

LITE Seed Grant Proposal

b) Descriptive Project Title:

SHIFT: A Transformation of UW's Printmaking Facilities—Ecology and Instruction

c) Project Summary:

Since 2011, UW's printmaking facilities and curriculum has developed a suite of methodologies that promote greener, safer, more economical, studio habits—practices that not only embody good stewardship, but also allow students to easily transfer skills post University (i.e. within home studios, outreach initiatives, local community centres or as art teachers).

This proposal compliments these initiatives from an instructional perspective. Its primary objective is to create an electronic handbook called *The Printmaker's Compendium*. This online multi-media learning tool will merge technical instructions, resources and archive with platforms that promote student exchange. The overall impact of the compendium will also be assessed.

d) Project goals outcomes and research questions to be investigated:

1. Create and customize an online *Printmaker's Compendium* for UW. This micro website linked to the department's webpage and through Learn will include step-by-step video demonstrations (a "How To" in Waterloo's print facility), a digital archive of student work, an archive celebrating print's historical trajectory, forums for online discussions and exchanges, downloadable PDFs and relevant links.
2. Advance students' understanding of toxicity within art materials and technical processes.
3. Provide a resource that extends beyond Waterloo's printmaking facility—a guide that can help fine arts alumni and other artists/printmakers set-up a more eco-friendly print shop. Consequently, I would like to build the site outside of Learn to ensure open access.
4. Promote good stewardship in relation to studio practices.

e) Project rationale and description.

This proposal signifies a paradigm SHIFT for the printmaking facility housed in the Department of Fine Arts. It is a holistic approach that combines ecology (greener sustainable habits for the student/artist, maker/thinker) and instruction (the creation of an electronic handbook).

Ecology: In an effort to find less toxic alternatives, members from the printmaking discipline began research involving both materials and processes during the mid 1980s. The results traced a solvent-based history that outlined a disturbing list of side effects—cancer, systemic poisoning and damage to the central nervous system. Secondary research was more optimistic, as the bulk of these efforts focused on the development and

testing of safer acrylic-based alternatives that works in combination with a salt-based etching system. Non-toxic methods raise material awareness related to the toxic impact on the body and the environment. For new learners, they establish safer practices and sustainable habits.

Following my appointment in 2011, my primary focus has been to implement this ecological SHIFT within the printmaking studio. This includes:

1. an acrylic-based etching system and photo-polymer film non-etch process,
2. the introduction of an odorless salt-based etching system,
3. water-based silkscreen printing,
4. the use of more eco friendly inks,
5. setting up an computer workstation and laser printer for film preparation.

Instruction: Within printmaking, technique is primarily taught through hands-on demonstrations coupled with hard-copied handouts. Most questions arise when students return to the studio to work independently. For the beginner, this can be both overwhelming and discouraging. The *Printmaker's Compendium*, an online handbook, would serve several functions: resource, customizable instruction guide, archive and forum for exchange. Using a multi-media approach (video, sound, image and text), information would be organized and accessed through this micro site. Within printmaking at post-secondary institutions, a handbook of this kind is unprecedented; it would establish Waterloo as an innovator, bridging current technology with a needed learning tool.

In addition *The Printmaker's Compendium* would provide opportunities for exchange outside the University. Production demands as well as a history rooted in social and political engagement place community and collaboration at the nucleus of print's continuum (i.e. artist run centres, print publishers and interventionist collectives). As a strategy, prints have the flexibility to be traded and circulated. Consequently, *The Printmaker's Compendium* is an ideal place to facilitate exchange. For example Waterloo students could create a series of prints to exchange with students studying print at other institutions. The *Compendium* would provide a forum to meet, exchange ideas and share their working process. I have been speaking with Professor Marnix Everaert who teaches print at the Academie Beeldende Kunsten located in Gent about several opportunities for exchange. Everaert is a leader in non-toxic print methodologies and will participate as a visiting lecturer at UW in the fall of 2013.

f) Plan/methods/procedures for carrying out and assessing the project:

1. Organize and compile the existing tests (films, plates and prints) into digital files.
2. Document each technique, outlining steps using a combination of video, sound and written instruction.
3. Begin a digital archive, representing print-based work produced at Waterloo and print's historical trajectory.
4. Assemble (and design) all technical information into a micro website.
5. Test access and navigation.

