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an international association of artists

spring 2013

# The Boston Printmakers *e-newsletter*



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Image above : Boston Printmakers' members looking at portfolios at the recent Annual Meeting at President Liz Shepherd's home .

## Letter from the President

Dear Members,

This past Sunday (April 7th) I hosted the Boston Printmakers Annual Meeting to which you were all invited. I wish that ALL of you could have been there (although we would have needed a much larger venue). Wouldn't it be amazing to spend time with so many other printmakers swapping recipes for sugar lift or adhesives or grounds or whatever?! The highlight of the meeting, aside from the brunch, is the opportunity for members to show their work and see the prints that others bring to share.



During the business part of the meeting, we summarized our activities during 2012 and talked a bit about our plans for 2013 and the upcoming North American Print Biennial, which you have been hearing about in our newsletters and from the website. Most importantly, members had a chance to ask any questions they had about Boston Printmakers' exhibitions, trips and educational opportunities.

To those of you who cannot attend a meeting in Boston, please don't hesitate to ask questions or get information via email: [info@bostonprintmakers.com](mailto:info@bostonprintmakers.com) and one of the Board members will get back to you. As always, let us know if you would like to participate by volunteering. We can use the help.

All the best.

[Liz Shepherd](#)

President

## Young Artists Develop Chases Garage



The Roche family in York Beach, Maine, is putting the final touches on a year long renovation plan to repurpose the 110 year old Chases Garage into a community art center. The 4500 square foot wooden structure located in the center of town and just steps away from the scenic Maine shoreline will take on its new function as a teaching facility equipped with printmaking presses, a darkroom, and ceramic workshop, as well as a gallery, and artists' studio rental space. Ned Roche and Caitin Giunta, recent graduates of the New Hampshire institute of Art, who have spearheaded the project along with a host of other contributors, will celebrate the opening of the facility on May 25, 2013. You can view more info online at Chases Garage Artist Studios [www.facebook.com/ChasesGarage](http://www.facebook.com/ChasesGarage)



**\*\*\*\*\*WANTED: INTAGLIO PRESS\*\*\*\*\***

If you have or know of an intaglio press, also capable of printing relief, for sale, please contact [Malgorzata Zurakowska](mailto:malgorzata.zurakowska@zeamays.com).

## **Collaborative Conclusions: Artists and Scientists Examine How Everyday Materials Impact Health**

**by Carand Burnet**

An artist interacts with material on an intensely personal level, often without considering the personal health implications. Specifically for printmakers, incising, sanding, and eroding a plate is a major part of the process towards creating an image. However, the artist's well-being is potentially threatened everyday by seemingly mundane materials like wood, plastic, metal, photopolymer, and linoleum. Questioning what chemicals are hidden beneath the surface and how the human body is affected is important because these materials surround everyone. With the help of funding from [Artists in Context](#), seven artists at [Zea Mays Printmaking](#) asked these questions and drew surprising conclusions. Their research has taken the shape of a free accessible [website called Substratum](#)-- a studio tool for individuals to learn how materials and creative processes affect health.



Zea Mays Printmaking, located in Florence, MA, has over a decade of research behind safer alternatives to traditional printmaking methods. In this case, a partnership of art and science created the online inquiry into printmaking substrates and health impacts. Substratum is the result of a year's collaboration between artists, scientists, engineers, and occupational safety organizations. Visually engaging and informative, the website provides useful statistics, MSDS information, and simple suggestions for safer studio practices. Artists in Context, a nonprofit based in Cambridge, MA, awarded Zea Mays Printmaking with a grant to develop the project and to convey it to an online audience. Artists in Context promotes exchanges between creative thinkers and other disciplines to create new

approaches in solving contemporary issues.

Under the framework of the Artists in Context grant and guidance of studio director Liz Chalfin, the artists began to scrutinize the printmaking plates they use to create imagery. It quickly became evident that materials in question extend beyond the studio and into everyday life. Printmaker Joyce Silverstone, who studied substrates typically employed to create monotypes, commented, "Even finding information on a household item like plastic was difficult. Artists use these materials, but so does the public, and it's frightening there's so little information out there."

From the start, the project encountered roadblocks as the group found that many MSDS, also known as Material Safety Data Sheets, left a lot unsaid. A MSDS provides basic instruction for a substance's proper handling and storage. Examining nearly empty pages, the artists contacted Dr. David Hinkamp, professor at the Health in the Arts Program at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Dr. Hinkamp deciphered the MSDS sheets, interpreting their meaning and implications. He explained that even though MSDS are helpful, they are one part of understanding artist materials because MSDS only covers select substances. Other chemicals, not recognized by the government, are untested and hidden in countless products. In fact, numerous consumer goods, like tissues, include undocumented substances. Dr. Hinkamp's advice affirmed the project's broader scope and confirmed the need for additional outreach into scientific communities.



The artists connected with Dr. Peltier, an Atmospheric Chemist at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Dr. Peltier, an expert in the health consequences related to air pollution, visited Zea Mays Printmaking and analyzed the photopolymer plate that the studio uses. The plates are treated with a photosensitive film and require several preparatory stages before being printed, during which the artists believed fumes were released. While surveying the process, Dr. Peltier encountered three stages that the plates released airborne vapors. Upon recommendation, Chalfin added supplemental vents. Lowering inhalation levels in studios with photopolymer processing is critical because it releases chemical fumes that could cause eye and respiratory irritation if not properly ventilated. Not only did the Zea Mays Printmaking alter their ventilation in response to Dr. Peltier's findings, but printmaker Nancy Diessner also added vents to her private studio. Pamela Crawford, who works in monotype and etching remarked, "We're proud that even our small efforts have prompted action within our artistic community."

