

PLANNING INFORMATION ONLY

RATIONALE

I can't say at this time how studying Picasso's prints (with an emphasis on his portraits will affect me). I am sure I will learn a lot and I hope it will enable me to loosen up and become more inventive. I am sure it will be important and reliable because he is such a pivotal and influential figure in modern art. I have obtained a number of books and exhibition catalogues which will help me.

My feeling at this stage is that I need

an overview of his life and context

an understanding of the times when he chose print over paint

to dissect some of his print portraits and to try and copy their effect – especially the emotion they attract.

2000 words is not a lot, and there is a huge amount to study so I will need to be quite focused. I can see a danger of filling up the words without going very deep.

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Synopsis

QUESTION: How has Picasso affected the development of Linocuts and how can this be extended to other mediums?

BIOGRAPHY (250 words)

Timeline of Life Events and Place;

Timeline of work/phases/periods;

Influences/ Place in Art Development/ Influence on others

HISTORY OF THE LINO CUT (250 words)

Picasso's explorative approach

Own exploration of the Linocut

Own exploration of another ~~two other~~ medium - *woodcuts*

PICTURE ANALYSIS (~~250~~ 500 words each i.e. 1000 words)

~~Picasso Bullfight linocuts~~

~~Picasso Mythology linocuts – link with Assignment 3 chiaroscuro~~

Picasso Portraits of Women linocuts – link with Assignment 4 Portraits

~~Picasso Late works/still life linocuts – link with Assignment 2 Abstracts- change to Assignment 5 memory~~

Update April 2015 : I am still concerned about being too broad and missing out on depth. I have decided to cut this work in half and focus on portraits and still life. After much more background reading and study into Picasso's life and work, these are the two areas that excite and interest me; more so than Bullfights and Mythology.

For each subject:

1. Overview of work
2. Select one Picasso linocut and analyse LINE, COLOUR & LAYERS
3. Locate suitable pieces and Compare Picasso with similar work by other artists
4. Produce my own interpretation of the Genre in Lino cut and another medium

SUMMARY of results and answers to the QUESTION: How has Picasso affected the development of Linocuts and how can this be extended to other mediums? (400 words)

EVALUATION: How effectively has my chosen study answered the question. (100 words)

Word counts are approximate and will be quickly used. A lot of the work will need to be done in visual form and reflections made in blog rather than final report.

OCA Printmaking 2
Parallel Project

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Picasso the Challenger, Challenging me!

How did Picasso affect the development of Linocuts?

Can his influence be extended to other Printmaking mediums?

Picasso the Challenger, Challenging me

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Picasso Biography and Timeline

History of the Linocut and Picasso's approach

My own experiments with materials – Lino, Japanese Woodblocks, Alginate

Picasso Linocuts Portraits – Picture study – (with Assignment 4)

Picasso Linocuts Still Life – Picture Study - (with Assignment 5)

Summary and Evaluation

Bibliography

BIOGRAPHY (250 words)

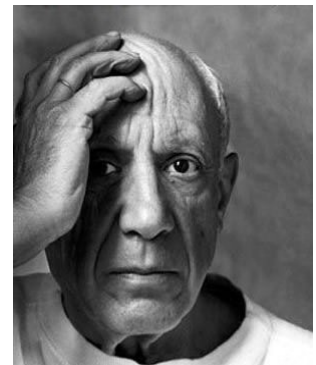
(Timeline of Life Events and Place; Timeline of work/phases/periods; Influences/ Place in Art Development/ Influence on others)



"When I was a child my mother said to me 'If you become a soldier, you'll be a General. If you become a monk, you'll end up as the Pope'

Instead I became a Painter, and wound up as

Picasso



To explore Picasso the man, I have researched on line, read about him, watched TV and listened to Radio programmes, keeping notes. I have used Chronologies of his life in Picasso :Challenging the Past (1) and Picasso: Life and work of the artist (2) and studied his place in Art History using Gombrich's Story of Art (3). The Radio Programme was a weeks worth of daily readings about life in Montmartre (4) and gave a vivid picture of Picasso's life and friendships during his early development and during his Blue Period at the beginning of the 20th century, when he was still in his early 20's. Also very enlightening was a BBC Documentary Picasso: Love, Sex and Art (5) which related his relationships to his different art periods and demonstrated how his art style changed and advanced with each loss or love affair. There were interviews with his children (the now adult Paul, Maya, Claude and Paloma) and his surviving mistress - Françoise Gilot. There were film clips of Picasso and of his wives, friends and interviews with his Biographers. I have also repeatedly used a small book Picasso In his Words (6) which has been revealing about Picasso's attitude to life and work. All this has been reinforced by reading and note-taking chapters in Je Suis le Cahier (7) which has verified the story and allowed me to look at his artistic journey alongside his social one.

