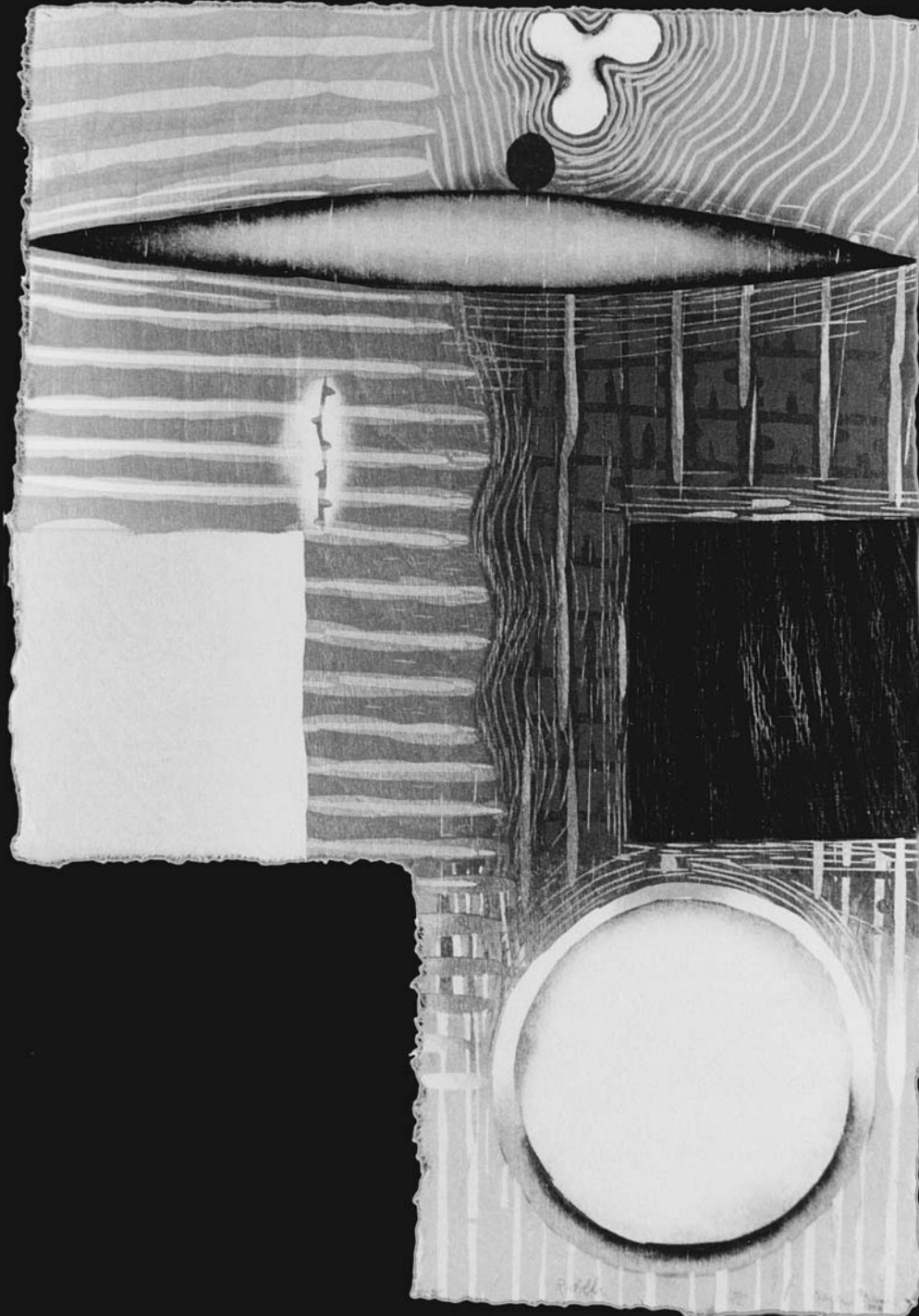


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Karen Kunc, Riddle, 1997, woodcut on shaped paper, 16" x 11"

INSIDE: Reversals; In Pursuit of Culture; Makeready; Sightlines; Street Prints; Rauschenberg; Web Tour; Misch Kohn; John Ihle; Annual Meeting ...



Herlinde Spahr, Cracktal Composition II, 1993, collage of lithographs on formica, 5' x 8' (Photo: Joe Schopplein)

About Reversals in Printmaking

by *Herlinde Spahr*

After the guide had told us the meaning of the smallest details in Van Eyck's *The Adoration of the Lamb*, I asked him why the gold lettering on one of the side panels was written upside down and backward. "Oh, that's simple," he said, in his heavy Ghent dialect in which the *g* sounds like an *h*, "that's simple. Those letters are not intended for you, they are painted for God who is looking down from above." I was immediately charmed by that medieval God so bodily present as a viewer of the panel. But that simple thought of a second, opposing point of view, looking back at the artist and the viewer is unforgettable. Painted as an act of worship, the rotated text of gold in turn challenged those looking at the panel to adopt a different perspective, to try to decipher the world from God's point of view.

In the medium of prints it is not Van Eyck's God who is looking back at the viewer but the printmaker himself, an artist whose medium demands an imagination capable of radical reversals. The printmaker's vision is always split

between the time before and after printing, between the private perspective in the studio and the public print in the museum, between the unique and intimate nature of the matrix and the reversed vision in the print.

Although photographers and sculptors also experience this moment of reversal, with the flopped negative and with the inverted cast, only the print artist creates a work of art by imagining it from the outset as an object in a world in which all the values are reversed, where any vision must first manifest itself in its negative form. Rather than look at prints, one should look through prints, because in the depth of every print is the artist looking back from within. A printmaker always describes the world as seen from a eclectic vantage point, a world in which high and low, black and white, right and left have no fixed value.

The Beltir, a people in North Asia, believe the lower world to be an inverted image of this world. They bury their dead with the reins in the left hand of the corpse

rather than in the right one, and the objects they place on the grave for use of the dead are either broken or turned upside down in the firm belief that they will emerge whole in the other world. These striking rituals are not unlike the activities of printmakers who anticipate the way the press will reverse and transform their images. Why do so many of the print techniques remind us of forms of torture? Take the expressionist artist fiercely attacking an innocent block of pine, ripping and splintering the wood in search of the truth, or the etcher's perverse delight in disfiguring the smooth skin of copper by incising deep furrows with tools ranging from burins to dremels, by eating into the metal with poisonous acids, Dutch mordants: are these acts of disfigurement not similar to the distorting rituals of the Beltir? As artists, we dream of high ridges while digging away in the trenches. So much of our craft that remains hidden from the public defies the pristine, serene, framed and tamed works of art that are called "prints." So much of our craft is geared at obscuring the reality of that violence done in the privacy of our studios: these activities are the rituals that will guarantee the final print to emerge whole, pure, restored.

But why should all this matter to a novice looking at prints? Imagine a viewer, unfamiliar with Christian mythology, looking at Grünewald's panel of the resurrection in Colmar. Is it possible to admire the triumphant body of Christ rising skyward without knowing what is painted on the other side of that panel? There that same body lies dead, a green corpse with a skin covered with pustules oozing pus, with bruises and gashes disfiguring the flesh, with fragments of thorns embedded in clotted blood. Some prints are not worth admiring if we remain ignorant of that miraculous process of transfiguration at the core of the printmaker's imagination. To look at a print always implies looking at two prints, to try to imagine a rotating point of view that twists the truth around once more. Darkness in any print has a light all its own. I once heard of a gallery owner refraining from exhibiting the new prints of one of the artists in his stable "because the work had turned so dark and somber." Let us not be fooled. The language indigenous to printmaking tends to explode that vocabulary, its dance around the values of darkness and light, of the left and the right, of highs and lows will never be a language that benignly underwrites the status quo. How much light does it take before darkness comes into view?

In the final episode of Ken Burns's documentary *The Civil War*, he zooms in on a neglected greenhouse filled with weeds. During the war, photography was the new medium of choice. But when the bloodshed of battle was finally over, people no longer wanted to look at photographs recording the horrors of that war, and thousands of glass negatives depicting proud uniforms and bloody corpses were sold to be salvaged as greenhouse panes. This silent greenhouse of the period, now rank with weeds, was

perhaps the most moving and poetic image preserved of that most bloody of wars. Imagine a gardener at the time, working inside this chapel of glass, with the sun slowly drying the emulsion, the bloody images quietly cracking and peeling away, the tomatoes ripening in the heat. Looking up to the sky he would see, staring back at him, black soldiers turned white, gaping wounds emitting light, an army of hollow-eyed ghosts, the poetry of stained glass. Yes, this, too, is the workspace of an artist, a fragile chapel in which visitors from the real world must learn to look with different eyes.

I often think of the Beltir and their graves. What would be left of their culture if the belief in a different and better world would gradually fade and die? Their empty ritual of reversals would only leave behind a collection of tombs with left-handed corpses, a scattering of cracked vessels. Also the process of printmaking is doomed to become but a strange ritual, a series of empty procedures and techniques, unless its language of reversals compels the imagination to look at the world from a different perspective.

A printmaker is not someone who produces prints, rather an artist who is looking at the world from the vanishing point.

Postscript

In 1993, the year I became an American citizen, I was awarded a Kala fellowship in Berkeley and set out on an ambitious print measuring five by eight feet. It was a large collage of torn lithographs printed on Formica and shaped with a router into the contours of the United States. But rather than depict the map as seen from the sky as is usual with maps, I chose to imagine a point of view looking upward from deep within the earth. California now faced the Eastern seaboard, and New York was banished to the Far West to endure the storms of the Pacific. And rather than depict the man-made borders of the different states, I applied on the stone cracking varnishes invented for the forgery trade to create a natural network of meandering lines cracking up the face of this reversed map of the United States. When this work was recently reproduced in a book, I discovered to my dismay that the map was scanned in reverse, making it once more conform to its traditional format. Apparently, the printer flopped the image at the last minute. I hereby dedicate these brief thoughts to that printer who reversed my reversal.

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Herlinde Spahr is a Bay Area artist and writer. Her recent monograph Open Studio: Work from 1977 to 1997 is reviewed in this issue of The California Printmaker.

Ariadne's Thread—Memory in Pursuit of Culture: Claudia Bernardi in Discussion with Moira Roth at Artists Forum

by Fran Valesco

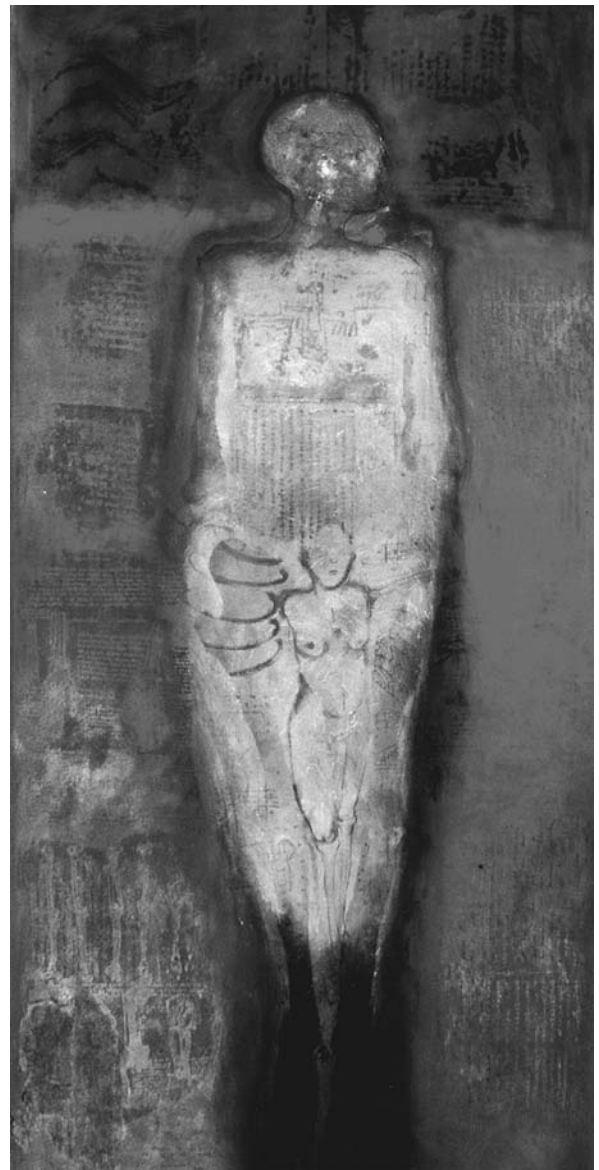
Artists Forum presents work in the context of conceptual concerns and features various events such as artists' talks, critical lectures, panel discussions, and workshops in conjunction with exhibitions. On October 29, 1997, Artists Forum presented a conversation with artist Claudia Bernardi and art historian Moira Roth, titled "Ariadne's Thread—Memory in Pursuit of Culture." The event took place in the gallery at 251 Post Street in San Francisco where Claudia's exhibition, "Bajo La Piel" ("Under the Skin") was mounted. That evening's conversation was the result of an initial gift by Claudia to Moira of a spool of thread, which led to other gifts, phone calls, faxes, and handwritten notes. The title of their talk is a reference to Ariadne, daughter of King Minos; she gave Theseus the thread by which he found his way out of the Minotaur's labyrinth.

Claudia explained her technique in the gallery brochure:

This is a series of frescoes on paper (which) explores memory kept and retained in the multiple geographies of the body, subtle stains of history that remain etched as a tattoo of life. In fresco, the pigments are not painted on the wall, they become the wall, being embedded into the fresh plaster. My work departs from the same principle. I use pure pigments that are embedded in the paper by the pressure of a printing press. No binder, oil or medium is used in this process, allowing the pigments to maintain their purest intensity. Each fresco on paper is the result of multiple runs through the press. The coloration is often times a process of subtraction, a scraping away from the layers....My art work is profoundly influenced by participating with the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team in exhumations of mass graves, in investigations of violations of human rights against civilian populations in El Salvador, Guatemala, Argentina and Ethiopia. In scratching the surface, I identify human figures that interact with the world of hidden images. The pigments convey the essential "materia prima." Their intensity and fugitive condition, so fragile yet persistent, are metaphors of the elusiveness of life and the never ending determination of hope.

