

ttp

THE TAMARIND PAPERS
A Journal of the Fine Print

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Amon Carter Museum. Cover; pages 46-51.

Australian National Gallery. Page 71.

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Michael Thomas. Page 65.

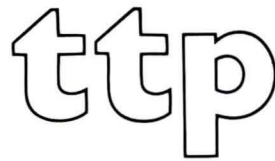
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We welcome submission of historical, critical, or technical articles on topics related to the fine print. Historical and critical articles should be limited to nineteenth and twentieth century subjects; technical articles may deal with any print medium. Manuscripts and photographs will be returned only if accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope. In preparation of manuscripts, authors should adhere closely to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Tamarind Institute is not responsible for loss of or injury to unsolicited manuscripts or photographs. The views expressed in articles and reviews are those of individual writers and not necessarily those of Tamarind Institute or the University of New Mexico.

Except as noted in captions, all works illustrated are printed in black; dimensions are in millimeters, height preceding width.



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Volume 9, Number 2

Fall 1986

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COVER:

Stuart Davis (1894–1964)
Barber Shop Chord, 1931.
Lithograph, 352 × 479.
Collection, Amon Carter Museum.

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Print Quarterly

Readers of *TTP* who have not yet become familiar with *Print Quarterly* should rush to correct their oversight. Since beginning publication in 1984, *Print Quarterly* has established its position as the leading English-language journal devoted exclusively to the history of the print. Articles are published on every aspect of the print from the fifteenth century to the present day. All articles meet the highest standards of scholarship; book reviews are solid and informative, frequently providing important added insights into the subjects reviewed. While in some past issues, emphasis was given to earlier prints, it is editorial policy to achieve a balance between historic and modern topics. Recent issues have included articles or reviews about the prints of Chagall, Degas, Denis, Haden, Manet, Matisse, Nicholson, Pissarro, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Whistler; and on such topics as "American Printmaking in the 1930s," "The Rise of Etching in America's Far West," Gemini GEL. The forthcoming issue will feature an article on the development of the screen print as an artists' medium in the United States.

Published in association with the J. Paul Getty Trust, *Print Quarterly* is edited in London by David Landau. Its editorial board includes leading European and American scholars. Annual subscriptions (calendar year only) are £22 in the U.K., £26 (or \$40 U.S.) elsewhere in the world. Address: 80 Carlton Hill, London NW8 0ER.

Art Nouveau Bing: The Paris Style 1900

The exhibition *Art Nouveau Bing: The Paris Style 1900*, which opened at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in September, will travel nationally throughout 1986 and 1987 under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution [SITES]. The exhibition examines not only S. Bing's proclivities for all the decorative arts but also his strong interest in and involvement with original prints. Bing's close ties with the Swiss printmaker Felix Vallotton are detailed through prints that Vallotton exhibited at Bing's art nouveau gallery in 1896 and through the specific commissions that Vallotton did for Bing. The latter include the main poster for the first

Salon of Art Nouveau (December 1895) and a previously unknown print that advertised Bing's shop and commissions. Bing avidly supported numerous other avant-garde printmakers, including Edvard Munch. In 1896 Bing gave Munch his first large retrospective exhibition in Paris, a show that was extensively discussed in modernist circles. Other printmakers exhibited by Bing included Georges Lemmen, Henry van de Velde, and the younger French artists associated with "The Nabis"—among them Pierre Bonnard and Edouard Vuillard. The exhibition is accompanied by a 296-page book-catalogue written by its curator and organizer, Gabriel P. Weisberg, and published by Harry N. Abrams. Weisberg's book will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of *TTP*.

Printmaking Seminars: Rutgers University

The Mason Gross School for the Arts and the Zimmerli Museum are cosponsoring a series of public seminar-lectures by artists and printers. The series, which began in October 1986, will continue in spring 1987 with presentations on 5 March by painter-photographer Juan Sanchez and printer John Hutcheson; and on 9 April by printmaker Howardina Pindell and printer Judith Solodkin. Each event will include a morning workshop-demonstration in the printmaking studios (Walters Hall, Douglass campus) and an afternoon lecture-discussion (Zimmerli Museum). For information and reservations, telephone (201) 932-9078.

Painters Make Prints in Maryland

A series of prominent painters have been invited to participate in *Painters Make Prints*, a year-long program of two-week residencies at the Maryland Institute, College of Art. While at the institute, each artist will present a public slide lecture about his or her work and host an informal open house. Artists scheduled to participate in the program in February and March 1987 are Pat Adams (lecture, 19 February; open house, 27 February) and Moe Brooker (lecture, 5 March; open house, 13 March). For information about times and places, telephone Arlene Richman, (301) 669-9200, extension 264.

A survey listing sixty-nine printmaking workshops in England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, compiled by Sylvie Turner and first published in the British publication *Artists Newsletter* (April 1986), has been reprinted in *Print News* 8, No. 3 (Summer 1986), pages 12–18. Turner's excellent introduction provides a brief history of the workshop movement in Great Britain and the survey includes full information about the services provided by each workshop, which vary from publishing and editioning to instructional and cooperative programs.

Irish readers of the survey will be astonished to learn that the Dublin workshops are listed among the "Print Workshops of Great Britain"!

REPORT FROM TAMARIND

Tamarind Gallery

Renovations complete, Tamarind opened its gallery on 10 October with a party attended by 400. The gallery (formerly office space) is a light, open area well-suited to exhibition of lithographs printed in the workshop. It is open from 9:00 to 5:00, Monday through Friday, and by appointment. Increased local sale of lithographs and interest in the workshop facilities are already apparent, according to Linda Tyler, gallery manager.

National Advisory Board

Marge Devon, Tamarind Institute's director, has restructured the institute's National Advisory Board. New members are Robert Conway, director, Associated American Artists, New York; Tony Jones, president, School of the Art Institute of Chicago; Barry Walker, associate curator, Brooklyn Museum; and Theodore F. Wolff, columnist, *The Christian Science Monitor*. Continuing members are Clinton Adams, W. McNeil Lowry, Gustave von Groschwitz, June Wayne, and Ruth Weisberg.

The portfolio *México Nueve*, begun in 1984 and completed in the summer of 1986, was formally presented to the *Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores* (Foreign Ministry) and *Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes* (National Institute of Fine Arts) in a ceremony and reception held in Mexico City on 3 November 1986. A number of the artists who participated in the project, as well as representatives of the *Instituto Nacional*, the *Departamento de Asuntos Culturales* (Department of Cultural Affairs), and Tamarind Institute were present. *México Nueve* was sponsored jointly by Tamarind Institute and the Latin American Institute of the University of New Mexico and was partially funded by the Arts and Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation.

This project, designed to enhance cultural and artistic ties between the United States and Mexico, invited the participation of nine Mexican artists, each of whom created two lithographs at the Institute. The artists—Alfredo Castañeda, Alberto Castro Leñero, Olga Costa, Gunther Gerzso, Luis López Loza, José Luis Cuevas, Gabriel Macotella, Vicente Rojo, and Roger von Gunten—represent the vitality and diversity of contemporary Mexican art.

Workshops

Tamarind Institute offered a successful monotype workshop in November 1986. Participating artists ranged from beginners to experts; all were kept busy by master printer Lynne Allen. A second monotype workshop—again including a technical lecture as well as hands-on experience in the pressroom—is scheduled for December.

An intensive summer workshop program has been scheduled beginning 29 June and continuing through 24 July 1987. Focus will be upon the theory and chemistry of aluminum plate lithography, the procedures necessary for creation of successful prints on aluminum, techniques of drawing (including tusche washes), and the etching of plates. For those who are interested, stones will also be available. The workshop fee will be \$200.00, which includes all supplies except aluminum plates and paper (these will be available at cost). Persons who wish to receive university credit may arrange to do so (the additional cost for tuition will be approximately \$150.00). For further information, telephone (505) 277-3901.

A REALITY PARALLEL TO NATURE

Stuart Davis's Lithographs: 1929–1931

Jane Myers

STUART DAVIS'S FASCINATION WITH, and adoption of, the modernist aesthetic following the Armory Show of 1913 prompted his sole trip abroad in 1928. In Paris, where he lived until the summer of 1929, Davis and other American colleagues participated in the intellectual and cultural milieu that had nourished the French artists whose influence had led Davis to new artistic ground. Among the Americans in Paris were a growing number of artists eager to pursue lithography—at that time still largely associated with commercial reproduction—as a distinct art form. In these surroundings, Davis embarked upon his most concerted printmaking effort, producing eleven lithographs before his return to America.

Davis selected as his subject the uncelebrated corners of the Latin Quarter and the Montparnasse district. In the prints and drawings executed in Paris he focused on views drawn from the fifth, sixth, and fourteenth arrondissements; in Montparnasse he rented a studio (since destroyed) from fellow American artist Jan Matulka at 50 rue Vercingétorix. The paintings were vivid statements of his enthusiastic reception of Paris subjects:

His reaction to this totally new environment was conveyed in a number of street scenes [which] evoke the picturesque charm of the *quartiers* while scrupulously respecting the flatness of the canvas by emphasizing the decorative and tactile properties of paint. In such paintings as *Place Padeloup* or *Place des Vosges*, Nos. 1 and 2, he alternated areas of smoothly brushed paint with dense or stippled passages, employing abrupt color transitions that make it impossible to read space three dimensionally.¹

Davis was emphatic that his compositions should evoke a sense of place rather than serve as literal transcriptions. Eschewing an over-emphasis on subject matter, Davis retained only selective details as both formal enhancement and as a suggestion of place. A series of sketchbook drawings rendered on the site served as a point of departure for both Davis's paintings and prints. Drawings served as the basis for all the Paris lithographs; the broad planar divisions of the pencil renderings were embellished in the prints by the addition of subtle tonal gradations and the grainy texture of the lithographic printing elements. The incorporation of imaginative linear patterns in the lithographs heightens their two-dimensionality.

The sketch of the Place Padeloup [FIG. 1] accurately records the actual location of buildings in this public square, located in the eleventh arrondissement.² While in the lithographs [FIGS. 2 and 3], the relation of the architectural elements remains intact, the central structure is reduced to its linear essentials. The delicately balanced compositions are animated by the details that caught Davis's selective eye: the serpentine swirls of the balconies' ornamental ironwork, the urns in the far courtyard, the lamppost, and the rooster atop La Cressonne restaurant.

Other sites in Davis's lithographs are more generalized, although they appear to be faithful translations of Parisian streetcorners. *Hotel Café*, *Hotel de France*, and *Au Bon Coin*—a title that possibly refers to

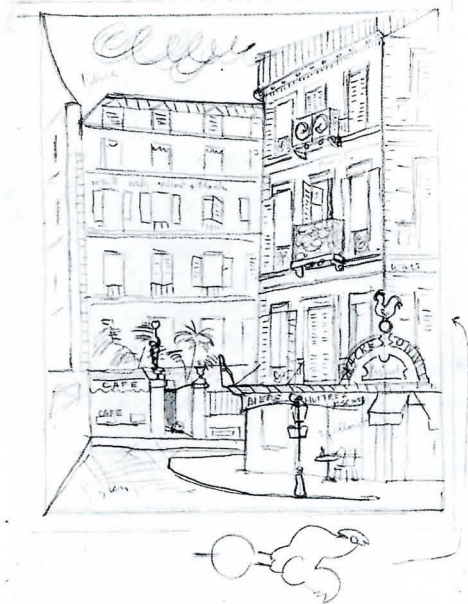


FIG. 1. Stuart Davis. *Study for Place Padeloup*, 1928. Graphite on paper, 245 × 191. Collection, Amon Carter Museum.

1 Diane Kelder, "Stuart Davis: Methodology and Imagery," in *Stuart Davis: Graphic Work and Related Paintings with a Catalogue Raisonné of the Prints* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1986): 6–7.

2 Named for composer and conductor De Jules-Etienne Padeloup (1819–1887).

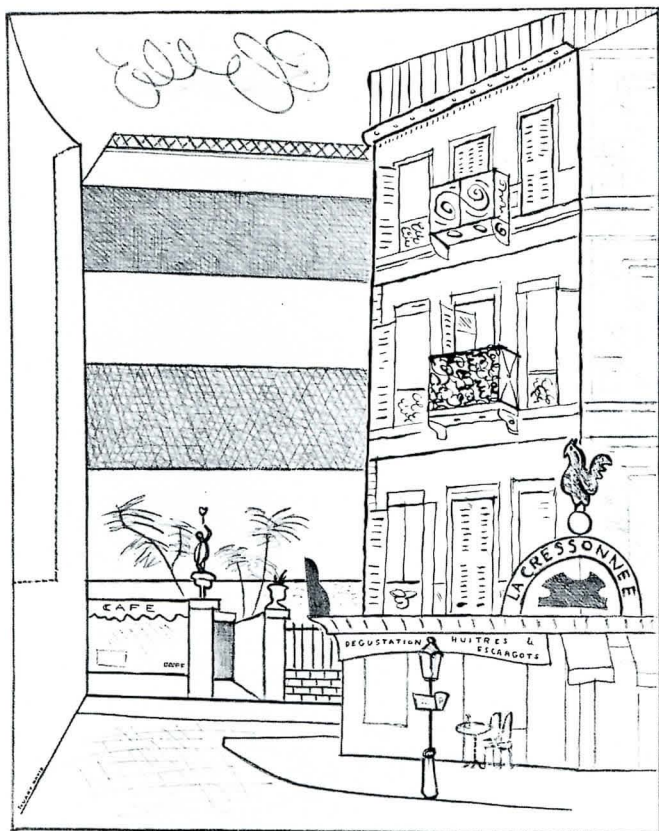


FIG. 2. **Stuart Davis.** *Place Padeloup, No. 1*, 1929. Lithograph, 348 × 279. Collection, Amon Carter Museum.



FIG. 3. **Stuart Davis.** *Place Padeloup, No. 2*, 1929. Lithograph, 345 × 278. Collection, Amon Carter Museum.

the name of the café depicted in the lithograph—express universal aspects of the city and are difficult to locate among the myriad number of such scenes in Paris. The precise geographical source for prints of the 1928–29 period is complicated by Davis's uneven French. A "rue des Rats," for example, does not appear in *Paris Gazetteers*, although a plausible candidate for this narrow street is the rue Rataud in the fifth arrondissement, an area the artist frequented. The source of the title of the print *Adit* [FIG. 4] remains a mystery and its location is unidentified.³ Attesting to Davis's disregard for specifying his subjects is the fact that the inscription appearing on the building in each version of the scene, all representing a virtually identical site, varies from "Rue des Ra..." in the gouache, to "RUE VANDA[MME]" in the drawing, to what appears to read "Rue Vercingétorix" in one of the two paintings based on the sketch.