The man who has emerged from this is a determined, focused artist with a passionate and irrepressible nature. It would be easy to call him a megalomaniac since many women fell

prey to his charms and were later discarded in favour of the next muse (only one survived him, two committed suicide after his death) but the title would be misused because his greatness and genius were fact, not a personal delusion. He was just totally absorbed in working, looking, experimenting and discovering. His personal emphasis was not on searching but on “finding” and he was relentless. Picasso was almost born, and certainly died, with a pencil in his hand - art was his life long, hungry passion.

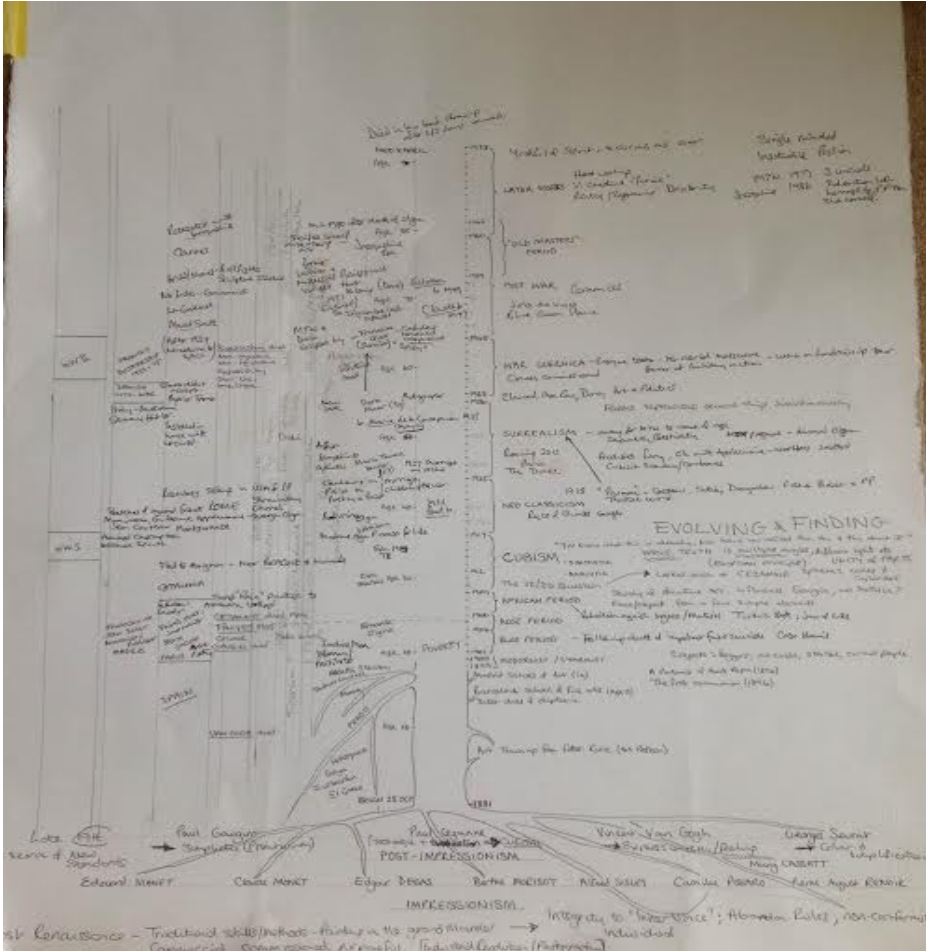
Methods, Materials and subjects were there to be stretched to their previously undiscovered limits. I have been impressed at the quantity of work he produced - sketches and paintings in their tens and hundreds e.g. In his reworking of Monet’s “Luncheon on the Grass”, Picasso produced 27 canvases and over a 100 drawings by way of study and preparation. (Challenging the Past page 109 (1)). This was during Picasso’s Old Master Period 1954-62 - a stage usually conducted early on but for Picasso it was something he did not get round to until his early 70’s. So he was an independent and original investigator - well placed in history to follow on the Impressionists - Manet, Monet, Degas, Morisot, Sisley, Pissaro, Renoir and the Post Impressionist work of Gauguin, Cezanne and Van Gogh.

