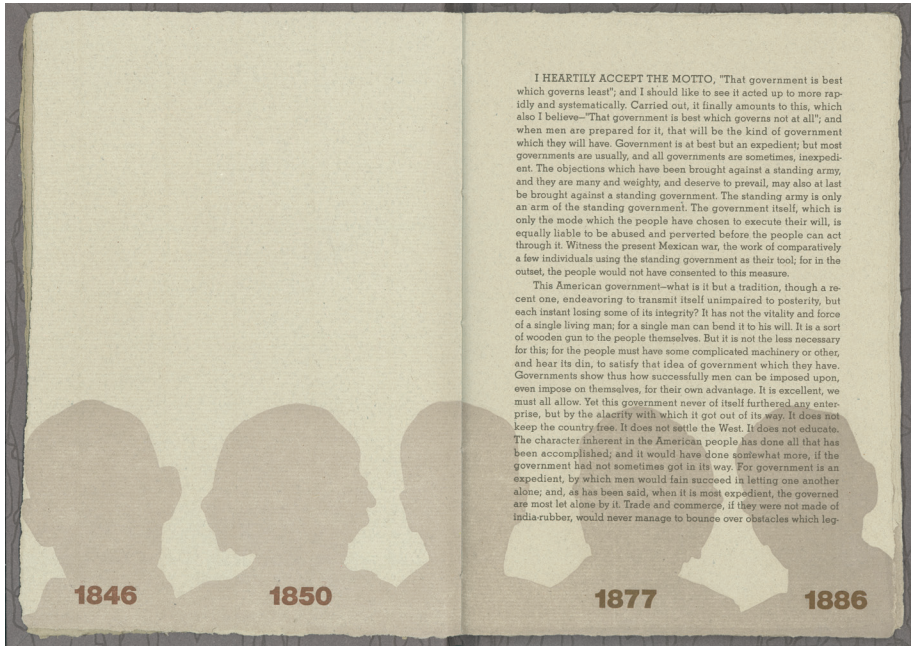


PLATE 4
Ashlee Weitlauf, *Civil Disobedience*, letterpress and polymer relief on handmade paper, 9 x 6 inches, 2005.

Printed formats have a well-established connection to the dissemination of political ideas, a tradition that is mined here in multiple ways. Ashlee Weitlauf uses a historical format for expressing dissent – the pamphlet – in work that both aligns itself with precedents like Henry David Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*, and addresses contemporary issues (plate 4). 2006's *Water is Rising* was made in response to Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath, and while the text is structured and styled to evoke the nineteenth century (plate 5), its content is unquestioningly twenty-first century. The voices of New Orleans residents are evoked in layered graffiti captured from the walls and rooftops of the city's buildings that creates a cacophonous visual chorus (plate 6). This striking juxtaposition between this handwritten vernacular and the stately letterpress text is unified by the tideline that marks the water level from page to page. Ericka Walker turns to another ephemeral format for circulating information, drawing on the language of early twentieth century propaganda posters. In her work, Walker raises complex questions about nationalism and individuality, duty, responsibility, men and machines. In *Begins* (plate 7), just the tail end of a submarine is visible, churning the surface of the sea. It suggests the bravado of military recruitment posters while subversively questioning the nature of the career that is said to be starting.





PLATE 5
Ashlee Weitlauf, *Water is Rising*, letterpress, polymer relief, and ink jet on handmade paper, 6.5 x 7 inches, 2006.

PLATE 6
Ashlee Weitlauf, *Water is Rising*, letterpress, polymer relief, and ink jet on handmade paper, 6.5 x 7 inches, 2006.

