Second nature: Impressions of place.

Trish Korte
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SECOND NATURE: IMPRESSIONS OF PLACE

By

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M.A.T., University of Louisville, 2001
M.A., University of Louisville, 2003

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art and Design

Department of Fine Arts
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the people who have supported me throughout my education, especially my husband, Ray Korte. Thanks for making me see this adventure through to the end.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mary Carothers
Kat Cox
Mitch Eckert
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Ray Korte
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Kevin Rose Schultz
Jennifer Sichel
Rachel Singel
For my art practice, I grow and forage my art materials for eco printing, a direct contact printing method that reveals leaf shapes and hidden imagery through heat and pressure. I take specific cues from surrounding materials, objects, and environments. Tree systems and compelling textures of fungus are interpreted through ceramic and fiber. With an ongoing collaboration of natural materials and eco printing processes, my art speaks symbolically and metaphorically through imagery and materials. This thesis and accompanying exhibition present an examination of current work in context with an ongoing investigation of natural materials and eco printing.
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INTRODUCTION

I am a process artist who speaks with the voice of environmental feminism, I am a mother, and an educator. My work reflects primitive technologies, produced by hand, with natural artifacts assisting in a personal narrative, stirring up feelings of time and place related to compositions in nature. My muse is acres of woods and endless terrain. I am inspired by the life-cycle of trees. I am exploring symbiotic relationships through forest imagery, mythology, and our dependence on nature for meditative peace, oxygen, sustenance, and protection. My practice embodies states of transition and impermanence and explores my relationship with the environment. Exploring these ideas through my relationship with materials and methods becomes the dominant driver in my work. An internal dialogue and connection to my landscape emerges when I respond intuitively to a botanical print. A print may seem finished as soon as the bundle is opened, or it may become the first stage in an art journey.

Using multiple processes and through materials and assemblage, my work is created. Not limiting myself to one medium or concept allows exploring the physicality and challenge that each material holds. My work involves synthesizing and recording responses to the experience with the environment. My work is a constant evolution of the media. It is my intention that each element, including concept, material, and process are informed by direct experiences within the beauty of the natural environment. I negotiate a path between printing and fibers, research, and experimentation to best interpret the ideas I have about myself and home. Botanical printing unifies my multimedia work. Using
foraged vegetation, particularly in the late summer, I investigate the mystery of native pigments through heat and pressure. August heat summons the colors of the trees to reveal themselves. When the roadside sumac begins to turn red, I am impatient to begin rolling leaves in bundles of felted wool, silk, and paper. Delightfully immersing myself in imagery and marks, I feed on the ancient techniques of encaustics, dyeing, and felted wool.

Working with renewable and natural materials is important to my process. Sustainable materials: cloth, paper, and discarded artifacts, give history and purpose to my work and are important in the ecological balance of our planet. I intend my art to raise awareness and question our impact on the landscape, address our broken connection to nature, and, at times, offer a peek at the wonder that is hiding in the forest. Collectively, these artworks call for a natural coexistence and question human activity on the earth’s fragile ecosystems.
The theme of nature has always been present in art, sometimes depicted in literal or abstract forms, or as a substitute for ideas of spirituality. My work is informed by the natural world. I’m inspired by organic marks, forms, and textures that visually record time, like rings on a tree or insect tunnels.

The mark-making process begins in nature through contact printing, which then informs its evolution. Images become ethereal and when combined with encaustic wax, a skin-like surface preserves the pigments and enhances the natural palette. Contact or eco printing links my work to contemporary fiber art through respect for the natural environment, the recovery of lost dye and plant-knowledge, and an appreciation for hand work carried out over generations.

