Draft 01

Through my exploration of silk screen printing by recreating the monoprints by Karel Martens, several critical questions have emerged. The unexpected elements of this medium is its intensely tactile and physical nature. Each step, from setting up the space to preparing the screen and changing colors or shapes, requires time and manual effort. This contrasts clearly with digital tools where adjustments can be made instantly. This hand-driven process also has technical challenges, such as ensuring precise registration, weight of the paper and managing the drying time of inks, which impacts the outcome. The knowledge generated through silkscreen printing leans heavily toward an appreciation of form, texture, and imperfection. These qualities challenge the conventions of precision often associated with graphic design and highlights the value of unpredictability in communication design.

Silkscreen printing often involves layering colors onto a single base to create a cohesive image. To hack this conventional method, I propose reinterpreting this layering process by printing each color layer into separate sheets of transparent film. These films will then be stacked to form the final image. This approach will emphasize the physicality of each layer, allowing for rearrangement, rotation, or even partial stacking to explore how color, opacity, and alignment interact in new ways. The project aims to challenge the conventional flatness of silkscreen prints and create a dynamic, three-dimensional interaction between layers.

Draft 02

Silkscreen printing is known for its structured, methodical process. From preparing the screen and layering inks to ensuring perfect registration, every step is designed to produce precise, repeatable prints. But what happens when we step away from those expectations? In this project, I've been exploring ways to hack silkscreen by breaking its conventional methods and combining it with a different approach. Through the lens of Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation by Charles Jencks and Nathan Silver (Jencks & Silver, 2013, pp. 38–53), silkscreen can be reimagined as something more flexible, modular, and interactive rather than a final, fixed image.

Breaking the Expected Process

Adhocism is about using what's available in unexpected ways, finding new functions for existing tools rather than following set rules Jencks & Silver, 2013, p. 40). Silkscreen printing, conventionally, builds an image layer by layer on a single surface. But what if each layer were separate, independent, and able to shift? By printing each color onto a transparent film instead of a final sheet, I'm disrupting the usual process. The result is no longer a flat, fixed composition but something fluid since layers can be stacked, rotated, or rearranged. This hacking turns silkscreen into something closer to collage rather than a final, locked-in print. Instead of aiming for perfect alignment, I'm embracing movement and unpredictability (Jencks & Silver, 2013, p. 45).

Combining Two Ideas into One

At its core, this experiment is about combining two things: the structured nature of silkscreen printing and the flexibility of layering and transparency. Traditionally, silkscreen is about control and precision, while transparent layers result in variation. By merging these two approaches, I'm allowing the print to remain in process rather than creating a final, settled outcome. This idea reflects the essence of adhocism, which takes familiar things and puts them together in ways that create something new (Jencks & Silver, 2013, p. 50). The act of stacking these transparent layers creates interaction, making the final image something that can change over time rather than being fixed at the moment of printing. It also highlights how color and form interact dynamically, depending on how the layers overlap.

Rethinking What a Print Can Be

By stepping away from the traditional expectations of silkscreen, the project challenges the idea of a print as a finished object. Adhocism encourages this kind of thinking, where limitations of a medium aren't constraints but opportunities to explore new possibilities (Jencks & Silver, 2013, p. 52). This experiment has made me reconsider what silkscreen printing can be. Instead of aiming for a polished final product, I'm more interested in the in-between stages—the way layers interact, the way mistakes or misalignments create unexpected compositions, and the way viewers might engage with the work differently when they can physically manipulate it. Through this process, silkscreen becomes more than just a tool for printing; it becomes a space for iteration, improvisation, and play.

Reference
Jencks, C. & Silver, N., 2013. Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation. Expanded and Updated Edition. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

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COMBINING TWO IDEAS INTO ONE

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