

FOLDED AND GATHERED

NICOLE PIETRANTONI

JULY 1, 2022 - FEBRUARY 4, 2023

MEZZANINE GALLERY



CONTENTS



- 1 - 3 CURATORIAL STATEMENT
- 4 EXHIBITION STATEMENT
- 5 - 6 ARTIST BIO
- 7 EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY
- 8 - 14 ARTIST'S INSTALLATION
INSTRUCTIONS
- 15 - 19 INSTALLATION IMAGES
- 20 - 22 WORKS IN EXHIBITION
- 23 BEHIND THE SCENES
- 24 THANK YOU

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Entering the Mezzanine Gallery where Nicole Pietrantoni's exquisite experimentally sculptural books are installed is a visual treat. The coral pink accent wall is foreshadowed by the same soft accents on the window edges leading along the bridge into the gallery creating a sense of growing anticipation through the enticing color that glows from the gallery. Nicole is, metaphorically, the great-great-granddaughter of Joseph Albers who said color is magic and the most relative medium in art. In the 1930s Albers taught color theory at Black Mountain College where he encouraged his students to learn to really see the nuances of color based on playful experiential learning.

Using her deep understanding of the CMYK (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black) halftone printing process, photography, silkscreen processes, the nuances of finicky inkjet printing, and expert bookbinding, the artist works intuitively to create tiny handheld accordion books that fit comfortably into the palm of your hand but expand to create wall size installations. Pietrantoni's installation, *Folded and Gathered*, also includes steel forms that mimic her cascading books but that are made from bent steel covered in inkjet-printed Japanese Kozo paper.



CURATORIAL STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

In a lengthy interview Pietrantonni expresses her creative explorations this way: "My artwork interrogates the tradition of landscape photography, its relationship to beauty, and how humans see and consume nature. ... My relationship to color was deeply influenced by a year I spent in Iceland as a Fulbright recipient - the palette of the landscape there is often a mix of blacks, grays, greens, and whites, but occasionally there would be a neon orange or yellow sign, shelter, or piece of clothing that pierced through the landscape and reminded me of the constant human presence in what is often considered a very remote and unspoiled wilderness. Since then, I have paid close attention to neon color in the natural world and began using it in my work to signal human intervention. ... Working with color has happened slowly but also intuitively - I progressively moved forward with a much broader palette, which now includes those fluorescent colors. My recent work uses painted fluorescent oranges and reds to reflect color onto the gallery wall. ... Color is simply light reflecting off of surfaces and being interpreted by our brains - but what our brains do with that information is far from simple - color is about how we see and examining how we've been trained to see." [i]

[i] Nicole Pietrantonni interviewed by Laura Crehuet for the Reflections on Color and Printmaking website: <https://www.reflectionsoncolor.com/interviews/nicole-pietrantonni>



CURATORIAL STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

We all live in increasingly fragile landscapes, whether in Iceland, Prague - where the artist currently lives with her family, her home state of Washington where she is taking a leave of absence from teaching, or right here in the mountains of Western North Carolina. Pietrantoni celebrates beauty in the Anthropocene, in times where we all see the devastating effects of climate change and a to rapidly warming planet. We see and don't see the loss she refers to in her artist's statement to our detriment and the greater losses of our children and grandchildren who are inheriting the lasting effects of unprecedented (that dreaded but appropriate word) greed from their elders.

— *Mary Anne Redding*
Curator



EXHIBITION STATEMENT

I make inkjet-printed accordion books on Japanese papers that expand to create large-scale installations. It is this tension of creating works that are both/and that interests me - work that is both print and book, both 2D and 3D, both static and dynamic, constantly in flux, slipping between categories. All of the work is rooted in an interest in an expanded definition of the book and its metaphoric potential at a time of all-things-digital. I see the book (and the subsequent pages, folds, fragments, and surfaces) as sites of inquiry to explore our experience and the construction of knowledge.

In my work I print with CMYK halftone dots and use other interventions like cuts and folds to draw attention to the production of the printed image - to point to how the image is created, framed and embedded in popular culture. While nature has often been the subject matter of my work, I have also explored photography's inability to document what we see and experience, questioned how we use beauty in times of loss and developed a deep interest in abstraction and color.

Much of my work is informed by time spent living in beautiful but ecologically fragile landscapes. In each work I take apart and compress photographs of a hyper-colored sunsets, weeds I see on walks and flowers from urban garden beds. I print my photographs on rolls of delicate Japanese paper and then bind them into books or adhere the images onto bent steel armatures. I spray the back of each column with a neon red paint that casts a glowing pink color on the gallery wall. All of the folds, fragments, and shadows point to an image that is at once beautiful but also broken and highly constructed.

