

The Print Club of New York Inc

Fall 2001

President's Greeting

Julian Hyman

The Print Club of New York began its eleventh year of operation with our fall meeting on September 25th at the Society of Illustrators. On that occasion, the well-known artist Paul Resika unveiled our Presentation Print for the year 2001. He has created a beautiful black and white etching for us that is characteristic of many of his famous prints.

Membership renewal notices have gone out, and these notices have a space for you to indicate an interest in one of the club's working committees. We would also ask that you make suggestions for subjects that would interest you for future club events.

I am pleased to say that our club membership was filled for the past year, and that we look forward to another year of 100% membership. Our second event will be the annual Artists' Showcase, which will be held at the beautiful National Arts Club. Our Program Committee chairperson, Muriel Moss, is arranging this meeting for us. The committee has chosen five artists out of a group of over twenty who submitted their slides for consideration. I encourage all of our members to attend this event. The artists will make brief presentations of their work, after which there will be a question and answer period and a chance for the audience to purchase prints of their choice directly from the artists. The Artists' Showcase has always been a wonderful experience for all of us.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Susan Specht for her excellent work as chairperson of the Membership Committee and for help as a member of our Board. I want to also thank Gillian Greenhill Hannum for taking over the responsibility of the publication of our quarterly newsletter during Arlyne Lesser's convalescence. Finally, I want to welcome member Herb Levart, who joins our Board of Directors this fall.

I want to welcome all of the members of The Print Club of New York to join us for an exciting new year!

The Print Club of New York, Inc.

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"Still Boats and Moon" by Paul Resika

The Print Club's 2001 Presentation Print

On Tuesday evening, September 25, Print Club President Julian Hyman welcomed a room full of members at the Society of Illustrators to the presentation of the Print Club of New York's 2001 print, the Club's tenth since its founding in 1992.

Still Boats and Moon is a black and white soft-ground etching by one of the most respected artists of our day, Paul Resika. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the National Academy of Design, Resika is represented in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum, the National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C., and many others.

Paul Resika is probably best known as a Second-Generation New York School painter. He studied with Sol Wilson from 1940-44 and attended the Hans Hofmann School of Art from 1945-47.

He had his first exhibition at the age of twenty and quickly became admired for his luminous color. At the height of his career, he turned to printmaking, an endeavor in which he primarily explores blacks and whites. A sculptor friend first interested him in making etchings about six years ago. Soon after, the American Academy of Arts and Letters invited members to make a print each for a special portfolio project headed by Will Barnet. Resika turned to Bob Blackburn in order to develop as a printmaker. He was introduced to Marjorie Hunt Van Dyke, with whom he has been collaborating for the past five years. Poet and art historian David Shapiro has described their mode of working as "chamber music directed by the artist in a fruitful duet."

Resika is largely interested in the gradation of values from dark to light. These issues also interest him as a painter. Indeed, he has a passion for Light. He explained to club members that he is not interested in the technical aspects of printmaking and that his collaboration with Van Dyke has worked well because she finds the technical solutions to the artistic problems he engages.

Marjorie Van Dyke spoke about her own background. She is also an artist, but she has not made her own prints since art school. However, she has a long history as a Master Printer. She was with Blackburn for fifteen years, but for the past three or four she has been printing independently in her own West 38th Street studio. Resika and Van Dyke work together directly on the plate. There are no preliminary drawings. This spontaneity of printmak-



Paul Resika

ing is a legacy of Bob Blackburn, and Resika's artistic sensibility meshes well with this approach.

Still Boats and Moon reflects a favorite subject of Resika's—boats. Indeed, David Shapiro has called him "the harbormaster." Resika works with similar motifs in both his paintings and prints, so one medium informs the other in a constant dialogue. The 2001 Presentation Print was printed from two plates—the drawing of the forms on one, the tonality on the other. Resika and Van Dyke said it was the largest print they had ever made at 19 1/2 by 23 1/2

Recent Membership Events

Print Club Annual Meeting

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

The annual business meeting of the Print Club of New York, Inc. was held on Wednesday, June 6 at 7 p.m. at the Society of Illustrators. Members were greeted with drinks and hors d'oeuvres prior to the beginning of the formal program.

