

Emily Reinauer

Human detachment from the natural world is a symptom of modernity. Years spent in the post-industrial city of New Bedford made me aware of the environmental and social consequences that this indifference has caused since the beginning of industry. I am concerned with the economic suffering that is possible when a society relies on a single industry, and that industry fails, and by what can happen when a company is shortsighted, ignoring their environmental impact

In my work, I abstain from this trend of apathy, and examine how obsolete, declining, and modern industries directly and negatively affect society, the landscape, and the environment; I look at how they may also indirectly affect not only the industries that come next, but whatever may come to exist on former industrial sites. I am particularly interested in this indirect, domino effect of pollution, one of the most powerful examples being how certain behaviors during New Bedford's industrial past are having unforeseen consequences on the current leading industry, fishing, and the schools that were built on contaminated wetlands.

Though a variety of marks and great detail is possible, woodcut still allows me to let the materials have some say in the process, and prevents me from exerting complete control over them, which reflects the concerns I have with human interference with nature – the need for total dominance.

I have also begun to explore these themes of detachment more abstractly, deconstructing and reconstructing images of modern architecture. My interest in this subject matter stems the original ideals of the movement, which became prominent when the textile industry in Massachusetts was nearing its end. Though the principles were in response to former architectural movements, I found the movement's ideals – social responsibility, well made over mass-produced, anti-waste, offsetting the damage done by the building – to be a comparable critique of the damage the mills have done.