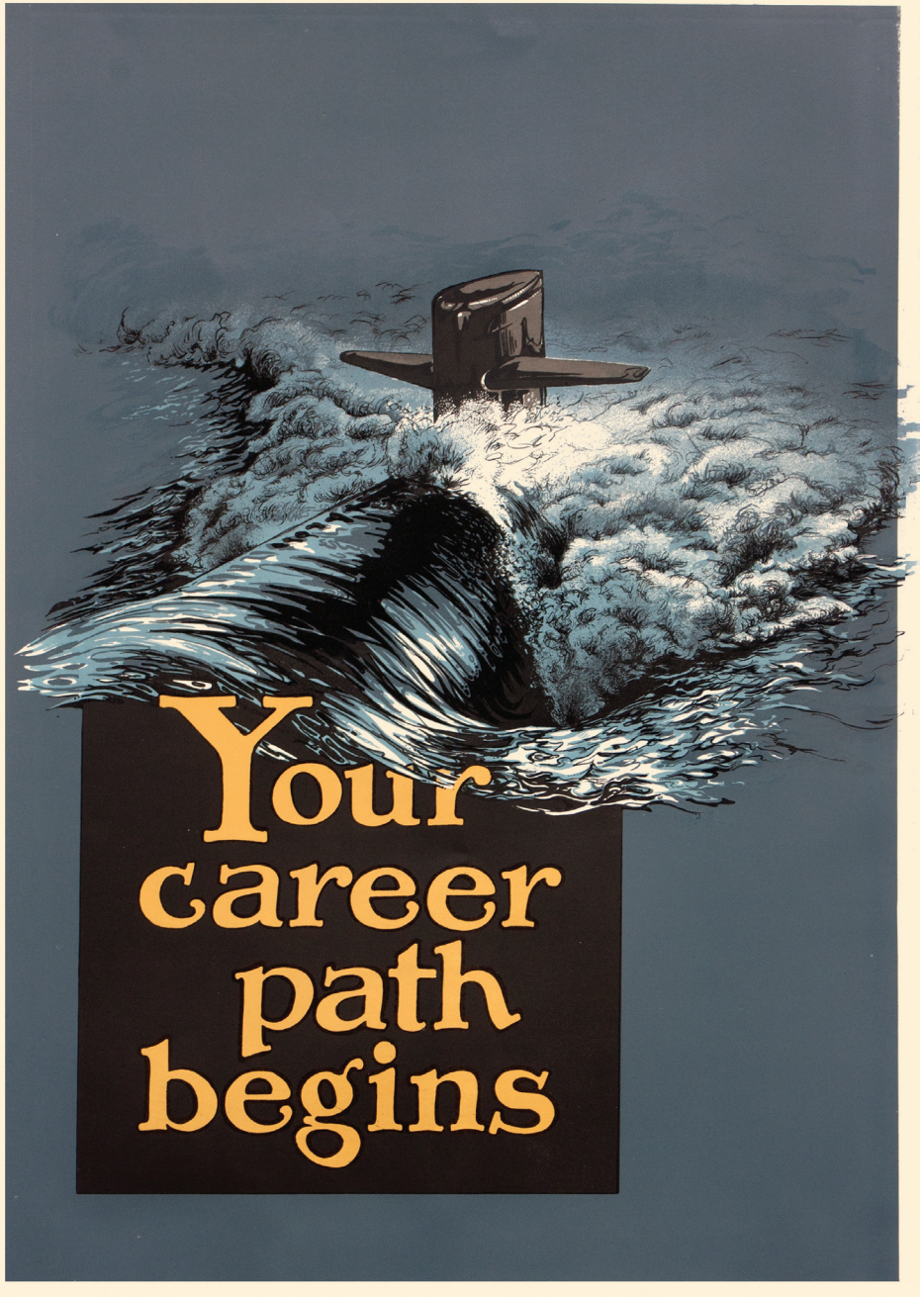


PLATE 7
Ericka Walker, *Begins*, lithograph, 36 x 25 inches, 2014.

PLATE 8
Elizabeth Klimek, *Solid III*, lithograph, 8 x 5 x 7 inches, 2008.



PLATE 9
Katie Ries, detail from *What You've Got*, seed balls with regional wildflower mix and offer to trade, size variable, 2015.



