SOCIAL MEDIA TAKEOVER: PALMARIN MERGES

December 7, 2020

Day #1 こんにちは Konichiwa!
Kumusta ka! Hello! My name is Palmarin Merges @palmarinprints, and I'll be taking over the @fiveoaksmuseumpage for this week, in conjunction with the DISplace Show, curated by Lehuauakea and Kanani Miyamoto. I am a Filipina American transplant in Tokyo, Japan.

Although the work that was selected for this DISplace comes from my 2011 Concentra show at Blackfish Gallery, what drives me to make work then as now - is to be as sustainable as possible by transforming common everyday materials and objects into new works, giving used materials new life. This idea of transformative play also extends to Ilokano (spoken in my home as a child) and English by recombining them and creating new texts/images from familiar words. My current work focuses on making concrete poetry using Ilokano, English (and Japanese)! Combining and manipulating text and images in humorous and thoughtful ways as you'll see in my Mixed Fruit work and in my Manila to PDX Exploratory Drawings which uses text as a strategy for creating organic pattern-like images. On Wednesday, for my interactive prompt we'll be taking the humble eraser, utility knife and ink pad to create our own patterns! I hope you'll join me! I'm looking forward to sharing my inspirations and process over the next few days with you!

また明日ね

Living in Japan can be difficult due to the language barriers and societal/cultural norms. BUT I have discovered that communication is possible and magic can and does happen. 😄 We just need to be open to the people and wonder around us and Do the hard work in making those connections. Speaking of work, if you're interested in seeing my other work, please visit www.palmarinmerges.com. See you tomorrow!
December 8, 2020

Yesterday, I let you in on some of my areas of interest. Today, let's dig a little deeper into what it means for me to be a Filipina American artist living in Tokyo, Japan during the covid-19 Pandemic. While I was working at PNCA (Pacific NW College of Art) before moving to Japan, I was blessed to have access to truly world class facilities - etching presses, letterpresses and bookmaking equipment. Without those facilities and equipment, my current art practice includes buraburashimasing*, garbage and ingenuity!

I would like you to broaden the definition of what you think of as art, or what you previously thought art materials look like and begin thinking more widely about how you might use the materials we discard. Such as packaging - in all it's forms, plastic, paper and otherwise and how we can take the Japanese philosophy of mottainai. “Mottainai” in its newer usage refers to not only recycling and reusing an item in as many iterations possible but to also pay respect to that material itself, and maybe save the world with art!!! By looking at the resourcefulness of women, women crafters, artists and artisans and how they create beautiful things using the meanest of materials.

Like the work of Filipino artist team, Isabel & Alfredo Aquilizan who are making large installations with JUST cardboard! Or the women of Gees Bend and their stunning abstract quilts, and the anonymous, multigenerational Japanese women who created Boro textiles & clothing items for their families. There are so many more people out there doing great work, if you know of them please share by tagging me @palmarinprints and I'll share it on @fiveoaksmuseum. Now for some images of my current work.

Here are some walking fish ceramic pieces that I made at the Minato-Ku Lifelong Learning Center with all of the Obaachan (grandmas).
December 8, 2020 (Continued)

Day 2 continued #patternperegrinations - Here are a walking series of photo and videos transformed into prints and patterns which I'll be showing you how to do make your own tomorrow!

@fiveoaksmuseum @mamakanani @_lehauakea_

Lastly, I leave you with a few examples of concrete poetry that I'm working on called Presh Pruit. Tomorrow we'll be working on creating our own stamps! On Friday, I'll introduce my garbage book made up of household waste - cardboard, food label stickers, random produce wrappers and paperbags. Then on Saturday, (which will actually be Sunday for me so there will be a delay of a few hours until I'm up around 8am, your 3pm Portland time). But I will answer as many as questions as I am able!

Check out my IG stories and posts at @palmarinprints today for more background on my materials and my current art practice.

# # #

buraburashimasing* - I made this word up. It comes from the Japanese word to wander around, going here and there.
December 9, 2020

Pattern Peregrinations (Looking for patterns while out on a walk). @fiveoaksmuseum! Let’s get started - here are the materials you’ll need. Don’t be afraid to improvise!

Materials you will need: 1) an image to draw, 2) small eraser, 3) an exacto/utility knife 4) a small stiff piece of paper about the size of a credit card to create an ink knife, 5) inkpad/paint, 6) any paper.

There are several steps so I’ve decided to separate the images and text. Please note that I’ll have a recorded version of this on Saturday taking you through the whole process with a few extras thrown in for fun!
Step #1 Select an image
look around
what do you notice
shapes
colors
textures.
Here I have selected an image of a building reflected on the canal near my apartment in Tokyo.

Step #2 Make a quick drawing the size of your eraser. This should take about 10 minutes or so.

Step #3 Redraw your sketch onto the eraser. The image when printed/stamped will be reversed ie facing in the other direction or in the case of letters, backwards. If you’d like your text to be readable, be sure to carve it backwards so that when you print/stamp it, it will be legible. You could alternatively just draw right on the eraser and skip step #2.

The next steps will be in the next post!
December 9, 2020 (continued)

#patternperegrinations project continues with steps 4 - 7.

Step #4 Decide if you're going to be removing the dark lines or the white spaces. When using a utility knife or exacto to remove material from your eraser, try to angle the blade in such away that you are creating a triangle/mountain shape (2nd image). You do not need to press very hard when removing eraser material. Use the lightest pressure possible. You can always take more away but you will not be able to put it back!!! The tip of the downward pointing triangle ensures that when you are printing/inking up the top of your eraser, your bits won't get torn off so easily during the printing process. The remaining raised surfaces are the areas that will have the ink on it when you print/stamp your image.
December 9, 2020 (continued)

Step #5 In the 3rd image, I’ve cut out the lines on the bottom row of the eraser. In the 4th image I’ve removed the white spaces in the middle row. And on the top row of 4th image, I’ve removed both some black lines and some white spaces. They will print differently and give you the opposite of what you’ve drawn.

