

The Print Club of New York^{Inc}

Winter 2000

President's Greeting

Julian Hyman

The Print Club of New York is in the process of commissioning its ninth Presentation Print and is entering the new Millennium with a record of accomplishment. The quality of the prints has been exceptional and equally important so has been the quality of our educational programs. Our membership is filled, and when an opening occurs we have been able to add knowledgeable and helpful new members.

During the past year, the Board of Trustees has discussed the possibility of publishing a second print each year in a smaller edition that could be purchased on a voluntary basis. The Board welcomes the opinion of the Club's membership as to the feasibility of such a proposal.

We are looking forward to exciting programs in the coming months, and I urge you to look for the announcement of these programs. We have installed a new Committee for Public Relations headed by Board Member Dorothy Kretchmer. Club members are invited to work on the Committee, or to share ideas with its members. We would like to encourage participation from our members in all of our activities. You can reach us by calling 212-479-7915 or writing to The Print Club of New York, P.O. Box 4477 Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163. Please let us hear from you.

We want to wish you a most Happy New year and everything good for you in the new Millennium.

The LeRoy Neiman Center for Print Studies at Columbia University School of the Arts

Arlyne Lesser

The LeRoy Neiman Center within Columbia University's School of the Arts was founded in 1995 with a gift of six million dollars to the School by the well known print artist LeRoy Neiman. Additionally Columbia University also made a commitment to renovate Dodge Hall for the School of the Arts with more than 7,000 square feet in the building devoted to the Neiman Center for state-of-the art studios in intaglio, lithography, silk screening and computer generated prints. The gift also provided fellowships for graduate students.

The Center embodies a unique two-fold mission and structure. First, it can accommodate up to 350 students a year in innovative graduate and undergraduate studies in printmaking, and second, it was established as an academic workshop receptive to the production of contemporary art by artists invited to the campus. Their works would then be published by the Center. The first students entered in 1997, and the Center's first published edition was Kiki Smith's project "Tidal" in 1998, done in collaboration with Tomas VuDaniel, head of printmaking.

The Director of the Center is Allan Hacklin, LeRoy Neiman Professor of Art, whose work has been exhibited in numerous solo exhibitions throughout the U.S. and abroad and whose paintings are in the collections of major museums. The Center's Master Printer is Kevin Falco who has served as a Master Printer on the staff of major print publishers, among them Petersburg Press and Tyler Graphics, and whose work is also in the collections of major American museums.

The academic component of the Center provides instruction to undergraduate and graduate students in a separate studio devoted to these classes. Currently 175 students participate in printing and photography per semester. In an interview Professor Hacklin stressed the interdisciplinary nature of the academic program which includes photography and digital computer imagery along with classes in more traditional print media. He emphasized that printmaking today is not medium specific and that in keeping with the mission of the Center to offer innovative art training, young artists are encouraged to experiment with a variety of techniques that will support the images they wish to convey.

Professor Hacklin also commented on the importance of image development in contemporary printmaking. He pointed out that the 1960's proved to be a watershed on how printmaking was viewed, that prior to that time process and technique came first, and the artist was trained primarily in the techniques of printmaking. During the 1960's the Pop Art movement brought about a profound

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change as artists never trained as printmakers began to experiment with printmaking techniques. To them the image came first, and working in close collaboration with master printers, technique became the means of expressing that image. Today, Professor Hacklin commented, many artists have gone a step further and the conceptual idea precedes both image development and technical execution. Professor Hacklin also stressed that there are no aesthetic biases in the Center's print department and that the aim is to aid the student in expressing his concept and his image through a variety of techniques. Thus, while the Center offers introductory courses in printmaking and

special classes in silk screen, intaglio, lithography and relief, it also offers an advanced course in printmaking, open to undergraduate and graduate students that encourages experimentation in a variety of media. The course is taught by two or three professional artists in master classes. The aim is to encourage students to be creative in a multi-media format, using digitally adapted imaging, Xerox transfer, photo plates etc. Adjunct Professors Peter Halley, Kiki Smith and Terry Winters along with Kevin Falco, Adjunct Assistant Professor, co-taught an advanced class last year. Each artist interacted in a different way with the students. Terry Winters assigned a special project to each student while Kiki Smith focused on artists' books. This year's advanced class will be led by Assistant Professor Tomas Vu Daniel and artists Ellen Gallagher and Barry LeVa.

