When I was peering out over vast landscapes, or flying down the side of a mountain on my skis, I experience a natural, immediate, and sacred connection with the world. Being outside provides me with a sense of self-reliance, freedom, and fascination. Creating art is similar to how I use a map, as it is a way of exploring, navigating, and locating myself within the greater context of the natural world. Printmaking allows me to create more detailed designs inspired by my relationship with the environment. In exploring the differences between photo-emulsions used in the silkscreen process, I have gained a better understanding of the nuances inherent in the preparation of a screen that is necessary for the creation of a detailed print.

**METHODS**

I compared three types of photo-emulsions, testing each one three times, at different exposures. Screen A was the control, exposed with a step-wedge (Fig. 1) at 20, 30, 40, and 50 light units. Screen B was exposed differently for each emulsion, depending on the results from the Screen A exposure times. Screen A and Screen B both received the same layer of emulsion. The exposure times for Screen C were based on the manufacturers’ recommendations, using two layers of emulsion, instead of one. Usually two layers of emulsion are only needed in commercial settings, where the screen is used hundreds of times or more.

**RESULTS**

Overall the greatest amount of detail and clarity was achieved using one layer of WBP, exposed at 40-50 light units. The Speedball emulsion also achieved excellent detail, but had a lot of soap scum during wash out. The QTX required two layers of emulsion for good results, but its shelf life is comparably shorter than the WBP and Speedball emulsions.

**ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The QTX emulsion comes pre-sensitized, meaning it is ready to use instantly. The WBP and Speedball emulsions come with a small diazo sensitzer powder that has to be prepared before being mixed in with the emulsion. Diazo sensitized emulsions have a longer shelf life initially, but once they are mixed they have the same shelf life as a pre-sensitized emulsion.

I observe and record what I see in the environment around me. Through sketches, notes, photographs, and the collection of natural objects, I continually add to my visual vocabulary of patterns, shapes, colors and lines. Alaskan Collection is representative of an actual collection of objects found throughout a summer of hiking, canoeing, and camping.

By distilling the forms I observe in nature, similar patterns and processes began to appear on all scales. The universal form of a circle or sphere is apparent on the microscopic, personal, physical, seasonal, and planetary scale. I often use circles in my work, such as in Solstice, to represent the cycles and universal connections inherent in nature.