

The Print Club of New York Inc

Fall 2003

President's Greeting

Julian Hyman

The Print Club begins its academic year with John Walker, an internationally celebrated artist, discussing the Presentation Print that he created for our club. This will be followed in October with our annual Artists Showcase. Over thirty artists submitted slides of their work, and only five were accepted for presentation. The reputation of the Print Club of New York has attracted much artistic talent. In November we will co-host a party for members of print clubs from many major U.S. cities as well as several from Canadian cities. We will have several brief, but significant, presentations in the course of this event.

There is much more to follow in the way of educational events through June of 2004. Once again, I urge every member to take advantage of these quality events. They serve as a way to keep up your knowledge in a field of printmaking that is continually introducing many new techniques.

The editor of our newsletter, Gillian Hannum, has taken on the extra responsibility of editing the newsletter of the International Print Collectors' Societies. I want to commend Gillian for her excellent work with our newsletter, which most people feel has been exceptional. Please look at the schedule of events that is enclosed in this issue of the newsletter. You will also get a reminder for each of those sponsored by this club in the mail. We look forward to seeing you at these events in the months ahead.

The Print Club of New York, Inc.

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Diagonal Hollyhocks: The Print Club's 2003 Presentation Print

Arlyne Lesser

A large crowd of Print Club members and their guests filled the exhibition hall of the Society of Illustrators on September 24 to meet John Walker and view his hand-colored etching, *Diagonal Hollyhocks*, the Club's 2003 Presentation Print. Mr. Walker was born in Birmingham, England, and his work is represented internationally as both painter and printmaker in museums in England, Australia and the United States. He has held many teaching positions and is currently Professor of Graduate Painting at Boston University. His most recent paintings have been exhibited at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art and at Knoedler & Company in New York City.

Although Mr. Walker is known primarily as a painter, he explained his great love of printmaking. He started his career as a printmaker, has taught printmaking and owns his own press. He believes that great painters are also great printmakers, as witness Rembrandt and Goya. At times, he commented, the painter "chases his prints," the image of the painting first emerging in the print. Mr. Walker explained the genesis of his flower print. Generally, he explained, he is known as a "tough" painter who wouldn't paint flowers. However, he is an avid gardener and he does paint flower images for himself and his family. In fact, he is now working on small



John Walker and printer James Stroud presenting *Diagonal Hollyhocks* to the Print Club.



John Walker cancelling the plate for *Diagonal Hollyhocks* as printer James Stroud looks on.

paintings of nasturtiums. Three summers ago his son became interested in growing hollyhocks, and at the end of the summer he made a painting for his son similar to the image in the Club's print. He also made hollyhock paintings for himself and other family members as well as several monotypes of the hollyhock image. The Club print employs several aquatints printed on top of each other in shades of black which Mr. Walker then finished by hand coloring. He explained that he chose to hand color the print, a laborious method, because the cost of a four color print would have been prohibitive. Also, he noted, because of the hand coloring, the etching has the fresh quality of a monotype.

Mr. Walker then introduced James Stroud, the printer with whom he worked, and who was in the audience, to discuss the technical aspects of making the print. Mr. Stroud explained that Mr. Walker has a "purposeful disrespect for the chemistry of etching." He will add sticks, scraps and nails on top of the plate; he will acid burn areas out of the plate, always with the desire of "seeing what happens." He is aiming for spontaneity, for wrestling the work into submission, for finding image and meaning out of the process. He may draw his image from his paintings, but the image in the print comes out of the process of printmaking itself. Working together with the printer, feeding on each other, Mr. Walker allows what Mr. Stroud called "controlled accidents."

Mr. Walker went on to describe his method of making prints as a dialogue between an artist and his printer, a



Artist John Walker addressing the Print Club.

PHOTO BY MARVIN BOLOTSKY

collaborative process. Most printers, he remarked, are artists themselves, and it is an act of tremendous generosity on their part to help other artists accomplish their images. Every printer has a different technique, and the artist's work is, therefore, affected by the interaction between printer and artist. The printer working closely with the artist becomes a collaborator in producing the plate. As to printing the edition itself, however, the printer has the final responsibility. He pushes the button.