In some of the Paris lithographs, the artist removed the composition one step further from reality by distorting and realigning the original site. In *Place des Vosges* [FIG. 6], this popular square, designed in the seventeenth century in a classically symmetrical plan, has been transformed. The artist condensed the elegant facades from a row of five pavilions into three as they recede in an undulating procession, converging on the Hotel de Rohan-Guéménée, where Victor Hugo once maintained an apartment. Davis's disregard for the historical aspect of his subjects is reflected in his comment on this square:

If one went to the Place des Vosges full of enthusiasm for its rich historical background, the fact that Victor Hugo lived there, etc., then the painting made to express that interest would have to be factual in the sense of it being a color and shape replica. . . . But if one came accidentally into Place des Vosges, unaware of its history, as I did, then the interest aroused comes purely from the physical aspect of the scene itself. . . . One paints this sort of interest without regard to historical accuracy, civic pride, or

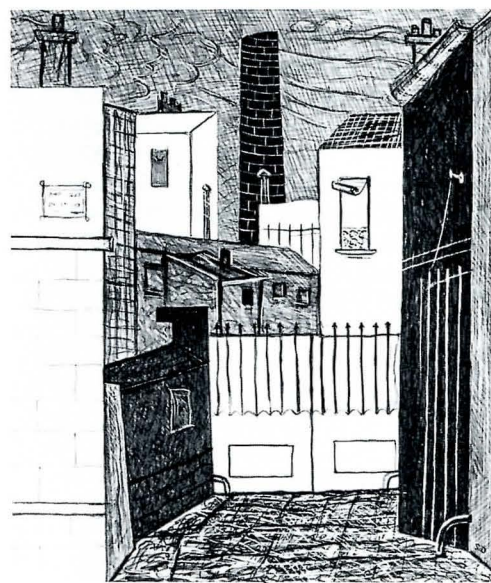
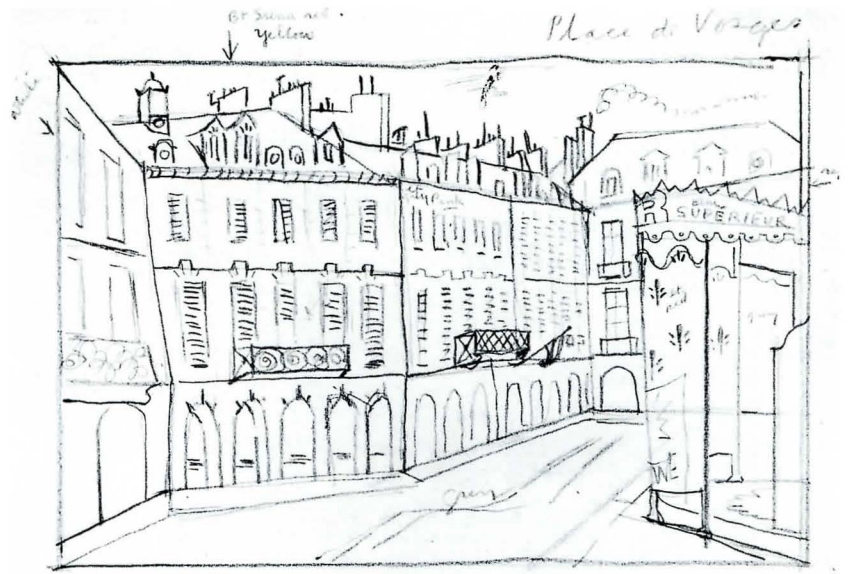


FIG. 4. **Stuart Davis.** *Adit*, 1928. Lithograph, 299 × 257. Collection, Amon Carter Museum.

3 *Adit* has no French translation. The Latin words *aditio* and *aditus*, however, refer to an "approach," suggesting the entrance Davis is depicting.

FIG. 5. **Stuart Davis.** *Study for Place des Vosges*, 1928. Graphite on paper, 173 × 252. Collection, Amon Carter Museum.



the name of the town or place. My picture looks like the Place des Vosges, but it looks only like certain color-shape relations, which are inherently there. These color-shape relations are beautiful, independent of the objects they are associated with, therefore they are abstract—but since they are always associated with some sort of objects, they are concrete and unique in each case.⁴

The Amon Carter Museum presented a major exhibition, "Stuart Davis: Graphic Work and Selected Paintings," from 29 August through 26 October 1986. A fully illustrated catalogue, *Stuart Davis: Graphic Work and Related Paintings with a Catalogue Raisonné of the Prints*, was published on the occasion of the exhibition. Essay by Diane Kelder. Catalogue Raisonné by Sylvan Cole and Jane Myers.

This article is based upon a portion of that catalogue, revised by the author, and is printed by permission of the Amon Carter Museum.

Davis's exploration of spatial concepts becomes more complex in the lithographs *Arch No. 1* and *Arch No. 2* [Figs. 8 and 9], where the predominant motif originated in drawings of the Porte St. Martin, located, like the Place Padeloup, near the Place de la Republique. Taking his inspiration from a series of sketchbook renderings, Davis made two prints and three paintings, all featuring a single opening in the tripartite portal, built in 1674 to commemorate Louis XIV's victory over the Dutch, Germans, and Spanish. One drawing with the city hall tower visible through the archway closely resembles the scene as it appears today. In the lithographs, Davis refines and reassembles these on-site impressions, creating ambitious compositional arrangements while retaining the overriding presence of the arch, combining it with Parisian façades and an oversized rum bottle. The "split composition" of these prints, featuring buildings adjacent to the archway, provides the artist with an opportunity to juxtapose interior and exterior space in a single image, a contrast that intrigued him.⁵

Although it is not possible accurately to establish the chronology of Davis's Parisian prints, it may be that such lithographs as *Arch No. 1* and *Arch No. 2*, characterized by more complex imagery, fall later in the series than the more direct interpretations of Parisian street scenes. Technically, the artist's development is apparent when comparing a 1928 print such as *Adit* with other lithographs in the series. In the earlier print, Davis, the consummate draftsman, employs calligraphic methods, including crosshatching and incised lines, as well as local shading and modulation of tone. In the other Paris prints, the artist favored more generalized forms, broader planes, and pronounced contrasts of black and white to evoke the structural rigidity and spatial ambiguity of his architectural subjects.

Certain technical details regarding Davis's printmaking habits in Paris remain incomplete. Most of these lithographs were printed in small editions of ten, twenty, or thirty impressions. Many of the Americans making prints in Paris in the 1920s sought the expertise

4 Statement written by Stuart Davis for the New-ark Museum, 12 September 1940.

5 For example, *House and Street* (1931), Whitney Museum of American Art.

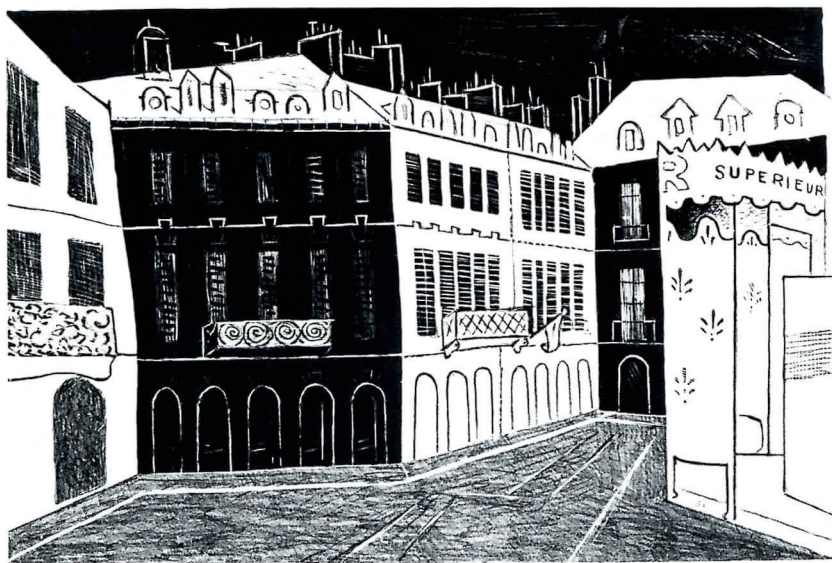


FIG. 6. Stuart Davis. *Place des Vosges*, 1928. Lithograph, 230 × 342. Collection, Amon Carter Museum.

of Edmond Desjobert, a printer noted for his technical skill and for the rich contrasts he achieved through his choice of inks. Such master printmakers as Louis Lozowick, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Benton Spruance, Howard Cook, and Adolf Dehn had their lithographs printed at the Atelier Desjobert.⁶ Although it has not been established with certainty that Davis worked with Desjobert, it is likely that this was the case. The Paris lithographs in the Amon Carter Museum collection are printed on mounted china paper (*chine collé*) and the papers used are consistent with those found in other prints from the Desjobert studio.⁷ In that studio, Davis would have come into contact with some of the most talented American printmakers of the period.

Davis executed one other print in 1929, probably shortly after his return from abroad. *Two Heads*, printed in an edition of twelve, recalls the pairing of conversational figures in Davis's earlier illustrations for *The Masses*. This print was exhibited in 1929 with a group of Davis's Paris lithographs at Edith Halpert's Downtown Gallery in the third annual American Print Makers exhibition. Davis's *Hotel de France* was admired for its "blond beauty of pale planes, curling arabesques, a sweep of line leading out with invitation to the unseen."⁸

Halpert, a dealer with whom Davis enjoyed a long association, handled all of the work Davis did in Paris; she exhibited his Paris paintings in the late 1920s and early 1930s.⁹ Davis's prints were first represented at the Downtown Gallery as early as a few months after his arrival in Paris when, in October 1928, three of his paintings and a single print were shown in the gallery's "Exhibition of Works by Americans in Paris."

Critical acknowledgment was also accorded Davis's Paris lithograph *Rue des Rats* when it was selected by John Sloan for inclusion in the American Institute of Graphic Arts' fifth annual "Fifty Prints of the Year" exhibition. Considered an important indicator of modern printmaking, this exhibition, like the American Print Makers annuals, traveled to cities around the country, creating a national audience for contemporary prints.

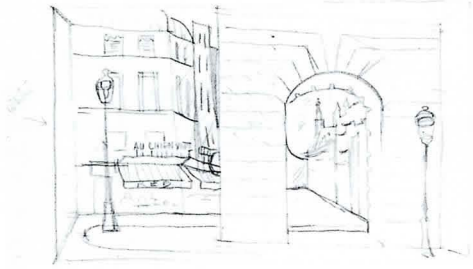
FOLLOWING HIS TRIP TO EUROPE, Davis returned to the American imagery of his early career, producing five lithographs in 1931 in which he transformed indigenous urban and coastal subjects into a pictorial language distinguished from the Paris works by the incorporation of both cubist and surrealist elements.

6 See Clinton Adams, *American Lithographers, 1900–1960: The Artists and Their Printers* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983): 73–77.

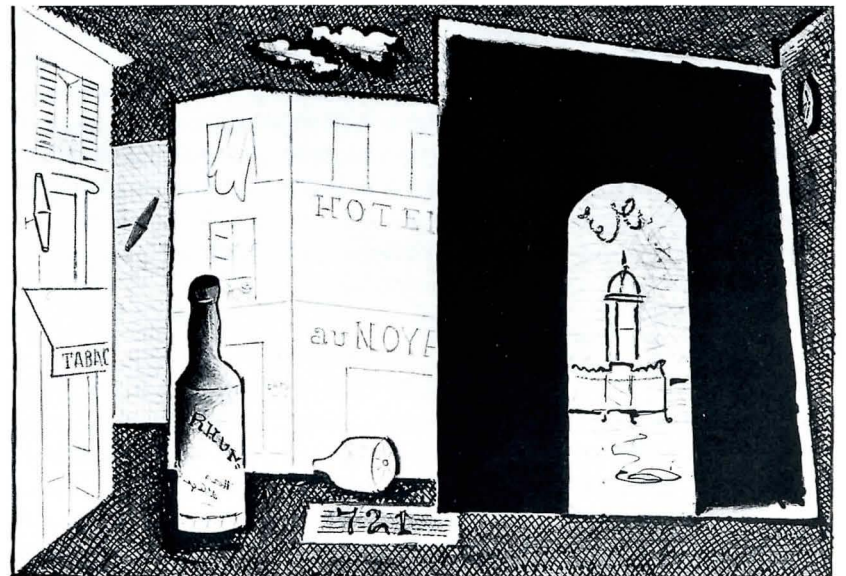
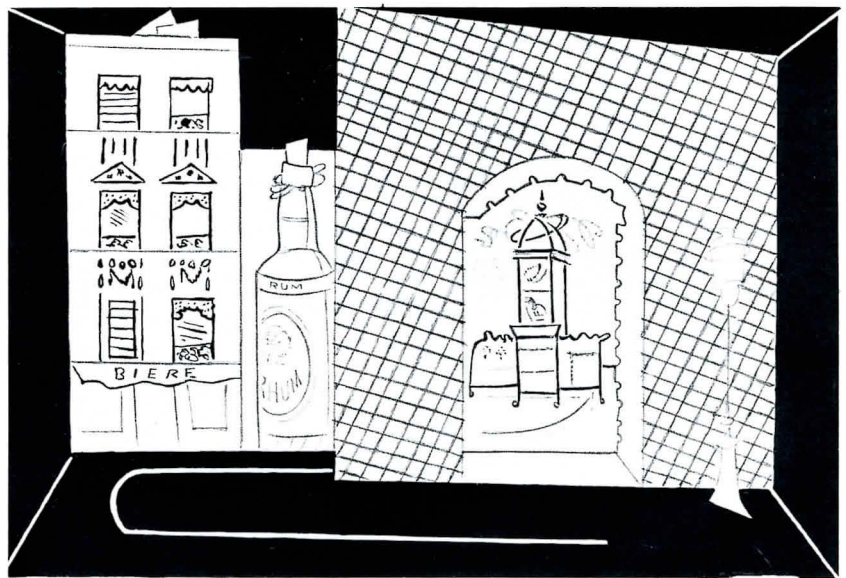
7 I am grateful to Janet Flint for sharing this information with me. Stanley William Hayter has also stated that Davis made prints in his Paris studio (Jacob Kainen, "An Interview with Stanley William Hayter," *Arts Magazine* 60 (January 1986): 64–67). Hayter's workshop was located on the rue de Moulin Vert, in the same vicinity where Davis resided during his time in Paris. It is highly unlikely that Davis worked with Hayter, however, for Hayter's studio (which he moved in 1933 to 17 rue Campagne-Premier, thereupon establishing his famous Atelier 17) was known for intaglio printing rather than lithography, the medium in which Davis worked.

8 Elisabeth Luther Cary, "Pre-Holiday Offerings in the Art Galleries: Watercolors and Prints," *New York Times*, 15 December 1929. Davis's Paris prints also appeared in the fourth annual American Print Makers exhibition. Each of these exhibitions included four prints by Davis. In 1929 they were *Arch No. 1*, *Hotel de France*, *Hotel Café*, and *Two Heads*; in 1930, *Place Padeloup No. 2*, *Arch No. 2*, *Hotel Café*, and *Paris Street* (possible *Rue des Rats* or *Rue de l'Echaudé*).

9 A large group of Davis's prints from the Downtown Gallery's stock was sold at an auction after Halpert's death (*Nineteen and Twentieth Century Prints*, New York: Sotheby's Parke Bernet, 8 and 9 February 1973).



ABOVE: FIG. 7. **Stuart Davis**. *Sketchbook drawing, Porte St. Martin, 1928–29*. Graphite on paper, 152 × 229. Collection, Amon Carter Museum. ABOVE RIGHT: FIG. 8. **Stuart Davis**. *Arch No. 1, 1929*. Lithograph, 227 × 329. Collection, Amon Carter Museum. BELOW RIGHT: FIG. 9. **Stuart Davis**. *Arch No. 2, 1929*. Lithograph, 240 × 335. Collection, Amon Carter Museum.



- 10 Kelder, "Stuart Davis" (1986): 8.
- 11 The tanks also appear in Davis's *Gloucester Wharf* (1926–1935, gouache, pencil, and india ink on cardboard, Milwaukee Art Center). My thanks to Martha Oaks, Cape Ann Historical Association, Gloucester, Massachusetts, for providing information on Davis's Gloucester imagery.
- 12 This sketchbook is in the collection of Earl Davis.
- 13 Jean Cocteau's *Antigone*, with sets by Picasso, was first performed at the Theatre de l'Atelier in 1922 (Philippe Jullian, *Montmartre*, tr. Anne Carter, Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1977: 195).
- 14 It is probable that Davis's 1931 lithographs in New York were printed either by George Miller or by J. E. Rosenthal. Edith Halpert is known to have directed artists from her gallery to both workshops. In an advertising flyer published during the 1940s, Miller lists Davis among the artists for whom he has printed. Two Davis lithographs, *Place Padeloup No. 1* and *Sixth Avenue El* were included in a sale of George Miller's printer's proofs in 1934. This fact suggests that Miller may have printed *Sixth Avenue El* and that he may have acquired *Place Padeloup No. 1* (printed in Paris) by exchange with the artist (see Adams, *American Lithographers*: 76). An alternative possibility is suggested by correspondence between Halpert and Max Weber in which she refers to the printer J. E. Rosenthal, who printed for several artists represented by Halpert's gallery and thus may have printed for Davis (see Daryl R. Rubenstein, *Max Weber: A Catalogue Raisonné of his Graphic Work*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980: 90). I thank Clinton Adams for this information.