Picasso fully used his place in Art History to continue the quest. His mantra was “If you know what you are going to do, what’s the good of doing it? There’s no interest in something you know already. Its much better to do something else.” in doing so he earned the respect and admiration of many and became a pivotal character in the development of art alongside theatre, poetry, love and friendship and large life.

Therein lies the attraction for me. A character who is my complete opposite - able to be selfish in pursuit of his art - single minded letting nothing and no-one stand in his way. Impossible !! I am not made like that, and yet I understand the desire to search and uncover, to be creative and original and let what is inside of me out. My brother, recently graduated with an MA in Fine Art , along with a shattered life, an attendant string of mental health problems, divorces and children who he does not see. My mother, now in a home with dementia, but a classically trained superb water colourist, who can turn her hand to oils and pastels easily and excels in landscapes and portraits. And now me... I’ve brought up my family, built my home , cared for parents, am living in and working out an unsatisfying relationship. Where will Picasso take ME? What can I learn from this man about technique and above all, his attitude? The biggest challenge he puts before me is how far to be single minded in art, work and relationships.



Picasso Timeline



I took notes as I studied, but also amalgamated ideas onto this timeline showing life events, women, location, activities, art periods, influences, contemporaries in several cultural fields, and world events.



Extract from Will Gompertz' map "What are you Looking at? Showing how Cubism influenced other art movements that followed. (Bauhaus/Modernism is missing from the top of the picture, but the links are traceable there too.) I believe Picasso's influence has extended beyond perhaps his most famous period though. His Cubist period took place only over the six years up to and during WW1. Surrealism which followed in the period between the wars, and Neo Classicism have continued to influence other artists.

HISTORY OF THE LINO CUT

The Relief Printing technique for most of its history has been based on Wood. With the development of new materials during the late industrial revolution and into the 20th Century linoleum (sheet flooring made of oxidised linseed oil and ground cork) became available. It was invented by Frederic Walton in England in 1860 and Matisse and Picasso are among the artists who exploited its qualities. It is easy to cut, cheap, can be any size, and is printed by press or by hand, using oil or water based ink. It is simple to print different colours, which can be registered by plate or by eye. Durability is not as good as wood and Lino can be mounted on wood blocks to extend its life, but on the whole small editions can be expected. Neither will the artist get the grain effect that many woods provide.

Lino was first used in 1890 in Germany for printing wallpaper. An Austrian artist and teacher Franz Cižek promoted its use in schools throughout Europe. The earliest linocut by Heckel, the first major artist to adopt the medium, is dated 1903. He and the other artists of Die Brücke regularly used linocut through the next dozen years. Matisse executed 70 linocuts between 1938 and 1952, using a fluent white-line technique. In Russia Popova produced Linocuts where a poorer culture was less inhibited about 'fine printmaking'. In London, Claude Flight taught Linocut techniques at the Grosvenor School of Art. Locally to me in Suffolk, Sybil Andrews and her good friend Cyril Powers, were famous and talented lino cutters of the between the war years.

Picasso's explorative approach:

It took Picasso's personality and way of working to develop lino-cutting fully. True to form, having understood the technique he was not content to do as he was told. As in all things he pushed the materials to their limits, raising them to a new level (Picasso Linocuts - 9). The technique of reduction printing was developed by Picasso and he also experimented with affecting the surface of the lino, using combs and metal brushes, pricking the surface to make it more porous and being inventive with the tools he used for cutting and mark making. He combined plates to print different colours and produce new ones. It was these innovations that lifted the lino cut from "poor relation" and "childhood play" to a recognised fine art form.

Although Picasso's first known Lino cut was made in 1939 (Hommage a un pays martyr) he did not come back to the form fully until 1954 and then followed 10- 12 years of development during which time he made just short of 200 pieces on themes such as bullfights, still life, portraits, Mediterranean and mythical creatures.

There are two major issues in any piece of work - the message and the medium. Picasso's strength was in manipulating and mastering the medium in order to make it do what he wanted with the message. He was relentless and aggressive in his approach to his materials accepting nothing as a given.

