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Sculpting of the landscape

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Sculpting Of the Landscape

By

Kaya Rossi Wielopolski

B.A., Binghamton University, Binghamton, New York, 1997

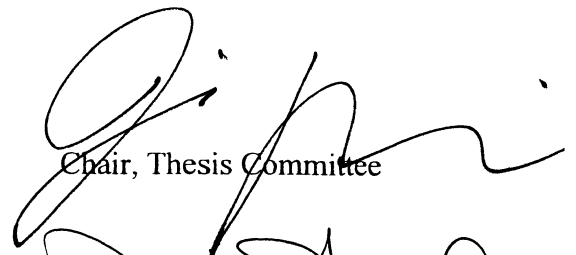
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2002

Approved by:



Chair, Thesis Committee



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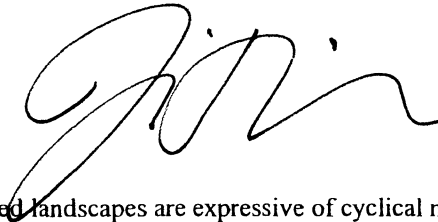
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Sculpting of the Landscape

Committee Chair James Bailey

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Bailey', written in a cursive style.

Waterscapes and other weathered landscapes are expressive of cyclical movements. The passage of time is persistent in the disturbance and conversion of infinite forms in the landscape. The processes within the environment are adaptable and transient as the cycles of formation and decay continually respond to elements in their pathways. Through the study of science I developed a deeper understanding and awareness of the visible elements and invisible forces interacting, their interdependence and the simultaneity of their activities. The awareness of parts, interdependency and simultaneity of processes is what I try to convey to the viewer

The format of abstraction allows me to explore the circulation of fundamental components within systems of the natural environment. Line, color, shape, composition and the layering of various printmaking techniques mimic a functioning process as they respond and interact with one another transforming the picture plane.

Introduction

My thesis work is about understanding adaptable, transitory aspects of processes within the natural landscape. In order to understand the how and why of a process's functional aspects, there must be an awareness of all the components involved, including the possible pasts that have led to the present state. I focus on expressing the interdependence of individual elements as they come into contact and evolve into a functioning system that constantly recreates itself. I strive to express the passage of time and adaptation as the two primary components of natural processes.

I work abstractly because I believe the visual elements of abstraction such as color, line, shape and pictorial structure speak more clearly to process than a naturalistic landscape image. A naturalistic image emphasizes an illusion of a place and I am interested in the constant motion of process as it functions within the landscape. Whenever an action occurs in the landscape, there is an equal and opposite, responsive re-action. As I construct my images, I am aware of how colors react to one another, how one shape relates to another and how line relates to shape. Likewise, I am attentive to the contrast of transparency verses opacity of colors and paper, intentionally layering different printmaking techniques. These formal elements are actively engaging with one another as I am reacting to them.

I choose earthy colors to maintain an organic, natural association. The more brilliant colors signify extreme change or strong forces entering into a system. The shapes I produce are sensually organic, referring to the curvature of the coastline, mountain ridges, plateaus, valleys, and the meandering of a river system. The line quality

within my prints varies in thickness and intensity, but remains loose and expressive in character.

Invisible activities of and in the landscape have provided me a discourse for visible elements. My background in science and observation of natural processes is the foundation for my investigation in natural systems. I transmute and translate these systems into the processes by which I create my prints. Translation takes place via factors I control, and factors that are uncontrollable, or variables that I choose not to control. There is a conscious deliberation, as well as a non-conscious, immediate response that takes place while I am printing. I aim to convey an awareness of individual elements, the systems and cycles they construct, their interdependence on each other and the simultaneity of their actions.

Materials and Techniques

As with science, there are uncontrollable variables within printmaking that continually force alterations in design and idea. Spontaneity and discovery are critical elements, in my working process. I remain open to the potential of all printmaking forms, utilizing intaglio¹, relief², screen printing³, aluminum plate lithography⁴, and an array of materials and tools. The expressive range of these different surfaces increases the amount of marks and textures I am capable of producing, in which, each surface requires a different treatment, multiplying the possibilities within the results.

The copper intaglio plates I use are recycled, and contain imperfections that I work into the compositions. The dry point⁵ and etching⁶ methods used to put down marks and texture allow for a variety of different treatments upon the copper plate surface. Dry points permit a rougher and harsher handling of the plate. The plates are sometimes rubbed against abrasive surfaces to produce a chaotic mass of lines. Etchings are much more delicate in their handling. My hand is loose and light on the tools as they sweep across the plate because the acid will remove the copper to create the desired line or texture.

Relief blocks share with dry point techniques a direct method of carving a mark. However, unlike dry point, undoing a mark in a relief is not an option. Since mistakes

¹ **Intaglio** is a method of printing in which ink is forced into incised lines or recessions on a plate, the surface is wiped clean, dampened paper placed on top, and paper and plate run through an etching press to transfer the ink to the paper. Encompasses etching, engraving, aquatint, collagraph, and other techniques.

² **Relief** is a printmaking method in which the inked surfaces of the plate or block prints and areas or lines that are gouged out do not print. Examples include woodcut, linoleum cut, relief etching and relief collagraph.

³ **Screen printing** is a stencil process using a mesh stretched over a frame. Ink is forced through the openings in the mesh, which can be blocked in a variety of methods.

⁴ **Lithography** is a printing process based on the unmixability of water and grease; usually done on limestone or grained metal plates.

⁵ **Dry point** is an intaglio method in which a sharp needle or diamond point is used to scratch a line into a metal plate. The resultant burr of metal that is raised holds more ink than the incised line itself and give the rich, velvety stroke characteristic of the technique. The plate wears out rapidly because the burr soon breaks off during printing.

⁶ **Etching** is an intaglio method in which lines are incised in a metal plate by acid. The surface is covered with an acid-resistant ground that is scratched to expose the metal lines to the acid.

cannot be taken back, direct carving is a good vehicle for spontaneous expression. The physical act of carving away the block is invigorating. I use mahogany and oak covered door skin boards for their grain patterns and a Medium Density Fiberboard (MDF) for its smooth surface. The wood grain has an inherent character of movement and adds an organic, sensual, initial feel to the print. The MDF board allows for solid blocks of color, and both materials add a feeling of stability to the images.

