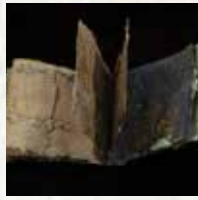
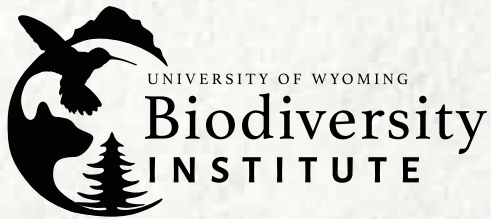


Invasive Paper IV



Invitational exhibition of works produced from handmade paper containing native and invasive Wyoming plants.



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From an Artist's Perspective

The nature of turning something that is of little to no interest or detested by much of the population into something beautiful with a new life is interesting to me. My reasoning for choosing to use invasive species had to do with the abundant nature and overall hatred of the invasive plants. I have yet to experience someone who is not excited about the prospect of getting the weeds off of their property.

After the first iteration of the Invasive Paper show, I had one of the participating artists approach me and tell me how much he loved working with the material. He explained that the material was so different and unexpected that any pre-planning or ties to his previous research had to be let go of and that he thought the paper had helped him to break out of some patterns that he had fallen into in his work. This, or similar stories have arisen from each of the subsequent shows.

- Sukha Worob, Artist and Exhibit Organizer

From a Biologist's Perspective

What are weeds? Weed scientists define them as "plants that interfere with the management objectives of a place". This terse sentence simply states that weeds are plants that are present where we don't want them. Weeds can be native or they can be exotic. The latter means that we brought them with us to a new landscape, sometimes inadvertently but sometimes not and later found that we don't want them there. Because we don't want them, we fight them with hoes, chemicals, and even flamethrowers. We introduce genes into crops to make them herbicide resistant, so that we can douse fields. We shower clear cuts with glyphosate to accelerate the growth of young timber slowed down by their smothering unwanted neighbors.

The analogies that we use to describe our interaction with weeds are those of war. They are invaders and we wage battle against them. We "round them up". Mostly, our victories are fleeting. Weeds evolve herbicide resistant and maintain seed banks, a military reserve, if you wish, that allow them to reinvade the territory that we have taken. Weeds are also good at waging guerilla warfare –they hide and stealthily attack when we drop our defenses. All our technology and military savvy seem, if not futile, at least ineffectual in the long run. Weeds persist. Our war against them has now innocent victims, including beneficial insects and humans. We are becoming targets of our friendly fire.

Perhaps we need to rethink our relationship with weeds.

Sukha Worob and Mark Ritchie worked with weeds rather than just against them. They made paper out of the weeds' flesh and gave it to other artists. The results are provocative and revealing. Doug Russel's styrofoam suburban sprawl on feral paper reminds us that weeds are us. Leah Hardy used the droppings of a mustang fed on weeds (an invasive feeding on others?) to comment on our quandary. Are we technological beetles rolling dung up a hill, just to have it roll back? The task of living with invasive weeds is that of Sisyphus. But these are just two examples in a provocative, thoughtful, and gorgeous exhibit. Its participants do not have answers, but that is not art's task. The task of artists is to ask difficult questions and to force us to rethink our relationship with the world and with each other. I hope that we take the challenge that this exhibit presents, because it is urgent and necessary.

- Carlos Martinez del Rio, Director of the University of Wyoming Biodiversity Institute



Nate Abel



My work surveys personal identity and history through the decay and manipulation of memories. As the tradition of oral history diminishes, I cling to the histories passed down to me by family members and recollections of my own experiences. My interpretations of these memories and experiences exist between the conscious and the unconscious mind. I am able to reflect on these histories while traveling through the western landscape which holds the very memories I meditate on. I find myself asking questions and listening for answers over its great expanse, recently this meditation on the landscape has expanded to include a search for the quiet in our fast pasted media saturated lives. The resulting images are forever shifting, just as memories do. I rework plates, stones, blocks and drawings to create images with their own histories which often have echoes of those that came before.

