THESIS

TRANSFORMATION BY THE MARK

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

TRANSFORMATION BY THE MARK

The earliest elements of art have been the mark making found in painting and drawing. From the cave paintings created in France 40,000 years ago to the modern day, the use of line and mark making in the rendering of an object is still of importance. Technology will always play a role in society, which in turn carries over into it's art. Modern artists have found methods to incorporate technology influence in their work and process. Artists must not forget the importance of line. In my thesis work the importance of line and mark making is a key element in my work. Using industrial made objects and environments, I explored the relationship between the handmade marks of an artist and industrially created objects. As modern technology has had a great effect upon the production of industrial objects, it has dehumanized the worker. In contrast, the lines and marks that an artist creates reflect the human aspect of art and life.

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The blue-collar element of Printmaking is what I find interesting. The most obvious example of this is that we use a mechanical press that has been specifically designed for the process of printmaking. The physicality of the printmaking process has had a profound effect on me. The relationship of the press equipment to the artist is similar to that of the machine to the worker in an industrial environment. I will address this similarity more fully in the following paper. I see in printmaking a medium that allows me to combine my love of drawing with an industrial environment that reminds me of my background.

My passion for the simplicity of line and mark making was influenced at an early age by works I saw in history books. Works such as Winslow Homer's 1863 chalk drawing entitled *Cavalry Soldier (figure 1)* is an example of a Civil War era drawing that fascinated me. Homer's gestural use of simple lines to express weight, movement, and a specific moment in time became very personal to me. After my first deployment to Iraq in 2003, I was introduced to the artist Otto Dix. The same elements in Homer's work that I found interesting were also in the work of Dix. There is the same sense of urgency to capture the essence of a moment by mark making that can be seen in Dix's 1924 etching entitled *Bombing of Lens* From THE WAR *(figure 2).* An additional artist that I have drawn inspiration from is Giovanni Battista Piranesi. *The Round Tower, Plate III*, from the series "Carceri" *(figure 3)* is an exaggerated rendering of the interior view of an imaginary prison that I find very compelling. Additionally, it mimics the approach children take in creating mechanical objects. For example, when a little boy creates a drawing of a robot he will add missile pads, rockets, and other elaborate items to the

drawing. That was the approach I took when creating the images of the rail gun. This image of the prison created by Piranesi gives the central idea of what a prison could look like at that time, but because of the dream-like imagery used it is impossible to identify a specific prison. Moreover it can be interpreted as a kind mechanical industrial space. Similar to Piranesi's approach to the prison, the images I created of the rail gun could be any rail gun. I rendered the image in an exaggerated form to remove the specificity of it.

My early work has always appeared to have an industrial aspect to it. The work I completed during my second year in the graduate program led to my thesis work dealing with the deconstruction of a single industrial object. During this period I used a limited color pallet and explored the non-traditional uses of the materials. I will discuss the works entitled "Washington Gun Construction #1" *(figure 4)* and "Washington Gun Construction # 2" *(Figure5)*. Both of the works were drawn from direct observation of an artillery piece from WWI located in Fort Collins, Colorado. In the work entitled "Washington Gun Construction #1", the yellow marks were made on a lithograph stone that I intentionally did not completely grind to a fine surface. I wanted to explore what textures the stone itself could create. The rough texture of the marks was a result of the grinding process. My intention was to render the first drawing in a manner similar to the conceptual drawings that an engineer would create for a product. For the second layer of color, the stone was ground down to a fine finish in order to produce a smooth line. I selected specific structural elements within the object to emphasize with the darker second layer. These works were my first exploration into how an industrial object could be visually deconstructed.

My intention was to give limited information to the viewer as to what the object really was. The viewer would become an active participant in defining the object and its potential purpose. In the second work, entitled “Washington Gun Construction # 2”, I introduced a Chine-Colle element to the print. Chine-Colle is a French term for a technique in which the artist prints an image on a lightweight material, such as Japanese paper, then cuts it out and pastes it onto a heavier stock paper. In another Chine-Colle approach, the thin paper shape may be glued to the print-support paper before printing. Traditionally, there are two purposes for incorporating the Chine-Colle method. First, it allows the artist to change the color of the background on which the image are printed. Secondly, using the delicate surface of Japanese paper allows more of the finer details to be printed. I began by creating a black and white drawing of the same object and printing it on lightweight drawing paper which I proceeded to rip apart. The ripped pieces were then glued to a sheet of heavier stock paper.