The search for hidden colors, forms, and textures is, for me, the lure of eco printing. I work with a color palette of earth tones—burnt sienna, warm grays, browns, and greens. A fondness for autumn and the theme of transformation guides the work. The renewal of nature through the destructive forces of winter, and the leaves sheltering the forest floor become portrayed. These marks/prints become the underpainting for my work. These
pieces are all unified by the concepts of memory, identity, relationships and ways of communicating. I choose materials such as wax, wood, and clay because of their tactile or moldable qualities. I work with fiber-based materials because there are so many ways to manipulate them, create three-dimensional form, or surface design. Traditional dye practices provide indispensable information and guidance for eco printing, not every color available in a plant reveals itself in a traditional immersion dye pot. Eco printing processes aim to use traditional dye plants in both old and new ways and to try plants not well known as dye sources. Through observation and research, art, like science, reveals the invisible through techniques and modes of representation. The goal of eco printing is not to interpret nature as accurately as possible; rather, the goal is to have enough of an understanding of what you see to pull out the elements that will inform the work stories of identity, place, and time utilizing pattern, technique, subject, and of course, material.
CHAPTER II

MATERIALITY

My materials are temporal, seasonal, and renewable. I begin my work with grown or foraged material from my yard. Leaves, plants, and tree nuts are all in abundance. Substrates of paper, wool, or natural fabric, (cotton, silk or bamboo) bond with the natural pigments residing in my yard waste. These natural materials are the basis for my research in botanical or eco printing.

Work addressing time, decay, and nature interest me. Concepts of how we are connected through the rhythm and space by visible and imaginary communication lines, symbiotic connection—real and imagined—are also of interest. I enjoy searching for, collecting, and gathering organic materials. In tree knots or wooden drawers, I find fragments that are no longer of use to anyone else and give them a new life. Ecologically, I monitor my carbon footprint. It is important to me to work in natural dyes and tannins that are environmentally friendly. I grow most of the foliage and thrift fabrics before purchasing textiles. I preserve and enhance my prints with encaustic wax- beeswax mixed with damar resin, and fixed with heat. This is a historical process dating to ancient Greece for the coloring of marble and terra cotta. The medium is applied as a molten material to a warmed substrate and then it is reheated to fuse the pigments wherein it becomes
impervious to moisture. Encaustic can be cast, textured, molded, and buffed to a high gloss.
CHAPTER III

PROCESS

PRINT

Every print is a record of a contact event: pressure, heat and moisture, time, followed by release. A print is an object that has been made by transferring an image between two surfaces in contact with each other. A print of actual size is the preservation of a form and a recording of an event through the mystique of the pull. The moment the image is peeling away from the matrix is magic.

My process begins through a layering of printed materials on a receptive substrate. I use low-tech methods to transform raw materials and found objects into individually designed mixed media and textile works that tell a story fueled by the connection to place, time and environment. These unconventionally beautiful prints, born from experimental processes, invite curiosity and meaning while beckoning our internal botanist.

INTRODUCTION TO ECO PRINTING
Eco printing, or contact printing, is a creative method applied by printmakers, textile designers, and artists. It is a technique where plants, leaves, and flowers release their pigments as shapes, color, and marks on fabric, leather, wool, and ceramic. Plant materials bundled inside of cloth are steamed or boiled to release the dye found naturally inside the plant, creating a contact print in the shape of the leaf or flower used. These contact prints are referred to as “eco prints” or “botanical prints.”

I have lived in the Southern Indiana landscape for decades and the woods behind my house have always been a place for renewal and wonder, the scale and textures of trees most deeply imprinted on my mind. Experimenting with natural botanical printing necessitated a review of basic chemistry. The process of seeking native dye plants brought me deeper into gardening, an understanding of seasonal rhythms, and the local ecology. I learned to look more closely at the landscape, scanning for potential sources of color.

My research for botanical contact printing on textiles and paper began around 7 years ago when a friend shared this process from a workshop she attended. Initial samples were very black. Research of iron and tannins of various strengths became pertinent. I relied on experimentation and shared information with fellow eco printers, especially my friend, artist Kevin Rose Schultz. We share gardening tips on appropriate plants for printing, as well as how to make and use mordants. Books and blogs by India Flint and Alice Fox opened the possibilities and variations that can be achieved with botanical contact printing are endless. I use three different mordants for printing: copper, iron, and alum (potassium aluminum sulfate). I chose these as they are relatively safe to work with, and they result in a wide range of color variations.
The mordants function in botanical contact printing much the same as in any dye process. Alum enhances the natural colors already present, tending to heighten the warm tones. Copper brings out the green tones, while iron saddens the dye color, achieving a wide range of grays, browns and blacks. Iron used with a plant that is high in tannins, such as oak, will result in a completely black sheet of paper unless the bundle is wrapped tightly. During the submersion process, the tannins and the iron mix in the dye pot turning the water black.