There is a personal enjoyment in the durability of these materials, which does not demand that I handle them as precious objects. I am able to deal with them like the wind whipping through the canyon or a storm beating on the land. As scrapes, bangs and breakages occur, those marks, too, become important elements within my images.

Printing a relief block can be done in one of two ways: by using a press or by hand rubbing. Printing by press gives a more consistent, controlled, and calculated result. I use western papers⁷ when I print with the press because the paper's thickness requires a large amount of pressure in order to get solid blocks of color. I hand rub my prints when I work with eastern papers⁸. Eastern papers are thinner, and hand rubbing allows for inconsistencies to occur when I do not wish to control the outcome, but yield to the surprises that appear as I pull the print.

Screen printing is a rapid process. The water-based inks dry fast, permitting me to layer different images and colors in a rapid manner. The ability to block out certain areas of the image with ease grants me the option of changing the image quickly and efficiently. The fast pace of screen prints are akin to a flash flood that instantly and drastically alters the land as it takes its course.

⁷Western paper is paper that is made with short fiber, heavy in weight and opaque.

⁸ Eastern paper is paper that is made with long fibers, lightweight and usually transparent.

On the other hand, lithography functions more like a feedback loop; sensing, evaluating, and reacting to changes in environmental conditions as a result of information fed back into a system. I work with a liquid drawing material called tusche⁹, which is a technique that alternates between direct and indirect interactions throughout the process. On one hand, attention to detail in lithography forces me to fight for control of the materials. On the other hand, the reticulation of the tusche is entirely out of my control.

While focusing on these materials and the intrinsic methods they involve, I experiment with the range of their abilities. My technical understanding of principles and methods permits the exploration of challenges within creating and producing the images.

⁹ **Tusche** is a wet greasy drawing fluid used for lithography. It gives painterly feel to the drawing and during evaporation reticulation occurs making the image look like a wash.

Historical Influences

The study of science, specifically ecosystems, has had a direct influence on my work. Ecosystems are composed of parts that contribute to a whole, which is greater than the sum of those parts. To understand the workings of an ecosystem, its parts must be dissected and examined. Once the individual elements of the system are understood, the pathway of each element, as it moves to connect with other elements, can be traced until the element depicts its interconnectedness in the complete functioning ecosystem.

Each form of an element can be thought of as occupying a separate compartment in the ecosystem, like a room in a house. In this analogy, biochemical transformations are fluxes of the elements among the compartments – that is, their movement between rooms.¹⁰ (fig. 1)

This diagram displays the movement and interconnectedness of elements between the biotic (living) and abiotic (nonliving) compartments of an ecosystem. It is through the synergistic action of these pathways that the whole is realized into existence.

Some of the images that enhance my understanding of the pathways in ecosystems come from diagrams in science textbooks (fig. 2). It is the combination of the step-by-step diagrams and compartment type models that enable me to expand on my ideas, and comprehend more abstract thoughts about complex systems. These types of diagrams are visually stimulating, as they sometimes move in circles, which show the direction of incoming and outgoing components. I enjoy the progression the images display as different stages of transformation unfold. It feels magical to look at the landscape and know how it moved, what forces were acting on it, at what intensity, and the length of time it may have taken to create the present structure.

¹⁰ Ricklefs p. 125.

An early artistic influence was sculptor Henry Moore, yet it was his *Elephant Skull* etching series, 1969, (fig. 3), not his sculptures, that impacted me. This series demonstrated his ability to take a natural object and distill from it its essence, which seemed to echo my idea of trying to accentuate the processes occurring within the landscape. The lines in these Moore etchings reveal moments of relaxation and/or tension, which increase the foreboding character of the caverns and corridors he extracts from the skull's convolutions. These etchings amplified my inquiry into the innate character of the natural landscape and ways of depicting it. The powerful sense of observation and discovery of organic forms in these etchings inspired my exploration of the abstract.

The prints of Michael Mazur also influenced my early work. The sense of spontaneity and fluidity of his marks caught my attention. Mazur is sensitive to line, and believes "it is the marriage of the mark, meaning, and emotion that result in a successful work"¹¹. Mazur maintains balance between mark, meaning and emotion. As my work became more abstract, I kept this equation in mind in terms of the different marks I used - how and why I used them. I attempted to infuse my marks with the dynamic interaction and tension of different systems, as they underwent time's immutable process of change.

Mazur attempts to comprehend the world from differing vantage points. The *Lily Growth* series, 1958, (fig.4a&b) addresses a duality in nature by capturing the simultaneity of order and chaos in the natural world. These etchings contain wild, dramatic lines within a definite structure; at the same time, they contain a biomorphic chaos of natural formation. In the exploration of transitory landscapes, I find myself trying to comprehend balance among various interdependent systems. I work with a

¹¹Hansen, p.41

variety of marks, textures and values trying to maintain a harmony and balance within the composition, while voicing the array of elements that simultaneously interact to make a system complete.

Mazur introduces the idea of time in his work through experimentation with the monotype, reworking of the ghost image, multiple layers, offsets, and inlays. Mazur's experimentation with printmaking mediums excites me as I experiment with layering techniques and develop my own ideas about the passage of time. I define the different elements within a cycle by layering different printmaking mediums. Then I juxtapose them onto another plate to represent the interrelationship of multiple natural systems in the environment.

Mazur's continuous exploration of the natural landscape has led him toward more gestural and abstracted images within his prints of the 1990's. The works evolved into abstraction, where the landscape became a departure point for the prints that now take on a life of their own. In this new work, Mazur allows the plate to control more of the decision making process without preliminary premeditation. The first group of this set was called the *Branching* series (fig. 5), based on the dual image of veins and arteries in the human body and their resemblance to tree structures. In the *Mind Landscapes* series (fig. 6), Mazur began to examine the landscape in a new way, experimenting more with the effects of light and movement in landscape rather than depicting an actual place. The forms in these images seem to float vertically, and show no horizon or specific landscape reference as the pictorial space is broken down, allowing for more ambiguity. I relate to Mazur's departure from landscape and his method of working, because I too have departed from depicting an actual place. I strive to capture the essence of process in the

landscape, while allowing for ambiguity, the pictorial space is deconstructed and my prints become abstract. The images retain a suggestive horizon line; however, the fractured pictorial space allows the viewer to contemplate the connections between various shapes, lines and colors.

