



Cloud of paper 'pigments'

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FOR a long time, paper has taken a back seat in an artwork, functioning as the base for an artist to paint on. So what happens when paper itself becomes the "paint"?

Such is the premise of the works that Australia-based Singaporean artist Suzann Victor created during her residency at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI).

Primarily an abstract artist who became known for kinetic illustrations, Victor says that not knowing anything about printmaking and paper was integral to the way her works turned out. "I entered the residency with an open mind and heart, with no preconceptions of what I could or could not do," she shares.

This is the first time she's worked with paper, but Victor was motivated to push boundaries and shift paradigms.



Australia-based Singaporean artist Suzann Victor (above), created 'We Cloud' (top) using paper fibres on polycarbonate frames. PHOTOS: STPI

The only female artist to represent Singapore at its national pavilion in the Venice Biennale since 2001, Victor produced four series of works which challenge the traditional ideas of print-making. "Paper is the heartbeat of STPI, especially as the receiving surface for mark-making," she describes.

She used paper pulp as a "pigment to paint with" - marking acrylic surfaces with it. When the pulp was still in liquid form, she spooned them into different shapes and sizes onto acrylic and polycarbonate surfaces, and then had them dehydrated.

"You can see the fibres, and here, paper is treated as a painterly pigment," she says.

The polycarbonate or acrylic "frames" are like building blocks which can be formed into modular units so that they can be assembled into different shapes. *We Cloud* is the title of this work.

The aesthetic sensuality of the works isn't an end to itself, she points out, but it was about looking at a traditional art form in a new way. "I was

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Victor on her residency at Singapore Tyler Print Institute

frightened to death!" she admits. "I'm not a printmaker, but it's one of the irresistible fears... I did enjoy myself very much."

In another series, Victor used her body to imprint on pulp in creating decollage layers. "I climbed on top of

the pulp, so that they bear my feet, fingers, limbs and movement, and I re-collaged them later when they had become dry. When the layers of paper are put up on the wall, the wall becomes the ground; and the paper becomes the figure," she explains.

Victor describes the works as a "performance" on paper pulp.

Another work about abstraction and landscape is a reference to nationhood.

"The ignorance about printmaking meant that I didn't have the burden of knowledge - and that was very liberating," she shares.

Victor also enjoyed challenging convention - and that is what will awe the audience most, as they marvel at how printmaking takes on a whole new dimension in her hands - and other parts of her body as well.

Imprint: New Works by Suzann Victor will be on show from Jan 18-Feb 21 at STPI, 41 Robertson Quay. Victor will also be carried by STPI at its booth D13, at Art Stages/Singapore from Jan 22-25, Marina Bay Sands, B2 of the Expo and Convention Centre, 10 Bayfront Avenue

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Continued from Cover Page



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