

## **Printmaking: An Intermediary Between Life and Death**

Much literature on printmaking attributes the medium's distinct potency to its historical function as the main vehicle for information dissemination, while a few scholars have hinted at print media's metaphorical connection to birth and life. This article argues that printmaking's power is more complex: it is far greater than its functionality, and concerns not only life, but death. In other words, it asserts that printmaking is a *medium* that bridges life and death. Through artistic case studies of my own work and that of Lisa Bulawsky, it demonstrates that (1) printmaking harbors the concept of life as a 'limited good,' as evidenced by the practice of recycling matrices; (2) the process of printmaking is both linear and cyclical, such is our experience of time, which informs how we reconcile our mortality; (3) the printmaking matrix can be a site of collaboration between the living and the dead; (4) printmaking's mark and multiplicity not only safeguard and propagate the memories of the dead, but also remind the living of their own mortality.

### **Introduction**

*One Hundred (Would Be) Daughters* (fig. 1) is a 35.5" x 95.5" scroll made of eighteen stone lithographs of a single repeating drawing that extends both vertically and horizontally. The scroll evolves from a lone regenerative matrix to become literally larger-than-life, just as human life unrolls by making copies of one single cell. While the lattice of dead bodies obeys the logic of reproduction, it negates fertility: under China's one-child policy, the unwanted and unborn daughters leave room for sons, who now struggle to find wives and mothers for their future children.

Why is printmaking so powerful? I think about this question whenever I study the soul-wrenching prints of Käthe Kollwitz or Sue Coe. I wouldn't have become an artist if not for the seductive process of lithography. As I engage with more mediums, I realize that printmaking allows me to explore existential questions in a way that

painting and sculpture do not. My research is an exploration in what exactly that difference is: what is printmaking's power?

Some scholars, like Sheryl Conkelton (2011), have attributed printmaking's power to its historical function as the main vehicle for information dissemination. Constituting the earliest form of mass-media, prints have often been described as 'democratic.' The plurality of prints makes the political message more accessible: both because of a lower cost that resulted from multiplicity, and because of a print's ability to exist in numerous locations simultaneously. Multiplicity begets multiple witnesses (Bulawsky 2016). These scholars focus on printmaking's *mechanical* reproducibility, which gives rise to debates on notions of the original and the copy, authorship, and authenticity.

Some scholars, like Ruth Weisberg and Kathryn Reeves, have hinted at printmaking's *biological* reproducibility as the source of printmaking's power. Print media is based on the life-giving, regenerative matrix, the Latin origin of which is 'womb.' In her seminal 1986 essay, Weisberg (1986) highlights the matrix as one of printmaking's central characteristics. Furthermore, she advocates for an exploration of a 'discipline-based aesthetic' (59) through the *function*, *process* and *materials* of print media (59-66). We shift here from a focus on printmaking as a powerful tool to a focus on the distinctiveness of its messages. Going one step further, Reeves (1999) links together matrix, reproduction, and a laborious process typical of print media. She then argues that printmaking 'is and has historically been gender-coded "feminine"' (75).

What my work reveals is that printmaking's power is more complex: it is far greater than its functionality, and concerns not only life, but death. Inspired by Barbara Balfour (2016), who articulates the hope that print media can be 'an enabling agency

rather than an ossified form' (122), I argue that printmaking is itself the intermediary between the living and the dead.

My exploration of print media's distinctive power lead me beyond conventional disciplinary boundaries. Anthropology of the late 20th century shares, with printmaking and the graphic arts in general, a fascination with symbolism, making it a suitable tool in establishing the connection between life and death in print media. In particular, I reference Maurice Bloch and Jonathan Parry's (1996) *Death and the Regeneration of Life*, which is a collection of essays on the significance of symbols of fertility and rebirth in mortuary rituals. It encompasses various cultures across a wide ethnographic spread examined by the contributors, from the necrophagous hermit of Benares (Parry 1982, 74-110), which is present-day Varanasi, to the Merina people of Madagascar (Bloch 1982, 211-230). However, in opposing life and death, the anthology sets up a binary which, I argue, printmaking itself questions.

