

The Print Club of New York Inc

Spring 1999

President's Greeting

Julian Hyman

The Print Club's Annual Membership Meeting will take place on June 1 at the Liederkrantz Club, 6 East 87th St. at 6:00 p.m. We invite all of our members to attend this important meeting which will begin with cocktails and the opportunity to meet fellow collectors. After a review of the year's activities, members will vote on officers and members of the Board of Trustees for the next year. A ballot has been mailed to all members. If you cannot attend the Annual Meeting, please return the ballot.

The Club is completing a very successful year. There have been many excellent programs and our presentation print, executed for us by the renowned artist Will Barnet, has been a great success. Club membership for the coming year has been completely filled, and a number of our new members are already active on our committees.

Our main goal of providing education in the field of printmaking has been achieved this year, and we look forward to maintaining the quality of our activities in the coming year. We urge our membership to participate in these activities by joining committees, forwarding suggestions for new programs, newsletter articles, membership notes and other matters of interest in regard to the print world. We look forward to hearing from you, and we hope to fill this coming Millennial year with more of the interesting, informative and enjoyable activities that our members have come to expect from the Club.

The Print Club of New York, Inc.

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The Cliché - Verre: Print Or Photograph?

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

Although museums often combine the care and exhibition of prints and photographs within a single department, collectors frequently emphasize the acquisition of one type of work or the other. However, there is a medium that includes elements of both. The cliché-verre (literally "glass negative" in French) is a hybrid, combining aspects of both traditional printmaking and photography. Indeed, museums are often ambivalent about how to categorize cliché-verre prints, and researchers must search for them both as prints and as photographs in collection files.

In spite of the fact that the process is as old as photography itself, relatively few exhibitions or publications have focused upon this unique printmaking technique. The first major exhibit, entitled "Cliché-verre: Hand-Drawn, Light-Printed," was held in 1980 at the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The accompanying catalog by Elizabeth Glassman and Marilyn Symmes provided the first comprehensive scholarly study tracing the technical and creative evolution of the medium.

Photography was "invented" in 1839 when nearly simultaneous announcements by Daguerre in France and Fox Talbot in England proclaimed their success in permanently fixing images made by sunlight, without any intervention of the artist's hand. Photography was the result of decades of experiments in photochemistry and optics, including the use of the camera obscura as a drawing aid. Daguerre's and Talbot's processes were, however, completely different; Daguerre created direct positives on polished metal plates while Talbot made paper negatives.

In March of 1839, three English engravers, James Tibbitts Willmore and brothers William and Frederick Havell, displayed clichés-verre to members of the Royal Institution and the Royal Society. This followed by less than two months Talbot's presentation of his invention to the same august bodies. However, the trio's intent was quite different from Talbot's, which was to delineate forms without the aid of a pencil. Rather, they wanted to use the photographic process to reproduce the work of the artist's pencil. In 1841 the cliché-verre was described in two technical manuals-interestingly enough, one for photographers, Robert Hunt's *A Popular Treatise on the Art of Photography*, and one for printmakers, T. H. Fielding's *The Art of Engraving*. A number of 19th-century artists experimented with the process, including members of the French Barbizon School, Delacroix and the English caricaturist, George Cruikshank.

The process involved in making clichés-verre is quite simple. An image or design is made by hand on a transparent matrix (originally glass; today, however, some artists use Kodak film or plastic sheets). The design is

then reproduced by using the matrix as a "negative," with the light passing through it registering the image on photographic paper. Early practitioners used a method much like etching, drawing or scratching with a needle, pen or other sharp instrument through a ground applied to the glass plate—either printer's ink or fogged collodion (a substance used to bind light-sensitive chemicals to glass plates in the mid 19th century). Such plates were then used exactly like photographic negatives, producing positive prints on photographic paper, generally by contact printing. A variation of this method, which is tonal rather than linear, involves the artist painting with an oil-based paint on the transparent matrix and then printing the

image as described above.

The cliché-verre offered several distinct advantages for artists. The materials (glass, ground or paint and photographic paper) were easily obtainable and portable. Also, the process of drawing or painting on the matrix was easily learned. Indeed, it was considered so easy that *The Literary Gazette* of March 30, 1839 suggested it could be "elegant employment for ladies" (207). And while the cliché-verre lacked the subtle textures of etching and engraving, it allowed for continuous tonal gradations based upon the density of the negative rather than merely on the balance of black and white.