Mr. Walker contrasted the method he uses in which he draws on the plate and collaborates with the printmaker to "make things happen" with what he called the "art director" approach, in which the artist

may take a drawing to a master printmaker who then turns the drawing into a fine print. He also explained that he does not wish to make digital prints because, although they can look like beautiful lithographs, the feel is not right for him. The digital print lacks that feeling that the artist has wrestled the image directly out of the plate.

Mr. Walker concluded that, for him, printmaking, the production of a beautiful illustrated image, is very special. Rather than hanging prints, he loves to be able to take them out, and spend time looking at and touching the prints in order to directly experience their beauty and meaning. It is in this way, he believes, that the print makes its impact on the viewer and remains "something special" on every viewing.

A Visit to Lake Sebasco

Julian Hyman

Towards the end of July, Elaine and I had the pleasure of spending a week at Rock Garden Cottages, a delightful group of cottages run by Ona Barnet, Will Barnet's daughter. One of the highlights of the visit is the beauty of the area. It is typical of many of the scenic areas along the Maine coast, and it is very near to an enchanting fishing village along West Point Road. It is also adjacent to a lovely, old Maine town, Bath. Bath has been the site of a large ship building industry that makes submarines for our Navy.

The next highlight is having evening meals with Will

Barnet and his lovely wife, Print Club member Elena Barnet. On several occasions, Will invited interesting people to join us for dinner. One evening we had the pleasure of meeting George Lloyd, a very fine contemporary abstract artist who was currently having a gallery show in Portland. On another evening, we had the pleasure of meeting Susan Danly, who is the Curator of Graphics, Photographs and Contemporary Art at the Portland Museum of Art; we were very impressed with her knowledge and background in art.

Listening to Will's stories is a very special opportunity. I've told several friends that I brought a small basket to dinner every evening to "catch the pearls." We look forward to a return visit next summer.

The International Print Collectors' Societies

Bound into the center of this issue of *The Print Club Newsletter* is the summer issue of the *Newsletter of The International Print Collectors' Societies*. The idea behind this consortium is the sharing of ideas and information among print clubs across the nation and in

Canada. Print Club members are encouraged to attend the Print Week social event in November (see calendar of events in this issue) in order to meet members from IPCS clubs who are in New York for the International Fine Print Dealers' Fair.

Selecting A Conservator

Laura Stirton Aust, ARTcare Inc.

The last newsletter included an article on when to call a conservator. Unfortunately, it may be easier to determine that your artwork needs conservation treatment than it is to find a conservator. Locating the appropriate conservator will require some time and energy. The process is analogous to finding a doctor — you want a knowledgeable professional, expert in the area of your need, to whom you can trust the health of your valued work of art. This article is intended to identify some of the issues involved with finding and selecting a conservator.

First, the conservation profession is not regulated by law, and its professional associations are voluntary. Selecting an appropriate conservator requires learning a bit about the field of conservation and what to expect from a professional, then asking some fundamental questions of those who are being considered.

A conservator may have a graduate degree in conservation or may be trained through apprenticeship. A professional will have theoretical and scientific knowledge as well as practical experience. Most importantly, your conservator should have integrity and a commitment to the highest possible achievement. Conservation entails examination, scientific analysis, and research in addition to a keen eye and steady hand.

One of the best sources of information about conservation can be found at the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) which is the national organization for conservation professionals. Though anyone can be a member of AIC, only those recognized as Professional Associates or Fellows of AIC have met specified levels of peer review and have agreed to adhere to the AIC Code of Ethics. AIC has a referral network that, in response to a request, will compile a list of conservators grouped by location and specialization.

