

The Print Club of New York Inc

Spring 2015

President's Greeting

Mona Rubin

May 2015

It is with mixed feelings that this will be my last President's Greeting. As of July 1st, the start of our next fiscal year, Kimberly Henrikson has been elected to take my place. I got to know Kim well over the past few years through all her contributions to the Club, first on committees and then as a Board Member. She brings a great knowledge of art history to the position.

She got her BA in art history from Penn State and is currently working towards her Master's degree at Hunter College. She has worked in art related jobs and is also currently the Editor of the IPCS Newsletter. We are fortunate to be able to have someone with her experience, education and extreme enthusiasm for the position. Kim and I have spent a lot of time discussing the various responsibilities of the presidency, and she is more than ready to take it on. She looks forward to meeting a broad group of members.

I will stay on as a Board Member and remain active as President Emeritus. The Print Club has been an important organization in my life. I have been a member since the inception, and it has been a shared family focus. As many of you know, my father, Julian Hyman, served as President for many years. It is particularly rewarding for me that an article written by him appears in this issue. He wrote about Craig McPherson and his newest prints. My Dad has collected Craig's work for years and was instrumental in arranging for him to become one of our commissioned artists. Although my Mom passed away 8

years ago, the Print Club was always an important place for her as well. When I handed over records of the minutes to Kim, we found years' worth of note taking in her handwriting in her role as Recording Secretary. Many family members and friends have joined the Club over the years, and attending events has become a great meeting spot for us. I am thrilled that my son, who recently moved back to New York from the West Coast, has promised to join in the fall.

Both old and new friendships have been one of the big rewards of my position. Joan Blanksteen is my oldest friend. Together with her husband, Charlie, they have been an integral force in guiding me through my decisions over the past five years. Their ideas and support were truly the foundation of my presidency. Joan continues to serve in the demanding job of Treasurer. Another college roommate from my art history years at University of Pennsylvania also joined the club, and it has been a source of renewed friendship. I also appreciate that several of my local friends from New Jersey have joined and attended events. This all adds to the satisfaction I have experienced.

Leonard and Muriel Moss have been a central part of my journey. They were instrumental in arranging for many of our Presentation Prints. Leonard served as President and handed over the reins to me. He provided information and training whenever I needed it and made the transition an easy one.

Looking back over the years, I am particularly grateful for the interchanges with artists and art professionals that I would never have had access to otherwise. I will always treasure the afternoon spent in the studio of Faith Ringgold, a great story teller, talking about her life and the history of our print. I appreciated getting to know Phil Sanders and learning so much from him. He is one of the most dedicated people in the printmaking world. Will Barnett's presentation will always be an outstanding memory. We did not know until the last moment whether he would be well enough to speak, and then he charmed the crowd with an extensive talk. Some artists I met we did not end up working with, but visiting their studios was always a treat.

Lunches with individual Board Members always provided a break from the work day, and this is where a lot of ideas were born. Lunches and art gallery visits with Kay Deaux led to great event ideas and some presentation artists! Talking over sandwiches with Rick Miners resulted in his role of really boosting the membership. Allison Tolman always shared her knowledge and connections from the commercial side of the art world, and I highly value all her contributions.

The Print Club has given me so much over the years – friendships, knowledge, leadership challenges, and of course the building of an incredible print collection! I truly love so many of the images that hang in our home.

I sign off with a heartfelt thank you to all the Board Members, a good luck wish to Kim as she takes on this new role, and to the entire membership that has allowed me to have this extraordinary opportunity. The biggest

The Print Club of New York, Inc.

P.O. Box 4477 Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163
Tel:(212)-479-7915

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Gillian Greenhill Hannum

thank you goes to my husband, Michael. He encouraged me to take on the presidency and, as a Board member, he

helped support me. Behind the scenes, he shared ideas and helped make it all manageable.

Recent Print Club Events

Guided Tour of *Sublime: The Prints of J.M.W. Turner and Thomas Moran*, New York Public Library

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

An excited group of Print Club members gathered at the employees' entrance of the iconic New York Public Library on a chilly Saturday morning in February. We were to have the rare treat of a guided tour of the Library's exhibit, *Sublime: The Prints of J.M.W. Turner and Thomas Moran*, led by Curator of Prints Madeleine Viljoen. We would have an hour, from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m., before the Library opened to the public. Viljoen, at the Library since 2010, is an art historian with expertise in Old Master prints. She previously held a Fellowship at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The exhibition, beautifully displayed on lavender-hued walls, was inspired by the Library's remarkable collection of Turner prints. Viljoen got the idea to pair Philadelphia artist Thomas Moran's work with Turner's as Moran, best known as a painter of epic Western landscapes, initially trained as a printmaker and had owned Turner's *Liber Studiorum* (1807 – 19). As the third floor gallery space is divided by the rotunda, it worked well for two "pendant" shows. Viljoen was asked if the timing of the show was related to the release of the film *Mr. Turner*. She replied that she'd had no idea the film was coming out, and that the coincidence of timing was happy serendipity.

The Turner (1775 – 1851) part of the exhibit began with a collection of prints by artists who influenced Turner as a maker of prints, in particular his *Liber Studiorum*. This included work by Claude Lorraine (French, 1604 – 82), who was very popular in England and collected by the Duke of Devonshire; Richard Earlom (British, 1743 – 1822), a mezzotint master who published *Liber Veritatis* from 1777 to 1826 after originals by Claude; William Sawrey Gilpin (British, 1762 – 1843), nephew of the elder William Gilpin who was champion of the Picturesque; and Turner's contemporary, John Constable (British, 1776 – 1837), who was represented by a small etching of Gothic ruins; it was not very successful and he did not do more. Also on the first wall were prints by William Havell (British, 1782 – 1857), Thomas Gainsborough (British, 1727 – 88), John Crome (British, 1768 – 1821) and Richard Cooper (British, 1740 – 1814).

