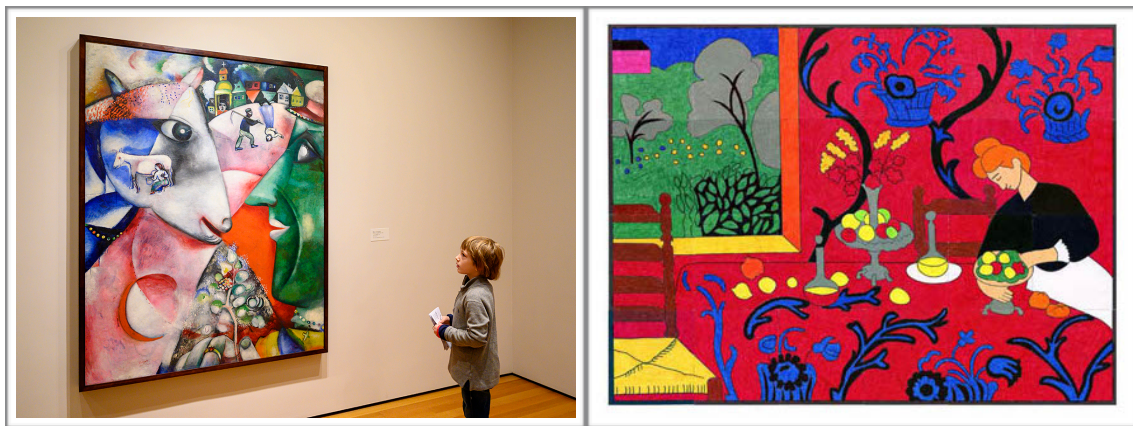


Printmaking with a vibrance and energy
that makes people smile

MOTIVATION

I want to create art that does people good. In contrast to the dominant theme of angst within the art world, my art is inherently optimistic and hopeful. I have issue with Agamben's comment in his seminar 'What is the contemporary' where he says "the contemporary is he who firmly holds his gaze on his own time, so as to perceive not it's light, but rather it's darkness"¹. I would argue that there is in fact a valid and essential place for art that lifts the spirits and makes people smile.



Matisse said "What I dream of is an art of balance, of purity and serenity, devoid of troubling or depressing subject matter, an art that could be for every mental worker, for the businessman as well as the man of letters, for example, a soothing, calming influence on the mind, something like a good armchair that provides relaxation from fatigue."²

This statement didn't make Matisse very popular in his day and I would suggest that, sadly, the art world would still not consider this a weighty or lofty enough purpose for art.

'Happy art' and indeed colour in art, still remains somewhat unfashionable to many. As Batchelor says in his book 'Chromophobia', "colour has been systematically marginalised, reviled, diminished and degraded. Made out to be property of the primitive, the vulgar... the superficial or the cosmetic. Colour is routinely excluded from the higher concerns of the Mind."³ Yet, I would controversially suggest, that in our present times, where fear and negativity are very much the norm, a leaning towards joy and optimism, rather than a focus on 'the darkness' would be a more fitting and accurate response to Agamben's definition of the contemporary as "those who neither perfectly coincide with [their time] nor adjust themselves to it's demands"⁴.

Examples of art doing people good

There is a growing body of research supporting claims that art in the workplace increases productivity, happiness and creativity, and reduces stress.

*"If you enrich a space people feel much happier and work better"*⁵ (Psychology professor Dr Craig Knight)

*"Aesthetic in the truest sense means energy-giving which is what a workplace needs"*⁶ (Alex Heath, IAC)

There are many studies on the positive effect of art on health as well, used not only as a tool within therapy, but also through being viewed.

*"The aesthetic aspect of art-viewing might be considered to go beyond a "response" and into the realms of an "experience"*⁷ (Dewey).



MY WORK

Colour

My art is abstract in nature and creates impact through colours that sing.

Colour evokes and expresses emotion, it creates mood and I believe it plays an important role in bringing joy and vibrance to a piece, able to refresh and nourish the viewer.

*"Pure colours... have in themselves, independently of the objects they serve to express, a significant action on the feelings of those who look at them"*⁸ (Matisse)

I plan to consider whether responses to certain colours are universal, how colour is used to attract in the consumer industry or to create atmosphere in interior design. I'd like to look at what affect a heightened experience of colour has for those with synesthesia and at the other extreme the challenges of colour blindness.

As part of my project I will research colour theory and how it relates to these issues, especially concerning how to use colours with impact.

Order and chaos

My work delights in the juxtaposition between order and chaos, freedom and control. I use extravagant, gestural marks layered with patterned precision, inspired by the vast dimensions and intricate detail that I see in creation.

GESTURE gives art a sense of energy, freedom and life, I partner it with PATTERN adding an element of contrast and fun.

METHOD AND INTENSION

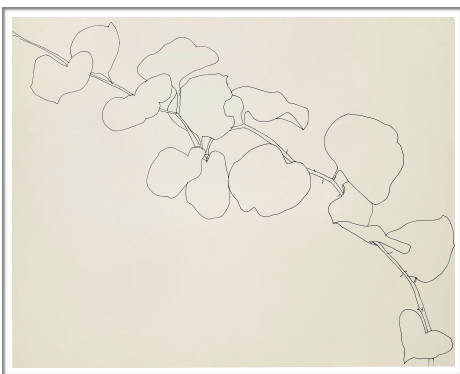
Thus far I have focussed on using paint, but now plan to experiment with the medium of printmaking, to explore it's potential in taking the extremes of colour, gesture and pattern a step further in my practice.

I will investigate a wide range of techniques including monotype, risograph, screen print and lithography.

I find that prints can often be a little flat and colourless, and therefore challenge myself to create pieces that have vibrance and energy. **Prints that feel alive, and cause the same emotional response as my paintings.**

PROCESSES AND INSPIRATION

- I want to develop the habit of using a sketchbook as a resource for my work. As a fundamental element of this project, I look forward to creating an interactive aid that is teaming with colour and experimentation, full of inspiration that feeds into my practice and serves as a useful source of reference.
- I intend to develop a regular drawing practice, prompted by the vastness and intricacies of nature that influence my work - from cells to the celestial. Inspired by Ellsworth Kelly's simplified shapes taken from his sketches of organic life, I plan to feed my ideas into the patterns that I create within my printmaking.



OUTCOMES

- I will summarise the findings of my reading and practical research into creating a series of colourful, playful prints that are full of life.
- These pieces would suit a clean, uncluttered space - a gallery, the reception area of a corporate or medical facility, or a contemporary home. However, I would like to consider how such art would impact places that really need them, bringing joy or hope to spaces associated with sadness or stress - the relatives waiting room in a hospital or a funeral parlour, for example.
- Beyond this project I hope to take printmaking into 3 dimensional and installation work, mixing media to enhance the playfulness and contrasts further still. Developing art that is tactile, can be stepped into and experienced.

RESEARCH

I will study the work of artists including Henri Matisse, Mark Rothko, Howard Hodgkin, Josef Albers, Yago Hortal and Charlotte Cornish, to name a few.



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