In addition to offering classes, at the heart of the Center is its mission to provide a professional print studio where artists, many of whom have never made prints before, are invited to produce an edition that the Center will publish. Master Printer Kevin Falco, assisted by two graduate students, is responsible for production in the studio. Here, too, Mr. Falco noted the importance of expressing the artist's image and breaking ground technically to produce what may never have been done before.

Although publication is the eventual goal, there is no time limit set on a project, no commercial urgency to publish, and the artist can work on editions that may not be immediately commercially viable. The Center's first publication in 1998, in an edition of 39, was Kiki Smith's artist's book, "Tidal," emphasizing the relationship between the moon and waves. Thirteen phases of the moon made at the Columbia University Observatory were printed as photogravures and combined with images of the ocean at Coney Island using Professor Thomas Roma's panoramic camera. (Truly a Columbia University collaborative effort as Professor Hacklin noted). The Center has a distribution agreement with Pace Gallery and any funds from the sale of the prints are used to support the Center and provide student fellowships.

Among works completed or in progress at the Center are those by Alexis Rockman, Elliot Green, and Ellen Gallagher. Additional works include former graduate students Tim Gardner who has his first show at the 303 Gallery in New York, and Greg Mahoney. For the future, Professor Hacklin indicated that the Center will continue to invite well known artists who wish to work on unusual projects as well as mid career and young artists who have never made prints before. Some areas being considered for future projects include artists' books, and photography made into gravures.

Prof. Hacklin concluded by stressing the University's debt to LeRoy Neiman whose generosity and vision has made this innovative Center possible. Mr. Neiman has established a legacy for the future, he commented, an academic workshop which can provide a supportive environment for both students and artists to practice their art free from the constraints of the commercial market place.

Upcoming Print Club Events

Saturday, March 11, 11:30-1:30

Visit to the Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Papermaking at the Mason Gross Arts Building, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. Judith Brodsky, Executive Director will lead a tour and discussion of the Center. Details will follow.

Wednesday, April 12, 7:30 p.m.

William Dane, Curator of Prints and Drawings, will speak on the print collection of the Newark Public Library. The Library has an extensive print collection with a large concentration on 20th century American printmakers. It also has a fine collection of Old Masters, Japanese woodblock prints, German Expressionist and School of Paris prints. Mr. Dane is a distinguished art historian, author and lecturer who has written widely on printmaking. The meeting will be held at the Liederkrantz Club, 6 East 87th St.

Tuesday, May 16, 7:30 p.m.

Marvin Bolotsky will speak on "Eastern European Printmakers: A Contemporary View." Mr. Bolotsky has collected prints during trips to Eastern Europe since 1990. He will discuss the blossoming of the graphic arts since the fall of the Berlin Wall. The meeting will be held at the Liederkrantz Club, 6 East 87th Street.

Wednesday, May 24, 6:30 p.m.

Judith Solodkin of Solo Impressions, master printer and publisher, will demonstrate the lithographic process and discuss publishing lithographs today. Solo Impressions is at 601 West 26th St., between 11th and 12 Avenues.

Thursday, June 1, 6:00 p.m. Cocktail party; 7:00 p.m. Annual Membership Meeting

The Liederkrantz Club, 6 East 87th St. Members are invited to attend the cocktail party and to vote on the Print Club slate of officers and members of the Board of Trustees.

Will Barnet Exhibition To Be Held at the Montclair Art Museum

The Montclair Art Museum in Montclair, New Jersey will present two exhibitions from May 14 through August 20 featuring the work of Will Barnet. "Will Barnet: A Timeless World" is a comprehensive retrospective exhibition featuring outstanding works from all periods of this renowned painter-printmaker's career. The show will include over 50 paintings, prints and works on paper from the 1920's through the 1990's. It will include figurative Social Realist works from the 1930's, abstractions from the 40's and 50's and later figurative works. Concurrently, the Museum also will exhibit "Will Barnet in Context: American Art from the Permanent Collection" which will place Barnet's work in

the context of other works by artists such as Arshile Gorky, Stuart Davis, Raphael Soyer, Ad Reinhardt and Steve Wheeler among others. The Print Club's 1998 Presentation Print was "Between Life and Life," a black and white lithograph by Mr. Barnet, and Print Club members will be particularly interested in this exhibition.