The remainder of this wing featured Turner's *Liber Studiorum* (1807 – 19). Inspired by the prints after Claude's work in *Liber Veritatis*, Turner was closely involved in all aspects of this project. In most cases, he etched the outlines of the various scenes himself and then turned the plate over to master printers to complete the job. A few prints in the set are entirely by the artist's hand. The NYPL received the set from Samuel Putnam Avery, who

had acquired them from collector Howard Mansfield. Letters at the top of each print are a sort of shorthand for the type of landscape being depicted: P represented Pastoral, EP meant Epic Pastoral, A was for Architectural scenes, H meant Historical and so forth. This is an especially rare set as it includes some examples with notes from the artist as well as some very rare states. For example, Turner's *Frontispiece* (1812) is shown both as Turner's line etching and also as a completed mezzotint by J. C. Easling. A banner on the left lists the names of all the master printers Turner hired to work on the project.

Viljoen next discussed one of her favorites from the set, *Mount Gothard* (1808). The treacherous and dramatic scene showing the famous pass through the Alps that was part of many a Grand Tour itinerary exudes romantic drama. Similarly, *Lake of Thun, Swiss* (1808) was influenced by Edmund Burke and shows a very effective creation of the illusion of lightening. Lightening also features in *The Fifth Plague of Egypt* (1808), a print bearing the H (historical) designation.

The Junction of the Severn and the Wye (1811) is labeled Epic Pastoral. This print was the first in which Turner created both the etching and the mezzotint himself. New to the mezzotint process, Turner's result was competent, if somewhat "flat." The next work we focused on was *Peat Bog, Scotland* (1812), another of the curator's favorite works. Expressive and theatrical, with translucent layers of rain, the vision could not have been realized without the talented master printers of whom so little is known. In the case of this work, the printer was George Clint.

The final Turner print we discussed was *Mer de Glace* (1812). Here we were able to see both prepublication and published states, both by Turner himself. The work has an almost Japanese quality; indeed, it is one of the most abstract prints in the *Liber*. The subject is the northern slopes of Mont Blanc. At some point, the plate was damaged, and Turner added a bird in the foreground to cover the small gouge in the plate.

The group then moved to the other end of the third floor corridor where we were guided through the first section of the "American" side of the exhibition, a selection of lithographs by Thomas Moran (1837 – 1926), made between 1859 and 1869. Moran, the child of English emigrants, was trained at a commercial print shop in Philadelphia as a wood engraver beginning in 1853. Early works were copies of works by Europeans, such as a copy of a Eugène Isabey (French, 1803 – 86) on view. Interestingly, from the beginning, Moran's works were more dramatic.

When Moran began creating his own work, he made sketches outdoors but did his printing in the studio. Initially, the results were somewhat "studied" looking. Examples include *On the Susquehanna* (1869), which is highly detailed, and experiments in cliché verre, a type of printmaking using photographic chemicals on glass,

which had been embraced the previous year by fellow American landscapists Asher Durand and John Kensett. Moran also treated European subjects in a similar way, such as *The Bay of Baiae, Naples* (1869). *Solitude* (1869) is Moran's *piece de résistance* as a lithographer, according to Viljoen. Based on sketches made on a trip to Lake Superior, only 10 or 12 prints were pulled before the stone was dropped and broken. Moran gave up making lithographs at that point.

The next section of the exhibition was titled "Thomas Moran and the American West." This is the Moran most of us were familiar with. The artist joined the Hayden Geological Survey in 1871 and spent 40 days with the expedition in the Yellowstone area. Watercolors by the artist formed the basis for the first color illustrations of the region, issued as chromolithographs in *The Yellowstone National Park, and the mountain regions of portions of Idaho, Nevada, Colorado and Utah* (Boston: Louis Prang and Company, 1876). The book had a pinned spine that allowed for the removal and display of the plates and also featured an extensive text by Hayden. The color was bold and shocked many viewers, making the influence of Turner all the more evident.

The final section of the American display focused on "The Etching Revival." Influenced by the Barbizon School in France and James Abbott McNeill Whistler's work in England, Moran took up the needle and helped found the New York Etching Club in 1877. In 1881, he was invited to join the newly-founded Society of Painter-Etchers in London. Here, we found displayed a Whistler from his *First Venice Set*, done in 1879, and works by Barbizon artist Charles Daubigny from about 1850. This selection introduced "Thomas Moran Etchings (1878 – 91)," the final section of the exhibition. Moran took quite an experimental approach to etching, employing sandpaper, scotch stone, aquatint and roulette, among other techniques. *Conway Castle* (1879) is his most ambitious etching from this period. It reproduces a Turner painting, now lost, that he bought from a New Jersey farmer.

Lighthouse (1879) shows Moran capturing the free and atmospheric abstraction of Turner's late work in his etching. *East Hampton Fire Place* (1880) reflects the artist's move from Manhattan to the Hamptons during this period. There were many seascapes in the 1880s. A trip to Great Britain in 1882 resulted in the moody and Turner-esque *Harlech Castle, Wales* (1882), done in a combination of etching and mezzotint. *Communipaw, New Jersey* (1884) is an example of the "industrial sublime." The etching and aquatint recalls Whistler's and Turner's scenes of Venice with a modern twist. *A Wreck, Montauk* (1886) was shown as a straight etching and as an etching and mezzotint. Very different moods were expressed by the two works.

The final two prints were both copies of paintings by the artist. *St. John's River, Florida* (1888) is an etching based on an 1877 Moran painting, itself inspired by Whistler's etchings of Venice. *The Gate of Venice* (1888), etching, roulette and scraping, is considered Thomas Moran's best print. It is based on a painting the artist had done two years earlier. The print, the largest made by the artist, took nearly two years to execute. The influence of both Turner and Whistler is clear. A little folio labeled "Venezia" is in the bottom left corner.

This opportunity to look at the exhibition with its curator was a unique and very rewarding experience. We are extremely grateful to Ms. Viljoen for sharing her expertise with us.

Upcoming Print Club Events

Monday, November 9, 2015

Save the date for the unveiling of our Club's 2015 commissioned print, by Irish artist Donald Teskey, at the National Arts Club.

Also of interest to Print Club Members:

June 7 – August 30, 2015

10th Biennial International Miniature Print Exhibition, Center for Contemporary Printmaking, Mathews Park, 299 West Avenue, Norwalk, CT (203) 899-7999 or www.contem-prints.org.

June 11 – July 31, 2015

New Prints 2015/Summer, International Print Center New York, 508 West 26th Street, Room 5A, New York, NY (212) 989-5090 or www.ipcny.org.



