

Maine College of Art & Design

***it comes to me on the breeze:
an archive of memory***

by:

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A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

Bachelor of Fine Arts
Major in Printmaking

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Portland, Maine
May 2022

an extension of my gratitude:

Thank you to my Gramma and Grandpa, who are the reasons I have been able to attend this school.

Thank you to my Mom and Papa for having, raising, and supporting me through all my endeavors.

Thank you to Mrs. Harpold, my high school art teacher for preparing me and guiding me through transitional periods.

Thank you to my ancestors who were so resilient, without them I would be nothing.

Thank you to my therapist, Andrew Bove, who has seen me through my worst and best times.

Thank you to Jeff (my old Subaru) and Frankie (my new older Subaru) for transporting me between Maine and Wisconsin and for granting me the freedom to drive around the land that means so much to me.

Thank you to John Portlock, Mary Canfield, Chris Stiegler, Pilar Nadal, Emmeline Solomon, and all my professors during my time at MECA.

Thank you to every person who has come before me in the Print Department and has shared their time, knowledge, and space with me.

Thank you Trey Jones for sending me money to purchase a Red Bull to stay up and write this paper.

Thank you to all the friends I've made along the way (even if we are no longer friends).

Thank you to Twitter for being the best archive of my every thought.

Thank you, the person reading this. I am happy that I get to share this with you.

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Through the labor of printmaking processes, I am actively documenting my life through multiplicity and disseminating the outcome for people to exist and interact around (and with) however they please. Through visual layering I contextualize my content for myself and contemplate what it means to be human. In simpler terms; I live, I grieve, I make. Both my work as a printmaker and the land I will be detailing throughout are things that I consider to be extensions of me and my body. While this is how I approach making as a whole, the work I have created and curated for my thesis comes with the following statement.

Control is something that I have been seeking for a very long time. I have idealized what having control would be like and while being in this institution and looking back at everything I've made, I now understand that I have surrendered control almost entirely. What you are looking at when you look at my work, it is the culmination of something that lives deeply in my body and spirit. Surrendering control has allowed the Thing to speak. I have come to see my work as something that lives on its own. The Thing has used me to escape and to say I am anything less than grateful for it living in me would be absurd + the opposite of the truth. The land, the place I am depicting, this "thing" has nourished me. I have been protected by it and it has watched over me far longer than I am able to conceptualize. My work is my attempt. Being away from the Thing has made me its disciple. Seeing myself as "lamb" and my work, the "thing", as my shepherd. I hope to share the solace I have gained through this labor + love. I am so grateful.

The majority of my work features aspects of images taken from my home in rural Wisconsin. While my family and I lived inside the town of 3,000 people, my grandparents lived on the outskirts amid corn and bean fields in a house. Their spacious yard is where I draw my interest from. Picture for a moment a two lane highway, coming from town and heading towards the nearby even smaller town. The entrance to my grandparents driveway cuts a path between a row of pine trees that sits behind the dense ditch, lush with tall grass and weeds in the summer. My grandparents loved to garden. My grandpa passed away from cancer in 2006, this is something I will discuss later as I get into the content I

assign through the making of my work. Since his passing, my Gramma continues to garden. She continues to provide fresh produce for her family, multiplying sustenance from a seed and giving it graciously to us.

Gramma's house is a space where I feel truly at peace. I can remember when I was much younger I would lay in the dewy grass and look up at the sky. There was little to no light pollution considering the size of our town and its proximity to the nearest cities. I remember seeing the curve of the earth in the stars and watching satellites drift from one side of the sky to the other. I remember catching fireflies with my cousins; I remember the weekend of the family reunions where we would run and play hide and seek in the tall and dense corn fields. I remember climbing the apple tree, something I did this past summer for the first time in a long time. (It was still as scary as it was when I was younger.) While my grandparent's house is a place that provided me with these things in my youth I've found myself turning more to the land surrounding the town. This often took the form of long drives no matter the time of day.

As soon as I got my license I became enveloped in the sweet serenity of speeding down backroads with the windows down, regardless of the weather. I know the roads like the back of my hand, lined with graveyards, grasses, crops, horses, barns, and silos across the horizon line. The distant vanishing point is only obscured by a low line of trees perched far in the distance. The sky, no matter what, no matter when, is beautiful. The most pure blues, comforting grays, and exuberant sunsets and sunrises dappled with brilliant pink, oranges, hazy purples, yellow, and reds. All of this to say, much of my time when I was not at

school, work, or with family I was most likely driving around. These drives are where a lot of my subject matter comes from. I take shitty iphone photos of the farmscapes as I passed them everyday, attempting to burn them firmly in my memory. The way it looks could never be removed from my brain, even if I tried.

I see the land as beautiful and whole. During times of crisis or joy or release I smell and breathe the air deeply. It ripples through my lungs and comes back out and the fields echo back to me what I could not say and can not conjure. They hold me, push me, and care for me in the same way that the breeze combs through the tall grasses in the ditch. This feeling, being heard without having to say things, is what I strive to provide with my work. I want to show what I created to someone and I want them to see part of themselves reflected back. Not everyone enjoys landscapes or understands the solace I find in the fields, I am not trying to convince people to love what I love. Showing and shaping a reproduction of the place that I love so much is important, it provides a moment of exhale or reprieve.

~

I have a somewhat difficult time situating myself in the context of artistic history in ways that do not relate to process. This is partially due to the lack of education in Art History courses about printmaking, in fact I recall many times where a lithograph was described as a painting when it was labeled a print. While the image making process of lithography can be painterly, it is still printed as a multiple. Regardless, there are a few people whose work has resonated with me. Rembrandt's van Rijn (Dutch, Leiden 1606–1669 Amsterdam) etchings,

specifically his attention to light and proportion are some of my favorite landscape renderings to look at. I've seen a few of his copper plates and the scale of them is tiny. Despite the size of the etchings being under twelve inches in height and width, he manages to capture great detail. One of the things that he demonstrates is the importance of scale in the making of something and how the scale impacts the way the viewer interacts with the space. The horizon line in much of Rembrandt's work is situated in the lower half of his pieces. In my own work, I tend to situate the horizon line in the same place, in the lower third of my compositions. (See Figures 1 and 2) In Figure 1 we see a depiction by Rembrandt titled *De drie bomen* made in 1643. The horizon line sits within the lowest third of the image which allows for the sky and the marks made in the upper portion of the piece to stand out. Given the nature of etching, his marks are made using cross hatching techniques. In figure 2 "*I'd like to go back now*" we can see how I situate the horizon line slightly below the middle of the image area. What this does is put an equal emphasis on the sky and the ground. The position of my horizon line stays consistent with what I see when I am in the space I am depicting. It is important for me to consider the height at which I am framing the piece, when I make a piece with imagery from home it is an invitation to come along with me and see what I see. It is another way for me to share what I love.