Several pieces in the exhibition were discussed. *Imprint of History*, includes text from the 1994 exhumation in Ethiopia in which Claudia participated, where two thousand people were murdered. The scale of the massacre was overwhelming, and she felt she was at the frontier of culture. Instinct became a way to retain almost impossible memories. It was also a way of dealing with rituals of death and of cultural expectations. Many survivors helped her to learn more; thus it became an illumination of history.

The Space That Is Left Barely Contains You includes her sister's letters. Their friendship is sustained through long, handwritten letters. The question hangs in the air: how long will they both do forensic work? The work will



Claudia Bernardi, *Bajo La Piel*, 1997, fresco on paper, 60" x 30"
(Photo: Malcom Lubliner)

inevitably change their relationship, though they don't want it to. They are not afraid of persecution, but of becoming cynical. Both of them empathize with many throughout the world, who live knowing that every time they leave their house they don't know if they are coming back. It gives the sisters what Claudia calls "crooked humor."

Anatomy of Flying is about awareness that the anchor of life is so tentative. The winged image comes from her experience in El Salvador where most of the exhumed were children. She observed the small rib cages, intact and wet, inside a T-shirt. She felt the bones would become dust if she touched them. They were so perfect, so tiny, that it reminded her of the skeletal part of a bird or an angel, and represented the transcendence of wings expanding.

Moira asked how audiences differed in the United States and Argentina. Claudia replied that in Argentina everyone shares history. In fact, there are three generations that relate to the disappeared and there is a personal connection to her

work. "Oh, this is how I remember my daughter." In the U.S., people are moved by the art without knowing the history. The viewer makes it possible to land within the image, surrendering to it. She calls this the generosity of the viewer.

During the question period someone asked why she does the forensic work. Claudia noted that she and her sister were orphaned at a very young age. There was a familiarity and contact with death. After eight years of political repression in Argentina from 1976 to 1983, a new democratic government came to power. Clyde Snow, an American scientist, began to get in touch with students of medicine, archaeology, and anthropology to investigate human rights abuses during the years of the dictatorship. Her sister was studying archaeology and was trained as part of a team to work on the problem of finding the twenty thousand disappeared. The idea was to present the evidence to families and to form an alliance based on remembering. Her sister thought Claudia would be interested and asked her to help with the project. For Claudia the forensic work emphasizes the similarities of people rather than polarities.

Herlinde Spahr asked how both Claudia and the survivors were transformed through the exhumations. Claudia stressed the importance of retrieving repressed memories and telling the stories of witnesses. The exhumations can only happen because of what witnesses say. She also confronts those responsible for the massacres. She asks, "Has anyone in your family disappeared?" The answer is "No," and both know why. That telling moment, in which personal culpability is made visible, has nothing to do with the final report.

A question was asked about the legal impact the reports have had. Claudia replied that unfortunately there are small changes compared to the effort: there has been no repercussion on any general's career. What is important to her is that the families are presented with the evidence and/or remains of the family member, and that can start a healing process. There is the importance of uncovering the truth to stop the denial of what's happened.

As a final topic, Moira asked Claudia to discuss her sister's discovery of Che Guevara's grave. Claudia, who was there when his skeleton was exhumed, replied that in the United States Che's image is connected with Cuba and his part in the revolution. In Latin America he is a symbol of the power of the alternative. He became an icon of the effortless moment when you feel what you need to do and you do it. The thread of history took him to Cuba, but he also worked with lepers and for various social causes. His importance is that he could not be silent or inactive, representing for a generation one who takes a stand. She said people gathered spontaneously on the streets after the news about Che to become unified in the sense of the community of history.

Frances Valesco has taught at various Bay Area institutions. Her work is in the collections of the Fine Arts Museums, San Francisco; the Oakland Museum; and the New York Public Library. Recently she exhibited her work at Fu Jen University and Esther Huang Gallery in Taipei, Taiwan.

Letter to Rauschenberg

by Glen Rogers Perrotto

I was inspired to write a letter to Robert Rauschenberg by a young physician/artist in Mississippi, Dr. Kim Sessums. My sister, his nurse, has been telling me of his artistic progress over the last couple of years. When he's not seeing patients, he is in his office molding clay into the likenesses of those around him. In 1996 he decided to do a bronze bust of his favorite artist and hero, Andrew Wyeth. After getting down the basic features by working with photographs and drawings, he realized that what he really needed was a face to face sitting with Mr. Wyeth himself. He pondered this for weeks, asking himself and anyone else who would listen, "Should I write Andrew Wyeth for permission to come to see him?" Most nay-sayers (including that little voice within) responded with the typical, "Don't be ridiculous!" My sister said the opposite, "What's the worst that can happen?" One month later, Kim Sessums was on the airplane flying up to Wyeth's studio with the incomplete clay bust on the seat next to him. He had been granted six hours with the famous artist. While Kim sculpted, Andrew Wyeth sat on a stool, chatting about his life and work. As it turns out, this is the first time that Wyeth has ever granted permission to another artist to portray him. Kim Sessums was given a rare audience with the master. He succeeded because he asked, because of his sincerity, because of his intense desire and purpose.

Dear Robert Rauschenberg,

I remember the first time I saw your work, a postage stamp sized reproduction in an art magazine. No matter how small the picture was, it was arresting. I hadn't seen images put together like that before. Enrolled in my first printmaking class at the University of Florida in 1975, I had gone to the library for inspiration. On those pages, I saw new ways of arranging space. I saw control and abandon used simultaneously. I saw the combination of photography with brush-stroke, found materials and paint combined with elegance, the layering of fabric, paper, and canvas. In those few moments, I was introduced to the work of Robert Rauschenberg and this work has continually proved to be a source of inspiration.

In December, I gave myself a beautiful gift; I flew to New York to see your retrospective at the Guggenheim. I was not disappointed! Five levels of your work, gradually unfolding, with each curve of the spiral bringing a fresh discovery. What I love about your early work is that it is so raw. (As I moved from one piece to another, I mouthed to myself, "raw Rauschenberg," over and over). I imagine that you worked as you lived as you worked. When I see a piece such as *Odalisk*, from 1955, I am transported to your studio, smell the smells, sense what the weather was like that day. Your early combinations bring inanimate objects to life: discarded windows, pillows, bits of metal and stuffed chickens. All

were transformed by your touch, by your choices. And your choices, placement and juxtaposition of objects, seem casually brilliant from my perspective. You have a way of putting things together, each line or dot of color placed effortlessly, like a Zen master intuitively making the right decision.

The year I was born, you erased a de Kooning drawing. The year I was born, you made a series of gold leaf paintings with crumpled and textured surfaces; a series that shines in its freshness and simplicity today. The year I was born you created a series of small assemblages with found wood, concrete, and metal that you called *Elemental Sculpture*. In one, *Music Box*, you pounded nails into the inside of a wooden crate and suspended three rocks with their points. In 1953 you were a young, daring artist who was living in the hippest place in the universe, and I was just opening my eyes. Twenty-two years later, after escaping my provincial home town in Mississippi, the land of magnolia paintings, you taught me how to see in a new way.

It is not a secret that your prints had a major impact on the revival of printmaking in the 1960s and 70s. Your work with Tatanyana Grossman at Universal Limited Art Editions demonstrated your love of the mediums of lithography and etching. Your continual exploration of materials and effects, and your shattering precepts of size have influenced countless artists. Your mixed media approach combining silk-screen with lithography, etching with photography really started a mini revolution in the print studio. You essentially opened the doors for us all to experiment. Your layering of printed fabric over paper, eliminating the need for a frame, gave us all a release from the traditional approach to presentation. Your use of solvent transfers with their gestural strokes and the energy contained therein caused a proliferation of copycat works on paper in every art school in the 70s. By using techniques such as blueprinting and offset lithography, you paved the way for others to cross over boundaries between fine art and commercial processes. I recently produced two twenty-by-forty-foot fabric banners with elementary school students with the Cyanotype process using their body prints to produce an image. My inspiration was the body prints that you and Susan Weil created in 1950 that were reproduced in that magazine at the University of Florida. Those powerful images have remained with me.

When anyone asks which artist has most influenced my work, I can only think of one, Robert Rauschenberg. As I look around this retrospective, I am astounded at how your work withstands the passing of time, and how your current work is in constant flow and dialogue with your earlier work. There is no doubt that you will have far-reaching influences on future generations. You continue to create a visual legacy in contemporary art.

Glen Rogers Perrotto has taught in the Bay Area and at the Citadel Print Center which she co-founded. She was a 1997 SFMOMA SECA nominee and recently held a residency at Villa Montalvo Center for the Arts in Saratoga. She has exhibited at the de Saisset, Triton, and Tokyo Museums among others.

Sightlines: International Symposium on Printmaking Presented in Canada

by Gary Shaffer

Edmonton considers itself a frontier space, wide open to the free exchange of ideas and practices. Known as the city having the world's largest indoor shopping mall, this dynamic community also includes the University of Alberta whose Printmaking Division organized and hosted the Sightlines – Symposium on Printmaking and Image Culture and who, along with the Society of Northern Alberta Print Artists, participated in organizing the extensive exhibition program networking gallery sites throughout the city.

The aim of the five-day symposium that transformed Edmonton during the first week of October 1997, was “to bring together artists, critics, writers and scholars from around the world in order to open a dialogue across a number of disciplines and practices that parallel the print process.” Historically, printmaking symposiums have concentrated on technical aspects of the medium. The more than three hundred delegates attending Sightlines were provided speakers who, instead, focused on the philosophical, cultural and critical issues impacting upon the printmaking medium. Lecture topics included “Japan and the Image Culture” as elucidated by the film critic, Donald Richie, who lives in Japan; “Art and Democracy in the Commercial World of McWorld” by the American political commentator, Benjamin Barber; and, “An Artist’s Timid Comments of Transcendence” from the Polish print artist, Stanislaw Fijalkowski.

Topics expounded by the various panels were the “Effects of the Global Village on Society and Image Cul-



Virge Jõekalda (Estonian), *The Great Thaw, 1989, drypoint*

ture”(erosion of local particularities); “Printmaking Education in the New Global Image Continuum;” and “The Nature of Artist-Run Cooperatives Around the World.” Varying degrees of success were achieved by the panelists, whose impact was often mitigated by their speaking abilities instead of the content of their presentation.

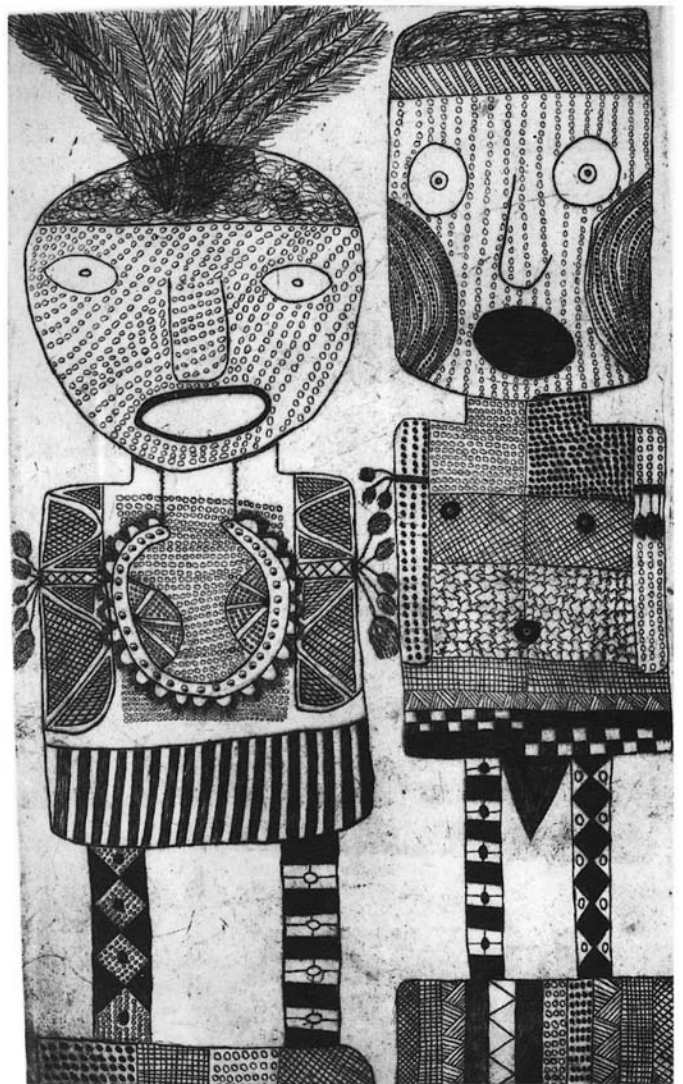
This being an international symposium, some of the speakers elected to present their talks in their native language and have a translator interject periodically in English. In the darkened Timms Centre Auditorium, a sense of otherworldness often prevailed insofar as one tended to lose track of words and focus on the unfamiliar sea of aural tones created by the Japanese or Polish language, for example, as well as give attention to the play of light upon the stage created by the speaker’s smallest gesture. Fortunately, some of their papers were published in English, without distraction, in the *Sightlines* catalogue edited by Walter Jule that accompanied the symposium.

Highlights from the panels included Karen Kunc’s presentation of the “American View” of printmaking education. She began by essaying a most common question, “How did you do that?” thereby defining the mystery leading to the obsessive nature inherent in the making of prints. The final word, however, came from Gordon Gilkey, a member of the “Remarkable Initiatives” panel, who put to rest a nagging question concerning the status accorded the printmaker. He said, “The printmaker is first of all an artist. Rembrandt was an artist who made prints. Picasso was an artist who made sculpture, ceramics and prints. And, Goya was an artist who created prints.”

The second component of *Sightlines* was its exhibition program. Billed as “the most comprehensive collection of prints ever to be exhibited in Canada,” ten gallery venues across Edmonton presented over four hundred prints by more than two-hundred and fifty leading artists working in twenty-two countries. Among the exhibitions were Goya’s “Disasters of War” print series; contemporary prints from Poland and Thailand; and new work by the Thai print-artist Thavorn Ko-Udomvit.

Not surprisingly, the major emphasis was placed upon presenting prints produced in Canada. The University of Alberta’s Print Division used the occasion to exhibit prints created in their “Master Class” of graduate students during the past twenty-five years. The Society of Northern Alberta Print Artists also presented prints produced in their cooperative workshops but wisely invited cooperatives from around the world to share their exhibition, resulting in a truly international presentation of prints for the symposium as well as an illustrated catalogue documenting them.