I experimented with many different local plants, with eucalyptus being the only non-local plant, though I have successfully grown it in my studio. I knew from my research that eucalyptus produces brilliant colors and intricate patterns, and decided to deviate from the local sourcing for this reason. I used both seeded and spiral eucalyptus. In my search for suitable local plants, I found that walnut, oak, and sumac were particularly effective due to the high tannin content.

The two processes I used were steaming and hot submersion. Hot submersion was the most straight-forward. I basically followed the same process as described in India Flint’s book, *Eco Colour: Botanical Dyes for Beautiful Textiles*.1 Prints achieved during the submersion process will always vary in clarity, usually retaining a watery/blurry texture with some startlingly perfect leaf or petal prints scattered throughout. I found that using strips of muslin for bundling were more effective than string, although I sometimes chose to use string because of the texture print achieved. I use a stainless-steel pot for large textiles over propane gas heat or a stainless turkey roaster for smaller electric steaming.

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Consistent heat of 325 -350 degrees Fahrenheit is needed, as well as space for turning bundles to regulate heat.

The length of steaming time also had an effect; for example, a tighter pile required a longer steam time. This time is reduced if the paper and leaves are soaked with water/mordant before steaming. My steam times ranged from 2 - 5 hours. After steaming or simmering, the plant matter is carefully removed from the fiber’s surface. Fabrics are washed several days after printing, giving time for the print to fix, while paper is laid flat to dry.

HISTORY OF ECO PRINTING

The history of botanical or eco print technique discovery has been lost over time, although it is almost certain that it has been used as an artisan technique for thousands of years. As a more formal practice, we can trace its history back to the Middle Ages, when a growing interest in science and better research resulted in the emergence of herbalism and a catalog system with the classification of plants by purpose such as medical, dyes, or spices. The first record of botanical printing is found in a manual authored by Pedanius Discorides, a pharmacologist from Ancient Greece. This manual was very popular during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In medieval versions, the technique was used to illustrate plants. During the Renaissance, a print of a sage leaf appeared in a manuscript by Leonardo da Vinci, along with instructions for botanical printing.²

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Around 25 years ago, India Flint developed the eco print process for a new generation of makers. Flint lives in Australia where eucalyptus is widely available and has more than 800 species. I find the coral colors an integral material in the process. Flint has published several books that have guided my experimentation. Irish textile artist Nicola Brown has become a large influence on my practice. Brown is an eco printer and felter. Her dye process and felting videos are widely seen on YouTube and Facebook. Her process uses creek beds and natural iron sources to prepare her fabrics for printing. Eco printing does not focus on strict replication of results. Prints are both clearly defined and attractively diffused.
CHAPTER IV