Following a brief business meeting, one of our members, Dr. Marilyn Kushner, Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Brooklyn Museum, presented a slide lecture previewing the museum's summer exhibition, *Digital: Printmaking Now* (June 22-September 2, 2001).

Kushner described the genesis of the exhibit on an island in Maine four years ago. The Vinalhaven Press had invited a small group of print curators to come and experiment with computers and printmaking. The results were so exciting that Kushner began to think about printmaking in a whole new way.

Indeed, she feels we are at a watershed point in the history of printmaking. While she does not foresee the end of traditional media, she does see the development of a fifth printmaking medium—in addition to the traditional methods of intaglio, lithography, relief printing and screen printing—the Ink Jet Print. Previously, she had felt that computer-generated images lacked texture and visual appeal, but over the past few years, she has found a number of really exciting works, all of which utilize the computer in some way. The impact of Adobe Photoshop is largely responsible for this development.

Over 120 pieces are in the exhibition, and Kushner says she could have found more. All the pieces in the show are by American artists or artists working in the United States. The quality is largely a result of the fact that some master printers have now begun to offer their services in the Ink Jet medium. One of the pioneers was Mac Holbert, working with Nash Editions. Several others quickly followed suit. This caused things to really take off.

Kushner also noted that in the digital arena, the distinction between print and photograph is further blurred. For instance, there are works in the show by Chuck Close, Jim Dine and Kiki Smith that all begin with a Polaroid. Close calls his finished work a photo; the others call the work prints.

Everything in the exhibit was printed between 1999 and 2000, and all pieces use the computer in some way. Kushner concluded by noting that this work really stretches the boundaries in exciting ways. Every new process scares peo-

inches. The artist indicated that he wanted to make something "suitably grand" for the Print Club of New York.

More of Resika's work can be seen in *Paul Resika: Etchings and Monotypes, 1998-2001* at Lori Bookstein Fine Art, 50 East 78th Street, from September 28 through November 3, 2001. A catalogue, with an essay by David Shapiro, is available. Lori Bookstein Fine Art is the representative of Paul Resika's etchings, monotypes and drawings; the artist's paintings are represented by Salander-O'Reilly Galleries.

ple, just as photography did in the 19th century, but each new process also helps artists expand their visions.

Bill Jacklin's Gift Of Artist's Proofs to The Print Club of New York

Julian Hyman

Bill Jacklin, who did the millennial print for us in the year 2000, graciously gave the Print Club of New York four artist's proofs. The beautiful black and white soft ground etching was entitled *After the Event I*. We have just completed the distribution of these prints to the following museums, all of which were more than delighted to receive them for their collections. They are: the Bayley Art Museum at the University of Virginia, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Portland Museum of Art and the Zimmerli Museum of Art at Rutgers University. The Print Club is indebted to Bill Jacklin for his more than generous donation. He was always a pleasure to work with, and we love the print that he created for us.

A Visit in Maine With Will Barnet

Elaine and Julian Hyman

In mid summer we spent five marvelous days in Maine at The Rock Garden Inn on Lake Umbagog. The inn is owned and run by Will Barnet's lovely daughter Ona Barnet. We had dinner with Will almost every evening and spent time visiting the charming town of Bath, the Farnsworth Museum in Rockland and, of course, the Portland Museum just an hour away.

The first evening we enjoyed a delicious dinner with Will and the Keithbys, major collectors of American art from Cleveland. The next dinner we were joined by Aprille Gallant, Curator of Prints at the Portland Museum. She curated the retrospective of Will Barnet's prints two years ago that had originated at the Montclair Museum in New Jersey. The next evening, Jessica Nicol and her husband, composer Tom Myron, joined us at Will's table. Jessica is Chief Curator of Art at the Portland Museum. The lively discussion about prints was capped off by listening to a CD of Tom Myron's symphony.

