

The Print Club of New York^{Inc}

Spring 2000

President's Greeting

Julian Hyman

This past winter was a very successful one for the Print Club of New York. It was distinguished by a number of varied, exciting and well-attended events. Among them might be noted the panel of experts who discussed "How to Evaluate Prints" in February and the trip to the Center for Innovative Print and Papermaking at Rutgers University in March where Judith Brodsky, Director of the Center, introduced us to the variety of exciting new techniques and images which characterizes the work of the Center. Looking forward to next year, our members have been invited to be the guests of Sanford Smith who sponsors the *Works on Paper* exhibition at the Sixty-seventh Street Armory. More information on this exciting event will be forthcoming.

We are also pleased to note that we maintained one hundred percent membership this year, and that we have a waiting list of prospective members for next year. We have appointed a committee to review the by-laws and to report back to the Board with suggestions for upgrading the existing by-laws.

We are pleased to announce that Bill Jacklin has agreed to create the Millenium presentation print for our members. Mr. Jacklin is represented in many of the major museums of the world including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art. The Club has been fortunate in its choice of major artists to produce our presentation prints, and we hope to continue this tradition in the future.

Lastly, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Club's membership, its Officers, members of the Board of Trustees, Committee chairs and Committee members for making my past year as President so enjoyable and so memorable.

Printmaking In Cuba

Alex J. Rosenberg

One of the apparent results of the United States' lack of relationship with Cuba is our loss of knowledge of what is occurring in Cuba. While the Cubans maintain relationships with almost all the nations in the world and enjoy cultural exchanges with many, until recently, we have had no reliable means to learn about current Cuban movements, be they political or cultural.

Actually, Cuba can be thought of as a very new country—only about 10 years old. From 1492 until 1990 it was controlled, first by the Spanish, then the United States, and finally the Russians. The effects of the Spanish and U.S. periods are most noticable; the Russians, who were in Cuba for less than 30 years, left very few signs of having influenced Cuban culture.

Spain has left Cuba with a language and many social traditions. Culturally, the United States, because of our geographic proximity, began to influence Cuban art as early as the 1880's—20 years before we defeated the Spanish to take over as the dominant influence. At that time, both the U.S.A. and Cuba left their traditional art ancestors, the British and Spanish respectively, and began to model art after French Impressionism. Since then, we have followed parallel lines in fine art and even in the period of estrangement the Cubans continue this tradition. The Russians had little effect on Cuban culture and social realism never really affected Cuban art. The American influence continued during the Russian period. We may have cut ourselves off from Cuba, but the Cuban artists remained knowledgeable about our art and advanced, following our movements. Perhaps they had the advantage of filtering out some of our unpopular mini-movements.

Printmaking followed this general course, originally portraying scenes of the cities and countryside, but because of economic restraints that have always existed in Cuba, the equipment used there today is mainly the same as used 100 years ago. The net result of this is that lithographs are mainly made on stone and printed on non-motorized presses; etchings and engravings involve no photo processes; and silkscreens are made as they were here many years ago, before the process became a mixture of automation and photography.

I will never forget the first time I met Belkis Ayon and had the privilege of viewing her remarkable prints. No one had to tell me I was looking at the work of a master. My wife Carole and I signed her to an agreement to be able to introduce her work into the U.S.A.—this before we knew anything about her or the method by which she made her prints.

Belkis died tragically last year in her early thirties, but before this, she achieved world fame during her very short career. About 7 years ago, while still a student at I.S.A., a graduate school of the arts in Havana, she was

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chosen to represent Cuba at the Venice Biennial. Upon graduation, she was named to be professor of printmaking. By the end of her life, she had enjoyed exhibitions in Spain, Germany, Mexico, Japan, Canada, here in New York, and in Los Angeles. She also was included in several U.S. museum traveling exhibitions, one of which is still on the road.

Belkis was a superb collotype artist who made murals with as many as six one-meter prints that fit each other. When I saw how she worked using old Kraft cardboard as her matrix and soft cheap paper to print on, I gave her money, and suggested she purchase acceptable paper and matrix material during her upcoming trip to Spain. Upon my next visit to Cuba, after Belkis had returned from Spain, I asked her how she liked working with good art materials. Her reply almost floored me. She had tried the better materials but her results were poor. Having learned in Cuba, she could only get the effects she desired on these inferior materials.