— *Nicole Pietrantonì*



ARTIST BIO

Nicole Pietrantoní's artwork explores the complex relationship between human beings and nature via installations, artists' books and works on paper. She is the recipient of numerous awards including a Fulbright to Iceland, an Artist Trust Fellowship, a Larry Sommers Printmaking Fellowship, a Leifur Eiriksson Foundation Grant, the Manifest Prize, and a Graves Award for Excellence in Humanities Research and Teaching.

Nicole has been awarded artist residencies at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Anderson Ranch Arts Center, Facebook Open Arts and the Venice Printmaking Studio, amongst others. She has given over 30 lectures about her work around the country and her art has been in over 100 national and international exhibitions, including solo exhibitions at the Coos Museum of Art, Kimball Arts Center, the Lamar Dodd School of Art and the San Juan Islands Museum of Art. Her artwork is in over 20 collections including Yale University, the Library of Congress, Zahed University-United Arab Emirates, University of Iowa Museum of Art and the Zuckerman Museum of Art.



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ARTIST BIO (CONTINUED)

She received her MFA and MA in Printmaking from the University of Iowa and her BS in Human and Organizational Development and Art History from Vanderbilt University. Nicole served as the President of SGC International in 2016 - 18, the largest professional organization dedicated to scholarship in printmaking, book art, and papermaking in North America.

Nicole is an Associate Professor of Art at Whitman College where she teaches printmaking and book arts. She is represented by Long-Sharp Gallery.



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EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

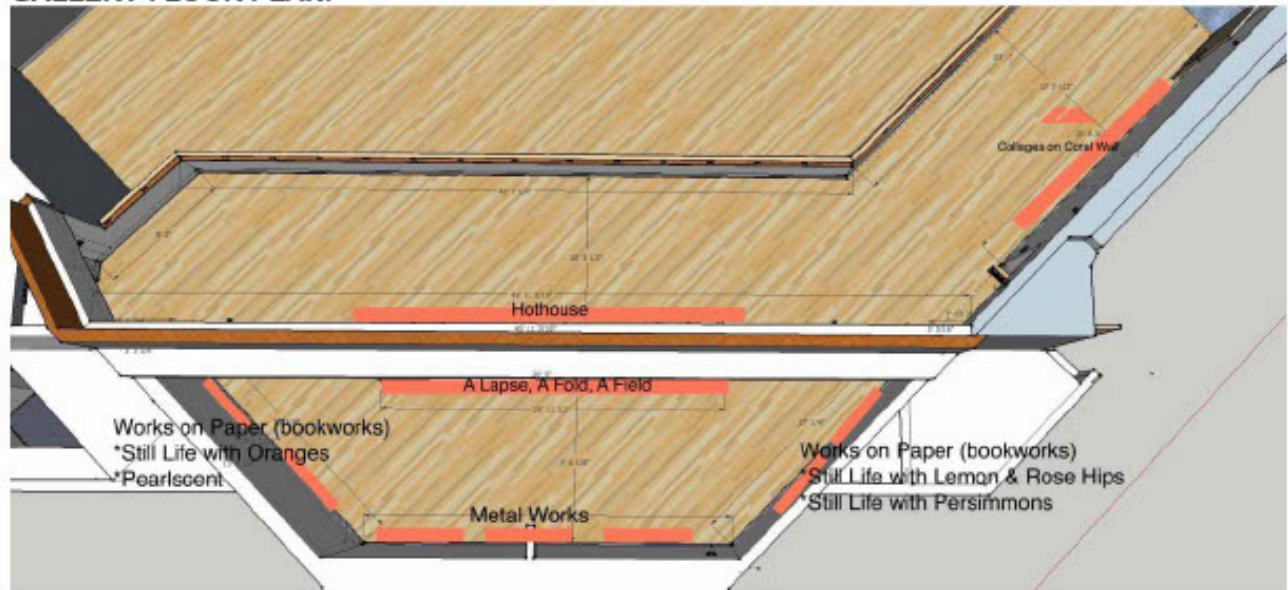
Nicole Pietrantoni's work looks closely at how color can be both beautiful and joyful, even during times of loss and destruction. Through the books in her exhibition, *Folded* and *Gathered*, she asks questions like, "Where do we find knowledge?", "Where do we find joy?" and "Where do we find hope?". As you think about these questions, what colors do you feel might represent your answers? Use those colors to create an artwork that brings you joy and hope.



