

# LARS ROEDER

Artist Statement

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The surface of water acts as a barrier, both penetrable and impenetrable, knowable and unknowable. It delineates an entirely different experience. Existing within that ecosystem requires a different physiology and spatial awareness. A fish jumping out of the water is much like a human diving underneath. It is a momentary transcendence with a facsimile of understanding. In my work, these relationships represent interpersonal communication, the roles of sender and receiver, and the limits of understanding and knowing one another. Being on one side of the surface is akin to the individuality of one's own existence. While we can attempt to momentarily enter another person's frame of mind, it is truly impossible to understand the complexity of their known experience, how their values are formed, and the scope through which they interpret external information. This paradox is heightened by the proliferation of digital media. The ability to self-publish opinions and engage in discourse through the deceptively dull communication methods that the internet provides, has exacerbated the neglect of differing experience. The indirectness, lack of accountability, and inability to emote begets an ambiguity that leads to divisiveness and irreconciled conflict. My prints and drawings maintain an awareness of this phenomenon through developed series of incongruous imagery. In asynchronous compositions, my work alludes to a differentiation of form and as the viewer is challenged to insert themselves into the composition.

My interactive installations examine the dissonance of experience in a more direct manner, finding ways to intersect the viewer and artist, or confront the participant with instructions or decisions for how to interact with the piece. This, in part, addresses the stigma of commitment to art, and the investment the viewer must make to interpret and understand. Rather than allowing for passive apathy towards the work, my audience is often confronted with a conscious decision, to put a quarter in the machine or not; to press the button or not; to control the machine or not; and they are committed to that decision, even as they may watch other participants choose the opposite. This creates another level of engagement. As participants try to rationalize their choice, they start to engage other people, encouraging them to partake, to create a shared experience, thus creating a micro-community within the exhibition space.

This body of work is symbiotic with printmaking for its reliance on multiplicity. The early works manifested from a desire to find function in the multiple. Rather than creating an edition for the sake of its own existence, I incorporate the entire edition into a single piece and fully exploit its conceptual potential. Printmaking allows for a repeatable, interactive experience with a physical art object. Participants engage a unique experience by creating, destroying, or collecting an individual print, but the ritual of that process is replicated by each person. The overarching concept channels Marshall McLuhan's dictum that "the medium is the message." The impact of each piece is expressed through the interaction with the printed ephemera, rather than the content of the image itself. Additionally, the sameness of each print speaks to the afore-mentioned variety of a participant's experience. When one engages with art, they bring their own understanding, bias, memory, and confidence to the interaction and thus create an individualized experience. Their own interpretation is a manifestation of their identity. My work seeks to disclose the barrier of individuality. Acknowledging this divide is the first step in coming together.

I work in printmaking for its versatility, its adherence to process and the potency of the multiple. Every traditional printmaking process has specific stylistic qualities and proficiencies; being versed in each discipline allows me to select the media to suit the concept and imagery. Further innovation results from the combination of different processes and the development of new techniques dictated by the project's particular scope. Expanding on a traditional process not only enhances the piece visually and conceptually, but it furthers the discourse of the technical parameters of that medium. Research in the innovations of printmaking processes is an important facet of my work. Even in historical techniques there is a continuing evolution of materials, safety and efficacy. Each new print is an opportunity to consider how a process could be done more effectively and what tools might help to enhance those techniques. Research in process innovations is also a pillar of the printmaking community and important for developing a professional network. It unites people through the process of making.