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# Life Structures

Melissa M. Pepin

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ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of  
The College of Imaging Arts and Sciences  
School of Art

In Candidacy for the Degree of  
MASTER OF FINE ARTS in Fine Arts Studio

LIFE STRUCTURES

by

Melissa M. Pepin

June 17, 2015

Thesis Approval

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Melissa M. Pepin

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Date

## **Dedication**

For my dear friend and source of knowledge, love, and  
laughter, my Grandmom Margaret.

## **Abstract**

The following document defines my creative journey as a fine arts graduate student at Rochester Institute of Technology. Through a series of personal life experiences I have selectively visualized a meaningful collection of prints on butcher-block paper.

In addition, I have described positive print experiences at a previous school. This MA studies ultimately directed my search for a MFA program that would provide breath to my research investigations. Creative problem solving in Fine Arts Studio New Forms also contributed to my exhibited work in the Bevier Gallery at RIT. By rendering stills, I was able to capture my personal environment from digital video to select home and family images that best narrated my life story.

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## Introduction

It's Sunday morning, the coffee was poured, and the sounds of chairs being pulled across the well-worn kitchen floor, the already starting conversation are what you heard. Sunday dinner was beginning. Food was being passed and the past week was being discussed. The conversations were lively and it took practice to learn, when to jump in. Just like learning how to jump into a double-dutch jump rope, I took my time, seized the moment and jumped right in. Growing up I stayed silent until someone took a breath or asked if I needed something. Then I could find a way to interject. Over time, as we got older, dinners were less frequent, and I was able to play cards and got to hear new stories and new life lessons. I learned so much in the cross-table talk.

Let's jump ahead to present day. The kitchen table is still the epicenter of the house, but now it is my house. It's the same in every way, but Grandmom is no longer with us. The sounds and smells are different now. After a good meal the dominoes come out to play and household noise now mingles with the shuffling sounds of a new game beginning. Instead of family, there is a different group of people surrounding my table and these friends are my family. They are now what hold my house together with stories and good times, following in the tradition of those who came before them. These are my *Life Structures*.



Fig. 1 "Home," 2009



## My History

As a freshman at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, I was told to take a printmaking class because my drawings would translate well into woodcuts. In the past I had some experience in linocuts, porchoir and monotype, but never had any real interest in the printmaking discipline. When I walked into the printmaking studio at Rutgers and saw the huge presses and the smell of Lithotine, I was enthralled. Soon printmaking went from another medium to the only medium I wanted to explore. My explorations of printmaking guided me to researching some of the most prolific printmakers of the time. Lynne Allen<sup>1</sup> took me by the hand and showed another Mecca to exercise my creativity. The Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper<sup>2</sup> was housed within the walls of the art building, where Master Printers collaborated with artists from all genres to make limited edition fine art prints. As interns, we learned collaborative printing methods and had a chance to speak directly with these high profile artists. Being able to discuss art in relationship to my personal direction provided insight that enabled my art to thrive. By learning the traditional printmaking techniques I felt steeped in the traditions of printmaking.

After graduating from Rutgers, I attended Kean University where I worked toward my Master of Arts in education. My thesis concept centered on the subject of doilies. A “doily” is the product of decorative craft that had lost favor over time, but for me, the doily was a metaphor for women. The doily is strong, beautiful to look at

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<sup>1</sup> Lynne Allen, Master Printer, 1948- ; [www.lynneallen.com](http://www.lynneallen.com)

<sup>2</sup> Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper, now the Brodsky Center for Innovative Editions; [www.brodskycenter.org](http://www.brodskycenter.org)

and something so intricate that takes a long time to create using traditional crocheting or tatting techniques. The final presentation of my thesis exhibition showcased monoprints that used doilies as a resist, then quilted and the prints sewn together in large 48"x60" panels. I recycled old prints, old paper and old drawings as my substrate, making each one unique. I pieced them together as one would sew a quilt. Each panel was then quilted by hand using a "punch then sew" method originally taught to me by my Grandmother. We stitched twenty 24"x30" panels with black embroidery thread to

create 48"x60" quilts. For display purposes they were mounted on foam core and hung with Plexiglas and clear mirror hangers directly attached to the wall. In this way the quilts were protected yet accessible to the viewer. They were open and



VE#1 detail, Melissa Pepin, 2006

vulnerable, reflecting a cultural context that would not have been as apparent if sealed behind glass and a traditional frame.