Although his direct exposure to Parisian avant-garde art had no lasting effect on his painting and theorizing, it certainly reinforced his conviction that modernism and the American experience were entirely compatible. Indeed, from the 1930s on, Davis was the only painter of major importance to embrace American subject matter while still retaining the formalist goals of cubism.¹⁰

The 1931 prints are tightly filled compositions replete with manifestations of the artist's richly visual environment. The town of Gloucester, Massachusetts, where Davis spent his summers, figures prominently in two of his prints, *Barber Shop Chord* [COVER] and *Theatre on the Beach* [FIG. 11], whereas *Two Figures and El* and *Sixth Avenue El* were derived from drawings in the artist's New York sketchbooks. The fifth print, *Composition*, is the most abstract of the group, exhibiting only vestiges of naturalistic forms: an isolated arm and three vertical shapes in the center of the composition suggest masts, one of the many nautical subjects that engaged Davis during his summers in Gloucester. Davis's repertoire also included the conically shaped natural gas tank that appears in *Barber Shop Chord*.¹¹ Towering over sixty feet, the structure was one of two brick tanks (no longer standing) located along the Gloucester waterfront. These gas tanks were a

prominent feature in the artist's youth as well, for in an early sketchbook dated 1909 Davis recorded similar gas houses in East Orange, New Jersey, where he lived with his family from 1901 to 1910.¹²

The lithographs of 1931 also summarize other themes in Davis's life and work. The biomorphic figures in *Two Figures and El* evince the dreamlike imagery of surrealism, a movement garnering considerable notice when Davis lived in France. One conspicuous component with specific origins in Davis's trip to Paris is the theater in *Theatre on the Beach* [FIG. 11], a lithograph in which the Gloucester shore (in a configuration based on one of Davis's summer sketchbooks) is incongruously situated beside an ornate theater. Superimposed over the two halves in a pose reminiscent of Picasso's grooming women is a cubist-inspired nude figure. The horizontal marks on the figure's torso and the position of the arms and hands simultaneously suggest the musician motif prevalent in cubist iconography. The source for the theater building, which was photographed in 1925 by Eugène Atget (1856–1927), lies in a Paris drawing. Davis elected to sketch only the center portion of the Théâtre de l'Atelier, located in the Montmartre district, and in the lithograph version, the artist further shortens the building to two bays and simplifies the architectural embellishment—an ornamental head relief—over each arched window.¹³ One of these stone medallions reappears in the lithograph *Sixth Avenue El*, where it has been transformed into a large, disembodied theatrical mask, contributing to the playful regrouping of disparate geographies and subjects characteristic of the 1931 prints.

Four of the 1931 prints fall into two pairs. *Barber Shop Chord* and *Sixth Avenue El* were exhibited at the Downtown Gallery's American Print Makers annual exhibition in 1931; *Theatre on the Beach* and *Two Figures and El* appeared in the same exhibition held two years later. Halpert's American Print Makers annuals, instituted in 1927, were noteworthy because the selection committee, composed of prominent artists, invited printmakers to contribute selections of their choice from their print *oeuvre*. Thus, the printmakers could freely determine which prints would represent them. Unlike some participants in the Print Makers annuals, Davis was not primarily a printmaker. Although the promotion of his lithographs by Edith Halpert through these regular exhibitions never translated into a market for his prints, the exposure provided Davis with some measure of critical acclaim as a printmaker.

The majority of the prints in the Print Makers annuals were lithographs, a medium then considered to represent innovative and modern trends, in contrast to the intaglio methods associated with the more traditional school.¹⁴ Critics applauded the avant-garde spirit embodied in the prints of Davis and other young artists, describing them as "thoroughly sensitive to the contemporary scene and to contemporary ideas in aesthetics."¹⁵ Another writer praised their work as "exceedingly lively and vivacious. Certain of them, such as Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Stuart Davis, and Wanda Gág, have so much command of their medium that they give the effect of being unaware of their medium—and that is an ideal state for any artist to reach."¹⁶ Davis's prints were singled out as "stirring abstractions";¹⁷ his *Barber Shop Chord* was called "resonant."¹⁸ Among the lithographers included in Halpert's exhibitions were artists such as Arshile Gorky and Max Weber, whose work was experimental and abstract, as well as artists like John Steuart Curry, whose work exemplified the conservative, regionalist idiom. Davis was clearly in the former camp and made a brief but impressive appearance in the print community of the early 1930s. □



ABOVE: FIG. 10. **Stuart Davis.** *Study for Theatre on the Beach*, 1931. Graphite, orange crayon, and green crayon on paper, 279 × 381. Collection, Amon Carter Museum. BELOW: FIG. 11. **Stuart Davis.** *Theatre on the Beach*, 1931. Lithograph, 279 × 381. Collection, Amon Carter Museum.

15 "Left Wing of American Print Makers, 36 Strong, Hold Annual," *Art Digest* 5 (15 December 1930): 23.

16 Henry McBride, "American Etchers and Lithographers," *New York Sun*, 12 December 1931.

17 "American Print Makers: The Downtown Gallery," *Art News* 30 (12 December 1931): 14.

18 Elisabeth Luther Cary, "The American Print Makers: Depth and Satire," *New York Times*, 13 December 1931.

THE SYNTAX OF THE PRINT

In Search of an Aesthetic Context

Ruth Weisberg

WITH FEW BUT NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS, critics and curators with powerful venues and easy access to publication have failed to provide printmaking with a theoretical framework. Recent books and exhibitions often disclaim responsibility for a comprehensive overview. An example is provided by Judith Goldman's *American Prints: Process & Proofs*, which "looks at graphics by painters; it excludes printmakers, not because they have not made important graphic statements, but because historically painters have brought the major innovations to the graphic arts."¹ While there is in her statement a suggestion of an underlying aesthetic theory, it is never elucidated, and it is never amplified or substantiated in her text. One is thus led to suspect that taste and selection are powerfully shaped by considerations of the marketplace, a suspicion further supported by Riva Castleman's recent book *American Impressions: Prints Since Pollock*. In her review of this book, Pat Gilmour notes that, "Although a few of the better-known 'printmakers' are mentioned, as one might expect from the print curator of a blue-chip museum, the emphasis in *American Impressions* is on the 'star' system and particularly those who have 'made it' in New York."²

It is characteristic of most writing on contemporary printmaking that certain aesthetic theories and value systems are assumed and that these assumptions remain unsubstantiated. Although at symposiums and conference panels, statements are frequently made about concepts and sensibilities, contemporary printmaking seems to lack a broad philosophical context for aesthetic analysis. Examination of the literature of an analogous field such as ceramics reveals what printmaking lacks. In the 1940s Bernard Leach created a separate aesthetic category for ceramics based on its inherent values and intrinsic qualities. Since the mid-1950s several authors have attempted serious syntheses of ceramic tradition and contemporary art expression. One must ask whether it would be possible in the

field of printmaking to compile a collection of critical essays such as those found in *Ceramic Art: Comment and Review 1882-1977*, edited by Garth Clark.³

Instead, the recent literature of printmaking leans toward the technical, the historical, and, especially, the socio-economic. This is understandable, given the print's function as consumer goods and as a mass medium which serves as transmitter of motifs, images, and ideas. The history of printmaking encompasses great contradictions; prints are at once intimate and political, private and public. While in the past thirty years printmaking reflected every style and trend, it was often a refuge for the artist whose work was figurative, narrative, socially conscious, or literary. It was a less rigid corner of the art world—one in which the formalist aspects of modernism could be circumvented. While the general tendency was toward more color and larger scale, this trend was resisted by printmakers who were nourished by the historical roots of their craft. It is interesting to note that in 1975 Richard Field could write in disparaging terms of etching as "a medium that had more and more become fixated on its own capacities for representational and literary complexity."⁴

In the 1980s this anti-representational, anti-allegorical bias disappeared, but modernism continued to exert an enduring influence through its insistence upon the integrity of materials. Printmakers continued to highlight aspects of process, to reveal their struggle with the graphic material. Other artists reintroduced illusionary and narrative subject matter into their work. Bruce Richards, who was

1 Judith Goldman. *American Prints: Process & Proofs* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981): 6.

2 Pat Gilmour. Review of *American Impressions: Prints Since Pollock* by Riva Castleman. *TTP* 8 (1986): 31.

3 Garth Clark (ed.). *Ceramic Art: Comment and Review, 1882-1977* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1978).

4 Richard Field. *Recent American Etching* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University, 1975): 1.

a minimalist painter, worked for a number of years on a trompe l'oeil series of enigmatic objects [FIG. 1]; Pamela Zwehl-Burke replicated a sketchbook page, creating art about the literal object as well as about the process of seeing [FIG. 2]; Warrington Colescott told the story of the history of printmaking in a manner both irreverent and engaging [FIG. 3].

SINCE PLATO, the ideal of aesthetic philosophy has been the all inclusive and the universal: ideas and theories that will endure through the ages, that will be applicable in all periods, and that will apply to all media. Even so, when one reviews the history of aesthetic theory and art criticism, one quickly realizes that the most influential ideas of an era are often doomed by their timeliness. There is a compelling historicity to aesthetic theory. Critics write insightfully only about the art of their own time, or about another time with which they have a clear affinity. The radii of their empathy and antipathy define their reach.

In the recent past, aesthetic analysis has been structured in innumerable ways, from media-based to iconographic, from stylistic to deconstructive. These discussions, however, often presume an accepted paradigm: a body of assumed ideas, an overview which provides a framework for speculative thought. I should like to locate my ideas in terms of a general paradigmatic structure, then move on to thoughts about a more specific, aesthetic understanding of historical and contemporary printmaking.

Since Heinrich Wölfflin's formulation of aesthetic theory in the early twentieth century, we have become wed to a pluralistic conception of style: to notions of periodicity, national character, media, and process. It is difficult to return to a pre-enlightenment mode of thinking, in which Beauty was thought to be the object or aim of art. The criteria for an objective conception of Beauty were to be found in such attributes as proportion, harmony, perfection, form, truth, and virtue. The major shift from this rule-based model occurred in the eighteenth century. Objective criteria were supplanted by a subjective analysis of aesthetic judgment, which was understood to reside in the realm of perception and in the workings of the mind. By the late nineteenth century, George Santayana could suggest that "Beauty is pleasure regarded [that is, experienced] as the quality of a thing" or "pleasure objectified."⁵

Late in the twentieth century, we are still engaged in this method of disassociating ideas

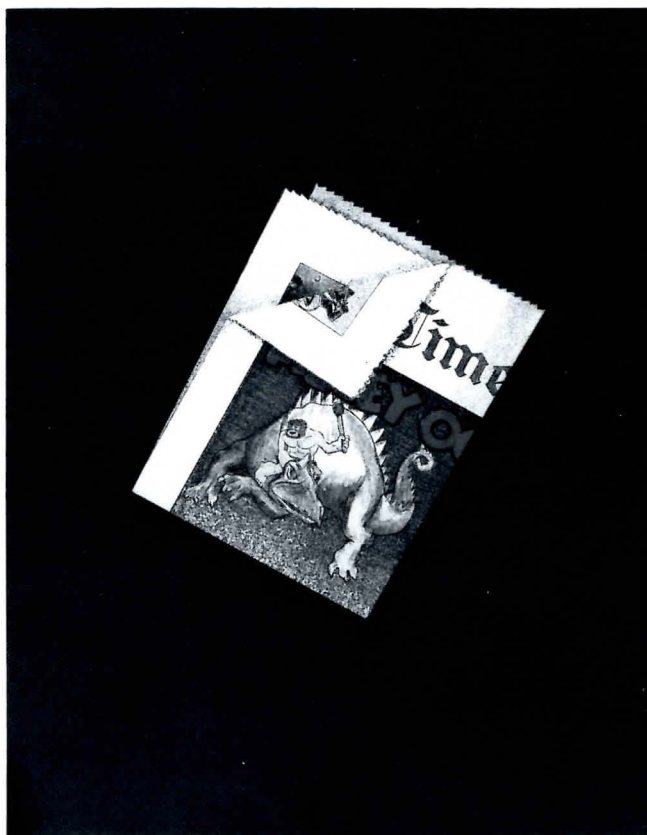


FIG. 1. Bruce Richards.
Detail, center panel: *Hand Game*, 1983-84.
Intaglio and lithograph, 641 × 1295.

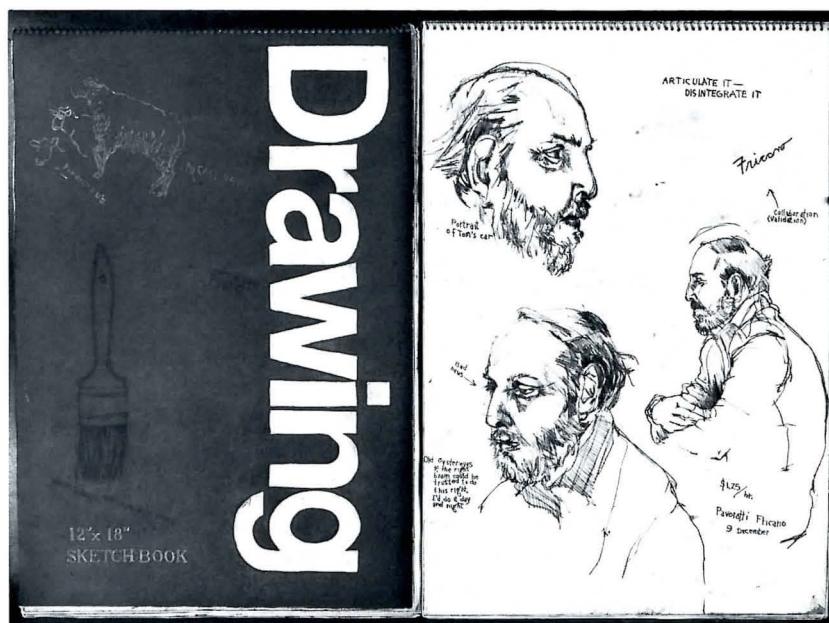


FIG. 2. Pamela Zwehl-Burke.
The Sketchbook, 1981.
Intaglio (softground), 310 × 457.



FIG. 3. Warrington Colecott. *S. W. Hayter Discovers Viscosity Printing*, 1976 (from the series *History of Printmaking*). Color etching, 559 × 705.

and analyzing their origins. The reflexive aspects of modernism are consistent with this subjective method. The apparent exhaustion of modernism has been followed by a liberating and feverish pluralism. Whether post-modernism represents a real shift in viewpoint is a matter of controversy. In trying to come to terms with the difference between the deconstructive impulse and the self-critical tendencies of recent modernism, Hal Foster writes that this distinction "is crucial to the post-modernist break, and no doubt the two operations are different: self-criticism, centered on a medium, does tend (at least under the aegis of formalism) to the essential or 'pure,' whereas deconstruction, on the contrary, decenters, and exposes the 'impurity' of meaning."⁶ In the end, he characterizes post-modernism as a rupture rather than a complete break.

Modernism, as defined by Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried, necessitates a very particular attitude toward the *media* of art. In their view, the medium gives the work its identity; therefore, a self-critical stance in dealing with the medium is a crucial factor in definition of one's aesthetic. Each medium thus has a code or nature to which one must

be true. Post-modernism, according to some, stands in opposition to this purity of medium, existing "between, across, or outside them, or in new or neglected mediums (like video or photography)."⁷

In practice, however, artists' attitudes toward media are still largely molded by modernist ideas about intrinsic qualities, and even those who decode or deconstruct are reacting to the immediately preceding code or structure. The breadth and variety of actual artistic practice is an important touchstone, for theoretical constructs—and even historical analyses—are fictions, more coherent and unified than is the practice of art in any era. The structuralist search for inherent categories seems most useful here, given my approach, which is to explore a discipline-based aesthetic. I will use the categories of *function*, *process*, and *materials* which subsume among them all factors relevant to printmaking.