Curlee Raven Holton at Kenkeleba Gallery.
PHOTO BY KAY DEAUX.

Guided Tour of Robert Blackburn: *Passages*, Kenkeleba House Gallery

Fran Alexander

The Robert Blackburn (1920-2003) retrospective, originated at the David Driskell Center at the University of Maryland, covers the artist's 60 year evolution from draftsman to teacher and master printmaker. *Passages* is the first comprehensive exhibit dedicated to the artist and includes over 70 prints and works on paper. The impressively wide range of style, subject and

technique make abundantly clear just how prolific Blackburn was, giving ample recognition to his place in American art as more than a teacher and founder of the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop (PMW). He was an important artist in his own right.

In March, PCNY members had a private tour of the chronological exhibit, at the Kenkeleba House in the East Village, led by Curlee Holton, Executive Director of the Driskell Center and friend and colleague of Bob Blackburn. Holton printed and presented our 2014 print by Faith Ringgold, who was in attendance at the tour as well. In fact, Ms. Ringgold made the first foundation gift for the exhibit, from her Anyone Can Fly Foundation, established in 1994, in her words, "to make sure artists born before 1920 are known by children, to not die in oblivion."

Holton's personal anecdotes of Blackburn's dedication to the work of others provided insight not only into the artist, but also the man himself. When Holton arrived at PMW for a fellowship in 1990, Blackburn took him by the hand to introduce him to everyone and said, "Sleep on that press. If it was good enough for Robert Rauschenberg, it's good enough for you." The Rauschenberg reference recalls a 1963 incident that has become printmaking folklore, when Blackburn had an accident with a Rauschenberg stone. The stone broke in two and Blackburn blamed himself. But Rauschenberg loved the resulting image of a diagonal white crack and even incorporated the residual stone chips into the print he named *Accident*, which won first prize at the 1963 Ljubljana Graphic Biennial in Yugoslavia. This event marked a turning point in American printmaking, and placed Blackburn at the forefront of its newfound respectability.

Blackburn's artistic journey began in Harlem, where his uncle arranged for him to study at Charles Alston's Harlem Arts Workshop at the 135th Street Library in 1934. When Alston started his historic "306" salon, Blackburn was one of the youngest participants among a group of young black scholars and artists including Richard Wright and Romare Bearden. He went on to art classes at the Harlem YMCA from 1934-35, and Augusta Savage's Uptown Art Laboratory with Ronald Joseph, Jacob Lawrence and Gwendolyn Knight in 1937-38.

By the age of thirteen, Blackburn was winning prizes. He attended Frederick Douglass Junior High School from 1933-36, where he was editor of *Pilot* magazine, designed the school lobby mural, and graduated with arts medals.

At DeWitt Clinton High School, he was Art Editor of the renowned *Magpie* art and literary magazine, which premiered many young writers and artists, including James Baldwin's earliest published work. During this time he also attended classes at the Harlem Community Art Center, the WPA's largest New York community center, where he learned lithography with Riva Helfond. Between 1936 and 1939, Blackburn published about 40 illustrations in *Magpie*. As seen in his classical 1938 lithograph, *Refugees (aka People in Boat)*, Blackburn's compositional and technical skills were beyond his years, and his influences included European modernism, Mexican muralism, American regionalism and the Harlem Renaissance.

A two-year scholarship to the Art Students League in

1941 enabled Blackburn to study painting with Vaclav Vytlacil, whom he had admired in Harlem as an adolescent, and lithography with Will Barnet, a painter and printmaker who became his life-long friend and mentor. Together, they approached the stone as a very creative medium, and their printmaking methods were more experimental than most. During this time he supported himself with work as a porter and at various commercial lithography shops. After graduating from the League, he moved from Harlem to Chelsea, where he continued to do art-related freelance work and took drawing classes, as there were no teaching jobs available for black artists.

Blackburn acquired his own litho press in 1947 and began printing for others out of his own studio at 11 West 17th Street to earn a living. At that time, printmaking was considered even less than a stepchild to painting. It was unusual for artists to operate presses themselves, and they did not interact much with the printmakers that they hired. In fact, Blackburn was not a part of the "Cedar Bar crowd," as he put it, despite having a downtown presence and absorbing all of the changes going on around him, from Cubism to Surrealism to Abstract Expressionism.

He officially opened his Printmaking Workshop (PMW) in 1948 with the help of Barnet, and by 1950 PMW was an organized collaborative workshop. During this time Blackburn had become increasingly influenced by Cubism rather than Social Realism, and his own work moved from figurative to still life. His 1950 litho *Girl in Red* not only displays his mastery of color, but it also incorporates his interest in open window and tabletop still lifes. His 1950 litho *Still Life (aka White Jug)* expands on the tabletop composition and transforms it, while his 1951 litho *Blue Wine Bottle* takes it even further, by flattening and simplifying the still life objects, and rendering the background abstract. This evolution in Blackburn's work, in Holton's words, "freed him from image and narrative to deal just with the medium, ink and pressure."

Between 1951 and 1952, with Will Barnet in his studio, they moved to groundbreaking color experimental lithographs using multiple stones, which were noted by *Art News*. Intaglio was added into workshop in 1952.

In 1957, after having worked and traveled in Europe for two years on a John Hay Whitney Fellowship, Blackburn joined Tatyana Grosman's famed print workshop, Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE) in West Islip, L.I. He stayed with Universal for five years, collaborating with such artists as Larry Rivers, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Jim Dine, Helen Frankenthaler, Grace Hartigan, Robert Motherwell, and Sam Francis... artists who would later define the "American graphics boom of the 60s." There, he developed a reputation as one of the country's foremost art lithographers, becoming the first African-American master printer. His own work during his time at ULAE was some of his most sophisticated still life lithography, as shown in the dialog between subject, process and medium in his 1958 litho *Red Pipe (aka Red Pitcher Still Life)*.

In 1962 Blackburn returned full time to his Printmaking Workshop, and spent the rest of his life there. His own work began to incorporate the gestural feel of Action Painting, as well as collage techniques, as seen in *Blue Window's* abstract form with collaged paper and cheese-

cloth (1962-63 litho). He also began to experiment with woodcuts, using small and large recycled blocks, which he repositioned and recarved, layering different colors in new ways to create such images as *Penumbra 1 (aka Walk in the Shade)*, 1970-74.