Gail Stavitsky, Chief Curator of the Museum, will curate both exhibitions and write the catalogue, the first substantial publication to unify Barnet's entire career.

The Montclair Museum is at 3 South Mountain Ave., Montclair, NJ. For further information and directions to the Museum, call 973-746-5555 or use the Museum's website at www.Montclair-art.org.

Eastern European Printmakers at the Connecticut GraphicArts Center

The Connecticut GraphicArts Center in Norwalk, Connecticut presents an exhibition of "Eastern European Printmakers: A Contemporary View" from February 6 to March 25. The exhibition featuring 80 etchings, engravings, lithographs and mezzotints by artists from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Russia, Belarus and the Ukraine is of special interest to Print Club members since it is drawn from the collection of Marvin Bolotsky, member of the Print Club Board of Trustees. Mr. Bolotsky collected these prints during trips to Eastern Europe since 1990.

Until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, most European artists had little contact with contemporary Western art and printmaking. After the demise of communism, cre-

ativity in graphic art flourished. The inventiveness, the surreal quality, the humorous and satirical images and the exceptional technical skill of these artists are being increasingly recognized on the international art scene.

Mr. Bolotsky who also publishes many of these Eastern European artists presented a gallery talk prior to the opening on February 6. He will also speak to Print Club members at the Print Club meeting to be held on Tuesday, May 16 at 7:30 p.m. at the Liederkrantz Club, 6 West 87th Street.

The Connecticut GraphicArt Center is on the grounds of the historic Lockwood-Mathews Mansion at 299 West Avenue, Norwalk, CT. For further information on the exhibit and directions to the Center, call 203-899-7999.

What Causes Paper Color to Change?

Laura Stirton Aust

As paper ages it often becomes yellowed or grayed. The paper also may become brittle and can break or tear. Some prints may look dingy but in fact are in pristine condition. Even a print which has been carefully stored in the best of conditions can appear to be a different color than a recently made print. This discoloration is usually caused by acid in the paper. The acid may be from non-archival framing and storage materials, or the acid may be a result of the paper manufacturing process. Acidic materials are often used to make paper. Acidic wood pulp is the most common source of paper fiber. But no matter what fibers are used, chemicals must be added to produce bright white papers. Sizing is applied to make the paper less absorbent to water, inks and other art materials. Some of these chemicals break down with time and produce acid. Although it is well known that acid deteriorates paper, the technology to mass produce paper with less acid-producing chemicals has only recently become broadly available. However, it is a more expensive process.

Therefore, paper manufacturers charge a premium for "acid-free" materials. Despite labels and guarantees, very few prints made after 1880 or before 1980 are actually on acid-free paper.

The discoloration of an acidic sheet of paper is a result of damaged paper fibers. Bleaching to remove the discoloration is counterproductive because bleaching also damages paper fibers. Over time bleached paper fibers are even more likely to discolor again.

We know acid breaks down paper fibers and causes discoloration, so why not spray something on the paper to neutralize the acid? In fact, there are such products on the market. They were developed for libraries with shelves full of crumbling books. They are used today for books and ephemera such as newspapers, old letters or documents, objects prized more for content than physical appearance. The process is called deacidification spray or solution. Deacidification adds magnesium or calcium to the paper to neutralize acids and protect the fibers from additional acid. Deacidification sometimes reduces discoloration but can not rebuild the paper structure. It is available at archival supply stores. But, before considering

prints as candidates for deacidification remember this procedure should be discussed with and carried out by a professional conservator because deacidification often destroys paper sizing, may give the paper a pink or green cast, generally leaves paper gritty or coarse, may change paper surface texture and may cause ink color changes. Also, the longevity of the process is unknown.