While studying at Kean, my printmaking class was introduced to non-toxic printmaking methods. Rooted in traditional printmaking techniques, I was slow to accept new methods and had no desire to experiment with them. My thinking changed when I started reading about printmaking fatalities. A side effect of traditional printmaking was illness due to physical exposure to deadly chemicals. I

realized that it was time to make a choice, either to continue using petroleum-based printing ink or making the change to water-soluble inks. I chose to cease my exposure to harmful chemicals and seek out new methods and safer inks. My research led me to Professor Keith Howard and Rochester Institute of Technology's studio MFA fine arts program that had a non-toxic printmaking curriculum.

Coming from a traditional printmaking background to RIT's research-based contemporary printmaking studio was difficult at first. Learning to handle ImagOn (a commercial photopolymer film needed for creating plate exposures), along with exposure to new terminology and new techniques gave me a fresh outlook on printmaking. I also took a Digital Printmaking class with Professor Alan Singer<sup>3</sup> who was teaching new transfer techniques that I found very intriguing. I left behind my oil-based ink and doilies and moved forward in search of what my MFA thesis would entail. I spent many hours that turned into weeks, learning everything I could about ImagOn and how to use it productively. My classmates and I were introduced to new processes that required documenting through a studio workbook. We were also encouraged to investigate research short-cuts by showing examples and antidotes.

By the spring quarter I mastered most of the techniques Keith Howard had taught us. There was, however, one technique that still required my attention, exploring where digital printmaking partnered with intaglio-type printmaking.

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<sup>3</sup> Alan Singer, b.1950- , [www.singerarts.com](http://www.singerarts.com)

## Investigations in Printmaking

Much like four-color lithography, 4-Color Intaglio-Type utilizes the printing industry's CMYK methodology for creating full color imagery model<sup>4</sup>. With the help of Photoshop to make a color separation I was able to create four plates and then print them in the CMYK sequence to make a work that had a full range of color while retaining a "hand pulled" look. It was a learning process, as different images necessitated a modification in the color theory. I would exchange Hansa Yellow for a Diarylide Yellow, or change Crimson Red for a Red Oxide to produce more suitable skin tones. It was an exploration in color ink research to produce the correct color combinations to achieve the desired print. For my images I went a step further and mixed a unique magenta ink to create better skin color and tone. Creating my own magenta ink was a process of trial and error in regards to the opacity and color intensity. By using transparent base and magenta powder pigment, I slowly added pigment until I obtained the



Wood Paneling #1, Melissa Pepin 2008

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<sup>4</sup> Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black make up the CMYK color model.

correct ratio. One jar of transparent base to one ounce of powder pigment was the equation that yielded the best result.

Among various artists that I researched during my initial study into 4-color Intaglio-Type prints was RIT graduate David Jay Reed. He developed a 4-color printmaking technique utilizing Graphic Chemical oil-based ink. “Reed’s art, executed in a realistic manner, depict the stories of his travels and of the people who have been important in his life.”<sup>5</sup> I felt a kinship to Reed because he used subject matter that incorporated his life experiences. Much like Reed, my own artwork captured a moment in time from my *Life Structure*.

Through technical research of materials and processes I made ten woodcuts based on my family photographs. Working with wood inspired me to look at wooden totem poles and other vertically stretched imagery. While researching totem poles, I had the idea to recreate the wood paneling that was found throughout my home. By stretching and pulling family photos, I could manipulate the image until the person photographed melted into the plate surface, leaving their human qualities as an afterthought.

While experimenting and exploring the new range of printmaking possibilities, I gathered working experience of old and new techniques that inspired me to incorporate alternative substrates in printing the body of work I was constructing for my thesis exhibition.