I will explore these questions through two case studies: one of my own project, and one of Lisa Bulawsky, an artist and printmaker, Professor of Art at Washington University in St. Louis, and Director of Island Press.

### **An Embodiment of the Cycle of Life and Death**

My three-part project, *To Be or Not to Be?* (2018-2019), uncovers printmaking's connection to death and the regeneration of life through both its subject matter and its process. This project includes two 26" x 20" lithographs and a sixteen-minute-long video displayed in between the diptychs (fig. 2).

In the first lithograph (fig. 3), a fetus with my infant face is seemingly kidnapped, head-first on her way to the womb door. A handwritten excerpt from a

Confucian classic, *The Classic of Filial Piety*, flows from her umbilical cord down to her blindfold. The Chinese text details how one's body is a gift from one's parents, and, therefore, one should not dare damage it.

The video documents me graining down the stone/matrix/womb that houses the fetus mentioned above (fig. 4). A compilation of newborn infants' cries plays backwards as I repetitively smooth out the surface of the stone/womb with a levigator and carborundum grits (fig. 5). After a laborious sixteen-minute session, the fetus in the womb is completely erased (fig. 6). She, however, reincarnates in the now-vacant womb in the second lithograph, this time pointing a gun to her mouth (fig. 7). Once reluctantly born, she goes back in time to the womb. Knowing how her life would turn out, she can now decide whether to be born or not.

The process of *To Be or Not to Be?* demonstrates how the concept of life as a 'limited good,' or limited resource, abounds in printmaking. Bloch and Parry (1996) introduce their collection of essays by concluding that '... death is a source of life. Every death makes available a new potentiality for life, and one creature's loss is another's gain' (8). For example, Hindu sacrificial practice equates cremation to 'an act of creation' (Parry 1982, 86), implying that a life must be surrendered if new life is to be obtained. While the recycling of substrates is prevalent across different printmaking processes, the collapse of birth and death is the most evident in stone lithography. Drawn on and printed from a lithographic limestone, which is a limited resource, the old image must be grained down for a new impression to be applied. As in the case of *To Be or Not to Be?*, the death of an image foreshadows the birth of the new, while the birth of an image necessitates the destruction of its predecessor.

The process of *To Be or Not to Be?* is both linear and cyclical, such is our experience of time, which informs how we reconcile our mortality. Anthropologist Edmund Ronald Leach (1961) theorizes the way religious ideology negates the finality of death with the promise of rebirth. He suggests that repetitive time (day after day, night after night) and irreversible time (death after birth) are muddled up so that irreversibility is assimilated into repetition (125-126). Consequently, birth seems to shadow death, just as death shadows birth (125). Analogous to how we experience time, my three-part project progresses both linearly and cyclically. On one hand, it happens sequentially and irreversibly: no one part could exist without the completion of its precursor, and there is no going back. The fetus first needs to die in order to reincarnate in the same womb. On the other hand, the fetus goes through two cycles of life, which both involve graining, drawing, etching, and printing.

### **A Conduit Between the Living and the Dead**

While lithographic limestones were excavated from earth and used to the living's desires, Lisa Bulawsky's *Terra Tumultum* (fig. 8) collaborates with the underworld:

The earth can speak the chaos of the world and register its complaints. *Terra Tumultum* (Earth Noise) generates an earth language that merges with human languages. Prints from metal plates that have been buried and etched by the earth are resurrected, printed, and displayed as memorial markers. The prints bear witness to threatened human values such as equality and truth, written in four languages – Creek, Spanish, Haitian Creole, and English – tracing the cultural history of the greater Orlando region. *Terra Tumultum* is a hopeful project for 2017, calling on and questioning the resilience of basic human values in corrosive times. (Bulawsky 2017)

The printmaking matrix here is the site where communication between the living and the dead takes place. The 'underworld,' an archaic word for the 'earth,' also refers to

‘the mythical world of the dead.’<sup>1</sup> Therefore, Bulawsky’s burying and resurrecting the matrices are symbolic gestures of the living that, like mail art, *corresponds* and collaborates with the dead. Indeed, the living applied vinyl letters of words such as ‘justice’ (as shown in fig. 8) to the metal plates. However, without the acidic soil of the underworld, the exposed surface of the metal plates would never have become etched, the masked-out letters never revealed.