French painter Camille Corot was introduced to the cliché-verre by his friend Adalbert Cuvelier, an amateur landscape photographer. In 1853 both were members of an informal group of artists and photographers centered at the workshop of Constant Dutilleux, a landscape painter and owner of an active lithography firm in Arras. It was a period of fertile interchange between those using the brush, the press and the camera. Corot is documented as having made some 66 clichés-verre, approximately two thirds of his total graphic output. Most were made between 1853 and 1860, with a second flurry of activity in 1871 and 1874, shortly before his death. The same stylistic shift that is evident in his paintings, from clear and detailed to soft and diffuse, can be seen in his prints. Delacroix is known to have made at least one cliché-verre, "Tiger at Bay of 1854" (now in the Detroit Institute of Arts). He learned the technique from his friend Dutilleux. Daubigny and Millet also experimented with the cliché-verre. The results are lyrical images, filled with a sense of space and light effects. The prints are highly autographic because the artist drew or painted directly on the smooth glass plate, removing the need for a professional copyist.

The cliché-verre process was brought to the attention of the American public in 1859 by John Whetton Ehninger's album, *Autograph Etchings by American Artists*, a copy of which belongs to the New York Public Library. Twelve clichés-verre were used to illustrate writings by twelve American poets. Included were examples by such luminaries as Asher B. Durand, Emanuel Leutze, John Kensett and Eastman Johnson. Many of these artists were experienced engravers. The resulting images were lovely; however the process remained something of a curiosity in America, never gaining the following here that it had in France. Nevertheless, two major collectors of 19th-century prints, Samuel P. Avery of New York and George A. Lucas of Baltimore, took an interest in clichés-verre. The Avery Collection now belongs to the New York Public Library, and the Lucas Collection was given to the Maryland Institute College of Art and is housed and administered by the Baltimore Museum of Art.

The term cliché-verre was popularized in the early 20th century by virtue of having been used by Loys Delteil in his 31 volume *Le Peintre-Graveur illustré*, published between 1906 and 1930. Osbert Barnard, who published the first important article in English on the process in the April 1922 issue of *The Print Collector's Quarterly*, also used the term. Other early names for the medium include: "cliché-glace," "dessin héliographique," "dessin sur verre bichromaté," "autographie photographique," "glass print" and "etching on glass."

Upcoming Print Club Events

Wednesday, Sept. 15, 7:30 p.m.

Judith Brodsky will speak on the Center for Innovative Print and Papermaking at Rutgers University, one of the most important printmaking programs in the New York Area. Ms. Brodsky is Professor of Art at Rutgers University and Director of the Center.

Tuesday, October 5, 7:30 p.m.

Artist's talk and viewing of the 1999 Presentation Print, Liederkrantz Club, 6 East 87th St.

Wednesday, October 20, 6 p.m.

Sixth Annual Artist's Showcase, The National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park South.

Other Events of Interest to Print Club Members

"The Malleable Medium: Proofs, States and Variations in Prints," Donson Gallery, 24 West 57th St., through June 5.

"John Sloan, The Art of the Printmaker," Kraushaar Gallery, 724 Fifth Ave., through June 5.

"David Hockney Recent Prints," Pace Contemporary Prints, 32 East 57th St., through June 5.

"George Bellows: Lithographs from the Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Harold Rifkin," Adelson Galleries, Inc., the Mark Hotel, 25 East 77th St., through June 5

"A Voice of Conscience: The Prints of Jack Levine," Brooklyn Museum, through June 26

"Netherlandish Prints from the New York Public Library," 16th and 17th Century woodcuts, etchings and engravings, at the Library, through June 26.

"Heroic Obsession: The Graphic Art of Jacob Landau," Woodmere Art Museum, 9201 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia, through June 27.

"Stephen Parrish, Rediscovered American Etcher," etchings by the father of Maxfield Parrish, Woodmere Art Museum, through June 27.

