

My current artistic practice lies in the investigation of chance-based woodblock printmaking, and my prints aim to use rigorous self-made algorithms to showcase the potential of the element of chance. Moreover, my understanding of woodblock prints is based on my belief that woodcuts are craft media, because some of the earliest woodblock printed books were discovered in rural regions in China where people made woodblocks to serve religious purposes such as printing sutras. Therefore, my prints promote my understanding of both chance and craft.

Collaborating with the element of chance in my prints means that I devote some degrees of autonomy to randomness: I intend to design a system which will guide chance to come to play on my block as I carve whereas the outcome of the design depends on chance devices such as a game dice. In my prints generally, I deconstruct the pre-existing dimensions of the block by reconstructing a new grid system based on the numbers I roll with a dice. Subsequently, I define the coordination between the rolled number and the accompanying carving action. And I repeat and run numerous iterations until I reach the end of my algorithm. Lastly, I print. In this way, chance determines my carving on the block, and in the process I am at times only a craftsman following my systems. Further, in some of my prints, I also emphasize the materiality of woodblock printmaking by printing the same block twice (I print a block once, re-ink it and print it again on the same paper after turning it 180 degrees). As a result, the print will embody diagonal symmetry—the original characteristics of the woodblock and the paper (woodgrains on the block and fiber indentations on the paper for instance) will become more salient because they will most likely appear twice due to the symmetry.

Furthermore, since I carve the block densely by hand, at times I fail to adhere to my system despite my efforts. But I acknowledge and embrace such accidents: in my definition of future systems, I will expect that they might surpass the ability of human hands; the systems might be too ideal that they risk failing. Such cases of systematic failure however, do not imply the end of my work; I see them as pivotal moments where my system capably gives birth to novel inspirations. For example, I have gradually started to welcome and incorporate such failure in my system because I see it not only as one possible outcome under the umbrella of my system but also as the provenance of a new order which will lead to subsequent operations. I have also learned to honor the skills of expecting what kind of failure is going to surface and when it is going to. In a way, I believe such incidents of failure contribute to a second dimension of chance which is based on inevitable human errors within craftsmanship. I am thus dedicated to printing all of my prints by hand regardless of their size so that I can contribute to the foundation of craft which is achieving refined forms by hand.

Understanding how incidents of failure dovetails with other smooth operations in my system informs my artistic perspective, and I am interested in the idea of systematic paradox: I want to further investigate how the system can remain functioning even if the function of it includes embracing its failure. In this way, I intend to invite two contrasting forces in most of my works, whether it is the two tools with which I carve to make different marks or it is combination between inks and organic solvent which both print and dissolve, because it is these very moments of interaction of two separate forces that create and promote energy in my works.

Also, since I am working mostly with wood, my prints also help me contemplate the position I hold within nature. Because of the incorporation of chance, I am downgrading my artist's role in my prints so that I can further call attention to the various possibilities of

unfathomable algorithms of chance and the universe. Although the characteristic of chance implies that nothing is stable, I believe that my interest in nature and how nature can inform my artwork is a constant underlying force behind my motivation of working with woodblock prints. After all, the fact that I design numerous algorithms to guide chance and that I champion diagonal symmetry does not go through chance operation, and with the process of carving which relies on chance, I enjoy defining what is “chanced” and what remains “unchanced.” Along the same line, I have also been researching on Japanese-inspired water-based relief and solvent-free intaglio due to the fact that they are more environmentally friendly. Although I am not ready to completely abandon oil-based inks and solvents now, I want to establish a future direction within my work which I hope will cope with green printmaking. Ultimately, I hope to be inspired by both the vast possibilities of nature and my respect for the environment.

In short, my works highlight my interest in examining the element of chance, systematizing it, and finally freeing it to its position in nature. At times, I feel more content to be a craftsman promoting the power of the art of chance.