In Bulawsky’s participatory project, *We Belong to this Band* (fig. 9), images of the participants’ dead art heroes, such as Louise Bourgeois, Albrecht Dürer, and Eva Hesse, were made into commemorative reliefs, printed, and bound into tear-off pads. These pads were then attached to garden stakes and planted throughout the city of Minneapolis. Fig. 9, for example, shows a tear-off pad with the portrait of Louise Bourgeois by Ann-Maree Crawford Walker in Elliot Park. Passers-by were free to tear off and keep the printed portraits as they desired (Bulawsky 2010).

*We Belong to this Band* demonstrates printmaking’s effectiveness in mediating life and death, not through the matrix, but through two equally important attributes of print media: the mark and the multiple. Bulawsky (2016) describes printmaking as a ‘Three-Headed Monster,’ the fundamental attributes of which are the mark, the matrix, and the multiple. She talks about the mark of printmaking as a trace, in the sense that it is indexical, like a fingerprint (2016). During our interview on January 22, 2019, she also refers to the mark of printmaking as a record of human existence. Indeed, a printed mark is made to last. The indexical trace of the maker is made on the matrix, which is then embedded with paper through pressure. Compared to a drawn mark, a printed mark is more permanent. The mark of printmaking is a trace left behind by its creator that says, ‘I was here’ (Bulawsky 2019).

Unlike traces that we carelessly leave behind, such as a trail of dirty footprints, a printed mark is intentionally left behind by its maker, keenly aware of her mortality. In her personal notes on the 'Three-Headed Monster,' Bulawsky (2016) describes the making of a printed mark as scratching 'on the lid of the coffin,' inscribing on our own gravestones.

Originating from a regenerative matrix, a printed mark is inherently multiple. Unlike the uniqueness of a painted mark, the mark of printmaking is meant to be repeated and dispersed. The multiplicity of a printed mark makes it easier to be commemorated: Bulawsky (2019) points out how 'commemorate' can be broken into 'co-memory,' or remembering together. While Reeves (1999, 74) suggests that there is a doubling of absence in the visible print: the absence of the artist and that of the matrix, I propose that the prints in *We Belong to this Band* demonstrate a doubling of *presence*: that of the indexical imprint of the living, and their admiring memory of the dead. The multiple nature of print media further ensures a multiplication of presence. Any one strolling through Elliot Park could tear off a piece of memory of Ann-Maree Crawford Walker's Louise Bourgeois, and put it in her pocket.

*We Belong to this Band* and *One Hundred (Would Be) Daughters* together accentuate how flexibly print media's multiplicity can be deployed to connect life and death. On one hand, multiplicity in *One Hundred (Would Be) Daughters* imitates the process of cell division at the very beginning of our lives. On the other hand, multiplicity in *We Belong to this Band* preserves the memory of the dead. The name and the portrait of the deceased are vestiges that outlast our mortal vessels. Their importance were recognized by the Romans, as evidenced by their practice of *damnation memoriae*, where the traces left behind by the condemned were expurgated and banned (Varner

2001). For instance, names on official lists could be erased, and wax masks bearing the condemned's likeness prohibited from public display (2001). The commemorative portraits in *We Belong to this Band* circulate the names and likenesses of the dead. The numerous original copies of the individual prints, therefore, collectively hedge against oblivion.

The tear-off pads in *We Belong to this Band* not only safeguard and propagate the memories of the deceased, but also remind the living of their own mortality. The title of the project implies an identification of the living with the dead. While the printed mark is meant to last, the form of the tear-off pad is ephemeral. In our interview, Bulawsky (2019) mentioned how the multiplicity of prints makes them less precious and almost disposable, 'just like a leaf that's blowing in the wind.' Prints may have a very short life, but the impression they leave on people does not.

## **Conclusion**

To date, literature on the medium of printmaking tends to locate its distinctness and potency on its practical role as a mass communication tool. I call for a *philosophical* re-imagining of print media's unique power. Specifically, I further printmaking's metaphorical kinship with birth and life, and demonstrate that it is a *medium* that bridges life and death.