"With Picasso there was no turning back. He took a sort of aggressive delight (delectation) in meeting, overcoming and defeating obstacles. Actually, difficulties often served him as a testing ground, an orientation point for new things... he was always trying to get the maximum out of a craft as he advanced in the mastery of his tools"

Hildago Arnera, Picasso's linocut printer in Vallauris

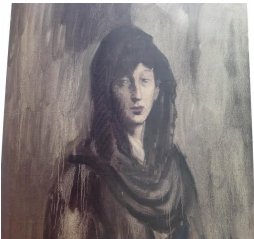
"An artist never defers to the material, to the substance. He makes it the instrument of his will"

Helene Parmelin, Confidante and Biographer of Picasso

My own exploration of the Linocut:

My chance to continue this explorative approach for myself came in April 2015 when I attended a Painterly Lino cuts course at Gainsborough's House in Sudbury – Tutor: Carl Borges. The techniques being offered were working with caustic soda, chine colle, textures and masks. I had worked with Carl before at an evening class last year (not my best time - I was unwell, awaiting surgery and too tired at the end of a day being a carer to be of much good in the printshop!) What I had gained then was a good appreciation of how to manipulate the inking and pressing so that even an uncut piece of lino could produce a multitude of effects. I dabbled with caustic soda at that time but had not produced anything significant.

I thoroughly enjoyed the course even though going back to oil based inks was hard. I spent the first two days with my concern on materials and techniques. I chose three Picasso portraits and tried to emulate the style using linocut, but let the materials take the lead and suggest what to do and how to progress. I tried not to plan beyond the first stage so that the image grew out of the capability and character of the materials. On the third day, I used some of my own photos to suggest an image and tried to interpret it using the methods I had been practising, again trying to let the print lead, so that each stage was decided on only as the previous one was completed. I was pleased with what emerged at the end of the day and **the biggest compliment was that one of my course members told me I was “one of those uninhibited people”**



Fernande with a Black Mantilla – reproduced using caustic soda and reduction cuts; Portrait of Dora Maar – caustic soda, reduction cutting and chine colle; Male figure – caustic soda, one cut and texture from anaglypta wallpaper mask.





Anemones 2015 Stella Davis

Lino cut made in three stages: Caustic Soda and paper masks (grey); cutting, partial inking and back drawing (green); further cutting and partial inking (white) Size A4 on Japanese Moon paper using oil based inks.

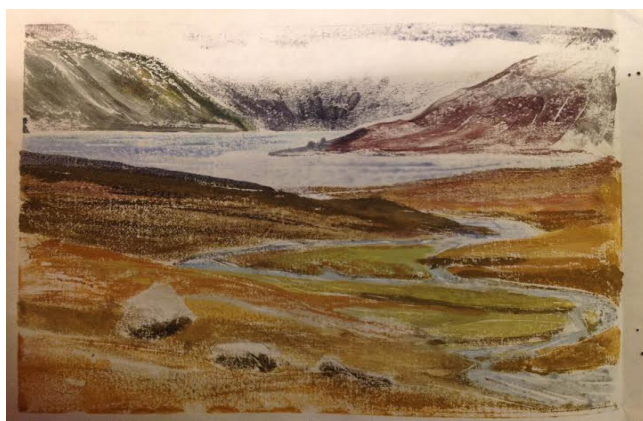
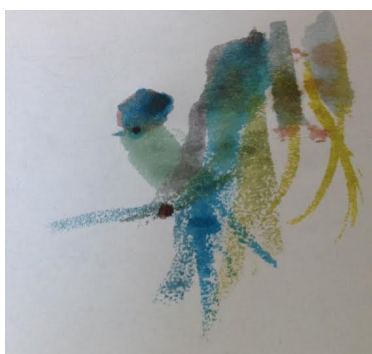
My Own Exploration – Japanese Wood Blocks

I went on a three day Course at Gainsborough's House, Sudbury with Jude Lockie who was teaching Japanese woodblock techniques. I learnt a huge amount about papers, cutting tools, inks, waterbased colours, nori paste etc and practised applying them. Apart from the cutting, there was much skill in inking up and brushing the block to control the quantity of ink. I also improved my registration skills.