I used to work primarily in black and white; during this period, I studied Franz Kline's work. Kline's fundamental principle concerned the strength of structure. In his black and white gestural paintings (*Chief*, 1950, fig.7), he investigated this interest in structure through value contrast, dark-light compositions and compositional climax. A proponent of romantic ambiguity, Kline focused and blurred the edges of his marks, using halftone transitions between black and white to help develop a compositional climax. These focused/blurred edges infer a change in the speed of the mark's rhythm or tempo. Kline applied white paint as heavily as black until they fused as one. A figure/ground reversal develops, heightening the spatial ambiguity in his work. Through studying Kline's approach, I began to understand the structure of my own work and the relationships developing between the marks and shapes.

The images that resulted from my black and white period permitted me to engage in a constructive dialogue, which strengthened the foundations of my pictorial structure. I began to incorporate Kline's figure/ground reversal into my work as a way to accentuate dualities I perceive in natural landscapes (figs. 8). Having acquired this compositional knowledge, I then chose to incorporate color relationships into my images to express the multiple dualities of nature.

I began to study Helen Frankenthaler's work, which is concerned with pictorial structure and color relationships similar to my own aesthetics. Her means of expression is

an expansive marriage of ideas, imagery and technique that develop through line, color and texture. She works a print, as well as a painting, so that the end product looks as though “it happened all at once,”¹² when in actuality it may take months or years to complete. There is an all-or-nothing integrity of marks within her work; she is not interested in showing the laborious process these images may entail. I desire a certain integrity within my marks, and although I am not interested in emoting the laboriousness of my work, I am interested in a viewer’s awareness of the process, of the assemblage of components that interact as a complete, active system.

Frankenthaler is spontaneous in her interactions with the plate, stone, and canvas. However, to bring the piece to fruition, a dialogue must begin which demands not only experimentation, but also time to evolve. I relate to Frankenthaler’s method, which she describes as “the print evolves, it tells you, you tell it. You have a conversation with the print.”¹³ This dialectic, so strong in her imagery comes to define her creative process. She does not proceed with preconceived notions, but rather operates out of moods and emotions that change from moment to moment. I begin my process in a similar fashion, with a simple idea or mood in mind, and then allow the print, within a dialectic context, to suggest possibilities as I continue to develop the ideas. I value the organic and spontaneous energy in Frankenthaler’s prints. Without actual references to nature in mind, Frankenthaler’s method sometimes allows for nature to unconsciously enter her work (*Savage Breeze*, 1974, fig. 9). She believes it “has to do with spirit or sensation that can be related by a kind of abstract projection.”¹⁴ Even though I start directly from

¹² Kerns p.28.

¹³ Harrison p.11.

¹⁴ Baur p.12.

nature, I do work toward an organic fluidity and spontaneity of shape, color and line that can exist harmoniously in my prints.

I am constantly in awe of the enormous amount of activities continuously occurring in the landscape; from the minute intricacies on which they depend to the ever-evolving forms they create. From the energy of the environment and the drive of art, I weave the fibers of these worlds into one. The prints in my exhibition reflect how I understand and process the simultaneous existences I observe in nature

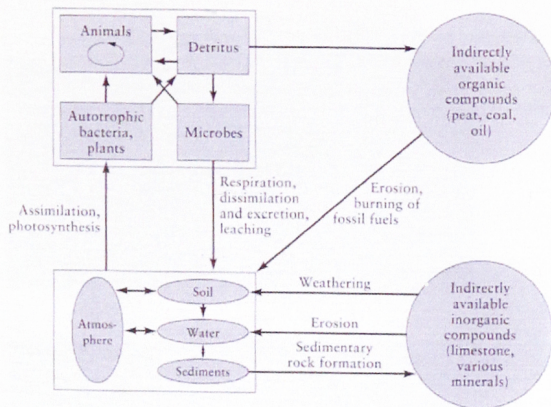


Figure 1. A general compartment model of the ecosystem. A more specific model can be drawn for each element that cycles in the ecosystem.

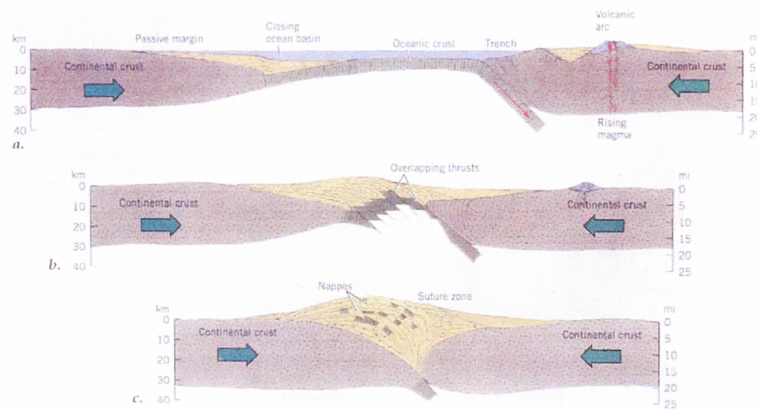


Figure 2. Schematic cross section showing continent-continent collision and the formation of a suture zone with nappes.

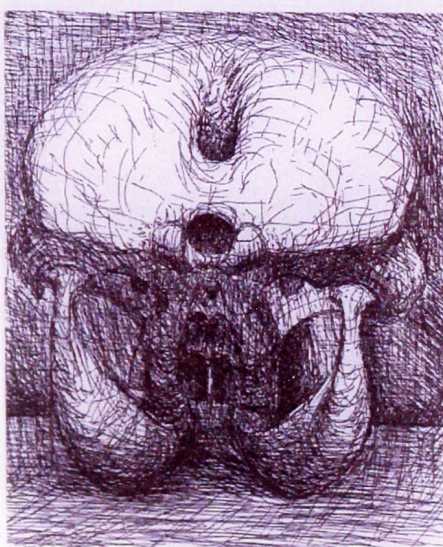


Figure 3. Henry Moore, *Elephant Skull*, 24.4 x 20cm, etching, 1969.