PMW was incorporated as a non-profit in 1971 and broadened its scope to include more intaglios and mono-prints. The viscosity process of multi-color printmaking from a single plate was of particular interest and allowed for variations between proofs with color mixing results, as seen later in his *Germination* (1983 intaglio), with blue bleeding into tan into green.

Blackburn received a Governor's Art Award from the New York State Council on the Arts in 1988 for his workshop. Attracting countless artists from near and far, PMW had earned the nickname of the "Little United Nations." Blackburn gave opportunities to many well-known artists, including Stephen Antonakos, Faith Ringgold and Larry Rivers, but was never one to tout his own work. "Bob would not want us here talking about Bob," Holton said. His was a life of generosity, about everyone else but Bob. He was known to say, "Everyone has a log to bring to the log pile. We all have something special to offer." The shop was rich in collaborative and democratic spirit, with no hierarchy, just Blackburn's yogic philosophy of collective experience.

He received a MacArthur Fellowship in 1992, and put all the money into his workshop. But the workshop struggled to stay afloat and Blackburn's health was beginning to fail. After years of relocating, PMW closed its doors in 2001 and signed a merger agreement with the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts (EFA).

Blackburn continued his own work, by then mostly in organic imagery, and the MTA commissioned a series of mosaics for Arts for Transit and Urban Design in 2002. Blackburn designed twelve glass mosaics, entitled *Untitled (aka In Everything There is a Season)*.

He died in 2003. Two years later RBPMW opened in EFA's building at 323 West 39th Street, and his subway murals were unveiled at the 116th Street Lexington Avenue station. The Kenkeleba House show closed in March, but you can always take the 6 train to immerse yourself in the world of Bob Blackburn. Many of the images from the show can also be seen on the Driskell Center's website: http://www.driskellcenter.umd.edu/Blackburn/Blackburn_Images/gallery.php.

Print Club of New York Annual Meeting and Artists' Showcase

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

On Monday evening, May 18, members of the Print Club of New York and their guests assembled at the Society of Illustrators for the Club's annual meeting and popular Artists' Showcase event. Those attending had a little time to have a glass of wine and mingle with fellow print enthusiasts before the formal program got under way.



Gregory Paquette, Steve Katz, Emily Gui, José Luis Ortiz Téllez and Nathan Catlin. PHOTO BY GILLIAN HANNUM

Annual Meeting

President Mona Rubin called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. She welcomed those present to our Showcase event, which provides an opportunity for the Club to give exposure to artists without commercial gallery representation, allows members on the Showcase Committee to connect each year with a variety of print shops and studios in our area, and finally, provides an opportunity for our members to purchase prints directly from the artists who made them, with no gallery mark up and no middle man



Emily Gui. PHOTO BY GILLIAN HANNUM

(in other words, at *substantial savings*). Mona reported that this event is about 20 years old, and that her father, Julian Hyman, was on the committee that established this annual event.

In making the Annual Report, the President noted that our Treasurer reports the Club to be in a strong financial position. We are finishing the year with about \$40,000 in the bank. Our membership is at 195, very close to our cap of 200.

Next, she reported on the vote for reelection of members to the Club's Board of Directors. Mona asked whether there were any nominations from the floor to add to the ballot; there being no additions to the list, she reported that proxies were received from over 50% of the membership, and all candidates received at least 80% of the vote. The following Board members were elected for a two-year term: Paul Affuso, Paula Cangialosi, Gillian Hannum, Rick Miners, Leonard Moss, Mona Rubin, Michael Rubin, Corinne Shane and Allison Tolman. The President then

noted that Muriel Moss, who has served on the Board for many years, had decided not to stand for re-election and would be going off the Board at the end of June. She has contributed in many ways, including serving on numerous committees and, most importantly, helping to secure some of our most important Presentation Print artists. There was a round of warm applause in appreciation of her years of service on the Board.

Members were also told that our annual Presentation Print meeting will be in early November this year, rather than the late September time period we have generally used. This is because we selected an international artist – Donald Teskey of Ireland – who is creating a beautiful, abstract seascape for us. He and his colleagues from Stoney Road Press in Dublin are coming for the Print Fair, and so it made sense to schedule our unveiling during their time in the U.S. Mona said she is sure members will be as charmed by Teskey's work as she has been.

Finally, Mona announced that she will be stepping down as the Print Club's President on June 30 following five years in office. She introduced Kim Henrikson, who will take over the presidency July 1 and is well prepared to move the Club ahead in the coming years. Mona noted how much she has enjoyed serving the Club as its President and how much she has learned about prints and printmaking. Mona then introduced Events Committee chairperson, Kay Deaux, to begin the Showcase.

Artists' Showcase

Kay thanked Mona for an outstanding five years. She then shared that the Showcase is her favorite Print Club event of the year. She briefly summarized the process leading up to the event, with members of the committee visiting a number of print shops and studios and looking at a lot of work. From those visits, a "short list" of artists were each invited to submit an e-portfolio of their work, along with a c.v. and artist's statement. From these, the committee selected the five presenters for the evening. The committee seeks to assemble a diverse group, representing different techniques, different stages in their careers and different styles. Each artist is invited to present for five to seven minutes with a Power Point about his or her work and career, and then to bring work to display and sell afterwards on the tables downstairs.

Steven Katz was the first artist to take the podium. Kay noted that he had been at the top of the list last year but had had a conflict with the date of our event, so we decided to carry him over until this year.

Katz thanked the Club for the honor and shared a little



José Luis Ortiz Téllez with Miracles. PHOTO BY GILLIAN HANNUM

of his background. Born in Los Angeles, the artist has lived in New York for over 35 years. He sees himself as a Realist, with a touch of Impressionism and Expressionism folded in. He began as a student of architecture at Santa Monica College, but he didn't like it and decided to seek a private art teacher instead. He found a mentor in portraitist Aaron Rappaport, who had studied at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, lived in Montmartre and knew Matisse and Picasso, among others. Katz studied with him for six or seven years, doing portraiture but, more importantly, drawing a lot with pen and ink. During this period, he also studied art history and design at UCLA. Upon arrival in New York, he met Raphael Soyer (1899 – 1987) whose Social Realism became an influence.

