

Front Cover

The cover is printed on bright, pale pink paper. It contains the title “*Relief Printing: Insulation Foam* by Míša Štorková.” Smaller text at the bottom of the page reads “from the series *Pressing Forward: Making Fine Arts Printmaking Accessible for All.*”

In between this text on the centre of the page is an insulation foam relief print of a block and series of tools laid out. The image is continuous from the back cover to the front; on the front cover are shown the front section of an insulation foam block (with a pink panther logo) and a pencil. The background of this image has a soft, organic-feeling chatter.

Text-to-Speech and Audio Disclaimer:

The citation style used in text-only and audio format is different than visual format. For visual zines, Chicago style citations are used, with superscript roman numerals that correspond to endnotes in the ‘References’ section at the end. For text-only zines designed for text-to-speech readers, citations will be formatted as such: (endnote #: cited to [name]). Corresponding Chicago-style endnotes can also be found in the ‘References’ section at the end. This difference allows for smoother navigation and clarity.

These zines are created in a collage aesthetic that uses paper cutouts, imperfect drawings, expressive scribbles, and stickers to provide visual interest. Individual pages include focused image descriptions of diagrams and photographs, without descriptions of this collage aesthetic.

Context/Acknowledgements:

This zine is part of *Pressing Forward: Making Fine Arts Printmaking Accessible to All*, a series focused on accommodating Fine Arts Printmaking (namely, silkscreen and relief) to physically Disabled artists.

This series of zines addresses accessibility as it relates to my lived experiences, and the experiences of the Disabled printmakers with whom I consulted. It is not a comprehensive or exhaustive list of accommodations which could be used while printmaking. Accommodations focus on working at wheelchair height, with reduced mobility, strength, and stamina. Disability is as diverse as there are Disabled people, and I welcome others to expand and extend upon my research in areas that I haven't covered.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this study (REB25-1061).

These zines were conceptualized and realized on Treaty 7 territory, northwest of where the Bow and Elbow rivers meet at a site traditionally known as Moh'kins'tsis to the Blackfoot, Wîchîspa to the Stoney Nakoda, and Guts'ists'i to the Tsuut'ina, and on which land I am an uninvited guest. The Métis Nation of Alberta (Nose Hill Métis District 5 and Elbow Métis District 6) also call this area home.

Thank you to the 5 incredible Disabled printmakers who shared their practices with me; in no particular order: Zoe Z. Steinberg, Heather Huston, Chelsea Clarke, Javier Flores, and Chelsey Campbell. I could not have done this project without their willingness to share their lived experiences and technical knowledge with me.

While barriers persist within institutional walls, I am grateful for the support from the University of Calgary's Program for Undergraduate Research Experience (PURE), which funded this project. Additionally, thank you to Dr. Ada Jaarsma for providing materials funding, and the Disability Studies scholars who consulted with me on this project; Dr. Zack Marshall and Noah Ulicki.

Thank you Aidan Dupuis, for acting as my hand model, and Dylan Martin for being a wonderful studio assistant.

Thank you to Alex Linfield, for advocating to put Míša ramps around the art building where needed, and for building me a wheelchair-height silkscreen printing table.

And finally, thank you to my long-time research supervisor, Heather Leier, who has taught me to raise my standards for allyship.

Pages 1-2: What Block Should I Use?

If carving and printing linoleum isn't an option for you, insulation foam could be a good block replacement (endnote 1: cited to Alex Linfield). Instead of carving into this one, you can simply squish it down with drawing processes or make impressions with objects you find around you.

Look for pink insulation foam from the drywall/insulation section of a hardware store. They sell it in two thicknesses (1-inch or ½-inch), and I find the ½-inch is plenty thick enough.

A pencil-and-sharpie drawing of an insulation foam block. This block contains a sketch of a cartoon panther holding a block of foam. Text at the top reads "Redacted Brand TM," and smaller text along the side reads "½ -inch thickness." An arrow is pointing towards this block from the text "generic pink feline brand."

Pages 3-4: Example Print

Over this two-page spread is a print pulled from a block of pink relief foam, showcasing various textures and marks that can be achieved. Black ink was printed on white paper, showcasing the following marks and how they were achieved:

- At the top of the page, loopy, narrow, and crisp shapes were made by a pencil, as well as dots that resemble stippling.
- Below that, larger, crisp shapes are created through cutouts by an x-acto knife.
- A rougher impression of tire-tracks is created by wheelchair treads, cuts across this page from the middle of the left side to the bottom right. Various amounts of compression were achieved in the block, leading to softer edges and a more organic quality.
- In the bottom left, ornate letters “ABC” were stamped into the block with leatherworking stamps. These printed with a moderate clarity.

Marks shown on the right-side of this page were all made using various attachments to a Dremel power tool:

- At the top, a range of crisp, small and wide lines were made using a small ball-end engraving tip. These marks are most similar to the results achieved with a pencil.
- Through the middle of the page, much wider and rounder shapes were achieved using a large ball-end engraving tip. This tool also carved circles of various sizes.
- Across the bottom of the page jagged lines were achieved with a pointed-end engraving tip. Rounded shapes and lines made with this tip became more angular and pointed, while straight lines allowed for the finest levels of detail seen.

Page 5: Press Setup

Set your pressure to just hand tight (don't squish your block)

I use 3 blankets: a sizing catcher on the bottom, then a cushion, and finally a pusher on top.

A marker sketch of a traditional flat-bed printing press is shown, with arrows pointing from the text to the corresponding areas of the press.

Page 6: Press Bed Setup

A top-down view of a press bed with a block, partially under the drum, that contains that drawing of a standing figure. In front is a blank block, labelled:

Leading block (of the same thickness) to keep the press engaged.

Pages 7-8: Other Printing Tips

To prevent the foam from eating up loads of ink because of its porosity, seal it with an acrylic gel medium before you start printing. Use a ratio of 1:1 gel medium to water.

Soak and blot your paper, as this makes it more pliable to transfer ink from a softer surface than a traditional relief block.

The amount of ink you need depends on what material you're printing on: paper or plastic acetate need more, while a spongier material like foam or bubble wrap needs significantly less, since it can squish into the crevices and pickup ink that way.

REFERENCES

1. Míša Štorková and Alex Linfield, personal interview, July 28, 2025.

Artist Bio

A black-and-white headshot of the artist is shown here. They are a white, androgynous person with a short mullet and tattoos, wearing a dark cut-off t-shirt, with their arms crossed in front of their chest. Along the side of this photograph, text reads "photo by April Neuhaus."

Míša Štorková (they/he/on/ona) is an emerging artist, craftsperson, and arts educator originally from Czechia and currently based on Treaty 7 land in so-called Canada. Míša's primary mediums are printmaking and analog photography, though anything employing a hands-on mixed media approach lies within their interest. Their art practice focuses primarily on the Disabled experience, matrilineal relationships, and generational trauma – regarding biological and/or found family, and they use humour to find meaning within the absurdity of marginalization. Míša strives to make works which question what we view as Fine Art, and to give voice to those who have been 'Othered'. Their work has been exhibited across Canada and published internationally.

BACK COVER IMAGE DESCRIPTION:

This cover is printed on a bright, pale pink paper.

An image of an insulation foam relief print of a block and series of tools laid out. The image is continuous from the back cover to the front; on the back cover are shown the back section of an insulation foam block, a face mask, and a paintbrush leaning on a tin with paint splatter. The background of this image has a soft, organic-feeling chatter.

Text underneath this image reads "Copyright Míša Štorková 2026."