Traditional intaglio plates were generally printed on heavyweight paper. This is necessary due to the amount of pressure needed to transfer the ink from the

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<sup>5</sup> Excerpt from biography on [http://www.akuainks.com/archives/179#Reed\\_bio](http://www.akuainks.com/archives/179#Reed_bio)

plate to the paper, and to achieve a deep plate embossing. One of the more appealing values of Intaglio-Type printing is that you can print the plate upside down on top of the paper, rather than positioning the plate under the paper. This discovery gave me greater flexibility in choosing paper that wouldn't tear under the weight of the plate during printing. This modification was a personal preference allowing me to make substitutions for the heavyweight paper used in traditional intaglio printing.

Printing on alternative paper had its challenges. Some lightweight papers could not be dampened. Dampening softened the paper enabling more ink to transfer from the plate to paper. Some papers like mulberry absorbed too much water and then fell apart when printed. After experimenting with a number of papers, I chose butcher-block paper as it was readily available and relatively inexpensive. I started printing with only a few rolls, just wanting to experiment with color management on the darker brown surface.

My first concern occurred when the butcher-block paper was being dampened. The accompanying process of squeegeeing excess water from the surface of the paper caused it to fall apart into small pieces. To remedy this, rather than placing the paper in a water bath and then moving it to the press bed, I placed the paper on the press bed and then wet it evenly with a water mister. The next big issue was humidity. It was winter and the printmaking studio was warm and the air was very dry. The butcher-block paper was drying too fast, making registration of 4-color Intaglio-Types almost impossible.

I found the easiest way to combat the drying factor of the butcher-block paper was to dry-print the plate, adding more printing pressure from the etching

press. This led to another problem. The lightweight butcher-block paper caused an ink bleed through the paper when this greater press pressure was used. This resulted in a double image from one side of the paper to the other.



**"33," Melissa Pepin, 2009**

Traditionally this would not be considered a good print. However I embraced this result and made the double-sided printing part of the work.

Another difficulty I found while printing on butcher-block paper was that the paper stretched when put under the higher press pressure necessary for printing on dry paper. It became an issue while I was printing the series entitled *"33", from the glass lined tanks of Old Latrobe*, and *The one with the homeless kid*. The image size of each print was 10" wide by 40" long and the paper was 18" by 48", which resulted in more stretching using

this longer paper. A 4-Color-Intaglio-Type needed to be run through the printing press in both directions.



**From the glass lined tanks of Old Latrobe... Melissa Pepin, 2009**

To compensate for the stretch of the paper I had to calculate how much the butcher-block paper actually

stretched. I changed the registration accordingly in each direction while the press bed was moving. It was a painstakingly slow process and many errors were made, but after testing the properties of the paper I was able to combat the stretching issue.

While I was learning these new techniques and discovering innovative ways of printing, I also took other studio classes. The class that had the most influence on my thinking was New Forms, taught by Dr. Tom Lightfoot<sup>6</sup>. I was encouraged to review the body of my artwork and to examine it for a common theme. This was challenging, searching for context in new techniques. New Forms also introduced the idea that I could integrate mixed-media prints within my thesis project. I learned how to make video installations using footage I collected from my digital camera and camera phone. This moving imagery featured not only pictures, but also sound recordings. By combining multiple techniques I was able to convey new feelings.



Martha Rosler, *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, 1975

The moving imagery intrigued me greatly.

The second course in New Forms presented unique challenges in that we were required to create an online blog as part of the artistic narrative.

The loss of my Grandmother

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<sup>6</sup> Dr. Thomas Lightfoot, b.1946- , Professor: Rochester Institute of Technology



became a driving force behind my work. I started keeping an online blog<sup>7</sup> of conversations I wanted to have with her. I made a journal of these conversations and then placed them in a black bag that I crocheted shut. It was a process of appreciating the past while moving forward. I cremated the crocheted journal to transform its content into the same final form as my Grandmother. Would she be able to hear my side of the conversation now? I made a video recording of the event and saved the ashes in a mason jar, much like the canned fruits and vegetables that lined my grandmother's basement pantry. I created an installation of these ashes in my painting studio, where I placed them on a table along with the video of the cremation and accompanying funeral music. The installation helped me examine what I created in relation to family and friends closest to me.