EXHIBITION

SECOND NATURE: IMPRESSIONS OF PLACE

Second Nature: Impressions of Place, explores visions of the artist's journey through the triple threat of pandemic lock down, neurological palsy, and dysphoria. Through eco printing, I forged a path that laid the foundation of a three-year investigation of art, feminism, and professional practice. I explored the intersections between visual arts and neurosciences as I healed from Bell Palsy, and explored how emotion and perception inform the images we observe. I became fascinated by the similar patterns and shapes that nature repeats all around us. The structure of organic life follows similar fractal patterns that can be observed in trees, plants, and our own neurological branches and organs. Walking through a forest, you will find fractal patterns in the networks of leaves, seeds, roots, ferns, and fungal mycelium in the soil. With respect for the land and a desire to leave a healthy planet for future generations, my work is produced from natural, discarded, and renewable materials.
In the encaustic on wood series, *Brain Fog* (Figure 1) three 30 H x 40 W inch panels display blurred symmetrical reflections. Viewers are encouraged to daydream within the patterns and visually morph images as they search for a narrative over prolonged observation, probing into the fantasy content of the human imagination and teasing the idea of a Rorschach-like diagnostic measure. A quick glance at the images gives the impression of a Rorschach test, but upon closer examination a viewer can fall more deeply into both an abstract and complex piece. The play of symmetry and illusion provides an individual experience and an open-ended response to the image. The organic process of mark-making through chance and natural forces reflects the process of Rorschach ink blots. This work departs from the black ink blot technique of symmetrical paint movement and includes printed images of warm colors, repeated vertically among the columns of Saxon blue and gray.
The first work in the series *Brain Fog*, is entitled *Mirror Image* (Figure 2). The web-like hatching documents responses to environment and experience. These natural pigments assist in the illusion of cave painting. The overall use of color and shape is organic. The left side of the picture plane contains a web of botanical information reminiscent of lacework. Cool colors of implied sky fill the background and suggest branches blowing against a leaded glass window. The right-hand side reads as a mirror of Rorschach prints, organic blots centralized from the initial fold of the paper. Discoloration, age, and decay blur into stain forming aesthetic harmony between art and nature.
The following piece in the series, shown above, is *Four Carrion* (Figure 3). Like *Mirror Image*, it is a horizontal, 33 H x 40 W inch assemblage of four eco prints standing in vertical repetition, stretching across the picture plane. The blend of colors and patterns constructs an impression of four skeletal figures in a coffin-like orientation. Each of the four symmetrical panels appears to contain a skeletal form, allowing for the interpretation of “body” as an abstract form within forest material. As if resting, calm, muted colors display the forms and columns of biomorphic imagery emerge from the light tone of the background. The cinnamon and cayenne colors fill circular shapes, which are reminiscent of organs and tissue sealed and preserved on ethereal wax. With time and observation, the visceral, fleshy physicality of lungs and bare bones appear in the tangled stick-like marks. These marks are twisted, gnarly, and densely overlapping forms creating a pelvis and rib cage.
The third and final panel of this series is *Bound and Tied* (Figure 4). The image is based in a world of ideas explored through a mixture of natural forces and human intervention. The soft, leafy forms showcase the tangled and reflection in bilateral symmetry. The left side of the work’s tight grid confines an organic overgrowth of marks and textures of muted colors. These are anchored by the Saxon blue natural dye presented horizontally in contrast to the vertical use of blue in *Mirror Image*. Looking to the far right of the composition, vine-like, twisting green lines furl through fleshy colors of warm peach-tones and golden hues. The marks situated against a blue background are engulfed, creating the sense of a nest. Bold mark-making creates a diversity of surface effects and visual texture. A subtle palette helps to achieve a feeling of calm and a sense of unity within the limited palette and the strong repetition of window-like panes, a fast ride through kudzu vines in southern Georgia.
The abstraction present in the piece, amplified by the medium, forces the brain to attempt to recognize animals, faces, and pictures within the images. There are an infinite number of possible images distributed throughout the works that may be interpreted by the brain or in the mind's eye.

Figure 5: *Specimen*, tryptic - eco printed silk on wood panel, 2021.

*Specimen* (Figure 5) is a collection of three eco printed silk panels vertically hung, interpreting “body” as abstract form, reminiscent of skin samples; specimens of natural tissue under magnification. The depicted panels suggest abstracted botanical shapes in lights and darks that mirror each other in near symmetrical balance. The surface
texture of encaustic and silk, supple to the touch, creates a sensual quality, an illusionistic film that distorts and blurs the ethereal image. Layering of cellular shapes and visceral tendons creates the appearance that the triptych is both fleshy and translucent.

The artwork may unsettle the viewer, as it is a psychologically engaging abstraction of pictorial designs. Further, the series hangs vertically at the average adult human height, which lends to this fleshy, haunting piece. Central to this work and the preceding series is abstraction—abstraction of color, shape, and even surface encouraging the disorientation. The stage for a viewer to read themself and their own perceptions into the image. These works represent an excellent case study for the ways in which a structuralist lens allows one to understand how meaning arises from the collaboration of different parts in an individual’s own context. Only when elements, signs, or images are arranged in a system do things have meaning. Calling upon the individual’s internal mappings, knowledge, and experience leads to individual meaning. Memory and visual coding, whether personal scheme or pareidolia, set these works apart from representational media by including the viewer’s interpretations.

