

The Print Club of New York Inc

Summer 2014

President's Greeting

Mona Rubin and Phil Sanders

I've decided to occasionally share my President's Greeting column in order to bring you some new perspectives from people with significant involvement with the Club. As my first foray into this new format, I have invited Phil Sanders to share his plans about his new position and move to North Carolina. We will miss Phil, but he promises to visit often as he will still be connected with New York arts organizations. In his previous role at Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, he has contributed his expertise to us in so many ways: recommendations for the Artists' Showcase, hosting events, speaking at some of our events, printing some of our presentation prints, and even assisting with the shipping of our prints! I wish all of you a wonderful summer and look forward to seeing you on September 15th at our opening event.



Phil Sanders. PHOTO BY GILLIAN HANNUM

process. There is no subjectivity of memory when you can look at a series of state proofs clearly showing the before and after. This ability to see your own creative process taken apart and put back together is what draws artists to the medium and what helps collectors understand the artist's intentions. What's not to love?

Conversations about contemporary prints and printmaking inevitably lead back to Robert Blackburn. His Printmaking Workshop, referred to as *Print Mecca* by printmakers around the world, was truly the most important pilgrimage site for anyone interested in making or seeing prints being made during the print renaissance of the last century.

Today, I see the spirit of Bob Blackburn alive and well in the new community that has grown around RBPMW. Artists and collectors have again found a place where they are free to learn and explore. They have found their way back home.

The relationship between printmakers and collectors is similar to that of paper and plates. It is through their meeting and mingling that information is transferred and preserved for future generations to experience. The Print Club of New York has been instrumental in supporting the careers of emerging and established printmakers at RBPMW, and I cannot thank you enough for that support. PCNY has played a major role in the success of the studio and the continuation of Bob Blackburn's vision for a world made better, one print at a time.

Print collectors are in the know when it comes to contemporary art, and they like a good deal. Print collectors know that print publishers are doing more than just vetting and supporting an artist's creative vision, they are investing in an artist's career. As a result, print collectors are often collecting an artist years before the rest of the art world is paying attention. I am reminded of this by the first works of Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg to be collected by MoMA: prints. Collecting prints makes it financially possible to collect more artists at various stages in their careers and easier to follow the age-old collecting advice: support early, collect in depth, trust your gut.

I know that as RBPMW continues to grow and a new steward is found, The Print Club of New York will be a lasting friend of the workshop and of printmakers. Bob Blackburn had a knack for finding the right people at the right time, and I believe his spirit will pull through again. I am looking forward to focusing my time on my own print publishing and creative capital consulting company, PS Marlowe. Although my home base will be in Asheville, NC, I will be keeping a press in Brooklyn and continuing to help RBPMW reach collectors and donors. I hope to get to see you more often now than before. I won't be a stranger, and I hope you will all stay in touch. There will be many more prints to come.

With this in mind, I would like to pass on this excerpt

When Mona asked me to write a note to PCNY members about my time at the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, I felt it appropriate to start by answering the question I am asked the most often. Why do I love prints so much? My response is fairly simple. Prints are the distillation of an artist's voice to its most essential elements, multiplied. Print editions enable artists to reach the widest possible audience through their work, and printmaking is the only medium that can preserve a record of the artist's creative

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from Doris Kearns Goodwin's book *Lincoln*:

When printmaking was first invented, Lincoln would later write, "The great mass of men... were utterly unconscious, that their conditions or their minds were capable of improvement." To liberate "the mind from this false and underestimate of itself,

is the great task to which printing came into the world to perform."

Thank you for your continued support. Until we meet again,

Phil Sanders

Print Club Annual Meeting And Artists' Showcase, Society Of Illustrators, May 20, 2014

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

President Mona Rubin welcomed Print Club members and guests to the Club's annual meeting, which this year coincided with our Artists' Showcase event. She began by offering a brief tribute in memory of former Board member, Howard Mantel, who passed away unexpectedly in February. Howard was Mona's "go to" man when she became President. He helped to answer her many questions about the Club's bylaws and procedures. She reported that a copy of the Paul Binnie Presentation Print, which Howard was instrumental in commissioning, has been accepted by the Brooklyn Museum as a gift from our Club in Howard's memory.



Michael Eade. PHOTO BY GILLIAN HANNUM

She next turned to Club business, reporting that the Print Club is ending the year in strong financial shape. She thanked Treasurer Joan Blanksteen for her excellent and detailed care of our finances. She then turned to the election of Board members, asking if there were additional nominations from the floor or people wishing to vote who had not sent in a proxy. There being no additional nominations, she reported that we received ballots from over 50% of the membership and that the following individuals were elected to a two-year term on the Board with over 85% of the vote: Charles Blanksteen, Joan Blanksteen, Kay Deaux, Kimberly Henrikson, Natalia Kolodzei and Gabriel Swire. Mona concluded the business portion of the meeting by recognizing her father, Julian Hyman, who



2014 Showcase Artists: Jaworski-Stranc, Eade, Waldman, Flaherty and Hulbert. PHOTO BY GILLIAN HANNUM

is retiring from Board service this year. She thanked him for encouraging her to take on the presidency a few years ago. She also noted that Julian was part of the group who first established the annual Showcase event. Mona then introduced Events Committee chairperson Kay Deaux, who presided over the Showcase.

Kay briefly reviewed the process that Showcase committee members follow in selecting the artists each year and invited anyone interested in joining in the fun next year to get in touch with her. She then introduced the first of the evening's five speakers.

