

# ARTIST PROFILE

## NICHOLAS PRICE: MODEST MOTIF, COMPLEX CONSTRUCTION

By ERIN J. SMITH / CASA

**A** SIMPLE IDEA, extrapolated through repetition, can result in something beautiful.

In the first solo show of his career, artist Nicholas Price has done just that: taken a simple repetition and pushed it to a whole new level. “Normally, I would’ve had an idea and just done it. I’ve discovered I could push ideas further,” said Price, whose new work will be on display through the 31st at



Nicholas Price

The Arts Fund Gallery. “I used this show to push to do something with the same idea.”

In January of this year, Price was awarded the Individual Artist Award in Printmaking by The Arts Fund.

The award is given to talented local artists to further their creative work, culminating in a solo show.

Price has made the most of this year, creating the largest body of work he’s made yet in preparation for the show. “Winning,” said Price, “forced me to work a lot this summer.” Of the 25 pieces he has created, 15 appear in the show.

On winning the award, Price said, “I’m very pleased, nervous, and excited. I see people who have won this before and I don’t know how I fit in. But someone saw something in me, and I really can give this a go.” Price is looking forward to furthering his study of art in graduate school and will begin the application process soon. “I don’t know how it will change my future,” he said.

A recent graduate of Westmont College, Price double-majored in English literature and art and studied printmaking with Tony Askew, Price’s mentor. As a sophomore, Price fell in love with the process of printmaking. “My creative impulse came out of learning from the art department,” said Price.

Price is currently the manager of Westmont’s Reynolds Gallery, giving him the opportunity to relate to the artists he studied with, not as a student,



Mistake, detail, 9"x67" monotype etching by Nicholas Price

but as an artist. “I have conversations with artists about the art they’re working on, which can make it more challenging to think about my own,” said Price. “I see a lot of ideas that aren’t pushed far enough.” Price made it his goal for the show to push his ideas further than he had ever before. For the show, entitled *Modest Motif, Complex Construction*, Price used modular printing to create the prints, some nearly six feet in width. “When I first started I figured out how to fit the plate to the paper,” but then Price found that being too precise was limiting. “It was exciting to see what I could come up with,” he said.

The visually intricate patterns are created by overlapping the glass plates. Price hand paints the lines, but the undulating patterns emerge from the process. “I’m very drawn to the process of the lines on the plates. I free-draw the lines, and they are imperfect,” said Price. “I’m very drawn to the imperfections. I like imperfections in people.” The theme of “imperfect” also shows up in the titles of his pieces, such as *Mistake* and *60%*.

Price does not want to force a reading on his work: “The work is not extremely explicit, so there’s a lot people could take away,” said Price. “I don’t want to dictate what people will get out of my work, because it depends on what they are coming with.” But when Price described his piece *60%*, he brought an interesting idea into play. He talked about how each color relates to specific people in his life, although he was reluctant to share which is which. “I know what color I put on the plates and how it’s going to look, but I don’t know how the color will relate to the colors around it. It’s a relational idea to me,” said Price. “I know how I’m going to react to things, but not how others are going to react.”

The gallery is located at 205C Santa Barbara St. Gallery hours are 1-5pm Tuesday through Saturday and by appointment. For more information, call 965-7321.



60%, 10"x67" monotype etching by Nicholas Price