5 George Santayana. *The Sense of Beauty* (New York: Scribner's, 1896).

6 Hal Foster. "Re: Post," in Brian Wallis (ed.), *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984): 199–200.

7 Ibid.: 191.

AMONG THESE CATEGORIES, function is best defined in relation to the history of the print. The multiplicity of prints gives them a role as communicators and disseminators of motifs and information. There is an impressive body of literature on the impact of the print as repeatable image and consumer product. When writers choose to emphasize these functions, the aesthetic aspects of the print usually become either incidental or extraneous. Walter Benjamin, William M. Ivans, Jr., David Kunzle, and, most recently, Chandra Mukerji have all written insightfully on the print as an artifact of material culture. When one examines the print from the viewpoint of modes of production and distribution, the rise of reproductive printmaking becomes predictable.

Reproductive work tended to degenerate or devolve aesthetically because of pressures to increase production and to standardize practices. Systems of crosshatching were evolved which allowed artisans to translate the subtleties of chiaroscuro into simplified and readable volumes, but such attendant losses were accepted to permit gains in market distribution. As Ivins observes of such a reproductive printmaker, "he had learned to see in a particular way and to lay his lines in accordance with the requirements of some particular convention or system of linear structure, and anything that that way of seeing and that convention of drawing were not calculated to catch and bring out failed to be brought out in his statement."⁸

Ivins inventories the profound effect the repeatable pictorial image had on the growth of technical and scientific knowledge.

[By] the nineteenth century informative books usefully illustrated with accurately repeatable pictorial statements became available to the mass of mankind in western Europe and in America. The result was the greatest revolution in practical thought and accomplishment that had ever been known. This revolution was a matter as momentous from the ethical and political points of view as from the mechanical and economic ones.⁹

To our eyes, the illustrations in an early printed book, such as Robertus Valturius's *De re militari* (Art of War), published in Verona in 1472, have aesthetic merit. Its large schematic il-

lustrations of catapults and moveable towers have a satisfying clarity on the pages; this appeal, however, was not intentional and was probably not evident to the author's fifteenth-century contemporaries.

Chandra Mukerji has expanded the implications of Ivins's thesis. For Mukerji, the special status of printmaking is due not just to its role as disseminator of information but primarily to its role as creator of culture and consumable goods:

The artists and printmakers who established shops outside guild control in early modern Europe were taking advantage of the emerging systems of manufacture and international trade to create new kinds of pictures in Europe. With more efficient means of production, they helped to create a proliferation of material culture; by producing new types of goods (art and mass culture) for new types of consumers (the collector and the nonaffluent) they helped to spread the range of people recruited into the new consumerist culture.¹⁰

A vast category of prints somewhat neglected by art historians is the topical broadside, where a preponderance of image over text combined with cheap distribution to create a powerful vehicle of popular communication. Most of the prints that serve this function are without great pretensions. Although Callot's *Miseres de la guerre*, Hogarth's *The Harlot's Progress*, and Goya's *Desastres de la Guerra* are among the inspired exceptions, their subject matter is not as uncommon as it once seemed. David Kunzle has gathered together a fascinating compendium of such narratives with an illuminating text in *The Early Comic Strip*.¹¹ His collection includes vivid depictions of Huguenot dissent, Jesuit intrigue, and Elizabethan plots. A section on personal morality contains diatribes against disobedient wives, some violent and some humorous, as well as images of what were perceived as the vices and follies of their age. One gets a lively impression of printmaking's relevance, its interaction with everyday life, its persuasive powers as propaganda, and its force in the externalization of beliefs. Some of the prints also have an unintentional appeal to the twentieth-century viewer, for example, the English engraving *The Escape of Jack Sheppard* [FIG. 4], gridded with an inventory of locks,

10 Chandra Mukerji. *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism* (New York: Columbia University, 1983): 46–47.

11 David Kunzle. *The Early Comic Strip* (Berkeley: University of California, 1973).

8 William M. Ivans, Jr. *Prints and Visual Communication* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1953): 60–61.

9 Ibid.: 20.

bolts, and doors broken or eluded by Shepard in his escape from Newgate Prison.

In general, topical broadsides are a somewhat degraded reflection either of contemporary taste or of that of a preceding era. They are typically conservative or regressive in style, crude in execution, and provincial—as might be expected in printed matter which was intended to be hawked on the street for a few farthings. The print, whether by Dürer or by an anonymous *formschneider*, remained part of the accessible popular culture until the nineteenth century. As Peter Burke observed:

[By 1500] popular culture was everyone's culture; a second culture for the educated, and the only culture for everyone else. By 1800, however, in most parts of Europe, the clergy, the nobility, the [wealthy] merchants, the professional men—and their wives—had abandoned popular culture to the lower classes, from whom they were now separated, as never before, by profound differences in world view.¹²

During the several centuries in which printmaking coincided with popular culture, it was also the most technically advanced means of reproduction. When Alois Senefelder invented lithography, it was more efficient and economic than the media that preceded it. In the nineteenth century the connection begins to break down. Walter Benjamin pinpoints the change:

But only a few decades after its invention, lithography was surpassed by photography. For the first time in the process of pictorial reproduction, photography freed the hand of the most important artistic functions which henceforth devolved only upon the eye looking into a lens. Since the eye perceives more swiftly than the hand can draw, the process of pictorial reproduction was accelerated so enormously that it could keep pace with speech. A film operator shooting a scene in the studio captures the images at the speed of an actor's speech. Just as lithography virtually implied the illustrated newspaper, so did photography foreshadow the sound film.¹³

So the print loses its identity as a state-of-the-art mass medium and gains the freedom to pursue more aesthetic ideals. Depending upon one's value system, these changes can be viewed either positively or negatively. For someone who values reproducibility and political purpose above all else (as does Benjamin), the new aestheticism is defined as a parasitical dependence on ritual. About art for art's sake, he writes:

With the advent of the first truly revolutionary means of reproduction, photography, simulta-

neously with the rise of socialism, art sensed the approaching crisis which has become evident a century later. At the time, art reacted with the doctrine of *l'arte pour l'arte*, that is, with a theology of art. This gave rise to what might be called a negative theology in the form of the idea of "pure" art, which not only denied any social function of art but also any categorizing by subject matter.¹⁴

During the next hundred years, prints evolved into precious works of art, their rarity assured by the new convention of the signed and numbered, limited edition. Newspapers, television, reproductive photography, and film took over the functions that at one time were served principally by the print and town crier. A new class of patron developed for the limited edition print. The new printmaking demanded connoisseurs with erudition and disposable income.

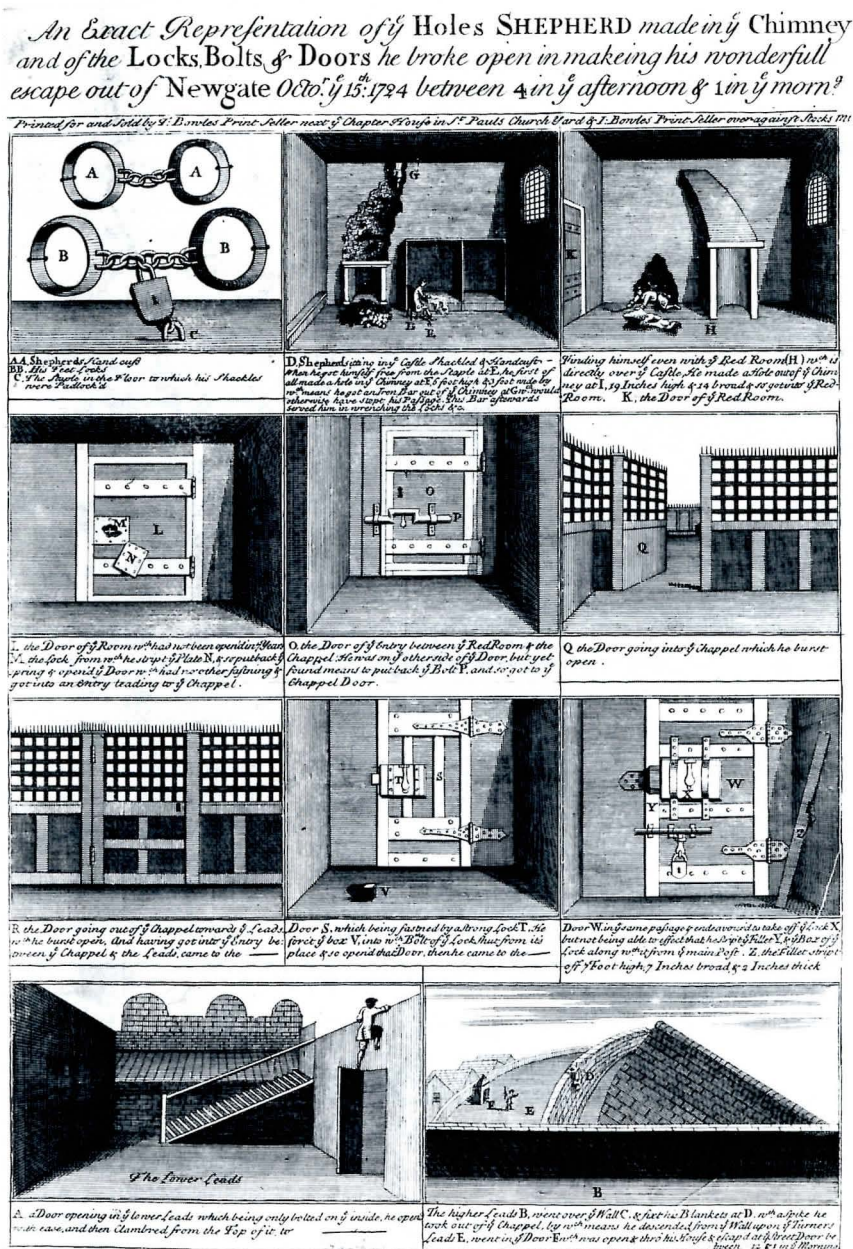
More must be said at this point about the way in which patronage influences the status of a medium. Before the nineteenth century, a limited number of illustrated books, portraits, and print series (the *Sieges* of Jacques Callot, for example) were commissioned by princes, popes, and wealthy burghers. Most printed material, as has already been seen, went directly into a market economy or was distributed as political opinion. In retrospect, we can also appreciate how printmaking may have aided an artist's development of images, as well as compositional and visual syntax (I will discuss the reasons for this affinity under the rubric of process). Suffice it to say here that examples of such conceptual thematic and formal struggle are among the most prized prints in the history of the medium. The progressive states of Rembrandt's etchings and drypoints and the variants of Degas's compositions have gained their present prestige retroactively, however. Generally, it was the patronage of the rich and the powerful that enhanced the renown of an art object in its own day. In turn, factors such as place of a genre within the hierarchy, the fame of an artist, or the status and monetary value of the material influenced the projects chosen by patrons. A pecking order of media was institutionalized in the seventeenth century, the era of the academies. While we are amused today by that rigid hierarchy of preferred subjects,

12 Peter Burke. *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: Temple Smith, 1978): 270.

13 Walter Benjamin. *Illuminations: The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969): 219.

14 Ibid.: 224.

FIG. 4.
Anonymous (English).
The Escape of
Jack Sheppard, 1724.
Engraving. Courtesy,
David Kunzle.



we are still affected by the beaux-arts traditions of the major and minor arts, of the fine arts and the crafts. Until very recently, I returned my printmaking slides at the University of Southern California to a tray marked "Minor Arts."

We are plagued by these hidden ideologies in the study of art history. Examples in printmaking abound. To this day, a certain nobility of the etching media overshadows the humble woodcut. These are adjectives we have inherited from the fifteenth century, when workers in precious metals had greater status than did those who worked with wood. A new patronage for the print has emerged in the mid-twentieth century; the locus of print collecting which earlier shifted from the person on the street to the connoisseur in the

drawing room has shifted once again, this time to a new middle-class audience. As Barry Walker noted in his catalogue essay for the Brooklyn Museum's 24th National Print Exhibition, *Public and Private: American Prints Today*: "In the 1950s, a small revolution in the way prints were produced, together with a broadened educational basis and a wider public awareness of art in general, led to a different type of print and a new kind of collector. . . . The crucial difference between the new and the old generations of print collectors was that the new generation of collectors bought contemporary prints to display them on the wall."¹⁵

15 Barry Walker. *Public and Private: American Prints Today* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1986): 10.

Prints destined to be framed had to compete with paintings and posters for impact and pride of place. This has led to large colorful images that are "easy to read" at a distance. The latter characteristic has been reinforced by adoption of procedures in which much artwork is judged, selected, or purchased upon the basis of slides, transparencies, or photographs. Subtle nuances of surface and scale recede in importance. What Walker calls a "public" print is not measured in terms of the social conscience of a Goya or Daumier; public here refers to the public nature of the viewing experience, in contrast with the privacy of contemplation of the hand-held sheet. While individual artists have contributed to this trend, print workshops and publishers have been particularly responsible for merchandising prints of this character. In terms of marketing practices, one might call these "public" prints the reproductive prints of today, inasmuch as they serve as substitutes for paintings. Riva Castleman admits that "the development of the workshop-publisher complex in America in the 1960s cannot be dissociated from the quality of the art produced within it. . . . Nevertheless, the preferences of publishers and workshop directors, like those of art dealers, have limited the number of artists and the sort of artistic styles or expressions that have been represented."¹⁶ This is an interesting statement, for Castleman, Judith Goldman, Richard Field, and others among the New York establishment have long been identified with the validation of the products of these workshops.

Process

MICHAEL ROTHENSTEIN once remarked during a lecture that the irreducible essence of printmaking is an embrace, one body pressed against the other. He certainly got our attention, while at the same time he isolated the intrinsic feature common to all printmaking processes: the pressing of a matrix against a receptive surface. Whether the image is mechanically or chemically produced on the matrix, it is always once removed from the final work of art. It is this indirection, this displacement, which is the hallmark of the printmaker's art, whether one is thinking of a fifteenth-century engraving by Pollaiuolo or a photoscreen print by Paolozzi. This reliance upon a matrix allows for many identical im-

ages, with resultant flexibility in their distribution and use.

The serial nature of the process through which a print is made has been much commented upon. The printmaking process allows the artist to record the discrete changes and developments in the image. The transcription of these revisions has been formalized over the centuries into a system of proofs and states. Most importantly, the artist's mode of concept is shaped by the possibility of successive proofs. The artist thinks differently when working on a print. There are often dramatic transformations of tone and color in the transfer from matrix to paper, as well as in the reversal of the image's direction. In intaglio, the bright metallic line revealed by a scratch in the grounded plate may become a black line on white paper. In lithography, one learns to calculate the value range of each color. When printed in yellow, pale washes of black tusche may disappear altogether. So while the engagement with the materials of printmaking may be immediate and visceral, much of the process is temporal and cerebral. The process unfolds through a series of controlled accidents. This is our delight and our challenge. The final image is the visible consequence of all one's decisions. As June Wayne recently remarked, "I consider printmaking to be to other media what chamber music is to the symphony. It is very disciplined—there is no place to hide and no one covers your errors. Like chamber music, it can provide a subtlety of *extase* that makes other media feel gross by comparison."¹⁷ This self-conscious emphasis on conceptualization in printmaking opens the facture to analysis by both the artist and posterity. For the reviewer, the evidence of decisions, additions, alterations, and deletions can reveal directly the artist's intentions and mental process. The eight states of Rembrandt's *Ecce Homo* gives us access to Rembrandt's internal considerations. The decisive sixth state, in which a crowd of onlookers is replaced by a cavernous abyss, has a stunning effect on anyone who has really studied these prints. Imagine, by comparison, what it would be like if we were to have all the stages of underpainting, or all the alternative modes of resolution, for a painting such as Velasquez's *Las Meninas*.

16 Riva Castleman. *American Impressions: Prints Since Pollock* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1985): 51.

17 In conversation, 11 September 1986, Los Angeles. Through her use of the French *extase* (ecstasy), Wayne gives greater emphasis to a contemplative trance-like state.

Collaboration has almost always been a key aspect of the graphic arts. In the Orient and to a great degree in the West, printmaking has been a group effort, with tasks divided among artisans and artists. One need only think of Japanese Ukiyo-e to realize that collaboration need not compromise aesthetic accomplishment. Such artists as Rembrandt and Whistler, working alone, are really anomalies. While it is true that Whistler's *Nocturne: Palaces* from the Second Venice Set would be nothing but vague wisps without the artist's masterful wiping of the plate, even Whistler relied on others when making lithographs.