A Canadian jury selected five or six printmakers to represent each of the nine invited print workshops with which they are associated. The “International Printmaking Cooperatives Exhibition” presented prints from the Australian Print Workshop; the Atelier Piratininga of São Paulo, Brazil; Southern of



Maryanne Mungatopi, Murrukupwara & Malakaninga, 1997, hard-ground etching on copper, 90 x 55 cm (drawn by the artist and printed by Martin King and Simon Cooper at the Australian Print Workshop)

Egypt; the Association of Estonian Printmakers; the Iceland Graphic Society and Workshop; Tintoretto Venezia of Italy; Printsaurus of Japan; the Edinburgh Printmakers of Scotland; and Kala Institute of Berkeley, California.

Disseminating the virtues of their cooperatives for a *Sightlines* panel were Archana Horsting of Kala Institute; Ernesto Bonato of Piratininga, São Paulo; Koichi Kiyono of Printsaurus, Japan; and Anne Virgo of the Australian Print Workshop. Each cooperative proved utterly different from the other, but certainly the most unusual undertakings were the “bush workshops” held in geographically remote areas of Australia in order that the Australian Print Workshop may work with Aboriginal artists. Several prints resulting from this endeavor were exhibited by the Australians.

Some surprising and inadvertent questions, along with a few answers, were provided by *Sightlines* exhibitions. Not expected was the discovery that the prints by a majority of the graduate printmaking students at the University of Alberta, along with many of the prints invited by Print

Department Head Walter Jule for the International Exhibition, were photo-generated.

The “Master Class” exhibition celebrated twenty-five years of Alberta’s Graduate Printmaking Program by presenting several prints by each alumnus. Due to the prevalence of the photo medium, it was not always possible to distinguish between prints produced during the 1970s and those made during the 1990s.

The photo process as practiced by many Canadian printmakers gives the entire printing matrix a frame or hook upon which to manipulate the photo image, in some cases very abstractly, so that technique is not immediately apparent. The resulting prints often possess a sleekness or smoothness of surface associated with photographs rather than marks made by hand with, for example, a burin or gouge. Nevertheless, the “Master Class” exhibited seductive prints that relied upon their inherent photo narrative and absence of surface to challenge the eye.

Judging from the international exhibition catalogues available as well as the impressive exhibition records that were, curiously, posted on the wall for each artist included in the “Master Class” exhibition, photo-generated prints win many awards. Canadian printmakers look to Europe and beyond, and not to the United States, for their competitions and exhibitions. Whether by design or otherwise, the American printmaker is not aware of many international exhibitions but the Canadian printmaker is. A very recent Seoul International Print Biennial had but one American printmaker included in the exhibition although its curator, Jong-Hyup Lee, was present in Edmonton and provided a Sightlines panel presentation.

A lack of timely communication or publicity concerning events taking place on today’s ever-changing international printmaking scene was not addressed until one delegate in the audience spoke up and asked why a list of participants attending the Sightlines event was not made available. Peter Ford, a British printmaker, writer and curator, had come to Edmonton from England and brought with him an awareness of oversights with which printmakers do not often deal. Along with the list of delegates, he asked for input to be incorporated into a resource book covering many facets of the international print world that he hopes to publish shortly. Nevertheless, once back in England, Mr. Ford reflected upon the Sightlines event and stated, as would many of us who shared the experience in Canada: “My reactions are quite mixed though I am very glad that I was there. I think that I got a lot of value from the whole event, inclusive of the exhibitions.”

A 56-page Catalogue of the International Printmaking Cooperatives Symposium is available from SNAP, 10137 104th St., Edmonton, AB T5J 0Z9, Canada. The 327-page Sightlines: Printmaking and Image Culture catalogue was published by the University of Alberta Press, Athabasca Hall, Edmonton, AB T6G 2E8, Canada.

Gary Shaffer has been a guest editor of the journal and was instrumental in the preparation of the CSP’s 85th Anniversary Catalogue of Prints.

Teaching Printmaking: American Drive and Directions

by Karen Kunc

How did you do that? This is the most commonly heard question in the print shop. It recognizes an innate characteristic of the printmaker—curiosity about techniques and processes. This seems a shameful admission in today’s conceptual art world, with efforts made to hide, excuse and redirect this natural inquiry. But the question expresses the print student’s desire to know the mysterious mixtures, arcane terminologies, stages and processes of order, and how to make surprises. These tools of the trade are the hook used to tantalize students, to introduce them into the “black arts” of printmaking.

The range and breadth of the teaching of printmaking across the United States is impossible to encapsulate. Instead of focusing on a few exemplary programs and individual teachers, I want to talk about the common developments, describe the current climate and articulate my own concerns, and perhaps even biases about the experience of teaching printmaking. Actually, I feel that I am a good spokesperson for the many diverse colleagues and friends similarly engaged in academic posts around the United States, for I represent a middle, common ground literally and figuratively. Not only is my location in the center of the country, but conceptually I span the old with the new, with a skepticism and independence fostered by relative isolation. This has been balanced with intense travel, through a variety of teaching experiences and as the guest artist “infiltrator,” collecting a sense of the value of printmaking in each place, the variety of approaches, and even peculiarities. With over twenty years involvement, I have absorbed so many experiences, watched from the sidelines, and joined in the fray often enough, to hope to articulate what has been transpiring in the realm of printmaking education.

What is the persona of the printmaker? Though difficult to generalize, perhaps there is innate visual attraction to graphic contrast, a mind-set for the requisite self-discipline, tolerance for repetition, patience for obsessive minutiae, and a willingness to collaborate. Introductory printmaking classes are meant to entice new printmakers, but actually seem to winnow the field, leaving the devotees to continue. But current changes across the board in art departments everywhere express a more expansive attitude, to make printmaking more relevant to all art students, to move it off the sidelines, and to recognize and promote a print media consciousness as a core of the post-modern practice.

A nagging question persists about whether we are watering down printmaking in order to attract students, with monoprints, little or no editioning required in courses, the promotion of mixed media, and the “quick fix” with painting and drawing additions. This could only be an academic issue that pales in the light of reality—the need to do

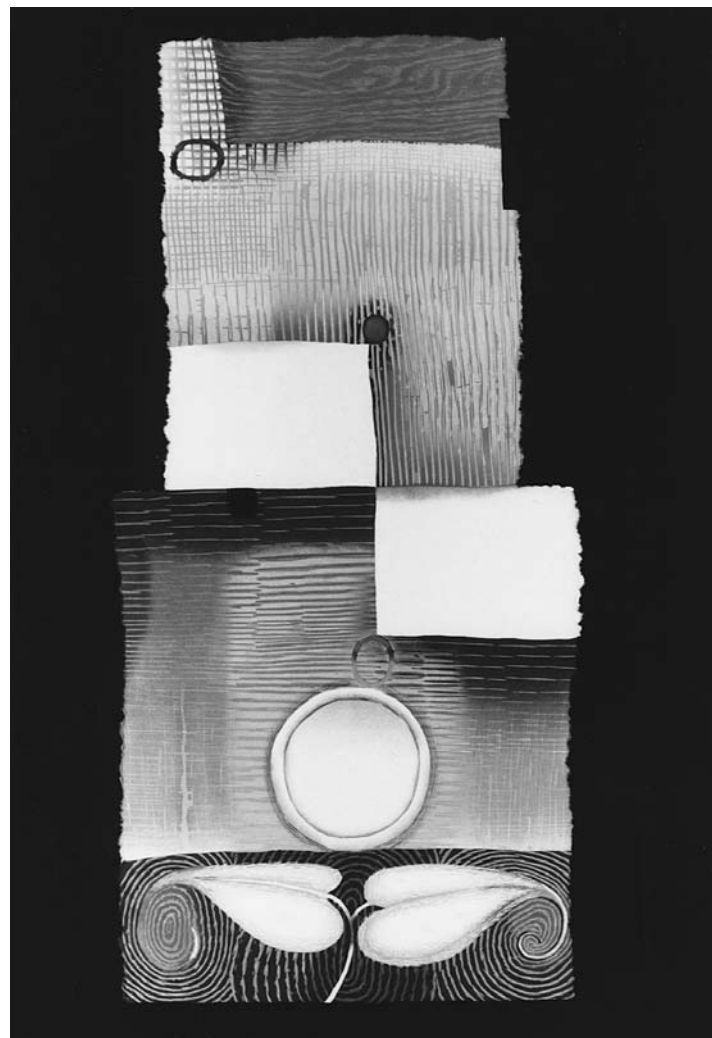
what the image demands, with solutions of any kind equally valid in the borderless, expanded print field of today.

So much of today's printmaking buzz is about adapting: combining the old with new technologies—digital media, computer generated output, photo/computer derived matrixes. I see this recent enthusiasm as part of a continuum, with printmakers always adopting the latest thing in the communication arts: etching evolving from engraving centuries ago; the search for the autographic mark leading to the invention and refinement of lithography; commercial offset presses being taken into print studios; and the inclusion of the highest of high-tech with photo-mechanical techniques. Today's new tool, the computer, is actually very natural for our students, and technically "easy," accessible. Coupled recently with playfully direct Xerox transfers, photocopy lithography, emulsionless photo silkscreen, high tech looks are easier and safer to accomplish than ever. Computer generated design and images, appropriated sources, and photo-mechanical processes have become a common part of printmakers' graphic language. Yet even these new methodologies require the "fixing" from transitory media into etched metal plates or grained litho stones in order to be manipulated by hand. The potential for greater interface of traditional printmaking with contemporary technology has come to a conceptually and visually rich stage. Printmakers continue to be innovators—tinkerers adapting concepts and skills from a thousand years of information revolutions.

The teaching of printmaking still generally follows a technical time line of hand processes to more complex "transformational multiplicities," from low tech to high tech, from traditional to contemporary processes. The goal may be to present a smorgasbord which allows students to follow their own interests. There is often the typically American implication that new is best, more is more, and that the conceptual and technological envelope must be pushed. At one time using day-glow inks, inventing white ground, or creating innovations with collagraph, could put an artist on the map. This has now evolved into experiments with inkjet, advertising production modes, and installation strategies using the matrix itself, to name a few.

The most recent innovation is the invention of an Artspeak for prints. Printmakers everywhere have become aware of post-modern critical discourse, a welcome evolution in sophistication and analytical rigor. Dialogues at printmaking conferences and in journals reflect efforts undertaken to elevate the status of printmaking. Printmaking concepts and issues are pervasive, yet denied, in the art world. With startling regularity printmaking approaches are unidentified or misrepresented—a deliberate avoidance of the P word. While contemporary art capitalizes on the print's ability to repeat, make variations, and appropriate sources, a veritable and pervasive "print denial" is taking place.

The drive to "take back the night" which acknowledges the primacy of print/communication media in our visual culture has led to work by faculty and students that is decided-



Karen Kunc, Twain, 1996, woodcut on shaped paper, 41" x 30"

ly not hand drawn, that is appropriationist, photo/computer derived, in the contemporary vernacular of juxtaposition, with a literate conceptual play, or textual based outward look at society. Here the printmakerly obsessiveness fits naturally into the post-modern practice of cataloging, collecting, and cross-cultural referencing, with meanings multilayered, superimposed and graphically empowered—prints with "attitude." This work is witty, bright, logical, experimental—and often generic. Personal expression is subsumed and few characteristics of the hand are in evidence. Meanwhile, there continues to exist a parallel world where printmakers persist with anachronistic technologies. Intensely laborious work is still being done with skill and draftsmanship, in engraving and mezzotint and the hand cutting of wood. This work references the history of printmaking in other ways, through the refinement of obscure, often particular aesthetics, with idiosyncratic twists and turns of the hand, and the drama of personal compositional decisions. These resistant practitioners—living treasures?—are equally valid in today's post-modern world. What seem to be oppositional strategies often coexist within a sophisticated system that allows for the personal evolution of each artist.

The teaching of the printmaking involves other skills. Specifically pleasurable for me is the hands-on indoctrination of studio work—how to use a tool, the physical exertions in carving wood, attention to touch, sensitivity to materials. So much of the teaching of printmaking is emulating how you were taught, following a school of practice and thought. The model is that of the mentor and student, master and apprentice, with the benefits of time and concentration. The Japanese say it takes a minimum of ten years to learn a traditional art, with most of that time spent sweeping the floors! One thus becomes absorbed in the life. This ideal is given great lip service in the academy but the actuality is a rushed, pressured time for both students and faculty. The advantage of our modern system is the integration of thought, and an ability for multi-track conceptualization. Here, things and ideas happen quickly, and the contemporary pulse of our time is certainly mirrored in our teaching institutions.

Printmaking in the United States could probably be mapped like a family tree—reflecting a mobile and legendary cast of characters, with stories of influence, longevity, and interconnections. This “map” is about knowledge unavailable in art history, largely oral and aging, about changing regional dynamics, influential programs, various personalities. Somehow this culture is also transmitted to students, largely by absorption, subtle initiation, talking over the presses with their faculty mentors. For students this telling of the family history instills a desire to become part of the group. The print world represents a tangible future for them more possible than the improbabilities of the New York myths of painter superheroes. Here the printmaking legends are represented in the latest portfolio exchange box, coming as guest artists to work next to you, expressing a willingness to talk and share at the next conference. This makes evident the possibilities of the printmakers life.

Finally, have I been a successful teacher? While often I can't see the forest for the trees, and dwell on the frustrations of the daily grind and delayed rewards that are part and parcel of teaching, I know what makes a healthy program. This is the ongoing revitalization of our theory and practice, creating outward connections, insuring visibility and valuation of student work, recognizing a variety of approaches, working within a supportive system, and enjoying a critical mass of excited people. I think I have just described the print shops and artists working from Arizona to Wyoming, Massachusetts to Oregon, Minnesota to Florida, with Nebraska, and my own shop, nicely in the middle!

This article was adapted from a paper presented at the Sightlines Conference. See the related article in this issue by Gary Shaffer.

Karen Kunc is associate professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her large-scale woodcuts and artist's books have been exhibited in Iceland, Korea, Canada, Poland, Japan, and throughout the United States. Her work is in the collections of the National Museum of American Art, The Museum of Modern Art, The Victoria & Albert Museum, and many others.