MATERIALITY OF TEXTILES

With their tactile familiarity, textiles readily evoke memories, past experiences, and physical and cultural associations. As textiles provide our ‘second skin’ they also possess many similar attributes to skin, which can be utilized to reference the body. This human association can endear very personal and idiosyncratic responses to different textiles, with varying levels of conscious engagement. Prints on textiles read differently than works on paper. The choice of substrate for my printed work interprets the message explored. Author Victoria Mitchell, of Norwich University of the Arts writes,
The use of textiles as an aesthetic and critical language… She cites the common roots and meanings for textiles across different languages. She proposes that this suggests textiles are a form of language, and that textiles as metaphor have assumed in recent writing the agency of a sensory idea, a material of thought, so that it becomes possible to speak of textile thought and literacy. 3

Translucency of silk and its supple touch is a visual and tactile opposite to the rugged nature of hand felted wool. I let the fabric speak to the construction and commentary of my work. The play of light is reflective and enhances the illusion of silk, whereas the warmth and texture of wool is rugged and earth-bound—visually absorbing the light—and environmentally friendly and renewable.

Textiles are among the oldest and most pervasive art objects produced and used today. A fiber can become a ‘metaphor’ for skin through its porous, tactile, pliable, fragile, and ephemeral qualities. Body transcends physical flesh to imagery of seeds or pods as I relate to my surroundings in the forest. My felted wall art reflects the topographical imagery of landscape. My daily walks challenge my body and free my mind as I trudge up the briar-filled terrain and follow the eroded creek beds and deer trails. Secret lives of moles burrow tunnels that create lines and dirt trails through the landscape inspire my designs. The process challenges my body with its endless cycles of physical activity, as constructing wool fabric takes constant agitation as you roll the bound fibers with your hands or feet. This woolen protein fiber has been the most reliable print surface. A special affinity exists between eucalyptus leaves and wool felt. The brilliant colors of coral and salmon can be achieved naturally through the eco printing process.

Figure 6: *Land No. 1*, eco printed hand-felted wool textile with silk and bamboo, 2023.

*Land No. 1* (Figure 6), is a 63 H x 40 W inch, eco printed, hand-felted wool textile with bamboo and silk. This work is a map of land and memory. Coral marks from varieties of feather and a spiral eucalyptus repeat against neutral, oval shapes to create a harmony of pattern in this undulating fiber wall hanging. The bamboo rods that run obliquely through the work reference the paths of erosion from water draining toward the nearby seasonal creek. Silk applique is incorporated to break up the harmony, creating obstructions in the landscape.
Figure 7: *Land No. 2*, Eco printed hand-felted wool textile, 2023.

An additional large fiber work in the exhibition looks at landscape through a zoom lens. *Land No. 2* (Figure 7), is eco printed, 40 H x 72 W x 5D inch, hand-felted wool textile. The thickly constructed two-dimensional wall art absorbs the light and shadow in its warm, welcoming fibers. Trails of pierced tunnels rise several inches from the surface as burrows in the landscape. Curvy, interrupted mounds trail vertically through the space against the flat areas of coral shapes of eucalyptus leaves and stems eco printed on the surface. Dark, black tunnels break the flora pattern and create three-dimensional space, perhaps the unseen worlds under the soil.
Since my first art history class, the figure in its transitory state is a repeated image in my work. Sitting in a dark classroom my freshman year in college, I was transfixed by the image of the Hellenistic sculpture, The Nike of Samothrace. Powerful beauty and dignity embody this quintessential artwork. This female figure, frozen in time, gestural and fleeting, penetrates the natural space and dominates the narrative. In my work, the female body contemplates a liminal position, between nature and culture, a forest of fractal branching systems and is a place-holder for self. As ageism and sexism promote disappearance, women fade to the background. As a woman of a “certain age,” I feel it even more necessary to include the female figure in my print and sculptural work to illuminate my narrative, refusing to fade. Beyond metaphor, decomposed sculpted figures host the fungal dresses. A narrative develops as the art piece evolves; contemplating time, aching joints and transitioning roles, my figures are transcending—enveloped in the forest—and possess power and beauty that rests in the reflection of our own sense of identity.