Another excellent printmaker is Sandra Ramos, who is best known for her color-intense aquatints and mezzotints. She has an ironic sense of humor and uses her excellent art to comment on present living conditions in Cuba. She also makes suitcases that are sculptural in their contents as well as being painted inside and out.

Minerva Lopez, who has worked with Vlaadi in Mexico, creates prints and paintings executed in pointillism, using real and imagined native scenes. Roberto Fabelo is one of

Print Club member Alex Rosenberg is a visiting professor at the ISA Institute, a graduate school of fine arts in Havana. Mr. and Mrs. Rosenberg are also Board Members of the Ludwig Foundation of Cuba, a foundation formed by the famous art collector Peter Ludwig of Germany for promoting young Cuban artists around the world and for bringing international exhibitions to Cuba.

Cuba's best known artists. His surrealistic scenes are usually executed in watercolor, tempera and oils; however, he has made lithographs using the same imagery.

Well known printmakers from an earlier or present period, some of whom are still working, include Humberto Castro, Nelson Domínguez, Antonia Eiriz, José Gómez Fresquet, Umberto Peña, Ángel Manuel Ramírez, Alfredo Sosabravo and Rafael Zarza. Many younger artists work in the three major print ateliers in the Old City of Havana, as well as ISA, the graduate school of the arts, producing prints in every kind of experimental art style. Some of them have already established their reputations. Previously mentioned were Belkis Ayón and Sandra Ramos. Other, lesser known but possible stars of the new decade, are Abel Barroso, Agustín Bajarano, Yamilis Brito, Marlon Castellanos, Dania Fleites, Ibrahim Miranda, Antonio Núñez, Isary Paulet, Juan Carlos Rivero and Mirena Suárez.

Other well known current Cuban printmakers are Carlos Garaicoa, Flora Fong, Saida del Río, and Ibrahim Miranda. Many younger artists work in the three major print ateliers in the Old City of Havana, producing prints in every kind of experimental art style.

Perhaps this flowering of Cuban art won't last as tourism invades the rapidly disappearing innocence of the Cuban printmakers, and money dictates what the artist creates. But for now, Cuban printmakers are still expressing themselves best by making original, very limited edition prints while employing traditional methods.

Upcoming Print Club Events

Thursday, Sept. 14, 7:30 p.m.

Bill Jacklin will present an artist's talk and viewing of the 2000-2001 Presentation Print at the Liederkrantz Club, 6 East 87th St.

Thursday, Oct. 17, 6-8:00 p.m.

Seventh Annual Artists Showcase, The National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Square South.

Also of interest to Print Club members:

"Will Barnet: A Timeless World and Will Barnet in Context," The Montclair Museum, 3 South Mountain Avenue, Montclair, NJ (973-746-5555), May 14 - Aug. 20.

"Frankenthaler: Prints & Proofs," exhibition at The Connecticut Graphic Arts Center, 299 West Avenue, Norwalk, CT. (203-899-7999), Sept. 17-Oct. 28.

Hiroshige At The Brooklyn Museum

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

I decided to time my visit to *Hiroshige: One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* (Brooklyn Museum of Art, February 18-April 23, 2000) to coincide with the peak of the cherry blossoms in the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens, thereby putting myself in the appropriate frame of mind to view the Japanese print exhibition. I duly marked my calendar for a Friday in mid April.

Unfortunately, when the appointed day arrived, it was pouring with rain. Nevertheless, I determined to press ahead with my plan, taking a quick stroll through the grove of cherry trees and stopping in the conservatory to view the bonsai display before heading to the museum. My only major disappointment was that the Japanese garden, closed for restoration since last year, still had not reopened.

There were only a handful of people in the garden that day; the same could not be said for the exhibition. Nearing the end of its run, the show was almost crowded, making it necessary to wait one's turn to view each print. Patience was, however, rewarded. The exhibit was spectacular.

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797-1858) was born in Edo (renamed Tokyo in 1868) to a low-ranking member of the samurai class. Japan's military leaders, who had usurped

power from the court in Kyoto, and ruled Tokyo, defacto political capital since 1603. By the eighteenth century, it was the largest city in the world, with a population of more than one million and a growing merchant class that helped to shape a new, urban culture.