The images on the rough and fine-ground stone were printed on top of pieces of ripped paper. I rearranged the pieces so they would not match the gestural drawings. The individual pieces of ripped paper became separate physical parts of the print. An engineer initially uses a conceptual drawing to develop an object. The drawings are then turned over to a machinist who physically fabricates the part. The ripped pieces of paper are intended to refer to the machined parts that would be assembled in the creation of an industrial object. The visual elements that I explored with these early prints, that would later reappear in my thesis work, were the gestural use of line and the use of line to deconstruct an industrial object to reflect the artist’s hand.

Initially, my later work began as three independent investigations of mark making. Upon formal analysis of the differences and similarities within the three individual series, the unifying element of the breaking down of an object by using gestural and expressive mark making became clear. It spoke to the larger idea of the importance of the individual artist's hand in the act of mark making. Therefore, I decided to specifically structure my thesis work around the similar elements of the three individual series.

The collective series reflects a breaking down of more traditional academic representational renderings of industrial landscapes to an abstracted representation of an individual object that expresses more of an intuitive approach to mark making. The intention of constructing my thesis work in this model is to have a recognizable object altered to a point that the object becomes secondary to how it is rendered. By reducing the importance of the object as an object itself, it allows the craftsmanship/artistry of the drawing marks to become the focus. When the marks become the focus, the typical approach a viewer takes, in wanting to define the image they are looking at, is taken away and the viewer is left with the marks as the primary element of engagement.

Lithography is the printmaking process I decided to use for my work. The physical action it requires to create a lithograph mirrors the physical relationship of a worker and a machine. The physical action involved in the lithography printing process begins with the artist centering the stone on the metal press bed and adjusting the pressure-required to print the stone. This action can be seen in the way that the worker adjusts their machine. The artist then turns to the printing ink on a stone slab in the methodical system of pulling a proof. The worker mimics this action by turning to his

workbench to retrieve certain tools. The artist and worker perform the continuous physical movement of going to a machine and then back to a work area similarly. The physical connection between the printmaker and the industrial worker is why I have selected industrial imagery. Furthermore, both the printmaker and worker have to use a specific process in the creation of an object. There is a specific process a printmaker has to follow in order to find the proper etch mixture for a given lithographic drawing; as with workers in an auto plant, the car had to be built according to a specific process.

I have selected the names for the individual works within my thesis to be structured as if they are sub-sections of a larger object. Additionally, the general systematic labeling contradicts the individually rendered drawings. All the works in the first series entitled "The Zone Series" *(figure 6)* begin with the title zone A, B, or C, which refer to the zoning of districts within a city. In Peoria Illinois all industrial facilities were located on the riverfront or by interstates. This allowed raw materials and finished products to be easily transported on the river or the interstate. This logical and functional approach can be viewed, as the "City" is a constructed functioning machine. The zoning letter is followed by a single word, such as steel. All manufactured products need raw material. The simple name of a raw material, such as steel or coal is to reinforce what a certain zone produces thereby generating unique industrial names. The viewer sees a rendering of an industrial structure, but is not given enough information as to what is the structures purpose. The raw material titles assist the viewer in giving purpose to the image. The different individual prints become an inter-connected landscape.

A classification system that is intended to refer to schematic and blue print drawings was selected for both the second series entitled "The Section Series" *(figure 7)*

while the third series was entitled "The View Series" *(figure 8)*. For example, the "The Section Series" begins with the classification of section A through C while "The View Series" begins with the classification of view A through C. Besides a general classification, the full titles of the second series also include specific terms that assist the viewer in indentifying the specific function of each individual part in relationship to the whole. For example, the middle plate entitled "Section B-Breech and Detonator" *(figure 9)* of "The Section Series" triptych depicts a gestural rendering of the gun itself, while the title refers to the mechanical devices of the breech and detonator of the gun.