~

On a recent trip to the home of Former Curator for Maine Contemporary Art, and now independent curator Bruce Brown on the Eastern Prom, I stood in the presence of not only a large Kiki Smith etching but also a Robert

Rauschenburg lithograph. Rauschenburg's work has not resonated with me at all, however I think that had I seen the print that I did sooner that I would have looked to him and his practice more. *Plank* (Figure 3.) is a lithograph that Rauschenberg printed in 1964 and it features various photographic elements, including an upside down photograph of a herd of sheep. To see someone else utilizing photographic images in lithography and including sheep was thrilling to me and others as I was using those same elements in my own work. (Figure 4). The revolutionary approach he took at the time is part of a similar conversation that I am having with my work.

He challenged the limits of methods and materials: rethinking customary approaches to lithography, screenprint, and intaglio; adopting new processes such as digital imaging; and printing on unconventional papers, cardboard, fabric, and plastic. Rauschenberg's foray into printmaking was a seemingly natural development, for imprinting—the very essence of printmaking—had long played a role in his work, in the form of fingerprints impressed in his paintings and magazine images transferred to drawings... Taking a sparer approach than in his previous prints, the artist abstained from gestural mark-making and based his composition on fractured grids made up of headlines, news stories, and news photographs. Originally realized as collages, the images were issued as two series of screen prints entitled *Features from Currents*, in which the text is generally legible, and *Surface Series from Currents*, in which the text is dark and obscured with interference patterns and reversals.¹

Playing with the audience's access to the information represented is something that I have considered in the past. I have found that for myself and my future viewings of my work and the way that I consider my work as my diary, I like to keep things legible.

This past year, I have been spending time sifting through the open source library that the MET has available online. While I do enjoy poking around various things on the site, I continually find myself lost in a search of Valentine's day

¹ "Let the World In: Prints by Robert Rauschenberg from the National Gallery of Art and Related Collections," National Gallery of Art, accessed May 11, 2022, <https://www.nga.gov/features/slideshows/let-the-world-in.html>.

cards from the 19th century (Figure 5.). What draws me to these beautiful pieces is a multitude of things which can be seen loosely in my own work. Many and most of the Valentine's in the collections were made by people whose names were lost to time, so unfortunately the artists are labeled "Anonymous". While I mourn the loss of the person who made the pieces, I find the documentation and possession of them incredibly important.

I consider my own work to be diaristic in nature, as I draw from my handwriting and personal life to create my prints and videos. When I think about my journals I see them as precious, I cherish them greatly and I can only hope that after I pass away, someone thinks they're important enough to document. The second way that the Valentines impact my work is their consistent and amazing use of borders and "frames". When I am approaching a print, the margins are as important as the image area. I often utilize the margins as a frame and a lens for my work. While I do not cut or add to my margins, I still see the margins as an integral part of the design. This can take the form of drawn adornments as seen in my piece titled *Garden Song* (Fig 6), where I made a graphite drawing and printed it as a risograph frame for an image of my grandmother, all rendered in various shades of green. The drawn frame contains more detail than the image inside it, including lyrics from Phoebe Bridger's track *Garden Song* from her 2020 record *Punisher*. I include "I don't know when you got taller, Must be something in the water... I'm not afraid of hard work, I get everything I want."² It can also take the form of a spacious margin, and I hold

² Bridgers, Phoebe. *Garden Song*. 2020, Accessed May 12, 2022. <https://open.spotify.com/track/5blgzvxxvlefRUCQK9JPocF?si=9cfa30903bf24766> .

both to the same level of importance. In my video work I utilize more visually active framing, as seen in my *Midwest Archive* (Figure 7.) and various other pieces. This framing is achieved by nesting one video inside of another using Adobe Premiere Pro. The ease at which I can create layers in video contrasts the efforts needed to layer in printmaking. Layering in any capacity is something that I think is necessary. Each layer provides new context and nuance to the previous, a concept that is also expressed by Michael Levenson. He writes, and Margeret Iverson presents,

“The diary must continually change its perspective. Its retrospective view is daily rendered obsolete as life outstrips the diary; each entry brings a new retrospect, inviting a restless process of self-correction and self-revision... intimacy of the diary is sometimes in tension with its periodic, mechanical, repetitive aspects.”³

While all of the aforementioned visual artists and genres of work have impacted my practice as a whole, the art that I was physically surrounded by as a child has shaped me, even if it does not show visually in my work. One of the pieces that I have been exposed to my whole life is a reproduction of *The Maiden* by Gustav Klimt (Figure 8). This is the first piece of artwork that I ever remember being enamored with, we have a 3 foot print of it framed and throughout my childhood and into adulthood, this piece specifically is embedded in my mind. I remember vividly a time when I was much younger and very ill. I was being carried by my mom and began vomiting over her shoulder. When I looked down the hallway we were in, I fixated on *The Maiden* and I felt a strange sense of symbiosis. His and Egon Schiele’s approach to rendering the body clothed (as well as nude) are very close to how I feel my approach to portraying my body is. He draws the human form abstractly and does not worry about perfect accuracy

³ Margaret Iversen. (2021). The Diaristic Mode in Contemporary Art after Barthes. *Art History*. 44. 10.1111/1467-8365.12587.

to real life. The abstraction of the human figure also helps me how I interact with femininity in general which is not something I will unpack here.

My Papa had a poster that was up on the wall for a long time when I was a kid. (Figure 9.) It was a design of a newspaper headed with “MORRISON IS DEAD STORY” with a photo of Jim Morrison and some other text. Where my current work is right now and a lot of my contemporary inspirations are poster and/ or music based. I can’t help but feel like my tendency to drift towards using visually bold writing comes from being surrounded by prints and media like the ones my Papa possessed. One such piece being a coffee lift aquatint etching that features an abstracted representation of eyes and a nose accompanied with my handwriting that reads, “you make me sad” (figure 10). Another piece that I have made titled “*fully/foolishly*” features imagery in separate window-like boxes. One box features the phrase in my handwriting “NOTHING BUT LOVE 4 YOU” I achieved separate image areas with gum arabic, a medium that when applied to a litho stone prevents grease from being able to penetrate the stone. The other sections in the piece feature drawings, painting, and toner transfers of imagery and motifs from my home.

~

Though I struggle having a direct relationship with regards to historic, it is far easier to place myself within the context of recent and contemporary art. While the processes I use to make my work hold years of history, the way I approach designing my matrix is based in mostly digital programs. Because of this, I have found most of my contemporary inspirations as well as where I situate my work happens to be alongside graphic designers, specifically those who

utilize text and image. Two people who are currently inspiring me are Jesse Feinman and Eric Timothy Carlson. Both, in their own ways, work closely with those in the music industry and artists in general to make designs that are meant to be translated into physical media. This is crucial to my practice as a printmaker, the physical tangibility of an object that holds my energy (as the designer and maker) makes and keeps me excited. I find myself engaging most with memorabilia that circulates in local and tight music scenes around me. I hold more precious the shirts and merchandise that were printed by a friend of or someone in the band, over shirts that might have been produced in a way not so directly related to the artist. (I understand that while this could bring up the conversations surrounding the “value” of certain laborers, I am discussing proximity and community.)

