



Detail of installation, 2015, Marilee Salvator

## Marilee Salvator / *Spread*

Exhibition: January 8 - February 20, 2016

Opening Reception: January 8, 2016 8:00pm - 9:00pm

Artist Talk: January 8, 2016 7:00pm - 8:00pm



**Alberta Printmakers Gallery**  
4025 4 Street SE, Calgary AB

Marilee Salvator: Spread  
Essay by Kristina Arnold

Marilee Salvator's work is deceptively beautiful. Entering one of her room-sized installations, the viewer is drawn in to a candy-coated world. A riot of jewel-toned circles bursts across the walls and cascades to the floor, shiny, plastic and playful. Forms tumble and spill, coalescing into patterns both lacy and bold. There are no frames on the wall, meticulously crafted editions or flat paper surfaces. Instead, thousands of single-color clusters are relief printed onto transparent film, each then painstakingly cut out by hand. In overlapping layer upon layer, nearly buzzing with life, each piece is pinned to the wall, seemingly to prevent it from escape. The addition of lighter, less intense ghost prints, the introduction of neutral greys to the work's palette, and the shadows created through the clear print surface provide a counterbalance, and give a physical and temporal depth to the work.

Spread's process and materials reference both traditional "women's work" and the more traditionally male space of the factory. Visual elements strongly rooted in the feminist-inspired Pattern and Decoration movement, traditional quilts and children's coloring books are paired with manufactured plastic film and an industrially-inspired process for creating multiples. Cloth piecework and mechanical die cutting are equally visually present. The individual artist's hand is concealed – through the intervention of the machine to create image, and at the same time revealed – by altering each piece individually (via cutting it with scissors) once it comes off the press.

Encountering Salvator's dense work we wonder: is this a jungle or a seascape? Has our scale shifted, and we are instead navigating the space under a microscope? We could be observing flora or fauna: breeding, morphing, mutating, and taking over a space. In her print project, Salvator harnesses the potential energy that lies latent within a process of multiples. A single building block, used over and over, stacks, fills, and masses. One cell divides, and these daughter cells divide, exponentially covering space.

Salvator's shapes and layers reference the build-up of time – both metaphorical and actual. We navigate the rain forest and smell the sweet overgrowth of decay; we snorkel through the accretion of barnacles and sealife on a long-ago sunk ship. We marvel at the dramatic complexity that is our body magnified many times over.

One component is, by itself, beautiful, healthy and desirable. But when repeated obsessively, a small piece metastasizes, becoming toxic to its body host, or envelops its environment completely and becomes dangerously claustrophobic. Beneath the gleeful, colorful surface lies a darker significance. Perhaps it is that the plastic film, though attractive, is busily proliferating in oceanic trash islands, suffocating the very sealife it depicts. Maybe the jungle vines, brought to a new environment and planted to share their beauty, are now reproducing out of control, choking out the native landscape. Or – the lifestyle we enjoy is barraging our bodies with daily toxicities that eventually add up to cancer.

Lest the viewer despair, our fears of what may lie behind the curtain are balanced by Salvator's sheer positive visual energy. We are cautioned of the consequences of our indulgences, but are ultimately left with a gift. Like the proverbial kids in the candy store, we have immersed ourselves within her transformed fantasy world, have consumed our fill, are satiated and slightly sick. We are richer for the experience, and if given the chance, we would do it again.

*Kristina Arnold: Writer Biography*

*Kristina Arnold has a MFA in painting from the University of Tennessee's Frank H. McClung Museum in Knoxville, TN. In 2005 she joined the faculty of Western Kentucky University's Art Department where she teaches and serves as the Gallery Director. Her artistic practice is primarily as an installation artist, with themes drawing conceptually from her former background and interest in public health. She exhibits both nationally and internationally, and her work has been published in Sculpture Magazine and New Glass Review. Arnold's residencies include Pilchuck Glass School in Stanwood, Washington, the Municipal Gallery in Bratislava, Slovakia and Jentel, in Banner, Wyoming.*

*Marilee Salvator : Artist Biography*

*Marilee Salvator is an Assistant Professor of Printmaking and Design at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green Kentucky. Her work has been exhibited in over 100 exhibitions throughout North America, South Korea, China, Japan, Portugal, Serbia, Ireland, Scotland, Poland, Italy, New Zealand and Romania. Her work is included in over 25 collections including JCI University, Jiangxi, China and Sakmi Art Museum, Okinawa Prefecture, Japan.*

Alberta Printmakers (A/P) is a non-profit, artist-run centre founded in 1989 in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The organization's goals are to increase public awareness of print media, to engage a diverse audience, to provide resources for the artistic community and production facilities for printmaking.

A/P has an open membership, and is governed by a board of directors. Management and administration of A/P's activities are the responsibilities of its Directors, who reach out to volunteers in accomplishing A/P's goals. A/P also hosts residency and summer student programs.

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