Street Prints

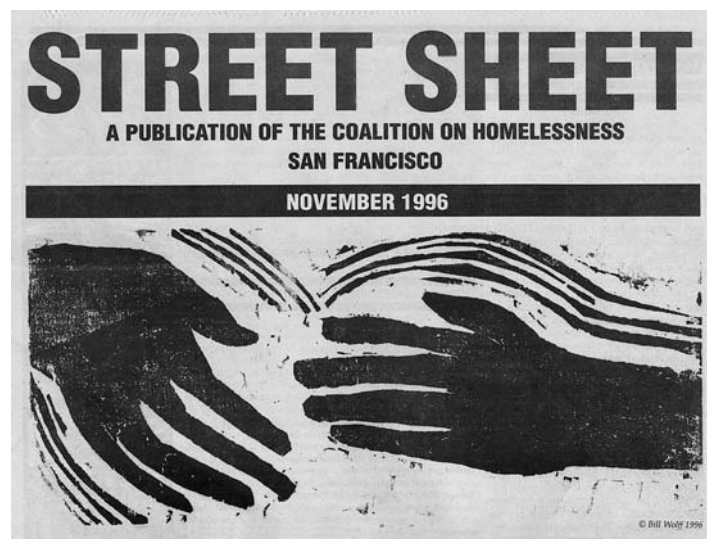
by Art Hazelwood

One wouldn't think of an organization called the Coalition on Homelessness (COH) as being a natural promoter of the arts. But over the last eight years the COH, through its project the Street Sheet, has been just that. Recently, in addition to its many other activities, the COH has created two more projects which bring the power of visual arts to bear on the question of homelessness and poverty. Through the years the COH has followed its mission of providing a voice for the voiceless, advocating for the poor and giving an alternative to panhandling to thousands of homeless people.

The Street Sheet has a distribution of thirty-six thousand and serves to educate both the community of homeless people and the general public. The editorial content of the Street Sheet varies from the writings of homeless people, to testimonials of police harassment, to explanations of new public policy's impact on the poor. Vendors of the Street Sheet are given copies free of charge and sell them on the street, keeping all profits for themselves. Unlike other newspapers for the homeless, the Street Sheet does not take advertising.

The Street Sheet's connection with art is due largely to the tireless activity and good judgment of editor Lydia Ely. She favors art that is not documentary but descriptive. Lydia feels that photography of homeless people can often be exploitative. Therefore, she leans toward expressive art in the paper. She has attracted a large and diverse group of artists; some homeless, some formerly so, and some wanting to use their artwork to support the goals of the COH.

I have been involved with the Street Sheet since 1994 when I first saw the paper and sent in a woodcut that I thought appropriate. Since then the paper has run my woodcuts, linocuts, paintings and drawings on a fairly regular basis. Several other printmakers have also been involved with the Street Sheet, including Bill Wolff, Casper Banjo, Ed Gould,



Cover woodcut by Bill Wolff in the November 1996 Street Sheet



Seeing Words Design, Market Street Art in Transit, 1997, kiosk

Sherry Bell, Barbara Nilsson, Roy Ragle, and Roberta Loach.

There are those who feel that any purpose for art debases it, but for me this has been a most rewarding experience both personally and for the development of my art. Not only has my work been put to use in the service of goals I strongly believe in, but my imagery and sense of graphic communication have been strengthened by the demands of creating work for the paper. In addition I have found that creating an image to fit a given subject is a stimulus to my work.

Besides the Street Sheet there are other activities that the COH has undertaken to bring art to the streets. From December 1997 through February, several artists associated with the Street Sheet have been working with a graphic design company, Seeing Words Design, to create a series of posters to be displayed on Market Street in downtown San Francisco. The San Francisco Arts Commission gives grants to create posters for twenty-four kiosks lining Market Street. The Arts Commission's project, called "Market Street Art in Transit," is open to applications from any artist. It gives artists a chance to put work "out there." With the possibility of reaching a large diverse group of people with art and a message about home-

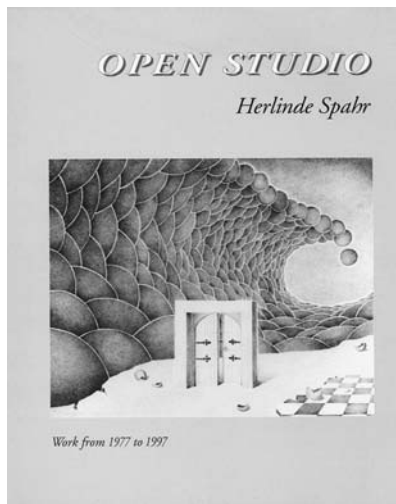
lessness, the designers developed a theme and the artists worked with them to put together a series of related posters. A linocut print of mine was central to one poster. The print used was originally made for the Street Sheet on the theme of addiction. For the poster the print was scanned into the computer and then cut out from its background. The image was then superimposed over a bingo playing board to suggest the random quality of access to drug treatment. Surrounding the image is the text of an account of getting a fix on the street. The collaboration with designers, artists, and writers in the making of these posters proved to be quite exciting. It also offered a rare chance for prints to be seen in public art.

In February of this year, artists began meeting for workshops in a park in the Tenderloin neighborhood in San Francisco. These workshops were designed to enable those without space or materials to create artwork, and to give artists who have their own space a way to share techniques and ideas. Casper Banjo, Ed Gould and I led a workshop on printmaking with limited materials. Casper demonstrated embossing using cut-out mat board. He glues two layers of mat board together with Elmer's glue and then carves a design from the top layer with an x-acto knife. Heavy weight rag paper is soaked in water and then pressed with a metal spoon into the cut-out image. The mat board must be sealed with acrylic spray to prevent sticking. Casper also showed various ways of using color with the embossing. He uses acrylic paint as ink, rolled onto the board or painted into the cut-out areas for transfer while embossing. Ed Gould and I demonstrated linocut with water-based inks. This straightforward technique seemed quite suited to the intention of the workshops. Participants printed small black and white linocuts as well as larger prints gouged (with difficulty) out of heated floor tiles, which are brittle and harder than standard artist's linoleum. A drypoint needle was found to work well on the floor tiles for creating a relief white line drawing. The idea of these workshops was to give participants a chance to work in other media, which they could continue, if desired, without great expense. Some of the products of these workshops were included in an exhibition of Street Sheet artists at Southern Exposure Gallery in March of this year.

Although the political activism of previous generations' visual artists seems long gone in these decades dominated by corporate art, there are still opportunities for artists to have a voice in issues of personal and societal importance. The Coalition on Homelessness is an independent organization that does not bow and scrape to corporate interests or to arts agencies' funding. Although it is not an arts group, the COH does suggest for artists the importance of freedom from institutional restrictions. This freedom has allowed a group of artists to be heard above the clamor of the marketplace.

Art Hazelwood is Secretary and Exhibitions Coordinator for the CSP. He recently collaborated on a book of his prints with Robert Rosenzweig which was in a show at the Corcoran Museum in Washington, D.C., and he had a woodcut show at the Fetterly Gallery in Vallejo.

REVIEWS



Cover of Herlinde Spahr's book

Wings of Stone

by Sherana Harriette Frances

Herlinde Spahr, whose new book, *Open Studio*, was published in December 1997, has given us a look into a lithographer's soul. It shines from the potent and surreal images she has imagined and then drawn, processed, wooed, coaxed and delivered from the lithographic stone. And it surfaces, more eloquently, in the intimate and emotionally honest excerpts from the Notebooks which document, not only her technical considerations, but observations of her process and her life.

Shared here are two decades of work and a lifetime of reflection. The images reproduced, from her early lithographs in the late 1970s, to her more recent works of 1996, are evocative and allegorical and reflect how deeply she has reached into the symbolic territory of the unconscious for form and meaning. These images play philosophical games with our minds, and, sometimes, make us recoil instinctively, as in images #31 and #32, "The Blind Spot"—here, Spahr has drawn, with meticulous realism, a lithographer's pencil jabbed into a wide-open eye. To me, a fellow, lithographer, it can be read as "the medium is the message," since to commit to lithography, with its demanding technical considerations, requires a disciplined effort of mind, spirit and body to finally bring to rest on paper what the (inner) eye is seeing. There is wit, humor, sophistication and passion in these images from an examined life.

Rarely have I walked into an "open studio" in which the artist has shared, with such humility and raw honesty, a celebration of her love affair with stone. After an episode in which she was hospitalized and diagnosed as a "manic-

depressive," Spahr comments (in her preface), "...the intensity of vision experienced during those flights of mania convinced me that I was an artist, and that I needed wings of stone...." In this book, her flight with those wings of stone is elegantly portrayed.

Herlinde Spahr's book, Open Studio, Work from 1997 to 1997, With Excerpts from the Artist's Notebooks and Essays by W. R. Johnson and Leonard Nathan, is available for \$15 from Lithium Press, Orinda, CA, (925) 254-2660.

Sherana Harriette Frances has been making lithographs since 1965 and was the founder and director of Artist's Proof Graphics Workshop in Larkspur, CA. She completed the professional printer's program at the Tamarind Institute of New Mexico.

Makeready: Finding Art in the Unexpected

by Leona Christie

It is rare to view an exhibit of prints with an emphasis on the seams and lining of the printmaking process. "Makeready: Finding Art in the Unexpected," an exhibition of letterpress and offset litho printing at the San Francisco Center for the Book, took many assumptions of printmaking and turned them inside out.

"Makeready," the sheets of paper that become covered with off-register, overlapping, and upside down images during the proofing process, are usually discarded. Because their effects are not intentional, these proofs are usually not considered worth keeping, let alone exhibiting.

Taking a cue from John Cage, who celebrated the role of chance in the creative process, and Duchamp, who allowed the artist to "find" art, Phillip Krayna curated an exhibition of trial proofs and accidents, and graphic work influenced by this aesthetic.

The show was divided into three components. The first consisted of actual makeready. Particularly interesting among these were the offset-litho proofs from the Vermont-based Stinehour Press, depicting juxtaposed images from different fine-art catalog and poster projects, mostly photographic. A visually arresting symmetrical surrealism was the predominant effect, resulting directly from the act of re-feeding sheets into the press from both directions. Also notable were the offset, accidental pentimenti images on tympan paper (a vellum-like letterpress packing material), contributed by Leda Black and Frances Butler.

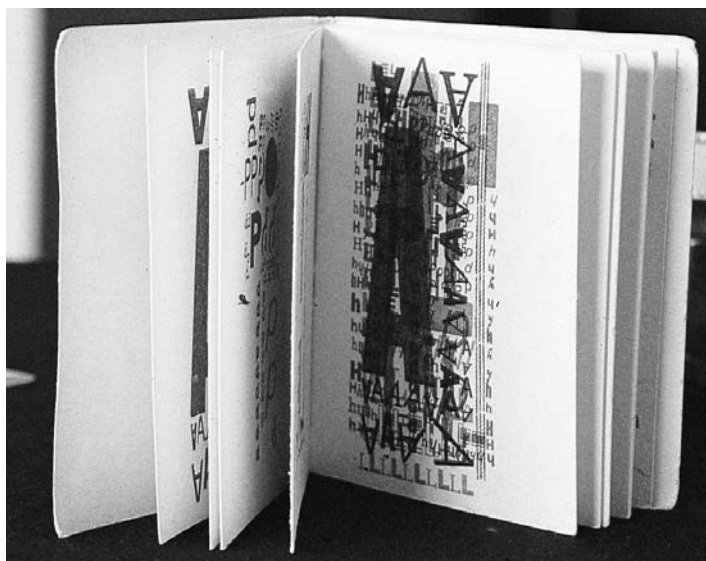
The second part of the exhibition focused on contemporary book artists (and one sculptor) who incorporate a makeready aesthetic in their work. Jan Hartley of Purgatory Pie Press exhibited a series of postcards entitled "Baudelaire over Rosenquist." Sifting through the garbage in New York's Soho, Hartley discovered makeready from a local printer that included artwork by the pop painter, James

Seiko Tachibana at Evolving Space

by Jessica Dunne

One of my favorite prints in Seiko Tachibana's recent show of etchings and monotypes at Evolving Space gallery is entitled *Tenderness*. That title resonates throughout the show.

Tachibana is a highly skilled etcher whose accomplished and varied technique never distracts from the work itself. No piece appears to be titled "Look at Me—I'm a Sugar Lift!" She favors muted colors and her strongest work, such as *Existence III*, comprises light tans and black. Most of the pieces are an arrangement of several plates on a single sheet of paper that balance beautifully. They lack dramatic contrast and may not grab you from across the room. But take a long, close look and you will see the evidence of obsession, the scratched and revised lines and worried surfaces that give them depth and complexity.



Artist book printed by Purgatory Pie Press

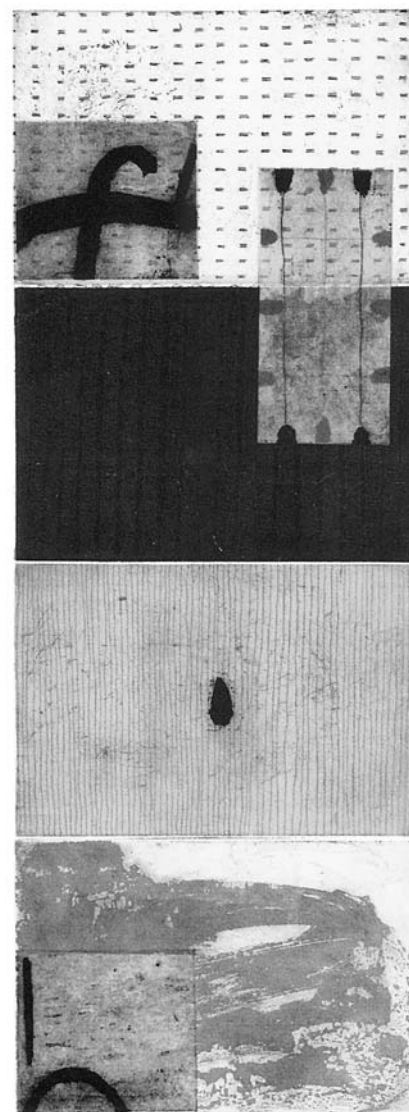
Rosenquist. These found sheets were overprinted with text from the French poet and philosopher, Charles Baudelaire, creating a startling collusion of eras. Also from Purgatory Pie Press was an alphabet book with dense overprinting of letterforms. In this same category, the sculptor Ruth Asawa exhibited a large, beautiful origami dragon, made from left-over makeready, transforming waste into a delicate, printed object.