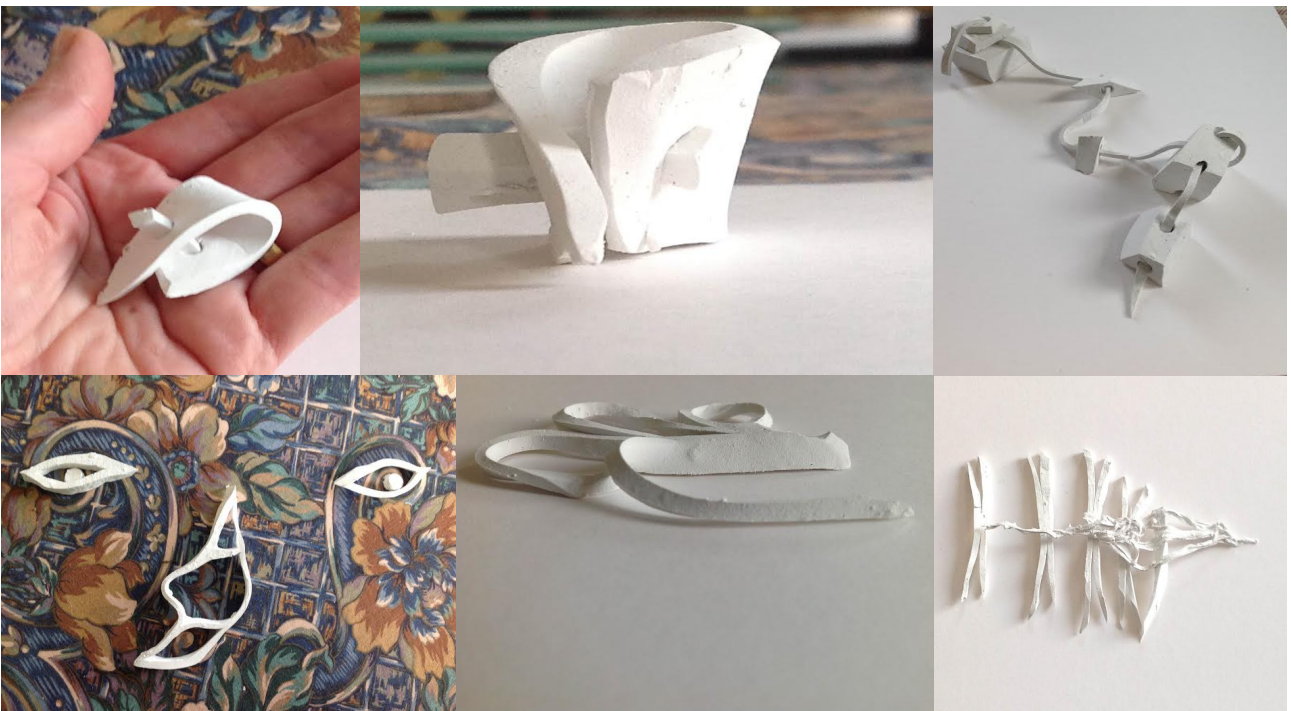
Akua Ink on Ho Sho paper – one colour plate; one colour plate hand coloured and three colour – two blocks.

At the same time, I had come across a technique called white line woodcuts being done by an artist at Birdfair (Lisa Hooper "First Impressions" Chapter 6) (8). With the help of Jude and other course members we were able to trace this technique back to Canada and find a variety of examples of work. I made prints using reduction cutting and the white line technique of pinning and reapplying the paper. Working in this way, I found I was able to avoid the white lines altogether and just keep layering up and painting the image to produce a monoprint. The view of Loch Muick in the Cairngorms I produced from a drawing done on location.



My own exploration – Alginate

I was delighted with the result of an afternoon's playing March 2015. My brother who is the creative and original one in our family had been doing an art project casting with *Alginate* - a substance that dentists use to make denture moulds. I started playing with the left over mix, it was like a firm opaque jelly and I discovered I could cut and shape it with a knife, a cheese grater, a peeler, make holes with a straw etc. The biggest compliment was that my brother was astonished at what I had done. He thought he had pushed the material to its limit himself. I brought the things I had made home on a board and over several weeks they have dried out to become a third of the size (another surprise), lightweight, and pure white. There is a delicacy there that wasn't present when I made them. They make beautiful shadows which was one of the things that first attracted me. I have been able to photograph them, and by losing the sense of scale they take on a whole new life.



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1. **Picasso: Challenging the Past** Published in June 2009 to accompany the exhibition of the same name at the National Gallery London Published by National Gallery Company Ltd
2. **Picasso: The Life and work of the artist** with 80 Colour plates Mario De Micheli Dolphin Art Book published by Thames and Hudson 1967
3. **The Story of Art** E.H. Gombrich 13th Edition Published by Phaidon 1972
4. **In Montmartre** by Sue Rae Radio 4 Book of the Week 4/8/14
5. **Picasso: Love, Sex and Art** BBC Documentary available on iplayer March 2015
6. **Picasso: In His Words** edited by Hiro Clark Published Collins San Francisco (Harper Collins) 1993
7. **Je Suis le Cahier : The Sketchbooks of Picasso** Published in Paperback by Thames and Hudson 1996
8. **First Impressions** Lisa Hooper Published by Langford Press 2014
9. **Picasso Linocuts** Markus Muller Published by Kunst Musuem Munster