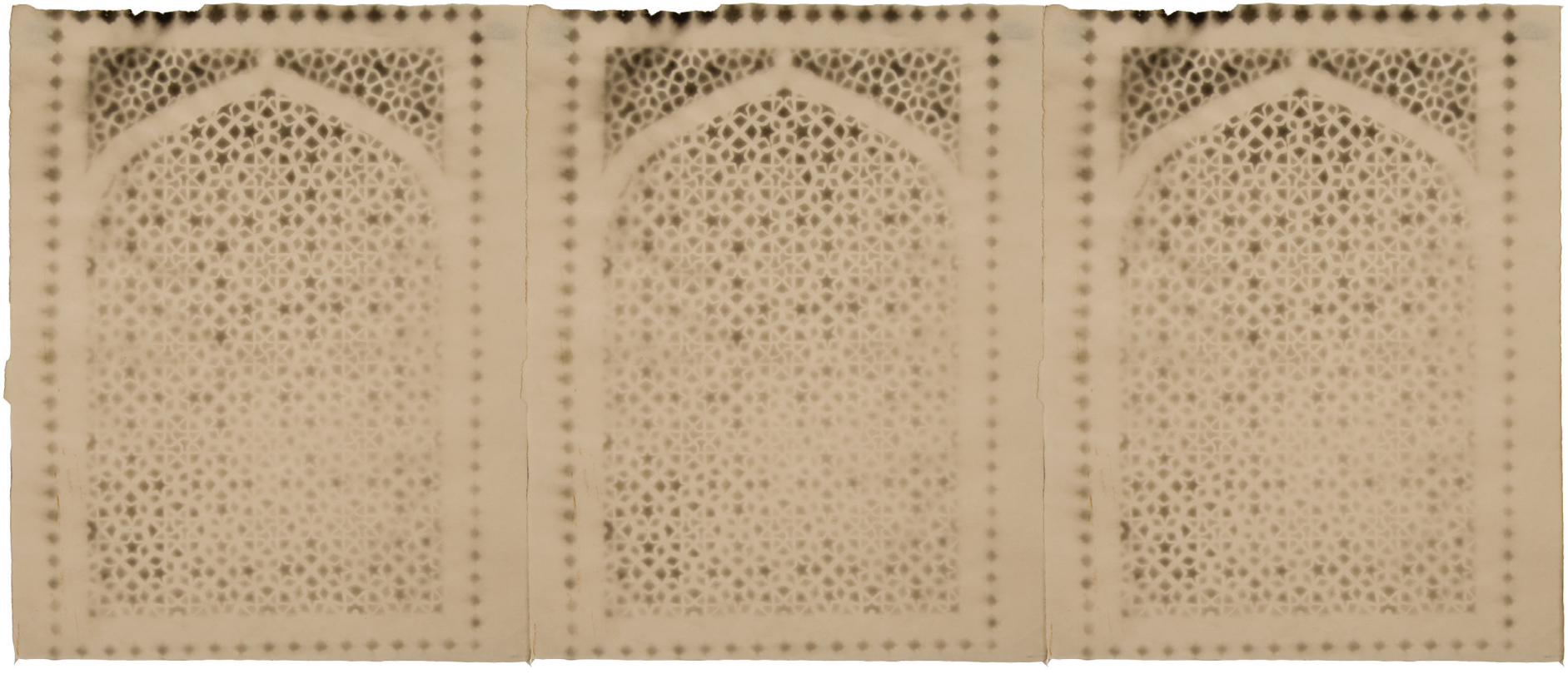
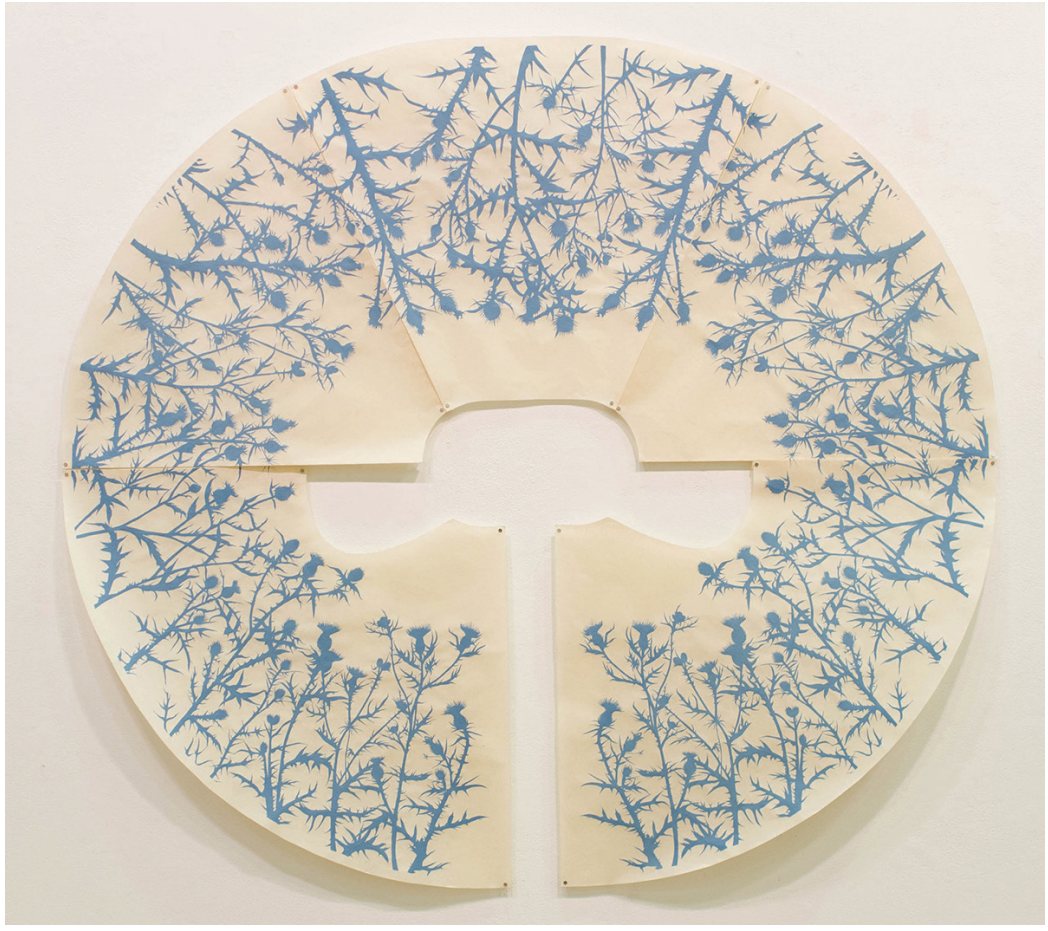


PLATE 10
Shaurya Kumar, *Jaili IV*, stencil and soot on paper, 26 x 54 inches, 2013.