Bruce Waldman has a long and impressive track record as a printmaker. He has work in many prestigious collections, is connected with both the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop and the New York Society of Etchers, is on the editorial board of *Carrier Pigeon*, a publication that showcases graphic work and original writing.



Print Club Members Purchasing Prints at the Showcase. PHOTO BY GILLIAN HANNUM

Upcoming Print Club Events

September 15, 2014

Save the date for our annual Presentation Print meeting, where artist Faith Ringgold will discuss the print she created for our Club; Society of Illustrators, 128 E. 63rd Street, New York, NY.

Also of interest to Print Club members:

May 30 – July 1, 2014

New Prints 2014/Summer, International Print Center New York, 508 W. 26th Street, 5A, New York, NY 10001 www.ipcny.org.

June 8 – August 31, 2014

4th Biennial FootPrint International Competition, Center for Contemporary Printmaking, 299 West Avenue, Norwalk, CT (203) 899-7999 or www.contemprints.org.

Currently, he teaches at the School of Visual Arts, and work by several of his students was gracing the walls of the Society of Illustrators as winners in a national competition for young graphic artists. Waldman introduced himself as a printmaker and illustrator. He noted that in the past, he's worked a lot in lithography, but lately he has mainly been making etchings and exploring monoprints. He noted that his main subject matter is animals, landscapes, jazz musicians and "the human condition." The first image he showed was a lovely monotype of a horse race. He indicated that the spontaneity of the process worked well with the subject matter. Next, he showed a series of etchings dealing with various "types" – *The Stalker* depicts a somewhat scary character, *The Conspiracy* shows "something nasty going on," and *The Contortionist* is deeply psychological, and perhaps a bit autobiographical, showing someone suffering from an anxiety attack. The next series of etchings he shared were of jazz musi-



Bruce Waldman. PHOTO BY GILLIAN HANNUM



Kirsten Flaherty. PHOTO BY GILLIAN HANNUM

cians. A friend allowed him to attend jam sessions, where he spent hours sketching. The musicians each got a print in return for letting him sit in. He noted that technique is very important to him as a printmaker, but he tries to keep it minimal. Other work he projected included his book jacket design for *Death of a Salesman*, which the Utah Shakespeare Festival used for a poster, a landscape that he did with color *a la poupée* (color wiped directly on the plate), a monotype that was a close-up view of a frowning Nixon, several etchings from his series *Angry Man with a Medallion*, and a soft-ground etching of gorillas and an etching and aquatint of elephants, the last inspired by his many childhood visits to the Bronx Zoo.

Next to speak was Susan Jaworski-Stranc. Susan was born in Buffalo, received an undergraduate degree at the University of Maryland, and a teaching certificate from the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston. Her work is in a number of university collections, including UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, New Mexico, and University of Alberta in Canada, and at the Ringling College of Art and Design in Sarasota, Florida. The Showcase committee found her work at the Center for Contemporary Printmaking in Norwalk, CT. Susan specializes in reduction linoleum prints — a technique that Picasso referred to as doing "suicide prints." She originally wanted to be a painter, but wound up getting closed out of a lot of painting classes in college and took printmaking instead. She did her first linoleum block when she was pregnant and was looking for a non-toxic medium; there was no "green" etching back then. Her first image was a black and white one of two geese. She loved color, though, and began making tra-



Susan Jaworski-Stranc.
PHOTO BY GILLIAN HANNUM



Cary Hulbert. PHOTO BY GILLIAN HANNUM

ditional color prints, with a block for each color. She learned about reduction printing when she was reading about Picasso. This technique only uses a single block. The artist keeps cutting away linoleum as each color is printed (as a result, there is no going back). She uses a viscous, oil-based ink and no press, just a wooden spoon to hand burnish. She has learned that she can get different effects depending on how hard she presses with the spoon; this can also help her to create painterly effects. Sometimes she will sand the surface of the block; sometimes she will use a stencil. She likes to get one color bleeding through another. She generally works small – 9 x 12" to 12 x 18". She puts the darkest colors on first. The prints are quite textural as the ink becomes very thick as the layers are built up on the paper. Many of her prints are landscapes or coastal scenes with lovely, nuanced colors.

Cary Hulbert received a BFA in 2007 from Montserrat College of Art in Massachusetts, which included some study abroad in Italy. This coming fall she will be entering the MFA program at Columbia. Her work has already been exhibited in many galleries in the Northeast, as well as numerous exhibits, both individual and group, in Dallas and in Austin, Texas. Add to that exhibits in Barcelona, Spain and Shanghai, China, and you can see that she is off to a very fast start in just a few years. Her work, primarily etchings and silkscreens, presents a fascinating juxtaposition of interior structured environments with images of an external, natural, and less-controlled world. She loves to experiment with the etching medium, playing with sugar lift, spit bite and soft ground. She starts with collaged images in Photoshop, mainly things she has found in nature and images she creates from her

imagination. Her intent is to show that there is a disconnect between nature and what we perceive to be "real." Nature encroaches on man's spaces as man encroaches on nature. Wolves appear frequently in her work as symbols of feral animals. Her "imagined worlds" are fascinating, yet unsettling. She shared with the audience that this was her first formal "artist's talk"; all agreed that she acquitted herself magnificently!