ARTIST'S INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS

Turchin Center for the Arts Nicole Pietrantoni

GALLERY FLOOR PLAN:



OVERVIEW:



ARTIST'S INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS (CONTINUED)

INSTALLATION DETAILS:

Hothouse



- 1 ½" spacing between each *book*
- Beware the shelves are funky sizes and the books are much larger than the shelves – so I hang them one by one (put up the shelf, then put up the book and measure the next book and shelf in accordance with it)
- There are white screw covers to help make the screws less noticeable
- Hang height is approx. 9 ft (but double check this – use a push pin to put one shelf in the wall and see how far the book hangs at 9 ft)

ARTIST'S INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS (CONTINUED)

A lapse, a fold, a field

A Lapse, A Fold, A Field

(remixed however you like – funky photo idea below)



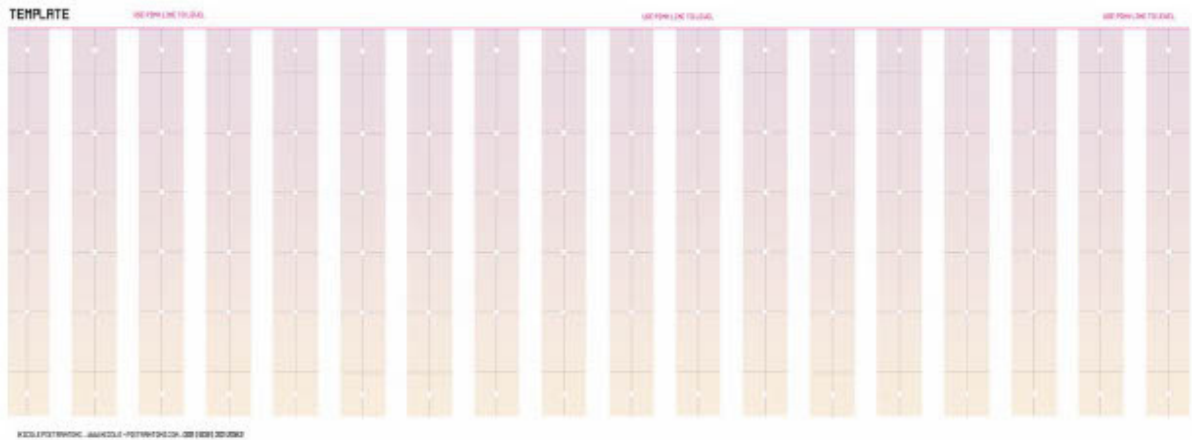
A lapse, a folc, a field

- 1 ½" spacing between each white shelf – these shelves are sized to the book size, so you can hang all the shelves first and then put the books up and it will look good
- Hang height is approx. 9 ft (but double check this – use a push pin to put one shelf in the wall and see how far the book hangs at 9 ft)
- Please have fun mixing the colors! There will be some books leftover.
- You can mix the big wall however you like! I thought it would be interesting to see it remixed and trust you!

ARTIST'S INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS (CONTINUED)

Paper Accordions: Still Life Series (3 bookworks) + Pearlescent (4 total)

- These use a template (which is included in the shipment from Walla Walla)
- Mount the included template to the wall and level the top pink line. Then, mark each hole with a pencil. Each bookwork has different numbers of books (8, 9, 10) so mark accordingly



- Hammer in a small, short nail or thumbtacks at each pencil marking. To make it look extra good, you can paint the nails or thumbtacks white. Not necessary, but looks nice.



- Once all the thumbtacks are in the wall, begin securing the books to the wall (from left to right, they are numbered 1-8,9, 10, etc). I typically use a level to adjust each one as I go and straighten them.

ARTIST'S INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS (CONTINUED)