Hiroshige, like his father, became part of the shogunal fire-fighting brigade. However, most samurai retainers needed to have second jobs in order to make ends meet. Thus, at the age of thirty-one, Hiroshige began to study the art of ukiyo-e (images of the *floating world*) under the master Utagawa Toyohiro. He soon had a successful career, becoming known for his skill at making color woodblock prints with sensitive atmospheric and seasonal effects.

Because woodblock prints were relatively inexpensive — one print cost about the same amount as a bowl of noodles — they were accessible to a wide audience. In order to entice the growing merchant class to purchase more prints, artists often issued them in series. Hiroshige's *Fifty-three Stations of the Tokaido* (1832) was an especially popular set.

The Edo series was the artist's last great body of work, the culmination of his career. *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* was issued between 1856 and 1858. The artist died in a cholera epidemic later that year.

The prints, of which there are actually 118, depict celebrated sites in and around Edo, places associated with relaxation and leisure, many of them along the banks of the Sumida River. Many of these places are associated with specific seasons.

Prints #1 - #42 represent the first three months of the year, considered to be spring in Japan. The New Year begins the season. Mount Fuji appears in a number of the scenes. Print #8, *Suruga-cho*, is an unusually symmetrical composition for a Japanese print, with the sacred mountain at the center and the urban street, *Suruga-cho*, seeming to lead straight up to it.

Of course, a number of the spring prints feature cherry blossom viewing. Print #11, *Kiyomizu Hall and Shinobazu Pond at Ueno*, shows cherry blossoms in full bloom at Ueno Park, balanced by a corner of Kiyomizu Hall. Print #14, *Temple Gardens, Nippori*, is filled with pink weeping cherries and evergreens.

After examining the series of prints associated with spring, viewers passed into a small gallery containing a glass case filled with woodblocks. This allowed visitors to see the technique used for making these beautiful prints, with a different block needed for each color.

Summer, the fourth, fifth and sixth months, is featured in prints #43 through #72. Many of the subjects are water scenes, the most well known probably being #58, *Sudden Shower over the Shin-Ohashi Bridge and Atake*, which inspired Vincent Van Gogh. In fact, in a small gallery off to one side, viewers could see his as well as other Japanese-inspired paintings by Monet and Whistler.

Prints #73 through #98 depict autumn, months seven, eight and nine in the Japanese calendar. During this season, maple-leaf viewing is a popular pastime, and there are a number of urban festivals. Print #84, *Grandpa's Teahouse, Meguro*, features Fuji in the distance, while #86, *Naito Shinjuku*, Yotsuya, takes an unusual, low vantage point between a horse's legs. This ground-level position has a special relationship to this subject because it depicts an area of special prostitutes who were known as "flower-bloomers in the horse droppings of Yotsuga."¹ Print #89, *Moon Pine, Ueno*, also uses an unusual framing device, a pine branch twisted into a circular form like a moon gate. Print #94, *Maple Trees at Mama, Tekona Shrine and Linked Bridge*, has as its central motif a close-up view of a maple branch with a landscape beyond.

The final group in the series, prints #99 to #118, depicts winter, with snow viewing being a featured activity. Among the most lovely snow scenes are #111, *Meguro Drum Bridge and Sunset Hill*, and #112, *Atagoshita and Yabu Lane*, the image reproduced on the exhibit brochures and promotional mailings.

Although the Hiroshige prints are gone from Brooklyn, as are the cherry blossoms for another year, the museum's beautifully produced and lavishly illustrated catalogue remains available, a valuable resource both for those who visited the exhibit and those who missed it. As for me, my stroll in the rain beneath the pink-laden boughs of Brooklyn's cherry trees was the perfect prelude to this exhibit, so rich in seasonal atmosphere.

¹ Museum label.

Protecting Prints From Ultraviolet Light

Laura Stirton Aust

Light is an unavoidable hazard to print collections. Light causes weakening and yellowing of paper fibers. It also causes many dyes and pigments to fade or change in color. The damage from light is not reversible. Faded pigments can not be put back, and light burn will unevenly stain paper. Therefore, decreasing exposure to all light, especially ultraviolet (UV) is a significant concern in protecting artwork. UV is the highest energy and most damaging light and mostly invisible to the human eye. Eliminating UV from light has very little visual effect on prints. Most museums filter UV from light sources and reduce light exposure by limiting the number of hours each day that art is illuminated. There

are also guidelines for museums intended to minimize damage from light. For example, works of art on paper should be stored in darkness with exhibition not to exceed six weeks every two years. These rules obviously are not practical for private collectors. But, reducing UV is manageable for anyone who is willing to take the effort necessary to protect their prints from the hazards of light.