In our own century, experimentation with the cliché-verre has continued, although 20th-century examples are frequently less well known than their 19th-century counterparts. Picasso and Klee both experimented with the process as did Surrealists Man Ray and Max Ernst. The French photographer Brassai [born Gyula Hal-sz, in Hungary] made a collection of twelve clichés-verre in the mid 1930s which were published under the title *Transmutations*. His approach was somewhat unique in that he scratched not upon a blank plate but, rather, upon one that already carried a photographic image. A number of contemporary artists, including Diane Escott, Barbara Greene, Steven Higgins, Jack Sal, Keith Smith, John Bloom and Lois Johnson, have also incorporated variations of the cliché-verre technique into their oeuvres. Bloom, for example, created a series of 55 clichés-verre in the late 1970s for his Master of Arts in Photography thesis at the

University of New Mexico. His method utilized drawing and scratching through a coating of smoke produced on a glass plate by a kerosene lantern. He printed these images on transparent film rather than on paper, giving them an ethereal quality. Johnson, who teaches at the Philadelphia College of Art, also explored the cliché-verre for her M.F.A. project at the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1966. Much of her work has involved mixed media, utilizing gum bichromate prints of cliché-verre images combined with hand coloring and collaged elements. Many of her themes relate to her western roots in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

The dialog between printmaker and photographer opened up by the cliché-verre process is a particularly fertile one, and the possibilities for experimentation are endless. Neither traditional print nor photograph, the cliché-verre deserves the attention of more collectors.

Print Club Member Harvey Isbitts Donates Winslow Homer Wood Engravings to Brooklyn Museum

Arlyne Lesser

Print Club member Harvey Isbitts has donated 251 wood engravings by Winslow Homer to the Brooklyn Museum of Art. The engravings which appeared in *Harper's Weekly* from 1857 to 1878 depict a view of life more than a hundred years ago as seen by one of America's most important artists. The Museum will feature 115 of the prints in an exhibition entitled "Winslow Homer: Illustrating America," from July 2 through October 10.

Mr. Isbitts began his collection in 1975 with the purchase of some bound *Harper's Weekly* volumes which contained the engravings. At that time the volumes were still easy to acquire and relatively inexpensive. Within a few years, after collecting 150 of the prints, Mr. Isbitts realized that he had a collection in progress and made it his goal to collect all of Homer's wood engravings. He spoke to dealers all over the country and although it was thought that Homer only made 220 original engravings, Mr. Isbitts' research enabled him to identify 289. Among these was a previously unknown Homer that he found in *Harper's New Monthly* and that he was able to identify through his extensive reading and research into Homer's life and work.

The most difficult engravings to obtain, Mr. Isbitts noted, were those which had appeared not in *Harper's Weekly* but in other magazines such as *Harper's Bazaar* and *Every Saturday*. "Cutting a Figure," in particular, a double fold of Gloucester Harbor which he found in perfect con-

dition was the most difficult single print to obtain. Since he began the collection, Mr. Isbitts noted that the engravings became scarcer and appreciably more expensive.

The Museum exhibition will include Homer's earliest prints, among them song sheet covers as well as such popular genre scenes as "Cracking the Whip." The exhibition will also include Homer's well-known images depicting the Civil War. Mr. Isbitts' favorites, the seashore scenes at Longbranch and Gloucester, will also be featured, giving glimpses of the work Homer would create in the future.

Mr. Isbitts still has a large collection of duplicate engravings of those which he gave to the Museum, and he still pursues his goal of finding the 38 early and hard to find prints that would enable him to donate a complete set of 289 to the Museum. He chose the Brooklyn Museum to receive the collection because of its wonderful watercolor collection which complements the images in the engravings.

Print Club members are urged to attend this important exhibition, the first museum retrospective of Homer's wood engravings, which was collected and donated by one of our members. The exhibition will focus on the meanings of Homer's images, placing them in a context that will reveal 19th century social conventions and the change in American life from the rural scenes depicted in the Currier and Ives-like genre scenes, through the War experience to the post war depiction of American leisure and other social activities.

Safely Storing Your Prints

Laura Stirton Aust

Most of us have more prints than we have walls on which to hang them on. And, the term deaccession seems to be a word reserved for museums. So, where do all these large, flat, fragile objects get put?

At museums prints are usually hinged (with Japanese paper and wheat starch paste) to a standard museum sized rag matboard. This back board is hinged (with linen tape) to a rag board window mat. These matted prints are covered with glassine (a very smooth, neutral pH, translucent paper) and boxed with other prints which

have been matted with the same sized materials. As a conservator, I store prints in flat files with map folders (an acid-free card stock paper) and buffered tissue (a soft, thin paper which has calcium carbonate added to neutralize acids). But how many people have flat files in their home? Where and what is the next best option? And, what about prints that are too large for flat files?