Other artists use their printed work as a means of investigating issues of deep social, political, or environmental concern. Elizabeth Klimek's *Solid III* (plate 8) was made in 2008, at the height of the economic downturn, as property values plummeted, and the archetypal American dream of homeownership seemed for many an unattainable goal. This small structure offers a sense of solidity, suggesting the durability of wood. In fact, it is merely a facade, a trompe l'oeil pattern on paper, that could be easily blown over, or crushed with the force of one's palm in an apt metaphor for the predatory lending practices that resulted in an inundation of defaults and foreclosures. Ecological stewardship issues are at the core of *What You've Got* (plate 9), in which Katie Ries engages the viewer, asking them to become participants in a trade-based exchange. Through her *Urban Land Scouts Project* she uses print media and other tools in a social practice that relies on multiples as part of locally scaled gift economies. For this exhibition, a low platform is covered with rows of seed balls, and visitors are invited to swap something (perhaps that stray button from their pocket, or the almost-empty tin of breath mints, the packet of artificial sweetener that didn't go into the morning coffee) in place of one of them. Over time, the grid loses its regularity; the balls are displaced by



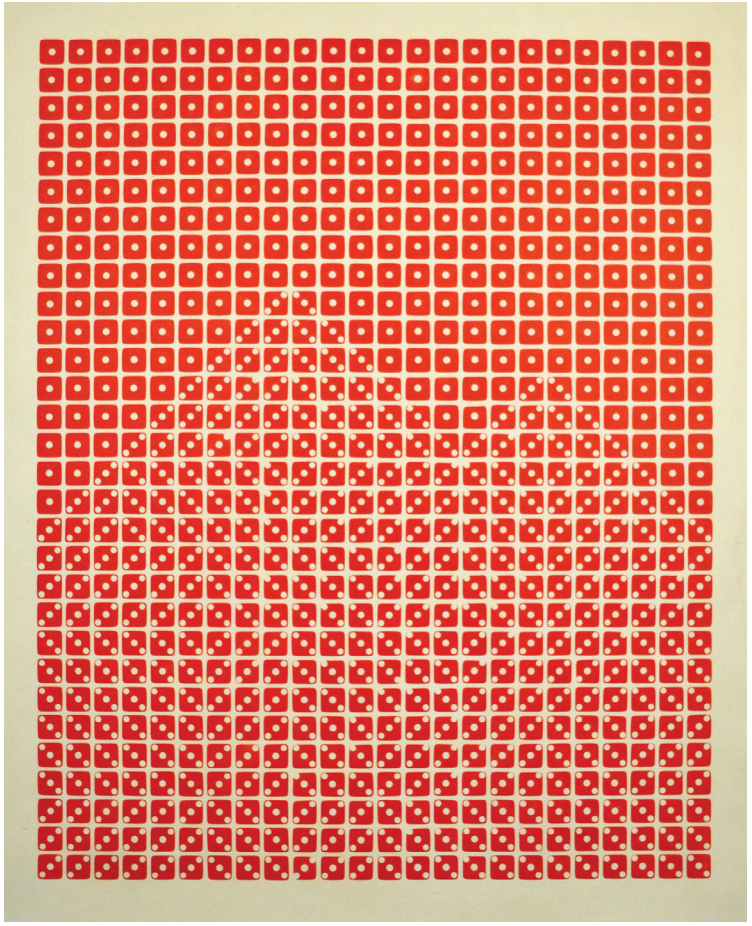


PLATE 11
Hannah Skoonberg, *Walking Through Thistles*, screenprint, 60 x 60 inches, 2013.

PLATE 12
Bryan Christopher Baker, *Gamma Corvi*, letterpress, 21 x 17 inches, 2012.

the motley assortment of disposable objects that have taken their place. Somewhere, hopefully the seed balls have been sown, with wildflowers now growing.

Inherent to printmaking are concerns about the trace and the imprint, ideas that are often aligned with issues of memory and history. In Shaurya Kumar's series *Monument(less) Scapes*, he explores the shift in meaning when art or architectural fragments, as in the case of *Jali IV* (plate 10), are shifted from one context to another. How might its significance morph as it's moved from its original architectural site to a museum vitrine or collector's home? Cognizant of India's 5000 years of history and the country's breakneck pace of modernization and industrialization, he makes a record of this architectural screen in soot, creating a mark in the present as the past becomes

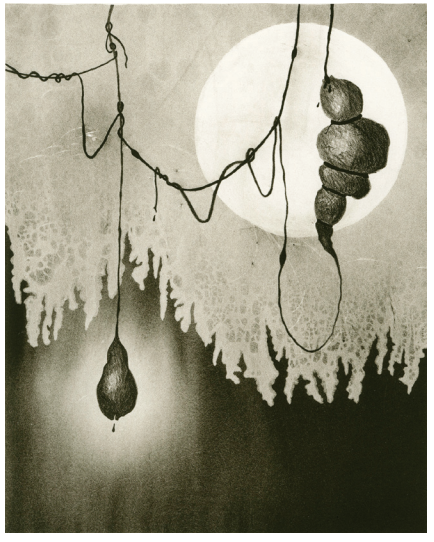
increasingly obscured. Hannah Skoonberg's work is often about personal memory, and she uses Japanese paper as though it were a fabric element, exploiting its seeming fragile but structurally resilient nature, in *Walking Through Thistles* (plate 11). Rendered as a skirt pattern, one imagines the discomfort of the prickles against one's legs. She performs a different kind of alchemical feat with the sagging chain-link fence of *Backyard Memory Object* rendered not in unforgiving metal, but instead in malleable paper. It trades solidity for ephemerality, and becomes a dreamlike object, incapable of its original function.