Films and Window Coverings

The primary source of ultraviolet radiation is sunlight. Window films and some coverings provide UV filtering without blocking substantial visible light. UV filtering of sunlight will help to safeguard prints, furnishings and textiles while also reducing the heat entering a window.

Clear and tinted window films are maintenance-free

and often carry a ten year warranty. Most films have a metallic coating that reflects 50% of solar heat and 98% of ultraviolet radiation. The coating slows heat loss in winter by 15% because it increases the window's insulation. There are many brands available. Two distributors I have worked with are Solis International (800-220-2525 and Solar Master Corporation (800-257-0448). The Internet and Yellow Pages list many others.

Some condominium and apartment regulations will not allow films which from the exterior may give windows a different appearance from those windows without film. If film is not an option, then window coverings, i.e. shades or curtains are an alternative. The disadvantage compared to applied window films is that window coverings may reduce UV while closed, and they should be closed even on cloudy days. It is also worth noting that even indirect sunlight contains UV. In fact, northern light contains more UV radiation per foot candle (a measurement of brightness) than southern light. There are, however, materials which filter UV without blocking the view. Sol-R-Veil (212-294-7200) makes a translucent fabric roller shade that blocks 98% of UV and is used in many museums and corporations. Solar Screen (718-924-7200), mylar roller shades and sheets (a thicker version of the applied films), are also a possibility.

Protecting Artwork in the Frame

Glazing is a protective covering used in framing artwork. The two most common glazing materials are glass and plastic. Glass is rigid and not easily scratched. It has no static electric charge, but it is heavy and breakable. Tru Vue Conservation Glass and Denglas are both satisfactory UV filters used for glazing. "Non-glare" or "anti-reflective" glass has an etched surface which scatters light to prevent reflections but does not filter UV.

Plastic is light weight and less breakable than glass. But it is easily scratched and not as rigid as glass. Plastic also carries a static electric charge which encourages the lifting of loose media found on pencil drawings, mezzotints and pastels. There are a number of glazing products which fil-

ter UV. Acrylite, Lexan, Lucite, Perspex, Picture Saver and Plexiglas all make plastic glazing with UV filtering properties. Your framer is likely to stock several brands. Most of these products are colorless and will filter UV for the life of the plastic. As the plastic ages it may take on a gray or yellow cast. It is still filtering UV, but you may want to replace it if the appearance of your art is affected.

Fluorescent Bulb Sleeves

Flourescent light contains less UV than sunlight though the UV output is still significant. Because flourescent fixtures produce little heat and use very little electricity they often remain illuminated for many hours. Since light damage is cumulative, it takes only a few weeks for fluorescent light to damage art. But if fluorescent light is filtered there is much less danger. Talas (212-219-0770) is one of many distributors of mylar sleeves that cover fluorescent bulbs and control UV without reducing visible light. A sleeve will also prevent shattering of the bulb. These sleeves will filter UV for the life of the product, but, like most plastic, as it ages it becomes brittle. So if the sleeve cracks or chips it should be replaced. If the light seems gray or yellow, you may also want to replace the sleeve.

Sometimes I am asked if it is necessary to use all these methods to filter UV. Having seen paper burned by the sun in only a few days, I cannot over emphasize the dangers of UV. A newspaper left on a window sill for a week provides a graphic example of the damaging effects of sunlight. I believe in using multiple defenses. Window film is the most difficult and expensive undertaking. But films are the best first step in a preservation strategy and they have benefits beyond protecting artwork. The next most protective approach is UV filtering glazing. An added benefit is that every print framed with UV filtering glazing is protected if it is loaned or donated to family or an institution. Finally, sleeves for fluorescent bulbs are simple to install and inexpensive. Don't wait for light to damage your collection. Avoid illuminating pieces whenever possible, and do all that you can to reduce UV from the light on your prints.

On Becoming a Collector

Elaine Hyman

The advent of the printing press made affordable multiple images available to the public. It became possible to collect etchings, woodcuts, engravings and aquatints. Later came lithographs, silkscreen prints, computer generated prints and the varied, experimental techniques which characterize contemporary printmaking. With such a variety of fine prints available, it has become important for the collector to choose a period or subject that might be developed into a collection. By narrowing the focus it is easier to become more knowledgeable and hence more discerning in the choice of prints you wish to collect.