To better evaluate my own work, I looked to other female artists of my generation that confront themes of feminism, gender, and relationships with nature. I found a kindred soul in artist Kiki Smith. This German-born American artist anthropomorphizes trees, birds, stones, and stars in what she terms is her collaboration with materials and the world. I looked to her work to better understand my own practice, admiring her organic use of varied materials, as well as her experimentation with printmaking; her multidisciplinary work explores the phenomenon of embodiment and the natural world through a broad variety of materials. She is quoted, “Art is a reflection of everything that
impacts your life." The presence of a body links an image with our own human experiences. We are able to empathize with the vulnerable body even if we have no knowledge of its interiority and permeation into life.

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Balance (Figure 8), is a 40 H x 26 W eco print on cotton with silk screen and encaustic. As I struggled with my equilibrium and anxiety, I used yoga to supplement my rehabilitation. Staring out my door into the woods, I could envision my strength returning as I struggled to balance in a beginner tree pose. Balance is an obscured female figure, occupying the center of the picture — plain, rooted to the earth, and stretching to the canopy. The black printed figure’s vertically stretched body is obscured by leaf forms in earth tones and black iron stains. The figure is joined in the composition by growing foliage to support the new expansion. Trees speak of strength and unity, while the forest echoes protection and wonder.

Introspection (Figure 9) a 32 H x 40 W eco print, silk-screen and encaustic on board. The
ACT OF ART MAKING FOR ME IS BOTH A MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL PROCESS. *INTRANSCEPTION* WAS MY FIRST FIGURATIVE SILK-SCREENED IMAGE. THIS WORK DRAWS ON MY PERSONAL JOURNEY THROUGH THE EMOTIONAL, MENTAL, AND PHYSICAL EXPLORATIONS DURING THE MASTERS OF FINE ART PROGRAM.

THE SEATED FEMALE FORM SITS WITH HER BACK TO THE VIEWER, GAZING OFF, BUT GUARDED. THE BODY IS SEATED AND GROUNDED WITHIN THE COMPOSITION THOUGH NO HORIZON IS PRESENT. IMAGES OF WALNUT AND GUM LEAVES SURROUND THE FIGURE WITH STAINS OF BLUE SUGGESTING ITS WELCOMING LANDSCAPE OF FOREST PROTECTION.

![Image of art work](image.jpg)

**Figure 10: Entwined Dependence, Eco printed rice paper, silk screen, encaustic on board, 2022.**

**Entwined Dependence,** (Figure 10) a 20 H x 32 W inch eco print and silkscreen with indigo, rice paper and encaustic on board. The symmetrical female images sit back-to-back, entwined and rooted to the site. The silk-screened twins rest on the soft blue, eco printed background of leaves on mulberry paper. The work examines the contemplative duality of self and expectations of motherhood, the struggle to keep personal identity as equally nourished as family.

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I was drawn to the work of Kiki Smith, especially her early work of fragmented body parts and the exploration of natural functions and vulnerability to external forces. I share Smith’s preoccupation with the body and use of hand processes to articulate concepts. Through her broad use of ephemeral materials, crumpled paper, worn fabrics, or fleshy latex, a sense of fragility and vulnerability is imparted, and the works are aligned with those of other women who believe that knowledge comes not only from the mind but also through bodily experience. Knowledge is subjective and cannot be separated from the sensate experience of the world.

Throughout my work, images of trees have been used as a catalyst for bodies. The temporal aspect of wood is readily apparent, inscribed in the nature of growth rings and knots in timber and seasonal variations in foliage. My hollow forms speak to the wonder of deterioration and regeneration, the body feeding the next cycle of life that springs beauty and wonder.

