

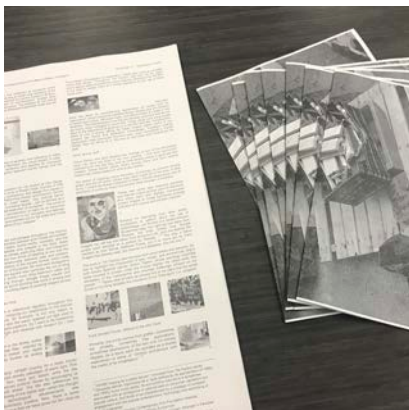


INTRODUCTION

The concept for this collection of monotype prints came to fruition during a month-long residency at the Can Serrat International Art Centre, which sits adjacent to the Montserrat Mountain range and the Baldosas Vallès tile factory. After sifting through piles and stacks of squares, and reflecting on walks through major cities in Spain and Germany, the visual impact of walls, tiles, tags and graffiti surpassed profound, and become an immersive demonstration of the deep connection between human beings and the built environment. The prints in *Tile Factory* contemplate the consideration of walls as an extension of self—as having an intimate connection to our thoughts and feelings. Further, that the words scribbled and planned out on the sides and fronts and backs of buildings are suggestive of our zeitgeist.

PROCESS

I received my BFA in Printmaking from Massachusetts College of Art and Design in 2016. During my time at MassArt, I specialized in screenprinting and intaglio. One of the main reasons I chose to attend Can Serrat was for their condensed printmaking facilities. I was excited to see how my work would evolve given the limitations of no dark room or acid bath. I used this time to explore monotype—an incredibly versatile printmaking process where you apply ink to a substrate (plastic, glass, metal) and then transfer that ink to a piece of paper by running it through a press or by applying pressure in selected areas. I used these techniques to build up texture on each sheet of paper until I felt it resembled the surface of a wall, scarred and marred by human intervention. The massive studio space at Can Serrat allowed me to work on all 100 sheets of Rives BFK simultaneously, which brought cohesion to the entire body of work.



ESSAY

Below is an excerpt from the essay I wrote about this print series. It was printed on the back of an image I took at Baldosas Vallès in July 2017 and disseminated at the opening reception of *Tile Factory*, a solo exhibition at The Beans Gallery in Chicago, Illinois:

The depiction of real and imagined wall phrases throughout *Tile Factory* acknowledge the continued relationship between print media and protest, while commenting on the digital realm, social media, nostalgia, and the art world today. Although sometimes only present in the titles, these messages stand in place of glaze names, paint chip titles, and Instagram captions. Conflating these old and new forms of labeling is one way the work confronts

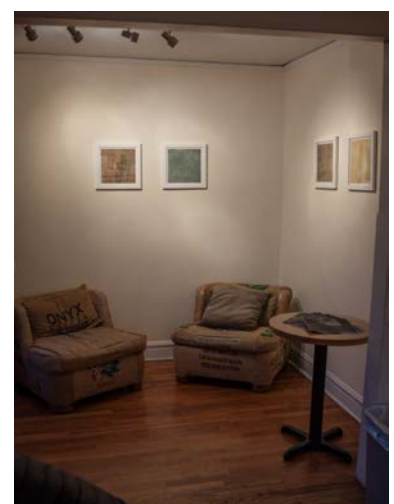
the reciprocal relationship between past and present. Another example is in the exploitation of the square format, which nods to both the long-standing tradition of European tile work and Instagram's debut aspect ratio. The use of the square also connotes the act of tiling in both the digital and physical world—from tiling bathroom walls and kitchen backsplashes to scrolling through Google Image results and Instagram profile pages. Even the act of *scrolling* has roots in analog and digital realms—from rolling and unrolling paper to pushing images across an illuminated glass screen.

The phenomenon of Instagram is referenced regularly throughout this series. Some prints have titles critiquing our relationship to this popular social media platform. *Valencia*, for example, is not only meant to reference the Spanish city, but also the warm, washed out light used to overlay any photo in the Instagram platform.

This critique of Instagram, an application I utilize daily, hints at a broader trend—bad design. Throughout *Tile Factory*, text runs off the page, colors appear dated and airbrush-esque textures reminisce with the 90's. In the field of design, there is a strong opposition to the use of these visual cues. That said, there has been an overwhelming appreciation for trends such as Vaporwave, which embraced outdated design choices (like the inclusion of faded neon colors, Microsoft logos, and statue busts) to create a *new* aesthetic. This demonstrates how the line between good and bad art can get blurry when nostalgia is concerned. These visual cues bring people back to the experience of growing up in the 80s and 90s. Consequently, there is now a strong affinity for these original digital marks in our present day trends and aesthetics. Interestingly, nostalgia—looking backwards—was previously frowned upon, even considered a mental illness. Now we thrive on it. We love to look back and romanticize the past.

EXHIBITION

My solo exhibition at The Beans Gallery ran from November 11th to December 3rd 2018 and was featured in the Top 5 Weekend Picks on Bad At Sports, a weekly podcast about contemporary art.



This project was made possible by the 2016 Genevieve McMillan – Reba Stewart Traveling Fellowship from Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston, Massachusetts and the Can Serrat International Art Centre in El Bruc, Catalonia.

SELECTED WORKS

Each monotype measures 11.5 x 11.5 inches. To view the rest of the collection, visit: victoriamariebarquin.com.



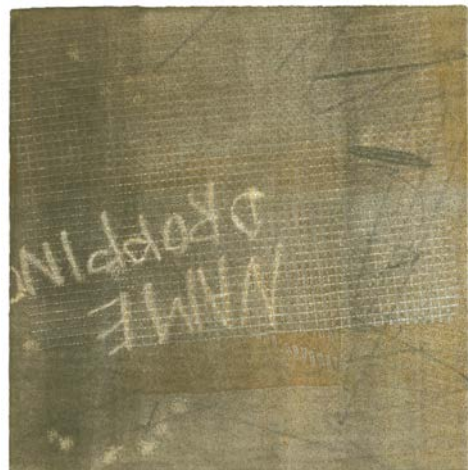
Trencadís



Bad Design I



BUFF II



Name Dropping



MIRÓ



Fast Food