5-1-2018

How to Make an Artistically-Sound Relief Print

Domenic Suntrapak

University of the Pacific

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First, find something to steal. All the best artists were and are plagiarists or thieves. Once you cut out a nose or two, or add a mustache on top of someone else’s sketch, it becomes yours. No one will judge you, and everyone will be awed with the “freshness” of your piece.

Once you’ve finished your original, one-of-a-kind pencil draft, gather your tools. I recommend Niji brand relief knives, due to the officiousness of their Japanese trademark. If you wish to appear especially professional, we recommend two sets. If you’re embodying the tortured artist look, three sets is absolutely mandatory. Begin to work, and be prepared to bleed for it. Most artists have to metaphorically suffer for their labors. Printmakers, however, are singularly blessed with sharp objects with which to suffer “accidental” injury. For the sake of publicity consider taking a photograph of fresh blood fallen on the wood block or linoleum strip. People love violence in art. While you carve, be sure to play some form of classical music. It ought to be something excessively light, like Handel, or intensely brooding, like Chopin.
If your studio is in or near a public space, be sure to blast your ambient soundtrack for all to hear. People will always assume you are hard at work, utterly consumed by your craft. Once the cut is finished, you must determine the color palette of the print. Rules don’t apply to you as a printmaker, so bending the laws of color to your will is welcomed and otherwise expected. After choosing the most garish hue you can find, apply the ink liberally, so as to cover any unintentional marks, and begin to press the block to the printing surface.

In olden times, printers used wooden spoons to migrate the ink to the final surface. However, in this period of modernity, anything can be used as a tool for transfer. Bricks, old shoes, charging cables, and other peoples’ lost property are all highly recommended.

When you print, reduce the volume of your work music such that everyone can hear the manic pulse of your medium smacking against the finished product.
The louder you become, the more impressed your peers will be. Finally, when the ink is applied, inspect the product for any “unforeseen developments.” There are no accidents in printing, only happy shifts in the grain. Make superfluous comments on the texture of the ink grain, and be sure to speak as if each random dot of color was entirely by your design.

Then, sign the back, as sloppily or convolutedly as possible. Both are desired if it can be managed. Make copies, many copies, and berate any magazines you can find to feature your work. After it all, it has absorbed your honest, tender efforts, and remains completely your own.