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### Note

1. *Collins English Dictionary*, s.v. "Underworld," accessed May 27, 2019, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/underworld>

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**Appendix: Danqi Cai Interviews Lisa Bulawsky, January 22, 2019**

D: I really enjoyed reading your research statement, which, I think includes your thinking up till 2015?

L: Yes, that's right.

D: You can disagree with me, but I feel like there are two shining, recurring themes, and they are time and mortality.

L: Yes! Well, I think those are big, broad swathes of territories there. Within that, I've been intensely interested in the relationship between personal experience and public history, and how those either are conflated or run parallel, and we relate to time and history based on things that are happening, or have happened, to us. And maybe that's actually just thinking in terms of how I, again, really focusing on ideas about memories and history, kind of going back to the way I think about time.

I have a sort of spatial synesthesia, where I experience time in relation to my body. Depending on the time period — like a calendar year sort of goes like a donut around me, and I kind of move physically, in my head, around this oblong donut. In terms of the past and present I don't think it's so different from other people's, but it's very dimensional, and I can move through it like a tunnel. And when I move through the tunnel, I find myself stopping at, oh, my first day of kindergarten. Right across from that is Robert Kennedy campaigning for President. Or Martin Luther King being assassinated. So I started realizing that these things are connected, for me.

And in terms of the way I see time. So the first series that I did was in 2005 that was really specifically about personal memory and cultural history, and it was called *Flashbulb Memories*. But I've always thought about printmaking and time and mortality in the sense that, the multiple allows for the dispersal, or dissemination of the image, in a way that becomes so less precious, that it's just like a leaf that's blowing in the wind. It can just be something that's scattered, and allowed to be discovered or not. So the ephemeral nature — I've been doing public, temporary projects since the late 90s — and, they've always been about gifting the work to the world, letting go of attachments, and understanding that print has a very short life. So [in the list of questions you sent me] you asked the question about whether the sawdust thing was a new approach, because it was more temporary, but that's been part of it all along.

D: I see. Have you always been experiencing time like a spatial thing?

L: Yes. Since I was a kid. I didn't really realize it was anything special, until I had a writing class in college and I started writing about it. I realized that not everybody experiences things that way. And I've tried to make work that almost 'illustrates' that, but it's just not interesting.

D: I remember at some point in your research statement you talked about how the printed mark serves as a metaphor for both the 'continuities and ruptures of time.' Do you think about your daily life in the kindergarten as the continuum, and some public, remarkable events such as Robert Kennedy campaigning as the ruptures?

L: In that quote, I was talking specifically about this work that I'd been doing over the last few years with my pile of newsprints with these accidental marks on them. So I think what I was referring to was the continuum of time recorded on this stack of 3,000 sheets of newsprint. And then the mark, being incidental, accidental, or marginal, kind

of being a disruptive force, because it's not intentional. So in a way that those newsprints have both qualities of being both continuous but also disjunctive. I'm not sure that I would apply it to everything; I'll have to think about that. I was really specifically thinking about the newsprints and the accidental.

D: You also used the phrase 'cyclical incidents,' also in another set of project that you did utilizing the pile of newsprints. What did you mean by 'cyclical?'

L: I think it's about getting older, to be honest. The experience of time, the way we learn, history, the way time was explained to us as something that moves forwards. History is progressing. Culture is progressing. So I guess I'm less convinced by that now? I'm interested in the way — I think this have always actually been part of my work, the visual aesthetic of it — that I didn't really apply it conceptually to my thoughts about time, but I think there are ways that history is rhyming — that's what I mean by 'cyclical' — like the thing comes back and they look a little different but they sound the same. They rhyme. And I played around with a rhyming visual aesthetic that's also disjunctive. So both things are at play. So 'cyclical' is about not progressing.

So those newsprint pieces and the current collage work that I've done from the newsprint pieces are sort of playing with what happens outside of the story of history: what's recorded. And thinking about what happens in the margins: what's not paid attention to, that's happening visually on the page. Because the newsprint is recording the margins of an image where the main image has gone away; because it's like a stencil for what's left on the newsprint.