Katz is both a painter and printmaker and teaches at the Art Students League. His paintings are large, panoramic cityscapes, such as the 20 x 60" *Cooper Union* (2013). His etchings, on the other hand, are specific and detailed, isolating features of the city. Katz learned to etch at Robert Blackburn's Printmaking Workshop. He says line is the key to etching, and he learned to love line when working with Rappaport. He showed very expressive etchings of the Ansonia (2013), the Stock Exchange (2013),



Work by Steven Katz. PHOTO BY GILLIAN HANNUM

the Guggenheim Museum (2013), Union Square (2013), the 59th Street Bridge (2013) and more. The final print he showed, *Columns* (2014) focuses on Corinthian capitals. Strongly influenced by art history, he is drawn to interesting architectural details.

Emily Gui is at an early stage in her career, having graduated from Bard's printmaking program in 2012. Already, however, she's had her work selected for inclusion in an International Print Center New York *New Prints* exhibition (*New Prints/Autumn 2014: Somewheres and Nowheres*), an extremely competitive juried exhibition. She is particularly interested in the cyanotype process.

Gui also thanked Club members for the opportunity to share her work with us. She opened her slide show with an image of an installation of her work that she had made in November of 2014. She especially likes to do experimental installations to show her work. She was thinking about blue as a theme for artists. Her primary inspiration was photographer Anna Atkins (1799 – 1871), one of the

first women photographers. She, too, utilized the cyanotype process, which was invented in 1842 by family friend, Sir John Herschel. Gui researched Atkins' life, her various homes and her use of the medium. She also thought about architectural blueprints. These various influences inspired Gui to combine photography and drawing in a unique way.

Emily is currently an artist-in-residence at Kala Art Institute in Berkeley, California. There, she found negatives others had discarded, cut them up and recombined them to create imagery for her own work. The final work she showed was an etching and aquatint of chairs around a table, using the same combination of drawing and photography as a point of departure.

Next, Kay introduced José Luis Ortiz Téllez, an artist who splits his time between Mexico and New York. Born in Mexico City, he began to study art seriously at age 15 (though he was not permitted to work from nude models until he was 16). He attended the Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas, the same school attended by such artists as Diego Rivera, David Siqueiros and José Clemente Orozco. When he arrived in New York nearly 40 years ago, Ortiz studied with Bob Blackburn. He also worked with Michael Ponce de León experimenting with paper in the 1970s. He likes the three-dimensionality that paper allows and mainly focuses on embossing, cast paper and viscosity printing. Ortiz said that he really enjoys the challenge of the materials telling him what to do; the materials suggest forms to him. He especially likes Mexican bark papers. Another influence was Mauricio Lasansky, to whom he once showed a four-plate print, which prompted Lasansky to come back and show him a work he was doing with 36 plates.

Among the works shown by Ortiz in his slide show was *Church/Iglesia*, a 1960 linocut that was the artist's first print. He also showed *Medusa*, a work combining etching, aquatint and chine collé with bark paper. A recurring "character" with a square head appears in a number of works — *Miracles* (linoleum cut and embossing), *Queen* (Deboss cast paper), *My King & My Queen* (linoleum cut on bark paper), *Men* (linoleum cuts) and others; its source appears to be the Pre-Columbian Chacmool. *Skyscrapers* (etching/dry point) celebrates his adopted home, New York City. An educator at School of Visual Arts, as well as a designer, Ortiz clearly enjoys pushing the envelope of printmaking.

Nathan Catlin was discovered at the LeRoy Neiman Center at Columbia University where he earned his MFA in 2012. Originally from the West Coast, he has already exhibited on both coasts and internationally. He was fea-

tured by IPCNY in its *New Prints/Summer 2010* exhibit.

Catlin began by saying that he mainly does woodcuts based on folklore and narrative. He works large, with pieces 7 x 3'. He turned to woodcut because it was an accessible medium. He can do it by hand; it takes him about three hours to print one of these images. As a result, his editions are usually "about three or four." He also does paintings, frequently mural size, and they mimic the woodcuts.

Influences include Renaissance art, with its focus on narrative scenes, and he likes his figures to be life-size so that people can relate to them. He showed a mural he had done for Local Project.Org and another, of a whale, for the 40-foot wall in the lobby of a building in Long Island City. His woodcut *Waiting* (2014) shows two birds (ravens?) on a tree stump; a similar bird appears in *The Beginning of the Flood* (2014). His *Sailor's Toolbox* (2015) shows things that have to do with sailing superstitions – things that are good luck, bad luck, necessary tools, etc. Catlin also does screenprints. His *Foxhole* (2014) features a fox peeking out of a hole in the trunk of a tree. The same motif can be found in his murals.

The final artist, Gregory Paquette, was born in Brooklyn. He attended Hunter College as an undergraduate and received his MFA from Brooklyn College. He has work in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago and the National Gallery, to name just a few collections. His focus for many years has been drawing, but he then became very involved in etching and exploring the differences of effect between drawing and prints.

Paquette told members that for his presentation, he thought that showing pairings of his drawings and prints would be most informative. He said that he has been drawing for over 40 years, mainly with charcoal and pencils; he has been a printmaker for the last eight or nine years. While the prints are based on the drawings, the print develops in a different way and takes on its own characteristics. In comparing the pairs of images, the drawing, done directly from nature, is softer; the prints have stronger tonalities and are more dramatic. The prints are etched, engraved and, in some cases, incorporate mezzotint as well. Paquette works on copper plates. The artist sees each medium as distinct but also sees each as informing the other.

Following the presentations, members were invited to go downstairs to speak with the artists directly and to look at and purchase the prints they had brought with them. Discussions were intense and sales were brisk. All agreed that it had been a splendid evening with a wonderfully diverse group of artists — resulting in something for everyone!

Craig McPherson

Julian Hyman

A life-long friendship began for me one Sunday morning about 35 years ago when my wife and I were visiting Mary Ryan's Gallery in New York. A young man walked in and, without stopping to talk, took a step down and began to examine a print lying on the floor. Mary informed us that this was an artist who was born in Wichita, Kansas and received his BFA at the university there. This was his introduction to the New York art world.

When he seemed satisfied with the print, we had a chance to chat and were delighted both with the print and the man. We immediately asked if we could reserve the print on the floor and found that we became third on the list. The print is still hanging over our bed 35 years later.

