Woodcuts to Wrapping Paper: Concepts of Originality in Contemporary Prints

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WOODCUTS TO
Wrapping Paper

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THE TROUT GALLERY / Dickinson College / Carlisle, Pennsylvania

Cover:
Yoshio Hayakawa, Still Life (Wrapping Paper), detail, n.d.
Offset, four color lithograph
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As adviser to the seminar this year, I would like to end this note by congratulating the members of the class—a particularly large class—for their cooperation with one another, freely exchanging ideas, opinions, and information, and their working together on all aspects of the project. They have accomplished an impressive exhibition with an important focus on the issue of originality in prints that should engage our visitors on a wonderfully visual as well as intellectual level.

The Members of the Art Historical Methods Seminar, Sharon L. Hirsh, Adviser

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INTRODUCTION

The works in this exhibition individually reveal the variety of techniques, imagery, and materials that have been used over the past fifty years to produce prints that are both stimulating and striking. Seen together, however, these prints also elucidate the complexity of the concept of the print itself: for centuries considered to be images on paper that were multiply produced, prints since the middle of the last century have considerably outgrown that earlier definition, to the point of provoking controversy about prints as well as raising important questions about the nature of originality.

It was only in the twentieth century that prints were routinely and self-consciously issued in “limited editions,” making clear by their numbering, often written by the artist on the paper below the print itself, that this was a unique, if not completely “original” image. If, for example, one hundred etchings were made from the same plate, then the first “pull,” as the lifting of the paper from the plate after it had gone through a press was called, would in theory be sharp and most detailed, as it had been printed from fresher cuts in the plate. Thus a print that was numbered “10/100” was considered, at least by dealers and connoisseurs, to be “better” than a print from the same edition that was numbered “99/100.” Often, pricing was based on this numbering, and the notion of prints as multiples was emphasized by the constant referencing of editions. Ironically, this numbering also resulted in each single print from an edition, of 100 or 1000, being thereby labeled as individual, even unique in its particular order of inking and printing. In addition, the marketing advantages of such labeling quickly resulted in its being used not only for intaglio and other processes in which a plate does wear down with every single printing, but also for techniques such as lithography and silkscreening, in which the print is made from raised materials, or with a stencil, and for which the numbering of an edition guarantees no inherent identification of quality. Just as prints were being more prized for their individuality, therefore, their multiplicity—for some, the definition of a print—was being questioned.

Many of these concerns about prints and printmaking were already raised in two important, now considered classic, writings of the earlier twentieth century: Walter Benjamin’s “Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” of 1936, and William Ivins’ Prints and Visual Communications published in 1953. In Benjamin’s essay, well known only by the 1950s, he questions the whole idea of “originality” in a modern society that relies on mechanical reproduction to produce most illustrations. According to Benjamin, the traditional idea of an “original” work of art was based on a concurrent notion of authenticity and a close relationship (he called it “ritual”) between artist and object. The original work of art had, therefore, an “aura” of value for viewers, who aesthetically joined in this personal ritual with the work. But with increasingly sophisticated technologies of reproduction—technologies that no longer required the presence of the artist let alone a ritual engagement with the image—this “aura” would eventually dissipate, overshadowed by a proliferation of endlessly copied copies. As Benjamin concluded, “for the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual. To an ever greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility ….”

William Ivins’ book also emphasized prints’ inherent replication, but claimed that this very quality was what had made prints responsible for communicating the technological and scientific knowledge in the modern world. For Ivins, prints were excellent communicators for two reasons: they presented information visually rather than verbally or in written form (and for Ivins, the visual was not only the clearest communication but was also not restricted to language barriers) and they were multiples, so that their visual information would be always identical. For Ivins, therefore, the importance of the print lay in its ability to disseminate visual information, and relied on its “exact reproducibility.”

A paradox of these two crucial theories of prints is that while Benjamin predicts the demise of the idea of “handmade” art in a culture dependent on mechanical reproduction, Ivins bases his defense of prints on the fact that they are assumed to be always “mechanically” (identically) reproduced. Yet, both authors must be credited with a certain prescience, especially in linking the future of visual communication to seemingly mechanical means, such as photography and film: their ideas have allowed artists, critics, and audiences alike to reconsider the role of the “original” work of art in general. In the 1980s, for example, as museum gift shops and “fine arts” posters appeared to be ubiquitous, some were led to question why we needed museums at all, or at least to suggest replacing art with reproductions, saving security and insurance; a 1982 issue of Harpers tackled the problem of “art versus collectibles,” and concluded that museums should simply display copies and “Let Them See Fakes.”

Although well known in print theory, neither Ivins’ nor Benjamin’s concerns and claims about prints have been fully satisfied by contemporary prints such as those in this exhibition. While several of the works shown here (the most extreme example would be the wrapping paper by Yoshio Hayakawa) have in fact been mechanically, and even commercially reproduced, they nonetheless have preserved their “aura” or originality, as they have been collected and are still appreciated as a single work of art (here, in fact, labeled and framed with gallery lighting, presentation, and even commentary). Rather than being degraded, prints of all definitions—from “handmade” to commercially produced—were newly appreciated during this period that has been called a “print renaissance.” For some, even this appellation
The contemporary print is experiencing a great and sudden flowering all over the world, so unprecedented in its variety and magnitude that one cannot possibly speak of a “renaissance.” Twenty years ago, it would have been impossible to think of print biennales—simply because there would not have been enough material—neither in quality nor in quantity. Now there are large international print exhibitions in Japan, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, the United States and many other countries—and we take them for granted. … and the printmaker begins to emerge—after a long period of public indifference—slightly intoxicated by the sudden burst of appreciation and attention.6

A major factor of this new print appreciation was the establishment of several large printmaking studios in the late 1950s; beginning with Pratt Graphic Institute in 1956, Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE) in 1957, and Tamarind Lithography Workshop in 1960, it was possible for printmakers to work with assistants, and often a “master printmaker” who would orchestrate in a collaborative way what the artists wanted to accomplish, together with new industrial scale equipment that could produce much larger prints in editions of almost any quantity. Traditional printmakers as well as famous painters and sculptors were lured to the new studios; larger prints—rivaling painting in size and especially if signed by well-known artists—were accepted as important works of art by the market and its audience alike. At the same time, this new emphasis on big print production made artists less responsible for working on every stage of every print, encouraging a detachment from some of the print processes. In turn, some critics interpreted this separation from invention as implying a loss of the traditional “artist’s touch.” But in many ways this was not new. A print proliferation—an earlier “print boom”—had occurred in the nineteenth century and was connected to the rise of a middle class in Europe and America that could afford to own art, as well as an increasingly literate public who wanted visual information as part of their books and newspapers. For most of these prints, the use of assistants was commonplace, and followed a tradition that went back to Renaissance workshops and guilds, where prints were routinely cut and printed by artists and craftsmen other than the one who designed them. By the end of the nineteenth century, photographic reproduction of paintings, as well as prints, was possible.7

Interestingly, much of this history of collaborative print production was neglected or negated by the 1950s, as prints again rose to prominence, became more experimental, and once again raised issues of originality, often more to the dealers, curators, and buyers who were working with the “new” print than to the artists themselves. Thus in 1961, The Print Council of America issued a promulgation that was intended to serve as a guideline to the appreciation and acquisition of what they defended as the “Original Print.” The pamphlet began with an introduction that admitted that “until recently, few of our fellow Americans had any knowledge of the graphic arts, much less any appreciation of fine prints,” and then went on to define “what is an original print” in terms of three basic but rigorous requirements:

1. The artist alone has made the image in or upon the plate, stone, wood block or other material, for the purpose of creating a work of graphic art; 2. The impression is made directly from that original material, by the artist or pursuant to his directions; 3. The finished print is approved by the artist.

The main concept underlying the council’s definition was the level of the artist’s personal involvement with every step of the work; echoing Benjamin’s earlier identification of the notions of “aura” with belief in “authenticity,” The Print Council sought to establish the original print as one that could maintain its aura by virtue of its physical connection to the artist.8 Intriguingly, the pamphlet also included an article by Carl Zigrosser, who was not only vice president of The Print Council but also curator of prints and drawings at the Philadelphia Museum; his essay addressed the historical background to this controversy about prints. After explaining the various types of printmaking and discussing their history as forms of reproduction, Zigrosser admitted that the recent development of prints as a “major medium” had resulted in a tendency to “glorify originality and creation.” He went on to declare that “[i]t may be that too high a premium is being placed upon these values in light of graphic tradition” that had always distinguished “originality of design” from “originality of execution.”9

In the meantime, many printmakers agreed with Zigrosser. An instructive example is a “duet” of articles published in the Print Collector’s Newsletter, one of the longest-running and important journals devoted to prints, in 1972. Both invited essays entitled “On Originality” offer a good sense of the variety of thinking that existed then, and exists today. The first article was written by Hubert Prouté, a print and drawings dealer in Paris. For Prouté, the new printmaking techniques and practices of the 1960s and early 1970s presented “serious problems” that undermined earlier centuries’ efforts “to make clear who designed as well as who executed the print in question.” (Prouté here does not reference Renaissance but rather only nineteenth-century practice, specifically when reproductive prints were signed with two names, the painter’s and the printer’s.) These admirable distinctions were, he claimed, now regularly
Prouté hoped, therefore, to “clarify the situation” by defining the “truly original print”:

As far as we are concerned, a print is original when it is entirely executed by the artist who designed it. The criteria for originality rest on the fact that only one artist contributed to the work ... [S]ome technical assistance from craftsmen is admitted ... [and] The use of photography is also permissible, but only if limited to part of the work.10

By contrast, the second essay “On Originality,” by the artist, printmaker, and founder of the Tamarind Workshop, June Wayne, begins with the bold disclosure that “[i]n spite of many requests for my definition of an original print, I have not written one because it seems an exercise in futility.” While prior attempts at definitions offer a list of what other artists may have accomplished in prints, she explained, they are at the same time limiting: “My problem is that definitions, by their nature, imply a freight of do’s and don’ts that try to invade the studio and influence art in progress.” At the same time that she was perfectly willing to experiment, get assistance, and “work outside the norms” of her medium, she questioned the ability—or willingness—of others to adhere to The Print Council definition, arguing “[w]ould you collectors, critics, curators, dealers agree to buy only those prints that fit the definitions? What about your ‘right’ to curatorial opinion, critical judgment, access to mavericks and innovators? Can you be free if artists aren’t?”

Further recognizing that the complicating factor in prints is their existence in multiples, Wayne pointed out that “in a set of look-alike triplets, all three are original ...” She then observed that, at that time, the public seemed to accept, as in her example, the originality of smaller print editions, and that future prints—which she predicted would continue to be more and more complex and require smaller editions—might solve the predicament of the “original print.”11

Over the years of controversy, however, Wayne’s prediction of only large-scale, low-edition prints has not come true; very small prints using new materials and techniques have also emerged. In all of these newer developments, however, numerous artists have not only ignored such restrictive guidelines but at times seem to have deliberately pushed the limits of their own work so that they completely re-invented the notion of the “print.” As if following Wayne’s opinion above, artists emphasized that the reason for making a print, from their point of view, was that it represented the best medium for a particular image or effect, regardless of its promise of multiplicity: “the edition,” according to Wayne and many other artists, “was merely a secondary benefit.”12

Soon, prints were being made with such mixed mediums and processes that buyers and curators outside the shop needed to have a technical affidavit of the process in order to understand exactly how the print was made. Prints were produced as murals, on plastic, in editions of thousands but also as single “states,” and by digital or mechanical processes that no longer
needed the presence of the artist. Pop artist Roy Lichtenstein used offset lithography—a process normally used for commercial and high-volume printing—for the advertisement/invitation to his one-man show at Castelli Gallery in 1962; the Lichtenstein print in this exhibition, however, was produced only three years later as an offset lithograph but this time as an individual, “original” print. Thus, just as The Print Council sought to restrict the “original print” definition, many printmakers celebrated the possibilities of new technologies for their craft. In 1970, in the pages of Artist’s Proof, an “Annual of Prints and Printmaking” published by the Pratt Graphics Institute, Bernard Childs, whose Frumenti print can be seen in this exhibition, wrote an article subtitled “High Speed Presses and the Unlimited Edition.” Childs enthusiastically explained the production of his work Tropical Noon as a huge edition, one print of which was included in each copy of the Annual:

“Tropical Noon,” the original print which accompanies this article, is one of 5000. It was created on a letterpress that can pull 3500 impressions an hour. The machine has precise and flexible controls that were evolved strictly for commercial printing requirements. These same controls make it possible for the artist to convert the commercial press into a creative instrument. Contemporary presses give us the means to meet an established contemporary need—unlimited editions of fine originals for the ever growing numbers of people who want them.

Childs went on to give a detailed technical description of how he made the print, with the assistance of a pressman, on the commercial Miehle horizontal letterpress, concluding “Publishers and machines exist to meet the need for unlimited editions, so do the artists. Together they can inaugurate a new era in great printmaking.”

Already in the 1960s, the alternative term “multiples” began to be used as a method of including all the new work being done in series (whether on paper or not), and of avoiding the confusion that now inevitably occurred with the use of the word “print.” When the Pop painter, installation artist, and printmaker Claes Oldenburg was asked, for example, how the new catalogue raisonné treating all his multiple work might be titled, the artist himself suggested naming everything—from hand pressed images on rice paper to plastic molded tea bags—“Printed Stuff.”

In this exhibition, excellent examples of this current complexity of prints and printmaking offer challenges for the viewer who is willing to engage in this issue on the basis of single works, viewed one at a time, as well as in the comparative context that this show presents. Helen Siegl’s Rooster, for example, might stand as the most “traditional” of all the prints here, having been carved as a woodcut by the artist herself, inked and printed by her in her own home. Because it is a woodcut, furthermore, there would not even have been a press, or any “mechanical reproduction” involved; the production tools here were her own hand and the back of a wooden kitchen spoon. Surely this would exemplify the “authenticity” and “aura of the original” that Benjamin claimed was so basic to prints’ appreciation. And yet even this very traditional print conflicts with Ivins’ assertion of the print’s historical importance as relatable to the exactness of its replication: close observation reveals that Siegl experimented with a small area of red ink (over the basic yellow of the first inking) in the area of the rooster’s neck; over this she then added blue in such a way and with such thickness that it suggests hand inking or even painting. The result of this experimentation is therefore a “print” that suits Benjamin’s traditional definition but defies Ivins’ assertion that each print be “exactly reproducible,” as it cannot ever be precisely the same even within a very limited edition. Other works in this exhibition are equally defiant of this notion of exact multiples: the prints of Bram Bogart and Jean Dubuffet, for example, pursued technical production requiring hand-brushing or accidental inking, resulting in pulls which are always slightly different from one another. Jane Freilicher and Benjamin Levy add in pastel or watercolor by hand after the initial printing, arguing in the same way against the notion of a perfectly reproducible edition.

