

The Print Club of New York, Inc.

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

Latest News

Summer 1994

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, Sept. 13 6:30pm Artists' Showcase Club members will present work by artists whose work is not widely known. 380 Madison Avenue (47th St) VARIG Brazilian Airlines bldg. 16th floor.

The Museum of Modern Art Print Department will be rescheduled at a later date.

Tour of Ken Tyler Graphics, Mt. Kisco, NY.

Visit to Print Department Zimmerli Museum, New Brunswick, NJ.

January '95. An evening with Yvonne Jacquette at the Brooke Alexander Gallery in SoHo.

Mershimer's New York to Open at AAA in July

All members and guests are invited to attend the opening of Frederick Mershimer's mezzotints of New York at the Associated American Artists gallery, 20 West 57th Street, on Thursday evening, July 21, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. Our PCNY Inaugural Print will be on view, as well as a large variety of New York scenes as only Mershimer can provide. The show will continue at least through August. To confirm summer hours and exhibit dates, please call AAA at 212/399-5510.

An Evening with Craig McPherson

On Tuesday evening, April 12, about forty members of The Print Club of New York met with the artist Craig McPherson on the mezzanine floor of 2 World Financial Center, the headquarters of American Express.

Mr. McPherson first took us to an upper floor and showed us five beautiful paintings, he had been commissioned to do, of the rivers and waterways of New York City. Following the execution of these paintings, the Chairman of American

Castellon and Collins Elected to PCNY Board

At the May 17 Board Meeting, two new members were elected to the PCNY Board:

Hilda Castellon became well-known to most print collectors when she worked with Sylvan Cole at Associated American Artists. An artist in her own right, Hilda will continue to devote her talents and experience to our collector members' interests and serve on the Print Selection Committee.

Matthew Collins, who has already been instrumental in computerizing our membership lists, adds to the computer capability of the Club. He is an eager print collector and enthusiastic about contributing to the club's success.

These new members replace Craig Cohen and Martha Glantz, whose work commitments were preventing them from attending meetings. We appreciate their service to the Club. The complete list of officers and Board Members follows:

Morley G. Melden, President
Michael A. Dym, Vice-Pres.
Charles Seidman, Secretary
Norman I. Brock, Treasurer
Harriet Burdock
Hilda Castellon
Matthew Collins
Marion Deutsch
Sylvie H. Gallagher

Julian Hyman
Geri Mickenberg
Glen Nelson
Danny Redmon
Martin Seham
William Selden
Ernest Shapiro
Spencer Weber Waller
Rosalyn Weinstein

Express asked him to do a series of murals of major ports of the world to be placed around their mezzanine entrance.

He devoted the next five years visiting, photographing, making detailed drawings and creating magnificent mural paintings of the harbors of Sydney, Hong Kong, Istanbul, Rio, Venice and New York. The lighting in these paintings had a master-like quality, especially in the market scene in Istanbul and the night scene of the New York City waterfront.

After the viewing of the paintings, Craig McPherson discussed the technique and then answered questions from our group. It was a very special evening for all who attended.

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes: Print Collector Extraordinaire

by Spencer Weber Waller

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes towers over the field of American law and letters in so many ways. Yet he was also a prodigious and knowledgeable collector of fine prints. Holmes was the son of one of the 19th century's leading intellectuals and a thrice-wounded Union officer during the Civil War. Before the age of forty, he published *The Common Law*, one of the most influential, if seldom read, legal books. After brief service on the faculty of Harvard Law School, he served with distinction for twenty years on the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts.

This, in itself, would have been a distinguished career. But in Holmes' case, he also served for 30 years as a member of the United States Supreme Court, helping to revolutionize the law of free speech, the power of Congress and the states to pass progressive social legislation, and numerous other areas of constitutional and federal law. He remains the only member of the Supreme Court whose life story became both a successful Broadway play and a movie. As a colleague once wrote, he was the Babe Ruth of American Law.

As an art enthusiast, Holmes amassed a valuable collection of wood engravings, etchings and lithographs. One of his first published writings was a college magazine article on the wood engravings of Albrecht Durer. Art as well as law was a frequent topic of his voluminous correspondence with the leading intellectuals of his day. Late in life, he wrote with poetic imagery: "Life seems to me like a Japanese picture which our imagination does not allow to end with the margin."

