

The Print Club of New York Inc

Fall 2014

President's Greeting

Mona Rubin

September 15th was an exciting night for me as we celebrated our Presentation Print by Faith Ringgold. Faith's talk energized the room. We had a huge turnout for our highly acclaimed artist, and the feedback about the print has been incredibly positive. The concepts behind Faith's art, in addition to the aesthetic appeal, address historical adversity. Her optimism expressed through her stories was uplifting for all who were there. Several members, including myself, brought along a copy of her much loved children's book, *Tar Beach*, which she was happy to autograph. We are extremely fortunate that Faith created this year's print and shared her ideas with us.

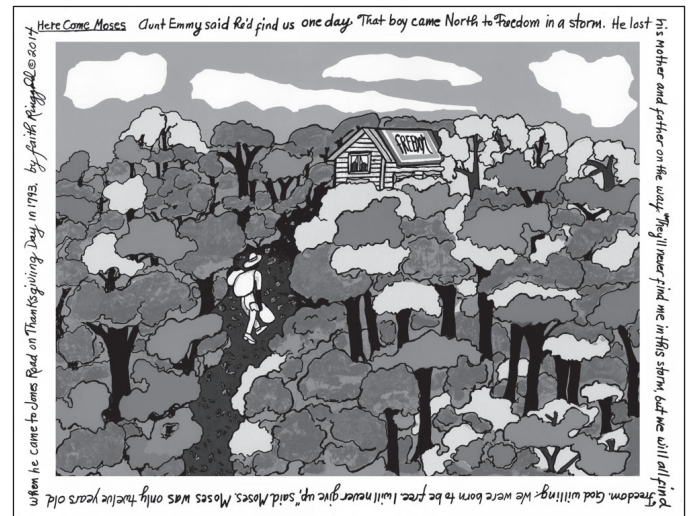
I met several new members who were in the crowd, and it was wonderful for me to see the high level of interest in what we are doing. As always, we welcome your ideas in any facet of our programming. I have found that the more one gets involved with the Club, the more rewards one reaps.

Just prior to Faith's talk, we kicked off the evening with our first Board Meeting of the season. I want to extend a thank you to all the hardworking board members who make all our activities possible. It was good to catch up with everyone after the summer months. Our discussion covered updating our website, possible future artists and some good event ideas. We are pleased to add Paula Cangialosi to our Board. Her undergraduate degree was in Art History. Her most recent position, for twenty years, was as an Executive Producer designing and managing corporate events and meetings. Although she considers

herself semi-retired now, she loves to network and take advantage of everything she can in New York City: opera, museums, lectures, theatre. She's thrilled to be part of the Print Club of New York and committed to her love of art. We extend a big welcome to Paula and look forward to the role she will play in event planning and membership.

We will be in touch with you soon with information about the Print Fair, which is always a popular event. I always enjoy seeing work there by the artists who have created prints for the Club. I am looking forward to our Chakaia Booker event on October 6th. It is good to follow the progress and successes of our Presentation Print artists.

As we build on our successes, we are certain to bring you another positive year of looking at and learning about prints. I'm sure to see many of you at the Print Fair in November.



Faith Ringgold, *Here Come Moses*, serigraph, 2014.
IMAGE COURTESY OF EXPERIMENTAL PRINTMAKING
INSTITUTE, LAFAYETTE COLLEGE.

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PCNY 2014 Presentation Print – Here Come Moses by Faith Ringgold

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

The ground floor gallery at the Society of Illustrators was full on Monday evening, September 15, as Print Club members and their guests eagerly awaited the unveiling of the Print Club's 2014 Presentation Print by renowned artist Faith Ringgold. Shortly after 6:30 p.m., President Mona Rubin asked everyone to take a seat as she welcomed them for the public presentation of our commissioned print. Mona began her introduction by saying that her daughter's favorite book when she was a child was Ringgold's *Tar*

Beach, a book that has won over 30 awards. It is based on an art quilt created by the artist in 1988 and now in the collection of the Guggenheim Museum. She went on to say that meeting Faith and visiting her studio have been among the high points of her Print Club presidency. The two live only a few blocks apart now, which is an added bonus. Mona noted that our image was printed by Curlee Raven Holton and Jase Clark at Lafayette College's Experimental Printmaking Institute [Clark also printed the Club's 2013 Presentation Print by Audrey Flack. Holton was recently named Permanent Executive Director of the David Driskell Center at University of Maryland and senior artist-in-residence in the Department of Art.] Rubin said that what stands out to her about Ringgold's print is the saturated color and the integration of image and text. She noted that Ringgold is always innovating. She recently created an "app" for the iPhone for Sudoku players that uses design elements instead of numbers.

Ringgold then took the stage and her print, covered on an easel at the front, was revealed. She told us the title is *Here Come Moses*. She began by reading the text around the edge of the image: "Here Come Moses. Aunt Emmy said he'd find us one day. That boy came North to Freedom in a storm. He lost his mother and father on the way. 'They'll never find me in this storm, but we'll all find Freedom. God Willing.