Another young talent discovered by this year's Showcase sleuths is Kirsten Flaherty, who received a BFA from the School of Visual Arts in 2011. Despite her recent academic credentials, she already has shown her work in a number of venues—many in the New York area, but also as far afield as Israel, Peru, Italy, and the Czech Republic. Kirsten is already a member of the Board of Directors of the New York Society of Etchers and exhibit coordinator for *Carrier Pigeon*; in addition, she will have a residency at the newly-established Guttenberg Arts Center in New Jersey this year. In much of her work, Kirsten introduces us to an animal world where life is threatened by thoughtless development. Her images are developed with a variety of techniques, primarily with traditional etching, but with excursions into mezzotint and solar plate as well. Works she showed included *Spider Monkey* and *Crown Eagle*, animals endangered by destruction of their habitats. The numbers in the background of her animal etchings are stock quotes, suggesting the impact of unbridled capitalism on the environment. She told us she had learned solar plate etching through a residency at Manhattan Graphics Center and recently studied the mezzotint technique with Fred Mersheimer. She had several examples of her work in the latter medium, small images of details of caged animals. Kirsten said that what she wants, most of all, is for her work to raise awareness.

The final speaker was Michael Eade, whose educational experience includes NYU's Tisch School, Oregon State, and the Portland Museum Art School, in addition to some study in Stuttgart, Germany. One aspect of his Tisch experience included being an assistant to Louise Nevelson. Michael's work is in some notable collections, including Hermes in Paris and the Harvard Business School. He is also a grand prize winner in an AT&T art competition. His work has been in numerous exhibits, both solo and group, and he has been commissioned by the San Francisco Arts Commission. Much of Michael's artistic output is in the form of paintings, done with egg tempera. But he has recently been exploring printmaking as well, using a variety of techniques and types of paper to capture and create images of nature. The artist feels he is still exploring printmaking. This has been supported by two fellowships at the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop. The first was in 2008; he wanted to use printmaking to develop his painting. He did this by discovering new detail by doing line etchings using a lit magnifying lamp. Many of his prints reference Old Masters whose work he admires – Rubens, Rembrandt, Dürer and Whistler among them. Eade showed the audience the back and forth "dialogue" between his prints and paintings of plants and landscapes. He combines an Eastern and a Western aesthetic in his art and has also studied *ukiyo-e*. His most recent residency at RBPW had

him experimenting with linocuts, wood cuts and stone lithography as well as with chine-collé, in which he became interested after seeing Chakaia Booker working with it.

Following the formal presentations, members were invited to go to the lower level where the artists had prints set out on tables for viewing and purchase. All agreed that this was a wonderful way to end our year!

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In Memorium

Board Member Howard Mantel

The Print Club was saddened this winter by the sudden passing on February 6 of Board member Howard Mantel. An avid collector of Japanese prints, Mantel brought to the Print Club of New York the experience he had gained as a board member of the Japanese Art Society of America. He was raised in Brooklyn and attended Brooklyn College and Columbia University Law School; for many years, he served as Director of Government Programs, Corporate Secretary and General Counsel for the Institute of Public Administration. From 1972 to 1975, he directed the Urban Analysis Center at City University of New York. Among his notable professional accomplishments was drafting the constitution for the Northern Mariana Islands. Howard is survived by his wife, Anita Beenk Mantel, his son, John Marshall, daughter-in-law Jean and grandchildren Lillian and Chester. The Club has donated Paul Binnie's presentation print, *Kosame*, #151/200 to the Brooklyn Museum in Howard's memory. It has been accepted into their collection with a credit line that reads: "Gift of the Print Club of New York in memory of Howard N. Mantel." We will miss Howard's wise counsel and excellent photographic coverage of our events. A full obituary appeared in the February 17, 2014 *New York Times*.

Print Club Member Ben Dineen

The Print Club also lost Club member and former committee chairperson Benjamin J. Dineen III, who passed away in April after a year-long battle with cancer. Dineen was most recently director of resource development and marketing for the United Way of Hudson County, New Jersey, where he was a fundraiser and grant writer. Prior to joining the United Way, Dineen was interim CEO of St. Dominic Academy in Jersey City, and served on the boards of numerous local nonprofits and community groups, including the Jersey City Museum, the Hudson County Community College Foundation and served as Chairman of the Advisory Council at the Brodsky Center at Rutgers University. Ben was a resident of Secaucus, where he resided with his partner, Dennis Hull. The two were honored by Hudson County Community College last year when they donated more than 230 of pieces of art from their personal collection to the college, the largest gift the Foundation Art Collection had ever received. An art gallery on the top floor of the university's new library, now under construction in Journal Square, will be named after the pair. Dineen was instrumental in starting the HCCC Foundation Art Collection, to which the Print Club has also donated work. A full obituary can be found at: http://www.nj.com/jjournal-news/index.ssf/2014/04/ben_dineen_united_way_executiv.html.

Julian Hyman Retires From Print Club Board

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

President Emeritus Julian Hyman has decided to retire from the Print Club Board at the end of his current term following nearly two decades of service. Hyman was one of the original members of the Club and served as its president for over a decade, retiring from that position in 2006. Among the highlights for him in his activities with the Club have been being part of the group that launched our very popular annual Artists' Showcase



Dr. Julian Hyman.
PHOTO BY MONA RUBIN

and finding the Society of Illustrators as our meeting place when our former venue closed without warning! He has also played a vital role in securing many of our presentation print artists over the years as a result of friendships he has established while collecting their work. Indeed, when asked to reflect on what has brought him the most pleasure over his many years as a collector of prints, Hyman often mentions the opportunity of getting to know artists, visiting their studios and helping to support their development. Many, like the

late Will Barnet and his wife, Elena, became close friends. In January of 2012, he hosted a "Salon," welcoming Club members to his home in New Jersey for an afternoon with mezzotint artist Fred Mershimer, the Club's inaugural

commissioned artist. One of his greatest delights has been having his daughter, current Print Club President Mona Rubin, move into a leadership role with the Club.