In light of these possible negative consequences, it is wise to choose only deacidification as a last resort for artwork. Candidates for this process include pieces which may not be bathed or are dangerously brittle and may be lost completely. Also, objects on very thick acidic card-board which may not be removed are sometimes sprayed from behind in hopes that deacidification will slow down the acid penetrating the artwork.

If deacidification and bleaching are not the answer to a discolored work of art on paper, what is? The most conservative approach is re-housing the artwork in alkaline materials: buffered tissue and/or rag mat board. Also, limiting handling and light exposure may slow down acid degradation. Regularly changing buffered tissue will help to insure there is always alkaline material available to neutralize acids. This may be done as often as once a month during the first year of storage. Fortunately, buffered tissue is inexpensive and available from archival

suppliers. These measures probably will not change the appearance of a discolored paper, but may prevent the paper from becoming darker.

Whenever possible, bathing is the most beneficial way to reduce the acid content of paper and improve its appearance. Conservators use distilled or deionized water to bathe prints. This water may be treated with chemicals which neutralize the paper fibers. Bathing usually removes some if not most of the discoloration and may prevent discoloration in the future.

Acidic paper is a huge problem for the archivist, museums and collectors of works of art on paper. Although we must accept that some papers simply will not last and some prints will never look as good as they did when they were new, we can prevent a certain amount of discoloration and staining by using only acid-free materials for framing and storage and by avoiding excessive light. Ultra-violet light is the cause of a great deal of paper damage and will be the topic for the next column in the Spring Newsletter.

Laura Stirton Aust is a paper conservator. This is the third column of a regular feature which appears in the Print Club of New York Newsletter. Please send your conservation questions and concerns to the Newsletter for consideration in future columns.

Gallery and Exhibition Reviews

Along Ipswich River: The Color Woodcuts Of Arthur Wesley Dow

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

Arthur Wesley Dow (1857-1922) was a leading figure in American art at the turn of the century. Renowned both as an artist and an art educator, Dow authored a groundbreaking book, *Composition: A Series of Exercises in Art Structure for the Use of Students and Teachers* (Boston: J.M. Bowles, 1899). Hirschl and Adler Galleries, Inc. mounted a major exhibition of Dow's work from October 21-November 20, 1999 to coincide with the centennial of the book's publication. The show included over sixty of the artist's color prints, a number of the blocks from which they were made, several related oil paintings, and photographs taken by and of Dow. It was the largest number of works presented for public view since the sale of the artist's estate in 1923.

Dow was born in Ipswich, Massachusetts, studied art with James M. Stone of Boston, then traveled to France from 1884 to 1889 where he attended the Académie Julian and the Ecole Nationale des Arts Décoratifs in Paris and spent time at Pont-Aven and Concarneau in Brittany.

It was after returning to Boston, however, that Dow became enthusiastic about Japanese art, particularly the color woodcuts of Katsushika Hokusai. This led to a close friendship with the Curator of Japanese Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Ernest F. Fenollosa. Dow and Fenollosa analyzed Japanese composition, determining that its essential elements were line, form, color and *notan* — the harmonious arrangement of dark and light. Dow

began collecting Japanese prints under Fenollosa's guidance and learned the techniques involved in making Japanese woodcuts from Sylvester Rosa Koehler, Curator of Graphic Arts in Boston and also at the Smithsonian Institution. By 1891 Dow was making his own color woodcuts. In 1893 he became Assistant Curator of Japanese Art at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

Dow quickly came to be seen as a leader in the revival of color relief printmaking in late nineteenth-century America. His approach was influenced both by his close study of Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints and his dedication to the philosophy behind the Arts and Crafts Movement, which stressed the integration of materials, inspiration and craftsmanship.

Dow's woodcuts show the simplicity and balanced asymmetry of the Japanese aesthetic. Among the exhibition highlights was *Wild Apple Tree* or "*Bend of a River*" (1891-93, 23.0 x 6.1 cm), a spare but elegant little print utilizing a black, calligraphic line and devoid of extraneous detail. The work takes the long vertical shape of a "pillar print," a format popularized in Japan for display on the wooden posts in Japanese homes.