Diana Baumbach



This piece utilizes "caution orange" and a target motif to highlight the impact of invasive species. The juxtaposition of a labor intensive handmade object with a digital print illuminates the process of making the work.

Lisette Chavez



In this body of work, I use texts to reveal personal confessions that imply shame. Hand-drawn images and the printed word serve as a biographical narrative, which document what I suppressed living in a conservative Catholic family. The "front" I carried became a way for me to conceal what I perceived then as a hypocritical household. My intention is to convey the unease between purity, seduction and evil. I hope to confront myself with truth and disclose the discomfort in trying to balance religious beliefs and actions in every day life.

Katie Christensen



Shifting through time and space, this book is a visual representation of the rhythms of our world, both in micro and macro. In the active state of opening we bounce from one thing to the next, viewing in snippets or moments of time. Sprouting up to the sun, or bursting out with spores, eventually tumbling to stillness. The verso or opposite side of the concertina folds depict wholeness. This is the dim light and quiet time of dusk and dawn. It is a place of rest and rejuvenation.

Todd Christensen



Printing on the handmade paper was both a joy and a challenge. Some of the paper contained chunks of material that embossed holes into my printing blocks which I didn't love so much, but the tactile quality and feel of the paper was so wonderful and fascinating and a true joy to work with and print on. I printed in somewhat transparent ink colors that I felt would complement the subtlety and beauty of the paper. Some of the prints have been rubbed with graphite while the ink was still wet. The paper is invasive, the snake is elusive, the pigeons are extinct, and I'm exhausted.

Leah Hardy



As a sculptor, I was most fascinated with employing the handmade paper to fabricate three-dimensional form. I chose to use the highly textured ochre-brown paper made from Domingo's manure. For clarification, Domingo is a horse. While I was drawn to this paper aesthetically, it also related conceptually to the dung ball that I fabricated from it. My current work explores the use of insect forms as metaphors for the human condition. This particular piece features a dung beetle as a toy balancing atop a dung ball and presented as a circus act. It questions our continuous challenge of trying to control (or be controlled by) the detritus of life.

Nyla Hurley



It's hard not to admire those who venture into unfamiliar territory and some how, despite the deadly odds and harsh conditions they manage to thrive. Despite the respect these actions demand, at what cost does beating the odds create in the long run?

Pat Kikut



After witnessing a mysterious "blood moon" on the morning of October 8th 2014, I decided focus my studio work on producing oil paintings and drawings of the moon. At first this decision felt like a big departure from my typical western landscape paintings. Now, after researching and making paintings of the moon I realize that this new subject isn't as far of a departure as I first thought. The moon is a lot like a western landscape. It holds a similar enduring beauty and strength and like western landscape holds many myths. Also, I have found that many of the land use issues that are the subjects of my paintings are relevant and applicable to the moon. Like the "wild west" the moon is a raw and lawless place where dreamers, land speculators, lawyers, real estate brokers, geologists and industry are looking to make a buck out of the moon's energy and tourism potential. In terms of this exhibit, it made sense to make images of the moon on invasive species paper as it suggests that are (and we will surly be) the most invasive species on the moon.

Abe McCowan



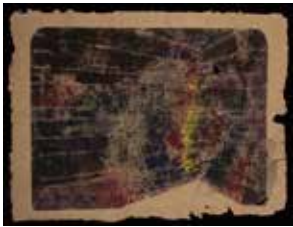
My work is inspired by experiences I have had while hiking in the deserts of the American West and northern Mexico. While these desert regions are sparse, they are surprisingly rich in biodiversity. This arid abundance creates beautifully stark wilderness. It is the wild plant forms in these landscapes – the chalky yet silky saguaro rib, the fine fibers that feather and spin off a yucca blade – that inspire this work.

