

Caleb Vasser, 2-27-18

Fash. Seminar

The Item I chose for the bridge one studio project is a painted tin tray. “What’s Painted on it?”, you may ask. Painted on this tray is a Japanese woodblock print of a woman sitting on a rock. She has on a yellow kimono with green and blue accents. She’s holding a fan and looking down at her hand. The rocks she’s sitting on are brown and painted with stiff motions. There’s two large leaf trees behind her to the left and Japanese text to the right of her head. There is a bright red outline around the lip of the tray. I bought her and her sister from a Salvation Army that I regular in Michigan on during spring break. They cost fifty cents each so I got them both for a dollar. When I got them I was very inspired by the art printed onto them so I decided to do some woodblock inspired drawings of my own. One is of the woman on the tray



but i put a blunt in her hand which is ironic because I often use the tray as an ashtray. The other is of a woman holding an umbrella.

Later, in the library, While doing research for my studio project I came across a book named “Master Prints of Japan” by Ukiyo-E Hanga. The book is full of ancient Japanese woodblock prints of both men and women. Alone and in scenes with each other. The book is really beautiful and I have marked

multiple pages to scan and print out at a later date. Turning the tray around and looking at the barcode/sales sticker that I failed at ripping off reveals that these trays were made in 1982 in Hong Kong for Action Industries INC. who operate out of Cheswick Pennsylvania. The one I



chose as my item is No.7565. When you drop the tray it has a distinct metal sound like putting a cookie sheet on the counter. It has no smell nor does it have a taste. The fact that it was made in '82 was kind of a big surprise to me. I had entertained the fact that it might be old but I never knew it would be that old.

I bought these at a very bad time in my life when I was going through a breakup and was in what seemed like a never ending sadness. I was on a mission to surround myself with pretty things just so I could feel better. I found these by chance while looking on the metal container shelf. I undoubtedly spent too much money that day but I kind of feel like it was worth it. Why I like the tray... Some (friends and family) would label me a tried and true Japanophile or the more colloquial phrase, "Weeaboo" which I think is cool, it's never bothered me, but I think their point is proven by how excited I was to find the trays. I do love them because of their imagery and can easily say that if there was not something of the same or better quality printed on the trays I probably would not have bought them. I never really thought of them as having any significant context to my life, they're more of those kinds of things that you have and never really think about unless you are using it. However, When I'm using it and I set it on my



computer, the magnets in my computer make my mouse pad work funny so I always have to move it wo use my computer for like three seconds and that's annoying.