Rain in May (c. 1907, 15.6 x 12.6 cm) appeared in two versions and was exhibited along with its pine printing block, and "*The Clam House*" (c. 1892, 11.5 x 16.6 cm) was exhibited in three variants along with its block, carved in black tupelo wood. Perhaps the simplest of all the works were six versions of *The Big Sky*, or *Marshes* (c. 1912, 5.9 x 10 cm), a painterly little composition with a few horizontal bands of color beneath a cloud-filled sky.

Dow opened his Ipswich Summer School of Art in 1891, offering courses in design, drawing and painting. Many of the students were women, a number of whom

were art teachers on summer break. In addition to his experimentation with the woodcut medium, Dow also experimented with photography, making silver prints and cyanotypes of scenes along the Ipswich River and in other picturesque spots.

Among Dow's many students over the years were future Photo-Secessionists Gertrude Ksebier and Alvin Langdon Coburn; indeed, Dow's concept of *notan* was particularly applicable to black and white photography. Later, Dow was appointed Director of the Department of Fine Arts at Columbia University's Teachers College where, among a number of innovations, he added photography to the curriculum, hiring Clarence White to

head up the program. It was at Columbia that Dow taught the young woman who was to become his most famous student, the painter Georgia O'Keeffe who later married the founder of the Photo-Secession, Alfred Stieglitz.

An informative catalogue with high-quality color reproductions accompanied the Hirschl and Adler exhibition. Print prices ranged from \$1,200 for a charming color woodcut of *Nabby's Point* (c. 1913, 6.1 x 10.3 cm) to \$40,000 for one of the versions of *Rain in May*. Many of the works on view sold during the show. However the gallery represents the print estate of the artist, so examples of Dow's color prints are still available.

International Fine Print Dealers Fair

Elaine Hyman

The ninth annual International Fine Print Dealers Fair held this past November at the Park Avenue Armory ran the gamut from Old Masters to contemporary print makers with somewhat less emphasis on photography than in the past. There were over eighty dealers from across the United States and from abroad. The Armory seemed very festive, and the booths were hung with quality prints. Many of the dealers chose a particular artist or theme which led to interesting and informative presentations. For example, Hirschl and Adler's booth featured the prints of Arthur Wesley Dow who was inspired by Japanese woodcuts into creating his own near abstract landscape images. A number of the exhibiting dealers are members on a personal basis of the Print Club and Sandy Smith who manages the Fair is also a member.

Emphasizing the educational aspect of the Fair, Marilyn Kushner, Curator of Prints, Drawings and Photographs at the Brooklyn Museum of Art moderated a panel entitled "Print Collecting Into the 21st Century." The panelists were David Adamson, master printer; Lesley Dill, artist and print maker; Faye Hirsch, writer and critic; and Marc Schwartz, print collector.

Among some of the notable offerings, the Mary Ryan Gallery attracted attention with 23 monotypes and monographs by Eric Fischl. They were created over four different periods since 1986 and are related to his paintings.

Fischl's focus is on the interplay of figures with their minimal background. Also of note was his limited edition Bonnard-like nude portraits of April Gornick bathing in a tub. His lush brushwork added to their appeal. The Susan Teller Gallery celebrated the 95th birthday of the realist painter and printmaker Harry Sternberg. The exhibit included his circle of friends and students from the Art Students League where he taught for 32 years.

Sylvan Cole filled one wall of his booth with rediscovered and newly printed etchings by Will Barnet, a portfolio which quickly sold out. Stone and Press also completely sold out a recent print by Art Werger and they showed a new mezzotint by Frederick Mersheimer who created The Print Club's first Presentation Print.

Among other interesting exhibits, Susan Sheehan showed an excellent group of Ellsworth Kelly's plant lithographs, the artist using strong, elegant lines to convey the essence of plant structure in a precise visual language. C & J Goodfriend exhibited their usual large selection of high quality prints from the 15th to 20th century while the Pace Gallery also showed prints ranging from Albrecht Durer to Kiki Smith.

The Fair was again a highlight of the season for print collectors. Here at one time and in one place it is possible to find that special print from the past, to discover what is being done at this moment or even to discern what may be tomorrow's important printmaker or technique. We look forward to the Millennium Print Fair next November.