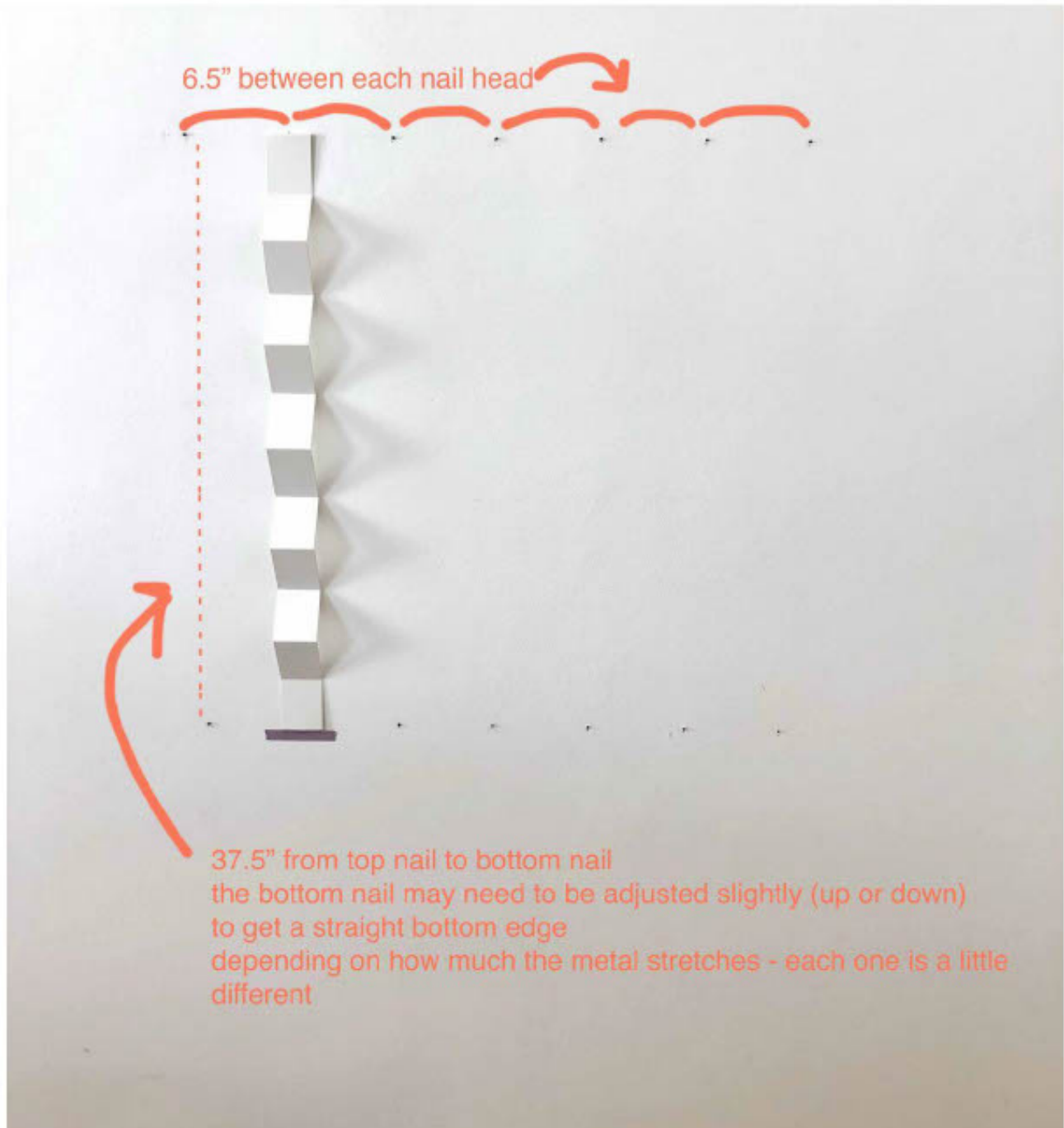


- Make adjustments to the accordions to ensure they are all straight and level.

ARTIST'S INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS (CONTINUED)

Metal Accordions – 3 total

- These are also on a grid – I first measure all the top nails using a level with the following measurement: 6.5" between each nail (this will give nice spacing)
- Then, I use a level to drop a straight line down to the bottom nail, which is 37.5" from the top nail



INSTALLATION IMAGES



INSTALLATION IMAGES



INSTALLATION IMAGES



INSTALLATION IMAGES



INSTALLATION IMAGES



WORKS IN EXHIBITION



Still Life with Persimmons, 2022
Inkjet on Kozo paper, acrylic paint,
bound into 8 accordion books
Edition: 1/1



Still Life with Persimmons and Orange, 2022
Inkjet on Kozo paper, acrylic paint,
bound into 9 accordion books
Edition: 1/1



Still Life with Lemon and Rose Hips, 2022
Inkjet on Kozo paper, acrylic paint,
bound into 10 accordion books
Edition: 1/1



Pearlescent, 2022
Inkjet on Kozo paper, acrylic
paint, bound into 8 accordion
books
Edition: 1/1