The Farnsworth Museum is planning to give Will Barnet a major show next year. The Portland Museum

Upcoming Print Club Events

Thursday, October 11, 6 p.m.

Be sure not to miss the Eighth Annual Artists' Showcase, to be held at the National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park South (20th Street between Park and Irving Place).

Tuesday, November 20, 6:15-7:45 p.m.

The Print Club of New York will have a special, private viewing of the print collection at the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum. Meet at the front entrance, 2 East 91st Street.

Coming in January, date and time TBA.

Watch your mail for the Events Committee's announcement of a lecture on Toulouse-Lautrec.

Also of interest to Print Club members:

"Monothon 2001," printmaking sessions September 24-29, preview exhibition October 6-12, and auction and party October 12 from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at Connecticut GraphicArts Center, Mathews Park, 299 West Avenue, Norwalk, CT (<http://norwalk.com/graphicarts>) (203) 899-7999.

Print Club member Stephen Fredericks will be exhibiting his own work at the National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park South, from October 20-November 1, 2001. Members are warmly invited to attend the opening reception on October 23 from 6-8 p.m.

"For Love or Money," Dieu Donne's 25th Anniversary Benefit Event, live and silent auctions featuring artwork by world-renowned and emerging artists to be held October 25 at 7 p.m. Preview auction items at www.papermaking.org. For further information, contact Stacey at (212) 226-0573.

The New York Print Fair will take place from Wednesday, October 31 through Sunday, November 4. The International Fine Print Dealers Association (IFPDA) is initiating Print Week—a series of events concurrent with the Annual Print Fair in November. As part of this citywide celebration, the Lower East Side Print Shop is holding a printmaking workshop and open house on Friday, November 2. The workshop is from 10-12 and the open house is until 6 p.m. For more information, check their website: <http://printshop.org>.

The Philadelphia Print Collaborative (PPC) is hosting "Celebrating Prints and Printmaking: In Homage to Dox Thrash," a series of events scheduled to begin the week of November 5 and run through December 14, 2001. A network of

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had a loan exhibit of American art from the Smithsonian, selections from their excellent permanent collection and a small show of Childe Hassam prints. There was also a wonderful room filled with small European bronzes, including a Kolbe, Degas and Barlach from the Otten Collection. The Ottens, whom we knew from Teaneck, had their vast collection on loan to the Portland Museum.

Will was so generous with his time. He was working every day on a new series of color lithographs. Both Aprile and Jessica were very interested in our Print Club and plan to visit us. After we got home we were so pleased to get two excellent print catalogs written by Aprile Gallant.

Sylvan Cole—Print Dealer

Elaine and Julian Hyman

When our editor, Arlyne Lesser, asked us to do an article on the renowned print dealer, Sylvan Cole, we were delighted. Over the years of learning about and collecting prints under his guidance, we have become very good friends. Sylvan and his lovely wife Mary invited us to spend a weekend at their house on Fire Island. The timing was perfect; Sylvan was mellow, and Mary kept feeding us.

Over thirty years ago, we decided to start our American print collection. We not only learned a tremendous amount from Sylvan, but he also guided us to select the best image of each artist. We wanted a Thomas Hart Benton but found it very difficult to choose just one. Sylvan encouraged us to decide on *The Race*. Of course, he was right. We still love it, and it remains one of Benton's important images. Over the years we continued to learn and add wonderful prints. But most dear to our hearts was the friendship we formed with Sylvan.

We bought prints by Childe Hassam, Stuart Davis and Reginald Marsh as the collection developed. We added Lyonel Feininger, Will Barnet and many others. He always led us to prints that became more valuable and important. Print collectors and museums turn to him because of the assurance of quality and fair market value.

Sylvan began going to galleries and museums in the 1930s while still a teenager. He remembers viewing a Georgia O'Keeffe exhibition at Alfred Stieglitz's gallery and meeting him. After graduating from Cornell University and five years in the Army, he started working at Associated American Artists Gallery in 1946. He was drawn to the work of the Regionalists: Thomas Hart Benton, John Steuart Curry and Grant Wood. He got to know many of the artists: Gordon Grant, Luigi Lucioni, Marion Greenwood, Raphael Soyer, as well as some of the World War II refugees such as George Grosz and Stanley William Hayter.