Jesse Feinman is a graphic designer based in Richmond, Virginia and I became aware of Jesse and his design work through an artist book that one of my favorite photographers was selling. The way Feinman handles page spreads and sequencing in the book speaks to me and the way I understand narrative, he achieves this with a balance of predictability and surprise in his sequencing choice. While he does design primarily smaller publication books, he also designs tour posters and merchandise. His design work typically features text and image, where the images look diffused and digitally altered. He often uses depictions of the human figure and works in gradients with extremely limited color palettes when he is not working monochromatically as seen in his piece that reads “I have never had it so gently” (Figure 11). While working in monochrome

he adjusts the threshold to make designs that are able to be printed in one run and still look intriguing. These elements, especially in aesthetics, can be seen in some of my own work. *Parting Actions* (Figure 12) features aspects of collage as well as handwriting and doodles. Printing that piece as well as “*if you’re thinking about doing it...*” (Figure 13) with a risograph machine allowed me to work with a broad range of tones and still have an intriguing image in one and two layers. The timelessness of the style of design and image manipulation, like the threshold and posterized aesthetics make my work feel less tethered to now, while also respecting the moment it grew from. I can take motifs that I have used before, like my eyes for example, and utilize them in different contexts.

The other designer that I have been heavily inspired by is Eric Timothy Carlson who is based out of Brooklyn, NY. I have existed around his work since 2015 in the form of album art visuals and concepts for one of my favorite musicians, Bon Iver. Specifically Carlson’s album design for the 2016 record *22, a Million* (Figure 14). Emmet Byrne describes the album art as follows,

Carlson’s work frequently mutates from medium to medium, a sketch becoming a poem becoming a sculpture becoming a shirt. Through it all, the idea of reading—the fluidity between text and image, the discarded pictographic origins of alphabets, the semiotic slide between icon to index to symbol—guides his work...In Carlson’s world, symbols rarely speak with the intent of reifying meaning, or branding something with repressive authority, but in a way that evokes multiple readings at once, asking to be adopted and infused with new life. It is this spirit that is on ebullient display in his new artwork for Bon Iver. This work is thick—an extensive collection of symbols and drawings and texts that spill out from the dense LP design (the legend/key to the entire transmedia system) to populate Instagram posts, giant murals, lyric videos, etc. The work is less a graphic identity for an album and more a documentation of a collaborative network of players, places, times, and tools.”⁴

⁴ Emmet Byrne, “Designing Bon Iver’s 22, a Million: An Interview with Eric Timothy Carlson,” Walker Art Center, October 3, 2016, <https://walkerart.org/magazine/designing-bon-iver-22-a-million-album-art-eric-timothy-carlson>.

The last sentence, to me, resonates with my approach to working. My work is collective in the sense that I am sharing the emotion and care I put into my work and I am distributing it with people. When looking at the imagery that Eric selected and designed to be on the cover, I see symbols that resonate with me and I know that others will have different associations with the symbols. When looking at his use of text in and around the cover and inserts, I become more immersed in the experience of the media object. The design as printed media serves the human function of enjoyment and connection. He has also created several video pieces to accompany live performances and lyric videos. I possess a screenprinted poster that he designed for a project that Bon Iver's label did with poet Ross Gay, another one of my inspirations. The poster reads, "I remember. My color's green. I'm spring." It is printed on a slightly off white french paper with all black ink, with the exception of the word spring. The words are all in caps in sans serif. I have lived with the poster in my living space in both Wisconsin and Maine for almost a year now and the piece has immensely impacted the lens I experience life through. The initial enjoyment of the piece came from the printed object itself, but in the past few months and due to my enjoyment of the poster's text I have delved into Ross Gay's other poetry. I have begun to write things myself in response and as afterthoughts to Gay's work. One of his poems that I have been listening to on my walks is titled *Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude*, and while I wish I could share the entirety of it here, it is quite lengthy. Here are the final two stanzas,

"and you, again you, for hanging tight, dear friend.
I know I can be long-winded sometimes.
I want so badly to rub the sponge of gratitude

over every last thing, including you, which, yes, awkward,
the suds in your ear and armpit, the little sparkling gems
slipping into your eye. Soon it will be over,

which is precisely what the child in my dream said,
holding my hand, pointing at the roiling sea and the sky
hurtling our way like so many buffalo,
who said *it's much worse than we think,*
and sooner, to whom I said
no duh child in my dreams, what do you think
this singing and shuddering is,
what this screaming and reaching and dancing
and crying is, other than loving
what every second goes away?
Goodbye, I mean to say.
And thank you. Every day.”⁵

This poem is important to the way I see my work now. It made the feeling of gratitude feel more attainable to me. For a long time, the way I was feeling and making things was very simple and made it easy to become cold and detached from myself and my extensions of myself. I presented the emotions as a desperate plea to be heard instead of a joyful cry of celebration for the emotion. For example, my lithograph “*let it*” (figure 15) is the product of a 6 month long relationship that came to an abrupt end that was out of my control. It features a motif that I pulled from my sketchbook, it looks visually overstimulating as it mimics the shape of flames and weaves the lines together, making it unclear where lines start and stop. To complement this motif, I developed a handwriting that also follows the form of a flame. I had started the lithograph at the beginning of the relationship and after it ended I harbored so much resentment towards the image and what it meant. What the poem and Gay’s work in general gave me was the perspective to process the thing I am working through and then hold on

⁵Ross Gay, “Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude by Ross Gay,” Poetry Foundation (Poetry Foundation), accessed March 22, 2022, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/58762/catalog-of-unabashed-gratitude>.

to it, graciously. After becoming enlightened with gratitude I was able to approach the stone and finally print it. The labor of printing the piece allowed me the time to be grateful for what came out of that trauma. Graining the image off the stone felt much more gratifying having settled with the emotions that came with that event. I was even able to hand color the lithograph, something I had never done before. I wanted to make beautiful my suffering, I am more myself because of it.

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While utilizing written and spoken language into my work I find that I journal less. It is when I am away from making print work that I journal, and I find that journaling satisfies most of the things I seek in printmaking (aside from the labor). Margaret Iverson wrote an essay after Roland Barthes that features a captivating description of journaling as follows

'The slip of paper, the note, the brief record of emotion, are pure repetitions of an instant. They refuse to be inscribed within a duration.' On every page of the Mourning Diary, continues Compagnon, *'it manifests the desire to stop time, to stand still, to be immobile'*. As mourning cannot become the object of narrative, cannot be ordered and rationalized, it *'appears as a series of random occurrences, a succession of moments, intermittencies, flashes of memory, small details that make Barthes think of his mother'*. The mourner is an *'erratic Self', 'discontinuous, sporadic, repetitive'*.⁶

These among others descriptions in her essay have given me a sense of comfort in knowing that my diary entries, in any form, conceptually can be seen as a multiple. I am constantly making multiples and have been since long before I began my print practice. When I was a child, my mom made it a habit to write thank you cards whenever I received something. The practice of writing thank you over and over again and sending it to people is a multiple that I was disseminating. When I would journal in a notebook I would also type it into the

⁶Ibid 3

computer. Having multiples soothes me, it relieves my need for control and my fear of loss. Having both digital and analog is as important to me now as it was when I first gained access to digital technology.

