

## Nicole Syzmanski

Having a creative outlet has always felt like a safe space for me. This has led me to be involved in different creative endeavors since I was a child, especially art making as I matured. So, when I was told by one of my professors that I looked up to that I could make it in the art world, it sparked a light in me that couldn't be extinguished. After that, I started to not only focus on the formal qualities of my work, but also, the very meaning behind what I was doing. I decided to start working in an abstract, intuitive way I was attracted to that same quality that came from abstract expressionists. This allowed me to release emotions that I felt like I couldn't express before. In turn, I found that I wanted to visualize overlapping and complex emotions that arise from life's experiences; emotions that reflect a state of being.

Starting my journey in abstraction, one of the abstract expressionists that has influenced me is Mark Rothko. Rothko was interested in expressing human emotions over anything else in his work. I was also attracted to how he used large canvases to express these emotions. The grandiose scale contributes to immersing the viewer into the artwork, which is something that I strive towards as I keep scaling up my compositions. Where we differ is through the medium; Rothko focuses on painting while I focus on printmaking. Rothko's style of working in large vertical stacked squares and rectangles with slight auras around them also differs from my format. I let loose with more spontaneous brushstrokes falling more in line with gestural painters, more along the lines of another influence of mine Franz Kline. and experimenting with various printmaking processes.

As I experiment with new processes and techniques, I focus on how to combine them to create my own visual language that can grasp the subtlety between two related emotions, while also capturing the elusiveness of emotions that one can have in different states of being. As I approach on a new composition, I don't have a specific emotion in mind that I want to express. Instead, the process of making puts me in a meditative state, which then, lets the work and I become one. This allows my subconsciousness to take over and express the state it feels it's in. Being in a meditative flow state also leads to me layering more processes onto the piece. The more processes I add, the more complicated a print becomes, but also the more accurate it becomes to the range of emotion that I am trying to invoke. The formal aspects between each piece also tends to differ depending on the process used and what other processes can be added.

My main three processes that I use the most frequently are monotype, chine collé, and intaglio. I am also currently exploring encaustic, plaster relief prints, and clay monotypes. Monotype works best for the quick expressive mark making you might see in a Franz Kline painting, and to also add a structural background to lay a foundation for the rest of the print. Chine collé can add subtle marks, layering, and transparencies in color that aren't noticeable until you're staring at the piece up close, or it can create harsh lines and visible textures to a piece depending on the paper used. Intaglio has short rhythmic marks, which contrast against the long gestural marks of a monotype. These, along with the other plethora of processes I've learned, or are in the process of learning, work together interchangeably alongside the color choices I use for each print.

These processes and color choices I use make my compositions more accurate to what I'm conveying. This makes viewers able to experience my work on a deeper level, and more importantly, to let their walls down and really connect with a piece, similar to my experience when making it; not to mention the situations in my life that led up to me making a certain piece. I hope it can make any viewer universally feel not so alone in their life journey.