Choosing dealers with whom you develop rapport is another important aspect of collecting. Many print dealers handle a wide range of prints, but often they have a particular category of special interest or expertise. Perhaps they

may represent the estate of an artist that interests you. The best print dealers share a commitment to advise honestly on everything from the acquisition or sale of a single print to the formation or liquidation of an entire collection. They will educate you and sell you the best print available. The key issues when buying a print are authenticity, quality, rarity, condition, provenance and value. When the price of art is rising, the idea of art as investment gains credibility. However, art chosen solely on the basis of investment potential will eventually yield a mediocre collection. Over time you will realize that a collection based on knowledge and discernment rather than current market value or "hot" reputation will yield the greatest satisfaction both aesthetically and as an investment.

We decided over thirty years ago to collect the best prints of American artists rather than minor works in oil. It was a slow learning process which involved winnowing out early choices, but luckily we found a knowl-

edgable dealer, Sylvan Cole, who taught us to see why a certain print was a better choice in quality and image than others by the same artist. We were able to buy prints by Thomas Hart Benton, Edward Hopper, Grant Wood and Lionel Feininger which provided a wonderful beginning for our new found passion. At the Mary Ryan Gallery we added our first contemporary artists to our collection, and friendships with the artists became an additional bonus. Expansion of our collection allowed us to donate prints to museums, and this led us to warm relationships with curators of prints at the Brooklyn Museum, the Montclair Museum and the Cleveland Art Museum.

Seeking out prints at auctions and print fairs have also added to the enjoyment of collecting. Print fairs provide the opportunity to meet dealers from all over the world. There is a cautionary note, however, in regard to buying at

auction. The work should be examined carefully out of the frame for condition and authenticity. Buying on the Internet does not allow such a close examination of the work and may lead to disappointment. The Print Club of New York has furthered our education by providing events at which experts share their knowledge on all fields relating to prints including conservation, valuation, historical styles, emerging artists etc. It has also been gratifying to add the annual presentation print to our collection.

Collecting prints has enriched our lives in many ways. Not only has the value of our collection substantially increased, but also we have made good friends with whom we share our love of prints and, most important of all, we now have the additional pleasure of giving fine prints to our children and grandchildren, the next generation of collectors.

Recent Membership Events

Members Hear Panel Discussion on Evaluating Prints

Arlyne Lesser

Did we pay too much for our print? How do we know if the print we bought is good value? What criteria should we look for when buying prints? These were some of the questions discussed on February 8 by a distinguished panel representing the viewpoints of the auction specialist, Todd Weyman, museum curator, Marilyn Kushner, dealer, Jim Kempner and artist, Clare Romano. Their remarks as to how they approach the question of valuation provided a large audience of members and their guests with discerning insights as well as practical information that individuals can apply to their own collections.

Todd Weyman, the evening's first speaker, heads the Prints and Drawings Department at the Swann Galleries, a leading auction house dealing with works on paper. Mr. Weyman has had extensive experience evaluating prints, Swann selling approximately 3000 lots of prints a year from private collections, estates and institutions. He shared with the audience a list of questions he uses in order to evaluate a print for sale. These include: (1) What appeal does this particular artist have in the market? He noted that artists have their up and down cycles, that different eras prefer different themes and styles. There are also changes in the market from year to year and even from sale to sale, and this must be taken into consideration when evaluating a print. Hence, based on precedent, using price guides and auction catalogs, the determination must be made as to how well this artist is selling. (2) How does this particular print fit into the artist's oeuvre? Is it a weak or a strong print? Even a great artist has a bad day, Mr. Weyman noted. (3) Is this an attractive image, an aesthetically pleasing image for a general audience or of interest only to a small group of collectors? (4) What is the quality of the impression? This is a crucial question not only for Old Masters but also for modern prints. (5) What is the quality of the color, vibrancy of color being a determinant of value? (6) What is the condition? Mr. Weyman stressed the importance of looking at the print outside of

the frame. (7) Is there a provenance? This question is particularly important in regard to Old Masters since it provides information as to the authenticity and prices paid in the past. (8) Has the artist been sold before at auction, how many times and how recently? The issue here is whether the print might have exhausted its market by being sold too recently and too often. (9) How scarce is the image? Mr. Weyman believes that rarity increases value. For example, over the past five years Old Masters have risen in price largely because they are a vanishing commodity. The same can be said for modern American prints of the 20's and 30's which were made in small editions and hence cannot satisfy the demand. Finally, Mr. Weyman stressed the crucial importance of research to determine whether the print is right as stated, to determine its state, and to look at the price history at auction over the past fifteen years.