~

What people will be seeing as my body of thesis work are things that I have created over the past four years at this school. Upon my completion of this degree I will return to my home in Wisconsin as a visitor of sorts, I will go to my grandma's house. I will help her in the garden, I will drive around aimlessly, I will sit on the porch and I will think. My print practice will have to shift to accommodate for my lack of materials, I will be more like my Gramma. Her and her tomatoes through my eyes are prints. They are multiple, they are shared, they are nurturing. What I hope to do is stay present, to be grateful for the time I had in the institution and this period in my life, and to go back to the land that has always listened to me. This time, I will have something to tell it and work to show it. I hope the breeze will hear me. There is so much in the mundane to rejoice in.



(Fig 1.) Rembrandt van Rijn, *De drie bomen*, 1643. Etching. Dimensions

Unknown

<https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/de-drie-bomen/0gGx1x4TAi2ujA?hl=en>



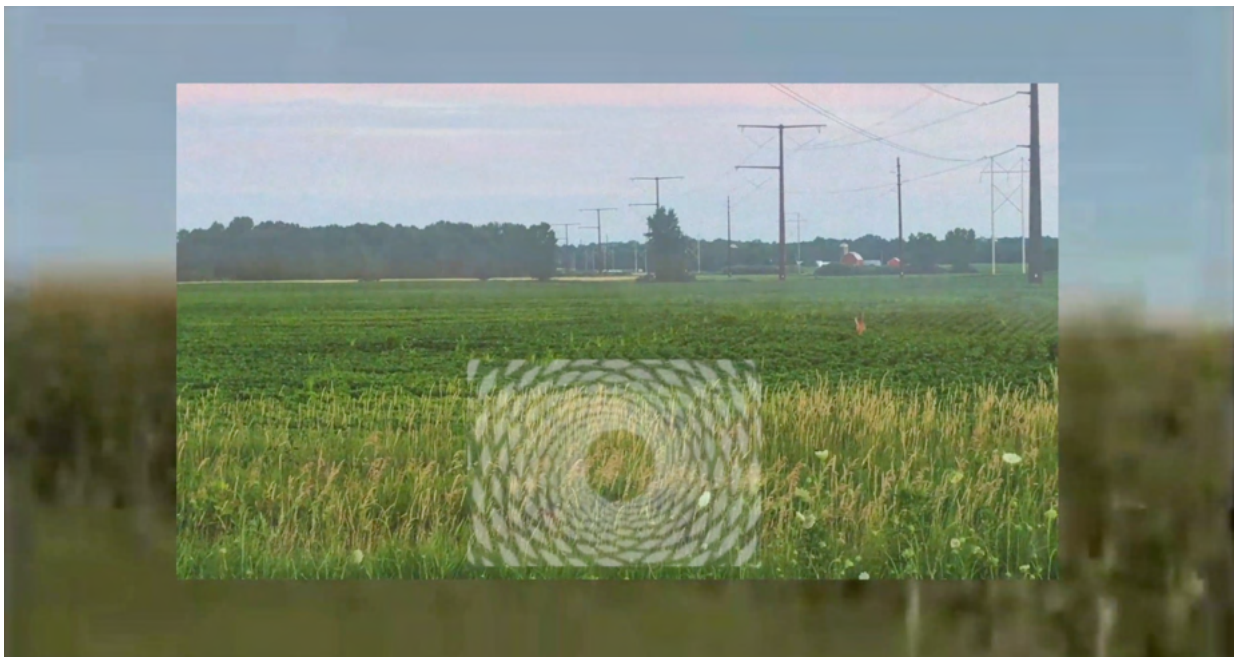
(Fig 2.) Helena Jefferson, *i'd like to go back now...*, 2020. Five layer acetate monotype on lightweight BFK. 8"x10"



(Fig 3.) Robert Rauschenberg, *Plank*, 1964. Lithograph 5'11"x 8'1". 14 x 15 13/16"



(Fig 5.) Anonymous, *Valentine - Mechanical - flowers reveal happy messages*, 1875. Heavy lace-embossed card-stock, die cut chromolithographed scraps, white silk ribbon for tabs, 3 1/8" x 4 5/8"



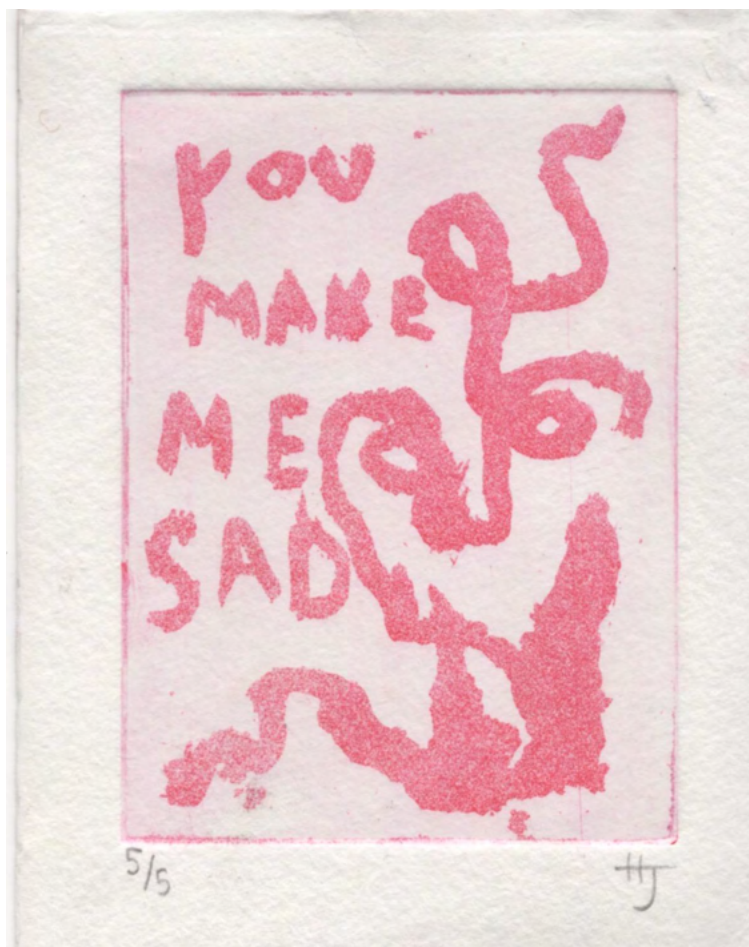
(Fig. 7) Helena Jefferson, *Midwest Archive*, appropriated and filmed video with collected sound. Duration 2min.