The last section of the show highlighted graphic design work with a distinctive simulated-makeready look. This included Martin Venezky's trendy San Francisco-based magazine, *Speak*, and Charles Anderson's advertising work for the hip retail chain, Urban Outfitters. Both designers are fetishizing the look of anachronistic, mechanical, pre-computer technology. As Krayna noted in the exhibition checklist, "Anderson's retro-style is influence by the gritty industrial history of the rust belt. He often uses the iconography of a printer's set-up—registration marks, crop marks, and overprinting—in his designs."

Some of the most outstanding images in the exhibition came from Hatch Show Print, a shop founded in 1879, famous for its giant circus and country music show posters printed with hand-carved wooden type and images. Exhibited were recent posters for the Grand Ole Opry made by restriking several old templates to create intricate, multi-layered designs, effectively and authentically using a visual voice of the past to invoke a continuous tradition.

"Makeready: Finding Art in the Unexpected" was at the San Francisco Center for the Book, 300 De Haro Street, in January and February 1998.

Leona Christie teaches at Diablo Valley College and City College of San Francisco. This spring she had a show at the Drawing Center in New York and at the Traywick Gallery in Berkeley.



Seiko Tachibana, Michi (Road/Life) Series

Her work is in a class I think of as Symbolic Abstraction. The imagery is subjective and, in combination with hints given by the titles, guides the viewer lacking an insider's knowledge of the system to an intuition of its meaning. This understanding doesn't need written explanation, even in the artist's own words.

There are many strong pieces in the show. My favorites were three from the "Michi" (road) series, *Massagu Iku*, *Yormichi Shite Ike*, and *Kune Kune Magatte Iku*. Each is twenty-four inches tall and three inches wide and uses many small plates arranged vertically to trace the progress of a soft black "road" pressing upwards. The spacing of all these plates and the softness of the thick lines is just right; she had to (rather than chose to) make these particular objects just this way. Tachibana's perseverance in searching for a balance of texture, structure and shade allows her sensibility to reach us.

Jessica Dunne won a Pollock-Krasner Grant for 1997/98 and had a Djerassi Residency in 1997. She will have a solo show of works on paper at the Frye Museum in Seattle in August 1998.

The Printmaker's Web Tour

by Roxane Gilbert

Technology increasingly permeates technique in the world of printmaking. Digital imagery and digital typeset have moved the printers' craft to the forefront of the technological revolution. Yet the traditional ways persist, not in discord with the new, but in synchronicity. This harmonious coexistence is nowhere more apparent than on the rapidly growing resource for exchanging vision and information: the World Wide Web.

Boot up your computer, grab your mouse, and get ready to go on a digital tour of great art and learning. For this journey you will need a modem (at least 14.4k) and a phone line, an Internet Service Provider or online service provider such as AOL, and web browser software (Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer are recommended; AOL 3.0 is okay). All of the Uniform Resource Locators (URL's or web addresses) of the sites mentioned will be listed at the end of the article.

To look at fine prints, start with a visit to the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco Image Base. More than fifty-eight thousand prints and drawings from the Achenbach collection are now online and searchable by artist's name, keyword, country and time period. Search for "Gilhooly" and you will come up with a list and thumbnails of seven prints by funk artist David Gilhooly. Click on a thumbnail, and the browser will open a larger format image of the art.

If your taste runs to Japanese prints, you will find a wealth of great sites on the Web. A good site to start with is Dave McClean's 20th Century Japanese Prints. It is not particularly sophisticated in its design, but it is full of good information, and the web pages load quickly. The differ-

ence between *sosaku hanga* (creative prints) and *shin hanga* (new prints) is clearly defined. There are links to other sites, as well as a bibliography.

Then you have to do yourself a favor and check out Hans Olof Johansson's site, Ukiyo-e, The Pictures of the Floating World. One component of Mr. Johansson's site is the amazing Floating World of Cyberspace, a comprehensive catalogue of woodblock prints on the Internet. You have to see this to believe it. He has compiled links to about three hundred images on different sites all over the world.

There are also galleries on the Web which deal in Japanese prints. Tobai International of Chicago, Illinois, specializes in Asian art. Their web site is beautifully designed. The pages may be a little slow to open, but it is worth the wait. Explore the "Printmakers" section of Tobai to see excellent quality work by contemporary artists.

You can do your gallery crawling in Manhattan, if you prefer. The Ronin Gallery on Madison Avenue between 57th and 58th Streets is now accessible from your chair. They have a splendid web site, featuring *ukiyo-e*, *sosaku hanga* and *shin hanga*. All of the great *ukiyo-e* artists are represented here, from Buncho to Zenshin. The *shin hanga* will have you checking the limit on your credit card. These pages tend to be slow to load, so be patient. There is a lot of information here, as well as beautiful imagery.

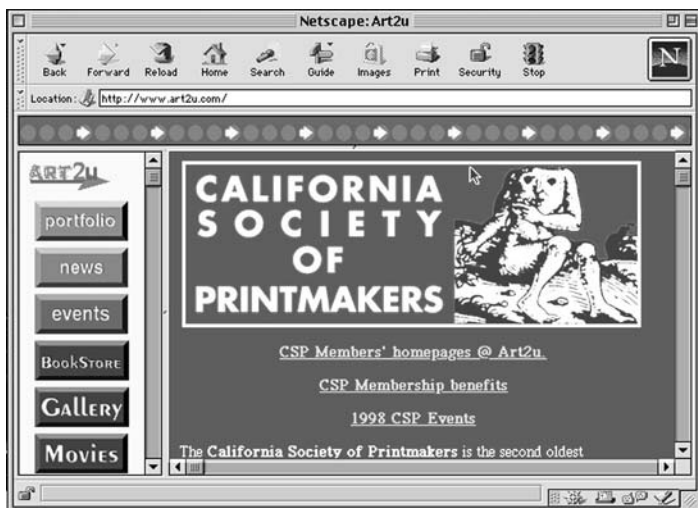
After boning up on Japanese prints, you might be ready for an auction. Paul and Janiece Knutson of Gloucester, Virginia, make it easy with the Asian Collection Internet Auction. Bidding instructions are provided at the site. If you are determined to purchase a particular print, but cannot monitor the auction, you can submit an "upper limit bid" and the Asian Collection staff will bid for you in ten dollar increments.

More and more educational institutions are using the World Wide Web as a tool to inform and recruit. The Australian National University, Canberra School of Art Printmaking Workshop, has a well-designed site that offers information about its program, staff and students.

Crossing the Pacific from Australia to Hawaii is easy on the Internet. You can find out all about the University of Hawaii at Manoa's course offerings in printmaking by looking at their web site. Maybe you prefer prairies to oceans. In that case, the University of Nebraska at Omaha Print Workshop might be for you.

City life adds yet another dimension to education. The Lower East Side Printshop in lower Manhattan offers workshops and work spaces to printmakers. Or how about the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica di Venezia? They offer summer workshops in papermaking, lithography, artists' books and bookbinding, intaglio, and serigraphy. Or make arrangements to attend an open workshop. Details are available at their web site.

A great resource for printmakers on the west coast of the USA is Berkeley, California's Kala Art Institute. Their ambitious class schedule is published on their web site.



Screen shot of the California Society of Printmaker's Web Page

Unfortunately for those of us with fifteen-inch or smaller monitors, some of the menu options in the left-hand frame won't show up on the screen. The designer used a no-scroll, no-resize feature that makes the page look lovely, but keeps it from being fully functional.

Several printmaking membership associations are getting exposure for their missions and their members on the World Wide Web. The California Society of Printmakers recently launched their new home page at Art2u, an online resource for artists and designers. The CSP site features a brief history of the organization, a description of members' benefits, and an exhibit of individual members' home pages.

The Printmakers Council was founded in 1965, and is based in London. Their web page states that the PMC objective is "to promote the art of printmaking and the work of contemporary printmakers." A proactive organization, the PMC arranges exhibitions and workshops for its members.

Tying these organizations together is the American Print Alliance of Peachtree City, Georgia. This is a consortium of printmakers' councils, whose stated aim is to "(help) bring the print arts into the twenty-first century." The APA home page explains exactly how they promote this goal.

There are several places to go for technical information. One such site, in Berkshire, England, is devoted to screen process printing. Waterless lithography is exhaustively covered by Nik Semenoff in Saskatchewan, Canada, at his New Directions in Printmaking. If you want to get involved in discussions with other printmakers, go to Middle Tennessee State University's Links to Other Printmaking Sites, where you can enter into a Printmaking Discussion Group.

While you are at the MTSU site, scroll down and look over this impressive list of over one hundred and twenty links to printmaking sites. The task of keeping the list current is daunting, so don't be too surprised if you click on one and come up with the dreaded "File Not Found" message. Just try clicking on some other link.

There are also a few online printmaking magazines list-

ed on the MTSU page. Be sure to visit Printworks Magazine. Chances are good that you will encounter an opportunity to show your work, if you take a little initiative.

The MTSU links page also lists a dozen commercial fine arts presses, including one in Israel. You will also find suppliers of inks, handmade paper and presses.

With so many resources literally at your fingertips, being a printmaker has never been easier. So get connected and expose yourself to the World Wide Web.

The Printmakers' Web Tour Links:

(these links can be found on the Web at

<http://www.art2u.com/pmtour.html>)

American Print Alliance

<http://thewww.com/printalliance>

Asian Collection Internet Auction

<http://www.woodblockprint.com>

California Society of Printmakers

<http://www.art2u.com/CSP>

Canberra School of Art Printmaking Workshop

<http://ausarts.anu.edu.au/ITA/CSA/printmaking.html>

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco Image Base:

<http://www.thinker.org/imagebase/index-2.html>

Floating World of Cyberspace

<http://www.bahnhof.se/~secutor/ukiyo-e/ukilinks.html>

Kala Art Institute

<http://www.kala.org>

Links to Other Printmaking Sites

http://www.mtsu.edu/~art/printmaking/print_links.html

The Lower East Side Printshop

<http://www.printshop.org/>

New Directions in Printmaking

<http://duke.usask.ca/~semenoff>

Printmakers Council

<http://www.printmaker.co.uk/pmc/index.html>

Printworks Magazine

<http://eyelid.ukonline.co.uk/print/works.html>

Ronin Gallery

<http://www.japancollection.com/>

Screen Process Printing

<http://www.printmaker.co.uk/sprnt.html>

Scuola Internazionale di Grafica di Venezia

<http://www.doge.it/scuola/home.htm>

Tobai International

<http://www.tobai.com/>

20th Century Japanese Prints

<http://home.iSTAR.ca/~dmcclean/prints.shtml>

Ukiyo-e, The Pictures of the Floating World

<http://www.bahnhof.se/~secutor/ukiyo-e/>

University of Hawaii at Manoa's

<http://www2.hawaii.edu/art/dept/print/print.html>

University of Nebraska at Omaha Print Workshop

<http://www.unomaha.edu/~fineart/prints/pwkshop.html>

Roxane Gilbert (gil@art2u.com) is the Webmaster of Art2u (http://www.art2u.com). She is a printmaker and has editioned lithographs and woodcuts for artists including Robert Arneson, Joan Brown, Squeak Carnwath, and David Gilhooly.

INTERVIEWS



Misch Kohn, *Becket*, 1977, engraving, woodcut, chine collé

Interview with Misch Kohn

by Barbara Milman

Misch Kohn has been making prints for well over half a century. He is widely recognized as one of the leading contemporary masters of the medium. A full scale retrospective of his work, "Misch Kohn: Beyond the Tradition," was originally shown at the Monterey Museum earlier this year. The second venue is the Nelson Art Gallery at the University of California at Davis, April 12 through May 22, 1998. The show follows his artistic development, from the lithographs and wood engravings of the 1940s, all the way to the masterful, technically innovative prints of the 1990s.

In an interview at his home and studio in Walnut Creek, he talked about his art and his career. It was 1939, and Kohn was ready to take his place in the art world.

After school was over, I went to New York City to make my fame and fortune. I had a portfolio of drawings, and thought I would be an illustrator for magazines. But I arrived when the whole world was out of work, and artists in particular. The WPA had employed everyone—de Kooning, Ben Shahn, everybody. But in 1938 Congress limited the time artists could be in the WPA to only a year and a half; then they were thrown off. So all the artists in New York were looking for work, and I was lost by the wayside. I was a painter of apartments and a chauffeur.

So Kohn headed back West to Chicago, where he joined the painters' project of the WPA. As he described it, the WPA was a wonderful program for artists, providing working materials and work space, as well as an audience for the completed artwork. Many artists—Kohn was no exception—were politically active in the late 1930s and early 40s.

The first week I was in Chicago I was taken to the Artists' Union. It was a real CIO union. At the union hall there was a gallery where shows were put up every two

weeks. All types of artists were there, the most abstract to the most photorealist. I was a social realist at the time. I did things like workers at machines and factories. In 1940 on the WPA, I was asked to illustrate a book on the pursuit of freedom for the Chicago ACLU. I was the art director for the *New Anvil*, a left wing publication. That's where I became friends with the writers Nelson Algren and Studs Turkel.

After his stint in the WPA, Kohn continued his painting and printmaking. During this time he developed a painterly, expressionistic approach to lithography and wood engraving. Then, in 1943, Kohn went to Mexico.

I was fortunate that I was sent to an American, Pablo O'Higgins, who had lived in Mexico most of his life. Pablo introduced me to all the other artists. He was an assistant to Diego Rivera, and introduced me to Rivera and Clemente Orozco. I had the pleasure of being on the scaffold with Orozco off and on for nearly a year. He was doing a mural on the dome of a church that was being turned into a library, of the four horsemen of the apocalypse.

When Kohn returned to the United States he continued making prints. He did a lot of wood engravings. By the late 1940s, Kohn wanted to make large prints, because "bigger is better," and he developed a method of combining several small blocks into one larger block. His wood engravings from the 1950s, some as large as twenty by thirty inches, illustrate how he pushed the boundaries of his medium to get the effects that he wanted. But eventually the inherent limitations of wood engraving got the better of him.

In the summer of 1957, Kohn was invited to teach at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where they had a good set-up for etching. There he did some large etchings, twenty by thirty inches, and began experimenting with the process. He printed many of his etching plates in two completely different ways: first in black on white (like traditional etchings); and then in reverse, white on black (using the method for printing relief prints). Kohn, like other graphic artists of the time, was breaking away from traditional printmaking techniques, continually pushing the limits and experimenting with unconventional printing methods and materials.

Although he admires innovation (he is a great innovator himself), there are some new techniques about which he has his doubts, such as computer generated graphics.