Marilyn Kushner, the next speaker, is Curator of Prints at the Brooklyn Museum, and she brought the perspective of a museum to the question of valuing a print. A museum collection, she stressed, is primarily a documentation of a given period in the history of art, and hence different criteria must be used to evaluate a purchase than the questions asked by an individual putting together a personal collection. When acquiring art for a museum, a primary consideration is knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the collection, defining the gaps and looking for prints that build the strength of the collection and fill in those gaps. For example, the Brooklyn Museum is strong in 19th and 20th century art; it is not as strong as the Metropolitan Museum in Old Masters. Hence, Ms. Kushner she does not look for Old Masters but rather she may look for American landscape etchings of the 1880's, African-American art of the 1930's-40's and New York School abstract expressionists from the 1950's. She also stressed the importance of remaining current, so she spends a good deal of time in Chelsea, looking at contemporary art.

In recommending acquisitions, she looks for reasonably priced, high quality prints, some historical and some contemporary that fill gaps in the collection. Thus, this year's

acquisitions included a 1995 print by Chuck Close and a woodcut by Arthur Wesley Dow. State is another consideration. Generally she looks for the most desirable state. However, she may also buy a first state by an artist even if there are four other states in order to develop a historic record to use as a teaching tool. The one criterion she does not use is whether the artist is "in" or "out." The primary goal when buying for a museum, unlike the goal of most private collectors, is to develop a representative historical collection of what was happening in printmaking in the United States and Europe during a given period.

Jim Kempner is a dealer specializing in contemporary prints at the Kempner Fine Arts Gallery in Chelsea. He also lectures on contemporary prints and stresses the importance of educating collectors about prints. The more the individual knows about the history of prints, important publishers, the size of editions, and the more he consults with knowledgeable experts, the better he will be able to choose a print for his collection and understand its value.

Mr. Kempner also listed his criteria for evaluating contemporary prints. Primary among them are four factors: who is the artist, what is the image, how rare is the print and what is its condition. In regard to the artist, value is affected by whether this is a young artist, in mid-career or acknowledged as a master. Young "hot" artists do not necessarily sell for higher prices since the dealer will generally not start with high prices for a young artist just beginning his career. The image, Mr. Kempner continued, is what we see first, what attracts the eye and hence is a major factor in establishing value. Also, if the image is an important signature image in an artist's career such as Jasper Johns' flag, it will be valued higher. Rarity, not just edition size, is another important consideration in establishing value. Small editions may be more readily available than prints from a large edition which are so popular that they rarely come on the market. Condition is also crucial. Prints from the 60's in particular, have condition problems due to light staining and bad framing. "Sweet Dreams Baby," by Roy Lichtenstein was printed in an edition of 250 plus proofs. It is rare to find one with bright yellow. Robert Rauschenberg's black and white lithographs from the 60's need cleaning, and though not all prints clean well, others do. He advised consulting with a conservator on the question of condition.

Some other factors Mr. Kempner mentioned in establishing value included who were the publishers and printers. ULAE prints from the 50's, for example, bring high prices because collectors look for them. Color prints generally have a higher value than black and white prints, and the size of the print may affect its price, although a small print by Helen Frankenthaler will not be valued lower because it is small. Mr. Kempner concluded by noting that the quality of the impression is an important fac-

tor when valuing older prints, but not for contemporary prints which are highly consistent in their quality. Similarly, while provenance is important for older prints, including those from the 60's, it is not a factor in the market for contemporary prints.

The final speaker was the artist Clare Romano, a Distinguished Professor of Fine Arts at Pratt Institute whose work is in the collections of major museums here and abroad and who is co-author with her husband John Ross of three books on printmaking. Speaking of herself, Ms. Romano came to printmaking as a painter with a desire to explore color in lithographs. As a young artist selling and pricing were the last items on her mind, but as she entered the marketplace she realized that an artist must recognize supply and demand and be aware of changes in the art market. Interests change, images change, the climate for making prints changes, the medium as explored by a variety of artists changes and today, she noted, there are possibilities for the print artist that never existed before. The general climate is important in regard to the marketplace, and the 1970's and 80's were periods of great demand for prints. There is far less demand today, which is a consideration in pricing a print, as is the fact that a print is a multiple.