An article by Charles Fishman entitled "The Insourcing Boom" provided me with terms that I used in the titles for the third series entitled "The View Series".
The article argues that some companies, such as General Electric have found that it is better to produce appliances in the United States due to the lower cost. Fishman states that "Oil prices are three times what they were in 2000, making cargo-ship fuel much more expensive now then it was"[1]. I selected certain terms in the article, for example the term "Time to Market" which refers to how long it takes a manufacturer to get a complete product to a given market. The viewer is presented with a contradiction of the gestural marks vs. the specific economical term. The gestural marks refer to the individuality of the artist mark, while the economical terms refer to the dehumanizing effect of modern manufacturing ideas. In a time of economical hardship the worker might be forgotten in the search for profits.

A grouping of eight small 5 x 7 images make up the "The Zone Series" *(figure 8)* that depicts an industrial landscape which is inspired by memories of my hometown.

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[1] Charles Fishmen, "The Insourcing Boom", *The Atlantic* (December 2012)

Some of the structural elements of the building are true to the real building but I constructed additional imaginary elements. The objects within the picture plane are rendered in a straightforward manner and allow the viewer to see them as industrial structures. However, specific information was not included. Instead, additional imagery was added to make it more difficult to identify the actual function of the given industrial structures. The process I used in creating this series was to use a standard lithograph #3 crayon. All the images in this smaller series use the same material and were etched the same way giving it a uniform appearance.

"The Section Series" is made up of images that form a triptych and moves away from the wider industrial landscape to focus on a specific individual object. Secondly, it reflects a personal connection to my father and my background. For 35 years my father was a factory worker at Caterpillar where he created parts for tractors. Those parts were the same parts Caterpillar created for tanks during WWII. I grew up seeing the parts my father created not only as objects created to provide for a family but also as objects that had multiple uses. An object that is not commonly recognizable allows me to alter the object in such a way that it can take on an element of make believe. Additionally, a viewer cannot easily establish specifically what an object is, can explore what it could be. The viewer's exploration is assisted by the variety of marks made.

I drew the railroad gun over three aluminum lithography plates to emphasize the scale. The given object in this series is a World War II railroad gun. The selection of this object is two-fold. First, it is an object that is not commonly known or recognized. Rail guns were initially developed as siege weaponry against fortified targets during the American Civil War. During WWI the rail guns were placed on flat bed rail cars. By the

time WWII began, the use of rail guns was contrary to their intended use. Rail guns were intended to be mobile weaponry and were no longer mobile because their use required three complex rail cars. The use of the rail gun in the triptych is done to reflect the changing use of this weaponry and its ultimate obsolescence as a whole object. The Caterpillar Tractor Company that my father worked and retired from not only produced tractors but they produced tanks and other military hardware. The dual purpose of a manufacturing plant to produce military and civilian objects is something I remember from my background. It was common to hear students during my middle school, 1975 to 1978 experiences talking about how if there were a military conflict, between the United States and Russia, which our local Caterpillar plant would be on a list of Russian missile targets.

I specifically selected the triptych format because the gun was constructed with three basic elements. For example, the K-5 Leopold Gun *(figure 10)*, which is the source of the section A, B, and C triptych had a single platform for the gun itself and two individual supporting rail car sections. The initial step of the process was to research railroad guns and to find specific reference images of the K-5 Leopold Gun.

Once I selected the reference materials, I created a rough drawing of a gun. I then selected the strongest elements of the object and drew on aluminum lithograph plates imagery based on these considerations. I intentionally exaggerated perceptive and proportional elements to further dissolve and reconstruct the object. As with the smaller industrial landscape prints, I added some imagery that was not historically correct to the actual K-5 railroad gun, which reflects back to the influence of Piranesi, the exaggerated prison interior and the use of exaggeration to remove the specificity of the object.