Craig McPherson had his first show in a gallery in Wichita in 1978. When he first arrived in New York, he lived in an old building in Harlem and took advantage of an extraordinary panoramic view from the roof top as his subject matter. From this vantage point, he observed Yankee Stadium, which he began to envision as a future subject for his work. Inspired by his broad view of the city from his location in Harlem, he had the rare views of hidden New York places like car repair shops and girders. Craig was able to find the visual beauty in a neglected, poor neighborhood.

Craig McPherson's career took off once the print of Yankee Stadium was completed. This was followed by a retrospective of his mezzotints and works on paper at Mary Ryan Gallery in 1993. His art work can be seen in many museums, including the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the New Orleans Museum of Art. A show of his work traveled to six additional museums, including an exhibition in Osaka, Japan.

In 1998, he was chosen to do a one-person show at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, England. The exhibit was titled "Darkness into Light" and consisted of a number of Craig's mezzotints. Once again, my wife and I were lucky and caught a plane that got us to Cambridge in time for the opening. The museum accepted a donation from us. The show included many smaller paintings as well as his current large prints. This exhibition moved on to the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow, Scotland.

The city of Pittsburgh was an important area of interest to Craig. His wife's family lived there, and Craig found many interesting subjects including Clairton Works, a steel plant, which he viewed from above. Another very exciting subject was captured in an expansive pastel known as *Edgar Thomson* (2001). It depicts the industrial plant at night, which was brilliantly rendered in black and grey.

Craig was asked by the Frick Museum in Pittsburgh to do a one-person show at the museum. It took about three years for him to produce enough work for this exhibit. The show, titled "Steel: Pittsburgh Drawings by Craig McPherson," included many outstanding images of the area. Recently, the Chicago Art Institute had a major show which included a number of Craig's important works and mezzotints.



Julian and Elaine Hyman with artist Craig McPherson at the Fitzwilliam Museum in 1998.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JULIAN HYMAN

Over the years, Craig captured many of New York's structures. It is fitting that American Express in Lower Manhattan commissioned him to paint the murals of seven important world ports for their headquarters there. This took several years to complete. During this time, he could only work on this project and nothing else.

During the time I served as President of the Print Club of New York, we were delighted that Craig accepted our invitation to do our Presentation Print in 2009. He gave a detailed talk and demonstrated the extremely difficult technique of preparing a plate to produce a mezzotint. *NY Water Tunnel* was a typical New York subject for him and an important contribution to the Print Club's roster. As a result of our long friendship, I was honored that Craig came to visit and show me his three most recent prints.

Hemp Lines I (2011-12), an experiment in drypoint and roulette, is one of a series of works Craig began in the late 90s based on the backstage areas of theaters. For him, the "working" area of the theater links to his broader interest in industrial subjects. Ropes such as these used to be used to raise and lower scenery before the advent of motorized winches.

Memento Mori (2013) shows a wrecked and partly stripped car buried in snow while a fire burns in a nearby oil drum. The mezzotint is based on a pastel done in 2007-08 reflecting on the near-death of the auto industry during the economic crisis. It also references his early years in New York, when "chop shops" were a common view out his window. His Washington Heights neighborhood was, at the time, one of New York City's most dangerous, and death was never far away.

ET2 (2013-14) returns to the subject of the Edgar Thomson steel mill mentioned earlier, located in Braddock, Pennsylvania. This mezzotint has an especially dramatic contrast of light and dark. Three generations of McPherson's in-laws worked in these mills. This was the plant in which the Bessemer process was first introduced to America in 1872. Craig says this is "probably the last of this series," which he began shortly after meeting his wife-to-be in 1982. These works can be viewed on Craig's website: www.craigmcpherson.net/home.

Etching The Abyss: The Graphic Work Of Charles Klabunde

Stephen Dvorkin

[I]t had occurred to him that the origin of his fear might dwell in the ancient, mythic memory of his race. . . . The old gods were different, even if you didn't believe in them: they laid for you in the dark.

Howard Bahr, *The Year of Jubilo*

This essay is intended to direct the reader's attention to the work of an important, but under-appreciated, graphic artist: Charles Klabunde (b. 1935).

It is not as though Klabunde is exactly *unknown*: his prints are, after all, in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Museum of Modern Art (New York); the National Gallery of Art; and the Morgan Library—and in the *permanent* collection of the Whitney Museum. He has received a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, and fan mail from the likes of François Mitterand (the late President of France), and Samuel Beckett (with whom he later collaborated on an illustrated book). But for every print-lover familiar with Klabunde's work there unfortunately are a hundred who are not, and as long as there are those with an interest in the graphic arts to whom his name is unfamiliar, Charles Klabunde has not received his due.

I was first introduced to Klabunde's etchings when he was featured in an exhibition mounted by the lamented Associated American Artists, in the 1970s. (I still have the program he signed for me.) To have been singled out for such treatment by the AAA's Director, the legendary Sylvan Cole, is a distinction in itself.

Although other subjects were treated before and since by the artist, and other media of expression explored (Klabunde is, for example, one of those rare printmakers who can *draw*), it is Klabunde's effusion of four-color etchings featuring fantastical tableaux and beings, produced during the 1970s and '80s, that first claimed my attention. And those works have not loosed their uncanny hold on me in the decades since.

The imagery characteristic of Klabunde's etchings of that period is at once familiar and *strange*, in ways that can be haunting—or even disturbing. And it should not be supposed that any of that ultimately was unintended by the artist.

Klabunde has published his own "mission statement" (as it were)—which is available on-line to be read (<http://www.charlesklabundeartist.com/artist-statement.html>), and which of course must be taken seriously. But there is a subtext to Klabunde's etchings of the referenced period that he has not acknowledged in so many words. Specifically, what is unnerving is that Klabunde's juxtaposition of familiar-seeming and otherworldly imagery taps into a "subterranean" (if you will) human irrationality, which we confront in dreams, but which we do our best, in our waking hours and daily lives, to ignore (or even to deny).

In an etching created to become a poster for a New Jersey ballooning rally, the ornamental capital of the large balloon that is the print's central image is a circle of ele-



Jedediah's Maypole. In producing this work, dated 1979, Klabunde employed four copper plates, Rives BFK paper, and such stuff as dreams are made of. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

phants—an image of weightlessness juxtaposed with an image of weightiness: irrational.