There are also international, regional and local conservation organizations which hold lectures and meetings where individuals can learn about conservation issues and meet conservators. Collectors also can call museums, libraries, and/or historical societies in search of conservation information. Some institutions have conservators on staff who can answer questions or recommend private conservators. Some staff conservators also treat private clients' artwork in the museum's facilities after normal working hours. Bear in mind that being employed at an institution does not automatically seal a reputation. Ask all the same questions that you would ask of any prospective conservator.

Generally, a framer or art dealer does not have the professional qualifications to perform art conservation. However, framers and dealers often work with conservators and, as a service to their clients, can provide names of conservators. Be cautious if a framer offers to show your art to a conservator then gives you a call with the price. It is important to know who the conservator is, whether he

or she has the needed skills and exactly what work is to be performed.

Whatever the source of information on specific conservators, it is critical to ask for some basic information about their training, area of expertise, business practices and conservation ethics.

To help determine the qualifications of a conservator first ask:

- For a resume that includes where he/she received conservation training.
- How long has he/she practiced conservation?
- Determine the scope of the practice. Is conservation the primary activity?
- What professional organizations does he/she belong to?
- For references from previous clients.
- Finally, find out how long treatment might take. Some conservators have backlogs of several years.

Know what to expect from conservation treatment.

- Your artwork will need to be examined before a treatment can be suggested.
- The conservator should provide a written treatment proposal with estimated costs. This is intended to protect you as well as the conservator.
- Ask questions about the proposed treatment. Will the paper color change? Can mends be removed in the future? How will staining be reduced?
- Ask if insurance or shipping charges will be additional.
- Inquire about what documentation accompanies the artwork when conservation is complete. You should be provided with a report and photographs documenting the artwork before and after treatment.

Finally, conservation treatments are often time consuming and expensive. Not every conservator takes the same approach to treatment. Ask about risks, options and results. If possible, speak with a number of conservators and be wary of those who propose a quick and/or inexpensive fix. Finding a professional whose conservation ethic reflects your own desires is worth the time investment.

Sources of Information:

- **The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC)**, 1717 K Street N.W., Suite 200, Washington, DC 20006, <<http://aic.stanford.edu>> or call (202) 452-9545.
- **The Canadian Association of Professional Conservators**, 280 Metcalfe Street, Suite 400, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2P 1R7.
- **Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI)**, 1030 Innes Road, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0M5 <www.pch.gc.ca/cci-icc> (613) 998-3721.
- **The International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC)**, 6 Buckingham Street, London, England WC2N 6BA 01-441-839-5975.

Exhibition Reviews

Poetry Into Print: Impressions Inspired by Verse, The Center for Contemporary Printmaking, Norwalk, CT, June 13-August 8, 2003.

Jilda Manikas

*Speak to me in verse
touch my soul and I will draw
my imaginings.*

This haiku by Susie Salomon greeted visitors to the latest members' exhibition at the Center for Contemporary Printmaking. *Poetry Into Print: Impressions Inspired by Verse* ran from June 13th to August 8th and showcased the stylistic variety of their members' creativity.

A full range of printmaking techniques was employed by the artists, whose diversity of methods included collograph, drypoint, woodblock, photograph collage, encaustic with thread, lithography, monotype, chine collé, letterpress and three handmade books.

Members were asked to illustrate poetry that has inspired their work, given meaning to their work, or become a part of their work. Some, like Constance Kiermaier, chose to write their own words, while others looked to the work of Eliot, Wordsworth, Longfellow and Vergil for inspiration. Over 200 pieces were exhibited on the first floor of the Center with hundreds more available for viewing in the black notebooks located at the entrance to the show.

First prize was awarded to Peggy Weis for a handmade book that illustrated her own poetry entitled *Mother - Book #2*. This 6-paneled book was created using encaustic with thread and alternated each panel with words and pictures.

The largest piece in the exhibition was by Deidre DeWaal, entitled *Hollyhocks*. DeWaal chose the 1826 work of Kyoroku: "Stillness: the sound of the petals shifting together." Her expression of this poem was a 3-piece carborundum aquatint consisting of a bright pink background with black swirling petals throughout. The drama of her work earned her an "Honorable Mention."