Artist Faith Ringgold signing books for Club members. PHOTO BY DEBORAH SALEEBY-MULLIGAN

Curlee R. Holton began working with Ringgold in the 1990s when she first visited Holton's studio. In 1997 they editioned her etching, *Anyone Can Fly*. They have done about 80 projects together by now. Indeed, Holton noted



Artist Faith Ringgold signing a copy of *Coming to Jones Road*. PHOTO BY JENNY LIAO

We were born to be free. I will never give up,' said Moses. Moses was only twelve years old when he came to Jones Road on Thanksgiving Day in 1793." Faith said she began her story quilts, which have influenced most other aspects of her art, because no one would publish her autobiography; it was her way of telling her story. Her art has been tied to stories ever since.

that EPI keeps a special supply of inks just for Faith in all her favorite colors. Holton said that the way they work together to develop the print is that she draws each layer separately on Mylar, and then each layer (color) is printed in turn. [Our serigraph was ultimately the result of 11 separate screens.] Ringgold noted that she had done a project for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Coming to Jones Road Under a Blood Red Sky* (2004), which has been their #1 selling print.

Our print is also part of the "Jones Road" series. She said it draws from the roles of both the Underground Railroad and the Great Migration in African-American history. However, Ringgold also noted that the "Jones Road" series is personal. After graduating from high school in 1948, Faith wanted to attend City College in Harlem. She'd watched neighborhood boys going there for years and decided that was where she was going to college also. She didn't know what she wanted to *be*, since women didn't really work at that time in history. She knew, however, that she was going to *DO* something; she was going to make art. Having had asthma as a child, Faith didn't begin to regularly attend school until the second grade. Her mother

home schooled her in the early years. In 1948, City College's School of Arts and Sciences was still all male; they would not allow Faith to pursue a liberal arts degree. They did, however, allow women to enroll in the teacher education program, so this is exactly what Faith did; she majored in Art Education and focused on teaching high school art. Ringgold loved teaching and said she learned a lot from the kids. "Coming to Jones Road" is also the story of Ringgold's life.

Faith then read from her book, *Coming to Jones Road*, which is dedicated to her husband, who supported her decision to give up teaching and be a full-time artist, and to her father, who supported all her dreams as a child. The



Artist Faith Ringgold unveiling *Here Come Moses*. PHOTO BY DEBORAH SALEEBY-MULLIGAN

project was the result of the challenges presented by hostile neighbors when she moved to Englewood, NJ on November 23, 1992. Her dream to build a studio and a garden was seen as a "threat to the 'quality' of their lives." For six years, various roadblocks were placed in the way of realizing her dream, but she persisted. She found in her art a way of healing and a source for finding beauty and strength. She noted that, "art is a healer and the sheer beauty of living in a garden amidst trees, plants and flowers has inspired me to look away from my neighbors' unfounded animosity toward me and focus my attention on the stalwart tradition of black people who had come to New Jersey centuries before me." The first painting in the series was done in 1999, inspired by an old, sepia photograph. She saw herself as following "a trail of shadowy figures North." She noted that even today, "redlining" in

real estate keeps schools segregated, needlessly limiting the possibilities of many children in our society.

Ringgold then took questions from the audience. One was about the influence of her mother. Faith responded that her mother, a fashion designer, was hugely important in her life because she taught her that she could do anything. She noted that her mother didn't really think of her as an artist and couldn't always understand why Faith persisted in a certain direction if the work was not selling. Faith then told the story of her first big sale, to Chase Manhattan Bank. David Rockefeller had sent curators from the bank's collection to buy something from Ringgold. The artist showed them a lot of the work she was doing in the 1960s, but it was all too political to be acceptable. Her mother said to her, "Look Faith, why don't we try to find something that you can sell to them." The

Upcoming Print Club Events

Monday, October 6, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Chakaia Booker in Conversation with Phil Sanders, David Krut Projects, 526 W. 26th Street #816, New York, NY. Take this opportunity to meet Chakaia Booker—celebrated artist, sculptor, and creator of the 2011 PCNY Presentation Print. This exhibit of her latest work at David Krut Projects (a fluid space projective space) offers an exciting set of hand-cut and assembled *chine collé* prints. Working again with master printer Phil Sanders, Booker continues to explore and expand the ways in which sculptural ideas can be translated to the world of print. The two will discuss their collaborative process as it is reflected in this wonderful series of prints. Copies of Chakaia Booker's book, *Print Me*, will also be available for purchase by members for \$25 through David Krut Projects. RSVP required to kdeaux@gc.cuny.edu.

November 5 - 9, 2014

IFPDA Print Fair, Park Avenue Armory, Park Avenue at 67th Street. Print Club members, watch for your emailed link for Print Fair passes.

Saturday, November 8, 10 a.m.

Annual Print Week Breakfast hosted by International Print Center New York. View *New Prints 2014/Autumn* and hear presentations by several artists, 508 West 26th Street, Room 5A. RSVP to Stephanie at stephanie@ipcny.org or 212-989-5090.