In others of the etchings, otherwise-fetching children have pointed ears. Again, they appear at once familiar, and yet subtly strange. In one work—*Jedediah's Maypole*—a number of children are turning a maypole, atop which one of Klabunde's pointy-eared children sits. There is something vaguely ominous in the scene. Are the children simply having fun—or are we viewing the enactment of some sort of primal ritual? Is Jedediah the lucky boy who was chosen to enjoy a ride—or was he chosen to be the human sacrifice in the ritual's next stage? Does Klabunde's image stir suppressed impulses, and awaken ancient memories? Is that why it is disturbing in ways that cannot otherwise be explained?

It seems to have been Klabunde's point, in infusing tableaux of ostensible innocence with subtle suggestions of menace, that the irrational in us is not as far removed from our essential nature as we might wish to believe. Yes, we have laws and morals to circumscribe the scope of our conduct in the waking world—and to separate that world from the irrational world of dreams (and, specifically, of nightmares)—but occasionally the separating wall

breaks down. And we need not go back to the days when festivities culminated in the ritual murder of virgins: in my own lifetime—indeed, in the very decade when I first saw one of Klabunde's etchings—the governing elite of Cambodia decided that the country would be better off if all of those who wore eyeglasses were put to death. That wasn't just a bad dream.

The child-creature with benign features and pointed ears appears in many of Klabunde's etchings. The deceptively human-seeming "demon-child" is of course a staple figure in tales told for the purpose of warning us that we co-exist with *Evil*, in a parallel world, which only sometimes (and to our horror) reveals itself. We have all read the books, and seen the movies. That Klabunde shows his demon children engaging in innocent, "human" activities—rather than actually *doing* evil—was no doubt meant by the artist to be disarming (in an almost literal sense) . . . and to suggest that evil does not abide *near* us, but rather *in* us . . . often "masked."

In fact, many of the "human"-like figures in Klabunde's etchings wear masks. When asked why, he seemed surprised; and his answer to that question was a question: "*Don't all of us wear masks?*"

Yes—there are the masks worn to disguise the commonplace connivers, hypocrites and false friends, and the actuality behind the appearance sometimes is much worse. During the very period when Klabunde's greatest plates were being created, a mask in the form of a handsome young man's face disguised the serial killer and sadist that was Ted Bundy. Women were charmed by the mask and murdered by the beast behind it. Do "*all of us*" negotiate existence behind masks? The answer may be simply a matter of opinion, or of degree.

For one concerned with plumbing Man's essential (and darker) nature, Klabunde unsurprisingly has been obsessed with archetypes. What are archetypes, after all, if not the embodiment of the primal essentials of our nature? In that regard, I own an etching of *Daedalus*, and Klabunde has done a series of paintings he entitled *Studies in Greek Mythology*. He also has treated figures that are archetypes of another sort. A number of Klabunde's etchings thus feature harlequins, jesters, conjurers, and



The Masked Wizard
Studies in Levitation #1
7/9/10 Klabunde © 91

Studies in Levitation #1(1991). One of Klabunde's masked demon-children, in an innocent posture. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

clowns—primal figures that (rightly) received treatment in the works of Jung, and in the *Dream Encyclopedia*.

The dream-like quality of Klabunde's prints was heightened by his print-making techniques. The palette employed was confined to pale, almost ethereal colors. When asked why that choice was made, Klabunde answered that the colors he employed helped to give the images "depth." I will, in the following paragraph, suggest another consequence—and another term.

In addition to the visual effect of the subdued colors Klabunde employed, he often elaborated the surfaces of his prints by pressing scrim of lace into the ground. The overall effect of the surface texture and the subdued color range is a felt sense of *distance* between the viewer and the image being viewed—contributing further to the sense that the image is some half-formed memory . . . or (again) dream. So the images and the techniques employed in rendering them in print ultimately are of a piece.

There is the unhappy possibility that the "darker" aspects of

Klabunde's work reflect the artist's efforts to come to terms with the bleak view of existence that he *personally* entertained – and that Klabunde did not work with the sole purpose of enlightening *us*, but also toward the end of occupying (and thereby distracting) himself. Supporting that view is the statement made by the artist in a 2005 interview: "Creating art about the abyss is better than staring into it."

Klabunde's etchings will not appeal to everyone's taste. There will be those (to my personal knowledge there *are* those) who find his work to be too disturbing to be appreciated—much less *enjoyed*. But the possibility of putting off a segment of his art's viewership was a risk that Klabunde plainly accepted in using his etching tools to sound the depths of our nature. It is not all butterflies and songbirds down there, as Klabunde saw it—and (like the famous baseball umpire of yore) he called it as he saw it.

For those who can face the implications of Klabunde's imagery with relative equanimity, there is to be appreciated the work of a great artist, and a master printmaker.

Henry Farrer, Remembered

Stephen Dvorkin

It is my purpose, in writing this essay, to rescue from unwarranted neglect the name of Henry Farrer, a man who deserves our gratitude and admiration. Farrer (1844 – 1903) not only contributed meaningfully to the resurrection of etching as a medium for creating art, but in fact created beautiful art in that medium.

Farrer was born in London, in 1844. He was the younger brother of Thomas Charles Farrer, a painter who had studied under John Ruskin and Dante Gabriel Rossetti—and who, by reason of those aesthetic influences, worked in the “Pre-Raphaelite” style. Henry, on the other hand, was largely self-taught, and initially aligned his style with that of his brother.

Farrer emigrated to the United States in 1863, settling in New York City. In his first years as a professional artist, Farrer painted Pre-Raphaelite still lifes. His style later transitioned to what we know as “Tonalism,” in which landscapes are depicted in soft light and shadows—as if seen (as the *ArtCyclopaedia* puts it) “through a colored or misty veil.” (Think of James McNeill Whistler, John La Farge, and Albert Pinkham Ryder.) Unlike other American artists of his time, Farrer *printed* in watercolors almost exclusively.