A percentage of the proceeds from the sale of prints in this exhibition will be used to support the Center's new Artist-in-Residence Program.

Hendrick Goltzius: Dutch Master, 1558-1617, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, June 26-September 7, 2003.

Elaine and Julian Hyman

The recent Goltzius exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum was a revelation to those of us who have seen only a few of his prints at Old Master auctions and group shows of 16th century Northern artists, where he is presented as less important than Albrecht Dürer. This major

retrospective of his prints, paintings and drawings included celebrated images from the National Museum in Stockholm, the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, and the Los Angeles County Museum, as well as from collections throughout Europe and the United States.

Goltzius worked most of his life in Haarlem. His right hand was disfigured by a childhood fire, but he drew powerful images of this hand. He was considered one of the most versatile draftsmen of his age. He used chalk, stylus and an engraver's burin to create a wide range of media, subject matter and styles. He established an active print publishing house and belonged to an important circle of Haarlem artists dedicated to Mannerist precepts. Although best known for his graphic work, he produced bold paintings in oil during the last seventeen years of his life.

Transit Views: Selected Prints by the New York Society of Etchers, New York Transit Museum, Gallery Annex, Grand Central Terminal, August 18-November 16, 2003.

Mary Lee Baranger

With this exhibit of *Transit Views*, the Grand Central Terminal's Gallery Annex of the New York Transit Museum continues a tradition of presenting art inspired by all aspects of getting around in a great city (see the Spring 2002 issue of the *Newsletter of the Print Club of New York* for a review of *Traffic Patterns*, prints of the early 20th century from the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University).

Artists seem to be particularly inspired by the crowds, the trains and buses, and the structures above and below ground. As the wall text and brochure by Stephen Fredericks of the New York Society of Etchers (and a Print Club member) point out, "The transit system's intense, often gritty appearance pairs well with etchers' bold line and direct approach. And just as we tend to associate industrial forms with shades of gray and black, most traditional printmaking is based on tonal gradation rather than color."

This is a beautiful and exciting show for the variety of images and techniques. The artists find grandeur as well as specificity in the transit system—the infrastructure and the straphangers and bench sitters. Realistic or abstract, there is pictorial potential even in the tracks, the steel and concrete pillars and beams with light filtering from the ventilation grills overhead. This underworld makes a dazzling composition of shapes and textures in Stephen A. Fredericks' etching *59th Street IRT II* (2003). You feel the Piranesi-like perspectives, textures and light of the humble workaday 1903 cut and cover tracks and platform steel and concrete. No train is rumbling through and no one is on the platform, but the life below and above ground floods in with the light. The shadows convey the staccato effect of watching from a moving train—the



Frederick Mershimer, "Crossings," 1998, mezzotint, 24 X 36 inches.

drama seen from the lead car window, beloved by child and adult, visitor and New Yorker alike.

The exhibit, curated by Amy Kurlander of the Transit Museum and installed by museum preparator Todd Ludlam, opens with two prints by Steven Stankiewicz. One has portraits of early steam locomotives (the Union Pacific North Coast Limited and Baldwin's No. 5607) with scumbles and scratches over the wheels to suggest speed. The second is the 20th Century Limited, the finale of the great steam engines. This print is accompanied by a model of the engine made by Williams Electric Trains in 1986.

In the earlier *Traffic Patterns* exhibit there were many more artifacts from the museum's collection. In this show there is only one other: an octagonal lamp-sign, ca. 1915, from a subway entrance, much more handsome than the current light balls. This lamp appears in Andy Hoogenboom's print of 2003 entitled *Beacons*.

One can call one group "magically real." Frederick Mershimer's three mezzotints use rich black and white contrasts for stark night lighting of cars entering the tunnels under the former New York Central Building on Park Avenue—*Gateway* (2002), *The Manhattan Bridge* (1998) and *Crossings* (1998). These are large prints, 24 X 36". *Crossings* is especially dynamic with the elevated FDR Drive zooming under the Manhattan Bridge to the Brooklyn Bridge. Alan Petrusis' smaller (9 X 12") 2002 etchings, *Marcy Avenue* and *Woodside*, convey the crepuscular gloom under the El. Daniel Hauben's 1992 etching *Elephant Under the El* adds the magically surreal tall pachyderm, almost grazing the tracks overhead as he plods towards you.

