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Many Strange Visual Effects can be Obtained by Overlapping Several Objects Containing both Raised and Incised Shapes and Varying the Textures of these Forms

Ruth F. Bravetti
Central Washington University

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MANY STRANGE VISUAL EFFECTS CAN BE OBTAINED BY
OVERLAPPING SEVERAL OBJECTS CONTAINING
BOTH RAISED AND INCISED SHAPES AND
VARYING THE TEXTURES OF
THESE FORMS

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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Art

by
Ruth Bravetti
February, 1972

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

Janis John Agars, COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Margaret Ahrens Sahlstrand

Christos Papadopoulos

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This study deals with the printmaking technique of embossing to create visual effects with "non-associative" forms. The prints presented deal with the realm of space and an atmosphere unrelated to our present environment or concepts of gravity. Several visual conflicts were achieved by overlapping objects, creating textured surfaces, and varying thickness, size, location, and shape of forms. Serigraphy, spray paint, flocking, and reflective beads were introduced in some of the prints presented in order to enhance the effect of embossing.

For the viewer to become involved with transparent "non-associative" objects was the main objective. The technique was limited to embossing in order to explore the process in some depth. From this study further work with combining color and embossing could develop.

DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my mother, Mrs. Hazeldene Haines and my husband, Syv. Bravetti.

The monoprints presented are space oriented with "non-associative" forms and textures arranged for perception and visual stimulation. The main objective of this study is to present the spectator with a visual experience he can move or step into as a world he has never explored before. It is necessary that he forget himself and all the concepts of gravity and enter an atmosphere of space, containing transparent "non-associative" forms. Some other objectives are: the development of a visual perception with primarily printmaking techniques, enhancement and variation of materials and embossing techniques for variety, the creation of "non-associative" forms in a limitless space, and the achievement of a desired conflict to stimulate the viewer involvement.

Embossing is the main technique used in the prints presented though serigraphy, flocking, reflective beads, and spray materials were employed also. There are many other printmaking techniques which I have used in previous work but to introduce them all in this study would be impossible. The techniques and materials introduced were to enhance and vary the effects created by embossing. With these techniques and materials I have created a body of work dealing mostly with the field of printmaking but the finished product, the print, does not necessarily represent the traditional print. I have purposely rejected certain traditional procedures in order to more fully achieve my objectives.

Within my prints the embossed geometric shapes create a relief impression on the paper surface. This impression becomes the transition from light and dark, the line, necessary in perception of form. Through trial and error, many discoveries were made with the use of shape and line association in the development of visual experiences. Some of these discoveries were achieved with textured surfaces, overlapping objects, varying the thickness of embossed images and variations of size, shape, and location of forms. These findings created the desired "non-associative" objects and visual conflicts necessary to stimulate viewer involvement.

I achieved textured surfaces by gluing coarse materials, lace, or ground walnut shells to shapes being embossed. The relief impression of these forms creates textured imprints on the paper surface. These areas appear under the smooth forms which were arranged on the top of the textured objects when they were prepared for embossing. The forms become transparent to one another when embossed, so the textured areas appear both behind and in front of other forms causing a conflict in their sense of depth.

When different forms are overlapped they become transparent to each other and create sharp and soft lines. Each shape is a separate piece having a definite thickness of its own but when they are overlapped and embossed they no longer are two separate images. Instead they become three different areas on the paper surface. The center area dominates the other two in its recession

into the paper and it also contains the sharp lines. While the other areas contain the soft delicate lines. Because of the transparency and the variation of line an optical illusion of movement is created; for the eye becomes confused as to which area is coming forward and which is receding. Many strange visual effects can be obtained by overlapping several objects containing both raised and incised shapes and varying the textures of these forms.

Another way of creating line differentiation is by varying the thickness of the forms embossed. If a shape of a definite thickness is contrasted by a thicker or thinner form a difference in the sharpness of line is created. When the roller of the press is forced over the two forms at the same time the area of paper over the thicker images will receive more pressure. The greater the pressure the sharper the line distinction on the paper surface and the less pressure the softer the lines. Because of this characteristic a degree of depth and importance can be created. If one form is to appear stronger or closer to the viewer than another, all that needs to be done is to vary the thickness of the forms in direct proportion to their importance.

A desired balance, a variety of interest, and movement of images can be achieved by varying the size, shape, and location of forms being embossed. The location of these objects directs the weight and movement they acquire within the atmosphere created. Where an object is placed in relation to other forms and its location on

the paper can influence the viewer's reaction to it. A large image may appear weightless if smaller images are arranged over the top of the huge form. If there is more pressure exerted on the smaller forms when they are printed the lines of these shapes are sharper. As I have already stated because of the transparency and sharpness of line a visual conflict is developed. This conflict includes weight distribution.

With the above methods of embossing I have tried to create tension through conflicts in visual perception. This tension is necessary in stimulating the spectators' involvement. Whether the viewers response is favorable or not has no significance for the important thing is involvement.

As I view my prints I become engrossed in a weightless atmosphere of geometric forms moving and rotating within the limits of the force emitted from one object and exerted on another. The force obtained from one form and directed to another keeps these shapes from falling into a seemingly endless space. In some cases the relationship of these forces becomes pulsating and warm while others are fixed and cold causing a desired visual conflict. When the objects are embossed they become transparent to one another but to the paper they are three-dimensional objects creating a great deal of chiaroscuro on the printed surface. The paper transforms into a perspective of space containing atmospheric, transparent images controlled only by one another. The transparency of these

forms creates an illusion of their moving in and out of each other.

When I first became involved with embossing of "non-associative" objects I was not aware of the similarity between the paintings by the Russian artist Kandinsky and my prints. Though he was essentially dealing with color and organic anamorphic images, simple geometric elements were also of great importance to his work as they are in my monoprints.

In the future I intend to explore the possibilities of color and embossing more fully than I have in this presentation. With the knowledge I have gained through my own experiences I intend to find solutions to the combination of color and embossing to develop visual experiences. "Non-associative" objects will continue to be the basic forms presented.

"non-associative" - Not associated with forms, shapes, or ideas common to our environment.

Prints Presented

Plate # One, Collagraph embossing, Spray material, reflective beads, and flocking.

Plates # Two, Three, Four, Five
Collagraph embossing, spray material, and flocking.

Plates # Six, Seven, Eight
Collagraph embossing, reflective beads, flocking.

Plates # Nine, Ten, Eleven, Twelve
Collagraph embossing.

Plates # Thirteen, Fourteen, Fifteen
Collagraph embossing and Spray material.