Ms. Romano's general criteria for pricing her work takes into account the size of an edition, the size of the print, the media used, the number of colors and whether the print has been made for the general market or on a commission. Pricing, however, she emphasized is her least concern. Her primary concern is to make a wonderful image that pleases her.

The symposium closed with a consideration of issues raised by the audience. Among these were the question of how to deal with unrealistic expectation on the part of the seller. Looking at the records for comparable prices was noted as a crucial tool for establishing a fair price. Reference material can be found in price guides such as Gordon's annual guide to print auction prices or Art Net. Comm. which provides a data base of auction prices for the past 15-20 years. In response to whether numbering in an edition affects value, i.e. whether #1 is a better print than #25, Clare Romano explained that the normal practice of the artist is to examine all the prints in order to get a uniform edition. Only after this is done are the prints numbered and there is no special order or significance to the numbering process. Where numbering is important, however, is where the artist used dry point since the burr wears down.

The symposium concluded with the panel agreeing that in order to assess the value of a print it is necessary to develop a sensitivity to quality through self-education, research and the experience of looking at many prints. However, the "bottom line" as Marilyn Kushner indicated, is that if you love a print and can afford it, trust your own judgement.

Judith Brodsky Leads Tour of the Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Papermaking.

Arlyne Lesser

Despite a pouring rain, a large number of Club members and their guests made the trip on March 11 to the Center for Innovative Print and

Papermaking housed at the Mason Gross Arts Building at Rutgers University. The trip was well worth it. Judith Brodsky, Director of the Center, provided a tour of the five year old, well equipped print and papermaking facility and provided a fascinating survey of the

complicated, innovative, work being done at the Center.

Ms. Brodsky began her discussion by taking members on a tour of the Center's facilities. The heart of the professional studio, she noted, was lithography. Although stones are available, artists of the 90's preferred photolithography which involves transferring the image onto a plate photographically and then drawing with tusche or crayons on the plate. The advantages of this process is that unlike drawing on stone which must be ground clean to begin again if the artist wishes to make many changes, using plates allows the artist to make these changes until the desired image has been achieved. The bright, well designed studios at the Center include a well ventilated acid room for etching; a computer laboratory containing an Iris printer which is used in conjunction with hand processes; a book art room containing a collection of type for hand type setting, also often combined with computer typesetting; a silk screen room, though not many artists are using the silk screen process today; a dark room for photographic processes, and a papermaking facility.

Papermaking was of particular interest to Print Club members and Ms. Brodsky demonstrated how paper is made. She noted that the process used today is still the traditional one using mold, deckle and fiber pulp. She also noted, however, that artists today are making and using handmade paper in creative ways. For instance artists have made paper from vegetable fibers, from beets, turnips and sugar cane and these textures have been incorporated into the print. She also described the process of pulp painting in which pure powdered pigment combined with paper pulp are used to paint a drawing onto the wet sheet of paper, becoming part of the paper itself.

After a delicious lunch, graciously provided by Ms. Brodsky, Club members were treated to a display of prints made at the center. Their originality, technical complexity, brilliant and innovative images, and the quality of color and finish were dazzling. As Ms. Brodsky indicated, the key to the extraordinary creativity of these prints is that they have been executed in an academic setting. They are not market driven, and the artists can experiment with

complicated techniques to create the image. They may for example combine elaborate collés (collage) with more traditional lithography, intaglio and wood cut as well as computer generated images. Ms. Brodsky explained that artists were not allowed to bring work already created and that they are invited to work at the Center on the basis of their significance in the art world. Some artists have had experience with printmaking while others are introduced to the process. Working with master printers and paper makers, these artists remain in residence for a minimum of two weeks and a maximum of six. They come from all over the world as well as a yearly group of New Jersey artists. Ms. Brodsky also noted the changes in style and technique over the thirty years she has been working with printmakers. In the 1960's fine art printmaking did not use photographic processes. In the 1970's through the 90's the photo transferred plates became the center of the printmaking process. Today the computer has opened up new and exciting possibilities and has become the favored process for creative breakthroughs.