Also of interest to Print Club members:

July 21 - October 15

Artist's Artists: James Siena, Josh Smith, and Charline von Heyl Collect Prints, organized by Gretchen Wagner, International Print Center New York, 508 West 26th Street, 5th Floor, NY, NY (212) 989-5090 or www.ipcny.org.

July 26 - March 22

The Paris of Toulouse Lautrec: Prints and Posters, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York (212) 708-9400 or www.moma.org.

September 8 - December 5

Big Picture Show, 1285 Avenue of the Americas Gallery, between 51st and 52nd Streets, in conjunction with IPCNY. For further information, contact IPCNY at (212) 989-5090.

September 12 - October 19

Benny Andrews/Patrice Renee Washington: Talking, curated by Nora Rodriguez, Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, 323 West 39th Street, 2nd Floor, NY, NY (646) 416-6226 or www.efanyc.org/blackburn-2020.

September 14 - December 14

Clare Romano & John Ross: 70 Years of Printmaking, Center for Contemporary Printmaking, Mathews Park, 299 West Avenue, Norwalk, CT (203) 899-7999 or www.contemprints.org. Opening reception: September 14, 2 - 5 p.m. Artist's Talk and Book Signing: Wednesday, December 10, 7 - 8:30 p.m.

September 14 - January 11

This Leads to Fire: Russian Art from Non-Conformism to Global Capitalism. Selections from the Kolodzei Art Foundation, Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase College, 735 Anderson Hill Road, Purchase, NY 10577 (914) 251-6100 or www.neuberger.org.

Saturday, November 8 6 - 9 p.m.

Auction and Party for Center for Contemporary Printmaking's Monothon, Lillian August Flagship Store, Norwalk, CT. For information contact CCP at (203) 899-7999 or go to www.contemprints.org. Printing sessions begin September 28 and run through October 20.

artist had done a painting titled *Six Shades of Black*; her mother thought the image might work for Chase, but the title needed to change. The painting hangs today outside the office of the bank's president. Today, Ringgold can't remember what she changed the title to (perhaps *Untitled*).

She was then asked about her recent project with the iPhone "app." Ringgold said she loves to play Sudoku, and came up with the idea of substituting design elements for the numbers. Her "app," available for iPhone, iPad and Android, is called "Quiltuduko" and includes 50 games which allow players to create their own "quilts." [For more information, go to www.quiltuduko.com. The first five games are free.]

Another member wanted to know about our print. Ringgold replied that she loves landscape. She said that as a student at City College, she never studied any of the artists of the Harlem Renaissance. They were all around her, but she knew nothing about them. Instead, she studied the Old Masters and had to teach herself about the artists in her own community. After finishing college in the

1950s, she painted lots of landscapes. She wanted very badly to get into a gallery. Ruth White, who ran Ruth White Gallery (42 East 57th Street), asked her why she was painting landscapes when the Civil Rights Movement was erupting all around her. Ringgold began in a new direction and increasingly focused on who she is. Her work still borrows from the landscape tradition, but it's about *her story*. Our print is about the first African American to make it to the Freedom House. The Freedom Quilt is on the roof of the house to show the way. The story of Moses making it to the Freedom House and Ringgold attaining her dream in Englewood are inextricably intertwined, making the work autobiographical.

There being no further questions, Mona reminded members of the upcoming event on October 6 with Chakaia Booker and Phil Sanders at David Krut Projects. Ringgold noted that Booker is one of her favorite artists, prompting Mona to invite her to join us at this event. The evening concluded with Ringgold signing copies of books members had brought with them.

CCP Panel Discussion for Print Collectors

Kimberly Brandt Henrikson

The Center for Contemporary Printmaking in Norwalk, CT held a lively and informative panel discussion for print collectors at its studio and gallery the evening of July 24th. This event marks the first of what CCP's Acting Director, Nomi Silverman, told the group will be a series of offerings beyond their instructional printmaking workshops. The invited panelists included Caitlin Riordan, Ann Chernow, and Ben Ortiz. Caitlin is a printmaker specializing in intaglio who is currently setting up a print shop in Boston. Ann is a painter, printer, art instructor, and decades-long collector. Ben is a collector and art advisor specializing in 20th century Caribbean and Latin American art.

Attendees provided a wide-ranging series of questions to guide the discussion topics. The panelists offered very clear and useful responses for both collectors who are just starting out as well as those with established collections. The initial question concerned specializing when collecting, and all agreed that the most important criteria is buying what you love, and that serious collectors will find themselves obsessive, discovering over time that they have a shortage of places to store artwork. As such, it helps to document your collection for insurance and other reasons. Ben offered some best practices including creating an information sheet with details about a work, keeping two copies of it, each in different locations, and including a color photograph of the work. If the task seems daunting, one can hire people who can help, and there is software that can be used for keeping the records in order. As collectors, we become caretakers of artworks that will have a life after we are gone. The obsessiveness spent in building the collection should leave a legacy, not a burden of work for family members who may or may not be aware of its importance or interested in learning more.