"The View Series" within my thesis work consists of three works of another individualized object. Unlike the triptych of the Leopold rail gun, the object in these works is rendered three different times and in three different ways. The object of this series is a full-scale reproduction of a WWI British fighter plane, an S.E.5A *(figure 11)*. The image is a close-up view of the right side engine. Unlike the images inspired by the K-5 Leopold Gun, the initial investigation was accomplished through direct observations. The vintage Aero Flying Museum that built and flies the S.E.5A is located near Hubson, Colorado.

I began the process by creating drawings from direct observations of the aircraft. Each of the images explores a different structural element of the larger image. For example, in the work "View C- Time to Market*"(figure 12)* I emphasized the structural elements of the upper wing assembly of aircraft while I disregarded the lower section, but in the work entitled "View B – Manufacturability" *(figure 13)* I focused on the lower left section of the lower wing assembly. The intentional abstraction of the object causes the viewer to explore the mark making without the need to identify the object. The openness of the drawing allows the line to extend past the edge of the image area. The white of the paper becomes activated by the simplicity of the drawing as an environment in which the lines and marks imply an object.

As an artist, one must be aware of the role technology plays in contemporary art, but one must not get lost in the available technology and lose sight of the artist's hand in creating the work. What I have explored in my thesis work is the importance of mark making by the hand of the artist and how that can be used to express ideas and

contradictions between the standardized industrial approach to mass production and the worker/artist's hand in creating fine art.