Faith Ringgold To Be PCNY's 2014 Commissioned Artist

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

The Print Club of New York is delighted to announce that our commissioned artist for 2014 is the internationally-acclaimed painter, sculptor, performance artist, illustrator and author, Faith Ringgold. The recipient of over 75 awards, including National Endowment for the Arts awards for sculpture (1978) and painting (1989), a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship (1987) and over 22 honorary doctorates, Ringgold now lives and works in Englewood, New Jersey. Her work hangs in numerous public and private collections around the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the National Museum of American Art in Washington, DC, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, the Baltimore Museum of Art, and the St. Louis Art Museum, to name just a few. She has also done projects at PS 22 in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, the Rose M. Singer Center on Riker's Island, and the 125th Street IRT subway station in Harlem.

Born and reared in Harlem, Ringgold completed her BS in Fine Art and Education and her MA in Art at City College. From 1955 – 1973, she taught art in New York City's public schools. She began painting intensively, with a focus on political subjects, in the 1960s and joined Spectrum Gallery on 57th Street in 1966, having one-person shows there in 1967 and again in 1970. She painted her first murals in 1967 as well. Throughout the later 1960s and early 1970s, she participated in numerous demonstrations, challenging institutions like MoMA and the Whitney Museum to include work by women and artists of color. During this period, she also began to teach at the college level, at Bank Street School, Pratt Institute and Wagner College on Staten Island.

Ringgold's mother, Willi Posey, was a fashion designer, and from her, the artist developed a strong interest in textiles. Her "signature" quilted frames were initially a mother/daughter collaboration and were inspired by the Tibetan *thangkas*, or soft fabric frames, she saw in an exhi-

bition in the Netherlands. She also made dolls and soft sculptures during this period of time. She and her mother collaborated on a number of projects until her mother passed away in 1981. It was her mother who inspired Ringgold's signature art form, the story quilt. The artist did her first, *Who's Afraid of Aunt Jemima?* in 1983. She has made over ninety-five quilts over the course of her prolific career.

A 1982 residency at MacDowell Art Colony refocused Ringgold on painting, and in 1984 she had a 20-year retrospective exhibit at the Studio Museum in Harlem. In 1985 she was appointed full professor with tenure at UC San Diego, where she spent half of each year, returning to her studio in New York the other half of the year. A 25-year retrospective toured the US in 1990.

Ringgold's first children's book, *Tar Beach*, was published by Crown Publishers in New York in 1991. It received numerous awards, including the *New York Times*' Best Children's Book award, the Caldecott award and the Coretta Scott King Award for the best illustrated children's book by an African American. The story quilt on which it is based, *Tar Beach* from the artist's *Woman on a Bridge* series, hangs in the Guggenheim Museum. Ringgold has authored a total of sixteen children's books since that time.

Ringgold has created a number of limited-edition, fine art prints over the years, many to raise funds for causes in which she believes. For example, in 2010, the artist produced a print with Professor Curlee Holton of the Lafayette Experimental Printmaking Institute to benefit Haitian children. She is again working with the EPI on the commissioned print for the Print Club of New York. We look forward to the unveiling of what will undoubtedly be an extraordinary addition to our collections at the annual presentation print meeting on Monday, September 15.

Renewal forms will be mailed in early August. Due to increased shipping costs, we decided to raise the annual dues by \$25 to help cover this expense. It is the first increase in many years!

Exhibition Reviews

**Derrière L'Étoile Exhibition,
Zimmerli Museum, Rutgers
University, March 8 – July 31, 2014**

Maryanne Garbowsky

Beginning in March, 2013, the Zimmerli Museum of Rutgers University launched a three-part exhibition of prints from the studio of Derrière L'Étoile. The

name in French translates to "Behind the Star," suggesting the studio's founder--Maurice Sánchez's--intent to support the artist in realizing his or her creativity. Sánchez began his studio in New York in 1978. Over the years, beginning in 1982, Sánchez has "donated more than 500 unsigned printer's proofs" to the museum, making him one of the Zimmerli's main sources of prints.

This exhibition amply demonstrates the value of these gifts. Drawing on its collection, the Zimmerli is presenting the prints chronologically. Part I, which opened

March 23, 2013 and closed September 29, 2013, focused on prints from the 80s, while Part II, which opened October 5, 2013 and closed March 2, 2014, consisted of prints from the 90s. The last installment, which opened March 8th, 2014 and will close July 31, 2014, deals with contemporary prints from 2000-2014.

During the course of these shows, the work of such outstanding artists as Claes Oldenburg, Donald Judd, Keith Haring and Jeff Koons, among others, has been shown. In the third and last part of this comprehensive show, the work of Eric Fischl, Robert Mangold and April Gornik will be shown. In 1995 April Gornik's landscape *Loire* was the New York Print Club's presentation print.

Because of the diversity of prints shown and the range of periods included, it is difficult to select the most memorable prints. However, if challenged to do so, I would select two from the second exhibition as being for me the most resonant and outstanding. The first is *Blue House*, done in 1998 by Carroll Dunham, a color lithograph. Although it appears to be a child's drawing, it is much more. The blue house, its borders outlined in black, has open windows through which people can be seen. In some windows, their mouths are open with well-defined teeth, and they appear to be speaking to each other, while in others, their mouths are closed, with no conversation going on. It is an evocative litho, which draws viewers in, encouraging them to wonder who these people are. Are they male or female? Related or not? Scribbled tufts of hair do not define their gender nor is there any indication of their relationship. So we wonder, our imagination actively engaged filling in the blanks as we think they should be.

