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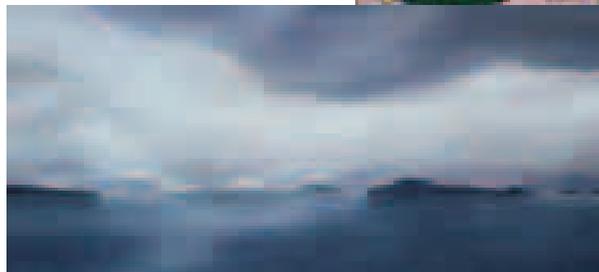
**HERRINGER KISS GALLERY**



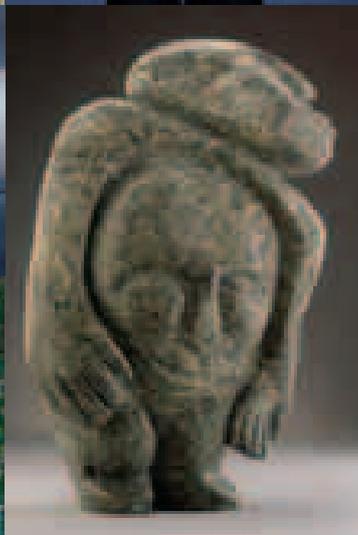
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This page: Marjan Eggermont, at work in the University of Calgary printmaking studio, applies screen filler to a recent silkscreen creation.

Opposite page, left: *bed*, 1998, silkscreen and saltlicks, 28" x 72"

Opposite page, right: *thick skin: on top*, 2003, etched steel, 19.5" x 12"

# MARJAN EGGERMONT: BEYOND PRINTMAKING

REDEFINING HER MEDIUM, CALGARY'S EGGERMONT BLENDS  
INTELLECTUALISM, INSTINCT AND AESTHETICS



Marjan Eggermont, one of the most prolific and progressive Canadian print artists of her generation, is reinvigorating the art of printmaking by turning to contemporary imagery and breaking the shackles of conventionality.

Eggermont draws inspiration for her art from life. Her work reflects diverse subject matter and her access to the latest technology. Her choice of materials and technique allows subject and medium to complement and reflect similar themes. Eggermont ends her process by leaving the etched image on either a salt block or a thick steel printing plate without making the multiple prints. "I was tired of editioning 20 to 30 prints at a time. I was more interested in the sculptural qualities of the block of salt or the plates because they bring my work a third dimension," she says. "And the fourth dimension is enclosed in the time and sweat I put into my work."

This new approach to printmaking prompted two curators, Deborah Herringer Kiss and Carl Danker, to invite Eggermont to the group exhibition *Out of Print — New Wave in Contemporary Printmaking in Alberta* at the Triangle Gallery of Visual Arts in 2000. "Marjan's approach is always a beautiful blend of intellectualism, instinct and aesthetics, but the intellectualism is her first priority. She is always experimenting, a sort of alchemist... in her works, the innovating process comes from practicality but her images and themes are conceptual," says Herringer Kiss. "Carl and I chose printmakers who were pushing the medium and the definition of printmaking. Marjan fit the bill perfectly."

Carl Danker concurs. "Marjan has always broken tradition, moving away from multiples and traditional media," he

BY JACEK MALEC

states. “She, like a number of contemporary artists, redefines her medium to better suit our contemporary view. Her process is driven to embody McLuhan’s idiom ‘the medium is the message’ — by not editioning her works in multiples, Eggermont has taken the medium of printmaking as a process in her creative search to do art, and has not made printmaking her art.”