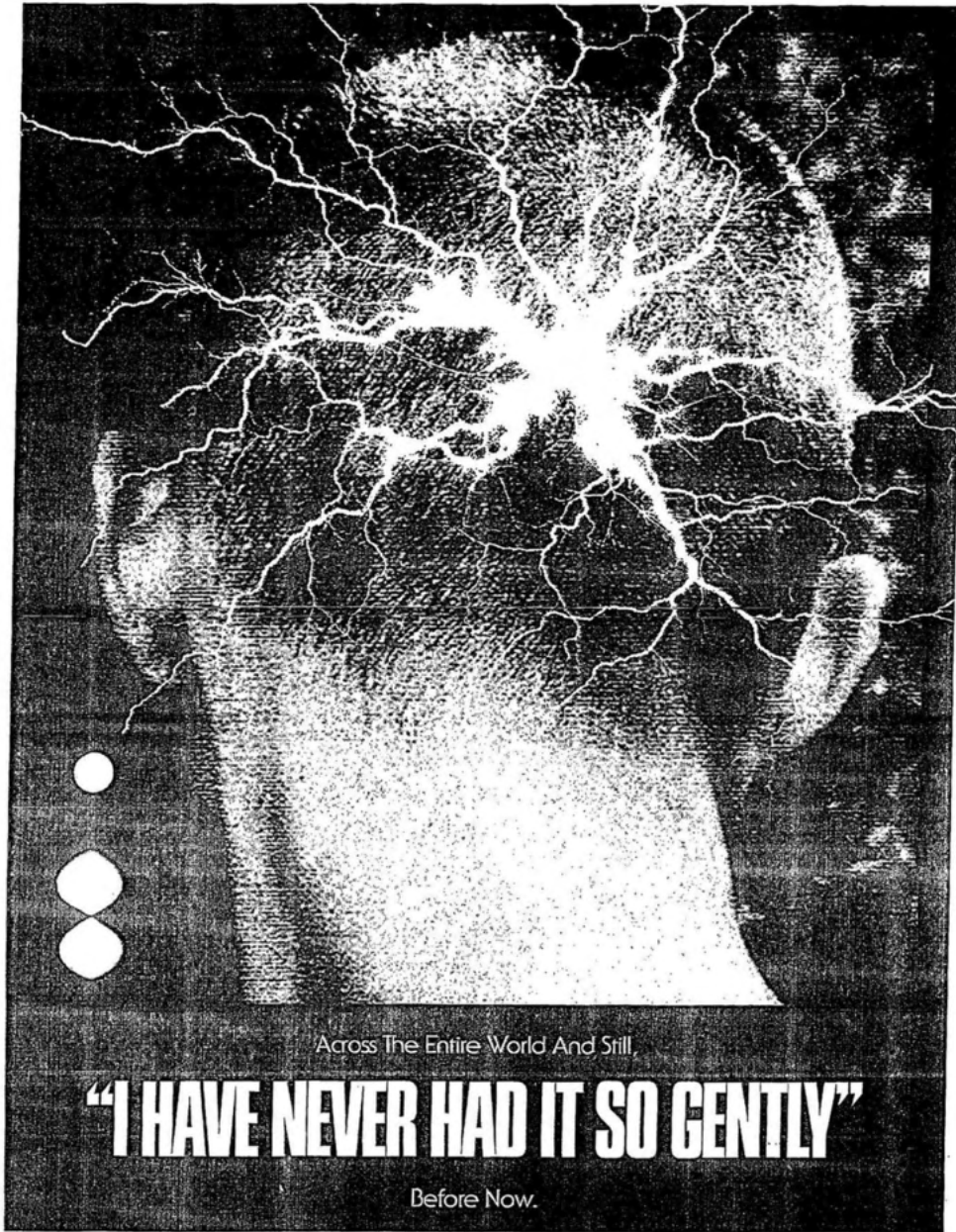
(Fig 8.) Gustav Klimt, *The Maiden*, oil on canvas. 1913, 6' 7" x 6' 3".



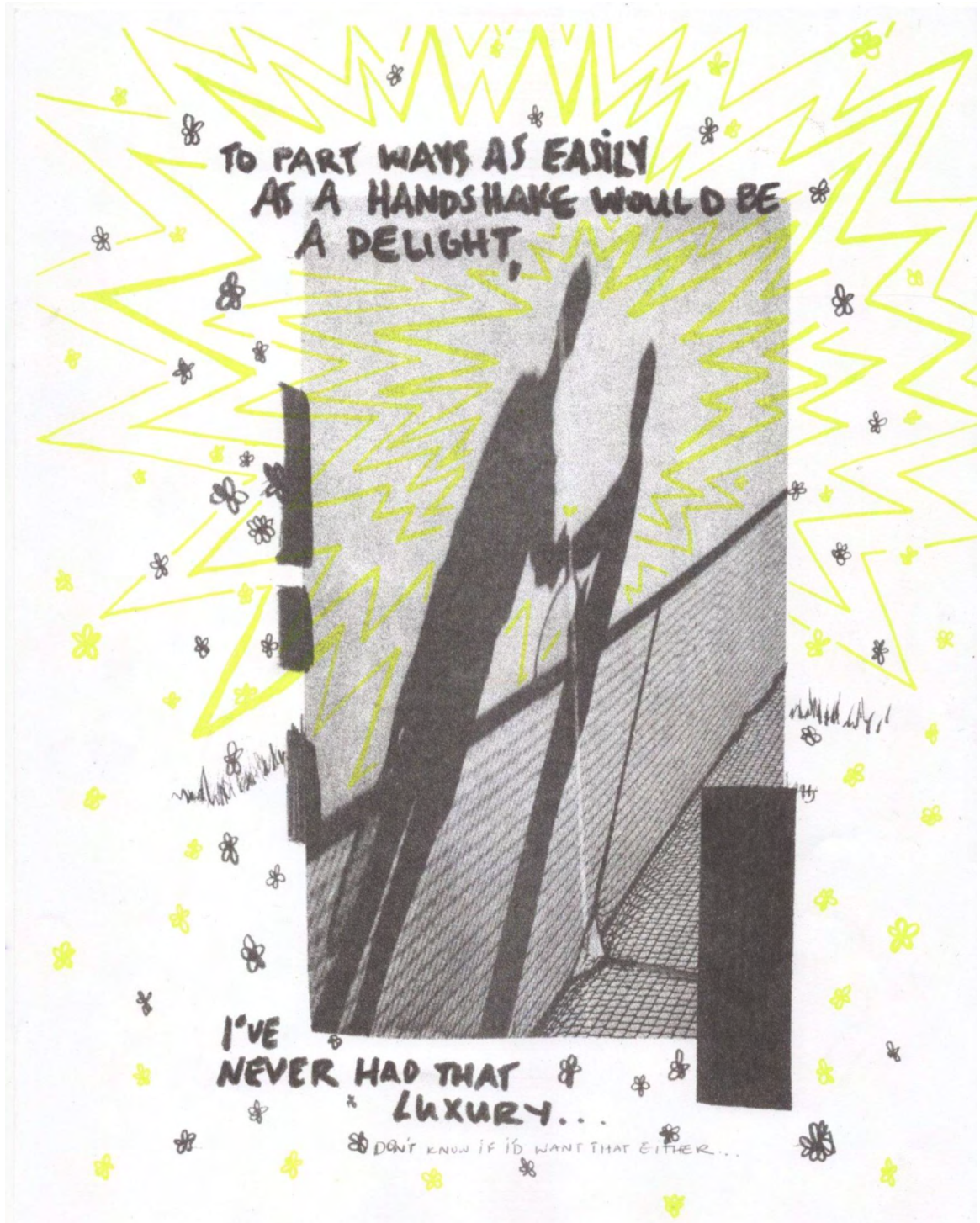
(Fig. 9) Image of Poster Courtesy of My Papa