Another favorite is Claes Oldenburg's *Apple Core*, a color offset lithograph done in 1991 that displays the remains of an apple. It is large and fills the whole page, giving the impression that it must have been tasty since the flesh of the apple is all gone. Rather than being disposed of, the core is given its own space and significance. One can't help but be reminded of poet William Carlos Williams' famous poem "This is Just to Say." While the poem appears to apologize for eating the plums that "you were probably saving" (as the speaker in the poem says), the plain fact is that "they were delicious so sweet and so cold." In the print, too, we sense that the apple was thoroughly enjoyed; no apology will be forthcoming.

Parts I and II of the exhibition have successfully offered viewers examples of the studio's fine art work, presenting a range of artistic styles, content, and techniques. The third and final show, which completes the series, promises to equal what has preceded it and will continue to highlight the outstanding work of Maurice Sánchez and his studio *Derrière L'Étoile*.

"Branching Out: Annual Members Exhibition 2014," Center for Contemporary Printmaking, Norwalk, CT, February 9 – April 6, 2014

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

The annual members' show at Norwalk's Center for Contemporary Printmaking always includes a lot of strong work, and 2014 was no exception. This year's show was dedicated to the memory of Bryan Nash Gill (1961 – 2013), a CCP member who was also a Print Club of New York Artists' Showcase artist in 2002. Gill's passing is a great loss for the print community.

Perhaps because it follows on the heels of CCP's very popular Monothon, monoprints and monotypes were in abundance; of the 78 works featured, 34 were monoprints, monotypes or combination prints involving monotype. There were also woodcuts, etchings, linoleum cuts, engravings, lithographs, collographs, screenprints and various other types of prints on display. The exhibit this year featured work by four former PCNY Showcase artists: Jane Cooper (2008) was displaying *Ode to Cadmium*, a 2012 monotype with embossing that showed white branches with budding ends against a powerful red ground; Christopher Shore (2002), now master printer at CCP, had a lithograph rinse print titled *Tree Moons*, 2013, showing multiple reflections of the moon through branches in a study in grays and black; Nomi Silverman (1999) was represented by a powerful, Franz Kline-like etching titled *Strange Fruit*, 2014; and Eve Stockton (2007) showed a 2014 woodcut in shades of plum titled *Cellular Network* that recalls the view seen through a microscope.

There were so many wonderful pieces. Suzanne Benton's 2013 monoprint with chine collé, *Quoth the Raven*, an abstract composition in shades of red and gold leaf with a raven inset in a medallion, Elizabeth G. Carré's small, delicate monotype and etching from 2012, *Stone and Water Oils* (#1), Carol Dunn's layered fall leaves in *Intertwined*, a 2014 digital print on collage and Barbara Flamm's rose, green, yellow and black encaustic, woodcut and collage *Reaching*, 2014 all beckoned.

Sally Frank's bark-like abstract woodcut, *Forest, V.1*, 2014 was lovely. I was also drawn to Susan Jaworski-Stranc's (PCNY Showcase 2014) linoleum cut of a landscape behind a screen of fall foliage, *Passage Through the Season's Fluttering Fire* of 2013, Ellen Lazarus's 2013 monotype with chine collé, *Leaves of Green* and Lynne Lederman's delicate collograph from 2013, *Fern II*.

Nancy McTague-Stock's 2012 photopolymer intaglio, *Wind, Berries & Trees*, evoked a view through a window pane and was printed on wonderful textured paper. Cynthia MacCollum's delicate, organic collograph monoprint, *Low Hanging Fruit* of 2013, also drew this reviewer. Susan Newbold's monoprint on steel, *The Forest* of 2012, one of the prints that won an Honorable Mention, depicts a conifer forest in shades of black and gray; Anita Soos's 2013 monotype, *Cadence: Separation*, also an Honorable Mention, has lovely color striations. Also receiving Honorable Mentions were Margot Bittenbender, Cathy Paine, Sigita Pranevicius and Scott Schnepf.

Best in Show went to Brenda Giegerich for her large, abstract monotype, *Untitled #64* of 2014, and 2nd Prize was awarded to Patrick Garner's *Phantasmagorical Garden*, a 2013 monoprint with collage. Award recipients were selected by Anne von Stuelpnagel, Director of Exhibitions at the Bruce Museum in Greenwich, CT. Von Stuelpnagel is herself an award-winning printmaker specializing in woodcuts and monotypes.

Thomas Hart Benton and the American Scene

Rozanne Cohen

This article examines American society and culture through many of the prints of Thomas Hart Benton (1889 – 1975). The artist was born in Neosbo, Missouri to a political family. His father served as a Congressman in Washington from 1896 to 1905. Despite his political background, Benton chose to become an artist. In 1907, he enrolled at the Art Institute of Chicago. A year later, he changed schools, transferring to the Académie Julian in Paris. From 1918 to 1919, Benton served in the US Navy, where he made drawings and illustrations. At the same time, he decided to portray the American Scene, particularly its rural heartland and its folkloric stories (Coppel 126).

Because he had a deep sense of the value of life and basic human emotions, he was able to portray his themes as they reflected agrarian cultural ideals. During the 1930s, the American Scene shifted from depictions of city life to images of rural America. Regionalism was a reaction to European-style abstraction that began to emerge with the Armory Show of 1913. Benton, along with John Steuart Curry and Grant Wood, had been born and bred in the Midwest. Benton came from Missouri, Curry from Kansas and Wood from Iowa; all had farming backgrounds (Coppel 23).