Assessment:

1. A toxic questionnaire conducted at the beginning of the semester and again at the end will establish students' learning in relation to toxicity, materials and practice.
2. Tracking related to activity and use of site.
3. Survey: Students will fill out a survey evaluating *The Printmaker's Compendium*. How many times did you use the compendium? In what ways did you find the compendium helpful? What print techniques required this additional learning tool? How could the site be improved (navigation, organization, video tutorials etc.)? Can you see yourself using this learning tool in the future and for what purpose?
4. Data can also be analyzed (conceptual, aesthetic and technical) through the documentation and cataloguing of artworks produced in Waterloo's studio.
5. Analytic Report: Bringing together information from the four areas (questionnaire, tracking, survey and catalogue), we will prepare an overview, summarizing the results.

g) Timeline:

Fall 2013 and Winter 2014: Technical tests and documentation of print processes will be organized by the student research assistant and videographer. Documentation runs alongside the syllabi for printmaking (i.e. students will document each process as it is introduced in class, scheduling times to re-shoot if necessary).

- Order of Fall Term Documentation:
 1. Relief Printing, 2. Polyester Plate Lithography 3. Acrylic-Based Etching
- Order of Winter Term Documentation:
 1. Digital Imaging for Film 2. Silkscreen Printing 3. Polymer Film Etching.

Winter and Summer 2014: Building the *Printmaker's Compendium* (the student will work in conjunction with CEL and Arts Computing to develop and prepare files).

September 2014: Open House Launch

h) Outline of project's broader impact (the uWaterloo community and beyond):

As a learning tool, the *Printmaker's Compendium* not only offers a unique resource specific to Waterloo's studio, but also expands beyond Waterloo as an example of how these practices might work in other printmaking facilities. Additionally, the compendium provides a framework applicable to other technique-based facilities within UW Fine Arts—the woodshop, the ceramic studio and time-based media. As an ongoing archive, the site will also catalogue Waterloo's legacy of print production—a resource that celebrates work created by students, providing accessible examples for students in the future. It will also facilitate print-based exchanges with other institutions, expanding student engagement to include national and international perspectives.

i) Plan for dissemination:

Once complete, I would like to hold an Open House in the print studio—a multi-pronged launch that highlights these new initiatives. Invitations would be extended to faculty and

students from Waterloo, local printmakers/artists, the general public and neighbouring institutions (i.e. print faculty and technicians from the University of Guelph, McMaster, Western, Sheridan College, U of T, York and OCAD). Keeping inline with print's history of exchange, I would like to invite these institutions to also participate in a print exchange. Thus the Open House event would include technical demonstrations, a lecture on the state of contemporary print, as well as an exhibition featuring the print exchange and student work. This would take place in our student run in-house gallery. A video projected in the studio would highlight excerpts from the *Printmaker's Compendium*.

j) Budget:

Fall 2013

Undergraduate Student Research Assistant (hourly wage is based on Waterloo's work study program): 10 hours/week for 12 weeks @ \$x= 120 hours x \$x (plus y% vacation and benefits)= \$z

Primary Tasks: Compile and organize tests into digital files; coordinate video documentation (i.e. research assistant will work with the videographer acting out steps); convert written instructions into HTML files; document student work, research and gather imagery related to printmaking's history; edit video clips into short 2-minute instructional videos that break down each stage.

Videographer (hourly wage for an undergraduate student, based on Waterloo's work study program):
20 hours x \$x= \$y

Primary Tasks: Document all steps in non-toxic techniques. Works in coordination with the research assistant.

Winter 2014

Student Research Assistant Continued:

10 hours/week for 12 weeks @ \$x= 120 hours x \$x (plus y% vacation and benefits)= \$z

Note: Tasks continue from research in the fall with the addition of web development in coordination with the Centre for Extended Learning and the Arts Computing Office (i.e. students ensure files are web friendly and ready for upload). The student will also help coordinate the print exchange, which will be featured during the Open House event in the fall.

Videographer (student hire based on Waterloo's work study program):
20 hours x \$x (plus y% vacation and benefits)= \$z

Primary Tasks: Document all steps in non-toxic techniques.

Winter and Summer 2014

Web Design: I have been in contact with Aldo Caputo from the Centre for Extended Learning who has confirmed that they can help with the design of the site in 2014. Once

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the site is established, I will maintain it in conjunction with the print classes.

I have also spoken with Lisa Tomalty from Arts Computing who has confirmed that they can host the site. They will also provide advice regarding maintenance and the new accessibility legislation that comes into effect January 2014.

Summer 2014:

Student Research Assistant Continued:

4 hours/week for 12 weeks @ \$x= 48 hours x \$x (plus y% vacation and benefits)= \$z

Tasks Include: Coordination and development of site in conjunction with CEL and Arts Computing. This may include preparing and uploading files to a web template, editing video, and assisting with coordinating the launch (i.e. facilitating the print exchange, designing the poster and Advertising).

Fall 2014

Open House Launch (September):

Reception: \$x

This will cover food and non-alcoholic drinks.

*Please Note: The department will cover all other costs for the Open House Launch from their budget for the Visiting Artist Lecture Series (i.e. speaker fees, travel and advertisement). In an effort to reach as many people as possible, I would like a small extension to hold the launch in September rather than August.

Total Grant Request: \$x