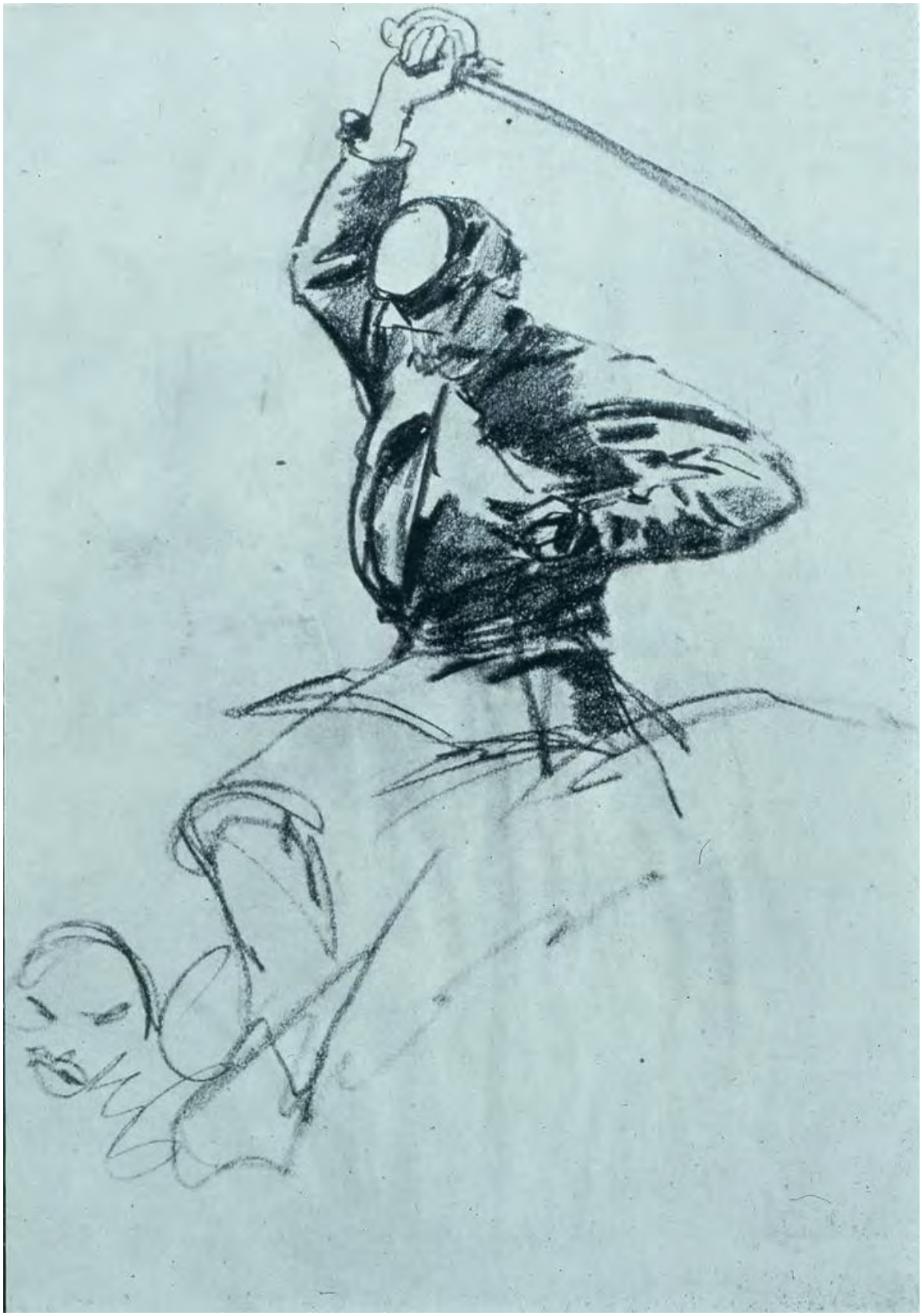


Figure 1- **Winslow Homer**, *"Cavalry Soldier",* 1863. Chalk, 14 ¼ in. x 7 15/16 in.

Figure 2- **Otto Dix**, *Bombing of Lens from THE WAR, 1924*, etching, aquatint, drypoint, 11 ¾ in. x 9 5/8 in.

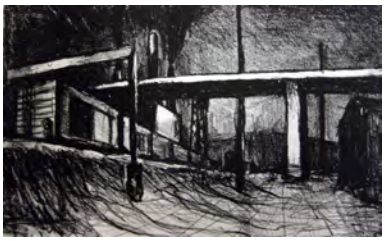
Figure 3- **Giovanni Battista Piranesi**, *The Round Tower, plate III, from the series Carceri*, 1749. Etching and engraving, 54.5 cm x 41.4 cm

Figure 4 - **Scott Lenaway**, *Washington Gun Construction #1*, 2012, Stone lithograph, 20 in. x 16 in.

Figure 5 - **Scott Lenaway**, *Washington Gun Construction #2*, 2012, Stone lithograph, 20 in. x 16 in.

Zone A - Communication
5 in. x 7 in.

Zone B - Warehouse
7 in. x 5 in.



Zone C- Yard
5 in. x 7 in.

Zone D - Transportation
7 in. x 5 in.

Zone E - Steel
5 in. x 7 in.

Zone F- Coal
7 in. x 5 in.

Zone G - Docks
5 in. x 7 in.

Zone H- Shift
7 in. x 5 in.

Figure 6- **Scott Lenaway** *"The Zone Series",* 2013, Stone Lithograph,

Section A
Traverse Wheels
2013
32 in. x 22 in.

Section B
Breech with Detonator
2013
32 in. x 22 in.

Section C
Mortar Cartridge
2013
32 in. x 22 in.

Figure 7 – **Scott Lenaway**, *"The Section Series" (Railroad Triptych)*, Aluminum Lithograph plate

View A
Offshore Production
2013
31 in. x 26 in.

View B
Manufacturability
2013
31 in. x 26 in.

View C
Time to Market
2013
31 in. x 26 in.