Step 6 If you have a stamp pad, go to step #7. If not, read on!

Step #6: Squeeze a pea sized drop of paint and spread the ink by pulling the dot of ink towards you. (5th image). Next, Always ‘pull’ in one direction and don’t spread the ink/paint wider than the size of your eraser. (6th image)
December 9, 2020 (continued)

Step #7: The easiest way to print is starting on the left and moving to the right. Stamp lightly at first until you get a relatively good impression. Variations in the amount of ink on the stamp as well as the amount of pressure you put on the stamp who printing on the paper will affect the way it looks. Experiment! Try printing and rotating the image 90 or 180 degrees every other time. Try printing it in a circle! I used a different eraser to print this one.
For me, the material comes first, then the experimentation, exploration and questions. Questions like - What can I do with this? How can I REALLY mess this up!? How can I attach it to another thing? Sewing? Glue? Embroidery? At the start of a series, I don't try to figure it all out. I concentrate on the material, the process and the pure joy of losing myself in the making.

The exploratory drawings in Manila to PDX employs Ilokano, Tagalog and English words to create richly patterned surfaces. These textual poetic forms owe their genesis to her love of Concrete Poetry, Filipino food and the Manila folder. The Manila folder is made from a species of banana that is originally from the Philippines, known as abaca or more commonly as Manila hemp hence the name and its appropriateness in Manila to PDX / Exploratory Drawings. My use of this ubiquitous office product, found in offices throughout the United States provides the means of exploring my Filipino American heritage and finding connection to a place that I’m separated from.
I worked on OPP during a residency at Caldera in 2018. Following the good advice of a friend, I brought only a few things and tried to be open to whatever idea or object came my way. 'Objects of Possible Power' began with research into my Filipino ancestry and are based on indigenous Filipino tribal objects which I have transformed into quasi-ritualistic sculptures made of beads and bones. There is a power imbued in objects we find and pick up, whether in the natural world or in the discards of humanity left by the wayside.

I took familiar items used in traditional Filipino dishes, chicken soup (tinula) and oxtail bones (sinagang), and obliterate their original function and meaning into something else, possibly new, possibly old. These ‘Objects of Possible Power’ and their Now and Future forms act as portals of imagination and infinite possibility.
This series incorporating my old prints, recycled bed sheets and embroidery sewn on washi (Japanese paper). For Concentra, I thought of time as a circle, like the rings of a tree. Each passing year is embedded in the bark and enfolded within its trunk as the tree grows. Tightly grouped lines express slow growth, drought or lack of sunlight; abundance is seen in rings that are broad and wide. In the case of these pieces, though not necessarily in chronological order, each ring refers to a place in my timeline as an artist.

Taking lithographs I made in grad school, collagraphs I made in Japan, monoporints and screenprints created in Oregon and incorporating concentric circular cut fabric and the technique of sewing by machine and hand and embellishing them with embroidery and thread, I explore the material quality of the fabric and the means by which the paper and cloth are connected. I hope you enjoyed seeing some of my favorite pieces and I'll see you tomorrow!
Today I'm going to show you an accordion style book I made using household waste - a menu from a Cena, cardboard, plastic sticker from egg cartons, and mylar foil juice packaging. The only new things used were double stick tape and the pink string from the hardware store. When I look at all the plastic around me. I think about how I can its life beyond merely a container for fruit, vegetable or meat. Its possible futures has just increased exponentially because now it is art material. Part of my artistic practice to look at the possibilities of the things around me and how they can be transformed to make something interesting, something else!

How can we save the world by being mindful of what we do with our trash?
How can we save the world from drowning in our garbage?
How can we save the world thru art?

We need to start asking the big questions so that we can solve the big problems in our world today. Making a book out of garbage isn't going to save the world but maybe if I can change how you perceive the daily mundane things you come into contact with, perhaps you'll start looking at things differently and show us all a way to solve the world's big problems together! Saturday will be my last day of the IG Takeover and I'll be doing a Q&A! I look forward to answering as many questions from you as possible! Have a great day!
the animals will recycle house-leaf garbage up the tree, the red twine and silver

Cover is from Frank Kane, Julie, frozen from peacock, (hein) Quincy, just 5 min walk
December 12, 2020
Day #6 Saturday

Hello Everyone! Thank you for following me on my IG Takeover @fiveoaksmuseum this week. For my final post, I’ve decided to do a short video following up on the stamping activity on Wednesday by printing on fabric and using household waste materials rather than an eraser to create a relief print pattern! Enjoy!

(Note: When printing on fabric please use ink or paint for use with fabric. The ink/paint used in the video isn’t recommended for fabric.)

Ask and I will answer!
For example, How is life in Japan? Where do you find your materials? What can I use to make a pattern? How long have you been doing printmaking/mixed media? What does your day look like? What is the most difficult thing about learning Japanese? When will you return to Oregon? How do you come up with this stuff? Are these prints the end product? Will you refine them later? Do you use the computer to come up with your patterns?

This last week has been a blast! To see more of my work and what I’m doing in Japan day to day, follow me @palmarinprints on IG or Palmarin Merges Artist on Facebook and sign up to receive random emails from me at www.palmarinmerges.com. Thanks again to @fiveoaksmuseum and @_lehuauakea_ and @mamakanani for this wonderful opportunity! じゃあね & marauding salamat!

view video at this link: https://www.instagram.com/p/C1spaTshIHf/