(Fig. 10) Helena Jefferson, *you make me sad*, 2019. Coffee lift aquatint on copper, 5" x 6".



(Fig. 11) Jesse Feinman, 2019. Digital image.



(Fig. 12) Helena Jefferson, *Parting Actions*, 2021. two layer risograph, 8"x11".



(Fig. 13) Helena Jefferson, *if you're thinking about doing it...*, 2021. risograph diptych, 8.5" x 22"



(Fig. 14) Eric Timothy Carlson, 22, a Million, 2016.



(Fig. 15) Helena Jefferson, *let it*, 2022. Hand colored stone lithograph, 11" x 15".

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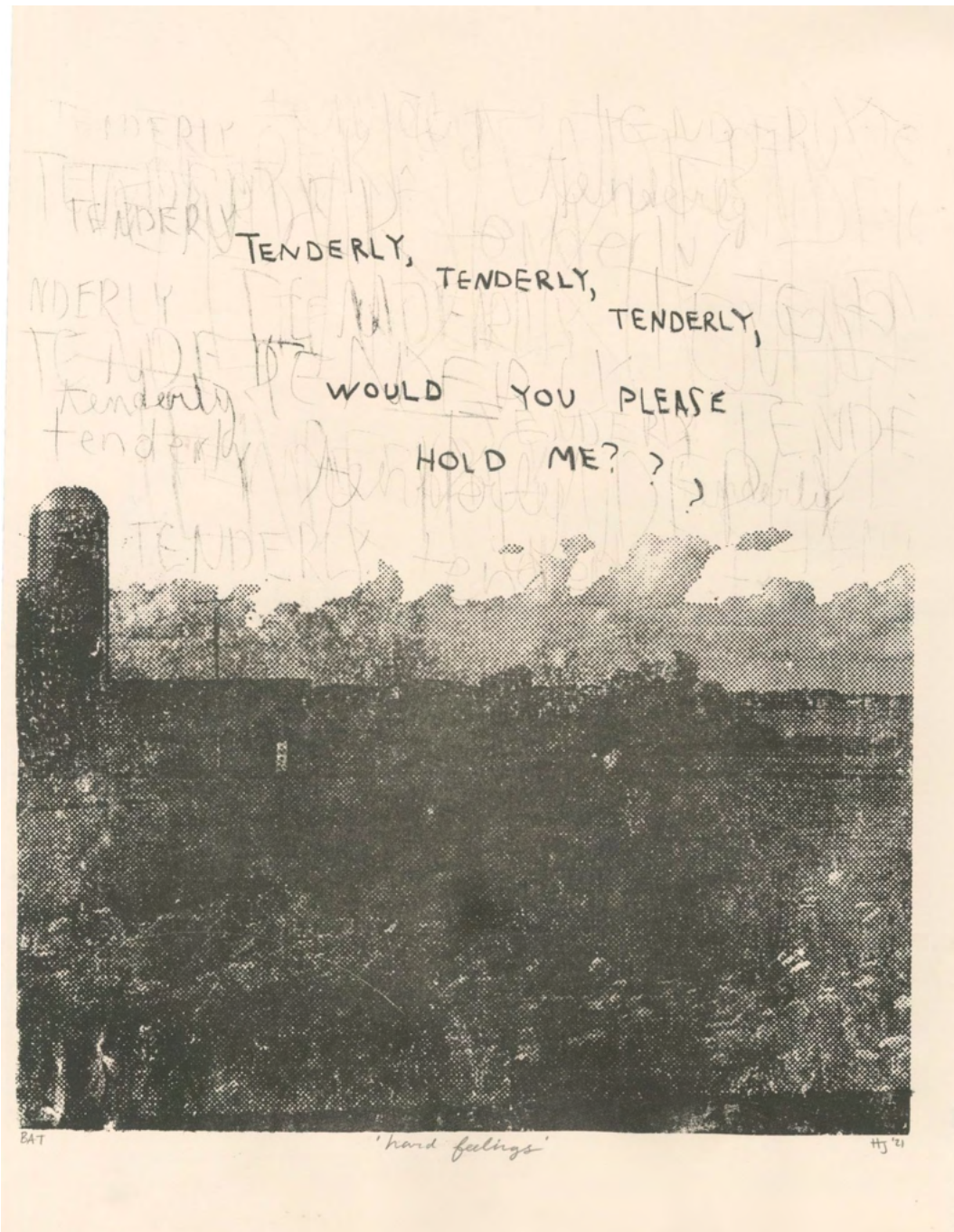
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Phoebe Bridgers, Garden Song. 2020, Accessed May 12, 2022. <https://open.spotify.com/track/5blgzvxvlefRUCQK9JPocF?si=9cfa30903bf24766>.

Thesis Image List

1. *hard feelings*, stone lithograph, 11" x 15", 2021.
2. *let it*, hand colored stone lithograph, 11" x 15", 2021-22.
3. *garden song*, 3 layer risograph and screenprint, 10"x10", 2021.
4. *garden song detail*
5. *ditch kitty*, two layer screenprint, 8" x 8", 2021.
6. *55*, trace monotype, 5.5" x 8.5", 2020.
7. *begin again*, duralar watercolor monotype, 8" x 7", 2020.
8. *Midwest Archive*, appropriated and filmed video with collected sound. duration 2min, 2022.
9. *fully/foolishly*, stone lithograph, 10" x 11", 2021.
10. *bandana design*, digital file, 2021.
11. *sheep archive*, CMYK screen print, 5.5" x 6", 2020



