

"Print Time" Tefen Museum, Israel 2013

"Upon this Bank and Shoal of Time"

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Building Blocks: 1985. The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in the heart of Philadelphia. Unfamiliar environment, a foreign language, unidentified sounds, a majestic temple of art with a venerable tradition. The printmaking workshop is comprised of several rooms. Rows of printing presses, a huge library of stone, metal, and wooden plates, aprons, work tools, and dozens of sheets of paper hung up to dry.

The smell of pine wood transports me instantly to a forest in the Western Galilee, or to the yard outside my home on Mount Carmel. A woodcut image (Obviously a reproduction) by Käthe Kollwitz greets me with its direct, poignant, political power. It would later be followed by woodcuts by Albrecht Dürer and Titian, which are breathtaking in terms of their incredible momentum forcefulness and absolute commitment to their subject matter. The works of Edvard Munch, Helen Frankenthaler, Anselm Kiefer, Vija Celmins, William Kentridge, and Nancy Spero would also serve as sources of inspiration. Over the course of four years, three or four days a week, I found myself in the vast space of the printmaking workshop. Putting together pinewood panels, drawing on them, carving a path through the wood with Japanese knives, applying ink with a roller and printing with a wooden spoon on Japanese Suzuki paper.

Vocabulary: Over the years, I have gathered newspaper clippings, images and photographs I take myself. This archive, coupled with my imagination and conceptual processes, has given rise to an ensemble of figures and images integrated in my work, and to which I can essentially repeatedly return. As a print artist, I find recycling images which have been processed into printing blocks an almost inherent notion, thereby accumulating and forming a vocabulary of sorts.

Using this vocabulary, I can form multiple sentences, ask new questions, and wander through new conceptual spheres. The American artist Nancy Spero based a major part of her work on recurrent figures, which she used in various ways and in different works to create a range of perspectives and new meanings.

Matter: Why wood? Because it is readily available in most wood supply stores, its common presence in everyday life and reasonable cost. Perhaps also because of its seductive scent... The modest origins of the wooden panel impact the apparent simplicity of the woodcutting process, which involves both physical and mental challenges. This process also serves, in my eyes, as a constant reminder that the print medium historically flourished as an important art form and platform for the critiquing and challenging of ruling doctrines of the church and others.

Processes: In recent years, I have become increasingly aware of the uniqueness of the woodblock itself and of the aggregation of elements that form a given work, with accumulative vitality and force. This effect cannot be attributed simply to monumental size, or to the carved panel possessing a powerful three-dimensional qualities; Rather, it arises out as result of the combination of these factors, amounting to more than the linear sum of the work's elements.

Working on a large scale and the emergence of the print into three-dimensional space are also a fascinating extension of the sweeping geographical sense underlying Titian's overall vision, as well as an additional critical element in the attempt to expand the limits of contemporary printmaking. I see the idea of bringing together a printing block and a sheet of paper as an expression of a wider, almost cinematic perspective, as well as to that of a third-dimension operating beyond the limits of the paper hung on the wall; as directly related to Titian's work, while simultaneously representing the fruit of an ongoing dialogue with cutting-edge technologies (digital print) and a range of other mediums (photography, video, and more). This form of art making also offers an alternative to the use of familiar materials, as well as to the scale of my own studio, as part of my need to study and evolve.

Time: My work process is characterized by a consistent preoccupation with the dimension of time. I am constantly searching for a way of making time palpable: personal time, the present time, historical time –examining these different temporal dimensions vis-à-vis the universal temporal dimension, a dimension that may exceed the limitation of human understanding. Such a realization may serve to undermine our sense of self-importance, our tendency to place our own existence at the center, our own hubris. In my work, I attempt to examine our values and beliefs concerning our short, finite lives.