Full page advertisement by Castelli Graphics, New York, for Robert Rauschenberg’s Currents series, Artforum 8, no. 9 (June 1970), 17.
Other works here challenge the conventional association of a print’s authority with the laborious process of traditional printmaking, suggesting that the marks on the plate equate with the artist’s touch. Both Bernard Childs and Mauricio Lasansky, for example, used power tools to make some or all of their plate marks. In addition, several prints shown here were made by publishers in studios where much of the production process was taken over by master printers and assistants: Robert Rauschenberg’s and Armand Arman’s prints are good examples of this, while Pablo Picasso’s approach in the print here is certainly the most extreme, as he merely signed the prints that were mechanically reproduced by the shop, from his own, earlier crayon drawing.

From another perspective, however, both Childs and Bearden often make a point of still being “original”—while using power tools and photography to prepare their plates—by allowing only a single print be pulled, rather than an edition of prints. Seen from a Postmodern perspective, in which the authority of the artist’s intention is replaced by a reliance on the individual viewer’s interpretation of the work, all of these prints pose interesting questions of originality. For an audience increasingly comfortable with mass production as well as multiplicity, these questions can even include a new, purposely open, definition of “print.”

But these prints are at the same time works of art that encourage us, despite our Postmodern perspectives, to also consider them as expressions of a Modernist sensibility of “originality.” Works in this exhibition also allow for this reading, especially in their connection to the personality of the artist, which remains in those works still resulting from physical involvement of the artist and personal commentary. Roberto Matta and Rupert Garcia make political statements while Bearden and Warrington Colescott comment on contemporary society. Mauricio Lasansky and Betye Saar expose his own skilled hand in drawing as well as a certain wit about the duality of his image, inevitably sharing with the viewer a glimpse of his own personality.

Finally, in Hayakawa’s print that is called, and in fact is, commercially printed and distributed to be used to wrap special objects (probably gifts, possibly dinnerware), Hayakawa’s work, like much other Japanese wrapping paper, has been subsequently collected, displayed, and enjoyed, for all the originality it possesses.

Sharon L. Hirsh
Charles A. Dana Professor of Art History

1 In his article on the “Historical Background” to issues of originality in prints for The Print Council’s pamphlet What is an Original Print?, Carl Zigrosser pointed out the differences of the “new” techniques of lithography and silkscreen from traditional intaglio and how these differences had affected questions of originality. See Joshua Binion Cahn, ed., What is an Original Print? (New York: The Print Council of America, 1961), 23-24.
7 Wiring for The Print Council in 1961, Zigrosser suggested that the questions of originality in prints with which the Council was grappling at that time had resulted from these inventions, which had produced a new notion of “reproduction.” With the advent of photography came, he claimed, “a new attitude toward printmaking … which stresses the original, the creative factor. Printmakers now strive to make works of art; in the past they just made prints.” See Cahn, 25.
8 In keeping with this emphasis, a conference of five artists produced guidelines for uniform practices of signing and numbering prints. Interestingly, one of these artists was Mauricio Lasansky, whose Self Portrait in this exhibition dates from this time when he was discussing with The Print Council the nature of the original print.
9 Cahn, 26.
12 Wayne, 29.
13 Sidney Chafetz, “Four Early Lichtenstein Prints,” Artist’s Proof (Brooklyn: Pratt Institute, 1970), 52.
14 Zigrosser, in his text for The Print Council, acknowledged that offset lithography posed a “special problem,” and was a “border line case more slanted toward reproductive than toward original production.” See Cahn, 24.
16 Childs, 86.
HELEN SIEGL (B. 1924), Austrian-American

_**A Rooster,** 1953_

Woodcut, paper size: 25 x 33 1/2 in. (63.5 x 85.1 cm)
Image size: 23 x 24 in. (58.4 x 24.0 cm)
Signed and dated in pencil: l.r.: Helen Siegl 1953
Gift of the Drs. Meyer P. and Vivian O. Potamkin, 1969.1.45
Not previously exhibited
Unpublished

Helen Siegl is an Austrian-born artist who studied art at the Academie für Agewandte Kunst in Vienna and later moved to the United States. In her career she has worked as an etcher, lithographer, woodcutter, and illustrator. Siegl’s woodcuts are characterized best by the playful subject matter she creates. _A Rooster_ exemplifies the traditional method of printing that preceded printing methods that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century.

_A Rooster_ depicts a farm rooster filling the whole space with the form of the animal, accompanied by textural elements from the wood as well as cut lines made by the artist. The colors are earthy yet intriguing, varying between the muddy brown background and the indigo blue of the rooster’s feathers, while contrasting with the rice paper that has been left without color for the bird’s underbelly. The natural grain of the wood alone also adds an expressive quality that is intrinsic to woodcut. The artist’s hand is especially apparent where Siegl applied more pressure in one area rather than another in the transfer of her design.1

In _A Rooster_, the technique is labor intensive and time consuming, requiring the artist to cut into the woodblock with different tools. After inking the image, Siegl then presses a piece of rice paper against the block with the back of a large wooden spoon. _A Rooster_ is printed on fine rice paper, which Siegl chose to use in most of her work, because it was more absorbent; thus, as she explained, “very thin rice paper gives best results.”2 The organic nature of the wood, along with the different textures, lines, and forms cut into it, give Siegl’s prints an inherently unique and original quality.

_A Rooster_ is characteristic of the type of prints that were produced during the re-emergence of printmaking as a major medium in the 1950s. With this revival came many new printing techniques that raised questions of originality in the reproduction and multiplicity of prints. The definition of the “original print” was first set in 1961 by The Print Council of America, and was upheld by several well-known print shops. This definition required the direct use and visibility of the artist’s hand in the print and did not include the use of photo-mechanical means or assistants producing images for the artist.3 Despite new printing methods, Siegl continued to make her own numbered editions and was always involved in the design and creation of a print. Siegl printed, signed, titled, and numbered each print herself, unless the image was further reproduced commercially in a book. Because most of Siegl’s prints were done by hand, there is a slight variation between each print pulled, which also adds to their originality. Thus, _A Rooster_ is a perfect example of what was considered “original” before the boom of contemporary prints and subsequent questions of multiplicity and authenticity arose.

Siegl’s work has also, however, been reprinted commercially. Because of her appealing subject matter, Siegl has allowed book publishers to reprint her images as illustrations in children’s books such as _Aesop’s Fables_.4 The variety of audiences that are able to view Siegl’s prints proves how accessible her work is to the public, especially to younger children. Perhaps the fact that Siegl has eight children of her own was a direct inspiration for the subject matter she depicts and the type of art she creates.5 This inspiration is seen in _A Rooster_, where Siegl presents an enormous rooster with its grand tail feathers, proud stance, and vibrant blue neck.

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2 Watson, 42-43.
Mauricio Lasansky, like thousands of artists before him, used his self-portrait to depict the cultural and social aspects of his time. Lasansky engraved his image in *Self Portrait* as he would appear at rest; his hands are folded in front of his body, and he appears to be contemplating some larger issues, possibly how the artist identified himself and how he reacted to the world. *Self Portrait*, a simplistic dual-tone print, forces the viewer to address the artist with few details and no background context. The use of light yellow ocher, a stark contrast to the white of the paper, emphasizes the figure’s face and hands. Lasansky forced the viewer to look at the figure not just as an image but also as a person.

At the time of the making of this print, the “artist’s touch” was crucial to being considered original. By inserting himself not only as the maker but as the subject matter, Lasansky confirmed the originality of himself as the artist and his print. Lasansky’s approach to printmaking leaves the viewer with the knowledge that *Self Portrait* is the work of a man who strongly believed in the continuity and legitimacy of tradition. In the 1950s intaglio, used here by Lasansky, was the technique favored by academia and specialist printmakers, contrary to tradition in his early life allowed Lasansky to develop the ability to synthesize and practice different engraving techniques.

Blending Hayter’s and his own ideas, he was one of the first to use power tools to achieve new textures on the metal plate. In *Self Portrait*, Lasansky inserted his “touch” by using an electric stripper to incise lines (the outline of his bicep) and hard burnishing (under his chin) to hide others in the outline of the figure. Lasansky’s ability to look at various sources for inspiration and techniques to use in his works is most likely related to his background in Argentina, which in the 1940s and 1950s did not have an established graphic tradition. His father and uncle, however, were engravers for the American Mint, and introduced Lasansky to the intaglio processes. The lack of a strong technical tradition in his early life allowed Lasansky to develop the ability to synthesize and practice different engraving techniques. Confirming this belief, Lasansky once remarked that “the artist must be an inventor as well as a craftsman. He will combine the experience in print-making techniques of the last four hundred years in one print.”

Large prints, such as *Self Portrait*, were a relatively new phenomenon; Lasansky increased the scale of his prints to promote a one-to-one interaction with the viewer and the print. In the 1950s, Lasansky fought to have larger prints similar to his displayed in museums that were holding on to the traditional notions of smaller intaglio prints. Lasansky was able to exhibit large prints that had the same high quality craftsmanship as smaller prints. His prints are now often prized for their large size; some were as large as six feet tall and used up to fifty plates. For *Self Portrait*, however, he printed the same plate only twice with different colors, creating a slightly skewed registration, noticeable in the lower left corner.

*Self Portrait* was considered an original print by the critics of Lasansky’s day because he took the print from concept to completion, and never removed the artist’s importance from the print or the process. During the 1950s, two drastically different approaches to printmaking were developing and defining new values of the print. Lasansky’s work followed the academic direction of intaglio, which focused attention on the artist and his or her work on the metal plate, rather than allowing craftsmen to transfer the design onto the plate. *Self Portrait* was created and printed completely by Lasansky in his workshop, as an expression of himself.

Danielle M. Gower

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3 Lasansky: *Inside the Image*, VHS, produced by Kevin Kelley and the University of Iowa (Iowa City: University of Iowa Audiovisual Center Marketing, 1993).
6 Zigrosser, cat. 31.
7 Longman, 8.
The fact that Colescott composed this print in drypoint calls attention to his preference for more traditional intaglio print techniques. This technique requires much precision, patience, and time just for one plate, all aspects that did not coincide with the quick, efficient, and multiple-print producing process of lithography that many contemporaries were predominantly using. Not only were big-name print studios such as Gemini Gel, ULAE, and Tamarind helping artists to work expressly with lithography as a way to reinvigorate interest in the media, but also intaglio had mostly fallen out of favor.4

Colescott continued to rely, however, upon the Northern European roots he inherited from his colleagues at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for traditions such as drypoint and other related intaglio methods.5 Colescott’s fame within this traditional medium, however, came about from his experimental blending of brilliant eye-catching colors with intaglio, which yielded the technique of color intaglio. This process, seen in Aldgate East, involves stencil paper rather than silkscreen and multiple intaglio-relief plates. His prints captured the imagination of students who came from all over to work with him.

Colescott’s unwavering work in a medium that was not in vogue during the 1960s produced surprising results. His experimentation in intaglio led to international recognition. As a master printmaker, he understood the art and the beauty of the printmaking process intimately in a way that gave him complete control of his art.7 Thus, Colescott embodied Aldgate East with all the components that reconfirm his experience in printmaking and his role as an active social critic.

Saman Khan

4 Susan Tallman, The Contemporary Print from Pre-Pop to Postmodern (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd., 1996), 99.
5 Colescott and Hove, 12.
6 In fact, Colescott’s work of the period rivaled prints by another well-known printer in Paris, William S. Hayter, who also worked in color intaglio but with a more demanding and complicated process called “viscosity painting.” Colescott and Hove, 53-54.
7 Colescott and Hove, 57.
PABLO PICASSO (1881-1973), Spanish

Young Spanish Peasant, 1970

Lithograph, paper size: 25 5/8 x 19 3/4 in. (65.2 x 50.0 cm)
Image size: 25 5/8 x 19 3/4 in. (65.2 x 50.0 cm)
Signed on stone: l.r.: Picasso 23.9.70
Gift of Philip and Muriel Berman, 1986.4.18

Young Spanish Peasant is a lithograph printed by Michel Casse in Paris using an original crayon drawing by Picasso.1 With her easy outward stare and casual demeanor, the peasant is confidently engaging; the print’s simple line and primary palette exemplify the combination of elegance and economy that popular audiences associated with Picasso’s works in the final decades of his life.

The artist was absent from the printing process and personally signed only a few proofs separated from the larger edition of 2,500.2 Picasso greatly enjoyed both etching and lithography and was skilled in the technical aspects of printmaking, having contributed his “reductive method” of color printing and his “rinsed linocut” to the practice.3 At the same time, however, he often made only brief appearances at the printshop while skilled copyists created large print editions of his finished crayon drawings, or, in some cases, he simply loaned the drawings to various printers. Many critics and collectors believed that prints made in this fashion were more like reproduced posters than original works of art.

Beyond the advantage of accessibility, a print’s reproducibility also offers the potential of financial windfalls for the dealers who manage their distribution. While these features generally fail to diminish the artistic value of a print made in creative spirit, they cause quite a controversy when the attributed artist is inactive in the printing process or when the print is a translation from a separate work. Practical observers called the production of these converted “original” editions a financially motivated move that would diminish the art market at large. Today, these critics seem validated by the current ubiquity of reproduced masterworks worldwide and the air of entrepreneurship that accompanied most of these prints. Young Spanish Peasant, for example, was falsely advertised as Picasso’s last known work in The New York Times and the edition offered for $125 each, check or money order.4 Not atypical of late Picasso, the artist consented to the drawing being editioned in exchange for a $100,000 contribution to an associate’s charity.5 Ironically, the advertisers declared the print limited and assured that “Upon completion of the edition, the stone was subsequently destroyed,” even though a new stone could be fashioned by the same process. It was created, after all, only as a means of making its parent drawing accessible to as many people as possible.

Oddly enough, the “originality” of a print has only become an issue since the 1950s, when the print medium was elevated to “high art” status. Before then, prints were understood as a secondary form, executed mainly by trained copyists and meant for effective dissemination. In the Italian High Renaissance, only Parmigianino and Mantegna bothered much with any form of printmaking; among their Northern counterparts, Peter Paul Rubens and Peter Brueghel each created only one print themselves before they adopted the common practice of their peers—Dürer excepted—and turned the task of printmaking over to more dedicated craftsmen.6 Through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the proportion of major artists interested in printmaking had increased only slightly. Although Mantegna and Dürer were duly praised for their virtuosity, most audiences before 1950 neither expected artists to execute their own prints nor cared which printshop produced them.7

Picasso was similarly uninterested; he particularly appreciated lithography for liberating him from the printshop, allowing him to craft his images comfortably in his own studio.8 In fact, his closest relationship with any printmaker began when Fernand Mourlot presented Picasso with color reproductions he had made of other painters’ work.9 Picasso believed that an image was animated by visual resonance rather than physical presence. According to his close friend Gertrude Stein,

[Picasso] used to say quite often, paper lasts quite as well as paint and after all if it all ages together, why not, and he said further, after all, later, no one will see the picture, they will see the legend of the picture, the legend that the picture has created, then it makes no difference if the picture lasts or does not last. Later they will restore it, a picture lives by its legend, not by anything else.10

Ultimately, any estimation of the value of a print is a reflection of our own attitudes toward art and the turbulent interaction between creative spirit and financial potential. Young Spanish Peasant can be called a typical Picasso drawing, a composition of graceful lines so perfectly placed that they capture our imagination instantly. But in an art world encumbered by canons and catalogs, we may never know whether such accounts describe the work or its signature.