Sylvan took over the helm as President and Director of AAA in 1958. It became the first all print gallery to have ten important exhibitions a year. Among the over 100 one-man shows he curated there were: the Chagall Bible, James Ensor, Childe Hassam, John Taylor Arms, Whistler and Hiroshige, as well as the complete prints of Benton, Curry, Milton Avery and Stuart Davis. Sylvan also curated many Feininger shows after taking over the print

estate in 1963. He showed print retrospectives of Will Barnet, Karl Schrag, Philip Pearlstein, Raphael Soyer, Werner Drewes and Louis Schanker. The gallery also annually presented an Old Master Exhibition and, at the other end of the spectrum, a New Talent in Printmaking Exhibition, which for each of its 16 years highlighted eight young, up-and-coming printmakers.

Sylvan had an ability to choose the best works of the best artists. He always dealt fairly with his artists and successfully promoted them with excellent catalogues. He also edited and wrote *catalogues raisonnés* on Raphael Soyer, Stuart Davis, Will Barnet, as well as Curry and Wood.

He takes a booth at the yearly print fairs in Cleveland and New York. After 60 years in the print world, he remains one of the most respected and admired dealers in America. He feels that the print world is unique in the fine arts because dealers, curators, collectors and other artists become friends and are supportive of each other. The fact that prints are more affordable and, of course,

usually in multiples separates them from paintings. Our collection of American prints has given us unending pleasure. We have given our children many great images, we donate to the Brooklyn Museum and the Montclair Museum each year, and we are very good friends with their print curators. We enjoyed having the Innovative Print Department of Rutgers use our home for a fundraiser, and to have other museums bring members interested in prints. The guidance we got from Sylvan has helped us form this collection. Last but not least, being part of the Print Club of New York has brought us wonderful new friends and, of course, adds a wonderful new print each year to our collection.

Terms Used to Define the Conditions of Prints

Laura Stirton Aust, Paper Conservator, ARTcare Inc.

We often see descriptions of prints for sale. They are found in auction catalogs, in gallery brochures and now on the Internet. The particulars usually include the artist, the title, the media, the size, and the condition of the print. The condition is critical because the value of a print is based in large part upon condition.

Although a verbal description of the condition of a print can never replace examining the artwork firsthand, it may be the only information available. A condition description may alert the buyer to damage or conditions that are not immediately visible.

A complete condition description will list the number, size and location of tears. It will also list support distortions, color and/or surface changes, image or design changes as well as previous conservation or restoration treatment. However, it is unusual to have all this information included in a sale catalog. More likely there will be only a word or two. These words are referred to as condition terms and are subjective. Nonetheless, they are generally accepted definitions of these terms. Some of the more widely used terms are defined below. In the next newsletter I will define conservation treatment vernacular which is found in auction catalogs as well as literature and documentation of conservation.

Pristine: Brand new, never handled, mint condition.

Excellent: No damaged areas, but obviously not new. Minimal amount of normal wear and tear marks. Received no conservation.

Good: Minor damage, moderate amount of wear marks. Less than one quarter of the piece showing any kind of damage. Minor pieces broken but considered repairable. Conservation treatment did not or will not alter the aesthetics of the image or visual history of materials.

Fair: Up to half of the object showing some damage.

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over fifty arts venues will showcase the work of over 150 American artists covering seven decades. Planned to coincide with the Philadelphia Museum of Art's "Dox Thrash: An African American Master Printmaker Rediscovered," the print festival will explore the influence of this pioneering Philadelphia printmaker, as well as a broad spectrum of contemporary prints and experimental print processes. For more information and a complete listing of events, contact Teresa Jaynes at the PPC at tjaynes@solfopro.com or call (215) 557-8118, or check the PPC web site at www.printcollaborative.org.

