

The process of printmaking is extremely physical and requires large amounts of time and labor. For me, the amount of work and time dedicated to each project incites a deeper connection to the overall meaning as each small detail is hand-crafted with meticulous care and attention. I use different printmaking techniques, particularly screen printing and linocut printing. I print on both textiles and paper, varying in texture and structure from piece to piece. The screen-printed clothing highlights personal experiences and the experiences of those around me by using symbols and images from the natural world. This includes animals, plants, and insects. I use these universal symbols, symbols that have certain concepts and ideas assigned to them by the majority of society, as a comparison to the “human experience” inspired by moments from my own life and the people around me. To draw this comparison, I first examine the experience and find a concept in generally accepted assumptions about a natural phenomenon. For example, in my artist book, *Dynamics*, I use the interactions between prey and ambush predators to examine the roles of both abuser and victim. These images of predator and prey on the left are paired with text on the right as the abusive relationship develops into the confinement of the victim in a “spider’s web.” Images are paired with text to accentuate their meanings, while other pieces are stand-alone images whose meanings can be left up to interpretation.

Before I can start printing my edition, I choose my image and create my matrix. When choosing images, I mostly work digitally and research which natural symbols I feel would suit the specific experience that is being examined. Once the project's backbone is finalized, I begin printing. Relief printing functions more like a stamp with the image carved into a matrix that is inked and pressed against a material. Screen-printing is much more like a stencil where ink is pushed through with a squeegee onto a material. Because they are so different, each process comes with its own pros and cons. For example, screen-printing is much more versatile and has more ease of registration, while relief printing allows for much finer detail and reproduces the natural texture of the block. Screen-printing is also a “right reading” process, meaning the image does not need to be flipped, which makes it much easier to print text rather than tracing text backward for relief. Relief lends itself well to bold color choices since it primarily uses oil-based ink. In my relief work, this can be seen in the piercing reds and deep blacks of the prints.

The physical nature of the printmaking process and the raw, unfiltered subject matter in my work investigate what it is like to be human with all its complexities, in a world that is straightforward. These pieces are created through a multi-step process, where the meaning of the images and the hand of the maker are visible. These images are presented to the viewer to interpret and experience as the printing of an edition creates multiple of the same work and makes them more accessible to the public because of lower cost. This accessibility of the artwork makes my message more accessible in tandem. The metaphors I draw in my work become a story for the viewer to interpret and relate to their own experiences. Equating their realities to something simpler and more primal as they make these connections to the natural world.

