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East Coast Screenprint Biennial Showcases Medium's Hybridity

Posted by [A Friend of Printeresting](#) on October 1, 2014 | [No Comments](#)

The following is a guest post by [Erik Waterkotte](#), an Assistant Professor of Print Media at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Curated by Nathan Meltz and featuring the work of: Aesthetic Apparatus, Emily Arthur, Charles Beneke, Shawn Bitters, Erik Brunvand, Stella Ebner, Bill Fick, Florence Gidez, Melissa Harshman, Adriane Herman, Dusty Herbig, Tim High, John Hitchcock, Mark Hosford, Travis Janssen, Amanda Knowles, Amanda Lee, Little Friends of Printmaking, Josh MacPhee, Taryn McMahon, Midwest Press, Ashley Nason, Sage Perrot, Jenny Schmid, Tonja Torgerson, Lenore Thomas, Crystal Wagner, and Erik Waterkotte



A guard stationed at the main entry of the exhibition to protect high-value items. Pic features work by (from left to right): Mark Hosford, Florence Gidez (on plinth), Bill Fick, and Erik Waterkotte (on floor).

On Friday, Sept. 12, 2014, the Arts Center of the Capital Region in Troy, NY opened the first [*East Coast Screenprint Biennial*](#) exhibition. Organized and curated by artist [*Nathan Meltz*](#), the *East Coast Screenprint Biennial* is a very ambitious exhibition. It features 28 artists from all over the US, and was organized from the ground up with local sponsorship, city support, and a Kickstarter campaign (used to fund a color catalogue). All that effort and Nathan Meltz is already looking towards 2016, when Troy, NY will host the next biennial.

The *East Coast Screenprint Biennial* is an exciting exhibition that does a great job of contextualizing Printmaking's (not just Screenprinting's) place in Art today. From Tonja Torgerson's wheatpasted figures installed around the city of Troy, to John Hitchcock's *Epicentro* installation, to Charles Beneke's screenprinted Tyvek collage *Mending*, the *East Coast Screenprint Biennial* is not your typical print exhibition. The atypical quality of the exhibition is a testament to Meltz's work and research as an artist and a curator. Meltz curated a range of works by both established and emerging, screenprint-centric artists and designers, creating a very contemporary print exhibition that showcases screenprinting as a transformative,

graphic process.

For those of you unfamiliar, Nathan Meltz's work exemplifies the integration of analog and digital. A talented screenprinter, digital artist, and musician, Meltz creates editions, which he uses as animation subjects for short films (of which he tracks and scores entirely by himself). Meltz creates a genuine, hybrid experience of analog and digital somewhere between Terry Gilliam's *Monty Python's Flying Circus* animations and the *Transformers* cartoon. Apparently it is this hybridity of screenprinting that motivates Meltz's artistic and curatorial intentions in the *East Coast Screenprint Biennial*.

Although titled *Screenprint Biennial*, screenprint is not explicit in the works Meltz curated. Rather it seems the transformative, hybrid graphic process is. For instance, in *Yeti Encounter* Jenny Schmid uses her printed images to create video animations that elaborate on the humor and dynamic of her works' narrative. In *Stumphouse and Stilthouse* Florence Gidez creates architectural, maquette-like, sculptures of homes that appear to house the outside inside, using screenprint on newsprint collaged to cardboard. Erik Brunvand's *Tube Screamer* is a "paper circuit," printed with conductive, and interactive when a viewer decides to complete the circuit. Meltz has also managed to showcase the dynamic of screenprinting's legacy in Popular Culture. The exhibition features some gnarly, rich, pithy prints like Dusty Herbig's day-glo, *Tangle Hash*, Adriane Herman's *You Lose You Ooze*, and Ashley Nason's punk'y *Lauch Pad I and II*. From the referential to the innovative Meltz's curatorial efforts exhibit a vigorous sample of innovative graphic works.

Meltz has stated that he was inspired to organize this exhibition by the Print Biennials of the 1960's and 70's. Considering the work in the show this seems like a dated reference to be inspired by, but from a printmaker's perspective it makes sense and is indicative of the schizophrenia of Printmaking's discourse. Like many printmakers (and indie rockers) Nathan Meltz is both inspired by and critical of tradition. Professional but grassroots, independent but city-sanctioned, The *East Coast Screenprint Biennial* does a great job of embracing and commenting on the conundrums of Printmaking's discourse, referencing the history and legacy of the Print Biennial while showcasing work that moves beyond the tradition and formality of the medium.



Opening night of the Biennial. Pic features work by: Erik Waterkotte (on floor) and Emily Arthur on far right column.



Nathan Meltz

pictured in his studio for the Albany paper.



Opening night, picture features work by (from left to right): top of Florence Gidez, Emily Arthur, Aesthetic Apparatus, and Charles Beneke's *Mending* on Tyvek.



John

Hitchcock's *Epicentro* installation. In windows Taryn McMahon's *Canopy*.



Opening night, picture features work by (from left to right): Amanda Lee, Mark Hosford, Bill Fick, and Little Friends of Printmaking on the column on the right.



One of Tonja

Torgerson's wheatpasted installations in downtown Troy, NY.



Opening night, pic features work by (from left to right): Charles Beneke, Tonja Torgerson, Melissa Harsham, and Florence Gidez in foreground.



Opening night,

pic features work by (from left to right): Ashley Nason and Aesthetic Apparatus.



From left to right, prints by Stella Ebner, Erik Brunvand, and Amanda Lee.



From left to right, works by Adriane Hermann and Jenny Schmid (color prints and video).



From left to right, works by Dusty Herbig and Amanda Knowles.



A shot from opening night from the outside looking in! Pic features Dusty Herbig scrutinizing Lenore Thomas' suite of screenprints with smoke.

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