Carol Brighton

Artist's observation

Arts Benicia California Printmakers: Tradition and Innovation

The artwork shown here, Notes on A Chinese River, is a combination of my handmade paper and a monotype print. It is a one of a kind, and it is also a print. The work is an integration of two mediums, handmade paper and print.

I make prints, paper, and paintings as witness to my life, as a way of understanding meaning and sharing experience. Ideas for my artwork come from walks, dreams, reading, and years of traveling throughout Asia - all this and memory cultivates imagination.

Making paper is simply fun. The basic materials of fibers and water combine to open up a rich field of creative possibilities. I prepare the paper fiber, usually Kozo and Abaca, by cooking and beating them, and then add pigment to create the colors I want. For the art work seen here I poured paper pulp as one might pour paint, creating the composition of a river scene in flowing paper fibers. The flow in paper making, and its wet to dry nature, is a mirror; everything changes, what is once fragile becomes strong and vice versa, what is once raw and coarse becomes clarified and fine. I love the flow.

I like the monotype method of printmaking because of its painterly characteristics. There is a quality of being immediate, even though it might take extended periods of time, and many passes through the press. A monotype has unique print sensibility, being one-of-a-kind and still a print. I feel a kinship with this method and many of my prints are monotypes.

Making art is like standing in a stream, and is a kind of alchemy. The image takes form in the current of where you stand. The stream has its own momentum. If you are there with your art tools, the confluence of your ideas, the materials and the stream shape the result.

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