Recent Membership Events

Members Attend Sixth Annual Artists' Showcase

Arlyne Lesser

Once again a large turnout of Print Club members and their guests marked the Sixth Annual Artists' Showcase held on October 20, 1999 at the National Arts Club in Gramercy Square. Events Chairman Dr. Muriel Moss presented six artists whose work displays the wide diversity of style and technique which characterizes contemporary printmaking. The artists were Felix Plaza, Karen Brussat Butler, Nomi Silverman, Adam

Pitt and Suzanne Scherer and Pavel Ouporov.

Although he began his career as a printmaker working in black and white, Felix Plaza's work now focuses on monotypes in which the image is composed through the use of three primary colors — red, yellow and blue — which he superimposes until he achieves subtle gradations of color from the interaction of the three primary hues. Mr. Plaza's images are drawn from everyday life — household items, flowers, fruits — and he concentrates on a single fixed object rather than a traditional still life con-

glomerate of objects. This single object is highlighted and heightened by dramatically emerging from dark backgrounds. His style is spare, influenced Mr. Plaza indicated, by 16th century painters. Mr. Plaza also emphasized that he likes to work in monotypes because they draw upon both painting and printmaking techniques.

Karen Brussat Butler reviewed the evolution of her career as a painter and printmaker. She has painted large watercolors since the 1960's, winning numerous awards for those watercolors as well as her paintings. It was her love of washes and the watercolor technique which led her to take up lithography in Chicago in 1986. Although she has worked on metal plates, particularly for her large prints, and has used the mylar transfer process since her return to the east coast in 1992, drawing directly on stone remains her favorite process. Ms. Butler commented that she can achieve a watercolor-like technique by drawing directly on the stone, using flowing washes in different colored inks without reworking. This is a difficult technique to print in that the washes may change in the printing process. Ms. Butler's images are drawn from her midwest experiences, such as "Prairie Woman," incorporating native grasses and prairie plants which are now rare. She also focuses on patterns found on odd objects and on individuals chosen for their interesting stories, psychic portraits as it were.

Nomi Silverman's technique of choice, etching, and her concentration on political and social themes testified to the diversity of style and technique characterizing the Showcase artists. Ms. Silverman commented that etching, which she characterized as a violent, destructive process of biting into the plate with acid and tools, is singularly appropriate for

her rendering of workers engaged in monotonous, repetitious drudgery. These observational images of miners and other workers are not real life events but symbols of the political and social issues they embody. The velvety rich black, the contrasts of light and dark, and the powerful use of color in these prints reinforce their symbolic content.

Adam Pitt also deals with social themes, but from the viewpoint of what it is like to be a worker in corporate America. Mr. Pitt's woodcuts derive from his personal experience on Wall Street and in computer programming and management. Using clear and direct images, but with satiric resonances and often with great humor, Mr. Pitt focuses on capturing the tensions in the workplace. These tensions are resonant in his titles "I Wish My Desk Would Catch Fire," or "It Will Never Happen Again" or "Masks," inspired by the way in which workers put on masks when reacting to their bosses and to other colleagues. Mr. Pitt commented that Munch was a seminal influence turning him to woodcut as a favored medium and to the darker overtones in the images.

Suzanne Scherer and Pavel Ouporov, the evening's final presenters, have been working together for the past 10 years. They began their collaboration in Moscow in 1989 where she was a student at the Surikov Academy of Art. Mr. Ouporov started his artistic studies when he was ten years old and accepted into the Academy. When he was fifteen he found an old printing press at the school and taught himself how to work the press, etching his own prints. Ms. Scherer did not know Russian when they met and Mr. Ouporov did not know English, so they commented by drawing on each others work. Thus began their collaboration in which they work together directly on the same plate, without preliminary images. Their medium is engraving and etching, using the burin and pressure to focus on line and create a velvety surface. One plate is used for monochromatic work and multiple plates for colored prints. Ms. Scherer and Mr. Ouporov particularly like the series format, emphasizing how one image evolves over time. Thus, they showed prints from their Bestiary series, from a series of holiday images and from a series of finely detailed images of hands, only 5" by 7" in size.

At the end of the presentations, Club members met with the artists to discuss their works and view their extensive portfolios. For those members who were not able to attend the event we are printing below a list of artists' addresses and telephone numbers. We wish to thank the Events Committee headed by Dr. Muriel Moss for the great amount of time and effort that went into making this outstanding event a success.