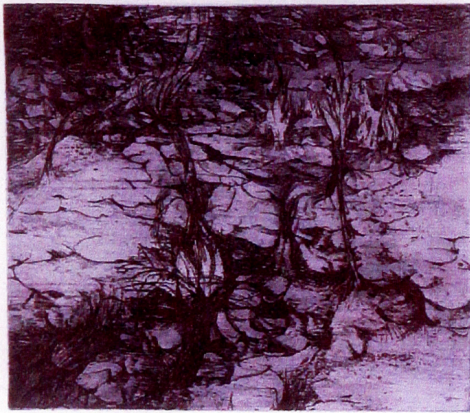
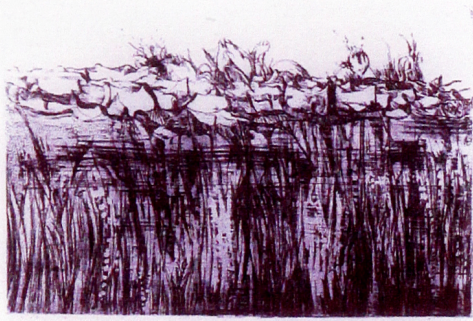


Figure 4a & 4b. Michael Mazur, *Lily Growths* #2, 12"x 18", and *Lily Growths* #4, 11.25"x 12.75". etching, 1958.

Figure 5. Michael Mazur, *Branching Series, Provincetown*, 20.5"x 17", monoprint, 1994.

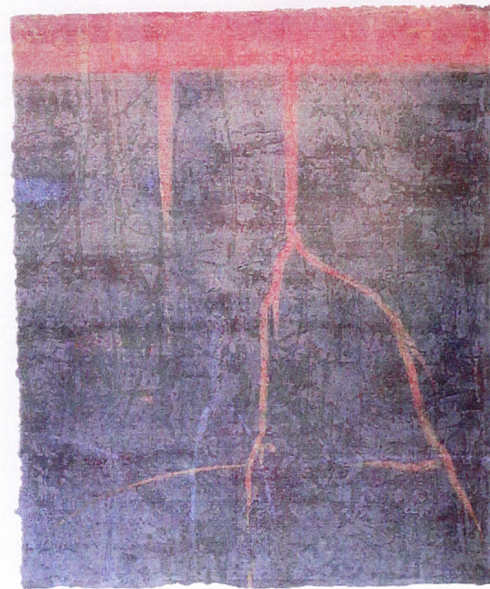


Figure 6. Michael Mazur, *Mind Landscapes* series, *Untitled*, lithography, 21.75"x 21.75", 1996.

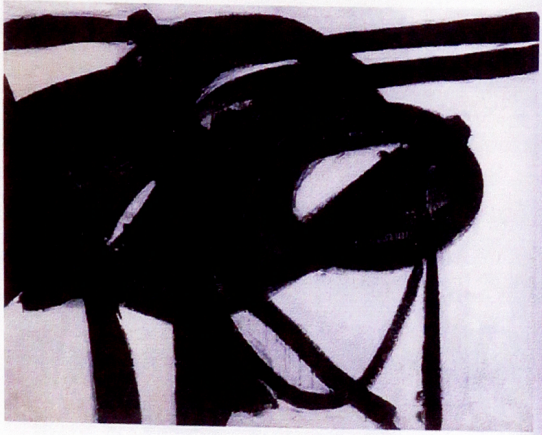


Figure 7. Franz Kline. *Chief*, 58.5"x
73.5", oil on canvas, 1950.



Figure 8. *Internal Force*, 9"x
12", etching, 2001.

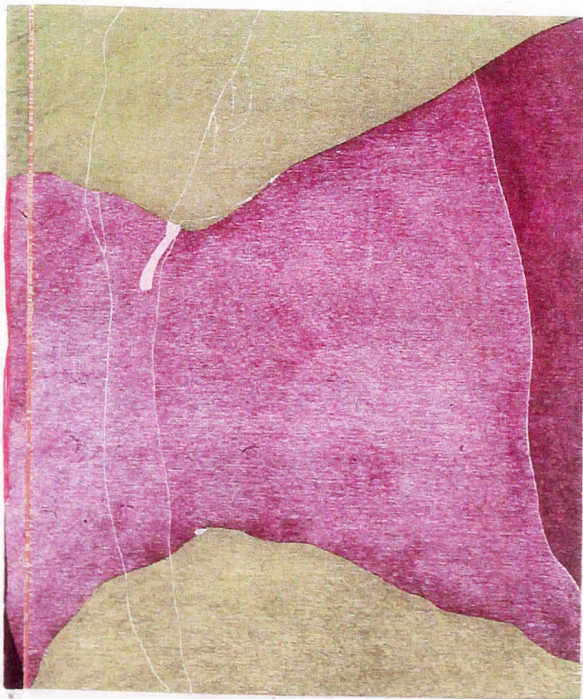


Figure 9. Helen Frankenthaler,
Savage Breeze, 31.5"x 27",
woodcut, 1974.

Thesis Body and Process

I have always been fascinated with the processes of change in the natural world. When I did my undergraduate work in Environmental Studies (with a focus in ecosystems), I became more aware of the subtle, delicate balance between ecosystems, habitats and natural cycles, and the profound effect humans have on these systems. My work addresses the mode of how these, the systems and cycles interact. Actively engaged in the pathways of printmaking, I became increasingly aware of how visible and invisible elements may interact within an ecosystem. Ecologist Alfred J. Lotka states that

ecosystems are energy-transforming systems; an example being the carbon cycle as carbon dioxide is changed into organic carbon compounds by plants to the consumption of plants by herbivores to the consumption of herbivores to the decomposition of organic matter thus, the cycle begins again.¹⁵

I believe my plates have energy-transforming potential (fig. 10), as they are cycled through the process of creating a print and recycled again in numerous other images. The presentation of each part, its interaction, and then its amalgamation to the whole, all within the idea of displaying something essential to an ecosystem is the backbone of both my work ethic and imagery.