For Smith too, the body is a vital tool for understanding our place in the world. In Smith’s works, the body’s frailties and strengths are explored and illuminated, with due respect to the inherent qualities of the materials employed. She reminds us that there is no convenient division between mind and body, or between the human and natural worlds. Smith’s work using handcrafted fiber items as contemporary art inspires the desire to bring more to the work than a mere conceptual or depersonalized character. By bearing the mark of the hand, manipulation of materials in an art object serves an intimate

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relation with its maker and thereby promises something authentic. My work seeks to address the relationship between nature and culture. My figurative forms in both my silkscreen printed female bodies or sculptures in clay capture the beauty of nature’s decay and is also captured in Impermanence, a life size female sculpture.

Figure 11. Impermanence, ceramics stoneware, eco printed silk and encaustic assemblage, 2023.

Impermanence (Figure 11) is a 36 H x 20 W x 16 D ceramic and eco-printed encaustic assemblage. Juxtapositions of transparency, textures, gestures, and trace shapes of color, a layered memory in a life size figure morphed and shedding, submitting to time. The coiled construction of stoneware clay grew vertically to life size proportions. 

Impermanence is a hand built female figure wrapped in slabs of cast bark and native mushrooms. The natural impressions of place are both actual and metaphorical. The surface finish of the human form is flesh-like in its silk and wax finish. Thoughts of disease and decay weigh on my mind as my mother’s fight with breast cancer manifests
in images of fungus on its host. Impressions of the landscape as textures of bark and eco printed silk organza create a mind, body, and spirit connection. Historic in its contrapposto stance and vulnerable with its missing limbs, the sculpture transcends the gallery and invites you into the mystery of the forest.

Figure 12: Second Nature, figurative ceramic wall sculpture, 2023

Repeating the theme of nature's elements in a poetic and organic symbiosis, Second Nature (figure 12) is a 33 H x 18 W x 6D figurative ceramic wall sculpture. The tree-like figurative form displays natural leaf shapes on silk organza adhered to the ceramic body with layers of encaustic wax. Flanked with fragments of ceramic bark and layers of mushrooms, this female figure displays her finest lace collar and begins the next cycle of our evolution.
The View from Within (Figure 13) is a site-specific work designed for the 1606 Rowan Street MFA Building that houses the graduate exhibition gallery for the University of Louisville Hite Institute of Art and Design. The MFA north gallery wall is a naturally lit space I transformed with eco printed fabric, as well as daylight and shadow. This temporary installation used waxed, eco printed silk panels adhered to the existing glass.
panes of the gallery’s overhead black garage door, which is part of the north wall. The black door structure contains eight glass window openings, 16 H x 41 W inches each, that are filled with an encaustic-coated, eco printed silk panel. The work changes by continually engaging with the sun through the day. The interior view interacts with the shadowy lace patterns from the tree branches installed outside the glass paneled door.

Time plays a role in the narrative of the gridded framework, exploring people’s disconnection from nature. Viewers will never experience the same moment again as time cycles in weightless presence. Nature framed, separated by glass, I contemplate biological concepts and botanical imagery as explanatory metaphors for human problems due to a disconnect with the natural work around them. It is not time itself represented but a reflection of it; Rhythms, shapes, and forms illustrating the day.
CONCLUSION

Collaborating with nature, my art speaks symbolically and metaphorically through imagery and materials. Taking specific cues from materials, objects, spaces, and environments that surround me, I interpret through ceramic and fiber bringing attention to cycles of rejuvenation, maturity, while reminding us of the fragility, as well as resilience of the natural world. My work identifies my own physiology with the fragility and transitory natural environment that sustains beauty in decay.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX: A LIST OF IMAGES FROM
SECOND NATURE: IMPRESSIONS OF PLACE

Figure 1: Korte, Trish. *Series: Brain Fog*. 2021. Eco printed paper, encaustic on wood, three 30” H x 40” W. Louisville, KY.

Figure 2: Korte, Trish. *Mirror Image*. Eco print on paper with encaustic on wood, 30” H x 40” W. Louisville, KY.

Figure 3: Korte, Trish. *Four Carrion*. 2021. Eco print on paper with encaustic on wood, 30” H x 40” W. Louisville, KY.

