

North Dakota Museum of Art

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EWA TARSIA, *ABSOLUTE DOT*

Ewa Tarsia is a Polish-born, Canadian artist. Whereas she works in diverse media including painting, sculpture, tapestry, landscape design, and drawing, she is known internationally as a printmaker. She has showed in international print biennials in Spain, France, Poland, Austria, United States, England, Germany, and Korea. The work in this exhibition represents the evolution of Tarsia's printmaking into personal techniques that meld the actual plastic printing plate into the final work of art that present as relief paintings.

As a printmaker, Tarsia is part of a tradition of artists who acknowledge that their plates—the pieces of metal, plastic, wood and linoleum that they print from—are the true objects of their affection. Covered with marks, lines and subtle traces of colour, printing plates are often as interesting as the images pulled from them. Each plate is visually complex, offering a fully active and engaged surface that, once transformed into sculpture, reveals both the artist's obsessive process and the beauty that motivates her to continue. As an environmentalist, Tarsia sees the irony of using plastic and paper to create images that celebrate the beauty of the natural world. "It reflects our society," she says of the work. "Plastic is everywhere."

The success of her artistic career in Canada was celebrated in June 2007 when she was officially inducted into the Royal Academy of Arts.

"My work reflects the intimacy I share, and have always shared with landscape forms, abstract textures, colour, shape, and light. My sensitivity to these elements and larger arenas of life and nature is translated through the medium of printmaking and painting. In this artistic language I am able to animate my perceptions and explore the transience of time, the character of night and day, and memories of past seasons. The images that ensue are both documents and discoveries, bridged by the fundamental element of process.

The successive stages of my projects can be planned but never fully predicted, as they depend on inner impulses and my interactions with the ever-changing environment. In this negotiation the dictates of my emotions and thoughts steer the ship, reacting to, but never surrendering to external circumstances. I do what I find important at a given instant, and allow instinct to animate the direction of my work. Art making is my vocation and inspiration, and I use it as medicine and meditation.

Maintaining the rawness of this energy in the slow, deliberate medium of printmaking and painting is a challenge and opportunity. My present work seeks to connect these two ends, exploring process to extend and suspend the in-between.

I have never practiced philosophical reflection as a prop of my work, but have always recognized the need to record my process and chart my practice. The memories of every decision, choice and thought are inscribed on my printing plates, and I seek to share that dimension with my audience. I will elevate creative activities to the rank of the finished work, and open the energy of my procedures. Through this revelation, I seek to push my work beyond the product into a place it can live.

This approach opens itself to contingency and change, which are manifested in the content and language of my work. Through this process, the domain in which my art circulates has broadened to include archetypal areas, entering an imaginary region where I'm able to bridge my thoughts and emotions with others through shared channels of the universal. Poised between emotions and formal questions, my creative world moves between a vibrant human cosmos and an abstract domain of forms and shapes."