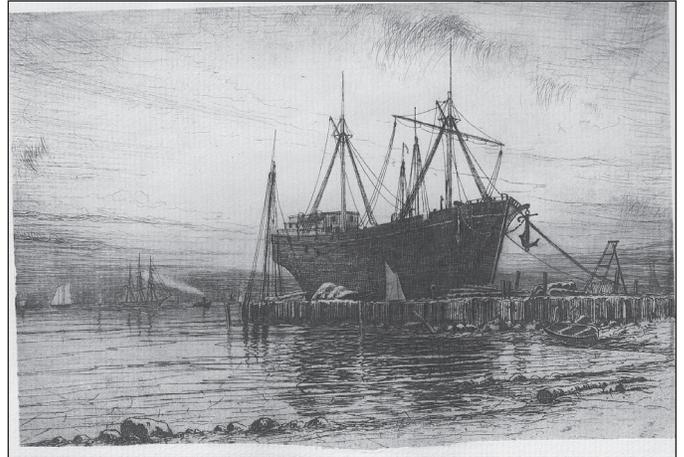
Significantly, in the 1860s, even as Farrer was working to develop the style of painting he could make his own, he also undertook his first efforts at etching.

At the time that Farrer took it up, etching was largely in eclipse as a means of artistic expression. With the occasional, brilliant exception (Piranesi; Tiepolo), etching had been in a long, slow decline from the peaks scaled in the 17th century by Rembrandt. By the mid-19th century, intaglio techniques generally were employed as means for reproducing art created in other media—usually painting. While the practitioners of 19th century engraving showed no little mastery of their craft, the image that each painstakingly transferred to steel (and thence to paper) was almost always conceived by another.

The so-called “Etching Revival” began in the mid-19th century, when European artists (first in France) began once again to view etching as being, in and of itself, an artist’s medium, through which the artist could take an active and direct hand in translating his vision to the viewer of his art. The “Revival” next moved to England (to be taken up by the likes of Francis Seymour Haden, and his brother-in-law, the expatriate Whistler).

Henry Farrer figured prominently in bringing the Etching Revival to the United States. He was a founding member of the New-York Etching Club, in 1877. The Club’s bi-monthly meetings were eventually held in Farrer’s studio—where prints were pulled from a press that he had, himself, built.

If more were needed to bring Farrer close to the hearts of members of our Club, it is a fact that his best (and best-known) etchings depict New York City scenes. He etched a series of New York street scenes in the 1860s, and a series of New York harbor scenes in the late 1870s and



Henry Farrer, *Sunset, Gowanus Bay*, 1880.

1880s. In contrast to the studied (and somewhat chilly) perfection of the steel engravings that date to the same period, Farrer’s New York etchings appear to be more spontaneous—and certainly are more atmospheric.

Original impressions of Farrer etchings are readily available, and are surprisingly inexpensive. (Farrer etchings are in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Smithsonian Art Museum; and the Morgan Library. For less than \$200, an original Farrer print may find its way into *your* collection.) Three of the more readily-available of Farrer’s etchings were commissioned by, and appeared in, *The American Art Review*, a journal founded and edited by Sylvester Rosa Koehler (1837 – 1900), a scholar of print-making techniques and history (and another significant figure in the American Etching Revival). (Because of the costs entailed in its production, *The American Art Review* did not survive its third year of existence.) The three referenced Farrer etchings—*December; On New York Bay*; and *Sunset, Gowanus Bay*—were bound into numbers of the *Review* that appeared in 1879 (in the case of the first two) and 1880 (in the case of the third).

It is perhaps difficult to look upon the serene New York City images of Henry Farrer and see an artist of the avant-garde. But would there have been the gritty New York etchings of John Sloan and Martin Lewis, or the heroic New York etchings of John Taylor Arms and Samuel Margolies, if the ground had not first been broken (pun intended!) for the Romantic etchings of Henry Farrer? Without the gentle leadership and artistic example provided by Farrer, those artists, and others, may have been born into a world that continued to see paintbrushes as the only tools suited to artistic endeavor . . . and today’s admirers of prints would of course have been the poorer for it.

Henry Farrer laid down his scribes and needles for the last time more than 112 years ago. But his name should be remembered—both for his efforts to foster creative printmaking in New York, and for the beauty of the plates to which he put his own hand.

Book Shelf

April Vollmer's *Japanese Woodblock Print Workshop, A Modern Guide to an Ancient Art*, is scheduled for release by Watson-Guptill on July 7, 2015 and is available for pre-order from Random House. A comprehensive handbook of materials, techniques and resources, the book is intended to make this water-based technique accessible to contemporary artists. The initial version of a new website for the book, with links to websites of contributing artists, reviews, and additional links and information, may be accessed at www.japanesewoodblockprintworkshop.com.

Member Notes

Print Club member Lynn Hyman Butler has work included in the exhibition, *Coney Island: Visions of an American Dreamland, 1861 – 2008*, which was on view at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford from January 31 to May 31, 2015. In company with artists such as William Merritt Chase, Reginald Marsh, Diane Arbus and Red Grooms, Butler explores this iconic New York institution and playground as “a place and an idea” (Wadsworth Atheneum website). The exhibit, which is accompanied by a 304-page catalog co-published by Yale University Press, will travel to San Diego Museum of Art (July 11 – October 13, 2015), the Brooklyn Museum (November 20, 2015 – March 13, 2016) and McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, Texas (May 11 – September 11, 2016).

The Print Club of New York, Inc.

P.O. Box 4477 Grand Central Station
New York, N.Y. 10163

Former Showcase Artists

Nomi Silverman won Best in Show at the Center for Contemporary Printmaking's annual members' show, which ran from January 17 – March 15, 2015; **Jane Cooper** (also a PCNY member) took one of two Second Prizes.

Karen Whitman was part of a two-person exhibit this spring with printmaker Don Gorvett at The Old Print Shop. The exhibit ran from April 7 to May 9 with Whitman giving an artist's talk at the gallery on April 28. The work is featured in *The Old Print Shop Portfolio*, Vol. LXXIV, No. 6, April 2015.

Prints Available

The Club has a small number of prints remaining from some of our past Presentation Print editions: Barnet (2012 print), Binnie, Catlett, Colker, Flack, McPherson, Ringgold, Segalman, and Snyder. Members interested in purchasing them should email info@printclubofnewyork.org for further details. For our newer members, all prints are illustrated on our website at www.printclubofnewyork.org. These are only available to our members at special member pricing.