Figure 4: Korte, Trish. *Bound and Tied*. 2021. Eco print on paper with encaustic on wood, 30” H x 40” W. Louisville, KY.

Figure 5: Korte, Trish. *Specimen*. 2021. Triptych, eco printed silk panels on wood panels. 20” H x 20” W. Louisville, KY.

Figure 6: Korte, Trish. *Land No. 1*. 2023. Eco printed, hand-felted wool textile with bamboo, 40” H x 72” W x 5” D. Louisville, KY.

Figure 7: Korte, Trish. *Land No. 2*. 2023. Eco printed, hand-felted wool textile, 40” H x 72” W x 5” D. Louisville, KY.

Figure 8: Korte, Trish. *Gaia II*. 2023. Eco print on cotton with encaustic on wood panel, 40” H x 20” W inches. Louisville, KY.

Figure 9: Korte, Trish. *Introspection*. 2022. Eco print on paper with encaustic on wood, 30” H x 24” W. Louisville, KY.

Figure 10: Korte, Trish. *Entwined Dependance*. 2022. Eco printed rice paper, silk screen and encaustic on board, 20” H x 30” W. Louisville, KY.

Figure 11: Korte, Trish. *Impermanence*. 2023. Ceramics stoneware, eco printed silk, and encaustic assemblage, 36” H x 20” W x 16” D. Louisville, KY.

Figure 12: Korte, Trish. *Second Nature*. 2023. Figurative ceramic wall sculpture, 33” H x 18” W x 6” D. Louisville, KY.

Figure 13: Korte, Trish. *The View from Within*. 2023. Eco printed silk and encaustic panels, tree remnants outside on the exterior glass door, MFA Gallery. Louisville, KY.
CURRICULUM VITA

NAME: Trish Korte
ADDRESS: 5071 E Borden Road
          Pekin, IN 47165

EDUCATION:
2023   MFA Studio Art & Design
2003   M.A. Studio Art & Design, University of Louisville
2001   M.A.T Art Education, University of Louisville
1986   University of Louisville, Louisville, KY - Fall 1986 - Bachelor of Arts Creative Arts

ACADEMIC SERVICE
2021-2023  Program Director, Judy Chicago’s International Honor Quilt, University of Louisville, Hite Institute of Art and Design, Louisville, KY  2021-2023
2019-2020  Adjunct Faculty, Art Education: Studio Methods
2018-2023  Adjunct Faculty, Foundations: Introduction to Drawing & Art Education

NOTABLE EXHIBITIONS/AWARDS
2023   Second Nature: Impressions of Place, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY
       In Plain Sight: Sites of Memory and Ritual, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY.
2022   OSW Exhibition Louisville Visual Arts, Cressman Center for Visual Arts, Louisville KY
       Portland Art & Heritage Juried Exhibition, LVA Gallery, Louisville, KY
2021   Portland Art & Heritage Juried Exhibition, LVA Gallery, Louisville, KY
2020   Push Comes to Shove, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY
       Artemis Journal 2020- publication
       60th Mid-States Art Exhibition, Evansville Museum of Art and Science, Evansville, IN
       Portland Art & Heritage Juried Exhibition, LVA Gallery, Louisville, KY
2019   Goddesses, Totems, & other Investigations, Rensselaer, IN
       Portland Art & Heritage Juried Exhibition, LVA Gallery, Louisville, KY
2018   MAC Regional Art Show, Art on Main, Madison, IN
       Quilt and Fiber Biennial, City wide quilt exhibition, New Albany IN
Kent Mansion Gallery, Exhibition with (Guest) Elmer Lucille Allen, St. Paul’s Art Council, New Albany IN
Mazin Annual Art Juried Exhibition, Honorable Mention, Jewish Community Center Patio Gallery, Louisville, KY
Portland Art & Heritage Juried Exhibition, LVA Gallery, Louisville, KY
Homage to Remnants—an assemblage invitational. M. S. Renzy Studio/Gallery, Lexington, KY
Mazin Annual Art Juried Exhibition, Honorable Mention, Jewish Community Center Patio Gallery, Louisville, KY
2011 Art Education Association of Indiana “Secondary Art Educator of the Year”