

ANNE GAINES *Fine Art*

...art that tells a story

REDUCTION LINOCUT: All of my art begins with a thumbnail sketch and a smooth piece of linoleum. Each piece is printed from a single linoleum “plate”, which is used to place colored ink in layers to create the artwork.

Every linocut that I create begins, out of necessity, with a very good drawing. I have to render my palette down to fewer than a dozen colors, and determine which colors will go where, before I make the first cut in the linoleum. This typically results in very bold colors, which makes my artwork clean and fresh.

Rather than create numerous plates (one for each color), reduction printmaking uses a single piece of linoleum to create the print. The first cut removes the area of the linoleum that will remain the color “white” in the piece. Next, a light-colored ink (perhaps pale yellow) is rolled onto the linoleum with a brayer and then printed onto white paper. If 30 pieces are planned for the edition of prints, then 32 yellow prints are made; this allows for 2 Artist Proofs where colors and shapes may be adjusted. The linoleum plate is then cleaned and the prints are allowed to dry. The areas in the plate that are to remain yellow in the artwork are then cut away from the plate and the next color, such as light green, is printed on the 32 originals. This process is repeated, from light to dark colors, until the piece is completed. By the end of the printing process, the surface of the linoleum is reduced to virtually nothing, hence the reference to “reduction” in the medium’s name.

I do a lot of my “art composing” late at night when the house is quiet. I let my thoughts wander, until an image or an idea percolates to the surface. Over the next several days, I will solidify the image in my mind’s eye, and work it out on paper. In this way, my art is directly influenced by the events of my life, and the experiences imprinted on my brain. One evening I took the newest piece from my “Cats and Butterflies” series to show to my homebound mother. As she was my biggest fan, she gave enthusiastic feedback, and then asked, “When are you going to do a picture of Rusty?” As I mulled this over later that night, the image clicked into place in my mind’s eye: her beautiful orange tabby in a tomato patch. (There’s a story in that! Ask me to tell you...)

I have been a festival artist for 20 years, and a full-time artist for the past 6. Reduction linocut is my joy: I love to draw and plan, I like order, I enjoy creating with a limited palette, I like the feel of carving the linoleum, and I revel in the shock of adding a new color during the printing process. I am constantly inspired by birds, trees, flowers, my cat, other animals, and the Scriptures. My work may be found at www.annegaines.com

MIXED MEDIA: My Mixed Media art came about as a result of my bringing printing plates to art festivals to help describe my printing process to patrons. Invariably, someone would come into my booth, point to a printing plate and ask: “How much is that?” After this happened about a dozen times, my very wise husband suggested that I carve and sell stand-alone mixed media pieces!

Similarly to my printing process, my mixed media art begins with a very detailed pencil drawing. I transfer the drawing to a piece of linoleum, and carve the face of the lino with woodcut tools, leaving a ridge around the areas that will receive colored India ink. I take a great deal more care in the carving for the mixed media pieces, as the strokes from my gouges become part of the design of the artwork – they can add texture (cat fur), movement (swirls), and details (feathers, leaves, water). Because I love drawing, carving, color and texture so much, I am excited about this new direction that my art is taking me!