With notes scattering like leaves over the studio tables, the artists began to wonder how their findings could be visually represented. They looked outward to scientists for technical guidance but also looked within themselves for interpreting the dilemma of preserving their health without restricting creative freedom. Substratum underwent many transformations during its incubation period. As the group proposed ideas such as a performance installation and exhibit, they realized that the internet would move the information beyond their immediate region. So they aspired to blend their art and personal stories with technology. The group tied on their aprons, rolled out the ink, and dusted off the plates

being warmed in the sunlight. They swayed from the press to the paper-- seven sets of hands rubbing, wiping, deciding. The prints were then digitally collaged and integrated in Substratum's home page. A slideshow displays vibrant diagrams, cross sections of muscles, finger prints, and DNA strips ghostly patterning over soft, blurred texture.

During this time, Environmental Engineers Marina Gayl and Scott Fortier from The Massachusetts Office of Technical Assistance and Technology paid a site visit to Zea Mays Printmaking and assessed health hazards in the studio. Gayl and Fortier helped the members make sense of commonplace materials like plastic and wood. Particular plastics emit various rates of fumes, so artists should consider low emission types, like the ones listed by The Office of Technical Assistance and Technology on Substratum. Some plastics, including Plexiglass and polyurethane, should be handled with care because they contain Dioxins, phthalates, and BPA, which could disrupt the endocrine system. Like the other scientists, the assistance was free of charge. Chalfin commented, "Every artist should consider a scientist an incredible resource. Each one was accessible, accommodating, and willing to help artists make change." Susan Jaworski-Stranc, a linoleum artist that studied the substrate, added, "I think it was a pleasure both ways. The scientists enjoyed having a new challenge."



The most unsettling discovery was formaldehyde's widespread and covert use in wood. The chemical is an adherent and is inhaled when it off-gasses, is sanded, or cut. Formaldehyde, recognized as a human carcinogen by the US Toxicology Program, causes eye, nose, and throat irritation, in addition to reproductive damage. A derivative of the chemical is an antibacterial component in domestic products like toilet paper, paper towels, and cosmetics. Judith Bowerman, who practices relief and researched the medium, remarked, "I was amazed by how far reaching Formaldehyde is. From household item like nail polish to a printmaker's wood block, non-artists are as much in the dark as artists are."

Zea Mays Printmaking discovered that asking questions generates positive responses. For example, the artists contacted a photopolymer manufacturer, who was missing a MSDS. A few weeks later a new MSDS was forwarded and is now obtainable through [Substratum](#). In addition to the project prompting action, the artists gained insight into the history of the substrates they studied. Printmaker Lynn Peterfreund gained a new perspective on the copper plates she uses for Intaglio. Because copper is a scarce resource, what is available nowadays is mostly recycled. She noted that, "...Intaglio artists are possibly working with the same materials as someone from the middle ages. It's remarkable to think about a material so full of history." [Substratum's](#) model acts as a template for others to gain knowledge and direction-- defining the relationship between artists and their creative materials. Upon completion of the project, Chalfin commented, "As artists, we must educate ourselves and ask questions. By doing so, we are looking out for everyone."

*Carand Burnet is a poet and mixed media artist. Her articles have been previously featured in Art New*

## Member NEWS

Send your member news for the upcoming  
Summer 2013 newsletter to Jennifer  
Caine [jenniferleighcaine@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferleighcaine@gmail.com)

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### **PRILLA SMITH BRACKETT**

Prilla Smith Brackett was a fellow at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts for three and a half weeks in January, 2013.

### **ANN CHERNOW**

The Silvermine Print Collection, [Silvermine Guild Center for the Arts](#), New Canaan Ct January 6 - February 17

The Gazers, Seton Gallery, New Haven University, New Haven, CT  
January 31 - February 28

### **DAVID A. CLARK**

The Elephant in the Room  
[Laconia Gallery](#), Boston, MA  
May 30 - June 30, 2013

Swept Away: Translucence, Transparence and Transcendence Contemporary Encaustic  
[Cape Cod Museum of Art](#)  
Dennis, MA  
May 18 - June 23, 2013

### **NANCY DIESSNER**

In Lovely Blueness  
[Bromfield Gallery](#), Boston, MA  
May 1 - June 1



## Member NEWS continued



### **TAKAYO NODA**

(image above)  
World of Print and Dimensional College  
Gallery Hakudohte, Tokyo, Japan  
March 25 - April 12

### **SHEILA PITT**

Sheila Pitt had two new prints accepted by juror Jacob Lewis, director of Pace Prints in Chelsea, into the [Ink. Press. Repeat](#) exhibition at William Paterson University, January 22-February 15.



**ROXANNE FABER SAVAGE**

(image above)

[More Roxyshow](#). The Orison Project,  
Essex CT  
March 22 - May 4

**LOUISE KOHRMAN**

New Prints 2013/Winter

<http://www.ipcny.org/>

International Print Center New York  
508 West 26th St, Room 5A  
New York, NY  
January 18 - March 9, 2013

2013 RISD Faculty Biennial

[RISD Museum](#)

224 Benefit Street  
Providence, RI  
February 22 - March 17

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**TWITTER:**

<http://twitter.com/BostnPrintmaker>

**LIZ SHEPHERD**

(image above)

Up and Out, [Simmons College Trustman Art Gallery](#), Boston, MA  
April 22 - May 31



**ANNE SILBER**

image above: *Three Calla Lillies*, serigraph  
Anne Silber will be exhibiting her serigraphs at the Alexey von Schlippe Gallery Of Art at the University of Connecticut Avery Point Campus in Groton, CT. The exhibition will run from April 19, 2013 thru June 2, 2013; opening April 19, 6:00 pm.

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