

# Jason Scuilla

## Artist Statement

Throughout Roman history, artists have chosen to depict emotional power through imagery of sexuality, religion, and art creation. Today, the United States of America is a powerful country, which shares many of the same vices as Ancient Rome. As an American artist of Italian descent, I choose to investigate these themes through printmaking, an art form famous for challenging the accepted norms of society. My practice follows this established tradition in the history of printmaking, best described by Frank and Dorothy Getlein in *The Bite of The Print*. "...Many a first rate printmaker has deceived himself and others into thinking that what he really wants to do is reform our vices. He doesn't at all. He wants to point them out, laugh at them, weep at them, shrug his shoulders at them, but above all to insist that they are there."

## Colossal Nero Prints

The Monumental fragments of Italian sculpture in Rome have inspired several of my recent prints. During a recent residency in Rome I was able to visit the Domus Aureas, Emperor Nero's pleasure palace. There I learned about the Colossus of Nero. According to legend, a colossal statue of the evil roman emperor once stood where the Coliseum stands today. I'm in the process of creating a series of intense, gnarled foot fragments of what I imagine the foot of Nero could have looked like. I've taken imaginative liberties with these images, enlarging the foot to an impossibly large scale and disregarding the original idealized roman form for a more contemporary interpretation.

## Spirits of Salome' Prints

Another suite of prints included in this body of work is a series of religious etchings inspired by Italian frescos. The catalysts for these prints are specific Italian Renaissance master works of art that have an emotional effect on me. I start by educating myself on the religious narrative depicted in the fresco, then study the formal elements of composition, in order to simplify the image down to it's essential elements. I extract these elements from the work, and use them to create my own unique image. For example, my print, "Villa with Spirits (The Dance of Salome)" began from a preliminary study of the Massolino's St. Catherine Cycle in San Clemente, a small church in Rome, Italy. Gradually, through hours of drawing and re- drawing, the piece was transformed into an image of Salome, just after her infamous dance for King Herod. Through my process, the once claustrophobic interior space of Masolino's composition has been transformed into a fragmented roman ruin open to the elements. In the background a decapitated John the Baptist can now be seen rising to the heavens.

<http://www.jasonscuilla.com>

[jscuilla@jasonscuilla.com](mailto:jscuilla@jasonscuilla.com)