Although all three artists were based in the Midwest from the 1930s, they retained close ties to New York through their printmaking (Coppel 24). In 1934, the publisher Reeves Lewenthal created a basis for artists to produce affordable prints at a low price for a wide public. He called his business Associated American Artists (AAA). To promote this, Lewenthal staged an aggressive marketing campaign. The price was an incredible \$5.00 per print. Members of the middle class could now afford to purchase works by famous artists. The prints were sold in department stores across the country. This was so successful that he also established a mail order business (Coppel 24).

These prints were printed in New York by George Miller. In 1915, Miller began producing prints. One of the first artists to work with him was George Bellows. In the early 1920s, Juliana Force commissioned Miller to demonstrate how lithographs were made. Many artists, such as Arthur B. Davies, Boardman Robinson and Rockwell Kent were working with Miller at this time (Fath 17). When Benton took up lithography in 1929, he began a lifelong collaboration with the printer. All 80 of the artist's prints were printed by George Miller except for two, which were printed by his son, Burr Miller, in 1967 (Coppel 126).

Benton's first lithograph, *The Station*, was first titled *Oklahoma*. The artist wrote that he made this from a drawing made in Enid, Oklahoma in 1926. Under the title *Oklahoma*, this work was chosen by John Sloan to be in the "Fifty Prints of the Year" exhibit in New York in March of 1930. It was given a positive review by Elizabeth Luther Cary in *The New York Times* on March 2, 1930 (Fath 22).

October 1933 saw the formation of the "Contemporary Print Group." It was stated that art should appeal to the general masses as well as cultivated people. It was, in effect, anti art-for-art's-sake. The group would issue a

series of portfolios of lithographs about "The American Scene" (Fath 30). One of these lithographs by Benton is titled *Strike* (1933). It depicts a strike battle at a coal mine. Four strikers are seen in light; one holds a picket sign; another is lying on the ground having been shot. Two men are shown in shadow. Both are wearing uniforms; one holds the rifle that was used to shoot. In a dark tone, a stipple is seen against a whitish sky.

During the summer of 1934, Benton went to West Virginia, on the outer rim of the Blue Ridge. At the only theater in town, he found a sign promoting that evening's show, "Five Famous Colored Artists and Entertainers." Now Benton's subject matter focused on African Americans and poor whites in the rural South (Adams 211). He sketched *The Minstrel Show* and a lithograph was made in 1934. A painting of the same subject was made after the lithograph (Coppel 34). In the picture, he grotesquely exaggerated the large ears and protruding elbows of the poor white audience as well as the eyes and lips of the black performers (Adams 212).

Benton received a commission in 1935 for a mural in the Missouri State Capitol. He stated at the time, "I made up my mind suddenly to leave New York and go home to Missouri for good" (Adams 239). The subject was to be a social history of Missouri that would include a comprehensive presentation of the evolution of the life and customs of the people of the state. For a section of the mural, the artist used American folklore as his source. According to legend, the subject of Frankie and Johnnie was well known. It is a song about a lovers' murder in St. Louis, which became part of Missouri legend. Benton made a large-scale lithograph of the scene distributed by AAA (Coppel 127). One can feel the frenzied action through the various poses of the figures as Frankie shoots Johnnie, who is with another woman. The kerosene light and pot-belly stove enhance the bar room. The bartender raises his hand in horror.

In yet another portion, above a door, Benton focuses on the story of *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens). In the lithograph of the scene, Huck admires the fish that Jim has caught. In the background, the steamer Sam Clemens steams by in a shower of sparks (Adams 253). It re-tells in a picture what has been repeated in a story; it is almost a substitute for the text itself. Huck and Jim are on a wooden raft. A large oar, set on a diagonal, leads the eye to the river and steam boat. The river can be a get-away for recklessness as well as a source of freedom, as Twain has caught the spirit of the moving river. This large-scale lithograph was also marketed by AAA (Coppel 44).

Benton's most prolific period of printmaking was between 1939 and 1941. He made 29 lithographs, including a set of six illustrating John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* for The Limited Editions Club. Benton stated that texture painting and increased coloration occupied his attention at this time, as he also expressed a new interest in Flemish Renaissance painting (Coppel 189). He made original drawings of the characters in the story in Eastern Oklahoma and Northwest Arkansas. The portrait of Ma Joad shows her as being heavy, but not fat. She is thick with child bearing and work, her thin, steel-gray hair

gathered in a knot at the back of her head. Her face was not soft, but dignified and controlled (Fath 90). The lithograph of *Casy* is stunningly lifelike. Steinbeck described him with a long head, bony, tight of skin, and set on a neck as stringy and muscular as a celery stalk.... His nose, beaked and hard, stretched the skin so tight that the bridge showed white (Coppel 98).

Nebraska Evening, 1941, was based on a drawing made in 1939. Benton noted that he was on a horse buying trip at the time. It shows a farm, windmill, horses and a man closing a wooden gate. The name BENTON is inscribed on the tail of the wooden-framed windmill, a common feature of the American Midwest (Coppel 127). He often captured the qualities of light. Here, the dramatic effect of the cloud silhouetted against the setting sun references the light of rural America (Coppel 127).

