

Erik Waterkotte

Artist Statement

If you ask, "Why is [the city of] Thekla's construction taking such a long time?" the inhabitants continue hoisting sacks, lowering leaded strings, moving long brushes up and down, as they answer, "So that its destruction cannot begin."

-from Invisible Cities by Italo Calvino

Fluctuating spaces are a primary interest in my work. The prints in this series represent a recent exploration into the image of disaster as a landscape in flux. The mark of devastation is compelling; broken architectures, voids of space and atmosphere distort a once recognizable landscape. In his book *The Destruction of Memory; Architecture and War* Robert Bevan states, "The built environment is merely a prompt, a corporeal reminder of the events involved in its construction, use, and destruction." My prints consider the disaster to be an uncanny space where time has collapsed: the inevitable has become the present and the remnants of destruction become evidence of the past and projections of the future.

The history of printmaking has a lengthy connection to images of disaster and war: Jacques Callot's *The Miseries and Misfortunes of War*, Francisco Goya's *Disasters of War*, Otto Dix's *War*, and Andy Warhol's "Disaster" series. Layering imagery in a variety of graphic medium, I combine images of disaster sites (appropriated, photographed, and collaged) with diagrammatic marks and forms. I use this juxtaposition of photographic, textural, and diagrammatic imagery as a means of expressing the fluctuating nature of time and space seen in the image of disaster. I draw influence from the illustrational conventions of space and color of Japanese Emaki scroll paintings and science fiction book covers from 1950s and 60s. Although my intent with these prints is not outwardly political, I see them as an expression of the times, reinterpreting the imagery of disaster that continues to permeate our popular conscious.