My work began as expressionistic representations of landscapes. I was specifically interested in landscapes that depicted the transition zones between land and water, such as the tidal zones of the ocean. I was attuned to the transitional effects of rivers on the lands in their path, and focused particularly on wetland ecosystems. It was this intermittent zone of change, the instability of the transformation between solid and liquid matter that seemed to underscore the vast interconnectedness of elements. My

¹⁵ Rickles p. 104.

landscape depictions became more energetic and dynamic as I focused on the processes that manifested themselves in these places.

While focusing more on processes within the landscape, I began to breakdown the source photographs I was using. I would find the most interesting aspect of the photograph, and then enlarge that area. These images became imaginary landscapes as I slowly moved away from the idea of an actual, physical place. As I continued to interact with and observe the environment, I came to understand that these natural processes were constantly occurring and occupying a three-dimensional space. I began collecting bones and other weathered, organic objects from the land. Photographs were put away and objects became my source as relics of a process symbolizing the passage of time and change.

I interacted with the objects partially in the same way I had with the photographs. I looked for an area of interest within the bone, one that represented an inherent movement of change, as one curve intricately glided into another. The bones developed into my point of departure. I began to respond purely to the marks, shapes and values within the picture plane. It was at this point that I worked in black and white (mentioned previously in the historical section). A renewed understanding of my compositional structure allowed me to incorporate color in my images, moving me towards complete abstraction. Object-based sources were abandoned and my inspiration came entirely from ideas and understanding of how processes function and maintain themselves within the environment. Color, line, shape and the layering within my prints came to symbolize the elements in a system, and how the parts interact and react within the whole unit. I examine the simultaneity and interdependence of the micro and macro worlds of

processes within the natural landscape, through abstraction and the manner in which I produce my art.

Some modern science theories look at the microcosms within landscapes and believe that the whole (the macrocosm, larger than the summation of the parts) just happens as the parts come together. As I explore the parts and pathways of the systems within printmaking, awareness of the macrocosm occurs when the various elements in my print develop into one active image. The natural processes of the landscape function within an open system, always allowing for unexpected events, in printmaking both the unexpected results of process variation and the end product mimic the natural world. In both systems, a diverse array of elements interact in creating a complex and integrated whole.

Australian artist Michael Kempson's work pursues the cycles that occur between the microcosm and macrocosm. Kempson's complex compositions are set in "polarities that bring into question assumptions concerning power relationships"¹⁶ (fig. 11). His constant play with scale and the schema of order and structure versus chaos and randomness work on an emotional level as questions of power relations present themselves. I am concerned with power relationships; however, I differ in that I question one's *awareness* of the interconnectedness of these power relations within the environment. My prints are composed through layering a variety of printmaking techniques, which signify the different complexities existing within the system of the print and the natural environment. With the numerous marks, colors, shapes and layers, I work toward a dynamically balanced, steady state. It is through this development of the imagery that my concerns of awareness and stability are exemplified.

¹⁶ Grishin, p. 140.

Since early childhood, I was taught to understand and know the basic principles of a system or process I was studying, be it math or grammar. From there I would be able to contemplate more abstract ideas based on the concrete knowledge previously acquired. I have applied this approach to the study of both science and various printmaking techniques. Once I acquired the basics of each discipline, the permutations of different interdisciplinary interactions became limitless.

The sciences inform my art-making, and the printing process helps me to understand the processes of the natural world. Throughout the course of my studies, I have remained aware of general scientific principles that attempt to define the guiding laws of natural events. One natural law that is constantly with me throughout the process of creating an image is the first law of thermodynamics. It states that energy is neither created nor destroyed, but only transferred from one source to another. My plates are sources of energy that undergo transformation as energy is transferred when they come in contact with different materials and elements that change their surface appearance and quality. Eventually, this energy is transferred into a final print. There is always a constant flow of kinetic energy throughout the creation process.

The method of creating a print is usually done in a linear sequence, however, I move in a more circular mode. Ecosystems also work in cyclical formats. They have given components that function within, just as certain printmaking techniques do; yet, there are also many external elements that affect an ecosystem either directly or indirectly. This increases the amount of energy being cycled through the system. There are a number of systems that come into play, all functioning simultaneously as the environment fights and struggles to maintain homeostasis. I mimic this process by

simultaneously layering different mediums, colors, and images on a number of plates, blocks, and screens (fig. 12).

I begin my process by choosing from a variety of plates. I print a number of them, sometimes in the same color, but also in different colors. Occasionally, I print the whole plate, block, or screen other times just sections of them - a majority of my prints are monoprints.¹⁷ Whether I start with a linear image or one with shapes, I add elements and build my images by developing darks, lights, and halftones. Developing the image in this way allows me to create a sense of space that is both shallow and deep. I relate the quality of space to the passage of time. If an image has shallow space, it symbolizes a more immediate or recent time period. A deeper sense of space indicates a longer time span. I often put down two to three layers before I stop to read the image. *Bromeliad Pond* (fig. 13a) displays this in-progress state as I begin to articulate the next few steps. It is then that I examine the interacting elements and decide how to weave the composition together. At this point, I see my images struggle for balance; I debate the formal concerns and decide what formal element or elements will bring the image into harmony (fig. 13b).

This method of working does not allow me the luxury of taking away an element from the print. The only way to create alterations is through an additive process. The natural processes in the landscape likewise work in an additive manner, as systems and cycles must react to what is present within their sphere of influence. This mix of unconscious response and conscious deliberation allows me to move between momentary stillness and chaotic commotion. I work toward a visual display that reveals both the individual components and the unit as a whole system. The prints in this body of work

¹⁷ Monoprints are one of a kind images versus editioned prints, which have multiples of the same image.

contain individual elements, such as line, shape or color, which tend to stand out in their own isolated spheres. But through continued observation, the pictorial structures of the images reveal the connections and interdependence of the individual parts. The prints convey a boundless force of movement, as though the formal elements are gliding through the print, disclosing the passage of time and nature's adaptations.