The seriality made possible by using a matrix offers the potential for in-depth formal investigations. Bryan Christopher Baker uses a ready-made visual language: that of dice. Baker suggests the existence of endless variations on this motif, from fields of red and white dice that all display a single dot, to interventions in this grid that take form of vectors, geometric shapes, or even perhaps a landscape of mountainous peaks, as in *Gamma Corvi* (plate 12). Each of these works is titled after a celestial element, a star, which suggests that these earthly, quotidian dice could actually be otherworldly, marking points in a constellation. Clifton Riley's project *into the rising* (plate 13) employs a vocabulary of the artist's own making – a body of twenty-six printmaking matrices spanning lithography, intaglio, and relief processes – that are then deployed in myriad combinations and permutations. These images have multivalent references, from building facades and cityscapes to scaffolding and infrastructure networks, and are layered so that there are different strengths and densities of imagery. The effect is one of palimpsest, as new strata are added, the old fade away.



PLATE 13
Clifton Riley, *the rising 15*. Lithograph and intaglio, 22.5 x 29.5 inches, 2013.

PLATE 14
Eun Lee, *Consume*, lithograph, 14 x 11 inches, 2013.



The "language of printmaking" is, of course, languages, as each medium has its own distinct sensibility. For some, a single technique offers seemingly endless possibilities. In a group of recent lithographs, Eun Lee explores different permutations and settings for forms of her own devising. In *Consume* (plate 14), two mysterious, organic shapes, akin to a burst pod and a cocoon, are silhouetted against a full moon in an undetermined landscape. Lee reimages these forms in various settings that exploit the range of lithography's effects, from opacity to translucency, watery drips to gentle brushwork. In *The Holes is How We Got Through* (plate 15), Veronica Siehl applies the blue and white palette of cyanotype to a variety of forms as she explores ideas of cracks and shadows. Siehl's repetitive mark making, suggestive of pelts or tiny seeds, become not the positive, but the negative in this process, as areas allow light through to make a mark. The forms seem organic, natural, and familiar – though are ultimately unidentifiable – creating tension within the rigor of the geometric grid. Screenprint is the language of choice for Mark Hosford, and is one in which he has created his own universe, comprised of complex architectural spaces that seem at turns playful and ominous. Drawing on a range of influences, described by the artist as "punk, skate culture, heavy metal, comics and tattoo imagery," these landscapes are marked by the supreme flatness and impenetrable opacity of this

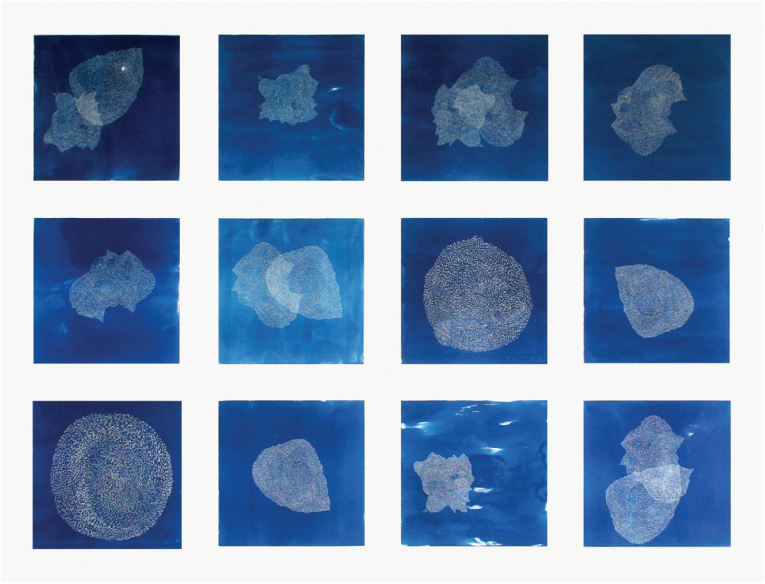


PLATE 15
Veronica Siehl, *The Holes is How We Got Through*, cyanotypes, 65 x 90 inches, 2013.