Ryan McNally
2 Plummer and Larson, 29.
6 Donson, 14.
7 Donson, 14.
9 Wallen, 9.
RUPERT GARCIA (B. 1941), American

Calavera Crystal Ball, 1992

Silkscreen, paper size: 30 x 22 in. (76.2 x 55.9 cm)
Image size: 28 x 20 in. (71.1 x 50.0 cm)
Signed in pencil: l.l.: 84/100 Calavera Crystal Ball Rupert Garcia
Purchased with funds from the Class of 1982, 2002.15
Not previously exhibited
Published: Andrew Perchuk, ed., Aspects of Resistance: Rupert Garcia exh. cat.

Toward the end of the 1960s, The Chicano Political Movement was formed by Mexican-Americans; this movement grew from an alliance formed by exploited farm workers, disenfranchised land grant owners, the urban working class, and students of Mexican-American background in the western part of the United States, specifically in California. Out of this movement came a group of artists who produced “Chicano Posters.” In turn, politics and art merged to become known as El Movimiento.1 These artists are known for their images that conveyed pertinent messages about the struggles of the Chicano population, using bright and bold colors. Rupert Garcia is one of the most well-known artists of the Chicano Poster Movement.

Garcia, a native of California, experienced the oppression of Chicanos firsthand, because his family members were agricultural and cannery workers. However, when Garcia displayed artistic abilities at a young age, he was encouraged to pursue a career in art, and went on to study in college, earning various degrees in art and art history. Despite his well-rounded background in the creation, study, and teaching of art, Garcia is best known for the posters he contributed during the time of El Movimiento, as well as to other political and social movements. Although The Chicano Poster Movement can be seen collectively within the realm of all poster making at the time, it does retain a distinctive iconography that reflects the different cultures, themes, languages, and struggles that defined the Chicano Movement.2

While Garcia’s prints raise questions of originality and multiplicity, they still retain an original characteristic through the motives behind the artist’s work in this medium. For Garcia, a silkscreen print is an essentially democratic medium that has been connected to many social and political movements throughout history.3 Silkscreening allowed Garcia to work quickly with multiples, enabling his political messages to reach a wide range of audiences. While Garcia was a major influence in El Movimiento, he also lent his political views and artistic talents to other important areas of political unrest at the time, such as the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela, segregation in the United States, and the Gulf War. As Garcia explained:

In using the images of mass-media I am taking an art form whose motives are debased, exploitative, and indifferent to human welfare, and setting it into a totally new moral context. I am, so to speak, reversing the process by which mass-media betray the masses, and betraying the images of mass media to moral purposes for which they are designed: the art of social protest.4

Garcia’s choice to work with the silkscreen medium is due to its characteristic of absorbing light, unlike the glossy finish of paintings. As he has said, “I want the viewer to be able to see my pictures with as little outside interference as possible.”5 Garcia’s prints often depict an image of a single figure, using bright primary or secondary colors and black as a contrast. This can be seen in Calavera Crystal Ball.

The images in many of Garcia’s prints often refer to ideas of universality taken from the Enlightenment;6 he also often focuses on the philosophical arrogance and Euro-centric point of view that has ruled the West for centuries. Through his socio-political art, Garcia challenges such one-sided social and economic views and confronts culturally-determined definitions of truth and beauty.

Calavera Crystal Ball depicts a huge skull with a smaller picture inset in its forehead. The smaller insert contains a human figure that resembles a traditional depiction of a white European or Colonial male donning a characteristic tricorn hat with a yellow handprint covering his face. This exact male image, as well as the skull and handprint, have been used several times in Garcia’s prints. In other works, the male figure has been referred to as “Cristobal” or “Christopher.” The figure is shown in bright colors, also common in many of Garcia’s prints; however, the handprint hides his identity from the viewer. The figure is representative of the many Anglo-Saxon European males who dominated the shaping of the West, such as Christopher Columbus. While Garcia correlates these ideas to historical figures such as Columbus, he also acknowledges the same elitist notion of universality that existed all the way back to the Christian Crusaders.

Considering the themes of Garcia’s oeuvre, and the traditional iconography of a skeleton linked to death, this print perhaps suggests the death of the Euro-centric paradigm. In this context, the title Calavera Crystal Ball suggests that the skull (calavera) is a crystal ball (perhaps a clever Chicano play on the word “Cristo-bal”), and the image in its head is what is being remembered. Garcia’s imagery seems deliberately conflicting, allowing viewers to interpret various meanings and messages from this print. While Calavera Crystal Ball is one of Garcia’s more recent works, he continues to tackle the same social and political overtones that characterized much of his work with The Chicano Political Movement.

Sarah Burger
3 Stellweg, 9.
5 Goldman, 54.
Yellow Bounce, 1971

Silkscreen, paper size: 29 1/4 x 29 1/4 in. (74.3 x 74.3 cm)
Image size: 29 1/4 x 29 1/4 in. (74.3 x 74.3 cm)
Signed in pencil: l.r.: Edna Andrade Yellow Bounce 23/25
Gift of the Drs. Meyer P. and Vivian O. Potamkin, 1972.1.1
Published: Patrick E. Smith, 20th-Century American Women Artists: Selections from the Permanent Collection at Dickinson College exh. cat. (Carlisle, PA: The Trout Gallery, 1999), 44.

Optical Art can be defined in a variety of ways; simply, it was part of twentieth-century geometric abstraction, which used lines, shapes, and juxtaposed colors to create the illusion of movement. Edna Andrade’s works convey a sense of motion commonly found in this genre. Optical artists, including Andrade, described themselves as interested in the psychological perception of art and the effect of trompe-l’œil (fool the eye), a style in which objects are depicted with photographic realism that makes the objects appear three-dimensional. They focused on the immediate effect the work had on the viewer’s eyes and how the viewer was able to process radiant colors and lines while understanding visual harmony and tensions. Andrade’s work from this period shows the influence of Optical art, while revealing a fascination with repetition.

In 1971 Andrade made Yellow Bounce, a silkscreen using a pattern of sixteen vertical columns and horizontal rows of circles. The rapid production of printmaking allowed Andrade, who also made paintings, to create multiple copies in a relatively short amount of time, with her same precise style. Here one sees the importance of Andrade’s training in the 1930s: while other artists were slower to adapt silkscreen printing as a “high art” form, her lack of distinction and willingness to experiment with “lower” applied arts was a direct result of her education.

Silkscreen printing, typically considered a commercial art used for displays, advertising, and textiles, was first acknowledged as a “high art” in the 1950s and was employed by innovative artists willing to question if the production methods dictated the originality of the end results. By silkscreening Yellow Bounce, Andrade continued to question the value of art based on its production methods.

Andrade initially painted in slow drying oils but soon transitioned to acrylic, which lent itself to the intricate nature of her graphic designs. She was classically trained to paint landscapes in the 1930s, when there were fewer distinctions between fine art and applied arts, compared to the late 1960s. Patterning during the 1930s was thought of as unoriginal and lacking in skill, but it could be viewed as a positive factor if it was used as a moderate part of the composition for specific details. Andrade used ideas about this “incorrect” use of patterning in which she was trained, and translated them into jolting compositions.

In addition to the speed with which she could complete her prints, Andrade’s desire to produce works that lacked the “artist’s touch” facilitated her transition to silkscreen printing. The flat planes of color and clean lines in her prints are evidence of a Minimalist approach to design and process. Andrade’s focus on repetitive geometric images is embodied in Yellow Bounce. Inspired by Modernists such as Paul Klee, Piet Mondrian, and Josef Albers, Andrade’s Yellow Bounce uses simple shapes with a deceptively simple color palette which in turn enhance the composition’s complex design. Each circle is comprised of two halves: one semi-circle is blue, the other is green. The green semi-circles were printed first, followed by the slightly larger blue semi-circles, and finally an intense yellow was printed. Each circle appears to have a ring surrounding it, which is actually the green and blue ink that bled through the yellow. The circles in Yellow Bounce resemble large “Ben Day dots” typically associated with the Pop artist Roy Lichtenstein who was inspired by comics and newsprint, and who elevated their common status. Yellow Bounce is characteristically an optical work; it was intended to seduce the viewer by upsetting the eye and to create a sense of motion, visually coercing the viewer to search for some way to organize the colors and shapes. The print promotes each viewer to create an original understanding and interpretation; the yellow plane can be seen as a grate with small triangular shapes underneath. It can also been seen as a flat plane of cut out shapes. Andrade related the patterns in her work to the traditions of craft-based arts such as quilt-making, weaving, and mosaics. Thus Yellow Bounce can be viewed in small segments, but like a quilt, it is best appreciated when seen as a whole.

Unlike other styles, Optical art was not devalued by the recycling of patterns because it did not influence the work’s psychological effect. Optical art patterns were turned into wallpaper, textiles, clothes, wrapping paper, and other everyday objects. Andrade, in fact, reused her own painted patterns: Rotation (1968), Emergence II (1969), and Yellow Turn (1969) exhibit the patterns of Yellow Bounce, in different colors and scales.

Andrade intended works like Yellow Bounce to cause a purely optical reaction. The reuse of patterning and the silkscreen process completely remove the “artist’s touch” from Yellow Bounce. According to Walter Benjamin, a print, because of its multiplicity, does not have an “aura” of originality; in Benjamin’s view, Yellow Bounce does not possess the same quality of “the original” as a painting. However, in Andrade’s work the print creates the same optical reaction as a painting and is therefore equally valid, implying that Yellow Bounce does not need an original “aura” to convey its optical message: a striking experience for the eye.

Danielle M. Gower
SANTE GRAZIANI (B. 1920), American

The Lady and Her Gown (Series: Homage to Ingres), 1967

Lithograph, paper size: 18 x 20 in. (46.0 x 51.0 cm)
Image size: 17 x 13 3/4 in. (43.2 x 34.5 cm)
Signed and dated: l.r.: Sante Graziani 1967
Gift of the Drs. Meyer P. and Vivian O. Potamkin, 1983.8.2.6
Unpublished

Drawing of The Lady and Her Gown, 1967

Drawing, graphite on Swathmore paper, paper size: 23 x 29 in. (58.4 x 73.6 cm)
Signed and dated: l.r.: Sante Graziani 1967
Gift of the Drs. Meyer P. and Vivian O. Potamkin, 1983.8.2.11
Not previously exhibited
Unpublished

Like many of his contemporaries, Sante Graziani is known for painting rather than printmaking. In 1943, after earning a master's degree in fine arts at Yale University, Graziani entered military service in World War II, where he employed his skills by drawing medical and surgical illustrations. His deftness in close handling of line and detail necessary for medical sketches is evident in both the drawing and print of The Lady and Her Gown (1967). The print is part of the series Homage to Ingres, in which Graziani consciously borrows the composition and style of several Ingres' oil paintings from the nineteenth century. The Lady and Her Gown is a re-interpretation of Ingres' Portrait of Baroness James de Rothschild (1848, Collection of Guy de Rothschild, Paris). Graziani, along with many artists working in America in the second half of the twentieth century, was part of the increasing popularity of printmaking by producing large-scale color lithographs such as this.1

Graziani specifically chose lithography for this series because the technique allows for mechanical reproduction of painterly and drawing qualities, a way to connect the printed image to Ingres' paintings. Graziani took advantage of this printing technique in The Lady and Her Gown by issuing a print that maintained all the same aesthetic qualities present in the drawing. Together, the preliminary drawing and print of The Lady and Her Gown is an example of how technological advancements in printmaking liberated the traditional print by allowing the final product to appear unique, hand-drawn, and distinctive to the artist's touch. In actuality, there is only one drawing, but there are ten identical prints of The Lady and Her Gown. Juxtaposing the two works “break[s] the act of creation into discrete preservable stages,” allowing the viewer to understand printmaking as a highly involved process, beginning with an original image and resulting in multiple copies that maintain authenticity as an original.2

Multiplicity is an integral part of printmaking, which seems to prevent the possibility of defining a print as an original. Whereas there is only one drawing of The Lady and Her Gown, done by Graziani's hand, the printed series was executed with several lithograph plates, one for each color, with aid from a master printer. In addition to questions of originality regarding production, Graziani's subject matter also raises questions of authenticity. Even though Graziani relies on assistance in the production as well as on the past by using Ingres' figure, he still succeeds in creating an original work.

Walter Benjamin, in his influential essay on originality, discusses the “aura” of a work of art, which he describes as the feeling of each creation, taking into account that art is time sensitive, possessing sentiments specific to where and when the work was made.3 In defense of the originality of The Lady and Her Gown, the aura of Ingres' painting is entirely different from that of Graziani's print; neither work of art compromises the other, but rather a dialogue occurs between past and present, expanding the depth and meaning of both.4 In The Lady and Her Gown, Graziani creates a new aura and interpretation, thereby offering an original perspective.

The visual language of Graziani's print reveals a repeated subject matter; thus, duplication exists within the image as well as in the process of the edition. The Lady and Her Gown portrays a mirror reflection of one woman, mimicking the physical process of drawing on the plate with the reversed image that results on the paper. Graziani embraces the element of multiplicity by repeating images, proving that he is not only conscious of re-sourcing subject matter, but also is aware of the essential quality of the reproducibility of all prints.5 The same woman is reflected with opposite characteristics highlighted, as if one woman is viewed through two different lenses. This technique is an example of the larger concern of prints: how aura, value, and originality are not lost in reproduction, because the reproducibility of prints allows for dissemination, which invites numerous interpretations of the same work. The drawing and print of The Lady and Her Gown reveal the same aesthetic characteristics and therefore can both be considered a genuine craft and an original work.