The Race, 1942, depicts a steam train. The train evoked wonderful childhood memories for the artist; it defined the open spaces of the American Plains. He noted, "all during my boyhood the train was the prime space cutter and therefore the great symbol of change...the steam train was a thing replete with suggestive motion" (Coppel 127). A horse runs beside the tracks. Benton wondered why horses so often ran with the steam trains while later paying no attention to the diesels (Coppel 127). This popular lithograph was also marketed by AAA (Fath 132).

In July of 1920, Benton had gone to Martha's Vineyard. The town of Chilmark was as isolated and inbred as the Ozark communities of Southwest Missouri and Arkansas. For the first decade, he lived in a barn with a dirt floor, without heat, telephone, electricity or running water. He returned to the island frequently throughout his life, making drawings and paintings of the island's old-timers. His love of Martha's Vineyard appears in the lithograph *New England Farm* of 1951. A painting in tempera on paper pre-

ceded the lithograph. It depicts a haying scene at a Vineyard farm owned by Denys Wortman, a famous New York newspaper cartoonist (Fath 172).

Two lithographs were made in 1967: *Ten Pound Hammer* and *The Little Fisherman*. Of the *Hammer*, he wrote, "old story of my youth – before the steam hammer beat out John Henry." Of *The Little Fisherman*, he wrote, "not much story. Britt Ader a boy of our neighborhood posed for me some fifteen years ago. Based on a common incident in Missouri country – a boy, on the lake or river bank, baiting his hook. No doubt the same occurs in Texas, wherever, and whenever, there's water and fish."

When World War II ended, Benton hoped that the Regionalist movement would be revived. He went to Hollywood to work for Walt Disney in planning a cartoon operetta based on the life of Davy Crockett. But, he didn't like working within the constraints of the studio. Returning to Kansas City, he was exhausted. He lost his long-time dog, Jake, and a few weeks later, his brother Nat died. Benton went into full-scale depression. Along with this, his work began to be criticized brutally by the press. Curry and Wood naturally met the same fate. Finally, he realized that the Regionalist movement had ended (Adams 317 – 318). Thomas Hart Benton died in 1975 in his studio.

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Former Showcase Artists

Joseph Hart, one of the Print Club's 2011 Showcase artists, is having a solo show, "Joseph Hart/Dread Blush," at David Krut Projects from May 1 – June 28, 2014. This is the artist's second solo show with the gallery, located at 526 W. 26th Street, Suite 816. Of the show, the gallery's promotional materials say, in part:

"Dread Blush emphasizes Hart's interest in the boundaries presented by scale and context, compositional management, and the paradoxical relationship between strategy and chance. Through the physical limits of his reach, the edges of over-sized works are hastily (and sometimes literally) pointed out with slashes in graphite or oil stick. These gestures, or reaches, function as an armature for his next set of marks and are balanced by carefully placed items such as insect decals, rubber elastics and miscellaneous studio detritus. These collaged

components introduce bursts of shape and hue, ultimately assisting in subsequent formal decisions. When in process, Hart frantically moves the work multiple times from table, to floor, to wall and back, providing evidence of action, adjustment and touch."

For more information, contact (212) 255-3094 or see www.davidkrut.com.

Yasuyo Tanaka, 2009 Artists' Showcase, will hold an exhibition "sindsdien Link daarna" from May 24 - June 21 at Galerie Ietsmooisaandemuur.nl in Den Bosch, Netherlands.

Catalina Chervin, also 2009, is in an exhibition at The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster Street, titled "The Intuitionists." The opening will be on July 10, and the show will run through August 24.

Camille Pissarro's Printmaking

Jennie Komsa

For Camille Pissarro and other Impressionists, printmaking seems to be different than their work in other media, thus suggesting that we should reconsider what we think about Impressionism. Impressionism as a movement has long been thought to have been about spontaneity and an instant snap-shot, but Impressionist printmaking provides us with a different view due to its laborious techniques.

The late nineteenth century is important to the history of printmaking, because it was at this time that the market for prints began to emerge among the middle class, expanding the demand for printmaking far beyond the small, exclusive runs by earlier painters like Rembrandt or Goya. Buying and selling of artists' prints began to take place on a much wider scale, and many of the standards set in the nineteenth century are still in use today. It is believed that Camille Pissarro was the first artist to sign, number, and annotate his prints, beginning in 1879. In doing so, he created a clear distinction between mass-produced prints created independently, and unique individual prints that had been viewed and approved by the artists themselves. Through analysis of prints by Pissarro, Edgar Degas, and Mary Cassatt, we now see that they made new and unconventional contributions to the practice of printmaking (Lant 18 – 29).

From early on, leaders of the Impressionist movement in Paris were influenced by Japanese woodblock prints. Although the stark lines of *ukiyo-e* are at odds with the Impressionist style, their use of natural colors and depictions of contemporary, everyday subject matter inspired European artists (Sullivan 215). Claude Monet greatly admired Japanese woodcuts for their own sake, but, to him, daubs of paint were absolutely essential to Impressionism. He refused to consider creating prints of his own. But others, like Degas and Cassatt, were much more willing to continue experimenting with alternative methods to painting. Pissarro's own work as a printmaker began in 1863; he chose to break away from the standard Japanese woodblocks, instead focusing on etching and lithography. Because printmaking's monochromatic images are incompatible with the Impressionist aesthetic of color and light, Pissarro concentrated on the most painterly aspects of printmaking, like aquatint and sanding, so that he could accomplish in print what he could not in painting (Lant). Varying the thickness of the baked-on resin in aquatint allows for gradual shifts in gray tones that are virtually impossible to duplicate with an etching needle.