Kathy Puzey



The content of my artwork is centered on the natural world and I examine the curiosity, contradictions and ambiguities inherent in our relationship with nature. The woodcut prints I am producing push the boundaries of this traditional medium through various mark making, layering and even sometimes move into the three-dimensional realm. I embrace the straightforward, no-nonsense characteristics that working with wood offers. I also love to see this material pushed and transformed into something unexpected.

Andrew Rice



In my recent body of work, I investigate our collective need for the spaces we construct, inhabit, interact with and define ourselves by. We are all interconnected and a part of a larger collective, or as John Donne describes in his enduring poem, No Man Is an Island, 'a piece of the continent.' We have created spaces and safe havens from the harsh world around us that encourage this reciprocal community. From personal spaces to larger, family and community spaces, it is paramount to our survival both individually and as a larger group. In the 21st century we have now gone digital in the spaces we create. These spaces provide protection, but also isolation, inhibiting access, but also providing guidance within the world around.

Mark Ritchie



The works in the exhibition are a continuation of the ideas and imagery of horses, domestic and feral, and the meaning of wild, native, introduced and invasive, that have recently occupied my work in the studio. With this project the materiality and meaning of the paper used in the work has informed my working process more intimately. I selected paper made from two non-native species that have naturalized or at least become ubiquitous symbols of the American West: the manure of a domesticated Wyoming mustang and the paper containing the branches of tumbleweed.

Bailey Russel



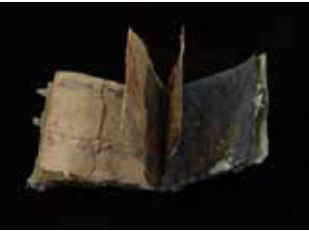
For this work I wanted to create images which had a tangible connection to the media they were printed on. I chose the cyanotype process because of the common nature of its light sensitive element, iron and also because of its connection to blue prints and the idea of mapping out a location. The images themselves are of tumbleweed and cheat grass, two of the most perniciously invasive plants in our state. They're simple in form to get out of the way of the beauty of the paper and to highlight the mapped out details in the plants. .

Doug Russell



Upon first viewing the handmade paper provided for this exhibition, I found it too inherently beautiful to alter or change. The texture, topography and color all spoke to a pristine and complete state of being. This reminded me of the vast landscape of the high plains and mountain west – with its stark magnificence and often elegantly minimal appearance. Reflecting on the embedded meaning of the local and invasive fibers present in the handmade paper brought me to a simple but inevitable analogy - suburban sprawl. The aggressive and relentless expansion of housing developments grows continually upon the natural land (represented here with the Styrofoam on handmade paper). This piece also echoes a larger arc within my current creative work – where a continuously evolving architectural model (entitled Styropolis) constructed from discarded expanded cell polystyrene pieces acts as source material and inspiration for both drawings and photographs.

Sara Schleicher



Over the last several years my work has focused on using imagery of spent plant matter as metaphor of psychological and psychosocial theories and emotions. My efforts are to give tangible weight to intangibles such as angst, lust, elation, etc. The opportunity to work on the Invasive Paper project is exciting due to the high proportion of my imagery being based on invasive plant species. For this book, I used existing plates and blocks to combine images that had not been juxtaposed before, yet they are all related.

Cerese Vaden



A large percentage of invasive species were consciously introduced by humans and are so interwoven into non-native environments as to be impossible to eradicate. Many of these plants and animals are actually introduced with the goal of eliminating an already existing invasive species, but the cure often becomes another disease. Incorporating a 19th century weavers shuttle, and the moth sent to eradicate spotted knapweed (the most invasive plant in the western US), the piece “Spotted Landscape” is my reflection on this continual hubris of humanity.

Sukha Worob



The imagery in this work is abstracted from photographs taken during the paper-making workshop in Spring of 2014 at the University of Wyoming. The relationships that have grown from invasive paper have become the primary focus and interest for me in the project. The overlap of interactions and collaboration that have come as a result of the work has turned the project into something much larger than its beginnings.