Nora M. Mueller

2 Tallman, 31.
5 Tallman, 58-59.
Victoria's Children, 1967

Lift ground etching and engraving, paper size: 19 5/8 x 25 3/8 in. (49.7 x 67.7 cm)
Plate size: 17 3/4 x 24 in. (46.2 x 61.7 cm)
Signed and dated in pencil: l.r.: P.W. Milton 67; l.c.: Victoria's Children
Gift of the Mary Dickinson Club in honor of Judy Banks, 1983.7

Victoria’s Children is a black-and-white lift ground etching that juxtaposes figures in an architectural setting. The print has two small children, one boy and one girl located in the foreground, as well as a cat and an outline of a carriage. The background consists of a one-point perspective outdoor architectural setting, in which the lines of the print establish a vanishing point behind the large tree. There is a spiked fence on the right side and a building on the left side, engaging a feeling of confinement within the print. Milton uses ramps and stairs to suggest depth and distance, yet they never coalesce into a readable architectural space that had been previously left vacant; what the camera tells us about how things look.5 Milton used photographic transfers on two of his prints, but later was upset to learn that viewers thought his more realistic works were photographs, so he returned exclusively to drawing.6 According to art historian James Heffernan, “Milton takes photography as both his model and rival, deliberately emulating its subtleties and evoking above all its mnemonic power, its capacity to fix forever a fleeting moment of the past.”7 Such moments are captured in Victoria’s Children.

Peter Milton was born in Merion, Pennsylvania and began his education at Virginia Military Institute in 1948, where he studied engineering and design. He transferred after two years to Yale University, where he studied under Josef Albers. Milton began teaching at the Maryland Institute in 1961, a year after he began his career in printmaking. Lift ground etching became his primary medium, in which drawing on a plate with sharpened crow quill pens to produce fine detail, such as that in Victoria’s Children, is used. After all details and elements have been added, the plates are then etched. Hard ground work is only added by Milton if he feels as though he did not gauge a lift ground effect; other engraving of the plate is added solely to augment the action of the acid.8 He worked in black-and-white exclusively after he was diagnosed as colorblind in 1962;9 unable to distinguish between red and green, Milton was better able to explore space and texture in his prints in black-and-white.10

At this time in the Western world, color was a very important aspect of television and the commercialism of popular culture. With the emergence of color television and revolutions in the fashion industry, such as synthetic fibers that allowed clothes to be dyed brighter colors and international designers that determined trends, the public grew accustomed to viewing a society that was vibrantly full of color which therefore made it harder to captivate an audience only using a medium based on black-and-white.11 However, Milton did not seem to be affected by this trend; he later explained, “it seemed imperative to find virgin territory, and my landscapes—completely imaginary—were that territory.”12

In 1965, Milton introduced animals and people into his vast architecture spaces that had been previously left vacant; now these figures meet the gaze of the viewer.13 Milton wanted to establish metaphysical games for his audience;14 he wanted all viewers to be able to interpret his prints as they wished, and he did not expect them all to agree. Victoria’s Children, like many of his other prints, brings up questions of reality versus imagination and always keeps the viewer guessing.
2 Szoke, 128.
6 Johnson and Milton, 16.
9 Johnson and Milton, 3.
10 Johnson and Milton, 15.
11 Heffernan, 177.
12 Johnson and Milton, 15.
13 Johnson and Milton, 4.
14 Halasz, 58.
Arman by favoring the object, rather than an image, for expression in the 1977 Amnesty International exhibition, influenced an impersonal role of the artist. Marcel Duchamp, also included paramount in printmaking: chance, error, and the possibility of an impersonal role of the artist. Marcel Duchamp, also included in the composition: Untitled here, albeit in a more contained manner, upon a lithograph plate.

The size and arrangement of the letters suggests a rawness and the possibility to extend beyond the paper, constrained only by the edges of the plate; the font size is too big for the space available. Arman cites Jackson Pollock’s work as inspiration of this all-over technique. Moreover, the word “AMNESTY” appears independent of any contextual frame: the three lines mark the syllabic breakdown, a way of forcing the viewer to read slowly and re-think the meaning and implications of the word. Removing the word from its artistic context, one might think of amicable pardons; however, focusing on the image as a whole (as a work of art, not a word), one senses tension and anger from the splattered jet-black and blood-red lithograph ink. The broken violin pieces also contribute to the feeling of destruction, conflicting with the message of amnesty within the print. Arman contrasts spontaneity with the permanence of language to create a work in conflict, much like the subject and larger issue addressed by Amnesty International.

In Untitled, contradictions in technique, style, and subject matter work together to create a print with a global and personal message, reflecting the public and intimate qualities of prints. Arman favors the impersonality of objects, yet he works in the most sensitive of print techniques, one that conventionally highlights personal touch. When designing the plate, he rarely comes in direct contact with it; rather, he uses pieces of violins as impressions and splattered paint to interact with the plate. Despite his attempt at objectivity, the print reveals sketchy lines and demonic colors that create a strong message of urgency and fear. The subject is not Arman’s, as it was commissioned by Amnesty International and shared by the fifteen other artists in the project. Nevertheless, he incorporates part of his personal style into the composition: Untitled explores the difference between the precise mechanical process of printmaking and the open spontaneous expression of Arman’s imagery.

Nora M. Mueller

2 Beate Reifenscheid, Arman, Works on Paper (Bielefeld, Germany: Kerber Verlag, 2001), 159.
4 Reifenscheid, 160.
6 Reifenscheid, 153.
7 Reifenscheid, 153.
Lichtenstein’s quintessential work of the 1960s Pop Art Movement embraced popular culture and mass media by taking the commonplace and making it high art. This movement fiercely rejected what it considered to be the self-conscious, elitist art of the Abstract-Expressionists in favor of a new style that could be accessible to a public that was not necessarily “art-conscious.” As Pop artists like Lichtenstein celebrated the man-made and mass-produced, a new kind of art emerged that could be light, available, and removed “the snobbishness in art.”

This Must Be The Place is typical of Lichtenstein’s work in the 1960s; it is part of a series that reveals his interest in 1930s Art Deco. A lithograph of the New York World’s Fair of 1939 was the specific inspiration for This Must Be The Place, although the city scene is largely of Lichtenstein’s own invention. It is based on strong horizontal and vertical silhouettes reminiscent of Art Deco’s stylized adaptation of geometric forms and sleek aesthetics. The original work was an ink drawing made in 1965 in response to a commission for a poster for a convention of the National Cartoonist Society held in New York. Later in 1965 it was printed as an offset lithograph.

Much of Lichtenstein’s work from the 1960s demonstrates his interest in re-evaluating familiar comics and cartoons of the 1930s and 1940s. Lichtenstein engaged his audience by juxtaposing banal subjects and commonplace clichés with irony, unexpected humor, and a touch of complexity. This Must Be The Place transforms a mundane and predictable city scene into a versatile image that can be recognized as having greater meaning. The buildings become stylized forms as lines cross and run together through unusually bright primary colors. Buildings in the 1930s style, as depicted in This Must Be The Place, existed in early comic books, but Lichtenstein was the first to use them as the central images in high art. “Curve-ended glass-walled towers, earth bound and airborne vehicles, and a skyline bristling with antennae comprised the artist’s vision of a present day New York that was eerily reminiscent of ‘Buck Rogers architecture.’” The verbal blurb further expresses Lichtenstein’s appeal to urban life, as it rejoices in the location. This comic strip-like image, placed in the context of art, encourages viewers to be increasingly conscious of their immediate surroundings, as an everyday image becomes an image to be considered aesthetically.

The use of Ben Day dots was one of Lichtenstein’s signature processes. Ben Day dots are tiny marks that are repeatedly printed close together as an inexpensive method of creating the illustrations in early comic strips. Lichtenstein made works like This Must Be The Place appear commercially reproduced by simulating the “look” of Ben Day dots; he even went so far as to intentionally formulate inaccuracies in his Ben Day dots to reflect the registration error that often inadvertently occurred in the mass production process. Lichtenstein, like other Pop artists in the 1960s, such as Andy Warhol, wanted to demonstrate an appreciation for twentieth-century culture and merchandise. By employing Ben Day dots in works like This Must Be The Place, he was able to celebrate the often overlooked style that inherently exists in familiar objects of modern society.

With a style that celebrates the Pop culture concept of mass production and an exploration of the familiar, it comes as no surprise that Lichtenstein chose to employ the print as a medium. In the example of This Must Be The Place, he actually had the work mass-produced as both a poster and an offset lithograph. Offset lithography is a technique most often associated with the printing of magazines and posters and can print in editions that might number in the thousands. It is a process that requires little or no involvement of the artist, as the prints are not hand pulled. Many printmakers of the 1960s and 1970s saw importance in maintaining an element of the artist’s touch in order to sustain what Walter Benjamin would call the “aura” of the original. Lichtenstein, however, saw no problem with mass production and a removal of the artist’s touch by using a small but powerful offset press. This Must Be The Place, as an offset lithograph, would have required little of Lichtenstein’s involvement beyond the creation of the initial drawing. In a work that mimics and celebrates mass production, the relevance of the original was negated, just as consumer culture increasingly embraced multiplicity and reproduction.

Blair H. Douglas

During World War II, Appel experienced first-hand the ruthlessness of war; he and other artists lived by exchanging paintings for food as they wandered the Dutch countryside trying to elude the Nazis. Appel felt helpless in the face of a second large-scale war which, in his opinion, seemed to contradict the progress of the modern world. Seeking a way to convey his anger, frustration, and horror in reaction to the events, Appel expressed his emotions through his art.¹

In 1948, Appel helped to found a group that included Asger Jorn, Mogens Balle, Christian Dotremont, Constant van Beverloo, and Cornelle Nieuwenhuis. The group was called CoBrA, an acronym for the artists’ three major cities of residence: Copenhagen, Brussels, and Amsterdam. Striving to distance themselves from earlier art movements, CoBrA championed a brand of expressionism that paralleled Action Painting in the United States at the time.² Though they dissolved only three years later in 1951, CoBrA garnered enough critical acclaim to communicate the importance it placed upon spontaneity, primitivism, and freedom from a supposedly civilized world.³ Since then Appel has continued to explore these themes through his art.

Ten by Appel is an important series as it represents the artist’s change of focus from paintings to printmaking. In the midst of experimentation within different mediums, Appel turned to this series of ten lithographs in order to branch out in his artistic endeavors. In these prints, the artist uses vivid colors and abstract designs that are reminiscent of his Abstract Expressionist style in CoBrA paintings. One of the three prints displayed here, Head on Water, provides a vague idea of an animal hiding in the jungle with one eye peeking out on the right. The next print, Moving in Blue, explicitly depicts a cat, while Blue Animal with Sunshine Head suggests an idea of a seacreature, perhaps a crab. In all of these lithographs, Appel invokes the essence and tactile texture of his paintings through his choice of bright, uncompromising colors and his layering techniques. The color scheme starts with darker hues of blue and black colors on the edges of the print and then gradually incorporates lighter colors, such as white, yellow, red, turquoise, and purple, towards the center.

Appel composes each print in the series with strips and slashes of color in a layering style with one on top of another in a messy, seemingly incoherent manner. The colors are not mixed but rather separate, which reinforces the effect of each color existing individually within the composition. At the same time, every shade works together to convey a sense of tonal balance. The choice of colors conjures up strong emotions while the distinct style provides the prints with a three-dimensional quality despite the two-dimensional medium.⁴

The abstract figures of the prints demonstrate movement and energy through the intensity of the colors. The animals are hunting, moving confidently like seasoned predators through the shadows of color and gazing skeptically upon the viewer, as though suggesting a reversal of roles and questioning the freedom of the viewer as opposed to the animal in the image. The harsh colors evoke an element of violence in the way that they collide with each other in quick slash marks conveying simultaneously the wildness and unpredictability of the animals in the jungle. Appel wants to deconstruct the civilized person and acknowledge more primitive roots that he believes lay dormant in every human. Together the potential danger inherent within the nature of the animals with the usage of extreme colors reflects Appel’s appropriation of an expressionist idea which he describes as “destruction as a necessary part of the process of expression.”⁵

These prints are a product of three diverse influences that combine to provide a unique representation of Appel’s ideas. First, nature plays an important role in Appel’s images of wild animals. According to expressionist thought, true freedom is gained by breaking away from the chains of modern society and technology and returning to nature: only in nature does one find solace and meaning. Ironically, however, city life also inspired Appel’s unique vision. Having experienced life in two major cities, New York City and Amsterdam, Appel often lifts images from the urban everyday and transforms them into art. For example, he appropriates children’s graffiti, such as chalk drawings on the street, to transcend traditional high art, and to approach a purer and more intuitive art.⁶ A final influence stems from the various arts like wall painting and sculpture of ancient cultures, specifically from Pre-Columbian, Mayan, and Indian cultures.⁷ Appel appreciates these simple and organic designs uncorrupted by Western constraints.

Appel makes art that mirrors his thoughts and imagination using the Modernist technique of automatism, a representation of the artist’s instinctive thoughts as influenced by his unconscious. Yet at the same time, he wants the viewer to take a Postmodernist approach in order to find inspiration and use his/her own
imagination to interpret the prints. This contradictory blend of a work using Modernist methods with a Postmodernist philosophy concedes multiple analyses. The very instinctive and impulsive nature of his series should lead each viewer to see something different in his prints.

These prints were made expressly as a series. Despite Appel’s strong background in painting, his work in lithography allowed him to experiment with the same brilliant colors and a technique that mimics the loose brushwork of his paintings. Although the prints seem inaccessible and externally confusing at first, the viewer can gradually share in Appel’s imagination through the exuberant colors and suggestive forms. The artist’s prints are almost like disjointed glimpses from a dream that leave an indelible impression upon the viewer.

Saman Khan

1 Roger Hurlburt, “A Bite of the Appel,” Sun Sentinel, 28 September 1986, sec. 1F.
6 Ashton, 68.
7 Frankenstein, 170.
Richard Ash’s first memorable moment in art school, according to his own recollection, was observing an etching being printed. Ash has always worked in printmaking, since his training at Wichita State University where he created *The Dawn of My Time*, to the present in which he focuses on silkscreens. As Ash explains his initial interest in prints, his response was immediate: “The plate and paper appeared as one thing on the left side of the press, and something else on the right … magic! Nothing else mattered. After that moment, I was hooked!”¹

Unlike many artists in the 1960s, Ash has always been involved with the process of creating his own prints. As he explains, “I have always worked directly with the print process, seldom bringing in drawings or completed ideas in order to edition them. In my opinion, printmaking is a very plastic series of processes and they have almost totally consumed my career.”² To make his prints, Ash works in his own studio and remains an integral part of the aesthetic and technical production of each work.

Ash’s fascination with the process of printmaking is exemplified in *The Dawn of My Time*. Many of the materials used to create this print were found objects. These objects, such as the small horse, stars, and even the letter stencils, were found on the sidewalk between his apartment and his studio. He has explained that, “someone obviously lost part of the set and I picked up the horse and the star with the circle around it.”³

This image is arranged into sections. The upper section depicts bold white lettering of the alphabet, which stands out against the black background. The alphabet is upside-down and contrasts the bottom section of Ash’s image. He placed the two encircled stars underneath the alphabet and then an image of a horse underneath the stars, all shown right-side-up. The horse is inside a rectangular box, which stretches across the bottom of the image. The found objects used to project the images of the horse and stars were stamped on the plate with asphaltum before it was etched. The upper and lower sections of the print represent different aspects of childhood that were of equal importance to Ash: learning and playing. Thus, *The Dawn of My Time* documents Ash’s grade school experiences in the 1950s.