The consequences of collaboration seem to be twofold. It leaves the process vulnerable to the lowest common denominator. The artist's efforts can be compromised because he or she does not have total control. Because control or mastery by the individual is the preferred model of modern Western culture, contemporary collaboration demands special social skills and sensitivity on the part of team members. Leonard Lehrer provides a most insightful examination of this aspect of printmaking, while defining some of the crucial desiderata for the non-artist members of the team: "Printers are a special breed, a breed which combines immense skill with diplomacy and endurance, patience with knowledge; they set the tone of the project, maintain its rhythm, and are expected to have answers for everything. . . . It is a unique relationship and a unique component of the art world."¹⁸

How much visible effect collaboration should have on the finished print is a controversial matter. Tamarind Lithography Workshop espoused a non-interventionist position. The printer should "detect the true spirit of the work and give it life, while at the same time avoiding any act which might tend to impose his own aesthetic upon that of the artist."¹⁹ In contrast, Ken Tyler believes the relationship between the artist and printer to be symbiotic: "You can't separate it after a while and you don't know whether the suggestion came from the printer on the press or that it was the artist's idea. But you know that something's going on there and if it works, it's magic."²⁰ The question that should be asked is what the effect of interventionist and non-interventionist modes of collaboration may be upon the quality of the work and the aesthetic choices of the artist. Another way to put this question is to ask whether the art is more important than the artist, or whether the artist's development is more significant than the success of a particular print.

My education and formation as an artist tend to put me in the noninterventionist camp. When I studied printmaking with Frank Casara and Emil Weddige at the University of Michigan and at S. W. Hayter's Atelier 17 in Paris, I was taught to believe in printmaking as a process which allowed one to wrestle from incalcitrant if seductive materials one's personal vision. Authenticity, originality, and the artistic growth of the artist are important values for me, so while individual prints may benefit from the intercession of a printer or publisher, I feel the artist is impoverished in the long run. The workshop can become not just a technical resource but an aesthetic crutch.

Material

WHILE IT IS DIFFICULT to divide completely material from process, it is valuable to consider each medium's intrinsic properties and visceral appeal. One's interaction with a process is strongly colored by its physical properties and their technical possibilities. In lithography one begins with the cool, sensuous surface of grained Bavarian limestone; the autographic qualities of crayon drawing and the myriad reticulations of tusche washes make lithography a rich and flexible medium for the artist. I have always felt that the sedimentation of lithographic washes was a reflection of the great macro-events of the earth: the eroding of mountains, the drying of lakes, and the silting up of the great river deltas. They also mirror the microcosms of life, as if viewed through a microscope.

Intaglio offers the swelling and tapering precision of the engraved line (too rarely mastered today), the eroded and insistent bitten line of etching, the grainy shadows of aquatint, and the velvet furrows of drypoint. For some, the making of an intaglio is just an excuse to work on the seductive metal plate. Zinc and (especially) copper present hard metallic surfaces that are still malleable enough to permit scraping, polishing, and all manner of surface manipulation. One develops the ability to "read" the plate uninked, even before proofing it, intuitively measuring the de-

18 Leonard Lehrer, "Artist and Printer: Some Matches Are Made in Heaven and Others . . ." *TTP* 8 (1985): 49.

19 Lucinda Gedeon. *Tamarind: From Los Angeles to Albuquerque* (Los Angeles: Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, UCLA, 1985): 13.

20 Pat Gilmour. *Ken Tyler—Master Printer, and the American Print Renaissance* (New York: Hudson Hills Press in association with the Australian National Gallery, 1986): 32.

grees of darkness and the crispness of whites.

The directness of woodcut also has its partisans. One enjoys the pressure of the hand as it cuts into and overcomes the resistance of a woodblock. Human beings seem to have an inborn attraction for wood. Gauguin and Munch added the rich veining of wood grain to our repertoire of gouge, knife, and chisel.

As I have not made screenprints, it is hard for me to imagine the pleasures of that medium, but others speak of its speed and flexibility.

While each of the printmaking media has its own distinctive ink layer, varying from the raised lines of intaglio to the silky veils of lithography, they are more subtle and nuanced than is the surface of most paintings. When connoisseurs viewed prints in albums or boxes, the hand-held sheet allowed an intimate scrutiny not possible through a protective sheet of glass. The downplaying of tactile qualities in contemporary prints is partly the result of a shift in viewing procedures. Scale, too, has contributed to change: when prints were small, they tended to be concise in their making. Artists drew more from the wrist than the elbow. As scale increases, so does the size of the gesture.

Just as we take for granted the convention of black-and-white representation of a multichromatic world, printmaking's scale infers a variable conceptual size. The grandeur of Piranesi's *Prisons* is not compromised by their actual dimensions. We more readily adopt the artist's imaginative projection of scale in a print than we do in a painting, where we often experience images that are larger than life.

Conclusion

HOW DO THE FACTORS I have described under the rubrics of function, process, and materials manifest themselves in the present? In the 1980s, under pressure from printmaking workshops and the prestigious galleries that publish prints, artists have tended to produce large colorful prints. It was thus a stunning turnabout when, in a recent symposium at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Richard Solomon of Pace Editions, New York, called for prints to return to the values of intimacy and pure printmaking.²¹ When other publishers at the symposium agreed as to the desirability of Solomon's suggestions, titters and guffaws broke out in the audience. Many artists in attendance found it somewhat hilarious and a little maddening that these men should endorse values they had previ-

ously undercut, with the consequence that what once had been a flourishing ecology of print galleries, national print exhibitions, and publications has been significantly diminished, so that prints are now either integrated into the general marketplace of the art world or all but totally marginalized. It follows that while a greater number of artists are making prints, there are fewer printmakers. Intrinsically, this change is neither good nor bad. The aesthetic consequence of the loss of a separate printmaking sphere seems to be a mixed bag: commercialism on the one hand, sophistication on the other.

We have yet to see a true reckoning of quality in relation to all layers of print production in the United States. I would contend that excellence is more widely dispersed than is currently acknowledged by the powers that be. When a curator can state: "I don't see printmaking—and never have—as a way of working out the basic problems of art," or: "There's such a difference between New York and anywhere else. I always do try to be fair and get to other places and see all I can but I only prove to myself that the best gets to New York somehow,"²² you know that any attempt at independent judgment is compromised.

For the artist, the relationship between printmaking and other media is far more complex and interactive. Pop Art borrowed mightily from print syntax. Printmaking has competed very directly with painting during the past twenty-five years. Current deconstructive strategies also place great emphasis upon the repeatability and diffusion of images.

Thoughtful artists who make prints are still caught in the dynamic tension between printmaking's socio-political function and its purely aesthetic possibilities. In each age, artists reanimate printmaking for their own purposes—mostly in hope of investing their images with the resonance which only the panoply of printmaking materials, techniques, and processes can provide. □

21 Panel discussion, "Contemporary Print Publishing," Graphics Arts Council, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 17 May 1986.

22 The quotations are from statements made by Riva Castleman on 10 May 1979 during a panel discussion, "New Prints of Worth: A Question of Taste," organized by *Print Collector's Newsletter* in relationship to the 21st National Print Exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum. In a preface to the panel discussion, *PCN's* editor Jacquelyn Brody characterized the panel as "the Open Establishment. . . . Theirs are the criteria—like it or not—that artists must meet." *PCN* 10 (September-October 1979): 109–19.

A VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION

Some Observations on Art and Artists

Marjorie Devon

While in the Soviet Union to explore a possible artist and printer exchange between Tamarind Institute and the USSR Union of Artists, I had an opportunity to visit a number of artists' studios in Leningrad and Moscow. I was invited by the United States Embassy to present slide lectures on contemporary American printmaking to groups of official and unofficial artists in both cities. Although I saw a great deal in the eight days I was there, I was able to meet only selected Soviet artists and to see but a part of their work. I report my observations with full knowledge that they are not comprehensive.

FIGURATIVE, ABSTRACT, EXPRESSIONIST: All are words we might readily associate with the art of the West. When we speak of contemporary art in the Soviet Union, qualifying adjectives are more likely to identify the political orientation of the artist than the character of the imagery. Whether a Soviet artist be official, unofficial, or dissident, none has the freedom to create, exhibit, or sell his or her work according to personal will. In a country in which every aspect of society is controlled by official policy, even art—so unconsciously presumed to be the domain of free expression—is not exempt.

It is only within the context of this political structure that one can even begin to understand contemporary Soviet art. The government, in the name of the collective good, limits individual choices and freedoms by both subtle and overt means, and strictly controls the environment within which artists work. There is pressure to conform to officially sanctioned Socialist Realist imagery; there is a lack of exposure to other artistic traditions, particularly to contemporary Western art. Together, these conditions impose a set of limitations that contributes to the homogeneous nature of much of the work that is being produced in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics today.

Unlike the early decades of the twentieth century, when there was open communication between Russia and Western Europe, the xenophobic stance of the current government

forces Soviet artists to work in isolation. In the late 1950s, for the first time since the 1920s, a number of foreign art exhibitions were allowed: exhibitions which were intended to prove the supremacy of Socialist Realism, but which instead had the effect of stimulating public interest and artistic inspiration.¹ The experimental attitudes displayed through these exhibitions were readily denounced as reflective of bourgeois decadence, and youthful enthusiasts soon found themselves excluded from the official system. Since that time, there has been little opportunity, except through underground channels, for exposure to Western art or its literature. Most of the artists I met, across the political spectrum, were unfamiliar with the names of even the best-known artists of our generation—Jackson Pollock, Jasper Johns, Robert Motherwell, Louise Nevelson, and Willem de Kooning; they revealed a complete lack of understanding of abstraction as an aesthetic principle. While they expressed universal fascination with the technical aspects of the American prints I discussed in my lectures, they criticized them for lack of “ideas.” This criticism seemed to equate content with political statement.

Artistic controls are implemented through the Academy of Arts of the USSR, the Ministry of Culture, and the Union of Artists, all official arms of the Communist Party. The Academy presides over art education, dictates curriculum, and establishes the official interpretation of the history of art. The Ministry of Culture regulates museum activities, including exhibition programs and acquisitions. The Union of Artists completes the picture by exercising ideological control over artists. Artists must be graduates of an art

1 Among these were exhibitions of work by Léger and Picasso (in honor of his seventy-fifth birthday); an exhibition of German prints; and a large exhibition of works by young artists from fifty-two countries, presented in conjunction with the Sixth World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow.



ABOVE: FIG. 1. **Evgeni Rukhin.** *Composition*, 1974. Collage, mixed media, 700 × 660.

Rukhin, one of twenty-four unofficial artists in the notorious open-air exhibition of 1974, was arrested for his participation. In subsequent newspaper articles, his work was condemned for its opposition to Soviet ideals.



CENTER: FIG. 2. **Alexander Suvorov.** *Portrait of P. Bagration*, 1982. Color etching, 560 × 420. BELOW: FIG. 3. **Alexander Suvorov.** *Cyclists*, 1979. Color etching, 650 × 500.



institute and must be approved at the local, state, and national levels for membership in the Union; theoretically, they cannot legally practice their profession unless they are members. Their portfolios, submitted as a part of the application procedure, must exhibit artistic ability and must also indicate adherence to the principles of Socialist Realism.

Members of the Union of Artists are well rewarded for their service to the Party and their contributions to society are highly valued. They are provided with studio space, steady commissions, and opportunities to exhibit and sell their work. In a space-scarce city such as Moscow, where it is not uncommon to find six people sharing a two-room apartment, five hundred square feet devoted exclusively to artistic activity is pure luxury. In Moscow I visited two studios that official artists were renting from the government at a nominal fee; they were well appointed, including elaborate tape deck systems and an extensive collection of contemporary music from abroad. Though the studios were ample by Soviet standards, there was insufficient wall space to permit display of much framed work. I was treated to a presentation in which work was shown piece by piece on an easel: a ritual interrupted for snacks, conversation, and more than occasional sips of Russian cognac or Georgian wine on the heels of toasts to world peace and to artists everywhere.

In this collective society where free enterprise is strictly limited, the mechanism for private sale of work does not exist. The artists are thus forced to be dependent upon the government for their livelihood. The Ministry of Culture employs artists by commissioning works. These commissions take the form of statues for public places (which are abundant), book illustrations, group exhibitions with a specific theme, or museum acquisition.

Nor do artists have free access to exhibition space: all public buildings are under governmental control. Efforts made by artists who are unable to show their work through official channels to find alternative spaces have proven unproductive or, on occasion, disastrous. In 1974, an exhibition of work organized by artists in an empty lot on the outskirts of Moscow was bulldozed by authorities [FIG. 1]. Because of international outrage—thanks to the presence of foreign journalists and diplomats—they were allowed two weeks later to show other work in a park for four hours.

The Ministry thus exercises exclusive control over the work which is seen and—through a government-run outlet, the USSR Art Foun-

dation Export Salon—over that which is available for sale. These pieces are housed in a large, dark hall; the walls are surprisingly bare. When we visited the salon, we wended our way through stacks of canvases, piled everywhere, to several banks of print-storage drawers. The setting was hardly conducive to sales—clearly not the presentation of a consumer-oriented society. Revenue from sales is divided (I did not learn how) between the artist and the Union. In addition to the salon, there are now a few galleries, regularly visited by Intourist buses that operate in much the same way, although the work may be more effectively displayed. It is strictly illegal to export work except through these channels.

Artists who do not belong to the Union fall into two distinct groups which may be characterized as unofficial and dissident. The line between them is a political one. The unofficials are generally unsympathetic to the limitations of Socialist Realism. The dissidents are ideologically opposed to the government, although their work may not itself be stylistically anti-establishment. Whereas the unofficial artists are generally tolerated today by the government, dissidents are actively discouraged—and sometimes prevented—from doing their work.

Since the system does not support their art activity, most unofficial artists have unrelated jobs or are supported by their families. They are infrequently given opportunities to exhibit their work and even on these rare occasions are subject to censorship. The unofficial artists I met told me that they remain outside the Union by choice. They said they had no trouble getting supplies, though they confessed that the scarcity of exhibition opportunities was a source of frustration. When I was in Leningrad, the unofficial artists described their most recent experience. They had been preparing an exhibition in the Youth Hall—the first allowed in a number of years; they had been granted permission to hang the show and had even been promised a catalogue.² Several days before the exhibition was to open, the censors refused to allow a substantial portion of the work to be shown. In a somewhat rare circumstance, the artists were able to agree on a boycott which ultimately proved an embarrassment to the government.³ There was a great deal of tension in the Youth Hall on the afternoon of my visit. The artists were awaiting the arrival of the censorship committee. Although I did not recognize anything in the show as “subversive,” the Soviet vision is of a different color. It is



FIG. 4. Nikolai Popov. *Buffoons*, n. d. Mixed media, 300 × 400.

entirely possible that some of the work I saw may not have been allowed.⁴

The dissidents find themselves in an even more difficult situation, despite the fact that their work may be entirely apolitical in nature. Ideologically and politically opposed to the Communist Party and its dictates, most of them have applied for—but have been refused—permission to emigrate. They are shunned even by their unofficial peers, who either fear they might suffer as a consequence of association or who regard them as traitors

2 Unofficial artists seldom have the possibility of inclusion in an exhibition catalogue. The Party controls all printing facilities; private ownership of any type of duplicating equipment is strictly prohibited.

3 Unofficial artists are so dependent upon the government that they are reluctant either to pass up an opportunity to exhibit or to jeopardize a future possibility.

4 I was unable to obtain information about the outcome of the committee's visit.

to the Motherland. They have few allies and fewer options; they are frequently harrassed, denied jobs, or sent to jail or mental institutions.