John Wolseley is an Australian artist trying to arrive at "an understanding of the 'mind and laws of the environment'."¹⁸ He strives to incorporate the movements of adaptation in the landscape within his work process. Wolseley's imagery resembles maps as he records the external appearance of the environment. He then layers transparent images on top to indicate movement as time and adaptation occur, changing the visual exterior of the land (fig. 14). Though my images are not maps, they do have map-like qualities in that they display an understanding of the laws of the environment. Like Wolseley, I am interested in the external appearance of the environment and how it changes over time, but I also try to incorporate the internal movements that take place forming the exterior of the earth. *Abyssal Plains* (fig. 15) is an example of an internal and external view of the land. It conveys the activity occurring beneath the crust of the earth and the forms that emerge from this internal activity.

In *Abyssal Plain*, the blue line at the top of the image symbolizes the surface of the land, thus the activity below is happening within the earth, while above the line the end product of the activity is shown. There is a vertical thrust throughout the image as all the shapes and lines push up toward the surface of the land. The elements coexist as the orange comes up from the bottom being forced to diverge in two directions by the

¹⁸ Grishin, p. 324

presence of the chine colle¹⁹ element. The orange forces its way up on the left side and contacts the yellow shape. The orange fights for existence as it subtly breaks through the yellow. Finally, it is negated halfway up the picture plane, while the yellow then leaps toward the surface of the land. The green shape is a slower moving force as it starts out as a light hue on the right. When the dominating struggle between the yellow and orange ceases the green becomes stronger and richer in color, as it glides upward. Neither the yellow nor the green break through the surface, but from their activities a shape emerges, rising above the surface of the land. Throughout the entire duration of the activities below the blue lines on the right rise up with few interactions, existing almost independently from the other activities. As these blue water lines rise up into the air, they are cycled through the atmosphere and returned as denoted by the delineated blue line come down into the picture plane, which then effects the shape on the left as erosion takes place.

I distill the elements of the landscape into formal components, perceiving the ideas of formation, emergence and disintegration as “landforms... produced by the endless struggle between the internal earth forces that lift crustal masses upward and external forces of erosion and denudation that wear them down.”²⁰ The activities of formation and disintegration bring about the idea of visible and invisible entities, which operate both internally and externally in a system. *Active Continental Margins. dependent and independent* (fig. 16) communicates this idea. The large relief block shapes simulate landmasses, however, they are transparent, which makes the screen print shapes and burn marks visible, ultimately conveying the invisible forces at work. Yet,

¹⁹ Chine colle is a method of adhering pieces of paper to the larger printing paper at the same time the inked image is being printed or after ward as a collage technique.

²⁰ Strahler p.313.

these marks and burns extend beyond the landmasses, depicting forces that push down. The dark linear marks work to create a shallow depth giving the image a sense of three-dimensional space. Building the image through darks, lights, halftones and the layering of various printmaking mediums causes a constant spatial shifting within foreground, middle ground and background. The spatial shifting intensifies the movement and activity in the print. This activity is used to suggest active kinetic energy actually taking place within the area.

Australian printmaker Carmen Ky also concerns herself with underlying energy structures and the rhythms of growth and change. As Ky explores the metaphysical patterns in nature, her prints are activated by “landscape elements pulsating as if charged by an invisible force and are caught at the moment of transformation.”²¹ (fig. 17). Her work concerns that moment when a liquid water molecule is changed into water vapor. I engage similar specific moments of conversion, but extend the idea to include both the before and after reflections of the entire process. *Changing States* (fig. 18) communicates the ideas of the visible and invisible forces, and the moment of transformation. The open bite²² activates the space within the landmass, indicating underlying, invisible forces. The purple begins to slowly cover the underlying image indicating the next phase of transformation, which is confirmed by a dark blue line that demands attention and the subtle orange mark that moves off the page.

Some of the prints convey ideas of adaptation and the passage of time in subtler channels. *Penplain with Water Pattern* (fig. 19) has only three elements at work: line, color and the burn mark. The process of hand rubbing this print brings into play the

²¹ Grishin p. 162.

²² An open bite is an intaglio technique on zinc or copper plates where no texture or aquatint is put down in the exposed area and the acid bites the unprotected area.

delicate modifications within the green and yellow. The variation in hue creates a sense of depth that depicts an aerial view of a sculpted landscape. Here the passage of time is not as immediate or rapid as in *Active Continental Margins*. *dependent and independent* It is depicted through a geological time scale going back millions of years. In this reverse rumination, one begins to wonder from whence the landforms emerged. The harshness of the carved lines and the exposed area containing the burn mark and water lines indicate that intense weather events occurred to sculpt the land into its present state, but the softness and roundness of the curves indicate the events took place long ago.

When landmasses are exposed through crustal activity in the mantle, they become vulnerable to external forces that immediately begin to break them down. As the blue lines extend over the rest of the image, they converge into one line with random interruptions. I interpret the line as displaying the movement and amount of water through the land in a linear fashion, as climate changed over time. Starting from the left: the water level begins to decrease and landmasses rise, as numerous rivers and streams are created. Gravity forces the water to find a pathway - slowly the rivers converge and a few meandering paths and pools develop. Through phases of climatic stability and instability, the water levels respond accordingly, thus forming the landmasses below at their present visual state.

I employ burn marks in a majority of my prints. I use the burns to represent corrosive, degrading elements that bring about immediate and drastic change within a landscape system. As mentioned earlier, *Peneplain with Water Pattern* shows a large strong burn, indicating a major event of transformation earlier on in the print. As it is viewed from left to right, the strength of the burn decreases along the way, thus having

less impact on creating the landforms within the print. The burn marks are created by pouring lemon juice on the paper, which is then placed on a hot plate and burned. The variation of the burn depends on how long and how much pressure I put down on the paper while it is on the hot plate. The uncontrollable drip of the lemon juice as it absorbs into the paper and the controllable process of creating the burn makes it an intriguing device to work with.