This print is from a series of approximately ten images which, when seen together, are intended to look like a film strip, a basic form of visual communication that would have commonly been used in the artist’s elementary school. Ash has further clarified that this unsophisticated method of visual education was soon replaced for the next generation: “When I was young, they had film strips rather than movies.”⁴ By incorporating both educational and recreational aspects of childhood into *The Dawn of My Time*, Ash evokes for the viewer his memories of being a child in grade school in bold black-and-white graphics.

Blair L. Harris

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² Richard Ash, e-mail message to author, 4 November 2004.
³ Richard Ash, e-mail message to author, 4 November 2004.
⁴ Richard Ash, e-mail message to author, 4 November 2004.
ROMARE BEARDEN (1914-1988), American

The Family, 1974

Photo silkscreen, paper size: 19 1/2 x 26 in. (49.6 x 66.0 cm)
Image size: 19 1/2 x 26 in. (49.6 x 66.0 cm)
Signed in pencil on print: l.r.: 4/12 Romare Bearden (vertical)
Gift of Larry and Pam Rosenberg, 1987.14

Romare Bearden worked from life experience, and his paintings, collages, and prints convey his multifaceted awareness of humanity. One of the essential goals of his work was to “reveal through pictorial complexities the richness of a life he knew.”

As an African-American living and working in twentieth-century America, Bearden centered his life and work on issues of cultural diversity, ethnic tradition, and the spirit of heritage. Bearden was born in Charlotte, North Carolina to parents who instilled in him the importance of political and social awareness. Early in his childhood, Bearden and his family moved to New York during the height of the Harlem Renaissance. Harlem’s intellectual, artistic, and political mainstream nurtured a passionate young artist who was eager to come to grips with life as an African-American. His lifelong interest in social issues resulted in art that was truly representative of twentieth-century America. His work not only encourages the viewer to interpret the experiences of African-Americans, but also to recognize the diversity that can exist in the lives of all Americans.

Bearden found that by utilizing an extensive range of media, color, and form in his compositions, he could effectively depict his understanding of diversity in a segregated and racist America. Fittingly, he worked extensively with collage and has become widely acknowledged as a master of this medium. For Bearden, the layered and tactile nature of the collage was an artistic reflection of his diverse heritage and African-American culture as he could combine personal objects and images in one work. Furthermore, Bearden believed that the concepts of human diversity that he explored through collage were universal and should be available to all. In the 1970s, Bearden responded to a growing desire to make his images more accessible by making prints.

To Bearden, printmaking was as important a medium as any other, and he found the process to be as satisfying as that of the collage. His wife, Nanette, has explained: “for Romare, making prints was as challenging and fulfilling as working on a collage, and the process drew out of him the same aesthetic drive and concentration.”

The Family is a photo silkscreen that is derived from an original collage of photographs, also called The Family. Herb Wheeler, a commercial photo engraver, worked closely with Bearden on the print editions of The Family as it involved a highly advanced application of collage-based photographic transfers. Wheeler and Bearden replicated a negative photograph of the original collage five times, each time using a different photographic screen to create printing surfaces with five different patterns. This process not only required much care and attention from the artist, but also employed photography, giving the print a sense of intimacy. The aged and textured brown photography creates the look of an old photograph that recalls treasured memorabilia of a personal past. Bearden allows his viewer to feel the intimacy of African-American domestic life through the overlapping of the figures and the familiarity of the photograph. The result is a print that expresses Bearden’s conceptions of African-American family heritage in both subject and medium.

Bearden did not regard printmaking as a method of replicating exact images for the purpose of producing mass copies. As Eric Gibson notes, “Bearden didn’t simply recycle his images; he used printmaking as a springboard to take his ideas further, a way of recasting the sensations of intimate domesticity, reverie, mystery, and eroticism that are hallmarks of his art.” Through prints, the initial collage of The Family could be experienced and interpreted on a multitude of levels, as the prints allowed greater accessibility for viewers and room for experimentation by Bearden. In fact, Bearden made each print edition of The Family entirely original by making each one slightly different from the others. The Family was created in print editions of photo silkscreen, aquatint, printed relief, and printed intaglio, and the prints within each edition are visually unique.

Often in printmaking, the prints within each edition are identical and any disparities are slight and unintentional. Bearden, however, was very purposeful in his creation of prints in unique states, as he wanted them to each maintain what Walter Benjamin called the “aura” of the original. The light yellow visible in the version of the print displayed here is likely the addition that Bearden made in this particular print. The other twelve prints of The Family in photo silkscreen were made with a slightly different color or placement of color. Moreover, each is signed and numbered in pencil by Bearden himself, making their individuality all the more clear.

One of Bearden’s foremost concerns in printmaking was the originality of his art. He found that the creation of unique states allowed his prints to embody the artist’s involvement in each and every print. They therefore could affect the viewer in much the same way the original collage could. In The Family, Bearden would not want his viewer to see a copy of the original, but an inimitable and individual work expressing his life experiences as an African-American.

Blair H. Douglas
4 Gelburd, 27.
5 Gelburd, 29.
6 Gelburd, 7.
7 Fine, 61.
James G. Davis, a successful printmaker, began his career as a painter. His works are emblematic of solitude, encompassing the uniquely human conflict between mind and body. Through prints such as Nancy, Davis shows the tension and discontent of the figure towards its surroundings while exhibiting the serenity brought about by contemplative thought. The subjects of his works are mostly figurative, exploring consciousness of the outer world as well as self-awareness. Davis’ works capture the psychological spirit of the subjects by breaking down their emotions and displaying them for the viewer to interpret.

Davis is an established artist with work in the collections of the Hirshhorn Museum and National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. He earned both a Bachelor's in Fine Arts (1959) and a Master’s in Fine Arts (1962) from the University of Wichita. Before devoting his life to painting and printmaking, he taught at the Universities of Missouri and Arizona. Davis considered his artistic style to be “interim,” the mental state between actual reality and perceived reality.1 The complexity and dynamism of his works offer a solution to this enigma of reality by capturing a sense of the psychological condition of his subjects. Critic Joanna Frueh has called Davis’ work an embodiment of “the scalpel-sharp acuity of Neue Sachlichkeit and the brooding chill of Goya.”2 Both Francisco Goya’s ability to encapsulate the silent thoughts of his subjects and the early twentieth-century cynical and socially critical view of Neue Sachlichkeit’s art are shared by Davis as seen in his efforts to transmit the human psyche onto paper. As Frueh explains, Davis utilizes personal iconography “as well as an active use of color and dramatic metaphor to convey immense aloneness and sexual obsession.”3

Nancy is a collograph in which black and white colors lend themselves to a highly textured surface. The collograph is a relief plate that is prepared by assembling textured surfaces onto a back plate. Davis uses a variety of found objects including wire, lace, and wallpaper to make lines and texture, along with more than one back plate, fitted to create this print. The composition is focused squarely on a woman, presumably named Nancy. A circle floats to the left of the figure which contains the image of a pristine bedroom. This circle could be interpreted as a representation of her inner thoughts and possibly a longing to escape the loneliness and entrapment that is expressed. Nancy’s lost expression and hypnotized stare remain true to these themes of longing. The extremely tactile surface of this print may possibly also refer to Nancy’s inner thoughts. In Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s short story, “Yellow Wallpaper,” a woman is confined to solitude and is surrounded by maddening wallpaper.4 Like Gilman, Davis calls attention to the anxiety of women in the household through the depiction of the brusque wallpaper. The wallpaper is obsessively decorative and textured; it is almost cage-like, surrounding the figure. The attractive figure, whose deep black dress displays none of her body underneath, seems to be trapped within the confines of the composition and her own life.

Davis successfully combines elements of the psychological and the tangible to form a sense of reality within this print. He places a lonely woman within a physically claustrophobic environment, yet allows us to witness her fantasies. As Frueh summarizes, “The effect is typical—we see a real place mirrored by its psychic correlate; Davis’ primary concern is that in-between condition that is our ordinary lot.”5 In Nancy, he juxtaposes real life with the world of the mind, making both attainable to the viewer.

Heather J. Tilton

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3 Frueh, 144.
5 Frueh, 144.
ROBERTO MATTA (1911–2002), Chilean

United Snakes of America, 1975

Lithograph, paper size: 22 5/16 x 29 15/16 in. (56.7 x 76.0 cm)
Image size: 19 3/16 x 25 13/16 in. (49.0 x 65.6 cm)
Signed: l.r.: Matta insignia 72/100
Gift of Carole and Alex Rosenberg, 1987.2.1

To celebrate Salvador Allende's election as president of Chile in 1970, Roberto Matta worked with young men in the village of Ramona Parra to paint a mural called El primer gol del pueblo chileno (The first goal of the Chilean town); afterwards, he pronounced it "Un muro con mucho humor, un no a los pulpitos y las academias, un arte accesible (A mural with much humor, an accessible art, not one made for the pulpits and academies)." He ensured that the people, children, and factory workers were thoroughly involved in its creation and celebration. With this uplifting mural, Matta showed the same sense of universalism that inhabited his renowned Surrealist paintings. But unlike the dreamworlds and “inscapes” that filled his works, this mural was an explicit statement of political and economic development being with the people around me, and I sought to create a new morphology of the human face. Among the myriad limbs in that struggle, there is not one specific being with whom we can empathize, much less the empty soldiers or their attack dogs, identifiable only by tooth and claw. Meanwhile, Matta takes care to clarify, by means of his star-spangled top hat, that Uncle Sam is the sinister creature who appears to be leading the melee. Surely, this is a stark contrast to Matta’s Surrealist masterworks, in which even the strangest of otherworldly shapes feel somehow human.

It is no coincidence that Matta’s editioned prints and large murals, made in collaboration with and for consumption by the public, are his most extroverted. These new directions probably began after the Second World War, a conflict which reshaped political and artistic universes as well as Matta’s conception of his own field of consciousness. For Matta, this meant looking into myself. Suddenly I realized that while trying to do this I was being with a horrible crisis in society. My vision of myself was becoming blind for not being made one with the people around me, and I sought to create a new morphology of others within my own field of consciousness.

United Snakes of America is the thematic negative to that hopeful mural. Originally drawn by Matta in 1973 and printed by Italy’s Stamperia Mourlot in 1975, the print is an explicit censure of the United States’ alleged involvement in a military coup which replaced Allende’s socialist Unidad Popular party with General Augusto Pinochet’s turbulent dictatorial rule. During Allende’s presidency, the United States publicly boycotted copper, Chile’s main export, and coerced allies to do the same, creating what critics have called an “invisible blockade” that sharply undermined Allende’s government. Beyond economics, indifferent Chileans were outraged by the United States’ alleged covert activity during Allende’s presidency. While the level and legality of United States’ activity at the time remain unclear, Allende’s supporters were convinced, partly by erroneous reports circulated immediately after the coup, that the Unidad Popular party would have succeeded were it not for the violent counter-activity on the part of the United States.

Matta’s United Snakes is an example of the reactionary spirit that compelled artists and journalists, both American and foreign, to decry United States’ foreign policy in the years immediately following simultaneous crises in Chile and Vietnam. Within the

Ryan McNally

SISTER MARY CORITA KENT (1918-1986), American

Be of Love #4 (Series: Be of Love), 1963

Silkscreen, paper size: 25 1/2 x 30 1/2 in. (64.8 x 77.5 cm)
Image size: 22 1/8 x 29 1/4 in. (56.3 x 74.5 cm)
Signed in pencil: l.r.: Sister Mary Corita Kent
Gift by the artists of Motive Magazine and Professor Emeritus Dennis Akin and Marjorie Pennington Akin, 1992.2.46
Not previously exhibited
Unpublished

Be of Love #4 is a classic example of Sister Mary Corita Kent’s combination of bright imagery and inspirational text in her creation of a uniquely religious work of art. Kent owed a great deal of her success to the encouragement of her liberal parents to whom she was born in Fort Dodge, Iowa. The family soon moved to Los Angeles, California, where she attended school run by the nuns of the Immaculate Heart order and developed her love for art. Kent studied drawing and still life at Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles for a brief period; she then began teaching at her former school at the age of eighteen. In 1941, she graduated from Immaculate Heart College and soon became part of its art department, while studying art history for her master’s degree at the University of Southern California.

While teaching, Kent came across a screen from an old silkscreen printer and attempted to clean it. She soon sought to learn its technique from the wife of a Mexican muralist, who knew of silkscreening in order to make reproductive prints of her husband’s work. Kent used silkscreen, however, as a means for her own self-expression. Her style was primarily influenced by Charles Eames, a Los Angeles industrial designer, and Ben Shahn, who used text in his painting to portray social and political commentary. In 1968, Kent left the order in Los Angeles and moved to Boston to live a quieter life, away from the popular art world.1 Kent died in 1986, leaving all of her personally-owned work to Immaculate Heart College, now home to the Corita Art Center, with the mission to keep her art public so that it can be seen, and her spiritual messages heard, by all.2

Be of Love #4 is the fourth in a series of seventeen prints in the Be of Love Series. Each of the prints is similar in style, including the elements of brightly colored intersecting planes, such as this print’s royal blue, fuchsia, and gold, along with upbeat, though unrefined, images and text. The words on this print read, “Be of love (a little) more careful than of everything,” a line from a poem in E. E. Cummings’ collection entitled No Thanks, which was his first work to incorporate religious, specifically Christian, undertones.3 Be of Love #4 was printed a year after Cummings’ death, possibly to commemorate his ultramodern and liberal stance on contemporary issues in American culture, while still referencing Christianity. Kent often related her art to current events and used it as a means to vocalize her opinion. She once said, “I admire people who march. I admire people who go to jail. I don’t have the guts to do that, so I do what I can.”4 Rather than march for causes, she used her art much as Cummings used his poetry, to ensure that strong convictions are heard by the masses with the intent of changing the cultural perception of the targeted issues.