D: And I'm also curious, speaking of your most recent work, *Lignum Vitae*. It really stood out to me that you've been working with private life and public space for the past decade and, as you were working on this specific project, eleven people were killed at

the Tree of Life Synagogue. I'm curious, because you're clearly invested in these remarkable, public events that kind of happen parallel to your own life. I'm curious as to what is your relationship with them? How do they affect you personally?

L: Just to explain for a second on a practical level: I wasn't already working on the *Lignum Vitae*. I made it specifically in response to the event. It was really quick — I had two days where I had free time at this residency. And that happened. I had always wanted to do one of these sawdust stencils. It's kind of a print, in a way. Coincidentally I learned the night before the shooting that this tree of life was a native tree of Key West and was endangered. It was just a weird coincidence of things. I guess in some ways your question is going back to the idea of the way that I experience time and these sorts of events. They all seem to line up.

I think we all experience this in some way. Like if you hear a song — that's actually how I started that first series. I was standing on the bridge in Florence that goes over the river Arno, and I was standing there and I heard this song playing, and I had this flood of images; they were like holograms. They were just blossoming in my brain that reminded me first of something that happened while I was driving my first car, which was a Chevy Nova. So I pictured this car and then I pictured where I was driving to: this job that I had... all these images sort of flooded back. It's associative memory. When you just stream of conscious, allow yourself to follow your memories of a particular time. Does that happen to you? You hear a song that's special at some point in your life?

D: I think so, but not as visual as that. I think it's just you. (laughs)

L: (laughs) Maybe. I guess I started becoming really conscious about that: what's going on with the world versus what I am doing. I have a divided practice. Sometimes I like to

be out in the world, doing socially-engaged or participatory things, especially in the summer. Public things. And then I also have a very private making practice where a lot of the stuff I make never get shown. I'm sort of a hermit. And I feel guilty about that (chuckles). I feel selfish. When there're these things really pressing, sometimes horrible things that are happening in the world that I'm not working to make better, that I'm not contributing something. I feel this tension between my private work and what's going on in the world.

D: I relate to that a lot. About feeling guilty about what is going on. Sometimes when you make work about what's going that makes you feel bad, you also feel like, 'am I capitalizing on tragedies?'

D: In your statement you mentioned this 'Three-Headed Monster' — mark, matrix and the multiple. It's interesting for me when I look at your two most recent projects. They both have their marks. I'd think that the mark of *Lignum Vitae* is the sawdust, and the one of *Terra Tumultum* is the erosive acid of the earth. I think they are two extremely different marks. What do you think about that and why?

L: I feel like my earlier work, even back in grad school in the 1990s, early 2000s, was really about exploring all the possibilities of the matrix — like not doing editions but figuring out how I can use the matrix in lots of different ways in different images — and then also exploring the multiple during public works and distributive works. So really over the last ten years I've been intensely interested in the mark. But in general, sort of the grand idea — the meta-mark; the Platonic idea of the mark. And actually I just did a collaboration with a press called Small Craft Advisory Press at Florida State University, where we crafted a book that's all about my thinking about the mark. It's a little chapbook. I did a residency in Paris in 2015 and that's all I did: try to sort out my

thinking about the ecology of the mark, almost. Or whether there is an ecosystem of mark-making, and where printmaking fits in that.

I'm interested in the trace, the mark as record, especially the print. I think it's important that the printed mark is a record of human existence and human events. History, in other words; or the 'common record,' which is another way of saying 'history' that I like better. And all the different kinds of voices of the mark within printmaking. Like the difference between an intaglio mark and a relief mark and a lithographic drawn mark, and how each of those has its own voice. And then the way that mark is, only in printmaking, embedded with the paper through pressure, where it becomes immovable. If you contrast it with a drawn, pencil mark, which can be erased, it's got a security to it.

D: Your interests in mortality and printmaking do come together really well.

L: I want to hear you write it out and sent it to me. (laughs)

D: (laughs) Because prints are ephemeral. Even archival prints, they still are ephemeral, if you look at it in the grand scheme of things. Leaving an imprint is just like leaving a trace that is mortal.

L: Also that inclination is one that, I think, most artists share: the desire to leave a mark in some way. To say 'I was here.'