I've seen a lot of it, but I haven't seen anything that really convinces me that they have something at the moment. The computer generated images aren't so interesting. The colors are garish, and it looks artificial. The nice things that are being done are going back to old techniques, photo-lithography, mezzotint images using photography, the kind of techniques they used in reproducing photography in books at the turn of the century.

Kohn continued to live and work in Chicago for thirty years. He taught printmaking at the Institute of Design beginning in 1949, where he ran the graphics workshop. When he started teaching, the Institute was young and experimental, often referred to as the New Bauhaus because

its founder, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, based it on Bauhaus principles. But by 1972, when Kohn moved to California to take a position at CSU-Hayward, all of his old friends on the faculty had left, and the school was no longer the same. In California, Kohn's work changed significantly. Although Kohn's prints were always noted for their free, painterly and innovative qualities, he feels that his work has become even freer since he moved to California.

It has something to do with the students I had at CSU. I had a group of very experimental students, and it opened me up. My work changed a lot. In Chicago, a large part of my work was black and white. When I got out here I used color in a different way; I think it was the sunsets I saw. And of course the light. I had much more light. I was working in my basement in Chicago. When I came here I built a studio with proper light.

Kohn is very enthusiastic about some aspects of California life, in other respects he is more critical. He explained the cultural difference between Chicago and California.

It is different. There is a different emphasis among collectors. The museums in California haven't had the support that they should have from people who, in other parts of the country, would support them. I think the people are wealthy enough here to support the museums, but I don't think they have the interest.

Kohn's work, along with that of Francis Chapin, Max Kahn, and Eleanor Coen, eventually led to a renaissance of art of printmaking in the United States in the 1960s. Today he rarely stops with just one, or even two, techniques in a given work. He may combine intaglio, etching, engraving, collage, chine collé, and other techniques in one print. His current prints truly reflect a mastery of all forms of printmaking.

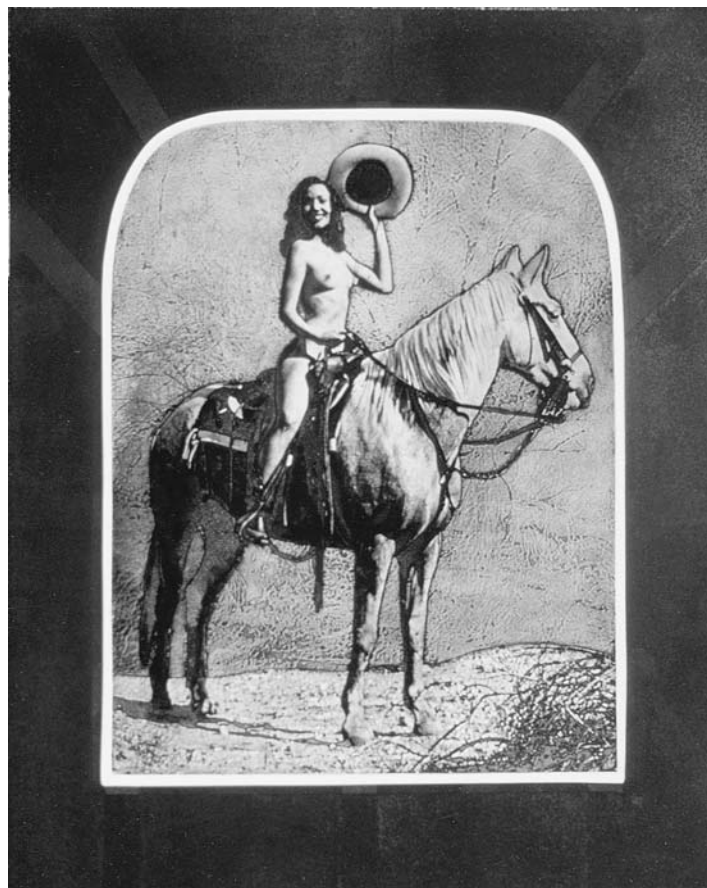
The retrospective show will have approximately one hundred pieces representing Kohn's work over six decades. Of course, a retrospective can include only a sampling of sixty years of work—only a snapshot of a lifetime devoted to art.

It's a matter of choice what you show. Things that I like myself very much, for instance a black and white etching of Laocoön that I'm so fond of, isn't in the show. The curator Jo Farb Hernandez made the choices, and she's absolutely correct. But she didn't choose all my favorites.

She may not have chosen all of his favorites, but the exhibition certainly has plenty of favorites for everyone who sees it.

This interview was originally published in its entirety in dav-art, a newsletter for Friends of the Nelson Art Gallery, University of California, Davis.

Barbara Milman has recently had solo shows at the 750 Gallery and at the Center for Contemporary Art, Sacramento CA; the Maude Kerns Art Center, Eugene, OR; Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN; California State University, Chico; and St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN. A book of her linoleum prints, Light in the Shadows, based on interviews with Holocaust survivors, was recently published by Jonathan David Publishers.



John Ihle, How the West Was Won, 1970-71, photo-intaglio, 15 5/8" x 19 5/8"

How the West Was Won and Hell Freezing Over: An Interview with John Ihle

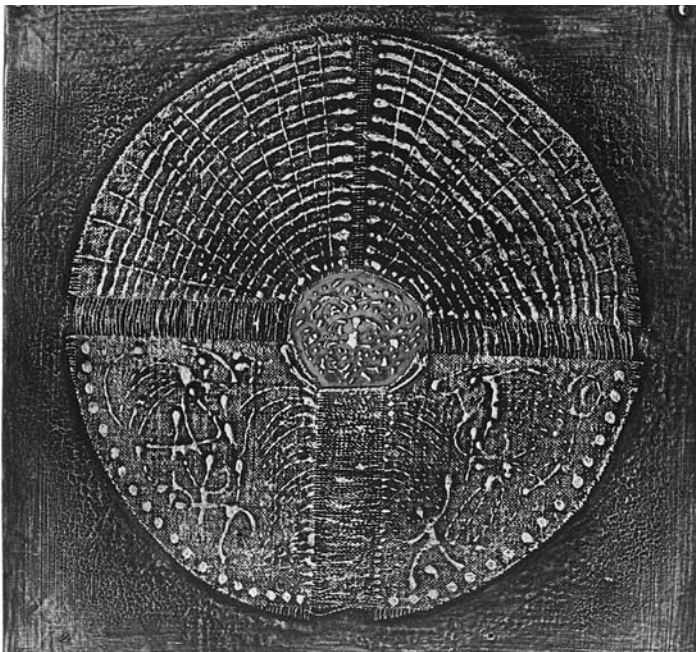
by Robin McCloskey

Robin McCloskey: You began your lecture at the CSP annual meeting by showing slides of abstract swirling patterns of lights photographed in Chicago. Why did you begin with these slides and what influence have these images had on your prints?

John Ihle: I thought it would be an interesting lead-in with the music I was going to play. We didn't have a good boom box and I couldn't play the CD, which was alto sax music. I mentioned in the lecture that I did something early in my career in teaching and I used these images in an Introduction to Art lecture. I would have the poetry of e.e. cummings read while showing fleeting images. I used nature slides, light slides, primitive art, contemporary art. It was a multimedia event, and I brought in the sense of touch and the sense of smell.

RM: Did you attend school on the GI Bill? What was the atmosphere like at the University of Iowa where you studied with Lasansky? Can you give us an example of an assignment he might have given?

JI: Yes, I was there on the GI Bill. I went there in the summer before I finished my BFA at Illinois Wesleyan.



John Ihle, Wakan Tonka (Holy Bull), "Canadian Series," 1970-76, color collagraph, à la poupée, 12" x 12"

That's where I met Karl Kasten, that summer in 1949. Lasansky was a very volatile personality. I went in there one day and he was just kicking butt. He got really mad at Paul Brach, who later became a New York painter. He was criticizing his work, saying "this monster has two left hands!" Lasansky's would have all the students start out, no matter what you knew, by going to the Natural History Museum, and pick out birds or anything you wanted, and make a print based on that. Then he would talk about various techniques. My teachers at Illinois Wesleyan had studied at Iowa, and would go to New York every year and pick out the most current work and bring it in to a show at Illinois Wesleyan, and for a small school like that, that was really great. That's how I first learned about Rico LeBrun, Matta, Brooks and a lot of other people. It was really inspiring.

RM: You moved to the Bay Area in the fifties. Were you aware of the Beats? It was mentioned at the meeting that jazz influenced your work. What music specifically and how did it influence you?

Jl: I was influenced by jazz in Chicago as well. I never studied jazz, but I listened to a lot. Ornette Coleman, a lot of people. As far as the Beat Generation, Kenneth Patchen in Chicago was an early poet, and he did a lot of visual poetry. And there was poetry and jazz—Kenneth Rexroth here in the Bay Area. In the fifties when I came out here there was a magazine that published a lot of the current poetry and some of the jazz things that were going on, and they also showed some of my art work, so I was pretty involved in that.

RM: Where do you start when you're trying to get a print program like San Francisco State's established? Was there an existing program you used as a model?

Jl: Well, Karl Kasten actually was at Iowa to work on a booklet getting all the information on how to set up a good

printmaking department because San Francisco State was getting a new building. They were one of the first California state colleges to get new equipment and all new facilities, buildings, the works. And unfortunately, they knocked out an awful lot of what we were supposed to get. They did set it up—it was okay. There were a lot of ideas that Karl had like the kind of sinks he wanted, but even so they didn't put in a good safe acid room. It took me ten years before I got a decent acid room.

RM: You've won many awards and commissions throughout your career. Is there any one in particular that's especially meaningful to you?

Jl: Well, I suppose the one that meant the most was getting into the show in Switzerland (the Second International Triennial Of Color Graphics, Grenchen, Switzerland in 1961). I got three prints shown in that and they bought one. Of course the IGIS (International Graphic Art Society, which published prints and distributed them nationally to subscribers) prints also got my name out. As I mentioned at the lecture it sold for \$6.50 or something like that. In the mid-sixties the San Francisco Art Association had a national show and they would have something like ten winners, two from painting, two from sculpture, from printmaking and so forth. And they were going to show those individual winners in depth the following year. I won for my "Me Tarzan, You Jane" print.

RM: It seems as if two main themes of your work are an abiding interest in anthropology and Native American forms, and a kind of humorous, ironic take on the American West. The two series are visually very distinct, but I wonder if you see them as overlapping in any way?

Jl: I think that they are different and visually they don't overlap. There's a tongue-in-cheek humor that I tend to go towards. The series "How the West Was Won" was based on the book of the cowboys, that John Wayne made as a film, where he took these kids from Montana to South Dakota and on the way they met these ladies of the night. I based a print on a porno slide that Barbara Foster gave me of a woman sitting nude on a horse, holding the reins completely wrong! Nothing dirty or anything about it, and so I got this story going on in my mind—this is how the West was won. When I was in North Dakota one time I got a hold of a whole bunch of glass negatives from a little town up on the Canadian border, Antler, North Dakota. They were great and I made all these halftones from the glass negatives for my North Dakota series. I still haven't printed all the stuff that I have.

In 1968-69 I taught for a year as a visiting artist at the University of Alberta. I wanted to go to Canada because I wanted to know about the Northwest Territories and the Eskimo Indians. My interest in anthropology goes all the way back to Chicago when I was working at the Museum of Natural History. Even when I was a kid I'd take the streetcar downtown to go to the museum.

RM: Photo-etching was developed in the nineteenth century, but it seems to have been neglected until the sixties when you and

other printmakers began to experiment with it. What led to its resurrection?

Jl: Where I got my original interest in the photo image was doing the yearbook at Illinois Wesleyan. I went into the photo-engravers' plant and watched them make the plates. And I worked one summer at a litho place cutting all these huge rubylith stencils for posters. Photo-etching was just to get an image on the plate and work it from there. In other words, I didn't want to just make a photograph and then transfer it to the plate like you would in photogravure. I had an interest in photography and the history of photography. John Guttman, who came here from Europe, was a leading photographer on the West Coast, did a lot to bring photography into the university even before I was around at San Francisco State. So I suppose that was an early influence too.

RM: *You were involved in the founding of the Bay Printmakers Society. Can you talk a little about the early days of that organization?*

Jl: It really started with two people, Will Peterson and Mel Strawn. They put an ad in *American Artist* for a national print show under the auspices of the Bay Printmakers Society. They didn't even have a place to show it! Well, why not? Eventually they got the Oakland Museum to put the show on. They were sort of unique in that they selected jurors who were not just critics or curators—they had Patchen jury one show, a couple poets juried a show. They wanted it to be judged by people who weren't that familiar with prints. It was a society for national shows only. We didn't have a lot of meetings—we didn't want a lot of meetings. Gordon Cook, myself, Dennis Beall, Nate Oliveira, Beth Van Hoesen, and George Miyasaki were in it; there were about thirteen or fourteen people. It ran for about five or six years. There was the California Society of Etchers but we didn't know anything about them. A woman came out to see us and asked if we would join the California Society of Etchers, because she felt it was getting bogged down and they needed new blood. We joined and that was the beginning of CSP.

RM: *When you visit large print shows now what are your thoughts?*

Jl: The only big print shows that I've been seeing over the last few years have been the ones at Kala. I have seen other shows, but they're few and far between today. I think this is very unfortunate as you just can't create a dialogue. There are important shows happening in other countries, but they need government backing, and hell's going to freeze over before America does that. I mean you have a Congress and a Senate that doesn't want to pay for anything. But I think there's a lot of good printmaking; I'm seeing some awfully good work.

Robin McCloskey is the guest editor of this year's California Printmaker. She travelled to Taipei, Taiwan in December 1997, where she was awarded the Gold Prize in Printmaking for the "8th International Biennial Print & Drawing Exhibit."

CSP ANNUAL MEETING

President's Message

by Daniel Robeski

It is truly exciting to be gathered together this morning with fellow artists and friends of the CSP as we embark on another year of collective creative endeavors. I'm excited, as I'm sure you all are, about the publication of the catalogue of artist members' works which commemorates our eighty-fifth anniversary. It's my understanding that such a members' catalog has been brought up and discussed from time to time in the past, and it's fitting that it has come to fruition in this anniversary year. I think we can feel justifiably proud of this document which chronicles the CSP's current artistic membership as this century draws to a close. The response by member printmakers to be included in the catalog includes nearly everyone who is a member and serves as a neat reminder that though CSP's membership is geographically spread out, literally flung across the globe, and many members never have personal contact with one another, we still manage to come together to accomplish great things.