It is not surprising, given the environment, that much of contemporary Soviet art can be easily categorized and that a number of generalizations can be made. It is also true, however, that there is a broader range of stylistic diversity than stereotyped Western perceptions have sometimes allowed us to accept. The official work of Union artists is made according to formula and fulfills our expectation of the heroic rendering of an historical figure or event; the Union, after all, is professedly a propaganda arm of the government.⁵ When showing me his work, one official artist made a distinction between his "official" and his "creative" work. The official work consisted principally of two series: a cosmonaut series,⁶ and a series of "terrorist" pictures, depicting soldiers dressed in army fatigues, incorporating such English words as "war" and "violence." In his creative work, circus themes allow a means through which he can explore spatial concepts—an investigation which might otherwise have been unacceptable. Another Union artist distinguished between his carefully rendered portraits of historical figures [FIG. 2] and his landscapes inspired by travels in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe or his interest in sports [FIG. 3].

In any case, there is a preponderance, across the board, of figurative work steeped in a narrative tradition. Even most of the unofficial artists were anxious to identify the sources of their work, whether a moral lesson, personal interest, literary subject or trip. While in the USSR I saw only one small abstract painting and met only one artist who did not volunteer an explanation of his work (in his case, some bizarre but quite beautiful images of birds, bugs, and a blindfolded woman).

The classic subjects of landscape, portrait, still life, and folk themes appear in prints as well as in paintings. Although I was not able to visit any printmaking facilities, my hosts were aware of my special interests. I saw prints in each artist's studio and a large number of

them at the Export Salon. Although there is evidence of a strong collaborative tradition in lithography, printmaking activity appears to be dominated by etching and relief prints, very likely because these media are more accessible to artists. Only official artists have access to lithography, as all stones and lithographic presses are strictly controlled by the government.

Although printmaking is generally subsidiary to painting, it appears to serve an important purpose for many artists. Perhaps because prints are not taken as seriously, or perhaps because they are often made as book illustrations in which greater flights of fancy can be tolerated, artists who make prints seem to have more freedom to experiment. For whatever reason, among the works I saw, both invention and inspiration were more apparent in the prints than in the paintings [FIG. 4].

A purist approach still prevails in Soviet prints. I saw no hint of the technical complexity which is now so prevalent in American printmaking. One might, in fact, draw a parallel between the state of printmaking in the Soviet Union today and the state of printmaking in the United States in the 1950s. Straightforward in their use of a single medium, the prints were for the most part also limited in size and color. I saw no prints that exceeded four press runs, though a few made use of blended inking. Prints in the export collection, organized by geographical area, revealed the presence of a particularly lively and active printmaking scene in Estonia where, I was told, there are several talented collaborative printers.

Since art is a reflection of a culture and an era, we must understand contemporary Soviet art in a context different from our own. Western society, at least in principle, accepts individual creativity and achievement as criteria for success; it is thus the antithesis of collectivism, which appears to value competence above inventiveness. When he purged the country of the Russian avant garde, Stalin reached for a practical rather than a theoretical art—an art, he said, that the people could understand. Officially, his legacy lives on. Unofficially, in the words of Naum Gabo, "art will always be alive as one of the indispensable expressions of human experience and an important means of communication."⁷ □

⁵ The term *propaganda* does not carry the negative connotation in Russian that it does in English. Propaganda appears to be regarded as a legitimate form of advertising for which no apology is needed.

⁶ Without exception, the artists I met presented their work as a series of prints or drawings related to a specific subject. Such presentations served as further confirmation of the central importance of subject matter rather than style or aesthetic exploration.

⁷ Quoted by Ibram Lassaw and Ilya Bolotowsky, "Russia and Constructivism," in *Gabo* (London and Bradford: Percy Lund, Humphries, 1957): 158.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

John Sommers

Let Us Praise Black and White

LATE IN OCTOBER, I traveled to Alma College in Michigan to serve as juror for the Sixth Annual Alma College Statewide Print Competition, a special event in celebration of the college's centennial year. It was a joyous experience. Rarely have I seen at one time so lively and competent a group of works. Intaglio prints were of every sort; woodcuts were numerous, most of them large in size and varied in approach; collagraphs, some of which incorporated other media, made challenging demands upon paper and color inks. In addition, there were serigraphs, Kwik-prints, gum-bichromate prints, three laser prints, and a few lithographs. Many of the prints were unique in concept and some in manner of execution. With few exceptions, they were executed with skill and were rich with vision. My conclusion was that Michigan's printmakers are alive, well, and working to challenge their media on all fronts.

First prize went to a distinctive, high-relief, intaglio print by Paul Stewart, printed on his own handmade paper (paper that he makes from his recycled prints). It was of such glowing, color-rich beauty that even among the strong works I have described, it stood out as undisputed "king" of the exhibition. But there was a second prize that rivalled the first: an astonishing black-and-white lithograph in which a dynamic composition was united with the richness of black ink to exploit the whiteness of the paper and assault the senses with color. This lithograph [FIG. 1], unique among those I have seen, was the work of Michael Thomas (MFA, University of Michigan, 1986).

During a visit to Ann Arbor after jurying the show at Alma, I was able to meet and talk with Thomas, who presently serves as an invaluable assistant in the University of Michigan printmaking department. He was willing to share with me—and the readers of *TTP*—informa-



FIG. 1. Michael Thomas. *Broken Panopticon*. Lithograph, 559 × 762.

tion about the technical process used in the making of his print: a variation of lithotint on aluminum, in combination with crayon drawing.

Thomas first mixes asphaltum powder with isopropyl alcohol. With the powder in full suspension, he flows the mixture across an aluminum plate which has been heated (at high heat) on an etching hot plate. He bakes the plate until the asphaltum fuses to it, stopping just short of the point at which heat might cause the plate to curl (the process must be closely watched because the material must not burn). When the asphaltum fuses, Thomas judges the tint that has been produced. If the effect does not yet suit his aesthetic intention, he continues alternately to flow on additional asphaltum-alcohol mixture and to bake the plate until he obtains the tint he wants. This tint, when achieved, serves as a ground for a crayon drawing. Thomas draws with soft crayons (numbers 0, 1, and 2). He etches the plate in the standard manner, adjusting the etch to the crayons used and determining the volumes of TAPEM and gum in relation to the amount of crayon that has been applied.

Fortunately, during my visit to Ann Arbor I was able to see one such work in progress. The plate carrying the fused asphaltum was rough to the touch. The crayon is vigorously and generously applied, creating a drawing in high relief. Building upon the tint that has been applied as a ground, the crayon tonally bridges the open spaces and reinforces

the particles of asphaltum, thus yielding on the plate an extremely tactile drawing. One might expect such a drawing to be "overdrawn," but it is not; one might expect it to dissolve under the etch, but it does not. Thomas's experience is that, after processing, plates so drawn print reliably, impression after impression. In his hands, they produce lithographs of immense richness and luminosity.

In Lieu of La Favorite

IT IS NOT UNUSUAL, even today, for someone to ask me the question: "What happened to La Favorite tusche?" When I say that it is no longer made—the company that made it has gone out of business—I often hear an audible sigh. There was a mystique about La Favorite, an aura of the charismatic. Artists and printers who worked with this tusche nostalgically describe their experience and wax poetic about its aesthetic and technical virtues.

During the 1960s it was the tusche of preference at Tamarind Lithography Workshop in Los Angeles. Above all, La Favorite was dependable. It was used everywhere—on stone, aluminum, and zinc. It dried with an impressive display of reticulation; it carried bridge-tones with certainty; its grease and pigment content were so finely balanced that the artist and the printer could accurately predict what would result after processing of the printing element. Though superb on stone and aluminum, it was particularly adapted to creation of elu-

sive *peau de crapaud* washes on zinc plates. Sam Francis always included at least one zinc plate drawn with La Favorite in his Tamarind lithographs.

Later, however, the quality of La Favorite gradually declined. It was still dependable when Tamarind Institute began printing in Albuquerque; by 1973, however, new stocks began to present problems. The labels on the cans changed several times; some cans of tusche departed so far from the original as to be totally insoluble. Tamarind's printer-fellows undertook research projects in a largely unsuccessful effort to make the new material behave as it had in the past.

La Favorite was manufactured in a small Parisian shop in which one or two individuals prepared the precious tusche according to time-honored formula and practice. As the new shipments became less and less useful, I could only conclude that the pot was not being watched. Perhaps the makers of the tusche no longer cared as they once had; perhaps—as in so many areas of lithographic printing today—they no longer understood what “the making” was all about. But all that is history. La Favorite is gone.

Ronald Netsky suggests a substitute,¹ not the equivalent of La Favorite, but a material which he finds preferable to a “half dozen commercial lithographic tuses on the market [with which] artists are sometimes not satisfied.” The source of his idea was found in *How to Draw and Print Lithographs* by Adolf Dehn and Lawrence Barrett.² Dehn's method, which worked beautifully in many of his lithographs, was to cover an area of the stone with a soft crayon tone (number 0 or 00) and then, with a brush dipped in water, to mix the crayon and water until a wash was achieved.

Serendipity? Perhaps. But Netsky suggests a modification of the Dehn-Barrett method so as to produce a crayon-tusche of dependable quality: “Using an empty ink tin, completely melt two dozen #00 lithographic crayons on a hot plate. Allow to cool and harden.”

In doing as Netsky describes, I would float the tin in boiling water, so as to

prevent burning. I would watch it closely, stirring occasionally, so as not to heat the crayons beyond their melting point. As soon as the crayon tusche was melted, I would remove it for cooling. I do not know that overheating (or even burning) could alter the performance of the crayon tusche, but it is best to take no chances—something changed La Favorite, possibly overheating.

Netsky continues:

To make four solutions of varying strengths: (1) Pour one-half ounce of distilled water into the tusche can. (2) Mix gently with a brush in a circular motion for five or ten minutes until you have a solid black paste. (3) Pour [the] paste into a jar and add two ounces of distilled water, a little at a time. (4) In four jars, labeled from darkest to lightest, pour one-half, one, one and one-half, and two ounces of distilled water. (5) To each of these add one-half ounce of the base solution. These solutions can now be used to achieve a variety of tones depending upon their strength. The remaining base will provide the darkest tone. . . . A second application of a solution (once the first is dry) will increase the density of the reticulation in that area.

Netsky then etchs the drawing in relation to its tone (he cites *TTP* 3:25). My recommendation would be to etch the tone appropriately for drawings made with crayon number 00.

A further verification of Netsky's approach is provided by Vera Sprunt, a graduate student in lithography at the University of New Mexico, who has used a similar crayon tusche, but composed of number 2 crayon. She has evolved a repertory of wash tonalities that would make the most sophisticated lithographer envious. Her consistent etching procedure has been to follow the etch chart provided for crayon drawings. To etch number 2 crayon washes on stone she uses, for a light drawing, pure gum arabic to 5 drops of nitric acid per ounce of gum; for a medium drawing, 7 to 10 drops; for a heavy drawing, 10 to 12 drops, sometimes with spot etching. On aluminum: for a light drawing, 1/3 TAPEM to 2/3 gum arabic; for a medium drawing, 1/3 to 1/2 TAPEM; for a heavy drawing, 1/2 to 2/3 TAPEM, sometimes using pure TAPEM for spot etching. One can use TAPEM acidified with phosphoric acid (to pH 1.7) for very dark passages.³

Here, then, in the form of crayon

tusche, is an approach which may serve lithographers who remain nostalgic for La Favorite: a tusche long gone but not forgotten.

A Superior Tusche Wash?

WHY IS IT NECESSARY when new and useful techniques are developed either to claim that they are “better than” or that they “replace” traditional techniques in lithography? Why is it not sufficient to say that they *expand* the creative potential of the medium? Such exaggerated claims were made some time ago for “the Mylar method”; now they are made again, this time by Nik Semenoff (see my review of his recent book, below), who has invented a “toner wash.” He suspends xerographic toner in a liquid and uses this mixture to make washes. When the drawing is complete, Semenoff fuses it to the surface of the printing element using fumes from solvent within a specially constructed chamber.

Because the drawing material is inert and acts as a stopout, it requires little skill or knowledge of the medium to use it successfully (an advantage in some circumstances, though hardly an argument to advance in support of a drawing medium for use by students of lithography). The fact that toner washes can be worked and reworked without the build-up that results from use of lithographic tusche is an advantage in many kinds of drawing processes. On the other hand, the fact that it cannot be used simultaneously with other lithographic drawing media is a disadvantage. Although toner washes have many qualities that can also be achieved with tusche washes, in my mind and eye they do not replace tusche washes; rather, they add to the existing technical repertory, expanding the range of creative possibilities of wash media in lithography.

Semenoff sent me a description of his process but omitted the name of the solvent he had used to “fume” the finished drawing. He also sent a ten-panel, printed example of washes made by his method. While without his permission, I cannot fully describe his process, I will comment on his attitude and presentation.

3 When drawing on plates, one must avoid the too heavy, “overgreased” drawing. If a passage has been sealed by excessive material, no etch will stabilize it. On stone, one can open a passage by burning it with a hot etch; on aluminum this is not possible.

1 Ronald Netsky is author of “Albert Winslow Barker: Graphite Crayons and Sea Salt” (*TTP* 6:18–22); he is a member of the art faculty at Nazareth College of Rochester.

2 Adolf Dehn and Lawrence Barrett, *How to Draw and Print Lithographs* (New York: American Artists Group, 1950).

Semenoff writes of the twelve qualities "of a perfect tusche." In my view, standard lithographic tusche possesses eleven of these qualities. The one area in which toner wash is superior is in airbrush techniques. When used in an airbrush it provides a wash-like tonal texture that will not fill in. This is because it is a stopout, not a grease. In that respect it is similar to polymer drawing materials,⁴ although unlike polymer materials, when Semenoff's toner wash is airbrushed on a plate or stone it creates a handsome, wash-like reticulation.

According to Semenoff, a perfect tusche would be a material that would be capable of producing any of the traditional wash effects. The examples he sent me do not bear out his contention that toner wash is such a perfect material. While some of his toner wash examples are uniquely formed, most could easily be replicated using tusche in solvents other than water. Toner wash does not reproduce the myriad qualities of water washes, nor do I think it could be made to do so. The range of qualities produced by toner wash is much more limited than is the range of water washes with lithographic tusche. One would have only to cite a few outstanding works to suggest the range of drawing possibilities which can be achieved through use of water tusche in the hands of an artist-lithographer.⁵

Finally, I take exception to Semenoff's statement that, "The use of aluminum is natural for this technique as it [toner wash] can produce better washes than were ever possible on stone" (emphasis added). I cannot agree with this conclusion. It is disproved by many fine lithographs. Nik Semenoff has not invented a substitute for lithographic tusche. He has, however, given the medium a fine and useful process which expands the effects that can be achieved in wash drawing.⁶

4 See Ben Q. Adams, "Air Brush Drawings with Polymer Materials" (*TTP* 1:25) and John Sommers, "Airbrush Drawing in Lithography" (*TTP* 1:92-95).

5 I have expanded upon this topic in "Tusche Wash Phenomena," *TTP* 8:63.

6 Nik Semenoff has written an article about his new process which will appear in a forthcoming issue of *Leonardo*. Those who seek additional information may write Semenoff at the Division of Extension & Community Relations, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0W0.

Technical Review

A Lithographer's Notebook.

By Nik Semenoff.

Published by University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 1985. 82 pp. (paper).

THERE ARE MANY WAYS in which one might approach discussion of this unfortunate publication. I shall begin on a positive note. The handsome wash drawing on its cover was printed using a toner tusche process; the lettering was printed by solvent transfer from a Xerox print. Except for this drawing and the author's description of "Semenoff's Toner Tusche" (pp. 7-10)—an interesting process which he appears to have developed—the book makes no original or creative contribution to lithography. Statements are not supported; processes are not explained as to procedure, purpose, or expectation. As a working manual for students, such a book is nothing less than dangerous.