While the preceding groups of prints stress structure and space, there are others that bring you close to the users of the trains. These present human interest, character and social class with empathy for both humor and tragedy. For instance, Bernard Zalon's *A Starry Night* (1995) is an ironic title for an image of a disheveled man

seated in a subway car, and Jacques Moiroud gives two tragic portraits of seemingly homeless men asleep: *Once I Wanted to Travel the World* (2003) and *Benched for Life* (2002).

Most of the works in the exhibit are from the last decade, except for a Will Barnet from 1939 and two prints each by Clare Romano and John Ross from the 1950s.

Other artists whose work is included in *Transit Views* are: Ann Chernow, Paul Chin Bor, Martha Hayden, Michael J. Leu, Bill Murphy, Richard Pantell, Michael Pellettieri, Richard Sloat, Emily Trueblood, Motoshi Wakabayashi, Bruce Waldman, Steven Walker, Tom White and Karen Whitman. The prints shown are very diverse in the artists' choices of subject and mood. All in all, they capture the multiplicity of a great city's transportation network.

Always helpful in a print show are the technical explanations. Artist Andy Hoogenboom has provided these for the brochure, giving definitions and descriptions. There are also two displays of tools, materials, plates and blocks to explain etching and other intaglio techniques. Best are the 10 blocks of Richard Pantell's *Serenade at Dawn* with the prints' progressive accumulation of color and detail—1000 impressions for an edition of 100.

This exhibit is worth any detour, as is our gloriously restored Grand Central Terminal.

**From Ink to Wood: Two Traditions,
Center for Contemporary
Printmaking, 299 West Avenue,
Mathews Park, Norwalk, CT,
September 8-November 8, 2003.**

Jilda Manikas

Ink from Wood: Two Traditions, the current exhibition at the Center for Contemporary Printmaking in Norwalk, CT, highlights the Japanese and Western woodcut printmaking techniques.

These two inking and printing methods contradict each other, yet blend together in perfect harmony. The Japanese or *Ukiyo-e* technique employs water-based inks that are brushed on a carved wood block. The pigments are "held in suspension" by the gum arabic and rice paste that is simultaneously brushed on the block. The ink is transferred to dampened paper by pressure applied with a hand tool.

In contrast to the Japanese use of water-based pig-

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK TRANSIT MUSEUM

ments is the Western method of woodcut printmaking which uses an oil-based ink. The wood blocks are carved by the artist and are printed either by the artist or by a master printer. One such symbiotic collaboration on exhibit is *Skowhegan*, 1965. Ben Shahn painted this image on a pine board and asked woodcut printmaker Stefan Martin to carve away the negative space leaving the brush drawing in relief. The final work boasts both Shahn's and Martin's signatures.

Ink from Wood offers an impressive list of artists working in these two styles: Chuck Close, Alex Katz and Sol Le Witt are a few of the artists whose prints are in the *Ukiyo-e* method, and Jim Dine, Helen Frankenthaler and Joel Shapiro are among those who work in the Western tradition.

Member Notes

Board Member Natalia Kolodzei is curating a show at the Bergen Museum of Art and Science in Paramus, New Jersey titled *Finding Freedom: 40 Years of Soviet and Russian Art, Selections from the Kolodzei Collection of Russian and Eastern European Art*. The opening reception will be on Saturday, October 18th, 2003, 5 - 8 PM, and the exhibition runs through November 30, 2003. For further information please visit www.TheBergenMuseum.com or www.KolodzeiArt.org.