During this time I was researching many video artists. Martha Rosler<sup>8</sup> and Joan Jonas<sup>9</sup> were women I investigated in depth, comparing their performances to what I was trying to create. My videos were short clips from my own life and the performers were my friends and family. I was the director deciding when and where we would play dominoes and when the timing was perfect to record. Unlike Rosler and Jonas' work, my videos were free, unscripted and a means to an end. My video work was not the final art but a means for getting to the final product. This was similar to performance art that was later illustrated in books with still photos. Consequently I started taking still photos of the digital video's footage I was making.

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<sup>7</sup> Short for web log

<sup>8</sup> Martha Rosler b.1943- , Brooklyn, NY

<sup>9</sup> Joan Jonas b. 1937- , New York City, NY

The video was already edited so it was just a matter of still-capturing poignant moments.

After I selected the exact still I wanted to turn into Intaglio-Type prints, I made positive transparencies to then make CMYK ImagOn plates. These original images were taken with my camera phone and were more pixilated, abstracting the faces of my subjects.

The first of these digital images was "*Chuck and Eric*," a 4-Color Intaglio-Type first printed on white mulberry paper and then printed on brown butcher-block paper. Unlike professional digital video, this resolution was extremely low and the images washed out in a pixel blur, a quality that could be controlled to some extent by the amount of manipulation done from the original video. I modified and altered this image by increasing color saturation and increasing the contrast. Though not obvious in this image, there were two figures laughing, their arms gesturing towards a deck of cards in the center of the table.

As I gathered more images to make my suite of prints, they became readable and defined. I started collecting video clips with my digital camera, so not only was the video crisper but also the length of the video clip become longer. I started concentrating on shooting the social activity revolving around my kitchen table and the domino



"Chuck and Eric" Melissa Pepin, 2008



**Watch yourself..., Melissa Pepin, 2008**

game in progress  
between my friends and  
family. The kitchen was  
the gathering place in my  
house and the table was  
the scene for many  
conversations, life  
lessons and good times.  
Like my introduction to  
both traditional and non-  
toxic printmaking, my

kitchen was steeped in tradition that held ghosts of the past. With the addition of new non-toxic traditions, my kitchen table was the place where we shared new stories. The trips home from school during breaks helped me collect content needed to start creating the body of work that would become my thesis.

From "*Chuck and Eric*" I started looking at the video collected from domino

games and found those moments that told a story on their own without further need for explanation. I wanted each image to convey thought and feeling that would draw the viewer into the game. The next image I worked on was "*Watch yourself*". In this print the interactions between these two people could be observed. One could also appreciate that the image was not taken with a quality camera. It retained the grainy pixel quality of the digital video taken by my camera phone. The space was defined and recognizable as a table. From this image I was inspired to capture more moments in video and to translate them into 4-Color Intaglio-Type prints. I started searching through my imagery for interesting angles and placed the camera on the tabletop to shoot video clips from the perspective of the tabletop. Two images really stood out from this point of view. In "*It's my turn*" a large domino in the bottom left



**Do it the way players play... Melissa Pepin, 2009**

hand corner is evident, while one of my models played her move on the right side of the print. Her face was contemplative and focused on the game. The other tabletop perspective print called "*Do it the way players play*" showed three men locked in an intense battle; though the feeling was much



*It's my turn...*, Melissa Pepin, 2009

different. "*Do it the way players play*" had a grainy and darker imagery to accentuate the thought and determination of the characters. In contrast, "*It's my turn*" captured a light and fun feeling, conveyed through bright and vivid colors.