Upon his death in 1935, Justice Holmes bequeathed his entire collection of rare books and prints to the Library of Congress. His book collection totaled over 1,700 volumes and included some of the finest examples of American literature, philosophy, and law, dating back to pre-revolutionary works belonging to his great-grandfather.

The print collection is equally impressive. The Holmes bequest begins with over 230 Japanese prints which have never been separately catalogued. However, a dedicated student can identify some of the images from the card catalogue where the provenance of the item is listed.

There is a better sense of the European and American prints and etchings that Holmes accumulated during his time in Boston, Washington, D.C., and his many travels to England and Europe. The best list comes from a letter dated April 16, 1935 from J.S. Flannery, a representative of the Holmes estate, to the Library of Congress. In the area of lithographs, Holmes favored Delacroix, donating 18 works.

Not surprisingly, Holmes preferred Durer over all other wood engravers, owning and donating 20 works at the time of his death.

The Holmes collection of etchings is the most varied. The etchings included 10 each by F.H. Simon and Jardin, six by Rembrandt, five by Van dyke, and four Durers. In addition to works by Meryon, Whistler, Haden, and many other familiar artists, there are five etchings by Holmes' own father, the esteemed Oliver Wendell Holmes, Senior.

Viewing any aspect of the Holmes bequest remains somewhat of a challenge because the American and European prints have been fully integrated into the Fine Print collection of the Library of Congress and no separate catalogue was ever prepared. In this regard, the general card catalogue and the Library of Congress staff are your best allies. The card catalogue normally indicates the source of the print. If you can find one or more of the images given by Holmes, the staff will retrieve the items for viewing in the Print Room.

Holmes had a fine eye for prints and a willingness to own prints from a tremendously wide variety of artists. Based on my own informal count, Holmes donated prints from more than one hundred fifty artists, not even including his Japanese woodblocks. Although not heretofore known for his endeavors in the art field, even a quick perusal of the Holmes bequest shows that the good Justice displayed the same level of breadth, depth, and accomplishment as he did as a scholar and a judge.

Philadelphia WPA Printmakers

The Club's Spring season opened on March 23 with a talk by Susan Teller on Philadelphia printmakers, primarily during the Works Progress Administration's sponsorship in the 1930s. The setting at her gallery in SoHo was the show entitled, *Michael J. Gallagher and His Circle*. Included were prints from the WPA Workshop and others from an earlier generation of Philadelphia printmakers that provided some historical background.

We learned about this influential group of artists and their lithography workshop, co-directed by Michael Gallagher, Hugh Mesibov, and Dox Thrash. One interesting printmaking technique they developed was a carborundum process where the carborundum was ground into the lithography stone or copper plate. The carborundum would cover the surface with ink-retaining ridges so dense as to print a rich black. Then, they would burnish this surface to create the image.

The Workshop was known for its stylistic developments, and the artists' camaraderie, emotional support, and racial integration. Unfortunately, when the WPA ended, the group disbanded, and only a few were able to continue their careers in art.

Modern Metropolis: Vintage Prints of New York City

by Leslie Nolan
Curator of Prints & Photographs
The Museum of the City of New York

The exhibition *Modern Metropolis*, now on view at the Museum of the City of New York, displays a representative group of prints of New York City during the early twentieth century. Selected from more than 10,000 prints in the Museum's collection, the artists' images portray various dimensions of urban life, revealing the energetic rhythms of the City.

In many ways, New York's arresting subject matter elevated the print medium to a higher standard than it had before, allowing it to achieve new prominence. Artists captured the sweep of towering skyscrapers, the labyrinth of buried subways, revelers at the beach, dancers cheek to cheek, backstage theater, and frenetic City workers. Included in this exhibition are prints by such well-known artists as Mabel Dwight, Childe Hassam, Louis Lozowick, Reginald Marsh, Jan Matulka, and Albert Potter.

The 1916 etching of the Fuller Building (popularly known as the Flatiron Building) by Childe Hassam, entitled, *Washington's Birthday Parade, Fifth Avenue & 23rd*, is one of the artist's most popular prints. The Flatiron Building was singularly celebrated in the fledgling skyscraper era, and heralded as "wondrous as the pyramids." Soft, cloud-like tones and lines seemingly dissolve as the famous building stands through an impressionistic cityscape.

In *Evening in Central Park*, Jan Matulka aptly portrays the 1920's boating scene in Central Park. Matulka's lithograph of monumental figures pulsates in rhythmic lights and darks, and reminds viewers how commonplace nighttime boating once was in the park.