In terms of whom to collect, the group stressed multiple times through the evening the importance of collect-

ing contemporary artists or emerging artists. Collecting their work provides them with needed support so they can make a living and continue the practice of printmaking. When considering collecting work by a famous artist, do not expect the work to increase in value because the price point at which it is currently being sold is most likely not going to change. Also noted were some artists' estates, which are producing posthumous prints, such as Renoir, Cezanne, and other impressionists, because the plates were never cancelled. It is acceptable to collect them, though be cautious and ask questions about the edition. One world-renowned artist editioned his prints in many ways – countries, continents, planets, etc. and up into the thousands; other deceased artists are known to have family members producing prints on pre-signed paper or signing on their behalf. Caitlin emphasized that the artist should always cancel the plates by damaging them with a scratch through the image, then printing the cancelled plates in a cancelled run to close out the run.

The panelists especially emphasized the importance of having knowledge about printmaking practices, an artist you are collecting, and the specific work in which you are interested. They recommended educating yourself about what you are collecting through a variety of channels not limited to reading books on the artist, visiting galleries, speaking with educators, and having knowledgeable contacts. Print shops should be considered a primary resource for information about an artist's print and can provide detailed documentation. The audience was reminded about making appointments to visit college and museum libraries with special print collections. These institutions will pull together prints from their collections for your visit so you can examine them closely to view the technique, the paper, texture, signature, each of which can be useful if you are considering purchasing a similar print and have any concerns about its authenticity. Foundations, such as those for Picasso, Warhol, and Calder, are also available for authentication needs.

Caitlin provided an excellent explanation of edition terms and common abbreviations. She described the working process as the artist works with a master printer on an image until they reach the desired result. They will then “pull a PP” (Printer’s Proof) which is used by the master printmaker as the model for the series, then the prints are run by the printmaker. There will also be an AP/EP or Artist’s Proof. There may also be Archive Proofs, Exhibition Proofs, Museum Proofs, and many others that get creative. The term HC labels a print that should not and was not intended for sale, though it could be another print from the run, but may not be. You may also encounter prints with an estate stamp. This indicates that the print was started while the artist was alive, but they passed away during the run.

She advised against getting caught up in numbering; the first in the series is NOT the first pulled print. In the print shop setting, prints are run and placed around the room to dry or will later receive surface modifications, but they are not kept in an exact order. You can always call the print shop to ask how many were in the edition, and they should also be able to provide you with a documentation sheet. You also need to make sure that your information is accurate. Recently she checked two websites concerning a printmaking term and they had contradictory information. You can have a good eye, but she reiterated the need to know good people around you who are knowledgeable.

CCP Exhibits In UK

Press Release

Members of the Center for Contemporary Printmaking, several of whom are members of the Print Club or past Showcase artists, exhibited their work by invitation at the Pendle Biennial Print Fest in Lancashire, England this September. Their work comprised one of two featured exhibits and was located at Pendle Gallery, next to the Pendle Heritage Center. The other show, at Higherford Mill, was part of Art Unpacked and featured four UK-based printmakers. The theme of the show, “Felix Culpa,” Latin for “Fortunate Fault,” explores the themes of fault as rift, fault as accident and fault as identity.

According to the prospectus, “A fault represents at its core a separation of viewpoint. When found in the earth a fault can form such dazzling expanses of emptiness between sides that it rivals the mountains in beauty and grandeur. Faults are sites of tension and change as well, spaces in the constant friction of flux. When found in others, they can represent chasms of logic or judgment — an assigning of blame based on a difference of action. In us, they show the glaring discrepancy between our plan and the outcome. When we expose them through our work they can both teach us about failure and lead us to our most important successes. Felix Culpa is a celebration of these ‘faults’ in their most spectacular forms. We look to these differences, absences, and rifts not as flaws but as features; fixtures of ourselves and our viewpoints which define our identity and our perspective. Fortuitous and unexpected, we send out our interpretations of faults across the pond in

Below are books and other resources recommended for further research:

The Complete Printmaker by John Ross and Clare Romano

Prints of the 20th Century, A History by Riva Castleman

Looking at Prints, Drawings, and Watercolors: A Guide to Technical Terms by Paul Goldman, J. Paul Getty Trust Publications

A Century of American Printmaking: 1880-1980 by James Watrous

The Print in the Western World, an Introductory History by Linda C. Hults

Art on Paper

old auction catalogues for specialized information (Sotheby’s, Christie’s, Swann)

RISD museum publications

MoMA publications focused on prints and printmaking

Before the evening wrapped up, additional recommendations included changing around the prints you have hanging around your home. If you don’t rehang them, you really fail to see them after a while. Ben encouraged attendees to join a print club through a trusted print shop, like CCP, or to join other print clubs such as the Print Club of Albany or PCNY. This event was well received by everyone in attendance; many people expressed their appreciation for the amount of knowledge shared by the panelists.

the hope of exploring these gaps and making familiar the unfamiliar, drawing closer these coasts.” CCP had previously hosted a visit by a group of artists from Lancashire. Submissions for inclusion were juried by Tatiana Mori, Curator, Greenwich Arts Council. Those selected were:

Linda Adato, Brooklyn, NY; Frances B. Ashforth, Ridgefield, CT; Betty Ball, Rowayton, CT; Shirley Bernstein, Hampton, CT; Binnie Birstein, Norwalk, CT; Ann Chernow, Westport, CT; Jane Cooper, Katonah, NY; Joseph Dermody, Greenwich, CT; Paul DeRuvo, Norwalk, CT; Katharine Dufault, Mamaroneck, NY; Alanna Fagan, Milford, CT; Sally Frank, North Salem, NY; Patrick Garner, Northboro, MA; Brenda Giegerich, Westport, CT; Adair Heitmann, Fairfield, CT; Bonnie Beers Johnson, New Fairfield, CT; Joan E. Lane, New York, NY; Ellen Lazarus, Larchmont, NY; Channing Lefebvre, Latham, NY; Annete Lieblein, Larchmont, NY; Nancy McTague-Stock, Wilton, CT; Susan Miiller, Sparrow Bush, NY; Heidi Palmer, Westport, CT; DeAnne L. Prosia, Newtown, CT; Gerda Roze, Mount Vernon, NY; Renée Santhouse, Wilton, CT; Roxanne Faber Savage, Fairfield, CT; Wendy Shalen, Waccabuc, NY; Christopher Shore, South Salem, NY; Nomi Silverman, Glenville, CT; Patricia Spergel, Larchmont, NY; Thomas Stavovy, Hamden, CT; Rebecca F. Stock, Wilton, CT; Dolores Tema, Norwalk, CT; Marjorie Tomchuk, New Canaan, CT; Ruth Kalla Ungerer, Westport, CT; Mitchell Visoky, White Plains, NY; Elisabeth Walden, Bridgeport, CT; Deborah Weiss, Stratford, CT

Multiple Originals: WPA

Rozanne Cohen

The Great Wall Street Crash of October 1929 brought about the most serious financial depression experienced in the United States. Not surprisingly, many artists found their livelihoods come to an end, among them printmakers, who saw the print market collapse. In 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt introduced his New Deal program of unemployment relief for Americans (Coppel 26). The first phase (1933-34) helped provide relief and recovery from the Depression. This included the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP). It was followed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which ran the Federal Arts Project (FAP) from 1935 to 1943 (Patton 127). It was only because printmaking was already established as a commercially viable art form before the Depression that it gained a place in the government's public art programs.

As a subject, the Depression presented itself to artists in different ways. Urban and rural poverty and the plight of African-American working conditions were among the themes that emerged strongly in printmaking during the WPA period. Printmaking requires training and skill; results are dependent upon knowledge of various techniques. Several African-American artists played a key role in developing and passing on these skills. This essay focuses on selected African-American artists who worked for the WPA and some of the printmaking techniques they employed.

The importance of Africa as a part of the ancestral legacy of African Americans was promoted in the 1920s by writer and philosopher Alain LeRoy Locke (1885 – 1954) and was meant to renew racial pride in Black America. His book, *The New Negro* (New York, 1925), was highly influential and both reflected and shaped the ideals and philosophy embodied within the Harlem Renaissance. It also brought a new political awareness to the African-American community.

What particularly distinguished African-American artists was their close identification with their people and their hardships. No other group of American artists had this characteristic to the same degree. They were especially concerned with social justice. Unemployment in the black community was twice that of other Americans, and they turned their support to the New Deal of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The results gained by artists of this period were an increased production of graphic art and a renewed public interest in prints and technology. Under government sponsorship, African-American artists were given more opportunities to work than ever before, and they were treated more equitably on "the Project" than in any prior work setting. This encouraged more African-Americans to enter the arts, and community art centers in places like Harlem and on Chicago's South Side became hubs of creative activity.

From 1939 to 1940, Charles Wilbert White (1918 – 1979), known for his murals and monumental prints as well as his skill as a draftsman, worked for the WPA at the South Side Community Art Center in Chicago. His art was both social and political in nature. His powerful works express

the struggles and achievements of African Americans. In the beginning of his career, he focused on the accomplishments of heroic figures, but his later work shifted to the daily rituals of everyday people. His lithograph *Hope for the Future* (1945) depicts a Madonna and Child theme. A maternal figure is shown holding her infant son. As scholars Lisa Mintz Messinger, Lisa Gail Collins and Rachel Mustalish have pointed out, even though the two are linked physically, the mother and child have no eye contact, thus appearing emotionally unconnected. In the distance, a tree stands dead, a noose hanging from its branches. While the mother is strong, with massive hands, she knows that she will not be able to protect her son from oppression (Messinger et. al. 25).

During the Depression, Elmer W. Brown (1909 – 1971) worked on the Cleveland WPA mural project, creating murals at Valleyview Homes and the Cleveland City Club building. He was an art teacher and also an actor and set designer at Cleveland's Playhouse Settlement, known since 1941 as Karamu House. This institution has encouraged the development of African-American art for almost a century. Opened in 1915, many of Langston Hughes' plays were premiered there ("African American Artists in the WPA Collection"). Also a master printmaker, Brown's linocut from the 1940s, *The Fortune Teller*, portrays an elderly African-American woman intently reading the leaves at the bottom of a teacup. The attention to detail and crisp, clean lines in this print are compelling, revealing the artist's mastery of technique. Her hands are large and strong and her face heavily incised. She wears her hair parted in the middle with braids pinned up around the sides of her head. The earring, eye glasses and dainty collar add to the dramatic effect of this image (Messinger et. al. 34).