There are only two images in which I appear. As my collection of images continued, the video camera was passed around the table; I became the new subject in the work. I was not expecting to use any images of myself, but in "*Guess what I'm thinking?*" the moment captured was so complete that I was compelled to include it in my thesis. The print was smaller than the rest at 7"x 9", making it more intimate. Using a larger border expanse of wrinkled brown butcher-block paper I created more impact around the print. Only through close examination could you see the small details such as the houseplants and wood grain on the paneling. The other self-portrait was "*Waiting for Gulyas.*" Here, the entire kitchen became visible. I achieved this final image by creating a "white zone" on the brown butcher-block paper. This was a breakthrough. The vibrations from the colors around the white area made the refrigerator and stove look white. The image suggested an extremely



**Guess what I'm thinking???** Melissa Pepin, 2009

happy environment and encouraged the viewer to pull up a chair and join the game.

The other problem I found while printing this series was that I was stuck in a major conflict of interest. My subject matter was extremely personal. There was a constant push and pull of emotions

relating to the subject matter that influenced the technical processes I was utilizing. My main goal was focused upon a singular drive to keep producing imagery.

Color played a major part in *Life Structures*. When first creating this suite of prints, some images were full-color and other images were black and white. Each had qualities distinctive to the image, but the more 4-Color Intaglio-Types I produced, the more the black and white prints lost their impact. The only resolution to this conflict was to go back and remake all of my prints 4-Color Intaglio-Types.



**Waiting for Gulyas...** Melissa Pepin, 2009

Through intense coloration I found *Life Structures* closely related to Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's nightlife posters, created in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The relationship between people interacting and having an enjoyable time was content I strove for in my own work. Like Toulouse-Lautrec's work, *Life Structures* became social commentary on select activities.



Lithograph, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, 1892

Unlike Toulouse-Lautrec, my environment was not self-destructive, but more about gathering and enjoying time spent with friends and family.

Carmen Cartiness Johnson was another figurative artist whose work I admired. She collaborated at the Brodsky Center and produced work called "*The Get Together*" depicting a group of African American people socializing in a living room. You could feel the interaction between the figures and I felt like a fly on the ceiling looking down upon many different discussions. In her artist statement she says, "I create narrative figurative work using bright and bold colors that tell stories of everyday people, largely women facing ordinary life challenges and joys. I rarely paint figures with faces, and would rather let body language and clothing to help address a figure's character."<sup>10</sup> This is what I wanted to achieve in my own work.

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<sup>10</sup> Excerpt from artist statement from [www.carmencja.artspan.com](http://www.carmencja.artspan.com)

Especially in the initial work “Chuck & Eric” where I wanted body language and environment to play a major role in understanding the work.

In 2003 I assisted the Master Printer working with William Kentridge on a suite of lithographs. In his video four years later entitled, “*Untitled*,” you see a woman getting into the bathtub. Kentridge would stop the video at an exact moment. He then captured this moment quickly on an aluminum lithograph plate. He labeled it with a red time stamp at the top right side of the print. Kentridge wanted you to know that the image was derived from a video or some sort of timed action.

I designed my installation to allow the viewer to experience emotions relating to their own home environment, a place where people would eat, live, love, laugh and cry. This home space included a table worn with time and family experiences, a table with dominoes in play, surrounded by the photographs of my family. In a similar way Yinka Shonibare recreated a three-dimensional living space in her installation entitled “*The Victorian Philanthropist’s Parlour*.” In 1996 this installation Fabric was overprinted with images of black football players that suggested the crucial role the game played in “upward social mobility, notably for black Britons, and its role in transcending national borders.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Gill Saunders and Rosie Miles, *Prints Now: Directions and Definitions* (South Kensington: V&A Publications, 2006) p. 43-44, citation<sup>2</sup> p. 139



My work relates to this art in feel and look but more closely in meaning to the artwork entitled *“Secondhand”* by Rachael Whiteread, “white dollhouse furniture compositions that use rapid prototyping stereo lithograph of laser sintered white



“Secondhand” Rachael Whiteread, 2004

nylon is a kind of memorial to the thousands who once lived

the lackluster lives that this furniture so touchingly evokes.”<sup>12</sup> The installation

*“Secondhand”* inspires images solely through a visual

experience. On the other hand my

installation invites people to not only visually experience it but also to touch, hear, and participate in the game of dominoes, reliving the experience that my family has at this table.

