

Carving in color

Kris Wiltse (Seattle) uses Photoshop to give a twist to traditional printmaking. For "Vulnerable" (part of "Mixed Emotions," a deck of 60 cards illustrating feelings), Wiltse cut one linoleum block for the lightest colors, then made a print. Returning to the same block, she made two other prints, carving away more each time. Then she scanned all three prints and used Photoshop to add color.



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1 In preparation for her color work, Wiltse scanned her three prints, opened them in Photoshop, selected all the black pixels, and copied them into separate layers in a new document. This resulted in three layers with black pixels on a transparent background.



2 Wiltse created a new layer at the bottom of the stack for color. Keeping her third print visible, Wiltse painted in this color layer with Photoshop's airbrush and paintbrush tools. "I work from warm to cool to black," she says, "so I start with yellow and red."

3 Next, Wiltse activated the layer with her first print. Turning on Preserve Transparency (by pressing the / key), she painted the black areas. The red and yellow layer showed through the transparent parts.

4 On the second print, she painted dark, cool colors.

5 Finally, Wiltse painted the third print, keeping the colors of the woman and umbrella dark enough for good contrast with the background.

6 Texture is important to Wiltse: "The speckle effect is a large part of my [traditional] print work," she says. Using Preserve Transparency protects the texture of the scan, while allowing her to add color in the black areas.