The 39 prints in this exhibition beautifully illustrate the contrasting natures of these two major traditional methods of woodcut printing and offer the viewer a taste of the excitement and vitality of the power of a print. It is fascinating to note the differences between these two methods of printing and, by having the opportunity to compare them side by side, one is able to feel both the viscosity of oil-based pigments and the fluidity of water-based paints which allows the wood grain to show through.

Ink from Wood: Two Traditions will run until November 8th at The Center for Contemporary Printmaking in Norwalk, CT. The Center is housed in a stone carriage house on the grounds of the Lockwood-Mathews Mansion Museum (current site of the filming of *The Stepford Wives*). For directions call 203-899-7999

Correction

In the Spring 2003 issue of the *Print Club Newsletter*, in the "Membership Notes" column, Mrs. Ferretti's name was mistakenly given as Elaine. It is, in fact, Eileen. We apologize for the error.

Upcoming Print Club Events

Tuesday, October 21, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

The Print Club will host its *Tenth Annual Artists Showcase* at The National Arts Club, 15 Grammercy Square South. Don't miss this exciting event at which five contemporary artists will show and talk about their work.

Thursday, November 6, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Mark your calendars now for the *Second Annual Print Week Party*. Our club is co-hosting this event with the Print Club of Cleveland and will welcome members of clubs affiliated with the International Print Collectors' Societies to our "home" at The Society of Illustrators, 128 E. 63rd Street, just east of Lexington [ring the bell at the red door to gain admittance].

Saturday, November 8, 10:00 a.m.

The International Print Center of New York, at 526 West 26th Street, Room 824, invites members of the Print Club of New York to visit during this special Print Week event. View their new exhibit while enjoying coffee and pastries.

Also of interest to Print Club Members:

October 3-December 14, 2003

Käthe Kollwitz: The Art of Compassion, The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY, <http://fllac.vassar.edu/upcoming.html>. This traveling exhibition of drawings, prints and five sculptures was organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario. *The Transmission of Fame: Italian Renaissance Prints* will be coming to Vassar from April 9-June 13, 2004.

Thursday, October 16, 6:00 p.m.

Brooklyn Museum's Print Room: a Behind the Scene Tour with Marilyn Kushner. As part of its Speaker Series, the Lower East Side Printshop is sponsoring this special tour led by the museum's Curator of Prints and Drawings. The presentation is free and

open to the public on a first come basis. Call (212) 673-5390 to reserve a space.

Saturday, October 18, 10:00-6:00

Resident Artists' Print Sale, Lower East Side Printshop, 59-61 East Fourth Street, New York, NY. Hundreds of prints by the Printshop's artists-in-residence will be for sale at prices ranging from \$10 to \$500. For further information, call (212) 673-5390.

October 20-December 7

BOOKS as ART: Recent Books by John Ross, Manhattanville College Library, 2900 Purchase Street, Purchase, NY. John Ross, renowned artist, printmaker and former chair of the Studio Art Department at Manhattanville, will exhibit a selection of the books he has created. A reception will be held on **Sunday, October 26 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.**, and the artist will present a talk on the planning stages of creating a book on **Wednesday, October 29 at 6:00 p.m.** Further information is available from Lynda Hanley, Education and Outreach Librarian (914) 323-5314.

Thursday, November 6 through Sunday, November 9

International Fine Print Dealers Association Thirteenth Annual Print Fair, Seventh Regiment Armory, Park at 67th Street, New York, New York. For information call (212) 674-6095 or go to: www.artline.com/associations/ifpda/ifpdafair2003/ifpdafair2003.html.

Saturday, December 6, 10:00-6:00

Annual Benefit Print Sale, Lower East Side Printshop, 59-61 East Fourth Street. This popular annual event features work donated by exciting contemporary artists, including Nancy Spero, Jackie Battenfield and Tomie Arai, to benefit the Printshop. All works available on view at the studio and on-line (<http://printshop.org>) beginning November 5. All donated works cost \$50 except those selected for the on-line auction. Sales begin November 5; at the full-day sale on December 6, the latest editions by Amy Cutler, Geraldine Lau and Joan Linder will be added to the selection.