“In Canada’s Northern Territories, where printmaking was introduced in the 1950’s and continues today, other cultures have been encouraged to record their myths and characteristic



Photograph, In *Victorian Philanthropist’s Parlour* Yinka Shonibare, 1996

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<sup>12</sup> Gill Saunders and Rosie Miles, *Prints Now: Directions and Definitions* (South Kensington: V&A Publications, 2006) p. 52

imagery to printed form.”<sup>13</sup>

Similarly I have recorded the personal myths and stories of my life in this installation.

Long before I started printing *Life Structures* my mind was set on making a large scale print, that would cascade down the gallery



Photograph of Life Structures Installation Space  
Melissa Pepin 2009

wall and land on top of a kitchen table. When it came time to organize our allocated space in the Bevier Gallery, there was no gallery space where this idea could be realized. I was assigned a space that was a long horizontal wall with no architectural

significant to what I was trying to convey in my installation. My prints were going to get lost in a vast open space with no definition of walls or personality. I wanted to recreate a domestic living space. I was able to exchange exhibit space with a

classmate and use her three-walled space to make my installation. The

semi-enclosed space allowed me to have room for not only my prints but also for a



Aerial Photograph of Life Structures Installation  
Margaret Bodo, 2009

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<sup>13</sup> Gill Saunders and Rosie Miles, *Prints Now: Directions and Definitions* (South Kensington: V&A Publications, 2006) p. 67-69

kitchen table set with a domino game as part of my installation. The downside to this installation space was that the three walls could not be enclosed, due to fire safety codes. This created a disjointed feeling within the space. The next issue with this installation space was that I had to install work on both the interior and exterior walls, creating distance



**"fuego" Melissa Pepin, 2009**

between prints. These concerns encouraged me to be very selective about the hanging sequence of my prints. I hung the three panoramic prints along the back wall of the space. Next I arranged the fifteen, 4-Color Intaglio-Types prints by direction, orientation of play and characters in the print. I took much care and



**Choo, Choo... get open, Melissa Pepin, 2009**

consideration in composing the layout. When looking into the installation, the right wall displayed prints entitled *"Home"*, *"Get on the Mexi train"* and *"Don't hate"*. The left wall was hung



**Nono are you smoking in my house?**  
Melissa Pepin, 2009

with *“Canasty,”* *Watch yourself* and *“Nono are you smoking in my house?”* The kitchen table was centered between the two walls of prints. A domino game, beverage bottles and audio speakers mounted beneath the table were then installed. On the opposite side of the right wall was *“Fuego,”* *“Choo, Choo Get*

*Open,”* and *“Waiting for Gulya”*. On the left wall was *“Guess what I’m thinking?”*, *“Do it the way players play”* and *“It’s my turn”*. Gallery visitors had to walk around the walls to view these prints and in doing so the context of the prints was altered. The prints had to compete with other student artwork surrounding my installations.

The major success of this exhibit was that my installation space was staged exactly as I had planned. The night of my opening, I had some of my performers<sup>14</sup> come and play



**Get on the Mexi train...** Melissa Pepin, 2009

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<sup>14</sup> Katherine Puksas, Maria Peterson, Andrew Casano and Matthew Peterson

dominoes, drink and recreate what happens in my kitchen on any given night. They invited other people to come and sit and play with them, bringing the installation to life. People were jumping in and out of the domino game. Others congregated around the table, sharing stories and having a good time; participants'



Canasty, Melissa Pepin, 2009

added new props such as beer bottles onto the table as they came and went, leaving behind other signs of social activity.

The installation was an important part of my exhibition because it brought greater clarity to the work by giving it deep-rooted meaning. With the addition of props, sound and people I gained an understanding of what exactly it was to be included in my world. As visitors entered my installation they received a full sensory experience, touch, sight and sound. The sounds were looped, ranging from sound clips of talking, to the shuffling of dominoes on the tabletop, and other varied household sounds.