Many of the prints in the exhibition, made between 1910 and 1940, were created for the New York City Graphics Division of the Work Projects Administration (1936-1942). By providing work for a variety of artists, the WPA was responsible for advances in printmaking technology. The New York City Graphics Division of the WPA employed hundreds of artists and reaped a harvest of more than 200,000 impressions of 11,000 images.

Two works on view, donated to the Museum of the City of New York from the Work Projects Administration, are *Old Aquarium*, a lithograph by Mabel Dwight, made in 1936, and *Backstage "Porgy and Bess,"* a lithograph by Kyra Markham.

In *Old Aquarium*, Mabel Dwight recreates a familiar scene of children and their caretakers in front of the Aquarium



The Bridge, c. 1930, Albert Potter (1903-1937) linoleum cut

on Battery Park. The building was a circular three-story edifice that became known as Castle Gardens, the site of notable public and social events in the late-nineteenth century. *Backstage "Porgy and Bess"* was created by the actress and printmaker Kyra Markham, who also designed book jackets and created murals in powder rooms in order to support her career in the theater.

Modern Metropolis will be on view at The Museum, Fifth Avenue at 103rd Street, until October 24.

IFPDA Print Fair Dates Set

Fourth Annual "The Print Fair," billed as the world's largest and most comprehensive exhibition of fine prints by The International Fine Print Dealers Association, will be held at the Park Avenue Armory, November 11-13.

This year the two-part free lecture series will feature Reba Williams, collector and scholar of American Prints at 10 a.m. Friday. Riva Castleman, Curator of Prints and Illustrated Books at the Museum of Modern Art will speak on Saturday, November 12, at 10 a.m. Further details later, or contact Cynthia Rubin at 212/759-446.

Another Print Donation

Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Rossof, PCNY members living in Chicago, have donated their Schrag print to Bradley University in Peoria, IL.

Karl Schrag Wins Prestigious Altman Award

by Mona Rubin

Karl Schrag was recently awarded the Benjamin Altman landscape prize of \$3,000 in the 169th annual exhibition of The National Academy of Design. This is the oldest juried show in the country, and winning entries are selected by a jury of prominent artists.

The winning painting, *Summer Haze and Autumn Wind* is typical of Schrag's outstanding ability to imbue landscape painting with life and movement. The large oil on canvas is broken by borders, depicting the lush greens and warm sky of summer above. This is contrasted by a brilliant orange tree blowing in the autumn wind in the lower section of the painting.

The viewer has the sensation of looking through a window toward two diverse scenes: the hazy stillness of summer versus the clear light and strong gusts of fall. The pallet of mostly greens with blues above serves to highlight the typical autumnal colors and expressionistic lines below.

Schrag's skill as a landscape painter is demonstrated in this unified vision of two seasons both equally inviting.

Karl Schrag ranks as an important American painter and printmaker with works in many major museum collections. The Print Club of New York extends congratulations to Karl

on adding this recent honor to his many artistic accomplishments.

Members of the Print Club fortunate enough to have acquired Schrag's print last year are familiar with his unique style. *My Room - Bright Night* depicts a scene from his summer studio and home in Deer Isle, Maine. In this unique lithograph, the artist gives us a glimpse into both his personal interior world and his vision of the night sky.

PCNY Classified Ads

As a service to its members, The Print Club is experimenting with classified advertisements of members' print. If you would like to purchase a print listed below, call the seller directly. If you would like information about placing an ad in the Fall Newsletter, call Glen Nelson 201/938-3565.

George Schreiber - lithograph "Rain" 12 x 17" \$350

Lester Hornby - etching "A la Gaité" 5 x 7" \$200

J.L. Nesbitt - lithograph "September Song" 15 x 18" \$300

For information about the above prints, call Elaine & Julian Hyman: 201/836-4419.

Robert Rauschenberg - WFUNA print "Tanya's Veil" 8 1/2 x 11" 500 ed., on rag paper \$400

Wolf Kahn - WFUNA print "Hillside in Early Summer" 8 1/2 x 11" 500 ed., on rag paper \$250

Ernst Roth - "Porta della Carta (Venice)" 1941 etching 8 1/2 x 14 1/2" signed \$200

For information about the above prints, call Dan Redmon: 212/947-6357.