Hale Woodruff (1900 – 1980) won an award in 1926 from the Harmon Foundation for his painting, which allowed him to study in France. After four years, he returned to the United States. In 1931, he developed a fine arts curriculum for Atlanta University. The printmaking classes he offered there focused on woodcut and linoleum block printing. *Young Buck* (c. 1938), a woodcut, shows the deep, expressive lines of a young African-American's head, shown in three-quarter view. The youth is depicted as forceful and strong. The highly stylized eyes and sense of volume recall African sculpture. It is a solemn work that shows Woodruff's artistic mastery in this medium (Messinger et. al. 32).

For many African-American artists, the South held horrific reminders of slavery, lynchings and poverty. *Going Home* (1935 linocut, also listed as *Coming Home* and *View of Atlanta* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's database) was created by Woodruff in Atlanta to express his outrage over the ramshackle housing that discrimination forced on African Americans (Bearden and Henderson 206). Social Realism was an important style and movement during this time of economic hardship, drawing attention to the plight of the poor. The print shows a poor, southern, black neighborhood to which a woman returns home. She wears a dress, hat and high-heeled shoes. The stairs are sagging and the houses are rickety. The bold lines and

strong contrast emphasize the drama (Messinger et. al 38).

In contrast, Dox Thrash (1893 – 1965) recalls a lighter memory of life in the South, despite segregation, in *Sunday Morning* (c. 1939 drypoint). Here, the figure is a “type” rather than an individual. A prim, prideful woman is shown on her way to church. She walks silhouetted, with her head held high and her nose upturned. She wears a feathered hat and carries a parasol. The image may be reminiscent of women recalled from Thrash’s southern upbringing (Messinger et. al. 41).

The tide of southern migration aggravated problems that already existed in northern cities. There was already congestion, inadequate housing and lack of employment. That suffering was what awaited Black Americans when they arrived in the northern cities (Messinger et.al. 43). This is best illustrated by Norman Lewis (1909 – 1979) in his lithograph *The Soup Kitchen* (c. 1937). It depicts an anonymous line of faceless men waiting for a free meal. The dark palette underlines the mood and emphasizes the sign on the back wall “W.P.A.” – the government sponsor of artist and soup (Messinger et. al. 46).

Given the country’s economic crisis and high unemployment during these years, the theme of skilled and semi-skilled manual laborers was illustrated many times. Charles L. Sallée, Jr. (1913 – 1988) was part of the group of artists that included Elmer Brown at the Playhouse Settlement (Karamu House) in Cleveland. For a time, he was a printmaker and muralist for the Cleveland WPA. His experiences working in integrated settings, including on the Federal Arts Project, is reflected in his art. *Wrecking Crew* (c. 1940 soft-ground etching) depicts both white and black laborers at a demolition site. They are in the midst of tearing down the upper floor of an old brick building. They work together without any visible signs of racial tension. This print celebrates the “quiet heroism and dignity of hardworking laborers in America’s heartland” and reflects the influence of American Regionalism (Messinger et. al. 65).

Printmakers of this era also addressed the issue of religion as it affected African Americans. Both Allan Rohan Crite (1910 – 2007) and Dox Thrash treated religious themes and documented religious practices in the South (Messinger et. al. 51). Thrash was born in Griffin, GA. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Philadelphia Graphic Sketch Club. He worked in the WPA/FAP printmaking workshop in Philadelphia from 1937 to 1941 and became famous for developing carborundum etching (O’Connor 294 and Messinger et. al. 41). (Carborundum, a commercial form of silicon carbide, is an abrasive powder that can be used to create tonal areas on etching plates.) In *Glory Be* (c. 1938 – 42), the use of carborundum, mezzotint, aquatint and etching are integrated. The religious scene is made more dramatic through the strong gradations of light and dark. A small gathering of people witness the brilliant light of God breaking through the clouds. Silhouetted against the night sky, each person seems to respond differently as is suggested through their body language. Messinger et. al. suggests that a small figure in the distance implies that the seven figures in the foreground might be part of a larger circle of worshippers; the tones are soft and velvety, creating a mood of religious intimacy (Messinger et. al. 57). Crite

was interested in Christian stories. His *African-American Madonna* (1937 linocut) shows a black Virgin and Child. Crite stated that although he was black, the figures in his work are not limited in a racial sense, but rather tell the story of all mankind through the black figures (Messinger et. al. 54).