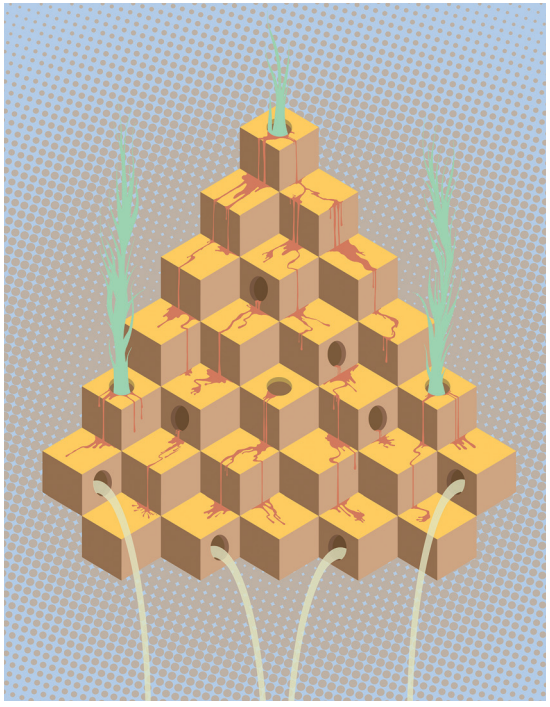


PLATE 16
Mark Hosford, *Mt. Qbert*, screenprint, 28 x 22 inches, 2011.

medium, as they drip with luscious rainbow goo, or require us to navigate through the maze of leaking cubes that is *Mt. Qbert* (plate 16).

One aspect of Josh Smith's multidisciplinary practice has been the in-depth exploration of single motifs including palm trees and, as seen here, fish. This exhibition includes a variety of examples made over a nearly decade-long engagement with this theme, made in a range of print media from lithographs and woodcuts to monotypes and screenprints. Each offers another take, suggests a new facet, and becomes a vehicle through which to explore the specific qualities and outcomes of different techniques, both singly and in combination (plate 17). This combining of mediums can become a kind of hybridity, a piling up of different modes of production. Wade Guyton's use of print permeates many aspects of his practice, with the production of artists books forming a steady and integral part. The pages of the recent volumes, known as *Blue, Red and Yellow*, function almost like a print pile up. Each spread (plate 18) depicts a pile of drawings on the studio floor. The drawings are comprised of ink jet prints on top of commercially printed magazine or book pages. The photographs of the drawings are then produced as commercially printed offset pages in a meta "print of print on print" production. This exhibition also includes several adhesive-backed floor pieces (plate 19) that Guyton has created in collaboration with his UT classmate Kelley Walker under the name Guyton/Walker, a collaborative relationship that was established during the formative years of study in a common studio setting.

Meredyth Sparks overlays patterned fabrics on intricately cut digital prints on canvas in *Extraction (La Petite Ferme (Blackbird) Wrapped Stretcher)* (plate 20). Sparks takes familiar everyday objects like radiators and caned chairs, and domestic textiles like upholstery and wallpaper, exploring their connections to design, decoration, and sites of labor and production, and makes them alien through her layered interventions. These refuse to sit politely on the wall, draping like swags, or standing on the floor like screens. Likewise Tim Dooley's *Mixed-Product 15 (Sound-System)* (plate 21), an ongoing project, occupies a space between print and sculpture. His open-armed embrace of what he termed "any and all chintzy, shiny, disposable, day-glo materials" results in tableaux that juxtapose abstraction and figuration, with images borrowed from mass media sources and pop culture

references, plus commercially available materials, resulting each time in a different mashup of cultural and contextual references. Jessie Van der Laan initiates a subtle investigation of gravity and weightlessness in *the missing time* (plate 22). Small parachutes in natural tones of white, ivory, and taupe seem to lift off, rising slowly into the gallery air. The monotypes accompany them to seek the same freedom, fluttering away from the wall, and illustrate their journey in different scales, colors, and conditions. Combined with her sculptural parachutes, the prints create a sense of the ethereal and the fleeting.

The idea that printed work is two-dimensional has been irrefutably rebutted. Lauren Kussro works beyond such limitations, creating scenes of lush beauty. Working with a variety of mediums and materials, she coaxes improbable forms from paper, suggesting coral, barnacles and kelp in an ethereal palette, creating wall-bound microcosms that stretch into three dimensions. One such miniature universe, formerly installed at Nashville International Airport, *Our Ocean* (plate 23) suggests a twist on public art: rather than memorializing a civic figure on a monumental scale, it offered a sense of intimacy, delicacy, and visual pleasure among the hustle and bustle





PLATE 17
Josh Smith, Untitled, lithograph, 25.25 x 16 inches, 2005,
Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York.

PLATE 18
Wade Guyton, Spread from *Wade Guyton: Zeichnungen für ein kleines Zimmer Grafisches Kabinett-Secession, Wien 27. Mai-21. August 2011*, **7.5 x 10.375 inches, 2011.**

