

Title-

Do traditional methods of creating art still matter in a digital age: looking at the work of Eska Marsh a contemporary print artist.

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Course-ba illustration

Word count-1521

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Introduction-

For this essay I will be looking at the artist Eska Marsh her art mostly her dry point and carborundum prints and discussing whether traditional methods of art are still relevant in a digital age. I shall look at style medium and narrative.

Style-

I feel that these words, written about Giorgio Morandi ring true in regards to Marsh's works. -The difference between the subject and the background is questioned, these spaces and forms with form usually being more important are challenged with the negative space being as important our usual ideas are interrogated. (Coldwell, p 2019)

Marsh's drypoint print work is generally monochrome, in black and white. The way the lines are drawn are lines primitive and defined. Marsh- of bill Traylor "I love how simple his drawings are its almost as if he's not seen a dog before he drew a dog I love that... I look at bill traylors work and it inspired the next group of work I made . Long beaks and tangled tales ."(draw,2026)

Charles shannon spoke of bill traylor's work to the audiences he attracted - you should look to the abstract as well as the realism. Enjoy the minimal style as well as the abstract-figurative skills (Bernier, cm 2013)

The forms of the objects that she draws are easy to comprehend, a coffee pot looks like a coffee pot, but drawn crudely...



“And this really strong sense of tonal design of these kind of these balanced shapes of light and dark has been a thread’ through Marsh’s work.”

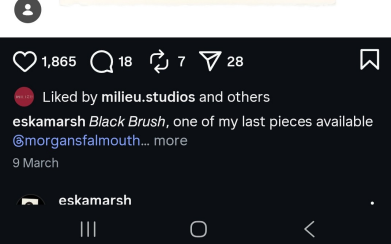
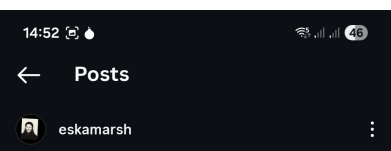
(Draw,2026)

When talking about her influences in style, Marsh said that -“ Egon Scheiles work taught me to be really expressive with my drawings also how body and torsos could be really elongated and things didn’t need to be in correct proportion and often he didn’t do shading and I don’t always quite understand how light hits a object that’s why my work is really flat.”(draw 2026)



In terms of the artists style, texture is added heavily. With the use of carborundum and the ink left on the plate in areas where it might have been wiped off. The forms are usually in a field of blank space giving the objects depicted a certain definition. Words about giorgio morandi’s still lives- His work strips his compositions down to a minimum , shapes spacing and tonal change , compact an image to a minimum.(Coldwell, p 2019)

In image 1 black brush she has taken the silhouette of five different brushes , the images of the brushes appear flattened .they are executed relatively simply, held in place in a white background giving a hard projected view of their forms.



Medium-

Marsh generally works in dry point and carborundum although recently she has been drawing in oil pastel images similar to her prints.

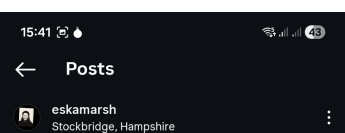


Marsh explains about one piece; - “so this is an Indian ink drawing so I would have drawn all the objects much larger scanned them in and created this composition...I would then make loads of charcoal layers and scan those charcoal layers and then overlay them onto my digital ink drawings which gives textures” (draw,2026). This quote refers to her early work, which I find interesting, as I like Marsh’s work for being traditional but she also has used

digital processes.

Marsh-“ I would digitally add loads of texture round my drawings to make them look like actual prints ,so when I got into dry point I like leaving loads of ink on the plate and giving loads of shadow round the object and making them look really messy its hard to do that with just drawing.”(draw,2026)

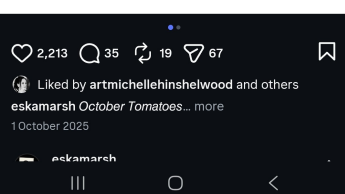
When Marsh makes plates, she works freehand with her scribe to produce an image. Like her oil pastel drawings, this doesn’t take along time as may be perceived by her simplistic style.



1/2

An artist- Holly Coulis uses her familiar motifs of oranges and lemons, but she places them in ways that are ‘physically impossible’, objects that once sat neatly on a kitchen table are now flattered into a new kind of space, challenging how we normally understand depth and spatial relationships. (Holly coulis shows us how to look closer.)

In the piece October tomatoes the plate is a simple dry point line with the fruit a carborundum textured areas. It was made by drawing and the effect of that makes the piece look like a dated wall painting or cave painting rather than a contemporary print.