"Whistler in Venice, The First Set of Etchings," July 1, 2001-January 13, 2002, The Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

"Pastel into Print," an exhibit of the work of renowned painter/printmaker Wolf Kahn, will be held from November 4-December 20, 2001 at Connecticut GraphicArts in Norwalk. On November 4 from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Mr. Kahn will lecture and give a monotype demonstration. Advance registration is required, members \$5; non-members \$15. Call (203) 899-7999.

The Lower East Side Print Shop, 59-61 East 4th Street, will hold its annual benefit print sale on Saturday, December 8 from 10-6. Information is available on their website, <http://printshop.org>, or by calling (212) 673-5390.

Print Club members are invited to attend the opening reception of the New York Society of Etchers exhibition at the National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park South, on Tuesday, January 15, 2002 from 6-8 p.m.

Severe wear marks. Major pieces broken, but present, or less than half of the pieces missing. Conservation treatment did not or will not alter the aesthetics of the image and visual history of materials.

Poor: More than half of the object showing damage. Serious damage, major tears, areas missing. Severe discoloration. Conservation treatment may alter the aesthetics or may not be possible.

Terry Winters: Printed Works

Gillian Greenhill Hannum

From June 12 through September 30, 2001 the Metropolitan Museum of Art mounted a major retrospective of the printed work of contemporary American artist Terry Winters. Perhaps best known for his paintings and drawings, Winters is also considered to be one of the most distinguished printmakers working today. This exhibit included 90 prints in a variety of media, including lithography, intaglio, woodcut and linoleum cut. Some of the work was executed at the Aldo Crommelynck Studio in Paris; the rest was done at Universal Limited Art Editions on Long Island.

The work in the show was all drawn from the Met's collection, many acquired with funds from the Reba and Dave Williams Gift. In addition, 37 prints were given this year by Susan Sosnick in memory of her husband Robert, an art patron and important collector of Winters' work. All 90 prints were executed between 1984 and 2001.

Winters' work reveals his interest in the history of graphic arts and his ability to effortlessly push traditional printmaking techniques in new directions. Both his prints and his paintings evolve from drawings; they usually develop independently, although sometimes they influence each other. Winters has noted that he feels no hierarchy among the various media in which he works.

Winters was born in 1949 and grew up in Brooklyn. He attended the High School of Art and Design in Manhattan before earning a BFA from Pratt Institute. He then moved to lower Manhattan where he still lives and works. His first solo show, of paintings and drawings, was in 1982. He began to make prints that same year. Since then, he has gone on to have one-artist shows at a variety of venues here and abroad, including: the Basel Kunsthalle, Whitechapel Art Gallery and the Tate Gallery in London, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Detroit Institute of Art and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

The artist works in all three of the major printmaking techniques: relief, intaglio and planographic printing. His first prints were lithos made at Universal Limited Art Editions on Long Island (ULAE). It was the beginning of a long association, and Winters continues to work with them today. ULAE was largely responsible for the revival of interest in printmaking among notable American artists in the late 1950s. Master printers there developed techniques for adapting commercial processes like offset lithography to fine art applications. On view were a series of Winters' lithographs from the 1980s. The organic, abstract forms were related to paintings he was making at the time based on drawings of botanical, zoological and architectural forms, including Buckminster Fuller's geodesic domes. Three large images entitled *Morula I*, *Morula II* and *Morula*

III (all from 1983-84 and published by ULAE) are large, blot-like forms. They could be seen to represent fertilized ova; biologists term the phase of development when an ovum begins to segment *morula*, the Latin word for mulberry. The edition sizes are 38, 37 and 36 respectively.

Winters made his first print portfolio between 1985 and 1986. Entitled *Folio*, it contains 11 related prints, including a title page and a colophon. The edition size was 39, with six artist's proofs and one printer's proof, all on handmade paper. *Folio* was also printed at ULAE.

