

ISKRA JOHNSON

About

As principal of [Iskra Design](#) I have been working with the alphabet for many years, providing custom letterform solutions for book covers, logotypes, and package branding. In the first decade of my career I studied Asian calligraphy, haiga, T'ai Chi and sumie painting. I also have a BFA in Painting from the University of Washington. I draw much of my inspiration from the interplay between the contemplative sensibility of traditional Asian art and a more Western need for invention and some measure of uncharted chaos.

My current work ranges in style and media to fit my obsessions. I have a background in printmaking and have always sought the aesthetic of etching, lithography, and silk screen in my work. I love surfaces that are bitten and etched, indirect and calligraphic mark making, and experimental processes in which there is an element of surprise. I also adore flat screaming color and the graphic qualities of stencils. I move between visual languages, always looking for an ambiguity of pictorial space.

Due to early exposure to solvents I have been unable to work in a traditional printmaking studio or with traditional inks, and this has pushed me to devise my own tactics to create the look and process of printmaking without a press. I tackle a piece of paper as though it is a plate, but the "plate" becomes the final piece of art.

I got my first digital camera several years ago, and since then I have been very focused on photography and how to work with it as an "artifact." Recent work is highly experimental, and uses photos from my cellphone and Canon as its base. I am printing images onto digital grounds over other media and creating transfer prints using alcohol gel and acrylic mediums. The technology can be daunting, but when it works the immediacy of the process, from seeing to documenting to printing onto a surface — returning the image to the real physical world, is thrilling. Other promising avenues include multiple-pass prints in which color is built up layer by separate layer as it would be on a traditional printing press and mixing silkscreen and digital printing.

Resume

EDUCATION

1985 B.F.A. in Painting, University of Washington, Seattle Washington

1975- Private studies in calligraphy and sumi with Sensei Ishii, Lucy Liu, Lloyd Reynolds, and

1983 Betty Lou Bennett

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2011 Collective Visions Gallery Washington State Juried Competition, Bremerton, Washington

2011 Fraker/Scott "Icons," (Juried) Seattle, Washington

2011 University House Wallingford "Circles" (Invitational) Seattle, Washington

2011 Pratt Fine Arts Center (Invitational) Seattle, Washington

2010 Port Angeles Fine Arts Center "Safe Harbor" (Juried) Port Angeles, Washington

2010 ArtSpace Printmaking and Photography Exhibition (Juried) Richmond, Virginia

2010 Seattle Print Arts at Patricia Cameron Gallery, (Invitational) Seattle, Washington

2009 Printmaking Exhibition, (Invitational) Wuhan Art Museum, Wuhan, China

2008 Two Wall Gallery (Juried) Art of Democracy

2008 ArtXchange, "What Does Compassion Look Like?" in honor of the visit of the Dalai Lama
(Juried) Seattle, Washington

2008 Collective Visions Gallery Washington State Juried Competition, Bremerton, Washington

2007 Greenwood Artwalk (Juried) Seattle, Washington

2007 Shakti Vinyasa (Solo Show) Seattle, Washington

2006 Seattle Print Arts at COCA, Seattle, Washington

2006 University House Wallingford "Natural Forms: Artistic Impressions" (Invitational) Seattle,
Washington

2005 Painters Under Pressure, John Page Gallery, Seattle, Washington

TEACHING

2010 PNCA Portland, Co-teaching Professional Practice and Thesis Development with Martin French, Illustration Program

2007 School of Visual Concepts, Seattle, Workshop: History of Typographic Style in Design and Illustration

2006 Guest Speaker and Workshop Presenter, Cornish, Seattle, Typography and Expressive Letterform Arts