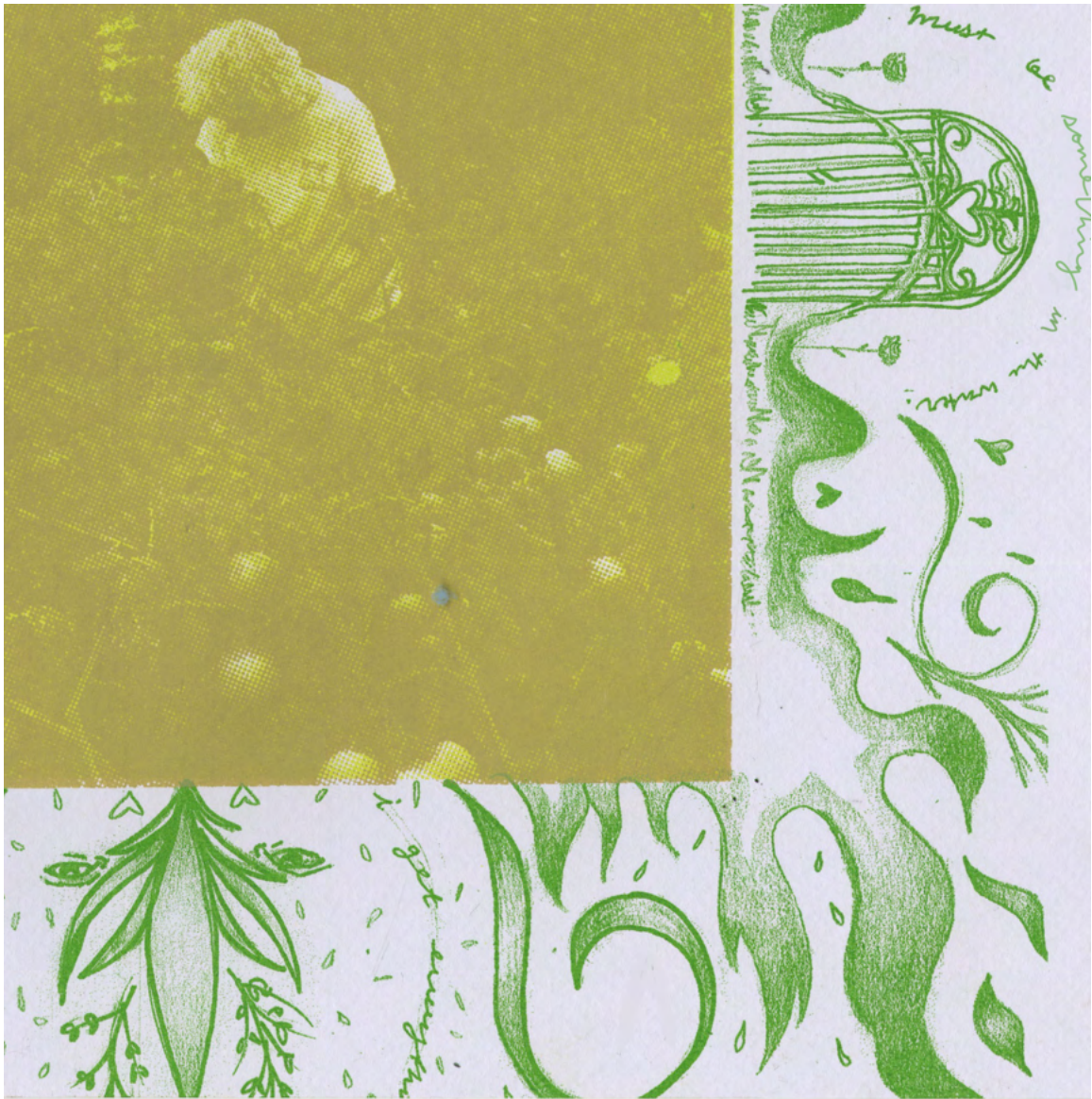
hard feelings, stone lithograph, 11" x 15", 2021.



let it, hand colored stone lithograph, 11" x 15", 2021-22.



garden song, 3 layer risograph and screenprint, 10"x10", 2021.



garden song detail



ditch kitty, two layer screenprint, 8" x 8", 2021.



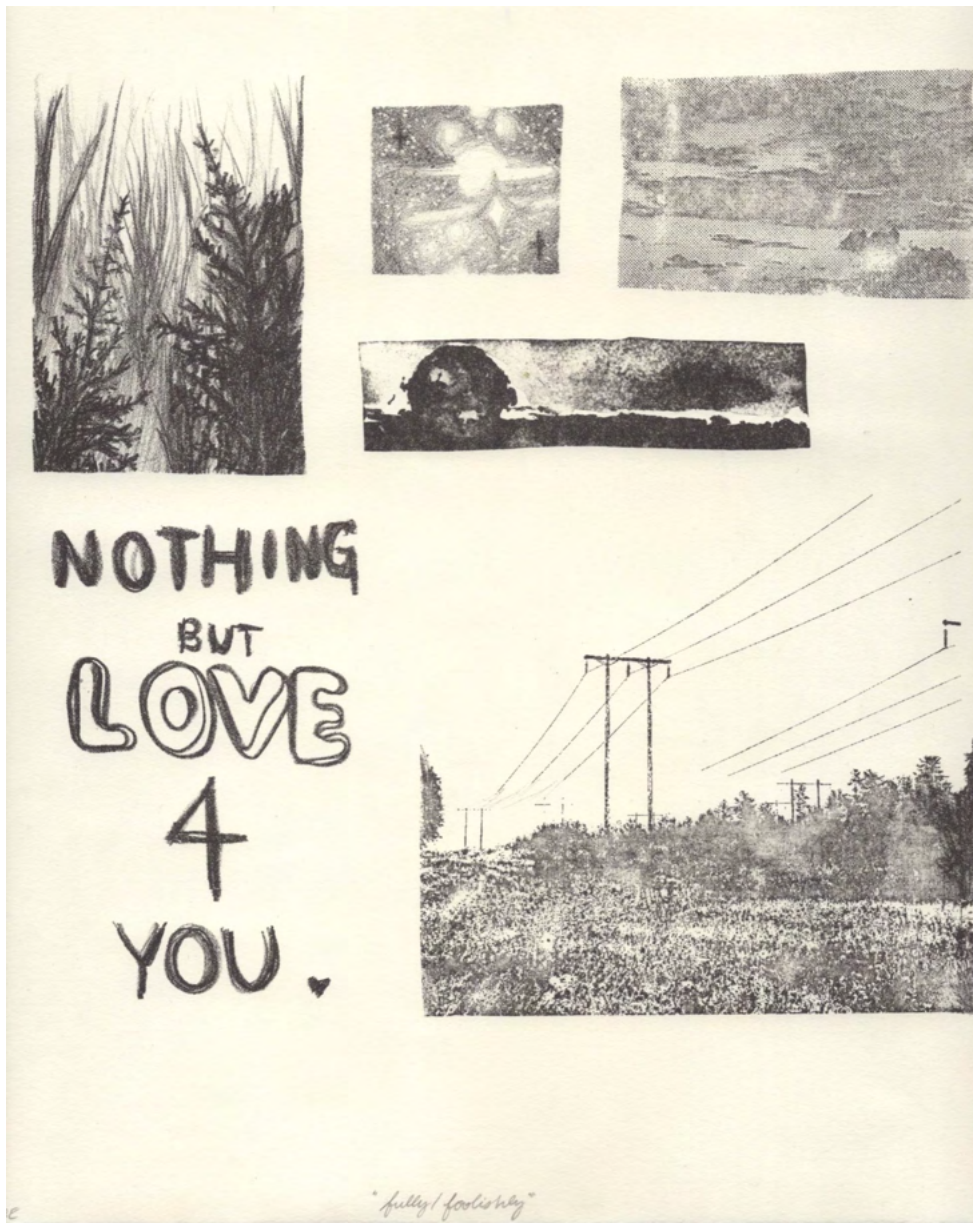
55, trace monotype, 5.5" x 8.5", 2020.