In his acknowledgements, Semenoff writes: "When compiling a book of this type, it is difficult to give proper credit to all sources of information . . . so I must apologize to any author who thinks I have plagiarized [sic] their [sic] information." In lieu of respecting the rights of authors and of copyrighted material, he thus substitutes an ungrammatical apology and becomes kin to the not-so-mythical hero of Tom Lehrer's famous ballad:

I am never to forget the day I first
meet the great Lobachevsky,
In one word, he told me the secret of
success in mathematics:
Plagiarize!
Plagiarize, let no one's work evade
your eyes.
Remember why the good Lord made
your eyes.
So don't shade your eyes, but
Plagiarize! Plagiarize! Plagiarize!
Only be sure, always, to call it, please,
Research.*

Semenoff glibly states that one of his "most informative sources for interesting techniques was the Tamarind Technical Papers and the later Tamarind Papers"—then proceeds to dispense with footnotes. This won't do at all. Quite aside from legal considerations in use of copyrighted material (a separate subject not to be explored in this book review),

*Copyright, Lehrer Records, 1951.

we at *TTP* are concerned that all those who have made contributions to lithography—from Senefelder to the present day—should be recognized. I do not like to see their work (and mine) subsumed under such a blanket disclaimer and copyrighted (!) by Semenoff as if the book comprised his innocent collection of thoughts and observations. To prove to myself that Semenoff could easily have located—and given credit to—his unacknowledged sources, I spent some time with *TTP* and the books on my shelf. Following is a list of less than half of the errors and misappropriations that I found:

1. On pages 4, 5, 19, and 45, Semenoff refers to Baker, A. W. Baker, Albert Baker, and Winslow Baker. The name is Albert Winslow Barker. The information re "Baker's Graphite Crayons" (p. 5) and "Baker's Water Process for Printing" (pp. 5-6) is lifted from Ron Netsky's article on Barker (*TTP* 6: 18-21).

2. In his bibliography, Semenoff lists Bolton Brown, *Lithography* (1923). That book contains no technical information. The information Semenoff lifts from Brown—liberally but inaccurately—comes from his other book, *Lithography for Artists* (1930), which Semenoff fails to mention.

3. "Engelmann's Crayons" and "Lemercier's Crayons" (pp. 2-3) are taken from Brown (1930): 82.

4. By failing to give the source of the information contained in "Bolton Brown Insoluble Crayons" (p. 3), Semenoff deprives the reader of ready access to essential information about the making and use of such crayons in Brown (1930): 93; and in Netsky, "Barker" (*TTP* 6: 18-21).

5. Semenoff mentions "a Mr. Phillips" in his section on lithographic charcoal (p. 4). The formulas and discussion are taken from S. Dale Phillips's article in *TTP* 3: 9.

6. The section on "Yashi's Tusche for Aluminum Plates" refers (without credit) to the work of Yasutoshi Ishibashi, as reported in an article "Replication of Tusche Wash" (*TTP* 6: 54).

7. The reader of Semenoff's item, "To Prevent Spreading of Pen and Ink Drawing," may do well to seek further information; it can be found in Alois Senefelder, *A Complete Course of Lithography* (1818; reprint, 1977): 204-05.

8. It would be interesting to know what might result if one were to use the formulas and follow the directions given in the section on "Hullmandel's 'Litho-tint'" (pp. 13-14). No footnote leads the

68 reader to Charles Hullmandel, *The Art of Drawing on Stone* (1824), or to Brown's comment on Hullmandel's method (in Brown (1930): 34–35). With respect to a lithotint by James Harding, Brown wrote: "Harding seems to have had the advantage of a peculiar invention of Hullmandel's (patented I believe) which partly accounts for some uniquely successful prints of his made by him entirely in wash and printed by Hullmandel. Whistler tried it a few times, unsuccessfully, and gave it up." Experience confirming the truth of Brown's words was gained at Tamarind in the late 1970s when Lynn Baker (later master printer) was conducting his senior research project. After several months during which he tried to interpret Hullmandel's directions and formulas and made use of information supplied by Thomas Way, Baker was unsuccessful in developing a successful lithotint process. Semenoff's simplistic account and his ever-present tone of authority thus mislead his reader.

9. On pages 14 and 15 Semenoff discusses "Tusche-like Inks for Transferring [sic] Cloth Textures." Thinned inks, animal fat, soap, machine oils? It seems to me that none of these would be very suitable, and especially so without an explanation of what results might be expected. The simplest and most straightforward system is the one used at Tamarind in 1967 for Louise Nevelson's lithographs. Simply print black ink on the fabric from a flat, then print (transfer) the impression on the new stone surface, apply rosin and talc, and establish the image with an etch.

10. The section, "Use of Acrylics for Air Brush Etc. on Plates" is taken from Ben Q. Adams, "Air Brush Drawings with Polymer Materials" (*TTP* 1: 25) and my "Airbrush Drawing in Lithography" (*TTP* 1: 92–95). Semenoff recommends adding polymer to tusche. I would not recommend this to any artist-lithographer who wants the tusche to reticulate. His warning that "this can produce a much darker image than desired" is insufficient.

11. The paragraph on "Lacquer Washes as a Printing Image" (p. 16) comes (without credit) from an article by Robin Cohen (*TTP* 3: 27).

12. Although in his discussion of "Lo-Shu Washes" (p. 17) Semenoff at least mentions Rebecca Bloxham's name, he does not cite her article, "Lo-Shu Washes" (*TTP* 6: 22–24).

13. "Producing Crystal Patterns in Tusche" derives from the research of Lauren K. Attinello, as published in my

"Information Exchange" (*TTP* 2: 50–51).

I could go on and on, for at this point I have commented only on the first 17 pages of Semenoff's 82-page book. Space does not permit me to report in similar detail upon all that I found in its remaining pages. Time and time again Semenoff appropriates the work of other writers and lithographers; time and time again he provides less information—and less accurate information—than was provided in his source, whether it be Senefelder, Brown, or an author whose research was published in *TTP*.

Two topics, however, require further comment:

On pages 45 and 46, Semenoff purports to discuss Bolton Brown's method of etching and his crayonstone method. The former (paragraph 22) is an excellent example of inadequacy and lack of understanding, for what Semenoff has lifted from Brown is not the whole method of etching but only a part of it: the wet-manner washout and roll-up, of which Brown writes: "I invented and domesticated this heresy." While Semenoff advises only to give the stone "an etch according to the image"; Brown tells how to mix the etch using "as many drams of gum as there are units of 32 square inches in the stone" (see Brown (1930): 64–65). The crayonstone method as given by Semenoff is not Brown's crayonstone method at all, but rather his "New Process," a method deliberately devised to diffuse the crayon drawing so as to achieve an effect similar to *retroussage* in etching: a method in which the artist continues to participate in the creation of an image by chemical means after the crayon drawing is completed. Semenoff's brief paragraph, based upon a misunderstanding of Brown, is no substitute for what Brown wrote (see Brown (1930): 66–67).

On pages 39 and 40, Semenoff sets forth the "Tapem Etch Formula" and the "Tapem Etch Table." Despite the fact that Semenoff speaks of these etch formulas as "superior to the standard 1:32 Phosphoric acid type," I most strongly object to his publication of this material without permission. I invented the word TAP-PEM, the etch formula, and the etch tables he publishes without credit. When Semenoff came to Tamarind, I gave him copies of my lecture notes and my aluminum plate outline (all of which include standard copyright notices). TAP-PEM means "tannic acid plate-etch mix." Its formula was first published in "Tannic Acid Plate Etch," a part of my "Infor-

mation Exchange" (*TTP* 2: 15). Shortly before that publication in 1978, I had seen Paul Stewart (my first instructor in lithography) make use of straight Hanco Plate Etch, Tannic Acid Type, to etch his plates during a workshop session. Stewart's method suggested the potential of a tannic acid etch and led me to develop the TAP-PEM formula.

There could be value in a volume such as the one Semenoff has compiled—a catalogue of current processes, together with others little used or forgotten—but *only* if it were accompanied by documentation which would lead its reader to sources and *only* if credit were given to the person or persons who first developed or published the processes that are described.

John Sommers

EDITOR'S NOTE:

An advance copy of Sommers review of Semenoff's book was sent for comment to President Leo Kristjanson of the University of Saskatchewan. In his reply, President Kristjanson said that the university's imprint should not have appeared on this publication and that "its use did not receive approval from any official of the university. . . . I trust that any concerns about copyright will also be removed before any additional copies of this document are circulated."



FIG. 2. Daniel Weldon. *Canyon*, 1985. Lithograph, 287 × 197.

Lynne Allen

The Hazard Communication Standard

THE HAZARD COMMUNICATION STANDARD recently issued by OSHA (the Office of Safety and Health Administration) is perhaps the most sweeping regulation proposed by the federal government since passage of the income tax. The printing industry is among those most directly affected by this standard. Because artist-printmakers use many of the same materials used in the industry, we are likewise affected.

Approximately twenty-five million workers are exposed daily to one or more hazardous chemicals. Such exposure may cause or contribute to serious health problems. Chemicals may also cause fires, explosions, or other accidents. It is because of these dangers that OSHA has issued the Hazard Communication Standard, the purpose of which is to establish uniform requirements, to evaluate the hazards intrinsic to all chemicals used in the United States, to ensure that full information about such hazards is transmitted to all persons potentially affected by them, and thus to reduce the incidence of illness or injuries caused by chemicals. The standard requires that the label of each container must identify hazardous chemicals, provide an appropriate warning, and give the name and address of the manufacturer (or responsible party).

The OSHA standard addresses the individual's "right to know"—an issue of growing importance in the 1980s. Many local laws are already on the books; federal requirements are becoming steadily more stringent. That criminal as well as civil penalties may be provided under law is made evident by a recent case involving a chemical company in Chicago, in which the owners of the company were held *personally* liable for the death of an employee.

The new standards are already affecting many of the materials used in hand lithography, most of which are manufactured for the offset industry. Already, some materials have disappeared from the marketplace; others have been modified. The impact of some such changes is discussed below.

Inks. Toxicity laws implemented by many states in January 1986 affect the graphic arts in general, including paints and printing inks. With the exception of the inks made by Daniel Smith and Daniel Citron, inks used in hand lithography are formulated for us by manufacturers who supply inks to the offset industry; they differ from offset inks only in that they do not contain driers. The principal manufacturers are Sinclair and Valentine,

Handschy Industries, and Graphic Chemical Company. Many offset inks contain solvents which are flammable, explosive, and toxic. The flammability of a solvent is indicated by its flash point: the lowest temperature at which the substance gives off vapor that will ignite. The lower the flash point, the greater the hazard of combustion. The ignition point is the temperature at which a mixture of vapor and air will continue to burn after spontaneous ignition.

Some of the pigments traditionally used in paints and inks are highly toxic, including all lead compounds. Inks which have in the past contained lead compounds have been reformulated to avoid them: Daniel Smith has changed Chrome Yellow to Imitation Chrome Yellow; Sinclair and Valentine (which has changed only one ink because of its lead content) now calls Primrose Yellow, Imitation Primrose Yellow; Handschy has modified several inks, among them Hanco Y2710 Primrose Yellow, Y2716 Warm Yellow (formerly Chrome Yellow), Y2715 Medium Yellow, OR1347 Policy Orange, Brilliant Green, and Kelly Green. Because Graphic Chemical Company did not use lead pigments, they have made no changes; they claim their inks to be completely non-toxic. Although some of the new inks differ slightly in color from those they replace, they remain basically similar.

Inks have also been affected by labeling requirements. The label on a can of Handschy's Bismark Brown reads:

HAZARDS: Slight irritant, skin and eyes. CAUTION: May cause mild irritation. Avoid eye and skin contact. Avoid breathing vapor or mist. Do not ingest. Use with adequate ventilation. Keep away from heat and open flame. Contains petroleum distillates. FIRST AID: . . . for ingestion, do not induce vomiting. Contains hydrocarbons.

Lacquers. Titan Red Vinyl Lacquer and Lith-Kem-Ko lacquers were removed from the market some time ago. The only lacquer currently on the market is Handschy's Lacquer "V", which makes use of solvents which evaporate more slowly and are thus somewhat less dangerous. Because lacquers and lacquer-solvents remain among the most hazardous materials used in lithographic printing, some lithographic workshops have reached a decision to dispense with them entirely.

Gum Arabic. An indispensable ingredient in stone lithography, gum arabic comes from the Mideast and north Africa, principally from Ethiopia and the Sudan, where gum crystals are gathered from several species of acacia trees (es-



FIG. 3. Daniel Weldon's traveling press, with the stone for *Canyon* on its bed.

Traveling Press

DANIEL WELDON of Hampton Editions Limited, under pressure of invitations for demonstrations of lithography, has invented a portable press, "a takeoff on the portable press of Senefelder." He writes:

Have press, can travel. My idea came about years ago and reoccurred during each demonstration of "lithography without a press." As all know, the enjoyment of the climactic point is the unveiling of the print after pressing the paper against the inked stone. Although it takes about two minutes to make an impression with this unit, it does work. I would never want to pull an edition from it (too much work). . . . My press can print an 11" x 14" stone with a little effort, but with good quality. . . . I don't plan on getting into the manufacturing of it, however I would be happy to act as a consultant for someone who would like to market it.

The printed quality of the black-and-white lithograph pulled on Weldon's portable press is excellent [FIG. 2]. The photograph of the press [FIG. 3] shows what a fine piece of craftsmanship it is. Weldon credits the mechanics of the press to his friend Anthony Kryl, a graduate student and industrial arts teacher. Those who want more information about the press may write Daniel Weldon (Hampton Editions Limited, P.O. Box 520, Sag Harbor, NY 11963).

70 pecially *acacia senegal*).¹ Because of drought (which prevents those who gather the gum from traveling far from sources of water) and political unrest, gum arabic has become both scarce and expensive.² In the face of such shortages, suppliers of liquid gum are combining different grades of gum and—because some grades of gum are overly acidic—are adding sodium hydroxide as a buffer. As the pH of such buffered gums is unpredictable, all new supplies of gum should be tested prior to use in the workshop.³

When sold in liquid form, gum arabic necessarily contains a preservative, usually formaldehyde. Because of the dangers thus presented, the OSHA standard applies. A recent label reads:

CAUTION: Contains formaldehyde.
HAZARDS: Contains more than 1/10 of 1% of materials appearing on the 3rd annual National Toxicology Program list of carcinogens. Possible cancer hazard based on tests with laboratory animals. Overexposure may create cancer risk.

To avoid such risk, one may either wear vinyl gloves or—a more certain solution—avoid use of gum that contains formaldehyde. Gum arabic can be purchased in crystalline form and compounded as needed. It will remain fresh for several days without preservatives if refrigerated.

Cellulose gum. Many lithographers use cellulose gum on zinc plates and when gumming down large aluminum plates. Although no longer available from Handschy (which added a phenol preservative to its prepared gum), cellulose gum (which is a corn byproduct) can be obtained in powdered form at most chemical supply houses. To prepare it in liquid form, stir 63 grams of powdered gum (sodium methyl cellulose) into 750 ml water. This mixture will be found to have a pH of about 6.0; the pH should be reduced to 3.7 by addition of phosphoric acid. Let the gum mixture stand overnight before use.

Hazardous Waste

WHAT IS HAZARDOUS WASTE? Waste is solid or liquid material that is no longer usable in its current form. It can be recycled, discarded, or stored. Do you produce hazardous waste in your workshop or studio? You do if you:

- use oils or other petroleum products;
- use dyes, paints, printing inks, thinners, solvents, or cleaning fluids;
- use pesticides or related chemicals;
- use materials that dissolve metal, wood, paper, or clothing;
- use flammable materials;
- use materials that burn or irritate the skin;
- use materials that bubble or foam upon contact with water;
- receive delivery of a product accompanied by a shipping paper or a label which indicates that the product is hazardous.

How much hazardous waste do you produce? The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) considers you a small-quantity generator of hazardous waste if you never produce more than 1,000 kg (approximately 2,200 lb, or about five 55-gallon drums) in a calendar month. Even if you produce as little as 100 kg (about one-half of a 55-gallon drum) you may be subject to limited federal requirements. If your workshop or studio produces such waste, you should obtain information from your state's hazardous waste management agency so as to determine what you must do to comply with the federal regulations which became effective on 5 August 1985.

Aluminum Plates

THE OFFSET PRINTING INDUSTRY is gradually abandoning ball-grained plates, replacing them with brushed metal or paper plates. As a consequence of the reduced demand for ball-grained plates, Precision Litho (located in Massachusetts) is now the sole supplier of such plates to local lithographic supply houses. The company assures Tamarind that they will continue to manufacture ball-grained plates. They are also experimenting with a more coarsely grained plate designed specifically for use in hand lithography. The Takach-Garfield Press Company also plans to market a coarse-grained plate in early 1987 (see the Directory of Suppliers).