Ms Brodsky displayed and discussed the innovative techniques used in a number of recent prints. The general impression taken from the prints which members examined was that of enormous creativity and complexity in the use of techniques. Miriam Shapiro, for example, made a print entitled "Homage to Frida Kalo" in which Kalo's torso and face were printed separately from a photo of one of Kalo's paintings. Then many fabric flowers were colléd on to the skirt, and the flowers were photocopied, reduced and printed with the face and torso as a lithograph. Kiki Smith had photos made of herself in period costumes for a series of images of women, drew from the photos on little pieces of plastic which were transferred onto photogravure plates. She then worked on the plates with aquatint and dry point and steelfaced the plates for printing.

The examples noted above are only a few of the prints which Ms. Brodsky displayed. The variety of artists and their extraordinary facility in using printmaking techniques testify to the vitality of the work being done at the Center under its director, Ms. Brodsky.

William Dane Speaks on the Print Collection of the Newark Public Library

Elaine Hyman

Print Club members and their guests were treated to a pleasurable and informative lecture and demonstration of prints on April 12 by William Dane, Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Newark Public Library. A delightful speaker, Mr. Dane related a bit of Newark's history and the development of the Newark Public Library. During the mid-nineteenth century Newark was a thriving city with a variety of small factories. In 1887 a vote was passed to create a free public library, and in 1901 the library was completed. There are now 23,000 prints in the Library's collection, ranging from Old Masters to contemporary works on paper. The Library also holds 3,600 books on prints, over 500 artist books, 4,000 posters and collections of greeting cards, lithographic sheet music, autographs, and children's illustrated books.

Among the Library's holdings, examples of which Mr. Dane showed to Club members, are American prints from

the late 1800's, German Expressionist prints, School of Paris prints, WPA prints, an important collection encompassing the history of silk screen prints from the 1940's to the 1960's and a collection of Japanese prints. Mr. Dane noted that the Library received all of the New Jersey artists' prints made at the Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Papermaking, and he personally has brought back many excellent prints from Puerto Rico which he has donated to the Library.

Mr. Dane demonstrated the variety of the Library's holdings by showing choice examples to his audience. Among these were beautifully colored books of Japanese prints called Ehon, a form which most of the Club members had never seen before. He also showed examples of Old Master prints, Japanese woodcuts and American lithographs, etchings and woodcuts, commenting that Raphael Soyer and Riva Helfond were among his particular favorites in this group.

Mr. Dane told his audience of the many personal relationships he has developed with artists who have written interesting letters to him and have donated many of their prints to the Newark Library. He read a few of these letters including one from John Sloan.

Mr. Dane ended his lecture by asking, "Why Prints?" and he answered that prints have made affordable the

works of many fine artists whose paintings are out of reach of the general public. He generously offered to review the Library's collection with visitors if they called in advance for an appointment. All of those who attended agreed that it was a very special and informative event and we wish to thank Mr. Dane for sharing his enthusiasm and expertise with us.

College Art Association Tribute To Robert Blackburn

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

The College Art Association, the national professional organization for teachers of art and art history at colleges and universities, recently bestowed one of its Lifetime Achievement Awards on printmaker Robert Blackburn (b. 1920).

Blackburn was also the subject of a paper presented at CAA's annual meeting, held in New York City from February 23 to 26, 2000. In a session entitled *Reality, Mythology and Agency: The Historiography of African-American Art*, Deborah Cullen of El Museo del Barrio spoke on "What Role to Take? Robert Blackburn as a Case Study."

Cullen, argued that Blackburn's career is too often seen one or two dimensionally, either through his connection to the WPA or in his role as founder of The Printmaking Workshop (PMW) in 1948.

Cullen points out that viewing Blackburn as "black artist of the WPA" is a very narrow view, considering the artist's work only to the age of twenty. Similarly, identifying Blackburn as "teacher and catalyst for future students," significant as that role has been and continues to be, overlooks the importance of the printmaker's own mature work, which must be situated squarely in the forefront of post-World War II American modernism.

"Why," Cullen asks, "hasn't Blackburn been considered as a key American modernist printmaker?" Clearly, he deserves to be seen in that light.

Bob Blackburn was in attendance at the CAA session in which his work and historical role were discussed. He participated in the question and answer session following the presentation, and he received a standing ovation from the members of the audience. One hopes that the CAA's recognition of Blackburn will go a long way towards righting history's omissions.

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