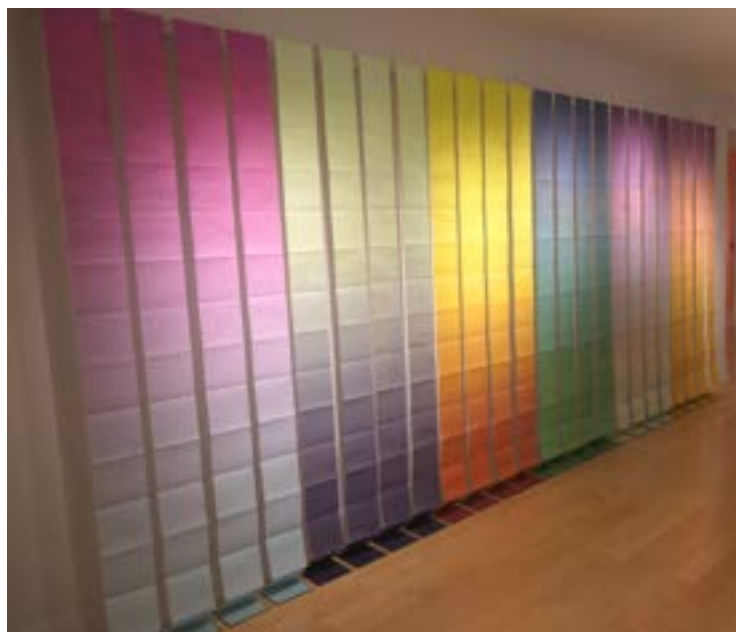
WORKS IN EXHIBITION



Hothouse, 2020
Inkjet on Kozo paper, acrylic paint, handbound into
17 accordion books
Edition: 1/1



Red-Violet-Hellebore-February 2022
Powder-coated steel, spray-paint
Edition: 1/2



A lapse, a fold, a field, 2019
Inkjet on Kozo paper,
folded and bound into 33 accordion books
Edition: 1/1

WORKS IN EXHIBITION



Foundling No. 1-10, 2022
Collage on paper

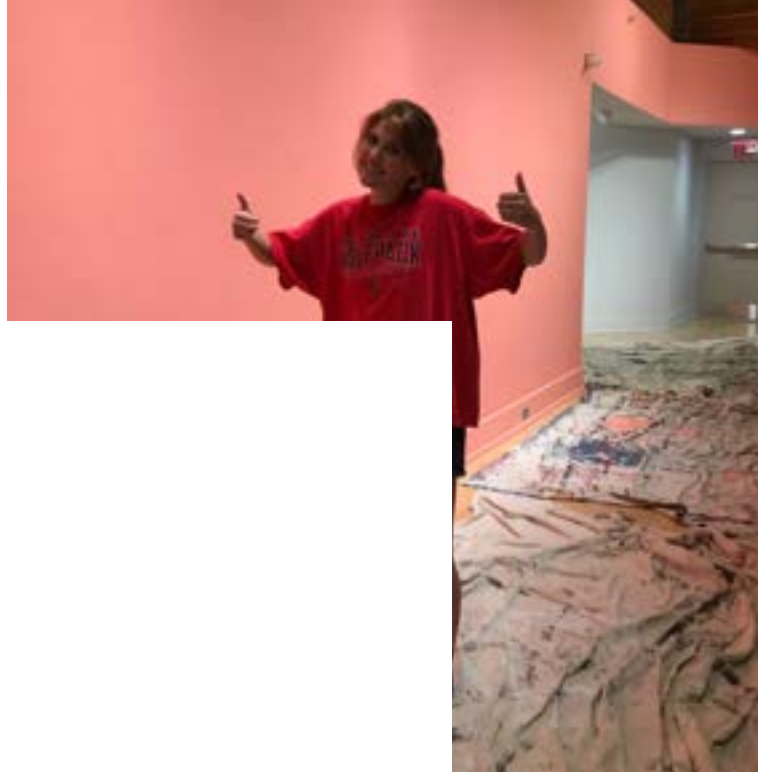


White-Pearl-Moon-March 2022
Powder-coated steel, spray-paint
Edition: 1/2



Glimpse, Glance, 2022
Inkjet on Kozo paper, bent steel, spray-paint
Edition: 1/1

BEHIND THE SCENES





THANK
YOU

FROM THE TURCHIN CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

The Turchin Center for the Visual Arts at Appalachian State University engages visitors from the university, community, nation and beyond in creating unique experiences through dynamic and accessible exhibition, education, outreach and collection programs. These programs inspire and support a lifelong engagement with the visual arts and create opportunities for participants to learn more about themselves and the world around them.

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