## Conclusion

In the future I would like to continue working with installations; I see the creative possibilities as endless. Besides continuing to explore installation I would like to find a venue to show new work. I will achieve this goal by entering local, national and international juried exhibitions.

While perusing these new endeavors I will continue to make prints. My thesis work gave me opportunity to ponder the subject of kitchen environments. I would like to interview individuals about the one thing in their kitchen that they use most frequently while being unaware of how much they use it. Through future stories and imagery I intend to produce a series of prints based on this investigation.

Besides making prints and installation work I would like to teach in higher education and share what I have learned from RIT and Keith Howard. In this way, I hope to have the opportunity to influence young printmakers based upon the new knowledge and experience I have gained at RIT. Without academic mentoring I would not have been able to create *Life Structures*.

David Jay Reed's work focused on his travels and like my work, "Reed's art, executed in a realistic manner, depicted stories of his travels and of the people who have been important in his life."<sup>15</sup> I felt a kinship to Reed not only as someone who attended RIT but also who used his life experience as inspiration for his artwork. Much like Reed, my artwork captured a moment in time and intentionally pulled the viewer into the imagery.

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<sup>15</sup> Excerpt from article at <http://www.waterbasedinks.com/archives/179>

Martha Rosler and Joan Jonas were artists I carefully observed, gaining inspiration from their performance art. I began making videos of my friends and family. As director I made the decision as to when and where we would play dominoes and when the timing was perfect to record. Unlike Rosler and Jonas' work, my videos were free, unscripted, and a means to an end. My videos were not meant to be the final artwork but a means of getting to the printing process, and ultimately to the thesis narrative *Life Structures*.

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Images:

Page 7: *"Home,"* 2009: image size: 16"x20" paper size: 22"x24"

Page 10: *VE#1 detail,* 2006: image size: 48"x60"

Page 12: *Wood Paneling #1,* 2008: image size: 24"x36" paper size: 31.5"x47"

Page 15: *"33,"* 2009: image size: 10"x40" paper size: 18"x48"

*The one with the homeless kid...* 2009: image size: 10"x40" paper size: 18"x48"

Page 16: *From the glass lined tanks of Old Latrobe...* 2009: image size: 10"x40"  
paper size: 18"x48"

Page 17: *Semiotics of the Kitchen,* Digital Still, Martha Rosler, 1975

Page 18: *"Chuck and Eric"* 2008: image size: 16"x20" paper size: 22"x24"

Page 20: *Watch yourself...* 2008: image size: 16"x20" paper size: 22"x24"

*Do it the way players play...* 2009: image size: 16"x20" paper size: 22"x24"

Page 21: *It's my turn...* 2009: image size: 16"x20" paper size: 22"x24"

*Waiting for Gulyas...* 2009: image size: 16"x20" paper size: 22"x24"

Page 22: *Guess what I'm thinking?* 2009: image size: 16"x20" paper size: 22"x24"

Page 23: *Reine de Joie par Victor Joze,* Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, 1892  
Lithograph in four colors. Image size: 58 5/8 x 38 3/8 inches. Printed across two  
sheets of paper.

Page 24: *"The Victorian Philanthropist's Parlour."* Yinka Shonibare, 1996

Page 25: *Secondhand,* 4.5 x 4 x 16.6 inches, Rachael Whiteread, 2004

Page 26: Photograph of *Life Structures* Installation Space 2009: by M. Pepin

Aerial Photograph of *Life Structures* Installation Space 2009: by Margaret Bodo

Page 27: *"Fuego"* 2009: image size: 16"x20" paper size: 22"x24"

*Choo, choo... get open.* 2009: image size: 8"x10" paper size: 22"x24"

Page 28: *Get on the Mexi train...* 2009: image size: 8"x10" paper size: 22"x24"

*Nono are you smoking in my house?* 2009: image size: 16"x20" paper size: 22"x24"

Page 29: *"Canasty"* 2009: image size: 16"x20" paper size: 22"x24"