Although museums generally mat prints, some collections remain boxed without mats. There are several different kinds of storage boxes made for works of art on paper. Solander makes standard museum sized boxes of acid-free materials. These are made with binderis board covered with book cloth and have metal latches. They can be stacked one on top another as they are quite sturdy. Another alternative is acid-free cardboard boxes with metal corners. These also come in standard museum sizes but should not be stacked more than few high as the thin cardboard will collapse under pressure. These boxes will require replacement in time because they will tear or break as the buffering material is depleted. Both boxes serve the same function. They reduce the amount of dust and light that comes into contact with the prints. If glassine is placed between each print and the paper size is near the box size, you have provided housing very near museum standards. Do not fill the box. Instead, use several sheets of matboard (the same dimensions as the box) to prevent shifting and remember to store the box flat, not upright.

It is preferable to keep prints flat because a rolled print usually requires the service of a conservator just to remove the curl. But for prints that are too large for flat storage, rolling is an option. Just remember, *NEVER* roll a print tightly and *NEVER* force it inside a tube. Roll it over a large diameter, solid walled tube (one which will not bend). If the tube is not acid-free, first cover it with glassine. Use two, one inch pieces of acid-free tape to anchor the glassine to the tube at each end. Place another sheet of glassine on top of the print before rolling it. If several prints are to be rolled around the same tube, stack them with glassine between each print and roll them all together. Finally, cover the tube with another sheet of tissue or glassine. The glassine and tube should extend at least two inches beyond the edge of the largest print. This unused portion of the tube will help prevent damage to the edge

of the prints and, if this package is to be placed inside a larger diameter tube, you will have something to grab a hold of when removing the interior tube.

Museum storage has a constant temperature between 60o Fahrenheit and 70°F and a stable relative humidity above 35% and below 50%. These conditions prevent desiccation caused by low humidity and mold growth which may appear with high humidity. Because the environment is stable there is little expansion and contraction of the paper which may cause distortions. Since most homes are not climate controlled, private collectors may question where to keep their prints? There is no easy answer, so I suggest locations to avoid. First of all, temperature and humidity extremes and fluctuations are bad. This eliminates most attics. Secondly, high humidity is bad which eliminates most basements. Even though the temperature may be fairly constant, basements are prone to flooding and excessive dampness. Closets with any sort of water pipes can be a hazard to prints. Finally, keep the storage boxes an inch or two off the floor to promote air circulation and check the boxes several times a year. Many damages start small and get worse with time.

Usually when a print is pulled it is in pristine condition. The support paper is the color chosen by the artist. There is a crisp plate mark on etchings, mezzotints, and engravings. The margins are clean and without distortion. There are no flaws or damages to distract from the image created. But, with time, handling, and improper storage a print may become discolored, distorted, creased, edges may have become dog eared and the beauty of the work diminished. Therefore, the care taken with storage and handling will be reflected in the condition of the print.

All the materials you need for safe storage are available at TALAS here in New York (212.219-0770), University Products in Massachusetts (800.628-1912) and Light Impressions in Rochester (800.828-6216). Each has a catalog and will help answer your questions.

Laura Stirton Aust is a paper conservator. This is the first column of a planned regular feature to appear in The Print Club of New York quarterly newsletter. The next column will address mat burn and other staining. Please send your conservation questions to the newsletter for consideration in future columns.

Members Hear Talk on Dutch 16th and 17th Century Prints

Arlyne Lesser

On March 25, Michelle Lapine, curatorial assistant at the Jewish Museum presented an informative talk to Print Club members on the influence of the Hebrew Bible on Dutch printmakers in the 16th and 17th centuries. Illustrating her discussion with slides, Ms. Lapine pointed out the historical context for the Dutch interest in the Old Testament. The Old Testament played an important part in the Reformation, for Luther as prophecy and for Calvin as revelation. In the Netherlands Protestantism took the form of Dutch Calvinism, and the Calvinists knew their Hebrew Bible. The New Testament was Holy Scripture, but the Hebrew Bible allowed for identity with its people, not merely being a preface to the

New Testament. Hence, such prints as depictions of the Isaac story or Joseph were popular. By the 1560's, however, interest in the Old Testament went beyond Calvinism. The Dutch politicized Old Testament narratives during their eighty year war with Spain, from 1568 and 1648. The images of the Israelites in their prints reflected their own fight with the Catholic King of Spain who wanted to purge Protestant heretics and sent the harsh Duke of Alva as his emissary. The eighty years of the war was also a revolt against Spanish autocracy. To the Dutch power came from the community and was local, traditional and customary.