Figure 8- **Scott Lenaway**, *"The View Series"*, Stone Lithograph

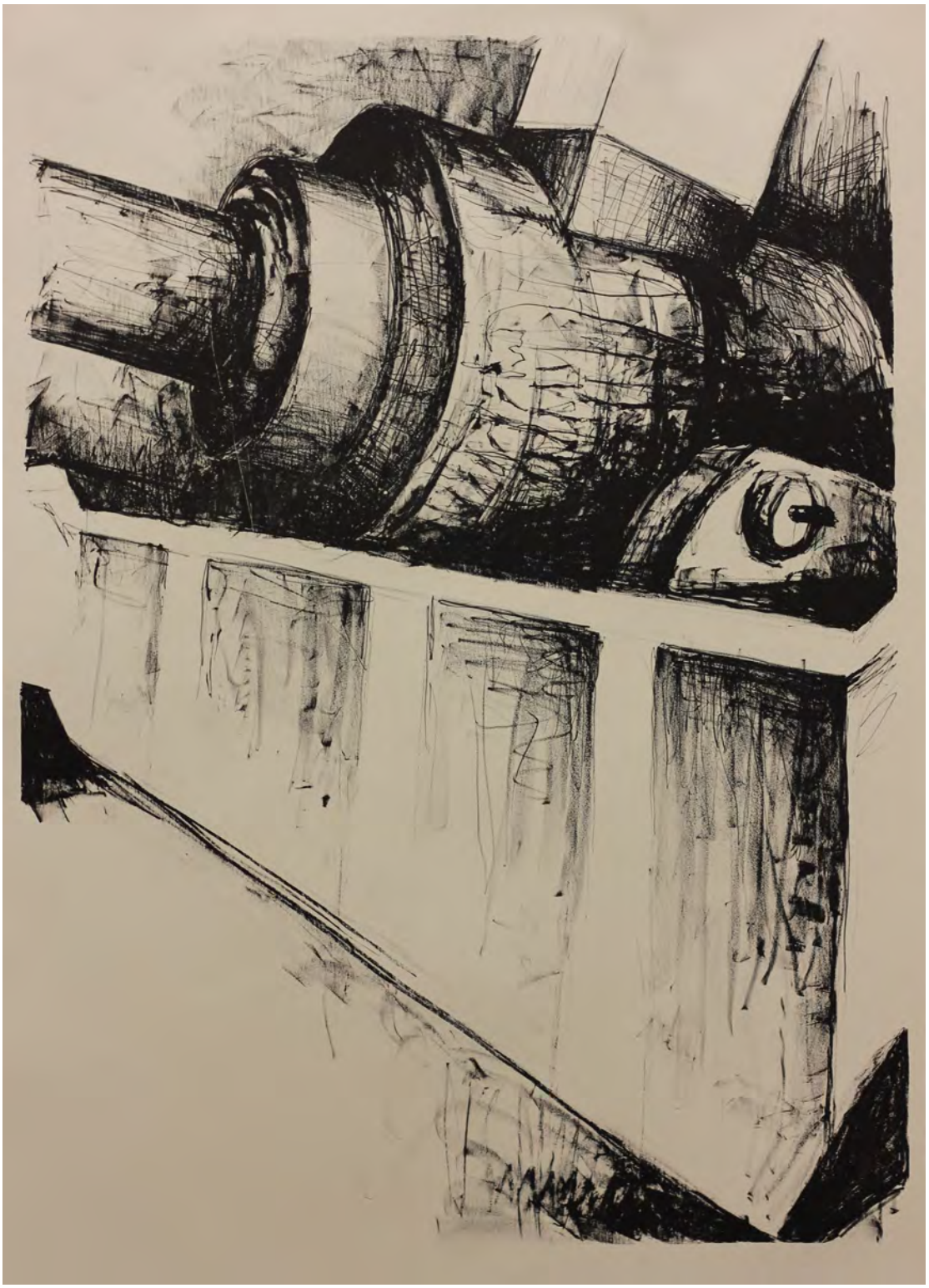


Figure 9- **Scott Lenaway**, *Section B-Breech with Detonator*, 2013, Aluminum Lithograph plate, 32 in. x 22 in.

Figure 10- K-5 Leopold Gun

Figure 11- S.E.5A, World War I British fighter

Figure 12- **Scott Lenaway**, *"View C- Time To Market",* 2013, Stone Lithograph, 31 in. x 26 in.

Figure 13- **Scott Lenaway**, *"View B- Manufacturability",* 2013, Stone Lithograph, 31 in. x 26 in.

Figure 14- **Scott Lenaway**, *Thor*, 2013, Stone lithograph, 18 in. x 14 in.

Figure 15- **Scott Lenaway**, *Loader*, 2013, Stone lithograph, 18 in. x 14 in.

Bibliography

Fishman, Charles. “The Insourcing Boom” The Atlantic (December 2012):