Narrative-

When exploring the narrative behind Marsh's work she often makes images of domestic items, domestic scenes, or common items, sometimes with a vintage edge to them.

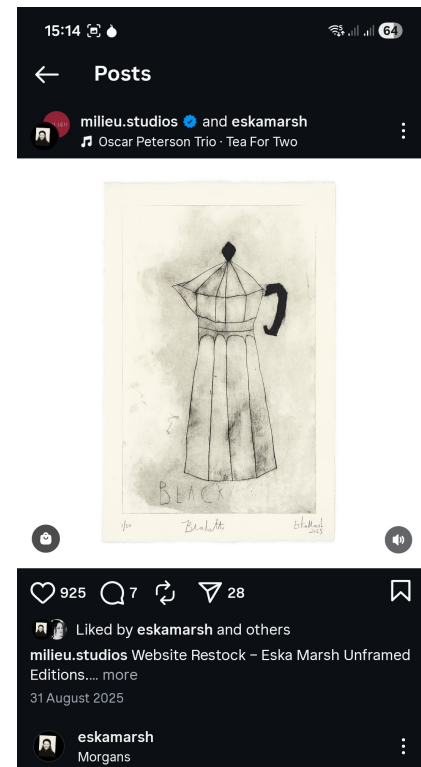
"If any one knows my print work now I'm obsessed with coffee makers chairs, eggs, pears .. I keep coming back to domestic objects. [Interviewer] what is it in these objects that you find interesting? [marsh] they all have their story to tell and I think I always loved antiques . In our house we've grown up with Lotts of Windsor chairs and so a lot of the items are quite nostalgic." (Draw 2026)

This practice of the nostalgic and familiar also connects to the still-life work of Andy Warhol. In 'Space Fruits' about Andy Warhol's work is related -A still life often uses common place items such as personal objects or flowers. In Warhols 'Space fruit' we see examples of these still life objects used intentionally around spacial areas. Warhols prints of 'Space Fruit' bring the sense of calm we often experience with the still life genre, insofar as they show static items 'just as they exist' (Andy Warhol: still life in pop art 2023)

Marshes use of the every day could also be compared to Giorgio Morandi.

Morandi painted everyday objects things which could be found in any second hand shop, many of which he bought in Bologna. They don't carry the heavy symbolism of traditional still lives, like the rich 17th century dutch banquet scenes or the moral messages of skulls and snuffed candles. (Coldwell p 2019)

I believe Marsh's purpose in her practice is to make aesthetically pleasing art that connects with its audience through nostalgic, narrative items. Alongside her use of space and



placement, Marsh's personal touch informs us on her life experiences, including places, adding further depth to her prints and drawings.

To appreciate an Andy Warhol still life one must appreciate his way of turning the everyday objects into an eye-catching image, bringing attention to surprise images and items he brought a sense of intrigue into the common place. (Andy Warhol: Still Life in Pop Art 2023)

We see in the piece "Place Like Home" the important chairs Marsh loves with a fish dinner on the table in front of us. We can't be sure if the missing diners are home or we are as the cutlery is placed for the viewer. Marsh speaks of people about to arrive or having just gone with her empty chairs. Is this table like the Mary Celeste? Or could it be interpreted as 'about to get busy'? Marsh's work using chairs as still-life, I feel, is similar to the same narrative of work as the contemporary artist David Hockney.

Sometimes Hockney uses chairs as part of the narrative in his painted artworks. He treats them as more than furniture, by giving them emotional meaning.

"A chair might suggest someone's presence, an absence or time moving on". (Souza 2026)

Marsh- "...But yea recently I've been talking about chairs and how apparently a chair in art work in contemporary art a chair represents someone who has left or someone is arriving and often it represents someone that has gone and isn't coming back...I'm interested in that and the symbolism of that."

I think this reference is relevant to describing Marsh's successes in her work. -Describing Kenauskgaard, Corbet, and Hanson-when these artists use ordinary, everyday items in their work these things appear different. By placing them in the context of the gallery or frame we look afresh at these objects. (Kenway J 2019)



Conclusion-

I think there is still place for traditional art in a digital age. Although it's interesting to learn from my research Marsh has digitally manipulated with texture some of her drawings to look like the 'noise' generally seen from printing. In order to keep up with the modern Contemporary illustrators and artists today tend wear many hats and to have a broader range of techniques than ever before. By many hats I mean as well defining their traditional practice, artists today need to have computer skills, websites, photography, even marketing and sales skills alongside their traditional one in order to make a living as a professional. I feel all this extra digital work can take valuable time and energy away from the artist and that the real value will always be the hand crafted piece of art made by these artists physically and mentally, and don't think digital art will ever be able to replace that.

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