By 1873, Pissarro had begun passing on his etching techniques to Paul Cézanne. The pair practiced etching together, and the portraits they made of each other were a result of their working friendship. Although Pissarro's 1874 painted portrait of Cézanne was groundbreaking and hugely important in his career, he also created prints at the same time. Pissarro etched a portrait, also in 1874, a fine impression of the only known state. It was printed somewhat dry yet full of detail. Only 18 to 20 signed impressions existed in 1874, and 75 stamped and num-

bered impressions were pulled posthumously in 1920 (Pissarro).

Though Pissarro had started working with etching early on, and had practiced with Cézanne in the early 1870s, he only became fully devoted to printmaking after meeting Degas in 1878 (Ives). Pissarro learned the finer points of printmaking from Degas, and, thanks to him, Pissarro was able to produce the two-hundred plates he did in 1879 (Lant).

In 1879, Pissarro created a series of copper plate impressions, calling them *Crepuscule*. At least four plates are known, but few were printed, and the project was only once annotated. The sequence of states of *Crepuscule* reveals to us Pissarro's attitude on printmaking; the road begins broad and curved with flat, dark areas of field in the first state, evolving to layers of shading in the second, to a dimly lit lane walked by peasants in the third. Different textures are also used — the fields and road become coarser and the sky, haystack and shadows are finer. Additional acid brushed onto the copper is used to make the trees appear to dissolve into the sunset, and the shadow and field are left naked. There is concentration on the inking and wiping, using colored and black ink (Lant).

From 1879 to 1880, Pissarro, Degas, and Cassatt exchanged many letters sharing printmaking recipes and discoveries (Lant). Degas encouraged Pissarro to explore and experiment with a variety of unconventional printmaking techniques and tools, including metal brushes and sandpaper. Degas planned to publish a journal with artists' prints, to which Pissarro intended to contribute *Wooded Landscape at L'Hermitage, Pontoise* (1879), a complex combination of soft-ground etching, aquatint, and drypoint. While Pissarro's paintings during this time were known to be colorful and "busy," his prints were textured in monochromatic tones, absent of color, and only showed partial terrain from beyond as opposed to elaborate landscapes. However, the journal never came to be, so Pissarro instead displayed his work at the fifth Impressionist exhibition of 1880, showing four different early states to demonstrate the technically elaborate development of the print (Ives).

The rarity of Pissarro's proofs was an important factor, and he worked hard to preserve the quality and individual character of his prints. Pissarro refused to sacrifice any step in the labor of printmaking and was horrified at mediocre techniques such as *guillotage*, which used photographic etching to create more prints for less money. Naturally, photographic plates at that time were not extremely sensitive, so considerable detail could be lost between the painting and the final plate; Pissarro was never willing to compromise artistic merit in exchange for a wider audience (Lant).

Though we think of the artist's work primarily in terms of landscape and figurative art, Pissarro's association with anarchism reached into his printmaking. Pissarro, along with son Lucien, Paul Signac, Maximilien Luce, and Theophile-Alexandre Steinlen, all drew posters, book covers, and illustrations for anarchist publications and were closely linked to Jean Grave, unofficial leader of the

French anarchist movement. One example, *The Plow* (1901), a blue, yellow, red, and green lithograph, appeared in the periodical *Les Temps Nouveaux*, published by Grave. It was accompanied by an article from Russian writer and nonviolent anarchist theorist, Piotr Alekseyevich Kropotkin (Clark 2).

In 1883, Pissarro returned to urban subjects when he visited the city of Rouen for the first time. On the banks of the Seine, Rouen's quays, bridges, and steamboats served as the subjects of several paintings. That year, he also etched a series of prints based on Rouen, and though small in format, they capture the lively old town, crowded streets, and beautiful cathedral perfectly and are well-known even today. This edition is rare, ten impressions at most, and they are unstamped and unnumbered (Pissarro). Another etching of Rouen was made with aquatint in 1884 for the series, and its remarkable grey tones and textural processes pleased Pissarro so much that he entered it in the eighth, and final, Impressionist exhibition of 1886, despite the fact that his style had begun to move toward neo-Impressionism in the intervening years.

His 1889 etching, *Femme à la Barrière*, with drypoint and aquatint, portrays a woman of the countryside engaged in everyday activities. It is impeccably printed, and the artist's painstaking reworking of the plate over 10 states is evident in the rich tones and textures. *Paysannes dans un Champ de Haricots*, Pissarro's 1891 etching, is the only known state of this group of peasant women, plain yet forceful in composition (Pissarro).

In 1890, Mary Cassatt attended a Japanese exhibition and determined to spend the next year creating prints in the *Japonisme* style. Cassatt made drypoint etchings on copper, creating sharp contrasts and using lines to convey depth within flat colors. Degas was impressed by the results and convinced her to exhibit ten of her works, including *The Coiffure* and *On the Omnibus*, at the Durand-Ruel gallery in late 1891 (Breskin 76). Inspired by Cassatt's aquatint prints, Pissarro's *Marché de Gisors, Rue*

Cappeville, 1894-95, was one of only five color prints he ever produced. The print marks his earliest attempt at using color (Clark 2). The major difference between Pissarro's work and Cassatt's was that his prints blended the colors produced by the superimposition of the plates; Cassatt usually applied multiple colors on the same plate, which she called *à la poupée* (Breskin 76).

Pissarro had trouble selling his prints and even getting them editioned during his lifetime. But, in 1930, printer Alfred Porcaboef was commissioned to print a limited number of Pissarro's five-color etchings using the same technique that the artist himself had used (Clark 2).

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