D: Another thing that I noticed reading your research statement is, in a lot of your projects, you pay tribute to people who recently passed through printed portraiture. Can you tell me a little more about that? It's like a staple in a number of your projects.

L: Yes, during a certain time period. It was pretty intense between 2008 and 2012, where I did a project *We Belong to This Band*, which was a participatory project with the portraits where other people draw their favorite dead art heroes. And the one on my



car, which was a reprisal of the *Blindspot Galleries* project. And I've done a lot more that are not on my website. I used to do these portraits of people who passed as silk collographs, where you can't see your drawing until you've finished it and you ink it up. So it's like bringing them back to life, in a way. I've never shown those just as portraits.

To answer your question, I really think it had a lot to do with the passing of my mother. And a real sort of dark time of thinking about death. But also, really, it didn't feel dark. It felt like I was doing a service, in a way: honoring, respecting, and an act of commemorating, which is a word that I really love because, if you break it up, it's co-memory, or remembering together. I haven't done those for a while. I think the last year that I did those portraits were 2012.

D: I'm sorry for your lost.

L: Thank you.

D: I think those projects are beautiful. They're touching. But I'm sorry about what inspired you to make them.

L: Actually, her passing also inspired me to do the *Prosthetic Memories* series. Because as she was ill, I was just hanging out with her and getting her oral history. She was telling me all about her life and I was writing it all down, so it gave me the idea to take the idea from *Flashbulb Memories* and do it as an interview process with other people, and use their memories to make the prints. It's just a hard thing to lose parents. Or anybody, obviously. I'm already prone to thinking about death and mortality. (laughs)

D: Kind of going back to your most recent project. I can still see the dichotomy between private life and public space, but I feel like they are more subtle. Do you think that's the case?

L: I think that's really true. I didn't really think about it until you asked me, but there's something changing in terms of that binary, or duality, being so strict. Where things are breaking down and starting to merge more. One thing weighs out over the other a little bit.

*Terra Tumultum* was a pretty different kind of project. It got shifted by the curators. I had something more broad in mind, and then it became specific to Florida with the languages and the texts that were on the plates. Because the festival was happening in Orlando, so they wanted it to have a relation — which I'm glad. It turned out that the plates were buried in Florida when hurricane Irma came through, so all of them were in the ground during the hurricane, which is weird. I don't know if it did anything different than it would have done. I don't think so, because I've buried plates here in St. Louis and they look pretty much the same. But there are differences. Some were buried in Miami, some in North Florida, some in Orlando area. It was an interesting project.

D: Those plates buried in different places were all in the same project?

L: Yes. I shipped them to people.

D: How long were they buried?

L: Two weeks to a month. It was supposed to be two weeks, but then the hurricane happened, so people left them in the ground longer. I'm glad they were able to find them because things got kind of crazy (chuckles).

D: (chuckles) I bet. So how were they printed after they were shipped back?

L: Just like etchings. Intaglio. What I did was I put the text on the plate first as vinyl, so it stopped out the plate from etching where the vinyl letters were.

D: So the soil really did the etching.

L: Yes. I never put it in any acid or anything.

L: What seemed like a serendipitous thing was that it looked like stone. So the fact that they became these memorial markers that looked like granites, but were made out of paper and printed from plates were kind of cool.

D: This is really helpful. I couldn't tell how they were made. I thought they were granites. I thought you printed the plates on granites somehow.

L: I should put some process pictures up on my website. I have some pictures of peeling off the vinyl from the plate, and actually burying the plate. And then I very carefully laminated the prints to these wooden stands that I put them in the ground with, so they look like solid blocks of something, but they're just on a piece of wood.

D: Where did the idea of burying plates come from? I've never seen anybody done it in the past. (laughs)

L: (chuckles) It's kind of about burial and resurrection. Kind of like the portraits, really. It's just bringing something back to life that's had a death. I suspected that there was some acid in the earth, but I didn't know what kind of mark it would make. It's pretty hard to control. I've since then built this planting bed where I mix up different types of soil, like manure and top soil, trying to see what gives the strongest bite. It's still just very unpredictable. (chuckles)

D: This is giving me chills! (laughs) I feel like this fits my thesis even better than I imagined it would be.