Throughout my body of work, I also play with transparency versus opacity in both ink and paper. The element of transparency is an important factor in my images because I incorporate hidden elements that quietly surface into view. Transparency, within either the paper or ink, is the main method I use to address the issue of invisible forces acting in the environment. *Moho* (fig. 20), done on western paper, is only the ink that is transparent. In this print, the internal forces are present, but not quite in motion -- *Moho* is the layer that exists between the crust and the mantle. The layers in this print show where the forces exist, but not an activity in which they participate.

New Growth (fig. 21) is a print that combines the symbolic quality of transparency in the ink, paper and burn mark; however, the burn and transparent paper are placed down with a chine colle technique. This is another method I employ to evoke the idea of invisible forces either coming into or leaving a system. In *New Growth* the collage element is subtle and faint. It expresses an older event as powerful, but young yellows and greens push through it. The collage element is being taken over and subsumed by the vibrant energy of the new growth.

Another image that deals entirely with transparency as a symbol of invisible forces and the interdependence of natural systems is *Coming Together: wetlands* (fig.

22). Unlike the other prints in the exhibition, *Coming Together: wetlands* is specifically meant to be viewed from both sides, emphasizing the interdependence that is the piece and the environment. This image has prints on both sides of the paper, and both the paper and ink are transparent. It is a five panel, free-standing, three-dimensional piece that forces the viewer to survey both systems of land and water at once, unable to separate the two sides of the panels, as they move around the piece. This inseparable quality of the piece works like a wetland ecosystem. The prominent quality of the wetlands is the fact that it is the transition zone between land and water. One must reflect on the land as much as the water in order to understand the relationships that coexist and help to sustain each other. The transparent panels in *Coming Together* do precisely this, as the viewer must contemplate the relationships between the lines, shapes and colors that exist on both sides of the individual panels.

There are times within the history of the natural world when the internal forces and natural events in the environment are more chaotic and severe. *Gaia* (fig. 23) is an image that includes prints on both sides of the paper and transparency of both the paper and ink and burn marks, which increases the amount of activity occurring in a number of systems. *Gaia* is the earth viewed as a vast self-regulating organism, which is what this free floating, five panel print represents. It is the ultimate ecosystem of both the biotic and abiotic worlds. This image displays the dualities of chaos and order, invisible and visible elements, and the dependence and independence of separate systems, as all of these dualities exist as one unit greater than the sum of its parts.

In *Gaia* there are formal elements of line, shape and color that interact and connect the five panels indicating single systems that span the entire image. There are

also smaller systems that function on only two or three panels, as they begin to isolate themselves into particular habitats. On further examination, even smaller systems on one panel exist operating in specific niches within particular habitats. It is here that the coexistence of the micro and macro worlds are shown as one and adaptation occurs as niches, habitats and ecosystems cycle the elements that they share.

I worked simultaneously on the prints in this exhibition establishing a strong dialogue between the prints, and myself as we influenced one another. When I create my images, there is no final visual product in mind. I only have a vague notion about a structure, a genesis developed by the constant recycling of plates and color, as the print's energy transforms through a cycle of chronological change. The forces that interact with the plates are direct and indirect, specific and random, thought-out and accidental. It is through these dualities within printmaking that I am able to choose a particular printmaking technique, or allow my intuition and moods to guide me and the life of the print.

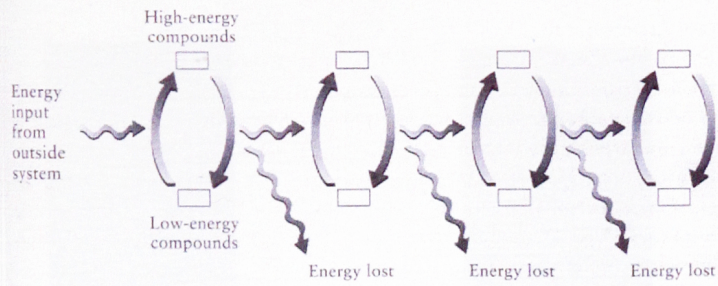


Figure 10. As energy flows through the ecosystem, elements alternate between assimilatory and dissimilatory transformations, thus going through cycles.

Figure 11. Michael Kempson, The Cycles series, *And he smiled upon his accomplishments*, 500 x 390mm, etching, 1993.

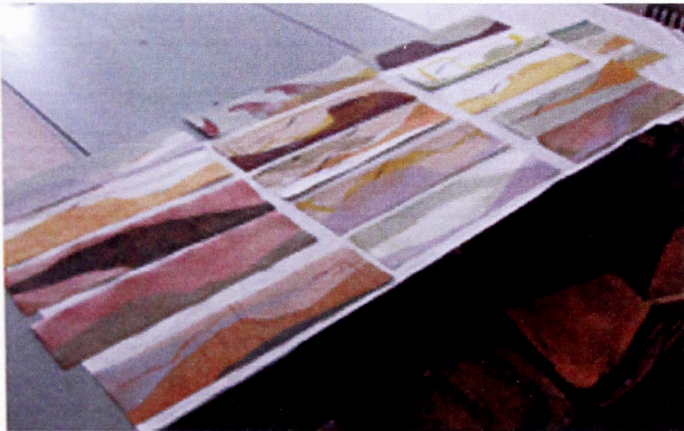
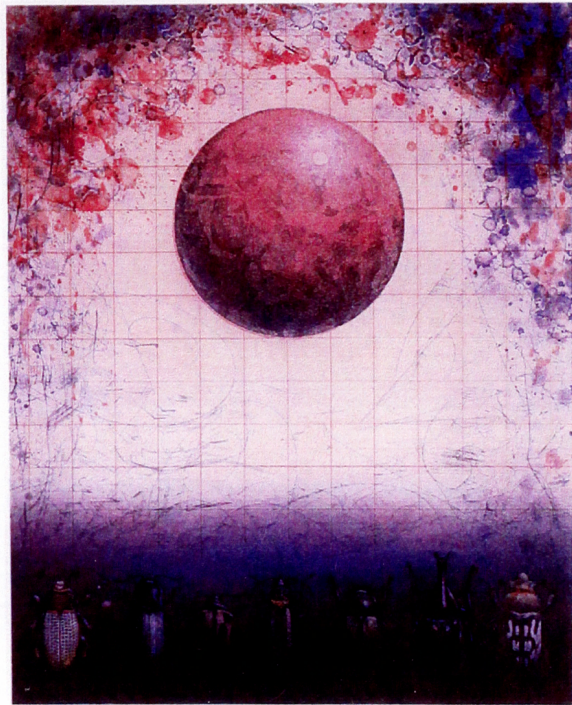


Figure 12. A group of small prints, 7.5" x 30", being worked simultaneously, 2002.