While some may argue that Kent’s print is not original because the quote is not her own words, Jean Dubuffet, a prestigious printmaker of the 1950s and 1960s (whose Insouciance is included in this exhibition) explained that, “Fruitful discoveries are made, not through the production of things but from the interpretation of them,” revealing that an artist’s originality is as equally conceptual as it is concrete in both medium and practice.5 According to Dubuffet’s argument, Kent simply saw Cummings’ quote and gave the text her own religious angle, as she does in most of her art.6 Contemporary printmaker, Tim Rollins, has also argued that the use of words in art can be as experimental and groundbreaking as anything else in prints, such as new chemicals or media. He claimed that text, when used in a truly innovative manner, can provoke a new and unique response from the viewer.7

While Kent did work in other mediums, such as oils and watercolor, she had been enthralled in the silkscreening process since the discovery of the old screen, and is most well known for her prints. The art of silkscreening attracted a great deal of hostility in the 1960s from critics, collectors, and artists alike. They grew suspicious of the art form because it allowed artists a great manual distance from their work; in fact, some artists never even touched the paper before signing it. While these critics argued that printmaking should be a more personal and painterly process, many contemporary artists and printmakers, such as Eduardo Paolozzi and Patrick Caulfield, were vocal about the alleged legitimacy of this “hands off” silkscreen practice. Because of artists like these, silkscreen prints were generally viewed as being mass-produced, and therefore, unoriginal. However, the technique in which Kent specialized required a hands-on process, during which the artist physically painted the image on the screen by hand.8 Be of Love #4 is a prime example of Kent’s technique; there are even variations within the edition, some slight and some blatant. For example, a number of the prints in the edition read “Be of love (a little) more careful than of anything,” rather than “everything,” as is seen here.9 This variation assures that her hand separately inked the screen in order to produce this print and each print in the edition. With her hands-on technique of silkscreening combined with the theories of Dubuffet and Rollins, the originality of Be of Love #4 cannot be doubted. Kent’s exceptionally spiritual rendering of imagery and prose is effective in divulging not only beauty but also a message of great personal importance.

Alison Buinicky
39

5 Susan Tallman, The Contemporary Print from Pre-Pop to Postmodern (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 51.
7 Tallman, 206.
8 Tallman, 298.
9 Kayser, 12.
GEORG BASELITZ (B. 1938), German

Mädchen mit Harmonika IV (Girl with Concertina IV), 1988

Drypoint and etching, paper size: 19 3/4 x 14 3/4 in. (50.2 x 37.5 cm)
Plate size: 11 x 8 in. (27.9 x 20.3 cm)
Signed in pencil: l.r.: Baselitz 3/20
Gift of the Andrew Muller Memorial Fund, 1992.2

Drawing on influences from Expressionism found in his homeland of Germany, and rebelling against the traditional conventions of Socialist Realism, Georg Baselitz became a pioneer of Neo-Expressionism. In his early years as an artist, he subscribed to the objective and representational art that was popular in Germany at that time. In his later works, however, Baselitz was able to diverge from this approach. Baselitz commented, in an interview in 1991, that he was becoming less interested in mirror images of things, and “more interested in the closed form, interior form, surface, plans, textures, and something that can be enclosed.”

Influenced by the German Expressionists of the early twentieth century, he celebrated printmaking as a form of artistic expression. Implementing the drypoint technique in Girl with Concertina, Baselitz was able to make unrefined lines that he desired in his work. The hazy lines are formed by “burrs,” or metal hair-like structures on the plate caused by incision. Baselitz did the printing himself. As he explained, “in printmaking two things go together. One is the execution of the plate, the other, its printing. It’s necessary to do both; if not you simply will not see the result.” In addition to looking to the German Expressionists for their printmaking, Baselitz was interested in their subject matter. These artists tended to focus on the darker aspects of the human psyche. Baselitz followed in their footsteps by bringing to light the madness that underlies depravity and the degenerate in his art, employing subversive subject matter and permeating human existence. He focused on depravity and the degenerate in his art, employing subversive subject matter in order to express themes of insanity and hostility.

Baselitz sought to break from his earlier conventions of objectivity and to make the experience of viewing art more subjective for the viewer. To accomplish this, he drew inverted abstracted human figures directly on the canvas, paper, or print plate. This upside-down motif stripped the figures of their literal appearance and forced the viewer to question what he or she was really seeing. Baselitz promoted ambiguity in his works and, as a Postmodernist, he believed that subjective feelings invoked of the viewer took precedence over his own expression or objective observation.

Baselitz’s practice of displacement—which manifested itself in the mid-sixties by a breaking up of the figurative material into shifted bands suggestive of the distortions by refraction phenomena—appears to be of fundamental significance in every aspect of his life and art, be it in subject-matter, his style, his vision or in the techniques he uses.

Because Baselitz’s images are inverted and abstracted, the viewer’s experience is allowed to be more personal by conjuring his or her own ideas about the meaning of the images. Girl with Concertina depicts an upside-down girl with her arms extended over her head holding a smaller, more portable version of an accordion, the concertina. The head of the girl is at the bottom center of the piece and is displayed by a series of disorganized circles. Baselitz creates a vacuum of space at the center of these circles which forms the girl’s facial features. The viewer’s sense of space is interrupted by the girl’s abrasiveness; the girl’s arms frame her face but are cropped, alluding to both time and space beyond the frame of the composition. The jagged dashes that surround her give the impression of furious energy and motion. Baselitz has written, “lines are really enough for me. They describe a figuration, an object, a bottle, a body, or a head. But I don’t want to push their significant character as far as to establish a relationship with reality.” His attention to composition over form results in the creation of works such as Karl (1987) and Girl out of Smyrna (1988), in which the figure is pushed into the viewer’s space, generating a sense of intimacy with the form as was done by the German Expressionist Ernst Ludwig Kirchner.

Through the aggressive lines and frantic composition of the print, combined with the softness of the drypoint lines, Baselitz has been able to express the depths of human experience and illustrate the density that is part of our perplexing existence. His art is distinct because of its upside-down motif, which shocks, but then encourages an intimate relationship between the viewer and the work; furthermore, he liked to do this with prints. Baselitz was uncomfortable with painting and drawing, to which something could always be added; he liked the fact that prints, when finally printed, were “finished.” As Baselitz stated, “nothing represents anything more definitive for me, formally definitive, than a print. All other techniques are dependent upon innumerable factors which make the understanding uncertain.”

Heather J. Tilton

2 Mason, 52.
4 Mason, 275.
5 Mason, 48.
6 Mason, 58.
MARK BULWINKLE (B. 1946), American

*Beast Meets the Prime Minister of Maine*, c. 1991

Silkscreen, paper size: 22 x 31 in. (56.0 x 78.5 cm)
Image size: 18 1/4 x 27 1/8 in. (46.5 x 69.2 cm)
Signed in pencil: l.r.: Bulwinkle
Gift by the artists of *Motive Magazine* and Professor Emeritus Dennis Akin and Marjorie Pennington Akin, 1998.14.6
Not previously exhibited
Unpublished

Mark Bulwinkle’s *Beast Meets the Prime Minister of Maine* exhibits the evolving techniques and materials of printmaking. The vibrant colors, intricate patterns, and lacquered appearance of the silkscreen are a contrast to the organically patterned and textured woodcuts of the early 1950s and are evidence of the increased influence of the printmaking studio and process.

Mark Bulwinkle is best known today for his steel sculptures produced primarily for gardens and outdoor spaces. Based in Oakland, California he received his master’s degree from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1977 with training in printmaking. However, Bulwinkle soon encountered resistance to his prints in galleries. The nature of the multiplicity of prints combined with his whimsical style led him to be dismissed as a serious artist. He soon learned to weld, his medium of choice being steel though he sometimes explores other materials. His steel sculptures feature the same cartoon-like animals and figures in action as *Beast Meets the Prime Minister of Maine*. The exaggerated limbs, faces, and movements are indicative of Bulwinkle’s trademark fanciful style. Due to a back injury Bulwinkle was forced to break from sculpture and return to printmaking. Although this print is presently undated, it can be assumed that *Beast Meets the Prime Minister of Maine* was produced during this period of the late 1980s.

The print is consistent with Bulwinkle’s whimsical and, at times, goofy style. *Beast Meets the Prime Minister of Maine* reflects the same sense of humor as his steel sculptures as well as the same sense of texture and movement. On the left is the Prime Minister who extends his hand to greet the beast. The beast, however, appears less aggressive than the Prime Minister who dominates the print. Cleanly outlined in yellow, the beast’s profile is simpler and, arguably, more human in appearance than the Prime Minister’s. The beast’s eyes are represented in a less intricate manner and the tongue darting from his mouth is less assertive. A speech bubble seems to spew from the mouth of the Prime Minister and is parallel to his nose, extended hand, and penis. The penis, outlined in yellow, is connected from the inside of the Prime Minister’s body to his hand, leading the viewer to wonder if Bulwinkle is commenting on male chauvinism and political power structures through the pretext of humor.

The patterns and composition of the print suggest constant movement and unrest. The patterns of dots just inside the frame of the plate draw the viewer’s eye to the same dots that line the figures of the beast and the Prime Minister. A bold yellow line brings the viewer’s eye from one image to the next within the print. Circles, grids, triangles, and hatch marks in the print suggest an unending clash between the beast and the Prime Minister.

*Beast Meets the Prime Minister of Maine* is different from traditional silkscreen due to the use of enamel paint that allows for the shiny, almost plastic-like surface. Bulwinkle’s choice of silkscreen combined with the enamel paint allowed him to exhibit bold, consistent colors in many layers. Silkscreens are done in a multiple stencil process, each layer of color and pattern requiring a different stencil. Completed in a print studio with an expert printer, the silkscreen process is usually collaborative between the artist and the printer and may take up to several months to complete. Bulwinkle’s interest in material and production, as evidenced by his interest in steel sculpture—a laborious medium of art—can be seen in his choice of silkscreen, a labor intensive and time consuming form of printmaking. Despite the collaborative nature of such an intricate form of silkscreen, Bulwinkle’s trademark humor and quirky style makes *Beast Meets the Prime Minister of Maine* entirely his own.

Laura D. Heffelfinger

3 Gragg, 30.
4 Gragg, 30.
Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985), French

Insouciance (Carelessness), 1961

Color lithograph on Arches paper, paper size: 26 1/8 x 19 3/4 in. (66.4 x 50.2 cm) Image size: 17 3/4 x 14 5/8 in. (45.2 x 37.2 cm) Signed and dated in pencil: l.r.: J. Dubuffet 61; l.l.: 22/30 Gift of the Drs. Meyer P. and Vivian O. Potamkin, 1984.3.3


The Art Brut movement in post-World War II Europe stemmed from an admiration for the primitive spirit embodied in the works of graffiti artists, children, and the mentally disabled. This movement was founded by Jean Dubuffet, a printmaker and painter from France. Dubuffet wanted to "appeal to humanity’s first origins … [making] works which … [he] … has entirely derived (invention and manner of expression) from his own sources, from his own impulses and humors, without regard for current convention."1 This dislike for traditional concepts in art is evident in the manner in which Dubuffet executed Insouciance, a work in a traditional medium yet fashioned with a unique and highly experimental method.

Although Dubuffet first worked as a painter, he quickly found lithography to be his favorite medium. After two attempts at printmaking in 1949 and 1953, Dubuffet finally devoted more time towards lithography in 1957. From 1957 to 1962, he produced Phénomènes, a series of 362 lithographs contained in twenty-four albums, fifteen of which consisted of black-and-white prints and nine with color prints. Insouciance was included in the seventh color album entitled Spectacles.2

In Phénomènes, or Phénomènes, Dubuffet attempted to create “a repertory of all possible facts one can see or even think of.”3 These “facts” to which Dubuffet refers are aspects of nature, ranging from elements, like water, to scientific processes, such as oxidation or foliation. In order to capture these elements, Dubuffet took imprints of items in nature, such as the earth or stone, and even the skin on a friend’s back. Using lithograph transfer paper, he imprinted these images on a plate. Dubuffet preferred to use a lithograph plate made of zinc for his printing rather than a stone because the plate was lighter, more transportable, and easy to manipulate with chemicals.4 This quality of manipulability was pivotal in producing some of the Phénomènes prints.

The lithographs with which Dubuffet was most pleased were those that contained macules, or blemishes.5 He felt that these unexpected marks were the plate’s way of explaining itself. Part of Dubuffet’s approach to his lithographs was to manipulate the plate without the use of tools. He avoided this traditional technique by transferring the imprints that he acquired from textures in nature to the zinc plate and then sometimes treating the plate with chemicals. In this way, Dubuffet chose the initial imprint but the reaction of the plate to the chemicals was random. The result of this, Dubuffet believed, was that the artist became a servant to the plate, which behaved in accordance to its natural and inherent characteristics.6

In order to promote blemishes within Phénomènes, Dubuffet haphazardly inked his plates, yet some macules occurred entirely by accident. For example, one of the layers in Insouciance was probably produced while Dubuffet was cleaning one of his plates.7 Lithograph plates were often initially cleaned by laying paper on top of the plate in order to remove some of the extra ink. Looking carefully at Insouciance, one can see white lines from a paper being pulled off the inked plate. The lines at the top left-hand corner of the print are diagonal and then at the middle of the print become horizontal, as if Dubuffet had started pulling the paper off at the corner and then grabbed both corners to pull the rest of the paper straight down and off the plate. The title of the print, French for “carelessness or thoughtlessness,” promotes a concept of someone accidentally dropping paper on the plate right before it was printed.

Insouciance, a color lithograph, was probably made with multiple plates and various imprints. Some of the layers could have been part of other Phénomènes, as Dubuffet customarily re-inked plates from older Phénomènes and used them as layers in newer prints; these layers create an exciting dynamic within the print. At first glance, Insouciance appears to be very similar to the other lithographs in Phénomènes. However, the ambiguity of this image brought about by the layering encourages close inspection, which in turn reveals some chaos within the print. Unlike other Phénomènes, Insouciance has no consistent basic pattern throughout it; the white lines in the print interrupt the textured surface and redirect the viewer’s eyes across the paper. In this way, Dubuffet not only draws attention to the carelessness involved in dropping paper on the plate, but also the phenomenon of carelessness as an interrupting factor in life. Humans can be distracted by an accident or imperfection, much as we are distracted by the “careless” white lines moving across Insouciance.

Michelle E. Garman

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2 Jean-Jacques Pauvert, Catalogue des travaux de Jean Dubuffet (Paris: J.-J. Pauvert, 1964), 203; Spectacles, completed in April 1961, contains ten prints, including Insouciance, all of which have twenty-three copies. Three of these twenty-three prints were marked A, B, and C, and were accompanied by supplementary proofs that were printed at the same time as the initial twenty-three. These prints, of which Insouciance was a part, with supplementary proofs were printed thirty times.
4 Pauvert, 8.
5 Pauvert, 8.
6 Pauvert, 10.
7 Pauvert, 10.
ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG (B. 1925), American

Surface Series (Series: Currents), 1970

Photo silkscreen, paper size: 40 x 40 in. (101.6 x 101.6 cm)
Image size: 35 x 35 in. (88.9 x 88.9 cm)
Signed and dated: l.r.: Rauschenberg '70
Gift of Lawrence and Carol Zicklin, 1982.13.1

In 1947, while in the U.S. Marines, Robert Rauschenberg discovered his artistic ability to aesthetically represent everyday objects. While at the Black Mountain College in North Carolina, Rauschenberg began an artistic revolution through his interest in popular culture. As Pop Art emerged in the late 1950s, he started to create two-dimensional silkscreen prints, using newspaper clippings of current events. The Surface Series was Rauschenberg’s way of commenting on contemporary society. As he has explained,

I just spontaneously, or organically, found out that the best way I could communicate with anybody was visually. And then that same sensibility grew into sound and movement. If I could write, or say what I have to say in any other way, then I would do so.