While this sampling only scratches the surface of the notable African-American printmakers working during the WPA era, it seems fitting to close with one who, arguably, had the broadest and deepest impact on the future of printmaking in America, not only for African Americans, but for all artists. Robert Blackburn (1920 - 2003) had the skills of a mature artist as a teenager. He grew up in Harlem and attended the WPA-sponsored Harlem Community Art Center, where he was introduced to printmaking and, as a teen, created a masterful lithographic print, *People in a Boat* (c.1937-39). Sharon Patton has suggested that the physical isolation and the barren land ahead of them allude to the social and political isolation of America before World War II and is a metaphor for the land of opportunity which offered no benefits for African Americans (Patton 147). It has also been compared to the biblical story of the Miraculous Draught of Fishes (Luke 5:1-11 and John 21:1-8) in which Christ performs a miracle by enabling his disciple Peter and his companions to easily net a school of fish. Astonished by the bounty of their catch, the previously hungry and wary fishermen become fully convinced of Christ’s divine powers (Messinger et. al. 55). In the early 1940s, Blackburn received a scholarship to the Art Students League, where he studied lithography under Will Barnet. Between 1943 and 1948, Blackburn did a variety of freelance projects, but found it difficult to find places to print as an African American. With the support of his mentor, Barnet, Blackburn opened the Printmaking Workshop in 1948 on West 17th Street in New York City to provide a venue where people of any color or nationality could come to work on prints. In addition to Barnet, Jacob Lawrence and Romare Bearden were frequent collaborators at the Printmaking Workshop (“How the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop Came to Be”). The Printmaking Workshop is internationally acclaimed for its diversity and vitality and has hosted and influenced artists from around the world, including Faith Ringgold. In addition to running his workshop, in 1957, Blackburn became the first master printer for Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE), where he collaborated with Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Helen Frankenthaler, Robert Motherwell and other leading abstract artists of the day. Thus, his impact reached beyond both race and artistic style, impacting the entire world of fine art printmaking in 1950s and 60s America (“How the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop Came to Be”).

Despite the contributions of these and other African-American artists, and the increased opportunities provided by government funding for the arts during the Depression era, it must be noted that, compared with white artists, African Americans were significantly under-represented in the WPA in relation to their total numbers in the general population (Messinger et. al. 11 – 12). The WPA ended on June 30, 1943. Labor needs for World War II rendered it no longer necessary for the government to

employ people in this way. Following its demise, many of the African-American artists who had been supported by the project struggled for support and recognition. It has taken decades for much of the excellent work they produced to reach a broad public through exhibitions and publications.

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Exhibit Review

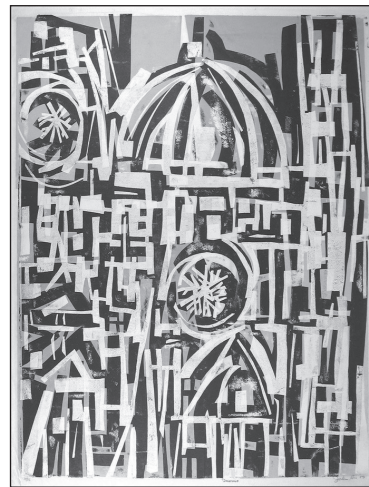
Clare Romano and John Ross: 70 Years of Printmaking, Center for Contemporary Printmaking, Norwalk, CT, through December 14

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

The Center for Contemporary Printmaking was packed for the opening reception of "Clare Romano and John Ross: 70 Years of Printmaking," an exhibition curated by CCP Master Printer Chris Shore to celebrate the long and richly diverse careers of two artists who devoted their professional careers to printmaking. Clare and John literally "wrote the book" on printmaking: *The Complete Printmaker* (1972). Their book, called by many "the bible of printmaking" was reissued



Clare Romano, *Silver Canyon*, 1984, collograph, 22.5 x 30 in. IMAGE COURTESY OF CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY PRINTMAKING AND THE ARTIST



John Ross, *Duomo*, 1959, card-board cut, 29.5 x 22.5 in. IMAGE COURTESY OF CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY PRINTMAKING AND THE ARTIST

in 1990 in a revised and expanded version with contributions from the Ross's son, Tim, a faculty member in the Department of Studio Art at Manhattanville College in Purchase, NY. (It was also broken up and issued as a series of paperbacks focusing on different printmaking techniques in the years following its initial publication in 1972.)

John and Clare both had long careers as educators, having trained several generations of students beginning in the 1950s at Pratt Institute, the New

School for Social Research, Manhattanville College, Yale and Columbia. For many years, they oversaw the Pratt in Venice program, evidence of which is seen in several works in the exhibition, including John Ross's inventive *Venice* (1995, etching) from his *Saved from the Sea* series, which shows many of Venice's iconic buildings packed together on top of a platform raised above the sea, looking much like an off-shore oil rig, as a gondola gently glides by.

Just as *The Complete Printmaker* provides an encyclopedic overview of the many techniques and approaches to printmaking, so the exhibit includes not only work from an extensive time period (1952 – 2008), but also from a variety of techniques: collograph, etching, letterpress, lithograph, silkscreen, woodcut, and also several examples of artists' books, a genre for which John Ross is internationally known. In the printing room adjacent to the gallery proper there are also some wonderful posters designed by Ross and Romano.