Figure 13a & 13b. *Bromeliad Pond*, 93"x 18", monoprint, 2002. First one is in progress and second is the final image.

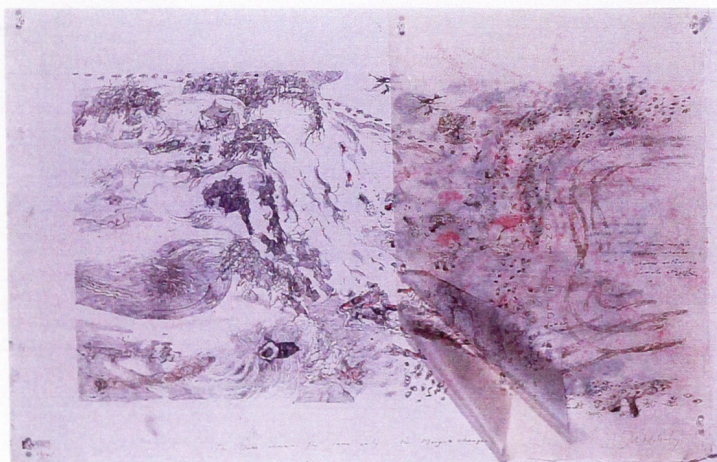


Figure 14. John Wolseley, *The dunes remain the same, only the margins change*, 650 x 940mm, lithography, 1992-93.



Figure 15. *Abyssal Plains*,
93"x 14.75", monoprint,
2001.



Figure 17. Camren Ky, *Scared Edge*,
610 x 450mm, etching, 1995.



Figure 16. *Active Continental Margins: dependent
and independent*, 14"x 92.25", monoprint,
2002.



Figure 18. *Changing States*, 7.5"x 30",
relief, screen, and intaglio, 2002.



Figure 19. *Peneplain with Water Pattern*,
22.75"x 93", monoprint, 2002.



Figure 20. *Moho*, 7.5"x 30",
lithography, relief and
screen, 2002.



Figure 21. *New Growth*, 7.5"x 30",
lithography, relief, screen and
chine colle, 2002.



Figure 22a. *Coming Together: wetlands* (front),
84"x 105", monoprint, 2002.

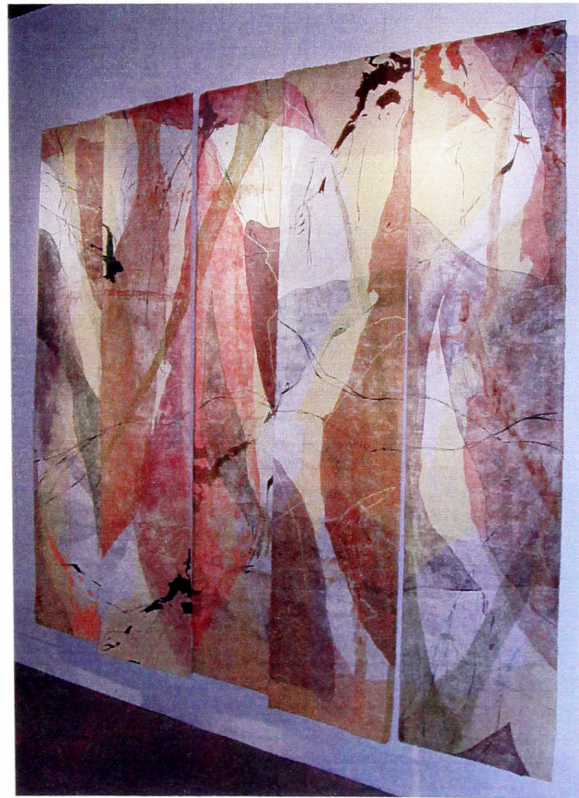
Figure 22b. *Coming Together: wetlands* (back),
84"x 105", monoprint, 2002.





Figure 23a. *Gaia* (front view),
94"x 106", monoprint,
2002.

Figure 23b. *Gaia* (side view), 94"x 106",
monoprint, 2002. Side view shows
the staggered installation of *Gaia*, as
panels alternate one back one
forward. The three back panels are
about 5 inches from the wall and
the front panels are about 7 inches
from the wall.



Conclusion

My work is concerned with landscape, process and printmaking. These three elements are continually maneuvered in the images with emphasis on one, two or all three elements as priorities. Many, if not all, the prints within my body of work depict a constant struggle between the dualities that exist in nature: chaos and order, invisible and visible elements and direct and indirect forces, as the passage of time and adaptation roll on. Oppositions exist on all levels within nature. There are a number of checks and balances that function within the biotic and abiotic worlds as they interact. These checks and balances and irregularities, which also exist, cause conditions in the environment to continually move back and forth between the extremes of good and bad, hot and cold, and intense and moderate. It is the constant flow of energy that cycles through the landscape maintaining a continuum of change.

I create a sense of balance in each print to display this character of rational and irrational stability, which reinforces the idea that movement and stillness must coexist within the same moment. One becomes oblivious to the constant movement and forces acting on a landscape as one goes about their daily rituals. I believe it is important to have an awareness that the force of gravity is a constant downward pull on mass, while at the same time the force of emergence yields an upward burst of energy, because it helps one to understand the natural world around them and how their interactions may affect the environment. As a further dissection of the processes within the landscape reveals more incongruities and contradictions, one realizes that the stability we experience in the landscape is a constant struggle to maintain, as the dualities coexist, resist and negate each other continuously.

Change occurs in a variety of fashions. Some are instantaneous, while others take years. There are moments where formation, alteration and decay all happen simultaneously. The realization of all these instances comes at the moment between the thought of awe, the grand immutability of the environment and the realization that there is a constant kinetic force at work in the earth. It is in these realizations of all a system's elements that I create my work.

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