The Hebrew Bible provided unifying and inspiring images as the Dutch identified with Old Israel and saw themselves as New Israel. In the prints of this period can

be found parallels with contemporary issues and precise comparisons with specific events: King Philip of Spain as Pharaoh and William of Orange who led the Dutch revolt as David or Judah Maccabeus. Goliath would be depicted as a Spanish soldier. Esther and Judith who rescued their people from tyrants were popular images and Amsterdam was depicted as a New Jerusalem. These prints identifying the Dutch war against Spain with Isrealite images were part of an immense anti-Spanish, anti Catholic propaganda effort designed to win popular support. Hence, the use of Old Testament images and scenes in these prints present the viewer with a complex level of interpretation in regard to contemporary events, and they played an important role in the development of a Dutch national identity.

In addition to the historical context, Ms Lapine also discussed the effect of these prints on the relationship between Jew and Gentile and their impact on both the Christian and Jewish communities. Although Calvinists studied the Old Testament in the 16th century, there was little contact between Jewish and Christian scholars. During this century, however, a wave of Jewish emigrants from Spain arrived in the Netherlands and became accepted into Dutch life. Jews were allowed commercial

privileges and in the 17th century were allowed to worship freely and build synagogues. Although use of Old Testament images tell us how the Dutch felt about themselves rather than how they felt about Jews, they did stimulate an interest in their Jewish neighbors. Jewish scholars and artists began to associate the Jews with the Hebrew Bible and with themselves in the struggle against Spain. Jewish models were used in prints, Rembrandt using his Jewish neighbors in his Bible scenes. Engravings of Jewish rituals such as the Passover service observances can be found in popular prints as well as in scholarly books.

Similarly, the Old Testament imagery so prominent during the eighty year war against Spain probably effected the Jewish community as well. For example, Rembrandt's "Triumph of Mordechai," from the Book of Esther would appeal to both Christian and Jew. The Esther story was associated with Spain and the Duke of Alva was depicted as Haman. The popular appearance of these anti-Spanish images based on the Bible inspired the recently transplanted Sephardic community as well as the Dutch. Ms. Lapine concluded that during this period, under the impact of the war against the Spanish, for the first time Jewish and Christian responses to art converged.

Members Hear Talk on Prints of the 60's and 70's

Arlyne Lesser

Drawing upon an important collection of 1960's and 70's prints for illustration, Jeffrey Ruesch of the Jeffrey Ruesch Gallery in Soho provided Print Club members with a wealth of information during his gallery talk on April 15. Mr. Ruesch who is a specialist in prints of this period as well as a lecturer at New York University provided an overview not only of the "iconic" figures and their prints -Lichtenstein, Warhol, Stella, Indiana and Rosenquist — but also of the state of the market for these prints when they were produced and now at the end of the century.

Mr. Ruesch began by noting that the genesis of the 60's Pop Art prints was market driven, the desire to make inexpensive editions which would create a wider audience for prints. He also pointed out the importance of the Tamarind Press on the West Coast and the ULAE on the East Coast in promoting printmaking as an important art form in the 1960's and 70's. Mr. Ruesch then concentrated on the "iconic" works emerging from this burst of creativity. He began his discussion with James Rosenquist's "The Crying Girl," originally printed for \$10, signed but not numbered, in a large edition of 300 to 500. Today Mr. Ruesch prices the print in excellent condition at \$15,000. "The Crying Girl" is a signature work because it typifies the Lichtenstein pop art style, using cartoon imagery, blown up hand drawn dots, brilliant red which in less well preserved prints fades to pink, and the trademark teardrop in the eye, an image to which Lichtenstein returned over and over in his painting, prints and sculpture. Mr. Ruesch explained that the criteria for market value are the number of prints that have survived, the importance of the image in the artist's work, in this case the cartoon images, and the condition. Nearly 60% of a

print edition, he estimated becomes folded, torn or otherwise damaged.