Clare Romano and John Ross: 70 Years of Printmaking, Center for Contemporary Printmaking, Norwalk, CT. PHOTO BY TIM ROSS

The exhibit also documents places with great meaning to the couple, from New York City, where they met as students at Cooper Union, and whose rooftops and water towers are captured in Romano's 1952 lithograph, *East Side Structures*, to canyons of the Southwest, captured in their colorful collographs, including Ross's *Peak* and *Pueblo Textures* (both 1984) and Romano's *Grand Canyon* (1978), *Golden Canyon* (1984) and *Silver Canyon* (1984). Italy features frequently, in Clare's charming woodcuts, such as *Anello*, *Mio Bello Anello* (1959), done during her Fulbright, and John's *Duomo* (cardboard cut, 1959) from the same period. Cape Cod also inspired over the years, as is evidenced by John's *Provincetown Beach* (1962, woodcut) and Clare's collographs such as *Cape Cod Bay* (1978) and the almost Rothko-like *Tidal Ribbons* (1985). Mallorca, Belgrade, Zagreb and Rome are also represented.

Then, too, one finds the images of locales like *Dorothea* (1966, collograph) which ultimately found a home in John's *Visible Cities* book art project – 12 architectural fan-

tasy prints with texts from Italian writer Italo Cavino's *Invisible Cities*. Both had responded in their own ways to the magic of Venice, and the images and fables create their own unique worlds.

The vast majority of prints in the show are artist's proofs, culled from John and Clare's extensive archives with the help of their son, Tim Ross. Most of the work is for sale, with prices ranging from \$350 to \$2500 for John's triptych, *Homage to the City* (1984, collograph). On Wednesday, December 10 from 7 – 8:30 p.m., John Ross will present an artist's talk and sign books at CCP. This interesting and beautifully hung show will close on December 14.



John Ross with former student/artist Dolores Santoliquido at the opening reception, September 15, 2014. PHOTO BY TIM ROSS

The New York Society of Etchers Presents 40° 42' N/37° 48' S

A Joint Exhibition of Intaglio Prints by New York And Melbourne, Australia Based Artists, The National Arts Club, NY, NY

New York, NY – The New York Society of Etchers, Inc. is pleased to announce the staging of their highly anticipated annual survey of new intaglio prints presented this Fall at The National Arts Club during New York City's international Print Week 2014.

This year's exhibition is a joint venture coordinated by the etcher's society with two of Australia's top curators. Central to the format of this cultural collaboration is an urban theme that will showcase contrasting views and styles from important printmakers working in major cities on opposite sides of the world. Dianna Gold and Carmel

Wallace, Ph.D. of Melbourne, Australia commissioned a cutting edge collection of prints by such important local artists as Rona Green, and Marco Luccio for their portion of the project. Mr. Sean Corcoran, Curator of Prints and Photographs at the Museum of the City of New York curated the New York area contributions on behalf of the New York Society of Etchers from a talented pool of artists working in the tri-state region. The exhibition will open to the public Sunday, October 26th and run through Saturday, November 8th, 2014.

The New York Society of Etchers, Inc. is an artist run not-for-profit printmakers group which focuses on organizing exhibitions of intaglio prints nationally and internationally, directly or through collaborations; and with public institutions. For more information contact info@nysetchers.org visit www.nysetchers.org and <https://www.facebook.com/37degrees48S>

Center For Contemporary Printmaking Names New Executive Director

Laura G. Einstein is the new Executive Director of the Center for Contemporary Printmaking in Norwalk, CT. Previously, she was principal of LGE Fine Art Consulting. With a 30+-year career in curating and museum work, she has worked as Interim Head and Assistant Curator of the Asian Art Department at Yale University Art Gallery, Lecturer at The Metropolitan Museum of Art for both the Asian Art and Education Departments, Lecturer at IBM Gallery of Science and Art and Curator at a number of museums

and galleries throughout the tri-state area, including curating exhibitions for Helen Frankenthaler, Wolf Kahn, Robert Andrew Parker and a variety of thematic exhibitions. LGE Fine Art Consulting worked for a selected group of artists, estates, and museums/galleries in Asian art as well as Contemporary Western art. She continues to guide at Philip Johnson Glass House in New Canaan and to write for *VENU Magazine*. She has also written for *Journal of the Print World*, among other publications.

Important Note to Members

If you have not yet sent in your Print Club renewal for the 2014 print year, please do so immediately. We anticipate beginning to ship the Faith Ringgold prints in early November, and you will not receive one if you have not renewed.

Videographer Sought

The Print Club would like to videotape its events for our Archives. If you have skills as a videographer and would like to help out with this, please let President Mona Rubin know of your availability.



P.O. BOX 4477 / GRAND CENTRAL STATION / NEW YORK, NY 10163 / 212-479-7915

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name:

Date:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail Address:

Please state briefly why you are interested in joining The Print Club of New York:

How did you learn about the Print Club?

Are you a collector, artist, dealer, curator, art historian etc.?

Which committees are you interested in joining? Please circle those listed below:

Events Committee, Publications Committee, Membership Committee,
Print Selection Committee, Public Relations Committee

Membership includes an invitation to all educational events, receiving our quarterly newsletter and our presentation print and an invitation to our annual meeting.

(Dues for 2014/2015 are \$250.)

Send this application for membership in The Print Club of New York Inc. to:

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