

Printmaking Critique: Participant Observation

Today is Monday, February 16th. At approximately 10:30am I arrived in the printmaking room at Fort Lewis College's art building; I had a project due at 1:25 that I was unable to get very far on. I showed up and immediately put my prepared copper plate in a citrus-based acid, to soak for forty minutes. I had applied a hard ground to the surface of the plate, and carved a design. I used a scribe tool to scratch in to the copper so it was exposed. This way, the acid dissolved the copper away only in the scratch marks I made. It will hold ink to repeat the design in the printmaking process. I was able to soak my print, clean it off, apply ink to it, clean the ink mostly away, send it through the press, clean the plate again, apply more hard ground, scratch it, and soak it again but then class started. I ended up with only one proof for the critique. A proof is like a draft in printmaking, you don't use the best paper and it is subject to change.



Copper Plate and
Print Proof

Most of the class had finished their prints, but there were others who only had one or two prints to show, like me. The teacher, Anthony (Tony) Holmquist, asked the class to clear away their bags and such and set out their prints for critique. He handed out a three-page worksheet, the first page of it was a self-evaluation. I could not fill this out, having no material to evaluate. The next two pages were questions to answer about other people's work in the room: which series had the best use of negative space, best consistency between prints, who took the most time on theirs, the strongest composition, and a comment on one that did not fit any category. Holmquist also announced that we would be cleaning up the print shop at the end of class. We were to separate the questions we answered and put them next to the pieces we wrote them about. After this we were to use the comments we received to evaluate ourselves. I did not get any comments, which is understandable because I barely had anything to show. There was a lot of very impressive work done for this project, and I regret not being able to finish on time. I cleaned off my plate and joined the rest of the class, scrubbing the ink off of the counters and sinks.



Cleaning the Print Shop