Just as "The Crying Girl" is among the most important prints of the 1960's, so is the other "iconic" work he discussed, Andy Warhol's "Marilyn." Warhol made 10 Marilyns, each in a different color combination. The black Marilyn, printed on a black background, was the most popular version in the 1970's and 80's, but a new generation of collectors seem to want the more "natural" look and favor the Marilyn with a pink background. The 1960's, Mr. Ruesch noted, did not have a tight grip on the number of prints in an edition and there are many prints available that may or may not be authentic. He showed several "Warhol" prints without signature or number, prints which may have been proofs or printed and never distributed but which have been denied by the Warhol estate, and hence cannot be sold as authentic Warhol prints. He also warned of many Marilyn fakes which are coming to market.

Discussing the Warhol style, Mr. Ruesch pointed out that Warhol deliberately chose inexpensive thin paper and preferred the dramatic colors and brilliant surfaces produced by screen printing rather than the mat finish and subtler colors of lithographs. Warhol also liked to work in a series of images to be sold together in a portfolio or box, a characteristic way in which 60's artists produced their prints. Mr. Ruesch then displayed a brilliant example of this Warhol technique, an 1968 first Campbell Soup portfolio in its original brown cardboard box, priced originally at \$50 to \$100 for a sheet and \$500 for the entire portfolio. Another "iconic" example of Warhol's work, the Tomato Soup can in particular, this series shows Warhol's sense of humor and the sense of humor of the 1960's artists. The brilliance and depth of color in these prints surprised Club members who had never seen Warhol works in such a pris-

tine state, and Mr. Ruesch explained that when exposed to light and temperature variations Warhol's red has faded to pink and his silver and gold have become mottled and discolored. Also, because the prints were printed on the cheap poster paper, they are virtually unfixable.

Another Warhol set which Mr. Ruesch displayed was one of the few complete Mao portfolios that exist in the original cardboard box. There are 10 images in the set, an usual number for a Warhol series, printed originally in an edition of 250. Mr. Ruesch pointed out that an original set is one in which each print has the same number. The set which he displayed in the original box is now valued at \$125,000. Also, since the Warhol estate no longer has a large inventory, Mr. Ruesch estimates that Warhol prices will continue to escalate.

Mr. Ruesch commented that he had begun his talk with Lichtenstein and Warhol because the market has chosen them as superstars from the 1960's. There were, however, other important 60's artists and Mr. Ruesch then went on to discuss Frank Stella, Robert Indiana and James Rosenquist. He commented that the market has rediscovered Stella whose 60's work was based on classic geometric shapes created with protractors and triangles. These prints, clean and articulate, speak of the period in which a whole series would hang in the lobby of a corporate head-

quarters. Stella's more recent works show him becoming more painter-like and three dimensional, using brilliant color and glitter. Mr. Ruesch suggested members look at Stella's exciting work in this style at the Saatchi and Saatchi building on Hudson St.

Robert Indiana's famous LOVE found on postage stamps, sculpture and jewelry is also a typical pop art image. It has been released over and over and the red/white/blue LOVE is another document of pop culture. On the other hand, James Rosenquist's works have become less popular, although he is a wonderful artist with a unique vision who knew how to draw, paint and airbrush on an enormous scale. His prints, however, even the famous F111 image, have fallen sharply in value.

Mr. Ruesch concluded by noting that each of the 60's artists had something different to contribute, some distinctive way of looking at things. Also, the Pop Art of the 60's came out of the desire to provide art at reasonable prices for the public — \$10 prints by Lichtenstein and \$50 to \$100 prints by Warhol. Today he believes that the dealers and publishers in Chelsea are playing the same role as those in Soho in the 1960's. They are both showing and printing works by emerging artists that the young collector can afford, a revival of the same spirit that give birth to the Pop Art of the 1960's.

Exhibition and Gallery Show Reviews

Editor's Note: In this issue we are inaugurating an ongoing section of the Newsletter that will feature reviews of exhibitions in area museums, libraries, and galleries as well as print shows. We welcome members comments, suggestions and input.

Works on Paper at the Armory

Malcolm Goldstein

An annual event that this year entered its second decade, the Works on Paper Fair print fair was held at the Park Avenue Armory from March 3 to March 7, with, as might be expected, American dealers in the majority, but with strong showings by their English, French, German and Swiss colleagues. The fair included samples of the inventory of ninety galleries. Prints of every era and of every graphic technique were on view, along with maps, posters, photographs and drawings. To most viewers, this was far more than could be digested comfortably in a single visit; it was all too easy to find oneself overwhelmed by a surfeit of delights.