Terry Winters began to experiment with intaglio in the mid 1980s. During this period he worked in Paris at the atelier of Aldo Crommelynck, a master of classical etching. Ten small Winters etchings from a portfolio of 25 published by Crommelynck, entitled *Field Notes*, were included in the exhibition. The series includes a wide variety of etching techniques: sugar-lift aquatint, spit-bite aquatint, open-bite etching and soft-ground etching. Some, like *Field Notes*, 21 that resembles a curled leaf, are amazingly delicate. Others, like *Field Notes*, 4, a bold, phallic form, are dark and somewhat menacing.

Fourteen Etchings (1989) pairs images, with photogravures (lower plate) juxtaposed with hand-drawn Mylar gravures with various intaglio additions (upper plate). The photogravures are of skeletal parts (X-rays of skulls, hands, feet, leg and arm bones, ribs, and a hipbone); they were taken from a book by the German discoverer of the X-ray. Related geometric and abstract forms are paired with them, printed on separate sheets glued to backing paper.

Furrows (1989) is a portfolio of five woodcuts issued in a handmade three-page paper folder. The publisher was Peter Blum Edition, New York. Linear images in light gray stand out against a woodgrained background. These are organic patterns. They are derived from drawings of the nervous system as well as from Japanese raked stone gardens. Winters also wanted to make reference to trees' growth rings. Thus, there is no single, clear point of reference for these images, which were made in Switzerland with François Lafranca. Each work is printed from two blocks. The image was drawn and carved on mahogany—a hard wood—using traditional Japanese tools. The lighter lines are what was cut away. Each sheet was then reprinted using uncarved oak planks. Grains of the two woods were placed in opposition in order to create the moiré pattern. The emphasis on the wood grain recalls the woodcuts of artists like Gauguin and Munch.

Winters' work in linoleum cut was represented by a portfolio of six prints entitled *Glyphs* (1995), published in an edition of 27 by Grenfell Press. These images emphasize negative shapes printed in black ink on robin's egg blue Japanese paper (the paper was originally white but was treated with a rinse of indigo dye, a technique used by Picasso in the 1960s). The finished product recalls the

photograms of Dada artists such as Man Ray.

Graphic Primitives (1998), a portfolio of nine woodcuts published by Two Palms Press and Terry Winters, was made by scanning some ink drawings from a cycle of 125 made during late 1995 and early 1996 into a computer. This produced images where the lines were even and crisp, not gestural as in the originals. Using a graphics program, Winters then layered areas, changed scale and played with composition. A disc of the computer-generated images was sent to a machinist who used a laser to incise the designs into cherry wood blocks from which the woodcuts were made. Winters again used Picasso's

"rinsed proof" method on the final prints; images were printed in white oil ink on white paper, then rinsed in black Sumi ink.

The most recent work in the exhibit is two large prints—*Amplitude* (2000) a sugar-lift aquatint and open-bite etching in black with shades of brown, published by ULAE and *Pattern* (2001), a color inkjet and offset lithograph. Both are linear, mesh-like, spiraling forms. They may be metaphors for cyberspace or maps of unseen "informational space." In either case, the forms seem to expand beyond the sheet, giving a sense of infinity reminiscent of the Abstract Expressionist tradition.

Exhibition Reviews

William Blake
Gillian Greenhill Hannum

A highlight of the spring exhibition season for all art lovers, but especially for those interested in the history of prints, was the Metropolitan Museum of Art's comprehensive exhibit of the work of British Romantic artist William Blake (1757-1827). It was the first major Blake show in New York and included more than 175 works of art. Organized by Tate Britain, the exhibition focused on the artist's unique vision and innovative artistic techniques, particularly in the realm of printmaking.

Blake had no benefit of education or travel and struggled with poverty most of his life, yet he composed some of England's finest poetry and visionary art during the Romantic Age. Yet he was despised by the artistic establishment of his own day, probably because he was always out of step with mainstream trends and attitudes. He was an anti-monarchist during the Age of Revolution, an anti-materialist at the height of the Industrial Revolution and a deeply religious dissenter. He is considered a "Gothic" artist because he embraced medieval forms at a time when Classicism reigned supreme.