Karen Butler
Water St. Studio
11 Water St.
Norwalk, CT 06854
203-853-7757

Nomi Silverman
25 Comly Ave.
Glenville, CT 06831
203-531-0876

Adam Pitt
143 Newcomb Road
Tenafly, NJ 07670
201-828-4222

Felix Plaza
7 East 3rd St.
New York, NY 10003
212-533-2625

Suzanne Scherer and
Pavel Ouporov
594 16th St.
Brooklyn, NY 11213
718-768-3779

Art of the Monotype Demonstrated by Valentina DuBasky at Cheryl Pelavin Fine Art Gallery

Marvin Bolotsky

On November 17 Print Club members were fortunate to witness Valentina DuBasky demonstrate how she creates a monotype. The meeting which focused on the art of the monotype was hosted by Cheryl Pelavin Fine Arts Gallery, 13 Jay St., Manhattan. Ms. Pelavin, a fine art publisher, founded Pelavin Editions in

1981, and in 1997 she established the Pelavin Fine Art Gallery which exhibits paintings as well as unique works on paper. Ms. Pelavin opened the proceedings by discussing monotypes and showing examples of several of the artists whose work she publishes and exhibits. Among them were Mark Katano, Ford Crull, David Dupuis, and Valentina DuBasky. After the discussion, members were treated to a demonstration by painter/monotype artist

Valentina DuBasky. The artist uses themes from her paintings in producing her monotypes, often working in a series of four monotypes, all different but related to each other. Ms. DuBasky, a frequent traveller, likes to incorporate the history, culture and ethnicity of the countries she visits into her work. She has been making monotypes with Cheryl Pelavin (herself a master printer) since 1984.

Monotypes are unique images made from a blank matrix utilizing ink, paints, paper collages etc. They are usually transferred to a sheet of paper utilizing an etching press for the transfer. The monotype Ms. DuBasky created for Print Club members began with the artist painting on oils on a plexiglas plate which was placed over a line drawing. After completing most of the painting, Ms. DuBasky placed several cut art papers in different sizes on the plate. Acid free glue was applied to the back of the cut paper. Then a sheet of Japanese paper was placed on the plate and glue was applied over the entire sheet. The plate and the glued paper was then placed on

the bed of the etching press, and a sheet of fine art paper was fed, under pressure, over the painted, papered, glued plexiglas plate. The result after going through the press was the completed monotype on the sheet of fine art paper.

Ms. DuBasky completed the monotype by painting over areas she wanted to touch up. She also applied gold leaf. The cut paper collage lent texture to the flat surface of the print, successfully fulfilling Ms. DuBasky's desire to use monotype technique to mitigate between her highly textured paintings and the flat surface of the plate.

We wish to thank Ms. DuBasky whose work is represented in numerous public collections and whose works from her Botanica series have been exhibited as representative of the United States in Embassy exhibitions throughout the world. We also wish to thank Cheryl Pelavin for graciously hosting the meeting at her gallery. Ms. Pelavin has become known in the world of fine arts publishers for her focus on the monotype.

Frank Feldman Speaks on the Laws Relating to Stolen Art

Arlyne Lesser

Increasingly, resolving the problems of art stolen during World War II, art taken from Holocaust victims and art bought by museums and collectors which later turns out to be stolen have become major issues in the art world today. On Jan. 11, Print Club member Frank Feldman, an attorney who has had extensive experience with art law spoke to a large turn-out of Print Club members on the legal aspects of stolen art. Mr. Feldman, who is himself a printmaker, teaches Art Law at Columbia University and is co-author of a book on the subject entitled *Art Law*, published by Little Brown.