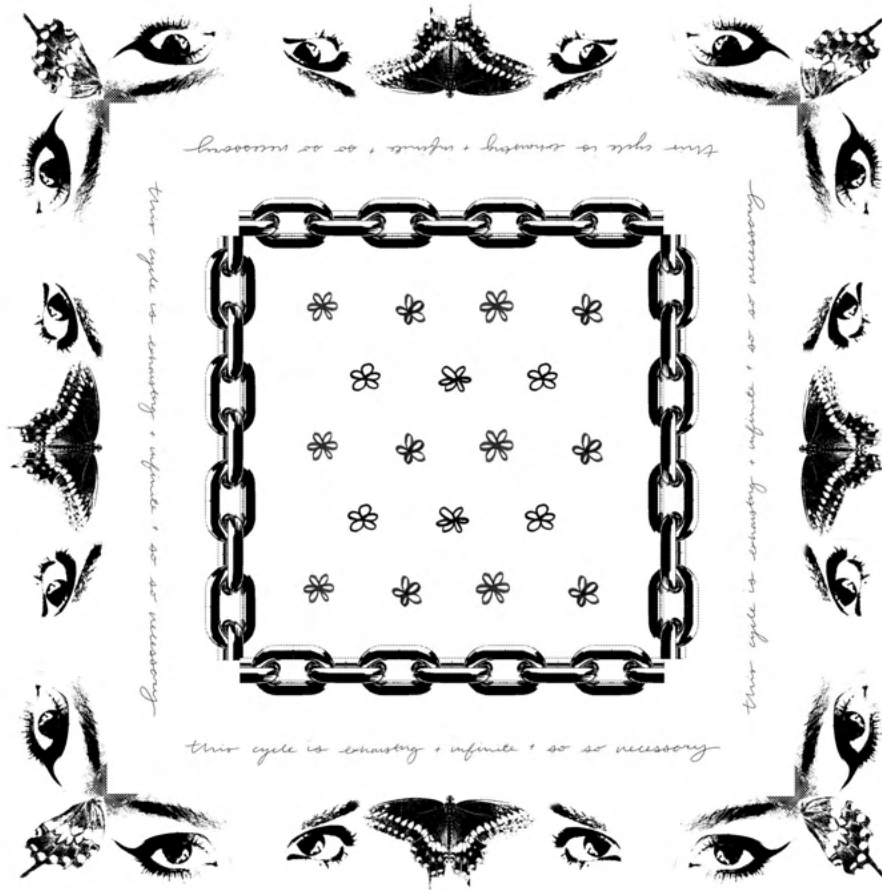
begin again, dular watercolor monotype, 8" x 7", 2020.



Midwest Archive, appropriated and filmed video with collected sound. duration 2min, 2022.



fully/foolishly, stone lithograph, 10" x 11", 2021



bandana design, digital file, 2021.



sheep archive, CMYK screen print, 5.5" x 6", 2020

Artist Bio

Helena Jefferson is a printmaker who is currently pursuing their BFA at Maine College of Art & Design. They were born and raised in rural Wisconsin which heavily influences the aesthetics and visuals of their work.

Working with laborious processes, Jefferson aims to provide a space in which reflections on self are made. They focus on feelings such as tenderness, vulnerability, selfishness, abandonment, grief, and resentment and encourage others to investigate these emotions as well. They contrast these 'tough to handle' emotions with softer images from home to provide a visual resting spot for the contemplation they are prompting through their diaristic approach to making.

Artist Statement

In my work I am approaching the spectrum of human emotions through the process of printmaking. Specifically I focus on tenderness, vulnerability, selfishness, abandonment, grief, and resentment.

All of these feelings are difficult to openly engage with, my work is very personal and I mainly make my work with self in mind. My work is meant to become a mirror, to open oneself to the idea of difficult emotional processing, which starts by acknowledging the feeling.

The reason that I utilize the printmaking process is because it allows me to have control. I can force the materials to do what I want. However, the materials have a personality and things can go wrong. I enjoy stone lithography in particular because the limestone feels like an extension and illusion of myself, it is stubborn and expressive; I engage in a dialogue with myself through the stone. Printmaking is an extension of my experience as a human.

Using imagery such as farmscapes and basic midwestern americana rural landscapes from my home that I care about, I am cultivating a visual space in which I feel a heightened sense of control of my autonomy. The landscapes allow me to explore the emotions and have the adequate visual and conceptual space to consider them wholly. I use soft visuals to accompany a thought or an idea that I would like myself to explore deeper and ponder. All of this paired with the labor I produce through the print process is what makes my work meaningful to me.

Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

2018-Current BFA-Printmaking Maine College of Art & Design - Portland, ME
(Pending May 2022)

GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS

2018-2022 Presidential Scholarship - Maine College of Art & Design - Portland, ME

WORK EXPERIENCE

2022 Teaching Assistant - Haystack Mountain School of Crafts - Deer Isle, ME

- Provided assistance to Daniel Minter and participants throughout a 2 week workshop. (Pending June 2022)

2021 Gallery Sitter - SPEEDWELL PROJECTS - Portland, ME

- Performed opening and closing duties, welcomed guests, engaged with guests in conversation about the work.

2021 Workshop Assistant - Lynden Sculpture Garden - Milwaukee, WI

- Provided assistance to Daniel Minter at a workshop where participants learned to design and carve linoleum blocks.

2020 Intern: Indigo Arts Alliance - Portland, ME

- Studio Arts and Programming Administration

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2022 Entwine - Maine College of Art & Design - Portland, ME

2021 *BFA Exhibition* - Maine College of Art & Design - Portland, ME

2021 *The Universe* - Maine College of Art & Design - Portland, ME

2021 *Developing a Culture* - Maine College of Art & Design - Portland, ME

2021 *Disrupt(ED)* - Maine College of Art & Design - Portland, ME

2021 *Merit Show* - Maine College of Art & Design - Portland, ME

2020 *BFA Exhibition* - Maine College of Art & Design - Portland, ME

2019 *Merit Show* - Maine College of Art & Design - Portland, ME

2019 *BFA Exhibition* - Maine College of Art & Design - Portland, ME

2018 *BFA Exhibition* - Maine College of Art & Design - Portland, ME