I hope to see many of you and many new faces also, fifteen years hence when the CSP celebrates its one hundredth anniversary in the twenty-first century. That anniversary celebration assumes, of course, that there will still be in existence the art of printmaking. But considering the long run historically printmaking has already had, I feel confident that there will be printmakers and our own print society in the year 2013.

Not everything is suitably committed to hard drives and floppy disks. The very grip all this sophisticated technology has on our lives seems to make our need for involvement with "hands-on" activities and the making of art by hand greater than ever before. The CSP is in a strong position because of our rich historical past and enthusiastic commitment by the present membership to provide a leadership and educational role in not only keeping the art of printmaking alive into a new century, but more importantly, making the ACT of printmaking more and more accessible to more and more people.

The potential for our involvement as a society in the larger world community has barely been tapped and I foresee that our greatest challenges for the near future lie in embracing the diversity of people who comprise our world and this Bay Area microcosm of that world. The process of accepting new artist members into the CSP exclusively by the merits of portfolio guarantees to a good degree the high quality and vitality of our members' work, as evidenced in the eighty-fifth anniversary catalogue. I think we should continue to strive to carry on as a society whose members' works represent the highest standards and finest sensibilities that the print is capable of. I also feel strongly that for

the CSP to thrive into the next century and continue as a viable organization, we must make all those extra efforts necessary to make our presence known in a positive way in all communities. We must not just be accepting of diversity, but actually be thoroughly involved in embracing it.

For some of you here present, actively entering communities that are not traditionally known for their involvement in or support of the printmaking arts might seem like walking into uncharted territory, and indeed for the CSP as a whole, it pretty much is. But guided by our creative instincts and abilities to use art as a language that crosses and diminishes all boundaries and differences, we will come to our one-hundredth anniversary with a membership roster enriched by a more realistic representation of persons of color, and increased representation of artists of foreign lands.

So I look forward to the coming year as a CSP member not only for the many forthcoming exhibits and events already planned, nor just for the pleasure derived from being an active participant in our eighty-fifth anniversary celebration, but also for the moves I know we are beginning to make in new directions. During the second part of this morning's meeting, we will be honoring the living artist John Ihle. But right now I want to take a few moments before going on to our "other" business to honor an artist now dead ten years, Stanley William Hayter. Founder of the famous Atelier 17 in Paris in 1927 at the age of twenty-six, Hayter spent the remaining six decades of his life expanding the frontiers of printmaking, becoming known as the father of modern printmaking. As a printmaker, painter, and teacher, he interfaced with hundreds of other artists famous and not famous and several persons in this auditorium can attest to his influence. He was painting at the age of eighty-seven on the morning of the day he died. He asked, "What is the intention of art? Perhaps it is to lead man toward a fuller understanding of his terms of existence; to aid all people to live more completely and escape from the history of human error, to demonstrate by example that the human mind has unlimited capacity to go further and further the more one demands it."

85th Anniversary Show

by Linda Lee Boyd

The California Society of Printmakers held the 85th Anniversary Exhibition at the Academy of Art College Gallery in San Francisco during March 1998. One hundred and sixty-six CSP members participated in this annual show in a large and beautiful gallery space. As is customary, the annual show is organized and hung by a committee of volunteers.

The CSP board felt quite fortunate this year in being able to show at the Gallery. It is in downtown San Francisco and its size and layout allowed for adequate space for all of the pieces. Howard Munson, head of the Academy's printmaking department and a new CSP member, created and

silkscreened the wonderful show poster. Art Hazelwood, the CSP exhibitions coordinator, put in many hours of hard work organizing this show from its inception through to the return of prints to the artists. Joan Finton and Barbara Rogers did an excellent job of gathering educational materials from John Ihle, Herlinde Spahr, Lilibet Dewey, and the CSP archives for the front window of the gallery.

The intention of the annual show is to give all members of the CSP a chance to exhibit their recent work. With so



Photos of the 85th Anniversary Show by Art Hazelwood

many prints in a show, it takes some time to view the prints and give each piece its due. During the hanging of the show and the reception, it was not really possible to do that, but a slow walk through the gallery, looking at each piece individually, is well worth the effort. The delight comes in viewing each work as a thing in itself, examining the content and the technique the artist has used.

Members of the CSP are using techniques ranging from straight-forward woodcuts to digital imagery. On the whole, there is a level of professionalism within the CSP that allows members first to experiment and then to evaluate the results as individual artists and as members of a community with an interest in prints.

Quite a few CSP members entered the same piece included in the 85th Anniversary Catalogue. Seeing the print itself will bring home how much more there can be in a print than can be shown in even a good photograph of it. There are many pleasant surprises of scale, color, and texture.

The show is a conversation of prints, with conversational groups established within the areas defined by the architecture of the gallery space. Some of the juxtapositions brought out surprising details in the prints involved and added to the overall flavor of the show.

Woodcut artist Linda Lee Boyd lives in Emeryville where she has her graphic design and desktop publishing business. Her clients include the CSP. She is a board member of the Emeryville Celebration of the Arts.

BROWN BAG

Letterpress Brown Bag

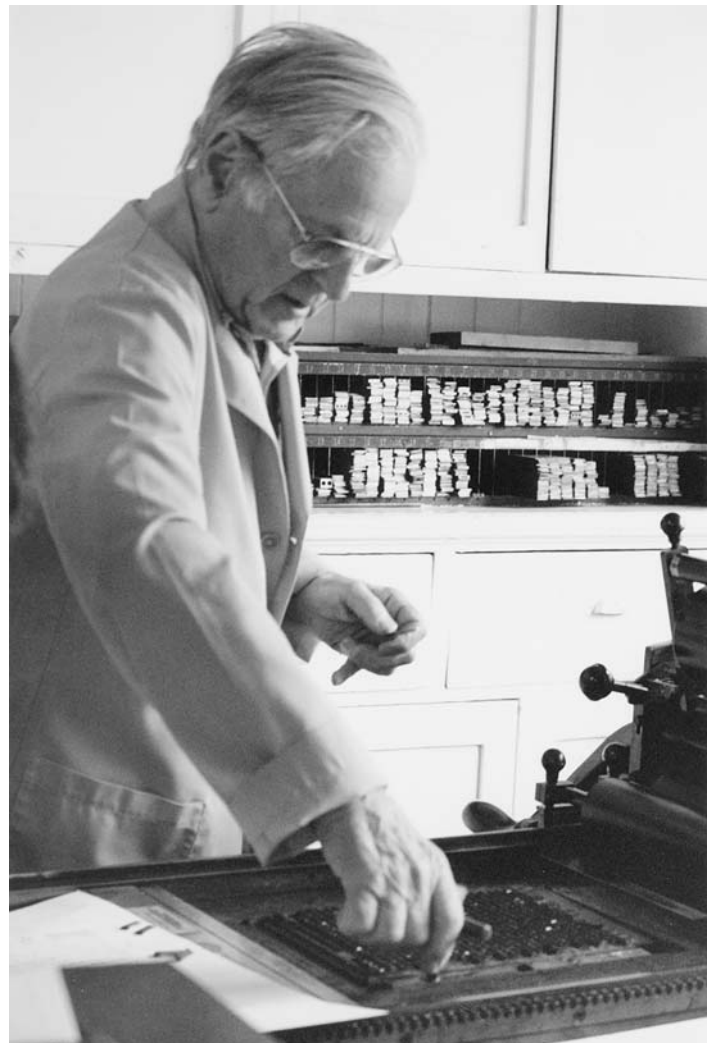
by Art Hazelwood

"Everything has to have a history, I guess, and like Alice in Wonderland it is best to begin at the beginning," said Irving "Whiff" Weinberg as he and his wife Martha Miller welcomed us to their house and studio in Hillsborough for a demonstration of typesetting and letterpress. Martha began making artists books in 1974 using a Vandercook letter press. Around that time their granddaughter sent a letter which inspired Whiff to put it in print on the letterpress. The idea of publishing family documents grew. His mother's autobiography, the letters of their son and daughter; he is now printing his fifth book. Asked if family members know they are being published now when they write to him, Whiff says, "nobody writes anymore, they just use the telephone." Whiff volunteers, "People think I must be out of my mind, what I do in two weeks they can do in twenty minutes on the computer." Still he persists in his craft and over the years their collection has grown to sixty-nine typefaces housed in 254 drawers. These typefaces have come from a warehouse in San Francisco that buys up old print shops as they disappear into the oblivion of the technologically displaced.

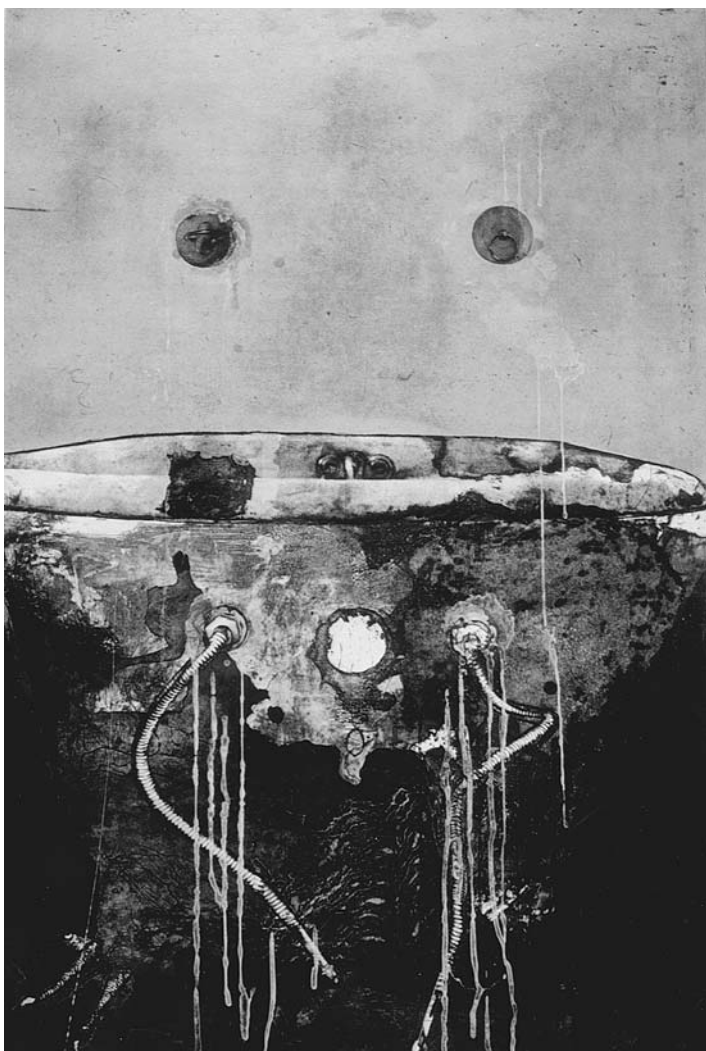
We were shown the perfectionism and attention to details

needed to make this print process work. Whiff finds Van Dyck, Centaur and Clear Face to be his favorite typefaces. Each page of type is laid out in a box called a chase with the text being laid in backwards. It is essential to learn to proof-read upside down and backwards in order to properly lay out the text. Even the group of printmakers attending, used to dealing with reversed images, had trouble reading the type as it was laid out. Spacers of different kinds are placed between words, between lines and to fill the margins of the page. When the chase is completely filled in with text and spacers, it is ready to be printed. Whiff prints on Mohawk Superfine paper, and uses Vanlon rubber base ink for letterpress work.

After a first proofing, some mistakes and worn type were discovered. The incorrect type was then removed with a forceps and replaced. The whole was then banged down and tightened up and ready for the edition printing. The act of printing was carried out by several of those in attendance. There is a fluid, rhythmical quality to using the press which made it a joy to work with. Those in attendance were glad to witness such dedication to craftsmanship and to the beauty of the printed page.



Whiff Weinberg demonstrating letterpress technique



Jimin Lee, *The Bathtub with Two Drains*, 1997, etching, chine collé, 36" x 24"

Jimin Lee

The Bathtub with Two Drains is one of "The Bathtub Series" from 1995/6. I have focused on body reference and gender issues through the bathtub. A large open area with two drain plugs above the tub symbolizes the outside of the female body; and the bathtub with two plumbing pipes represents the inside of the male body. The bathtub image was printed on transparent Kodalith in the darkroom. Additional images and markings were drawn on the Kodalith, and the image was transferred onto a pre-sensitized copper plate. Litho pencils and tusche were used to create organic texture in the dark area.

Jimin Lee's work will be included in the "Priva B. Gross International Works On/Of Paper Exhibition," Queensborough Community Art Gallery, The City University of New York, May 1-June 26, 1998.



Jane Gregorius, *The Uneconomical Cow*, 1997, monotype screenprint, 42" x 30"

Jane Gregorius

Everyday Matters: This work is related to very primitive, non-literate modes of communication. Pictures and pictographs stand in for objects, people and events. My concern is for an expression which is rich and full of freshness. Immediately inspiring are children, who, free from rules and paralyzing influences, express themselves spontaneously. This silkscreen monotype represents a current problem in Brazil where a land reformer is jailed for allowing squatters to inhabit unused land. Its title *The Uneconomical Cow* is a reference to the disparity between the big ranchers with their grazing animals, and those without land and thus no income.

"Everyday Matters," a show of thirty-nine silkscreen monotypes and seven drypoint monotypes by Jane Gregorius, was held at the new Cabrillo College Gallery from March 20 to April 24, 1998.