Among the strongest exhibits were the Expressionist prints offered by German dealers. In an especially memorable showing, the Galleries Glockner of Cologne provided classic examples of the work of, among others, Barlach, Feininger, Heckel, Modersohn-Becker, Pechstein, and Schmidt-Rottluf. This is, of course, not a new field of collecting, but it appears to be attracting an increasingly

large number of enthusiasts.

Old Master prints were also abundantly on view. Pia Gallo of New York presented works by such artists as Altdorfer, Goltzius and Rembrandt. Other exhibits in this field were also offered by Hill-Stone and Paul McCarron, both of New York. Great Japanese prints by classic masters of ukiyo-e were presented by Herbert Egenolf of Venice, California and Carolyn Staley of Seattle. At Ms. Staley's booth seductively colored modern Japanese prints were also offered. French graphics of the Belle Epoque were to be seen at Lumley Cazalet of London and Mark J. Weinbaum of New York.

Plentiful as were the displays of Continental and Asian art, American prints were, as usual at this fair, the most numerous wares offered. The works, mainly from the first half of the twentieth century, prominently displayed at the booths of dealers in the field hint at trends of renewed enthusiasm for the architectural drypoints of Gerald Geerlings and the genre lithographs of Thomas Hart Benton. The prints of Martin Lewis and Louis Lozowick were also on view at several booths. Favorites for many years, they continue to attract new collectors despite their constantly escalating prices. The interest given to the display of Lozowick's prints may have been stimulated by the fact that a retrospective of the artist's work was held at the Mary Ryan Gallery simultaneously with the fair.

Hard on the feet and, ultimately, the eyes though the fair may have been, it was well worth the attention visitors accorded it.

Will Barnet: A Retrospective of Prints

Elaine Hyman

A retrospective show of Will Barnet's prints at the Walker-Kornbluth Gallery in Fair Lawn, NJ, March 28 through April 18, brought so many of his admirers to the opening that the Gallery was filled to capacity. Mr. Barnet has been making prints for 60 years, beginning in the 1930's with small black and white woodcuts and etchings of his wife and baby. His work of the past three decades has largely been serigraphs and lithographs or a combination of the two. His most recent work is the Print Club's 1998 Presentation Print, "Between Life and Life," a print which was pictured in the April 11 review of the show by Barry Schwabsky in the New York Times.

Will Barnet is considered to be among America's foremost contemporary printmakers. The New York Times reviewer called him "the printmaker par excellence, although he is a fine painter, too. He is one of the few

artists well known in his own right who has also been a master printer helping other artists to realize their ideas in print.

The show was particularly strong in Mr. Barnet's early work dating back to the 1930's and in many ways typical of the Social Realism of that period. His prints from the 1950's and early 1960's when he was concentrating on painting, are rarer. This period is marked by abstraction. The late 1960's shows Mr. Barnet returning to the figural images that characterize his later work. These prints focus on women and animals, and the clear edges of the forms and the emphasis on the linear silhouette evoke a Japanese quality. In particular, these later prints embody an inner core of stillness that resonates with symbolism.

This exhibition of etchings, woodcuts, lithographs and serigraphs demonstrated the beauty of Will Barnet's images as well as the ideas which were important to the artist. The exhibition was beautiful, informative and impressive.

"Graphic! British Prints Now" at Yale

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

Print Club members may be interested in a special exhibition this spring at the recently refurbished Yale Center for British Art in New Haven.

Entitled *Graphic! British Prints Now*, the show runs from April 8 to June 6 and showcases the work of a group of young British artists (known in their own country as YBAs) who are leading a renaissance in printmaking in the U.K.

The focal point of the exhibit is a series of portfolios or suites of work, all executed during the past five years, exploring a range of techniques from traditional etching to embossed paper and various types of screenprinting. Diverse themes are also explored, although many of the pieces deal with concepts of identity — personal, artistic and cultural.

The Yale Center selected all the featured collections from among recent acquisitions. Peter Doig's *Ten Etchings*, 1996 are moody, evocative images utilizing traditional hard-ground etching, aquatint and drypoint. Doig's somewhat troubling, existential works, which exude a sense of loneliness, are his first printmaking venture. He is known primarily as a figurative painter, and the prints in the suite relate to recent paintings by the artist.