He dealt with universal themes: life, love, war and faith. Elongated forms, solid contours and hierarchical compositions characterize the artist's style. In addition to being drawn to the art of the Middle Ages, he admired the work of a number of Renaissance masters, especially Michelangelo and Dürer.

Blake began his career as a printmaker; he was apprenticed to the engraver James Basire (1730-1802) in the 1770s. In 1775 Blake was commissioned to do engraved illustrations for Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* (1742-45), a graveyard poem that meditates on life, love and death. For the four volume, luxury edition, Blake produced extremely inventive designs, although they did not always follow the author's intended meaning. Unfortunately, the political situation in Britain undermined the project. Only 43 of Blake's 537 watercolor designs were ever engraved. A copy of the book and five of the watercolors were included in the show. In 1805 Blake executed designs for a luxury edition of Robert Blair's *The Grave* (London, 1808, reissued in 1813), a work originally published in 1743. Due to a heated misunderstanding with the publisher, the engraving was actually

transferred to a popular commercial engraver. The designs for this project merge Gothic emotionalism and Michelangelesque figures.

Blake was an important innovator in printing techniques. Late in 1790 the artist and his wife, Catherine, moved to Lambeth, a village in London south of the Thames. There he perfected a new printing technique he called "relief etching." It was unprecedented in that it created a single, raised printing surface that Blake saw as an alternative to intaglio. His relief etchings combined word and image and allowed him total control of a book's publication. In fact, word and image were etched more or less simultaneously onto the same copper plate. Blake printed the images on a large rolling press, helped by his wife. Blake and Catherine then hand colored each sheet with pigments he prepared himself and bound the pages together. These illuminated books are among his most celebrated achievements.

An entire room was devoted to examples from all known books and engravings advertised by the artist in his 1793 *Prospectus*. Because of the small scale and fine detail in some of these pieces, the museum supplied magnifying glasses so viewers could examine the images to full advantage. Among the works displayed were *America a Prophecy* (1793), *There is No Natural Religion* (c. 1795), *The Book of Thel* (1789), *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1793), *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790) and, of course, pages from the stunning and jewel-like *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1789/1794, copy, printed c. 1825, Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art). In the case of the last project, 26 of 54 relief etchings (printed in orange-brown ink and enhanced with watercolor and shell gold) and four facsimile copperplates were displayed. Visitors flocked to scrutinize the pages of favorite poems such as "The Little Girl Lost," "The Little Girl Found," "Laughing Song" and "The Tyger."

There were also very clear displays explaining the relief etching technique itself. The process involves an artist writing or drawing in reverse on the clean surface of a copper plate using a quill or brush dipped in an acid resist (we do not know the exact composition of Blake's "stopping out" liquid). The plate is then etched in acid by building a "wall" of sealing wax around the plate's edges and pouring what was probably nitric acid into the shallow reservoir. Blake manipulated the acid bath with a feather or brush to remove all air bubbles. This entire pro-

cess was carefully repeated twice in order to guard against underbiting. One of Blake's original copperplates was also exhibited: Plate 2 of *Saturn before the Throne of God* from the *Book of Job* (1823-26).

Blake's other major contribution to printmaking was through his large color prints. These were the culmination of his experiments with color printing at Lambeth in the 1790s. The images are iconic, carry no text, and are much larger than the jewel-like *Songs*. They were from no known commission and had no known public exhibition. There are twelve known designs; the subjects come from Milton, Shakespeare and the Bible. Many of the designs function as pairs.

The technique seems to be a form of monotype; Blake called it "fresco." Oil and tempera were mixed with chalk and applied to a flat surface. He pulled prints by pressing sheets of paper onto the damp paint. He then "finished" his designs in ink and watercolor. Each image is, therefore, unique. One of the well-known images is *Newton* (1795/c.1805), showing the scholar bending over his diagram and failing to notice the fantastical world behind him. Blake blamed Newton for systematizing the universe and separating reason from imagination and mind from spirit. Another much reproduced color print is that of *Nebuchadnezzar* (1795/c.1805), taken from Daniel 4:31-33. The king, being punished by God, is bestial, on all fours and insane. The pose was derived from a Dürer print, and

the subject may be a veiled reference to the madness of Blake's own king, George III.