L: (laughs) I don't think I'm done with the burial thing, but that's on hold. I'm actually working on this — maybe something that never actually gets finished. It's like a Book of Days that's called the *Book of Eternal Returns (and the Doubt of Being)*, and it's all this kind of rhyming images, and counting, sort of. There're like 50 images in it right

now. I haven't started putting it on my website because I don't know if I want to wait until it's done, or until I've shown it partially. It's 11" x 13". I call it a book but it's not going to be bound.

D: It kind of reminds me of the Book of Hours. I believe that's when you pray, you look at the book and you know that 'it's 1 pm so I should do this.'

L: Yes. That's why I didn't call it a Book of Hours because it's much more of a devotional object that is prescriptive, something that guides an activity, whereas this is more of a reflection.

D: This is so exciting! I'm really excited about it.

L: I'm hoping to make a bunch of progress on it over the next few months.

D: Thank you so much! For being so honest and sharing your experiences, and just life in general, really, with me.

L: Of course! Happy to. Thank you for asking.

## Figures

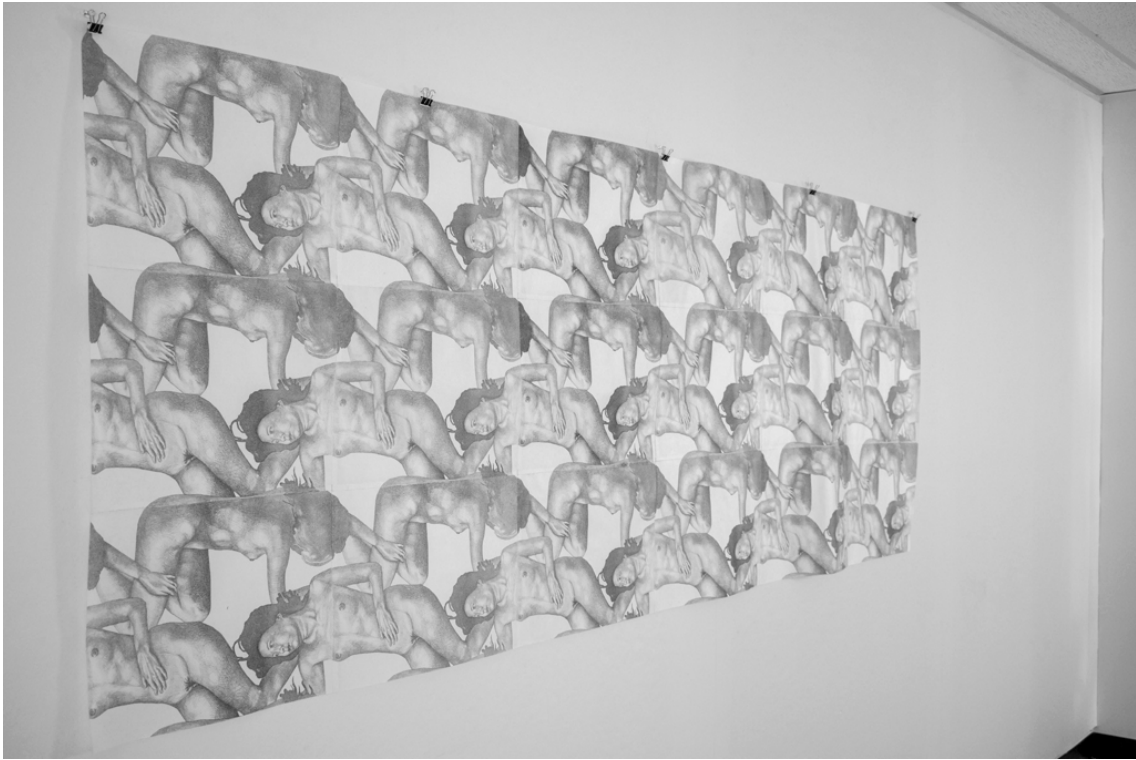


Figure 1. Danqi Cai. "Installation View," in *One Hundred (Would Be) Daughters*, 2018. Lithograph scroll. 35.5" x 95.5".