The abstract woodcut monoprints in Ian McKeever's collection, *Twelve x Eight* of 1997, deal with issues involved in the artist's exploration of romanticism and the sublime. Also primarily a painter, McKeever takes some time out each year to make prints because he enjoys the immediacy of printmaking and finds the dialectic of different time frames for painting and printmaking stimulating.

Gary Hume's *Portraits*, 1998 are clearly inspired by Pop Art, in particular the work of Tom Wesselmann and Andy Warhol. Like Warhol, Hume explores notions of celebrity in some of the portfolio's images, while others represent

stereotypes. *Francis*, which is a powerful and effective portrait of artist Francis Bacon, and *Whistler*, showing a languid-eyed, droopy-mustached nineteenth-century dandy, are especially effective. Hume also uses painting as his point of departure, scanning the painted image into a computer, then creating stencils from it by hand and screenprinting the work in the traditional manner.

Hughie O'Donoghue, who has been very involved in printmaking since 1984, is represented by a group of ten carborundum prints published in 1997, entitled *A Line of Retreat*. The works are highly personal, based on his father's experiences as a soldier in France during World War II. The artist describes them as dealing with "history and memory."

Ben Langlands and Nikki Bell have created a visually and conceptually interesting suite in *Enclosure and Identity*, 1996. The portfolio is comprised of ten blind-embossed prints based on the symmetrical ground plans of ten mosques from various cities. The low-relief images on white paper work particularly well for architectural themes. The team, who live in Whitechapel — an area of London with a large Muslim population, feel that architecture crystallizes culture.

Finally, *Screen*, 1997, a collaborative project commissioned by Charles Booth-Clibborn, founder of Paragon Press, showcases the work of twelve young British artists, none of whom had made editioned prints before. The eleven screenprints in the portfolio, issued in an edition of 75, focus on themes of personal and artistic identity. Some are humorous; others are provocative. The artists (Darren Almond, Jake and Dinos Chapman, Mat Collishaw, Anya Gallaccio, Siobhán Hapaska, Abigail Lane, Georgina Starr, Sam Taylor-Wood, Gillian Wearing, Cerith Wyn Evans and Catherine Yass) have all been involved in making video works, and a number of the prints are photographic in origin.

In addition to the featured suites of prints, the exhibit

also includes 23 artist books selected by Elisabeth Fairman, Curator of Rare Books and Archives at the Yale Center. Blind-embossing, relief-rolling, wood-engraving, letterpress, screenprinting and various other techniques are represented in the group.

A symposium, held at the Center on April 9, raised the question "Just what is it that makes today's British prints so different, so appealing?" The answer seems to lie in the

sense of exploration inherent in the work-exploration of the self, of the environment, of art in general, and of print-making techniques in particular. The Yale Center for British Art is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 5:00 p.m. It is closed Mondays and major holidays. For more information call (203) 432-2800 or visit their website at www.ycba.edu.

International Miniature Print Competition at Connecticut Graphic Art Center

Marvin Bolotsky

Recently while escorting a Polish printmaker/curator gathering material for the Krakow Print Triennial 2000, I visited the Tyler Graphics workshop in Mount Kisco and was once again impressed by the quality of the prints as well as the gigantic size of some of the images. A short time later I experienced a similar excitement when viewing an exhibition at the Connecticut Graphic Art Center in Norwalk that was the antithesis of what I had seen at Tyler Graphics. The quality was equally excellent, but the prints were no more than four square inches. This was the 1999 International Miniature Print Competition sponsored by the Center, and the second mini-print competition held there. Eight artists from around the world are exhibiting 198 gem-like prints from March 28 through May 29.

In addition to the entire range of intaglio prints, wood engravings, woodcuts, silk screen and lithographs, new computer generated prints such as the iris print and the ink jet prints are represented. The aim of the competition according to the Center's director, Andrew Stasik, is to encourage graphic artists to work in the miniature format as well as offering the public an opportunity to view and purchase the fine work in this format created by artists here and abroad. Prints range from \$20 to \$225 and sales have been brisk.

Among those receiving cash prizes and purchase awards are Konstantin Chmutin, a Russian artist now living in New York City. Oleg Denisenko of the Ukraine, Helen Yaker from Greenwich, CT, Konstantin Kalynovych also of the Ukraine and Mike Addison of England. Other purchase awards were received by Susan Litsios of Switzerland, Maori Takami and Masaaki Ohya of Japan, Yuri Borovitsky of Russia and Anne Desmet of England.

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