But I only have art.1

Rauschenberg was discouraged and overwhelmed by the political and social circumstances of the world in the late 1960s. When anti-war demonstrations grew more intense as the secret U.S. invasion of Laos and the murder of several hundred Vietnamese civilians by U.S. troops were revealed to the public, Rauschenberg was disillusioned that his positive social and political commitment were useless and moved to Malibu, California, where he hoped to concentrate on more peaceful work. However, he could not escape contemporary issues and instead created a large series of silkscreen prints titled Currents in 1970. Rauschenberg recalls:

I wanted to do the largest, most realistic, but peaceful watercolor painting in the world. So I went out there on the beach, started gathering my materials and got into the most serious and journalistic work I have done: “Currents” and “Surfaces.” I found I could not escape. So just forget about the world’s most peaceful watercolor.3

Eighteen out of the forty-four silkscreen prints from Currents were made into a sub-series entitled Surface Series. The other twenty-six prints were named Features. The example displayed here, one of the eighteen prints in the Surface Series, has presumably been left untitled to emphasize the relationship of this print to the whole of the series.

To produce this series, Rauschenberg collected clippings from headlines, newspapers, and photographs from the January and February editions of The New York Times, the New York Daily News, and the Los Angeles Times in 1970. He did not edit the clippings, but simply arranged them as collage into eighteen 35 x 35 inch compositions.4 When creating these prints, Rauschenberg provocatively relied more on his ability to arrange objects and less on his drawing or painting talents. It was not his intention to use these clippings from newspapers as reproductions. He describes the technologically-produced parts of his prints as being as “poetic as a brushstroke.”5 He regards his materials—news clippings, advertisements, and photographs—as types of tools, similar to paintbrushes or pencils.

Art historian Robert Mattison argues that this series is as far from traditional “art making” as Rauschenberg has ever gone: “The series is based on the artist’s refusal, as far as possible, to avoid conscious selection and manipulation of information.”6 Because he chooses materials that were previously produced and does not edit them, Rauschenberg removes himself from the printed images, raising issues of originality.

The silkscreen prints from this series are intended to provoke shock and emotion from the audience. The print selected for this exhibition is especially provocative because of its bold headlines. Phrases such as “Cop Stabbed in the Back on 1-Man Patrol in Harlem” and “NEW RITUAL SLAYINGS—Three Die in Tate-Like Murders” jump out of the overall black-and-white image in order to affect the viewer with the gravity of current events. By taking clippings seen in popular publications and making them “art,” Rauschenberg can lead an audience to react in a different way. He states,

I want to shake people awake. I want people to look at the material and react to it. I want to make them aware of individual responsibility, both for themselves and for the rest of the human race. It has become easy to be complacent about the world. The fact that you paid a quarter for your newspaper almost satisfies your conscience. Because you have read your newspaper, you have done your bit. And so you wrap your conscience in your newspaper just like you wrap garbage.7

In Currents, the surface of which has been treated to resemble waves of water gliding over the clippings, Rauschenberg presents his views about current events as collage and calls it “the most serious journalism I’ve ever attempted.”8 In 1970, this print functioned as a collage of current happenings, but now presents its audiences with a collection of events from history. The wave texture that covers the clippings makes this reaction
to time more apparent. The clippings are momentary and fixed, while the waves resemble movement in time, like *Currents.*

Blair L. Harris

3 Kotz, 54.
4 Mattison, 158.
6 Mattison, 158
7 Kotz, 57.
Mystic Sky With Self Portrait, 1992

Color silkscreen on pasted board, paper size: 21 1/4 x 25 1/4 in. (54.4 x 64.5 cm)
Image size: 21 1/4 x 25 1/4 in. (54.4 x 64.5 cm)
Signed in pencil: l.r.: Betye Saar 20/100
Gift of the Drs. Meyer P. and Vivian O. Potamkin, 1997.4
Not previously exhibited
Unpublished

Betye Saar’s Mystic Sky With Self Portrait raises several issues of originality, race, and the role of the artist in printmaking. Saar, a southern California artist, is best known for her assemblages that explore the evolving history and identity of African-American women. Mystic Sky With Self Portrait is a media departure from her traditional assemblages and installations yet it explores similar interests through the subject matter of the print.

Betye Saar is considered one of the leading contemporary American women artists, in part due to her outspoken subject matter. Saar does not consider herself a feminist artist despite being designated as one by many. As she has recently stated, “The feminist movement has given me more professional exposure. But I resist that now … I’ve always worked the same way, and haven’t done anything I would consider ‘feminist art.’” She was a member of the board of the groundbreaking WomanSpace, a gallery in Los Angeles which opened in 1972 that was devoted to exhibiting and fostering the development of feminist art. It expanded to include a performance art space and workshop but was closed within eighteen months of opening. Saar has said that WomanSpace failed in part due to the racial separatism between the black and white artists. The white artists did not support the black artists’ efforts, leading to a divisive and exclusive atmosphere. Many other African-American female artists involved in WomanSpace held the same view. The feminist movement was not about race but arguably was solely about reclaiming the female body; artists such as Judy Chicago, for example, explored issues of the body and sexual objectification of women. Saar, on the other hand, was more interested in exploring her identity as a black female artist and chose to avoid presenting images of the black female body because of its history of visual representation. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, African-American bodies were linked to deviance and vulgarity; the African-American female nude in particular was associated with “abnormality and sexual degeneracy.” Saar has therefore focused instead on exploring issues of her personal history as a black woman as well as the role of mysticism and religion in her life.

As an assemblage artist, Saar uses found objects and photographs to build objects that tell their own story. She uses the history of these objects to create a link between the past and present, whether it be the representation of black women as manifested in iconic figures like “Aunt Jemima” or her spiritual connection to her own great-aunt Hattie. Saar pieces the objects together in a way that quietly communicates their relationship to one another as well as revealing aspects of Saar’s identity. It is inferred that Saar believes in a collective subconscious that allows all viewers to identify with her through the relics and symbols that she includes in her pieces: “It’s what I call automatic art, the art that I do … A lot of it is art training, but a lot of it is that I know it evokes something, I can’t always explain it.”

Saar’s interest in history and spiritual connections is evident in Mystic Sky With Self Portrait. Rather than working within the confines of the “feminist aesthetic” or “black aesthetic,” Saar chooses a more inclusive art that explores her fascination in the occult, religion, and mysticism. She uses many symbols that are “archetypal signs and symbols from the transcendental teachings of both eastern and western philosophies and religions.” The symbols of the Eye of Horus, or “all seeing eye,” dice and pyramid, among others, hold meaning for Saar but are also represented in eastern and western culture and are dependent upon the viewer for meaning, especially when seen in Saar’s context. Line, color, texture, and medium become secondary elements for the viewer, thereby allowing the artist and her iconography to become the defining characteristics of the print.

Saar refuses to allow the medium of printmaking to remove her personal touch as the artist. In this self-portrait, she is represented visually in the lower right of the print with her face peeking out slightly as if to remind the viewer that she is there among the many symbols. The floating quality of the symbols suggests a stream of consciousness that Saar allowed to escape in the process of creating the print. The palm in the print, on one hand a generic symbol for divine insight, is conceived by her own and implicates her as the artist as much as the presence of her portrait in the corner. The use of cut-outs is also a reference to her work as an assemblage artist and reinforces the idea of her touch despite the detachment of the printing process. From her choice of symbolic imagery to her own face peering out of the corner, Saar is omnipresent in the print and yet openly invites the viewer to make multiple interpretations.

Laura D. Heffelfinger

2 Dallow, 76.
3 Dallow, 85.
Two Nudes, 1971

Aquadrint, hand-colored, paper size: 21 x 17 in. (53.3 x 43.0 cm)
Plate size: 15 3/4 x 11 7/8 in. (40.0 x 30.0 cm)
Signed in pencil: l.l.: Benjamin Levy; l.r.: 77/100
Gift of Carole and Alex Rosenberg, 1987.2.11
Not previously exhibited
Unpublished

Benjamin Levy’s Two Nudes provokes an unearthly feeling, as though the viewer has stepped into a timeless place existing between dreams and consciousness. This is a common effect of Levy’s work because it is about the nature of memory, with ghostly childhood recollections often appearing vividly in his compositions. Levy was born in 1940 in Tel Aviv into a Jewish family, though his mother and two siblings died shortly after his birth. Levy’s father remarried into a Turkish family and, with his new wife, raised eleven children, Levy being the second youngest. He began studying art at a young age in Israel under Abraham Yaskil, then in Paris at the École de Montparnasse, and finally at the Pratt Graphic Art Center in New York City. He eventually returned to Tel Aviv where he met his wife. In 1965 the new Levy family moved to New York, where he gained almost instant recognition; he still resides there today. A tremendous amount of his artistic inspiration still comes from old family photographs that show him growing up in the Jaffa Yemen district, as well as many that were taken even before his birth. The figures in his works appear to be strangers who move stiffly, like puppets, around a small town in a time of the past that somehow remains unaltered. This distant dreamlike quality of his art is reminiscent of the metaphysical and Surrealist works of Giorgio de Chirico and René Magritte.1

Two Nudes is a good example of Levy’s style. The composition is set up much like that of a theatre stage, with clear fore-, middle-, and background, shown by the color gradation of the blue water, a recurring subject matter in Levy’s art.2 This compositional technique serves to isolate the two white figures and to highlight them as if in a spotlight. The water, by contrast, appears to be moving due to its covering of colored dots; this in turn emphasizes the stillness of the two figures, who remain stopped as the world moves around them.3 Flecks of color on the ground follow the vivid points on the water, causing the viewers’ eyes to dart across the image and observe the entirety of the piece. Levy also ties the figures back into the background by mimicking the shape of the clouds in the shape of the upper woman’s hat.

Levy portrays these women tenderly, a tactic that is often overlooked in contemporary art. This sense of human vulnerability gives Levy a great ability for portraying erotic subject matter.4 Most of Levy’s erotic scenes are ambiguous and provide endless interpretations between male and female figures. Two Nudes is rare because this intimate scene takes place between two women, though the particular interaction is still unclear. The two figures appear to have no verbal or emotional psychology between them and, typical in Levy’s art, seem as though they communicate in a lost or forgotten language.5 In these floating figures, Levy often provides symbols to communicate deeper meanings to the viewer.6 For example, in Two Nudes the upper woman holds a yo-yo, which steadily rises and falls as if it were set in motion by an anonymous force that also manipulates human lives, and perhaps these two women, in the same baffling way.7

This print’s aquatint process was performed by Levy himself, and each of the one hundred prints in the edition was then hand-watercolored individually, making each one slightly different from the others. Levy highlights the warmth and softness of the women’s skin by adding translucent pink watercolor over the white figures, while he counteracts this with shading on the other side of their bodies to show shadow and light direction. According to contemporary critics, Levy excels more when working with prints and watercolors than in other mediums, where he tends to lose the open white spaces admired so much in his prints.8 Two Nudes is an excellent example of Levy’s artistic approach; by taking advantage of the aquatint paper he is able to maintain these bright open spaces which he can then hand-color. In this way, Levy emphasizes the dreamlike and yet familiar qualities of the figures that seem to float from his own subconscious memories.

Alison Buinicky

8 Piersol, 7 and Waddington, sec. L14.
BERNARD CHILDS (1910-1985), American

*Frumenti (Wheat)*, 1955

Color engraving on Arches paper, paper size: 22 5/16 x 17 11/16 in. (56.7 x 44.9 cm)
Plate size: 19 7/16 x 12 1/4 in. (49.4 x 31.1 cm)
Signed and dated in pencil: l.l.: Childs ’55 Ed 116/120 Imprimé par l’auteur
Gift of the Drs. Meyer P. and Vivian O. Potamkin, 1957.1.2

Engraving as a medium for original prints interests me most …. The press is not just a machine. It can be as sensitive as a musical instrument. Ink responds to every fiber of the paper and to the warmth of the hand. The tools and the metal move to the hand in the same way color is applied to the canvas. The difference in media must not make any difference in result. A painting and a print can and must have the same unique personal quality. The poetry they evoke must be of the same order.¹

*Frumenti* is the work of Bernard Childs, an artist who, as explained in his comment above, developed a personal technique of printmaking using electric tools, made his own prints, and often made limited edition prints. The fact that the print is a limited edition can be noted at the bottom left hand corner of the print exhibited here, where it states that the print is “imprimé par l’auteur” (printed by the artist). As quoted above, Childs is sensitive to the printing process, experimenting with the methods of printmaking while maintaining the unique properties also found in painting. These principles make Childs a prominent and original printmaker of the late twentieth century.

Born in Brooklyn, New York to Russian immigrants, Childs spent most of his early life in the United States. In 1921, Childs moved to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania where he first became interested in art. After attending the University of Pennsylvania for two years, he moved to New York; there he studied under Kimon Nicolaides at the Art Students League and also met Per Smed, a renowned silversmith. Nicolaides, who wrote The Natural Way to Draw, was interested in the gestural line in drawing, which influenced Childs.² Childs then began working as a machinist, but shortly afterwards, in 1943, he joined the Navy and was stationed outside Okinawa. After four years of service, he returned to New York in 1947 and started painting in the studio of the French, post-Cubist painter Amedee Ozenfant.³

After four years in New York, Childs left for Europe, arriving first in Italy. He studied at the University of Perugia and then went to Rome where he had his first solo exhibition at the Galleria dell’Obelisco.⁴ One year later, Childs moved to Paris where he continued to paint and exhibit some of his works. He learned how to do intaglio printing in 1954 while spending a month at Atelier 17 in Paris. Engrossed with intaglio processes, Childs built his own studio and made over seventy-five editions of prints during this time, focusing on engraving and collography.⁵ In 1966, Childs returned to New York, where he resumed his printmaking. He did keep his studio in Paris, however, and visited frequently.

Childs first learned the traditional method of intaglio, but added to this knowledge in a personal manner because he realized that this process allowed him to combine the elements of painting with his affinity towards metalwork.⁶ He used a century-old French press and an American-made Foredam grinding tool equipped with various drills, burrs, and wire brushes to carve into his plates. Working with the power tools, Childs made over forty engravings and drypoints as well as twenty-seven editions.