Figure 2. Danqi Cai. "Installation View," in *To Be or Not to Be?*, 2019. Multimedia triptych. Variable dimensions.



Figure 3. Danqi Cai. "To Be...," in *To Be or Not to Be?*, 2018. Lithograph. 26" x 20".





Figure 4. Danqi Cai. "Film Still #1," in *To Be or Not to Be?*, 2019. Film still at 00:01. Cinematography by Jeffrey Chance.





Figure 5. Danqi Cai. "Film Still #2," in *To Be or Not to Be?*, 2019. Film still at 03:20.  
Cinematography by Jeffrey Chance.

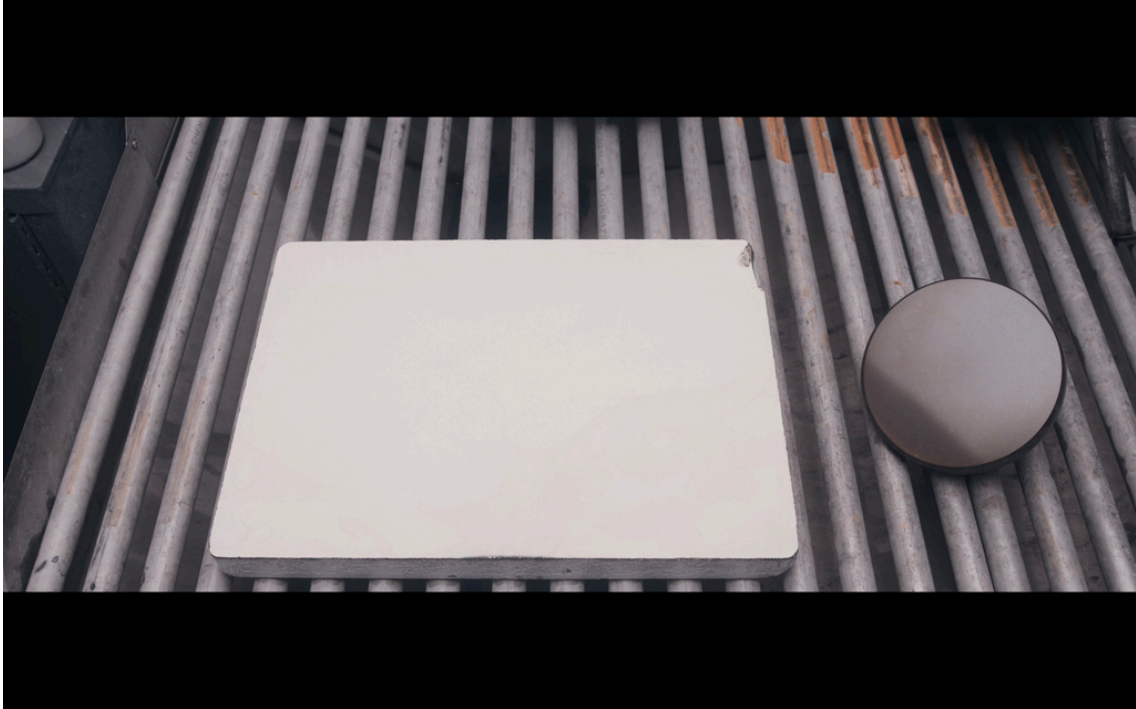


Figure 6. Danqi Cai. "Film Still #3," in *To Be or Not to Be?*, 2019. Film still at 16:08.  
Cinematography by Jeffrey Chance.



Figure 7. Danqi Cai. "...or Not to Be?," in *To Be or Not to Be?*, 2019. Lithograph. 26" x 20".





Figure 8. Lisa Bulawsky. "Justice," in *Terra Tumultum*, 2017. Intaglio print from zinc plate buried and etched by Florida soil, laminated on wooden stand. 9" x 12" print on 36" wooden stake. Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 9. Lisa Bulawsky. "Elliot Park," in *We Belong to this Band*, 2010. Perfect-bound tear-off pad with relief prints, mounted on wooden stake. 4" x 6" pad (variable thickness) on 12" wooden stake. Courtesy of the artist.