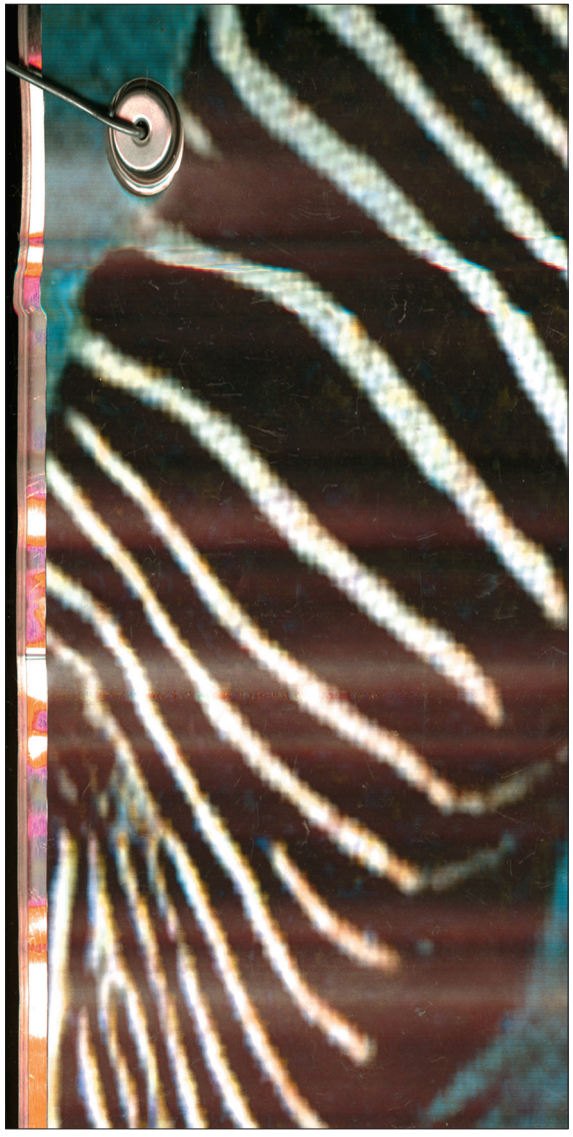


PLATE 19
Guyton\Walker, *Untitled*, digital print on adhesive vinyl, 96 x 48 inches, 2009-2015.

PLATE 20
Meredyth Sparks, *Extraction (La Petite Ferme (Blackbird) Wrapped Stretcher)*, cut-out digital print on canvas, fabric-wrapped stretcher, 78 x 57 inches, 2014.







of the arrivals area. Crystal Wagner's printed environments tend toward the all-encompassing. Her large-scale installations explore the complex relationship between people and their environments, which are increasingly disconnected from natural settings. Wagner uses materials of our modern, tech-obsessed world, trolling dollar stores and supply depots for materials, repurposing the machine made and the disposable and integrating them with her own carefully considered and produced printed elements. The resulting projects are hand-made but not human-scaled, operating almost like parasitic organisms that grow to fill all the space available. For this exhibition, Wagner has worked with current UT printmaking students to create *Fall*, a large-scale work that utilizes multiple and varied screenprints to connect the Art and Architecture Building atrium to the entrance of the Ewing Gallery (plates 1-3).

A number of artists are engaged with practical applications of print in the world. Among them is Emily Minnie, who draws on a diverse range of sources from the Arts and Crafts movement to children's book illustration, to create hand-drawn wallpapers. *Peony Bloom* (reproduced as part of this catalogue's end-papers) began as a detailed

PLATE 21
Tim Dooley, *Mixed-Product 15 (Sound-System)*, mixed media screenprints, 10 x 12 x 3 feet, 2015.

PLATE 22
Jessie Van der Laan, *the missing time*, monoprints and parachutes, size variable, 2007.

