

Monika Meler

In *Great Barrier*, author Barbara Kingsolver compares the burning of the Notre Dame Cathedral in 2019 to the destruction of the natural world:

The cathedral is burning. Absent flame or smoke,
stained glass explodes in silence, fractal scales
of angel damsel rainbow parrot. Charred beams
of blackened coral lie in heaps on the sacred floor,
white stones fallen from high places, spires collapsed
crushing sainted turtle and gargoyle octopus.

Something there is in my kind that cannot love
a reef, a tundra, a plain stone breast of desert, ever
quite enough. A tree perhaps, once recomposed
as splendid furniture. A forest after the whole of it
is planed to posts and beams and raised to a heaven
of earnest construction in the name of Our Lady.

My most recent body of work postulates that humans can only love that which they touch, build, or are responsible for making. There is clearly a contradiction between what is valuable and what humans value and this contradiction is what defines the Anthropocene, the geological terms for the age of humans, or more specifically the impact the humans have had on the earth especially through global warming, industrialization, and colonization.

By incorporating shapes that resemble rocks, pieces of earth, or natural forms and images that were made from domestic objects intended to imitate nature, I am evoking the root of the problem of “value,” in its many manifestations and forms. How is it possible to value the objects in our homes that are meant to mimic or celebrate nature while actual natural environments are left to perish?

Bio

Monika Meler serves as Head of the Department of Art & Design and Associate Professor of Art/Printmaking at VSU. Previously, Meler served as the Foundations Art Coordinator and Head of Graduate Studies in Art at the University of Saint Francis. She earned her B.F.A. from the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design (MIAD). She continued her studies at Purdue University, where she earned an M.A., followed with an M.F.A from Tyler School of Art, Temple University. While at Tyler, she spent a year studying in Rome, Italy.

Monika has exhibited her work extensively in group, juried, and solo exhibitions. She has

completed residencies at Zygote Press in Cleveland, Kala Art Institute in Berkeley, Emmanuel College in Boston, Center for Contemporary Printmaking in Connecticut, Frans Masereel Center in Belgium, Cork Printmakers in Ireland, and Women's Studio Workshop in New York. Solo Exhibits include *Yours, Mine, and Ours* at Wabash College in Indiana, *The Color of Distance and Desire* at the Western Colorado Center for the Arts, *The Center That Cannot Hold* at Frontier Space in Montana, and *The Distance Between* at the Limerick Printmakers Gallery in Ireland.