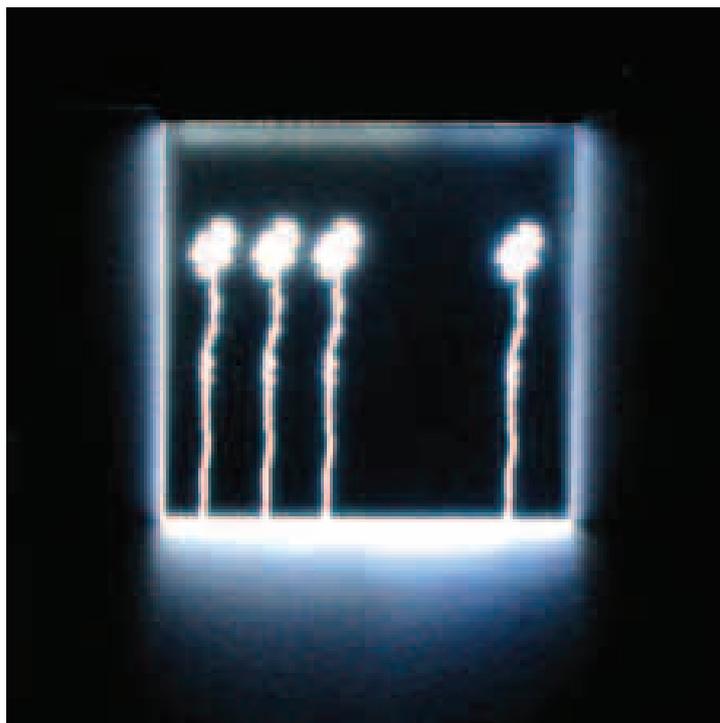
In 2003, Eggermont was recognized by the Calgary Artwalk Society as one of the city’s 20 most influential artists. She has worked as a dedicated visual artist, an independent curator and an art activist with major projects concerning poverty and homelessness. She also continues to search for ways to introduce art to a much broader audience. This self-attributed mandate brought Eggermont to the University of Calgary, where she is currently a senior instructor in the Fine Arts Department, teaching drawing, art fundamentals and printmaking. In addition, for the Schulich School of Engineering, University of Calgary, she teaches a mandatory course known as Engineering Design and Communication. “The physical process of drawing has been replaced by computer programs and the students don’t know how to draw, how to organize and how to control space. Because design skills are fading fast, the students need to learn to visualize,” she says. “I want to bring back some basic human skills to complement the use of machines.”

In 2004, Eggermont was a recipient of the prestigious The Allan Blizard Award, a national teaching award for collaborative projects that improve student learning.

Marjan Jose Eggermont was born in Leiden, The Netherlands, in 1966. She immigrated to Canada in 1986. In Calgary, she earned a degree in military history with a focus on visual arts: Hitler’s infamous exhibition staged in Munich in 1937 as an attempt to vilify avant-garde art. “This study sparked my interest in visual arts and the history of visual culture,” Eggermont states. “I was particularly impressed with the powerful prints by Kathe Kollwitz, Emil Nolde, Oskar Kokoschka and Ernst Kirchner, whose works were part of that infamous exhibition, so my choice in printmaking seemed natural.”

She continued her academic pursuits with undergraduate and graduate degrees in printmaking at the University of Calgary, under print master Bill Laing. Calgary print artist John Will and art history professor Dr. David Bershad were also instrumental in shaping her creative mind. Says Laing, “Marjan was one of my best students and extremely promising. I have found her work not only very sensual and intellectual, but also challenging the notion of the printmaking process... she is very prolific, never satisfied with a final outcome, always searching for a new vocabulary, always experimenting in a medium, always pushing herself to grow.”

Eggermont’s series *Thick Skin*, presented at the Herring Kiss Gallery



*dun bos / thin forest*, 2005, etched acrylic with LED lighting, 24" x 24"

## “ I WAS TIRED OF EDITIONING 20 TO 30 PRINTS AT A TIME ”

ically refers to my immigration by incorporating Hobbema’s one-point perspective and the etched motif of the trees from his famous painting: one-point perspective... there is only one way to go... there are no options,” she says. “In this visual debate I was trying to build a link in a metaphoric way between two countries whose art is so obsessed with the power of landscape.”

This debate continues in the new work Eggermont is showing in *Now You’re Half Way Home*, an exhibition this fall at the Herring Kiss Gallery. The title was inspired, in part, by the fact that Eggermont has now lived for an equal amount of time — 20 years — in the Netherlands and in Canada.

“Her images are never simply pretty pictures,” says Herring Kiss. “They are steeped with meaning and a sense of the sublime. Her work always has a second reading: the viewer moves beyond the initial impression of the image itself to the deeper meaning of the image.” But of even greater significance is that, taken individually or as a whole, her work is a lexicon which symbolizes a personal narrative. It is a quiet narrative, told without fanfare or self-aggrandizement. A narrative in which Eggermont shares her aspirations, her explorations and her ideals. It reveals strength, grace, and that rare freedom that an artist achieves when image, technique, vision and process have successfully merged. 📍

**Marjan Eggermont is represented by the Herring Kiss Gallery in Calgary; her work also appears at Diane Farris Gallery, Vancouver. An exhibition, *Now You’re Half Way Home*, presenting Eggermont’s new work, runs September 13 to October 15 at the Herring Kiss Gallery.**

**Jacek Malec, a Calgary-based art historian and critic, is the director and curator of the Triangle Gallery of Visual Arts in Calgary.**