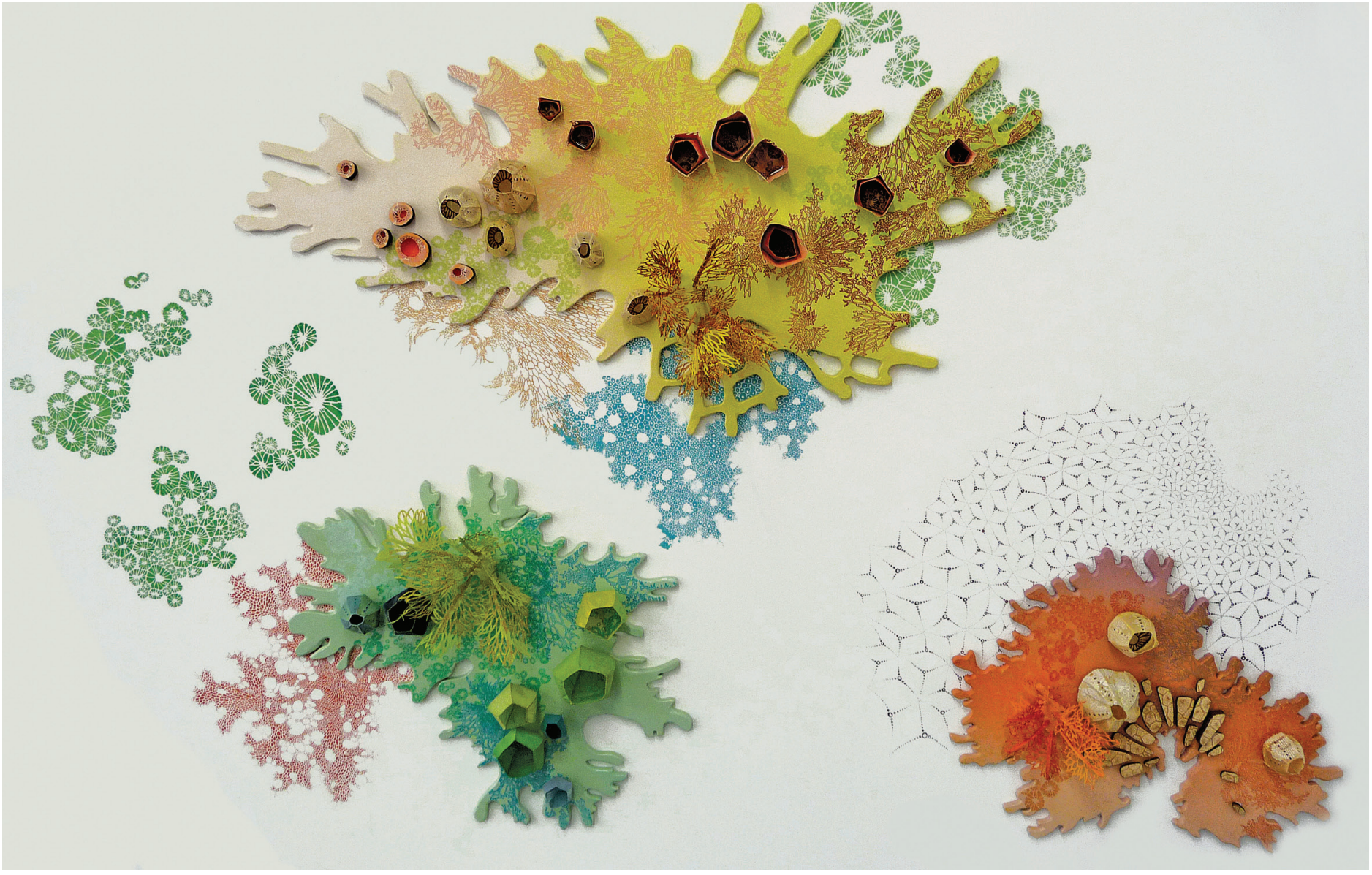


PLATE 23
Lauren Kussro, *Our Ocean,* screenprint, monotype and paint on paper and wood, screenprint on wall, thread, wax, size variable, 2013.

pencil study of lush blossoms and buds populated by insects and butterflies. Scanned, arranged in a pattern, and digitally printed in high resolution, the drawing retains the subtlety, texture, and varying densities of the original, but is now embedded with the possibility of the infinite repeat. Josh Minnie's engagement with wallpaper veers in a different direction, as he uses it as a means to examine various permutations of pattern. In *Subduction* (plate 24), Minnie breaks down and reconstructs camouflage using the language of 3-D vector graphics, creating an angular, dimensional iteration that is both immediately familiar and vaguely alien. Issued here in four different color combinations, each suggests different qualities, from a retro 1980s color riot, to polar floes and ice caps, to a more traditional military application.

The twenty-one artists in this exhibition demonstrate the range of print in the twenty-first century. Some hew close to traditional techniques; others work from greatly expanded definitions. There is work that is practical and work that is conceptual; work in two-dimensions and in three. Taken together, they illustrate the hybridity of material, medium, and philosophy that evidence the extent to which the concerns, languages, and applications of printmaking have infiltrated all aspects of artistic production.



PLATE 24
Josh Minnie, *Subduction*, sections of screenprinted wallpaper, size variable, 2014.

INFORMATION AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Bryan Baker	MFA 2003	stripedlight.com
Tim Dooley	MFA 1997	www.uni.edu/artdept/dooley.html
Wade Guyton	BA 1995	www.petzel.com/artists/wade-guyton
Mark Hosford	MFA 2001	sugarboypress.blogspot.com
Liz Klimek	MFA 1997	elizabethklimek.com
Shaurya Kumar	MFA 2007	shauryakumar.com
Lauren Kussro	MFA 2006	www.laurenkussro.com
Eun Lee	BFA 2000	www.scad.edu/academics/faculty/eun-sook-lee
Emily Minnie	MFA 2003	emilyminnie.com
Josh Minnie	MFA 2004	joshminnie.com
Katie Ries	MFA 2010	whoshareswins.com
Clifton Riley	MFA 2013	cliftonriley.com
Hannah Skoonberg	MFA 2014	skoonberg.com
Josh Smith	BFA 1998	joshasmith.com
Veronica Siehl	MFA 2010	veronicasiehl.com
Meredyth Sparks	BFA 1994	meredythsparks.com
Jessie Van der Laan	MFA 2009	jessievanderlaan.com
Crystal Wagner	MFA 2008	crystalwagner.com
Ericka Walker	MFA 2010	erickawalker.com
Kelley Walker	BFA 1998	www.paulacoopergallery.com/artists/KW
Ashlee Weitlauf	BFA 2002	ashleeweitlauf.com

COVER
Clifton Riley, *the rising 100*, lithograph, intaglio, relief, 22.5 x 59.25 inches, 2013.

ENDPAPERS
Emily Minnie, *Peony Bloom*, section of digitally printed wallpaper, size variable, 2014.

THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE KNOXVILLE

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