It is important to note that Childs considered printmaking two separate arts: making the plate and printing the plate. Instead of regularly using his press as, for instance, the Pop artists would have for continuous reproduction, Childs often used the press for making a single work. He worked at the print by himself, from drilling into the plate until removing the final print from the press. He often only made one print from a plate rather than making editions, considering it important that the printing process continue only “as long as the artist can sustain the ‘glow’ of the print.”⁷

The images of Childs’ prints come directly from the method in which he works; he lets the power tools create the design. Some critics, such as Gordon Brown, have claimed Childs a mystic who “makes his works look strange and simple at the same time—a difficult combination.”⁸

*Frumenti* shows Childs’ use of the electric drill to create an abstract image. Childs’ color choice, of deep browns, blacks, and golds, complements the forms with natural tones rather than garish or bright ones. His ambiguous forms let the viewer concentrate on his technique rather than subject matter. *Frumenti*, meaning “grains,” can be seen in the deep amber and earthy colors resembling wheat. The power tools leave a light and elegant mark, creating thin lines that crisscross to form a scattered design, much like that of harvested wheat.

Alexandra Thayer

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⁴ Acton, 138.
⁵ Acton, 138.
⁶ Acton, 138.
⁷ Johnson, 118.
JANE FREILICHER (B. 1924), American

Landscape, 1975

Lithograph and pastel, paper size: 29 x 22 in. (73.8 x 56.0 cm)
Image size: 24 x 18 in. (61.0 x 45.5 cm)
Signed and dated in pencil: l.r.: Jane Freilicher 1975; l.l.: 3/100
Gift of Lawrence and Carol Zicklin, 1982.6


Although Freilicher uses familiar landscape imagery, her printing methods make her prints unique. She uses her memory to construct her images and rarely creates any initial outlines, distinguishing her style from many other artists. She often works with landscapes, as seen here, and explores the ideas of inner versus outer spaces. She uses interiors and exteriors as a way of looking at the differences in depth and the changes in space. Freilicher’s Landscape was initially done as a color lithograph, and was later reworked with pastels.

Influenced by the School of Paris, including Modernist painters such as Chagall, Soutine, and Modigliani, Freilicher started painting in the 1940s; her other models include Renaissance and Venetian painting.1 She later went to Brooklyn College where she earned her BA in 1947. A fellow artist, Nell Blaine, served as Freilicher’s mentor and suggested that she look into the work of Hans Hofmann, a well-known Abstract Expressionist. In 1948, Freilicher began to study with Hofmann, who saw nature as a source for expression. Similarly, Freilicher uses nature as a source for her subjects.

In 1952, Freilicher had her first major solo exhibition at the Tibor de Nagy Gallery. It was not, however, until the 1980s when Freilicher moved to Manhattan’s Fischbach Gallery that her work began to reach a greater audience.2 Freilicher surrounded herself by artists and poets such as John Ashberry, Alex Katz, Fairfield Porter, and Frank O’Hara. Though she claims she was not directly influenced by them, she acknowledges that their presence provided an inspiration to her work.3

Rather than abstracting her images like so many of her contemporaries, Freilicher embraces Realism. Commenting on the Abstract Expressionist’s concept of revealing the inner self, Freilicher remarks, “People who ‘expose their subconscious’ often expose dull material… ‘realism’ affords more opportunities for unique organization.”4 She notes that in the fifties there was “pressure to be abstract; it was the thing to be, and there were a lot of people who thought it was a cop-out or a weakness not to paint abstractly.”5 Freilicher’s defiance of the “standard” abstract printing and painting style of the time proves Freilicher to be an independent artist.

Freilicher claims to “think more in terms of color than of line.”6 She puts colors together loosely and sees the image as a “lively blur of reality as it is apprehended rather than analyzed.”7 Her style mimics that of the Impressionists: she places her colors together like patchwork and captures the ephemeral nature of the landscape; here, the deep greens of the field in Landscape are highlighted by brilliant reds and golds while the un-highlighted blue of the water seems to hover on the surface of the print. Freilicher’s expression of texture, found in the build-up of pastels, emphasizes the vibrant and juxtaposing colors between the land and water in Landscape.

Alexandra Thayer

2 Day, 49.
5 Grant, 35.
6 Day, 49.
7 Day, 52.
BRAM BOGART (B. 1921), Dutch

Trois Images, 1989

Aquagravure on pulp paper. Paper size: 38 x 38 in. (96.5 x 97.8 cm)
Image size: 38 x 38 in. (96.5 x 97.8 cm)
Signed and dated in pencil: l.r.: Bram Bogart '89; l.l.: 94/99
Gift of Dr. Paul M. and Teresa M. Kanev, 2001.7.2
Not previously exhibited

Unpublished

The meringue-like surface of Trois Images is not typically seen in prints, but this is not surprising given that its artist is Bram Bogart. As an Abstract Expressionist painter, Bogart has always attracted audiences. His paintings exude a sense of playfulness and spontaneity that beckons viewers to come closer and explore them. The liveliness of Bogart's paintings is echoed in his prints.

Bogart's inspiration for his works comes from artists such as Vincent Van Gogh and Piet Mondrian. He admires the tactile quality of Van Gogh's landscapes and Mondrian's use of horizontal and vertical lines to create structure.1 Along with texture and organization, Bogart pays close attention to symmetry and the use of signs in his works. The overall composition of Trois Images is balanced both in the amount of paint used on each side and the even number of squares used in the print. The four squares, which serve as the focal point of the print, are not new to Bogart's works. Bogart believes that "everything in nature, in a simplified form, leads back to the sign … " and for this reason, he uses shapes such as squares, rectangles, and circles as repetitive elements throughout his works.2 The squares in Trois Images are echoed in a painting completed by Bogart also in 1989, entitled Driehoeven (Avanti Galleries, New York).3 The only differences between the image in the painting and the print are the green, red, and blue colors used in Driehoeven and the fact that the painting is comprised solely of the four squares, whereas the print has a surrounding area of paper with additional paint.

The paper behind the yellow and blue squares of Trois Images is a subtle reminder that the work is actually a print and not a painting like Driehoeven. Trois Images is unique in the sense that, although it is a print, it lacks the two-dimensionality and flatness that is typical of other printmaking mediums such as lithography and etchings. The textured quality of Bogart's prints is a result of aquagravure, the printmaking technique that he uses. This method employs the use of layers of plywood in order to create a relief form, which is then used to generate the final work. The negative spaces of the relief become the positive areas of the print. Paint, to which Bogart adds whiting for thickening and varnish as a drying agent, is first hand-painted into the relief areas. Then, pulp paper is laid on top and pushed into the hollow spaces. Eventually, the dye in the paint absorbs into the pulp paper and dries, resulting in a thickly painted paper relief like that of Trois Images.4

Due to the hand-painted nature of aquagravure, each individual print in an edition is slightly different from the others. This individuality is another aspect that runs counter to the generally accepted characteristics of prints, that all prints in an edition are exact copies of one another. Bogart, who had a fascination with nonrepetition in his paintings, seems to have purposefully chosen aquagravure for its necessary inexactness. "Nonrepetition," he wrote, "whether within one painting or a group of paintings, is important to me. The artist is constantly trying to find new ideas, i.e. to use the same material to make new works that are totally different, in form and colour, from the previous ones."5 By using aquagravure, Bogart is able to continue using his signature built-up paint appearance, yet through another medium.

The frothy, three-dimensional quality of Trois Images is evidence of Bogart's exposure to both the Art Informel Movement in Paris and Matterist Movement in Belgium. In the 1950s, Bogart moved to Paris and came in contact with artists of the Informel style: a use of quick spontaneous brushstrokes in order to capture the subconsciousness of the artist. Bogart used this technique by loading his brush with paint and rapidly moving it across his canvas or relief form, in the case of aquagravure.6 Due to this method of applying paint, Bogart's works appear to be light and airy when in fact many of them are significantly weighted. The use of a loaded brush helps Bogart create tactile surfaces, which are characteristic of Belgian Matterist techniques. Matterist pieces, to which Bogart was exposed in the 1970s when he moved to Belgium, do not convey a feeling of or abstractly refer to an object outside the piece: they are the object.7 For this reason, there is no need to analyze Trois Images as a work that symbolizes any one particular thing. All one has to do is appreciate its rippling texture, simplicity, and originality in order to understand Bogart's goal in its conception.

Michelle E. Garman

2 Bogart, 113-114.
4 Gordon Samuel, e-mail message to author, 26 October 2004.
5 Bogart, 113.
6 Bogart, 113.
7 Haggerty, n.p.
YOSHIO HAYAKAWA (B. 1917), Japanese

Still Life (Wrapping Paper), n.d.

Offset, four color lithograph, paper size: 20 1/8 x 29 3/4 in. (51.1 x 75.6 cm)
Image size: 20 1/8 x 29 3/4 in. (51.1 x 75.6 cm)
Gift of the Drs. Meyer P. and Vivian O. Potamkin, 1972.1.5

Yoshio Hayakawa’s print was produced as commercial wrapping paper. The design on the print is a coffee cup, saucer, and spoon representing a simple table setting that is repeated. Different primary colors, red, yellow, and blue, are used in each setting and outlined with black. The cups are depicted from two different perspectives, one from a bird’s eye view that is common in Japanese prints, as well as from an eye level view, thereby suggesting a Cubist influence; showing different angles of the same object was a device that allowed Cubists to show the passage of time. However, this passage of time does not disrupt the table setting; it is always ready for use by the next person. The viewer can only assume that the cups which are viewed from the side are also filled and ready for consumption. This domestic table setting gives the impression of simplicity, although it is extremely complex. The design is printed on paper, the most common material used to wrap gifts since it can be folded and many different patterns and colors can be printed on it.1

In the late 1960s, Japanese artists began to create large print workshops, similar to those in the United States; this print revolution has continued in Japan to the present day.2 Such large-scale print studios made it easier for artists to produce more and larger prints because of the help of professional printmakers. Many well-known artists who worked in other mediums turned to printmaking at this time. Moreover, as printmaking workshops evolved in the 1960s, the traditional form of Japanese prints, woodblocks, was being deserted for other more Western processes such as engraving and lithography, and this enabled artists to turn out bigger editions less expensively.3 Most of Hayakawa’s prints are commercially produced; other print editions have been produced in editions of 1,000. Hayakawa recently held an exhibition in Tokyo of ninety-five original works produced through the PiezoGraph Laboratory. Hayakawa participated in the fabrication of each work to ensure that they were true to his original design.4

In Japanese culture, wrapping paper plays an important role in the process of gift giving: gifts are wrapped so as to surprise the one receiving.5 Although in the West the recipient is expected to open a gift right away and express satisfaction for the contents, in Japan it is considered rude to open a gift immediately because it shows too much interest in the material content rather than the emotion that the present conveys.

Gifts in Japan are often wrapped in more than one layer of paper, depending on the formality of the occasion. However, gifts for funerals are typically only wrapped once to symbolize that the event should only happen once. Japanese often carefully wrap and hide precious possessions, unlike Americans who might display their valuables. In Japan, if a guest would ask to see the item they would have to sit through the deliberately slow unwrapping process before having access to the piece.6 The emphasis on wrapping means that the gift and the wrapping paper cannot be separated. Therefore, the value of the presentation depends on the value of the wrapping. Some wrapping paper is so valuable that it is given as a gift itself.7

Printing processes can produce works ranging from fine art prints that people buy for thousands of dollars to commercial wrapping paper. Each culture holds prints as different levels of art, and the Japanese value wrapping paper as an artistic creation that delights the creator, the recipient, and every other viewer. The value of Hayakawa’s print is in the harmony and consistency of the design; each place setting is carefully positioned within a square and is repeated throughout the print. The primary colors are used to contrast the repetitive pattern of the wrapping paper. In a culture that values harmony, a simple place setting with complex design elements would be admired by many Japanese who seek wrapping paper for their gifts.

Erin E. Mounts

5 Hendry, 13.
6 Hendry, 19.
7 Hendry, 27.
Glossary of Printmaking Techniques

Aquogravure: A recently-developed technique using negative molds that are freely painted with ink, then filled with paper pulp; as the pulp dries it absorbs the ink. When removed from the mold, the print is a deeply-inked, cast paper work.

Aquatint: An intaglio printing process, made by dusting a metal plate with fine particles of acid-resistant material (e.g. powdered resin or asphaltum) and then placed in an acid bath. The acid bites into the plate between the particles of resin, creating a mass of tiny nicks on the plate surface. The plate is inked and wiped, leaving ink only in the nicked areas. When printed, the fine pattern of nicks produces tonal effects similar to watercolor.

Collograph: Print made from a collage of various materials glued (or sometimes simply thick glue) together on a cardboard, metal, or hardboard plate; when put through a press, these raised materials produce a raised, textured surface on the print.

Drypoint: An intaglio technique in which a sharp needle scratches directly into the plate. This creates a burr (a ridge of metal cast up on either or both sides of a line by the tool) that remains attached to the plate. The burrs, when the plate has been inked and wiped, produce the characteristic velvety soft lines of the drypoint.

Engraving: Intaglio technique in which the image is made by cutting into the metal plate directly with sharp tools. The plate is then inked and wiped, with the ink remaining in the incised lines. After passing through a press, these lines appear as the lines on the print.

Etching: An intaglio printing process. Etchings are made by coating a metal plate with an acid-resistant coating and then drawing through the coating with tools to expose the plate surface below. The plate is then immersed in an acid bath where the acid bites the surface layer of the exposed metal. The coating is removed and the plate is inked and wiped to leave ink only in those areas of the plate that were etched by the acid.

Hand-coloring: The hand application of color (e.g. by brush, pen, pencil) to prints. Unlike the printed image which may be identical throughout an edition, hand-coloring will vary slightly from print to print.

Intaglio: An umbrella term used to describe a variety of printing techniques that work on the principle that ink clings to roughened portions of an otherwise smooth printing plate (includes etching, engraving, aquatint, mezzotint, and drypoint).

Lift ground etching: An aquatint technique in which the image is drawn on a plate with a water-soluble (often with sugar added) solution. The plate is then covered with a ground and submerged in water, making the sugar solution dissolve, in turn lifting the ground and exposing the image area. The plate is then etched.

Lithograph: A printing process that operates on the principle that oil repels water. A lithograph is made by drawing on a smooth stone or plate with greasy materials such as a lithographic crayon. The surface of the plate is dampened with water and then rolled with an oil-based ink. The areas marked with the greasy material hold the ink while the moist areas repel it. A sheet of paper is pressed onto the plate surface, transferring the drawing to the finished print.

Offset: Method of printing that involves the transfer of an inked image onto an intermediary, pliable surface, (e.g. the rubber or thin metal cylinder on an offset press), then to paper. There is no reversal of the image in this process, which can produce editions in the thousands.

Silkscreen: Also known as serigraphy, a printing process whereby a gelatin or acetate stencil is used to block areas of a screen (silk or metal) through which ink is forced with a squeegee onto the paper below.

Woodcut: A relief printing technique in which the negative areas of an image are carved away from the surface of a wood block. The raised, uncarved areas are rolled with ink and a sheet of paper is pressed onto the inked wood block to produce the print.
WOODCUTS TO Wrapping Paper

Concepts of Originality in Contemporary Prints