

Birgit Rathsmann and **Marie Lorenz** talk about Marie's show at **Locust Projects in Miami**, 01/08/11-02/19/11

Birgit: What did your show consist of?

Marie: The Locust Project show is called **Waverunner XV: Indices and Abstractions**. A 'Waverunner' is a kind of jet ski and I have put everything but the jet ski in the show. In the middle of the room when you first walk in there are six ramps, like skateboard launch ramps, ranging in size from about 12 inches to five feet high. They are floating ramps and you can see from certain marks on the ramps that they have been used. A few days before the opening, I took them out into the bay and rode a jet ski off of them, in ascending order, until I was too freaked out by how high I was being launched. (I rode off numbers 1-3).

On the wall to the left are two videos, one is shot from a camera affixed to the jet ski and records the jump. The camera kind of zooms around for a while, riding by the jump a few times before going over. The projections were about 10 x 14 feet each.

Here are three stills from that video:





The other video is shot under water. You can see my hands and the underside of the jet ski. I am holding a wrench, fixing the jet ski under water.





On the wall behind the ramps are a series of huge prints. There are 4 prints and they are about 11 feet high and 8 to 16 feet wide. They are prints made from a jet ski. I took apart a Waverunner in my studio in New York and printed each section. Each print is like a peeling back of the layers of fiberglass and machinery - first the outer and then the inner layers are printed.

On the large windows that make up the front wall of Locust Projects I put black vinyl that is cut with a diagram of the jet that powers the jet ski. During the day, a kind of sunlit projection of the jet diagram moves across the floor and ramps and eventually on to the wall of prints. And that is it!

Birgit: Where did the jet ski come from, and how did you print it?

Marie: I found the jet ski that I printed on craigslist. I picked it up for free out of someone's backyard. I had been printing things that I found on the beach and then I began to look online for bigger things. I started to think of the 'free boats' section of craigslist as a kind of cyber beach where things wash up. I printed it by inking sections of the jet ski with a wash of sumi ink and rice paste and then pressing mulberry fiber paper onto the forms. It is a way of printing a textured surface that will not lay particularly flat.

Some people know the method as 'fish printing' because it was developed by Japanese anglers to record the size of their catch. I learned to do it from an arts and craft class in 2nd grade. I liked thinking of the jet ski as a huge fish.

Birgit: These look so amazing and monumental and, I don't know, like Inuit art or something aboriginal.

Marie: Thanks! Actually a lot of people noticed that, that is sort of looks like art from the Pacific Northwest. There is something about those shapes that look like Native American or First Nations painting and sculpture. And I have a sort of unsubstantiated theory about it. Those are the shapes and patterns that make a small boat; basically what the jet ski is. And since small boats - kayaks - were important early in the Pacific Northwest, I think those shapes made it into the art in other ways.



Birgit: When and how did you decide to print objects you found on the beach?

Marie: Mmmm. The thought came after I made a rubbing of the boat I wrecked in Italy a few years ago. I had been making all these carvings of boat wrecks and stormy seas. I would make relief wood carvings and then do rubbings from them. All about sinking boats. Then I actually sank a boat that I made. I was swept out into the sea while testing my first sail boat. The boat capsized and I swam back to shore. The boat washed up in shore a few days later, about a mile from where it I capsized. I brought the boat back to my studio and it was all crunched and cracked from banging into the rocky shoreline, but it was basically in one piece. I made a rubbing of the cracked bottom of the boat. And when I looked at the rubbing I realized that it told the story of the wreck way better than all the depictions of wrecks that I had made up until then. It said everything very simply and directly. That is when I started to pick up things on the beach and make rubbings of them and print them. I wanted to see if things could tell their own story better than I could tell it.