Mr. Feldman began his talk by remarking that stealing art is big business. During the space of his lecture, he commented, eight pieces of art will be stolen somewhere in the world. The recovery of this art is difficult, costly and not always successful. He then discussed several critical legal issues such as how long do you have to recover a stolen work of art before the statute of limitations runs out, from the time you make a demand and are refused recovery, or from the time you discovered the theft or should have discovered it through the exercise of due diligence? In a federal system, he pointed out, case law on this issue differs from state to state and between state and federal courts, and decisions on recovery cannot be predicted. Similarly, the question of conflicting rules of law enter into the question of recovery, and Mr. Feldman then discussed a fascinating case in which an art object stolen from England was bought by a good faith purchaser in Italy. The English court had to decide between the English rule of law that a thief cannot pass a good title and the Italian rule of law that a good faith purchaser gets a good title. The English court applied Italian law under the English conflict of laws rule.

Currently, Mr. Feldman commented, issues of Holocaust art recovery are coming to the fore and the level of proof that is required so many years later has made the

recovery of such stolen art tremendously difficult. How can the claimant prove that he or she is the member of the family that is the appropriate heir? How can the claimant prove that this Cezanne is the exact one which was stolen? Also, there is the issue of heirless art. Even if it can be proved that a painting or art object was stolen, to whom does it belong if there are no heirs to claim it?

Another hurdle to recovering stolen art is the economic one, how can the individual victim, particularly when dealing with Holocaust art, pay for the expensive legal fees involved in complicated art recovery cases? Attorneys may take the case on a contingency basis and there is an organization of Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts that will work pro bono, but plaintiffs must pass a means test which may be too low for them to qualify. Mr. Feldman concluded that the amount of recovery of Nazi looted art is miniscule because of these burdens of proof as to ownership.

In addition to the legal aspects of stolen art recovery, Mr. Feldman also discussed the role of the Art Loss Register, of which he is a Director, in such recovery. The Art Loss Register is a private company with headquarters in London and offices in America and Germany. It keeps a central data base of stolen art and a record of every auction catalog so information is available on whether a stolen art work has surfaced for sale somewhere. Conversely, the data base will report that the work in question was never reported stolen. Although individuals may use the the Art Loss Register for a fee, it is largely dependent on insurance companies and auction companies who subsidize and use it to seek out stolen art. So far through the efforts of the Art Loss Register over \$100 million in stolen art has been recovered. However, Mr. Feldman, concluded, most stolen art disappears from view and the thieves are rarely caught. Although spoken in jest, he tells his students at Columbia Law School to "get into stolen art. The money is big, the crime is victimless, the risks are low, and few go to jail."

The New York Society Of Etchers, Inc.

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

Print Club members may be interested in knowing more about a relatively new organization, The New York Society of Etchers, Inc., "a not-for-profit exhibiting society dedicated to the presentation and documentation of etchings by living artists." Founded in 1998, the group plans to organize and present first-class intaglio

shows accompanied by high quality catalogues. They also hope to exchange exhibitions with other societies.

The New York Society of Etchers, Inc. will hang its first show in September, 2000 at the National Arts Club. Marilyn Kushner of the Brooklyn Museum and artist/printmakers Michael Pellettieri and Will Barnet have agreed to serve as jurors. We will provide further details about the exhibit as they become available.

The Art of Hand Papermaking at the Dieu Donne Papermill

Founded in 1976, the Dieu Donne Papermill inc. is a not-for-profit hand papermaking studio, one of the few in the country offering a variety of programs related to hand papermaking. Adapting the age-old techniques of hand papermaking for contemporary arts, Dieu Donne has worked with such artists as Chuck Close, Barbara Bloom, Sandy Skoglund and Richard Artschwager. Located in Soho at 433 Broome St., Dieu Donne has assisted thousands of artists, conservators, publishers and printers who have used archival handmade paper made at the studio. Dieu Donne also custom designs paper for museums and libraries such as the Whitney Museum of Modern Art and the Library of Congress.

Additionally, Dieu Donne provides classes, workshops

and internships in papermaking for professional artists and students and sponsors a workshop outreach program for New York City schools, art centers and museums. The Broome St. facility also houses a gallery, a store and a study center. Works on paper, paper art, limited edition books and editioned paperworks are displayed in the gallery while the store carries handmade paper, papermaking supplies, books on papermaking and artist-designed objects and books. The Study Center houses a library, slide registry and archive of handmade papers and paper art. For the print collector, the Dieu Donne offers an opportunity to explore the art of papermaking, an art which traditionally has been associated with fine printmaking.

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