

Fischer uses River Valley to leave her own imprint

Using copper-etching and ink, printmaker Kyla Fischer hopes her MFA works provide a mesmerizing break from the rat race

A Trace of Passage

MFA Printmaking Show
Runs until 9 June
FAB Gallery

NICOLE CARGILL
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Kyla Fischer is capping off her four-year tenure towards a Masters degree in Fine Arts with an engaging exhibit at the FAB gallery. A Trace of Passage, her latest compilation of work, was mainly inspired by Edmonton's own North Saskatchewan River Valley.

"I take long walks in the River Valley where I am drawn to the details of textures and surfaces," Fischer says. "These experiences leave me in awe of the beauty I see around me, and I am led to contemplate the transient nature of human existence."

The River Valley inspiration isn't outright or obvious—even a seasoned valley connoisseur may be hard-pressed to see the connection. Fischer photographs the images quite close up; then, using a technique called copper etching, she etches the images onto a copper plate using an acid bath. Finally, she adds ink and transfers the images to paper.

"The original visual cues of a realistic photographic image are stripped away," Fischer explains. "The color is reduced to monochrome, the compositions are cropped, and the scale is skewed to be larger or smaller than the original."

Creating the prints in such a way is very process-oriented. Unlike paint-



KYLA SAYS RELAX The works on display in Fischer's A Trace of Passage are meant to evoke feelings of self-awareness and reflection.

ing, where the results of oils on a canvas are immediate, there are many steps involved in printmaking. Fischer admits she enjoys the monotony and meditative effects of the process, the physical nature of the work, and the breathtaking results that come with it. She's most proud of a group of five large prints she feels best encapsulate the simplicity and fluidity she

felt herself drawn to in the outdoors. By removing what she calls "excess noise" within the photographs, Fischer attempts to bring the bare essence of her idea to the forefront.

"The images are not a mere documentation of nature, but an unfolding of—and perhaps an opportunity for—a spiritual experience," She muses.

With her MFA now in hand,

Fischer will teach printmaking classes and continue to hone her craft at a printmaking studio in downtown Edmonton. But with A Trace of Passage, Fischer hopes that her audience connects with the meditative quality of the exhibit. Paring down the images to their essence is her attempt to move away from usual printmaking visuals and bring about

internal reflection in gallery-goers. The sparse images on display are meant to remove the hubbub of the everyday and use the natural environment to give a person the chance to relax and reflect.

"This work presents a reconnection to nature while providing a place of quietness and stillness that our lives are often lacking," Fischer says.



TARASTIEGLITZ

Lacuna Coil hotter, more malleable than other metal bands

Lacuna Coil

The Hottest Chicks in Metal tour,
With The Gathering, In This Moment,
and Stolen Babies
Thursday, 25 May @ 8 PM
Dinwoodie Lounge

PAUL BLINOV
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Lacuna Coil is a metal act with a soft side. The six-piece band may have taken part in such thrash-happy festivals as Ozzfest, but unlike their head-banging contemporaries, they aren't afraid to break out the acoustic guitar every once in a while.

"We started doing [acoustic shows] because the radio stations wanted us to play live in the studio, and usually they don't have much room and couldn't fit all the equipment," singer Andrea Ferro explains. "So we stripped down versions of our songs, and then it seemed that people really liked it."

The band, hailing from Italy, features dual male-female vocals courtesy of Ferro and Cristina Scabbia; Cristiano Migliore and Marco Biazzi on guitars; Marco Zelati on bass; and Cristiano Mozzati on drums. The acoustic show is a new addition to the band's repertoire, as Lacuna Coil been touting their ethereal metal set around Europe for more than a decade. They've taken some small stabs at North America, but "the Hottest Chicks in Metal Tour," is Lacuna Coil's first headlining stint on this side of the Atlantic.

"We always had very good offers

for supporting tours [overseas], and when you support, you always sell records, so the label was always pushing for support gigs," Ferro says. "[Supporting shows are] where you perform to people who don't know you. A headlining show is more for your fans ... we've had this idea that you have to establish yourself for a headlining show. We've had several years to do this, and now it's time to build the name of the band as a headliner."

"It's cool to have a variety of people who listen to your music because it means you've been able to touch different aspects of music listeners, and not just be the band that only the tough metal guys listen to."

"Of course it's kind of a stupid title," Ferro admits, about the Hottest Chicks in Metal moniker. "It's made on purpose. It's a way of saying, 'This is something different.' [The tour] is also supported by [metal magazine] Revolver, so it's just an excuse to say, 'you should check it out.' The title gets people talking, and it works pretty well."

Dubiously titled as it may be, the tour is giving Lacuna Coil an opportunity to perform both their metal

act and their stripped-down songs across the country. Aside from the plugged-in evening shows, the band's stopping by various instrument stores across the continent to do their acoustic set, hold question periods with fans, and even raffle off guitars—"to encourage people to play music," Ferro explains—courtesy of a partnership with Ovation guitars. It's at these smaller gigs, away from amps and patch cords, that Ferro believes Lacuna Coil can prove something to crowds.

"[The acoustic performances] are a way of showing people that even if you're a metal band, and use a lot of arrangement and heavy guitars in songs, you can still play a stripped-down version and make it sound good," Ferro points out.

According to him, the acoustic stops have been surprisingly popular, too, which he sees as a testament to the depth of fans that the band is capable of pulling in. It appears that Lacuna Coil are making themselves quite at home in North America, with audiences of all ages and types.

"Our audience is not only solely the metal crowd," Ferro clarifies. "Mostly, probably, but we also have a lot of people who just like rock music or who are just musically open-minded ... we have people who bring their sons or daughters to the shows. So it's cool to have a variety of people who listen to your music because it means you've been able to touch different aspects of music listeners, and not just be the band that only the tough metal guys listen to."