India XIII

by Robert Brokl

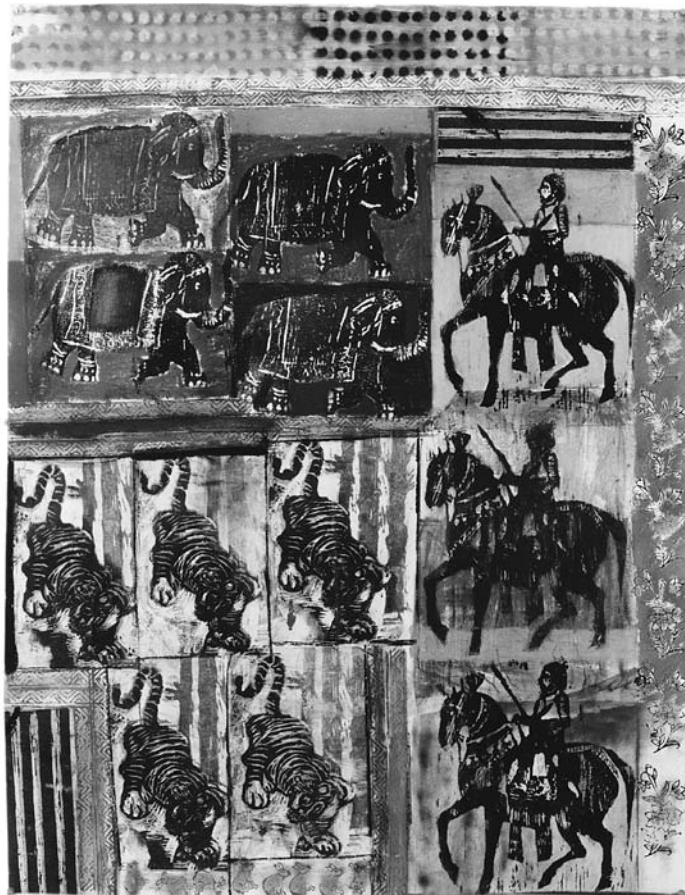
Six Antique Heads was produced during three hectic days in 1993 at the Drake University Print Symposium in Des Moines, Iowa. I was a guest artist there thanks to the generous recommendation of Sylvia Solochek Walters. This woodblock, reproduced in the 85th anniversary CSP catalog, was my last editioned print.

India XIII is a good example of the way I've been working since—combining woodblocks, drawing and painting, and stencils. I spent a month in India in 1996. Since then, struggling against the inherently flat, mute qualities of paper, wood, and canvas, I've been trying to recapture the near-jamming of all my senses (smell, sight, hearing) that I experienced on that trip. The content helps drive my technique.

The mounted horseman originated with a miniature painting from a shop in the Chandni Chowk bazaar in Old Delhi; the tigers (in truth, lifted from a seventeenth century Japanese ink painting) are staples of Indian miniature paintings, and the elephant was based upon a simple painting on cloth souvenir. These carvings are mine, but I relished contrasting their German Expressionist crudeness with the delicacy of the flower woodblock I picked up in the Jaipur market. Generally small, with "humble" subject matter—animals, plants, geometric patterns, these blocks are produced for fabric printing and then, without showing obvious wear, "discarded" to the tourist trade.

The large format (fifty by thirty-eight inches), the clutter and jumble of the image, the strong colors jockeying for position, are offset by the loosely gridded structure and the ways the individual images are buried and layered—printed on the reverse of transparent paper, embedded in pastel, and stained with paint.

One travel anecdote: We stumbled upon a group of artists, family members, operating a small shop at the edge of the central market in Jaipur. They produced inexpensive but wonderful miniatures—reproductions of older work, using mixtures of ground stone combined with water in clam shells and painted with the tiniest brushes on "antique" papers. One person was responsible for the figures, another the backgrounds. Although I was terribly impressed with their skill and excited about finding artists abroad, so much so that I launched into my usual complaints about the Art World, their perspective was really quite different. Unconcerned with my preoccupation with "originality" and "self-expression," they unpretentiously turned out exquisite work—modern links to a glorious tradition—for the tourist trade. When I asked if they ever



Robert Brokl, *India XIII*, 1996, woodblock, pastel, acrylic, spray paint, 50" x 38"

wanted to visit the U.S., they seemed interested in plying their talents painting portraits in the park!

Robert Brokl (CSP President 1981 - 1982) will participate in *East Bay Open Studios*—for the last time he swears—the weekend of June 13-14. *India XIII* and other work are on view at SFMOMA Rental Gallery at Fort Mason.

Radical Printmaking: From Tradition to Invention

by Laura La Forêt Lengyel

In the last three decades, printmaking has witnessed revolutionary departures from six centuries of seemingly mysterious rituals and practical traditions in all print media. Linked to technology, the printmaker's art has evolved slowly until now. Very few artists today even follow in the paths of early twentieth century hand printers. Modern print studios have fostered experimentation: manipulated viscosity, hot acids bites, cardboard plates,



Laura La Forêt Lengyel, Blueprint #137, monopressing (monoprint from human body), 1996, 30" x 22"

photo transfer technology, and the monoprint, just to mention a few avenues. Invention has been the catchword since the 1950s. Printmaking today embraces more experimentation on all levels than ever before.

Dorr Bothwell, a thriving and robust working artist now ninety-four, attended the San Francisco Art Institute in the 1920s, then taught there in the 1940s. A pioneer in adapting serigraphy to fine art printmaking, her limited edition work was not accepted at the Beaux Arts Academy in Paris, because serigraphy had not gained acceptance as a fine art medium. After years of consideration, it finally achieved bona fide status. Dorr is still exploring "Radical Printmaking" mixing color copying, collage and painting.

Enter Stanley Hayter in Paris shortly thereafter experimenting with the resistance of oil based ink viscosities and intense treatment of metal plates, including his unorthodox practice of deep biting plates to create different levels and textures.

Emmy Lou Packard used inventive multi-color printmaking techniques that were similar to those of Carol Summers. Her type-high linoleum and wood blocks were cut into interlocking sections, inked, reassembled like a puzzle, and then printed. Sometimes two sets of interlocking blocks were used, producing a myriad of colors without a myriad of matrixes. Carol Summers dissolved the oil-based

inks by spraying solvent onto the paper. Each section of the block was rolled with a different color ink, producing a soft fusing of multiple colors.

N'aima Leveton dove into "Radical Printmaking" in San Francisco in the late 1960s when the Xerox copy machine was the only brand in town and the machine itself was a novelty in any office. She started out photocopying faces, as well as her lithographs and etchings to collage together into some of the earliest mixed media experimental works with technology outside of New York City.

Eleanor Rappe and Stephanie Weber also walked through my gallery doors in 1969 with their "Radical Prints." By fabricating their own plates, built up with acrylic and cardboard, they created large format prints that came to be known as collagraphs.

Early in 1995, I set aside etching and engraving traditions and abandoned the idea of planar surfaces and mediums to experiment with the human body as the medium and the press. I was seeking a new way to view female imagery and to express my concerns about the idealization of women's body types in art history and popular culture. I started pressing women's painted breasts and torsos directly onto print papers, involving the subject in a new dynamic aesthetic concept. The model is not only the medium but also an active participant, effecting the resulting composition. In this way, the artist-model relationship has taken on a different aspect.

Printing from objects and applying paint to the human body has a long history, evident in prehistoric artifacts. Yves Klein experimented with body prints in the late 50s, known as Anthropometrics. The term I have coined for my experiments is "Monopressing," as my own form of "Radical Printmaking."

In remembrance of Emmy Lou Packard, artist, teacher, and social activist who passed away on February 22, 1998, at the age of 84. Known as a muralist and printmaker, she felt that art should be easily accessible to the public.

Laura La Forêt Lengyel was born in Bridgeport, CT and has a B.A. in art from Mills College. She is a former gallery owner in Mendocino, CA. Her studio is now in San Francisco, where she is a painter, sculptor, printmaker, and design consultant.

CSP NEWS

A CHANGE OF ADDRESS FOR THE CSP

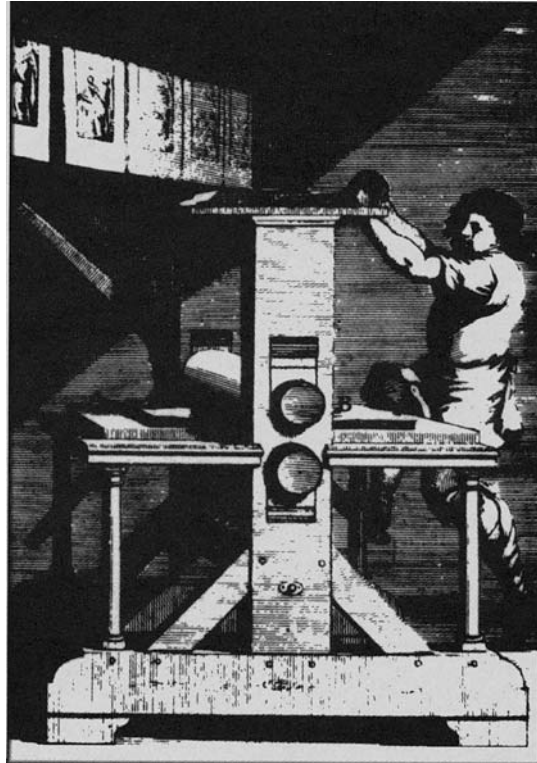
The CSP has moved its mailing address from Berkeley to: P O Box 99499 - Emeryville CA 94662.

ANNUAL MEETING DONATIONS

The CSP wishes to thank La Papeterie St. Armand (3700 Rue St.-Patrick, Montreal, H4E 1A3, Quebec, Canada) and Somerset Papers (P.O. Box 324020, Olivette, MO 63132) for donating paper samples to our 1998 Annual Meeting.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Los Angeles Printmaking Society is calling for entries for their Fifteenth National Exhibition. The slide deadline is June 30, 1998. For a prospectus, send a legal size SASE to LAPS 15th National, c/o Roxanne Sexauer, Associate Professor, Art Department, California State University, Long Beach, 1250 Bellflower Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90840-3501; (562) 985-7886; e-mail: woodcuts@concentric.net.

The Tamarind Institute will be celebrating the 200th anniversary of the discovery of lithography, July 24-26, 1998, with a symposium entitled "Collective Impressions, A Symposium to Explore the Many Aspects of Artistic Collaboration." General information is available from their web site: <http://www.unm.edu/~tamarind>; or from Becky Schnelker, Curator, Tamarind Institute, 108-110 Cornell SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106; phone (505) 277-3901; fax (505) 277-3920.

Pacific Prints 1998, through June 17, Pacific Art League, 665 Ramona Street, Palo Alto, CA; (650) 321-3891.

The Printmaking Department of California State University at Long Beach is also celebrating the 200th anniversary of lithography with a course titled "Lithographic Bicentennial Workshop," July 13-25. There will be opportunities to work with Cynthia Osborne of CSULB, Beauvais Lyons of the University of Tennessee, Wayne Kimball of Brigham Young University, and New York artist Sue Coe. Lectures and critiques will be held by Tamarind founder June Wayne and Michael Twyman, lithographic historian from the University of Reading in England. The workshop will culminate in a portfolio exchange of lithographs by all participants. Students earn three units of undergraduate or graduate credit for the course. Scholarships are available. For further information and an application form, contact CSU Summer Arts, Office of the Chancellor, 400 Golden Shore, Long Beach, CA 90802-4275; phone (562) 985-2064.

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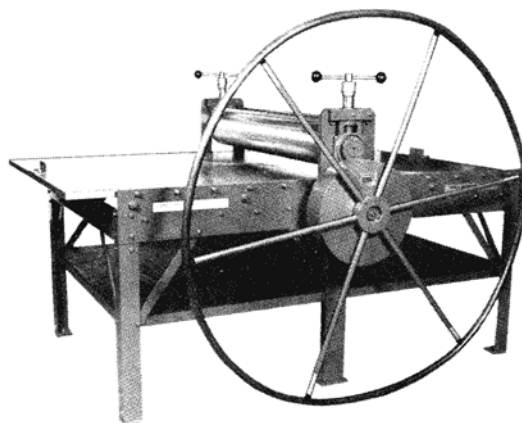
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CSP NEWS PAGE

CSP SHOWS

A Tradition Continued: Relief Prints, through June 12, Fetterly Art Gallery, Vallejo Community Arts Foundation, 3467 Sonoma Blvd., Suite 10, Vallejo, CA 94590, (707) 648-4035. CSP members in the show are: Benny Alba, Angela Banhara, Betty Bates, Charles Beck, Linda Lee Boyd, Patricia Brandes, Jeri Burnside, Lynda Byrne, Marcia Cary, Jean Eger, Jan Eldridge, Paul Feldhaus, Donna Fenstermaker, E. Hudson Hamilton, Art Hazelwood, Robert Kennon, Karen Kunc, Sydell Lewis, Mark Luca, Kathryn Metz, Barbara Milman, Patrice Moreau, Barbara Nilsson, Sheila Pitt, Naomi Policoff, Patricia Sundgren Smith, Toru Sugita, Susana Terrell, Sandy Walker, Charles Ware, Dianne Weiss, and William Wolff. A catalog is available by sending a check for \$2.50 made payable to the Vallejo Community Arts Foundation to the above address.

Community of Prints: Laney College and the California Society of Printmakers, curated by Ana Montano, July 1 - 29, Laney College Art Gallery, Tower Bldg., 900 Fallon Street, Oakland, CA 94607, (510) 464-3586. The reception is Wednesday, July 15, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. Casper Banjo will be making a silk-screen poster for the show which will be given to associate members as well as being for sale. CSP members in the show are: Angela Banhara, Casper Banjo, Robert Brokl, Jimena Correa, Donna Fenstermaker, Betty Friedman, Janet Grodin, Elizabeth Kavalier, Richard Lininger, Janet Mackaig, James Morgan, Barbara Rogers, Kirsten Stolle, and Xavier Viramontes.

Tradition and Transition in the 90s, July 9 - 25, SOMAR (South of Market Cultural Center), 934 Brannan St., San Francisco, CA. The reception is Thursday, July 9, 5:00 - 7:30 pm. Art Hazelwood will be making a woodcut poster which will be given to all associate members and will be for sale as well. Over 140 CSP members will be participating in this show which will emphasize large prints or series of small prints.

85TH ANNIVERSARY CATALOGUE

Copies of the CSP's 85th Anniversary Catalogue of Prints are available for \$10 each (plus \$3 for shipping) by sending a check made payable to the CSP to Linda Lee Boyd, 3 Captain Dr., #406, Emeryville, CA 94608.

OPEN STUDIOS

The CSP will participate in the Pro Arts East Bay Open Studios at the Berkeley Store Gallery, 2295 Shattuck at Bancroft, Berkeley, June 6/7 and 13/14, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Members participating are Naima Azgui, Casper Banjo, Betty Bates, Sandra Beard, Sherry S. Bell, Jeri Burnside, Jean Eger, Nathan Fredenburg, James Groleau, Laura La Forêt Lengyel, Sydell Lewis, Roberta Loach, Barbara Milman, Sharon Mitchell, Naomi Policoff, George Shuey, Kirsten Stolle, Kathy Taylor, Lila Wahrhaftig, Charles Ware, and Ming Wu.

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