Albion Rose (c.1793/c. 1796) is also a color print engraving finished with pen and ink and watercolor. A nude man with a face resembling the artist's own rises like the resurrected Christ. The inspiration for the pose was drawn from *Vitruvian Man*. Albion was central to Blake's own personal mythology. A giant, he symbolized British liberty (Albion is the ancient name for Great Britain).

Perhaps the best known of all Blake's images is *The Ancient of Days* (1824), a relief etching finished in gold, watercolor and gouache. The print depicts Urizen, whose name is a pun on "your reason," Albion's brooding, wrathful son, Blake's giver of laws. This composition also has precedents, in this case medieval depictions of God creating the universe with architects' tools. The plate was designed to be the frontispiece for Blake's book, *Europe* (1794); it was later issued as a separate print. The two versions were hung side-by-side for comparison.

The exhibition ended with a series of etchings from *Milton a Poem* (1804/1811), a project begun around 1800 when Blake moved to Felpham. This was a period of emotional and spiritual turmoil for the artist. John Milton (1608-1674) was the poet Blake most admired. The series shows Milton's redemption as he destroys Urizen (reason). In many ways, this is the most personal of his projects.

Red Grooms at The National Academy of Design

Julian Hyman

A wonderful exhibit of prints by Red Grooms opened at The National Academy of Design on July 11. The artist, as well as many celebrities of the print world, attended the opening. Over 300 prints were presented, and they all came from the collection of a life-long friend of the artist, Walter Knestrick.

Grooms is a master of the print medium and shows great creativity in his techniques, which consist of lithographs, etchings and silk screens. Many of the prints were of well-known areas of New York and were charac-

terized by large groups of people, lots of activity and marvelous color and form. The three-dimensional lithographic constructions provide the viewer with a good deal of humor. These were done in collaboration with the printer Bud Shark. Mr. Shark said that it was always a delight to work with Red Grooms.

The exhibit was divided into four parts, the first being early prints which were done in 1957. This was the year the artist came to New York from Nashville, Tennessee. He never left our city and became an icon of New York. Go see this show! You'll love it and you'll learn much more about this wonderful artist.

Toulouse-Lautrec at The Loring Gallery

Geri Mickenberg

An exceptional collection of Toulouse-Lautrec's rare prints and posters, along with a lecture about Lautrec's work, was offered at the Loring Gallery in Sheffield, Massachusetts on Saturday, July 7th.

Gary Bruder, who has one of the largest inventories of

Lautrec's lithographic works for sale, was the lecturer. He gave us a great view of Lautrec's life and times and captivated the audience. Museums, auction houses and collectors frequently call on Mr. Bruder for his expertise on Lautrec's works on paper.

Among the works exhibited was the extremely rare, three-sheeted version of the famous poster *The Moulin Rouge*.

Scholarly Query

I'm a graduate student in art history doing research on women in the 1930s. Anyone with information on Minna

Citron's life/career/location of works, etc. please contact J. Streb at jls250@psu.edu or 814-861-0615.

Member Notes

Last call for renewals! As a courtesy to long-time members, the Club extended the renewal deadline to October 1 this year. If you receive this newsletter and have not yet sent in your renewal, do not delay any longer. Membership slots that have not been renewed will be offered to those on our growing waiting list.

Several Print Club members collaborated on a summer exhibition at the Mason Gross School of the Arts Galleries

at Rutgers University. *Installed Collections/Collections Installed* was curated by club member Judith K. Brodsky, who recently retired as gallery director and was founder of the Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper. The exhibit drew from seven private collections, mostly in New Jersey. Lenders included Print Club members Elaine and Julian Hyman, Leonard and Muriel Moss, Norman Dubrou and Harvey Isbitts. The show was reviewed by William Zimmer in *The New York Times* of Sunday, July 29, 2001.

The Print Club of New York, Inc.

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