1 See Robert Prinsky, "Stuff That Makes Gumdrops Gummy Is Costly, Hard to Get," *Wall Street Journal*, 22 October 1974.

2 Past shortages stimulated research into synthetic gums, none of which proved to be an acceptable substitute in stone lithography. Lovis (low viscosity) gum was found to work erratically with acid, making it impossible to stabilize its pH. See Clinton Adams and John Sommers, "Gum Arabic: Is There an Alternative?," *TTP* 1 (July 1975): 46–48.

3 To check liquid gum, measure its pH, which should be between 4.0 and 5.0. To 30 ml of gum, add one drop of nitric acid, then re-

check the pH; continue adding acid, drop by drop, rechecking the pH as each drop is added, until at least 25 drops have been added. When graphed, the measurements from these tests should form an even curve; if at any point the measurements jump erratically, the gum probably contains a foreign ingredient, most likely a buffering compound. One such gum tested at Tamarind measured a pH of 2.4 after the fourth drop of acid; it then jumped to pH 1.9 after the fifth drop of acid. For an understanding of the role of pH in lithography, see Garo Antreasian and Clinton Adams, *Tamarind Book of Lithography*: 268.

BOOKS & CATALOGUES IN REVIEW

The Prints of Edouard Manet. By Jay McKean Fisher.

Published by the International Exhibitions Foundation, Washington, D. C., 1985. 127 pp. \$12.95.

ALTHOUGH I KNOW IT'S SACRILEGE and Fisher goes out of his way to present an altogether different view, I have to confess that my feeling about Manet's etchings is close to that expressed recently by Jim Dine: "I love the paintings, but I think the etchings are so ugly. They're too secondhand, they're like souvenirs of a great artist."¹

Nevertheless, because Manet is a great artist, his graphic work has not only been exhaustively researched by Juliet Wilson Bareau,² who has turned up new evidence as to how closely the artist followed his painted models, but has also been the subject of five catalogues,³ none of which is definitive. This scholarship Fisher has synthesized and illuminated with his own insights—a task so thoroughly undertaken that one regrets, as Barbara Shapiro did in an earlier review,⁴ that he did not cover all of Manet's prints, rather than stopping short at about three quarters of them.

Writing at the time of the Manet retrospective of 1983⁵ Michel Melot characterized his printmaking as "autographic reproduction," pointing out that it derived largely from the artist's painting and was poised somewhere between the reproductive print of the Ancien Régime and the "original print," eventually to be securely established by the post-Impressionist generation.

For the exhibition detailed in his catalogue—which, alas, I missed—Fisher assembled choice proofs cleanly printed on Chine, which Manet is said to have preferred to Delatre's tonal impressions. He argues that the artist's graphic work was motivated primarily by a desire to popularize his paintings—an intention confounded occasionally by political suppression, but more often by lack of a publisher. Fisher, stressing the care that the artist brought to all the prints he made, suggests that Manet did not seek graphic substitutes for his originals (as a professional engraver might have done) but worked for an equivalent of his painting in graphic terms. I've often

wondered what, when you boil it down, such a statement *really* means. You can only do in etching what you can do in etching; to postulate that it is possible to deny the character of a process, despite using the process, starts essentially from a view of it to which artificial limitations have arbitrarily been applied. We all know that mid-nineteenth century etching enthusiasts made much of spontaneity and *écriture* as an antidote to the formal rigidity of reproductive engraving—and certainly Manet often revels in a broad and deliciously summary scribbling. The overwhelming evidence, however, is of relatively slavish attempts to reverse compositions, to trace photographic reductions of the originals rather than drawing them freehand, to struggle, often unsuccessfully, with aquatint, and to hand over the so-called "mechanical" tasks—such as graining, biting and printing—to professionals. Some intaglio prints succeed with real

distinction: that "guitarrero from Montmartre" the *Spanish Singer*, the second version of *At the Prado*, the *Exotic Flower* from "Sonnets and Etchings," the wonderfully structured *Dead Torero*, and the elegantly understated *Line in Front of the Butcher's Shop*; but more misfire. Among those which seem less than dazzling are

1 Jim Dine, interview by Marco Livingston, July 1986.

2 Juliet Wilson (Bareau) featured Manet's prints in exhibitions at Ingleheim am Rhein (1977) and Galerie Huguette Berès, Paris (1978).

3 E. Moreau-Nélaton (Paris 1906); L. Rosenthal (Paris 1925); M. Guérin (Paris 1944); J. Harris (New York 1970); J. Leymarie and M. Melot (Paris 1971).

4 Barbara Shapiro, review of Fisher, *Print Quarterly* 3 (June 1985): 144–49.

5 *Manet 1832–1883* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams, 1983).



Edouard Manet (1832–1883). *La Barricade*, 1871. Lithograph, 465 × 330. Collection, Australian National Gallery.

72 the awkward *Little Gypsies*, the dud *Manet père*, the splotchily aquatinted *Boy and Dog*, the rightly abandoned *Travelers*, the “vague and unresolved” *Ambroise Adam*, the positively amateur *Candle Seller*, the unaccomplished *Toilette*, the trivial *Silentium*, the ambitious but rather ill-assorted *Little Cavaliers* self-conscious on their undulating molehills, the gawky *Infanta Marguerita*, the inept *Olympia*, the distractingly wire-brushed *Boy Blowing Bubbles*, the wild-eyed and disheveled *Berthe Morisot* straight from an encounter with Jack the Ripper, and even the *Dead Christ with Angels*, described by another irreverent observer as “a poor miner raised from a coal mine.” Even the relatively successful *Victorine*, in the costume of the Espada, appears to me to stand on plastic legs.

But if Manet’s intaglio production is more than a little uneven, as a lithographer he triumphed, for this technique is far less strained in its relationship to drawing. Although, ironically, the lithographs were even more limited in circulation than the etchings, the subject matter Manet found suitable for the process was that of popular mass communication—the caricature, the music cover, the advertisement, and, following on Daumier’s example, the socio-political comment, into which category Douglas Druick has convincingly consigned *The Balloon*.⁶ As scholarship lays bare the relationship between the prints and the paintings, comparing X-rays of the latter in relation to the former, it becomes apparent how closely even the lithographs document the pictures on which they are based. The variation of the legs in the *The Urchin* suggested greater freedom in the earlier etching, but in fact the lithograph accurately reproduces the final version of the painting, which the etching recaptures in an intermediate stage. *The Execution of Maximilian* likewise records a painting in progress, and the wonderfully dynamic evocation of *The Races*, often interpreted as consciously modern freedom of expression, reflects rather an inability on Manet’s part to resolve the painting *Races at Longchamp*. Fascinating information emerges about Manet’s compositional methods: for example, the soldiers shooting the Communards in *The Barricade* are taken, via a flipped tracing, from a drawing of those shooting Maximilian, and are consequently all left-handed. Other matters debated by Fisher include the possibility, based on a statement by the printer Auguste Clot to Mo-

reau-Nelaton,⁷ that *The Barricade*, *The Races*, and two lithographs of *Berthe Morisot* were not even proofed during Manet’s lifetime. Although he cautions that more work must be done in comparing the various proofs, Fisher suggests that the difference between allegedly early and later impressions may stem from minor editing on the part of the printers. In one case he gives proof of the use of a paper frisket to block out parts of the image. Certainly it is difficult to believe that an *essayeur* of Auguste Clot’s technical sophistication could have been misled as to whether the stones he claims to have proofed for the first time after Manet’s death had been printed before or not.

If these deliberations are not shocking enough for curators who for decades have described Manet prints in accordance with previous conventions, the most bold and controversial part of Fisher’s catalogue is that in which he suggests that the illustrations for Manet’s book, *The Raven*, are not lithographs, as has always been thought, but gillotages.

Manet and *The Raven*

The Raven (or *Le Corbeau*, as it is known in French) was a joint project undertaken by Manet and the poet Stéphane Mallarmé. Mallarmé translated the original English text by Edgar Allan Poe into French, and this two-language edition was published in Paris by Richard Lesclide, better known as an enthusiast for original etching. A rare proof of one of the illustrations is dated January 1875 and a letter of 27 May 1875 from Manet to Mallarmé invites the poet to sign copies of the book at the artist’s studio. Another letter makes it clear that copies were printed on demand and, because the book was unpopular, Fisher suggests it is possible that fewer than the advertised edition of 240 were produced. Segregated from the lithographs by Moreau-Nelaton, who described the illustrations (and several similar prints) as “*autographies au lavis reportées sur pierre*,” Manet’s illustrations have traditionally been catalogued as transfer brush-lithographs, although the poster advertising the book claims no more than that they are “*cinq dessins de Manet*.” Referring to a choice of paper, the same advertisement mentions “*Illustrations sur Hollande ou Chine*” (on Holland or China paper); it also promises a cover and an ex libris on *parchemin*, although it is actually fake parchment, not the real thing.

Manet contributed four main draw-

ings to the book—outstandingly large images measuring between 30 and 32 cm on their shorter side and up to 48 cm on the longer one. They depict a man sitting at a lamplit desk, standing by a window towards which the raven is flying, and staring at the bird perched on a bust of Pallas above a door; in the last and most dramatic of all four, an empty chair stands in a shadowy room. A vignette of a raven’s head is repeated on poster, slipcase, and book cover, while a silhouetted raven in flight ominously wings its way across the ex libris. Manet, doubtless influenced by Japan, has drawn with a brush sometimes fully charged, sometimes starved dry. The prints, which are rather coarse in texture, particularly in the context of the 1870s, have a curious duo-tone quality composed of the granular grey of the underdrawing, which appears almost separately processed, and the darker, more richly inked accents in strategic places on the raven itself, or parts of the man’s body or hair. The illustrations are not integrated with the text, but inserted on single sheets, either of textured Holland paper or the smoother Chine.

The letterpress text is credited to Alcan Levy, but a letter from artist to poet referring to a supply of Japanese paper, confirms that Lefman was the printer of the illustrations.⁸ Cited in contemporary directories as practicing “*heliogravure en relief pour la typographie*,” Lefman is celebrated as a pioneer of the most advanced phototechnologies of his day. Fisher’s radical submission that the Manet illustrations and a handful of other prints of the decade are gillotages is the development of an idea first put forward by Druick and Zegers in an essay about Degas.⁹ Of the other prints so described, Fisher’s catalogue includes two rare variations of *Au café* of 1874—one tonally brushed and feebly printed, the other, more successful but essentially a linear

6 Douglas Druick and Peter Zegers, “Manet’s Balloon: French Diversion, the *fête de l’empereur*, 1862,” *Print Collector’s Newsletter* 14 (May-June 1983): 37–46.

7 E. Moreau-Nelaton, *Manet, graveur et lithographe* (Paris: Lois Delteil, 1906), note to catalogue no. 82.

8 See Fisher: 115.

9 Douglas Druick and Peter Zegers, “Degas and the Printed Image, 1856–1914,” in *Edgar Degas, The Painter as Printmaker* (Boston 1984): xxxiii and note 26, liii. “Some and perhaps all of Manet’s work printed by Lefman may be relief prints rather than the lithographs they have been thought to be.”

pen-and-ink rendering of the same scene—and another brush drawn “autographie,” *Au paradis*, credited to Lefman and used in an article about Manet in the *Revue de la Semaine* of 29 April 1877.

Gillotage

GILLOTAGE is a method of making relief prints on zinc, known, according to Eder, since 1822.¹⁰ The principle was applied to lithographic drawings in Vienna around 1840, but it was a decade later that Firmin Gillot of Paris, who was trained as a lithographer, made it a regular feature of industrial practice. Using asphaltum and calling the process paniconography, Gillot would pull greasy imprints from lithographic drawings, from autographies (defined as drawing or writing in ink or crayon on transfer paper), and from wood or copper engravings. Using the grease of the ink from these various sources as the basis for an acid resist, Gillot would set the designs down onto zinc plate which he would etch with acid to make a typographic printing plate (see Hornig's description of paniconography, page 74). The financial advantage was that in addition to avoiding the cost of an interpretative engraver, the relief plates could be printed alongside a letterpress text, thus obviating the need for more than one process. Eder associates both Gillot and his son Charles with early experiments using photo-transfers, including a coarse approximation of a grained “half tone” first developed by Negre. This deployed a layer of chromated gelatine on paper to provide a kind of natural grain by reticulating the gelatine in a way similar to the collotype process. An example of this kind of printing (wrongly described by the editor as based on asphaltum) appeared in *La Lumière* on 5 May 1856. As a regular strategy, such a method failed to catch on because it was coarse and too complicated to print industrially. So although the random dot structure of crayon lithography translated into gillotage (as in Daumier's work) could produce a tonal approximation, gillotage tended to confine itself to line-work suitable for economical machine printing. Where luxury publications were concerned, it was possible by the early 1880s to translate the most sensitive wash drawings into exquisite “*aquarelles typographiques*” and such prints were produced by Gillot for *L'Art Japonais* by Louis Gonse. The “half tone” in them was procured by the use of a fine dust grain, plus net-like screens or dot structures

from scratchboard, which could be transferred by grease to stone for lithography, or to zinc for chemigraphic relief etchings. Such prints mark yet another transitional stage between the lithographic or linear gillotages, the coarsely imperfect tonal gillotages developed on photo sensitive gelatine tops and the photo-engraved half-tone dot systems we still use, which were in production by the end of the century. If Manet's illustrations for *The Raven* are indeed gillotages, their coarse and unusual tonal structure must be situated within the broad range of possibilities suggested by this confluence of impure and bastard techniques.

Fisher's Case and the Curatorial Response

IN ARGUING that *The Raven* and other “autographies” by Manet are actually gillotages, Fisher submits that the French word means either lithograph or gillotage if effected by direct transfer from a crayon, brush or pen drawn master. This, taken together with the fact that both before and after this flurry of uncharacteristic prints in the 1870s Manet's lithographs were always printed by Lemercier, has convinced Fisher that Lefman was chosen for this particular job because he was a master of this innovative work. However, despite the fact that Lefman was noted for photo-process, Fisher only considers the illustrations as direct brush transfers to zinc, probably because no drawings have survived, but also because of Moreau-Nealon's early categorization. Using magnification and a raking light to examine the prints, Fisher did not feel there was conclusive evidence to clinch the matter either way, and as Druick and Zegers had done before him, he suggested that a relief plate can be printed without detectable debossing, as examination of many gillotages in the periodical *La Vie moderne* confirms.

Not surprisingly, curators have been swift to question Fisher's technical revisions. Barbara Shapiro extended her review to include visual evidence from Boston's China version of *Under the Lamp* from *The Raven*, magnifying it eight times. She noted a broad flattening around the composition “which could only occur from the pressure of a scraper bar on a lithographic press.” If one were printing gillotage lightly without signs of debossing, she reasons, then there would not be this observable change in the paper. She also noted obliquely across the

top right hand corner of the same illustration a curved indentation bearing the kind of file work “so often found on the edges of lithographic stones.” Looking at other “autographies” discussed by Fisher, she went on to argue that the tonal nuances or “under-drawing” revealed in them would be difficult to explain with relief techniques, but could be naturally realized by lithography.

Her review in *Print Quarterly* was extended by observations, both on Fisher's thesis and the nature of gillotage, by Antony Griffiths of the British Museum. Stating that there is “no description of the process readily available in English,”¹¹ he translated from French an account of c. 1894 by Jules Adeline,¹² setting aside, for reasons that are not altogether clear to me, a superior description by Motteroz¹³ which is not only closer to the date of the book in question but contains interesting references to Lefman. The Adeline translation, which omits one of the most important technical aspects of gillotage,¹⁴ helped to convince Griffiths that the technique was both complicated and expensive and therefore only suitable for mass production, not for a limited edition. He agrees with Shapiro that the flattened paper can only point to lithography and maintains that it would have been perfectly possible for Lefman to have printed the illustrations lithographically, because the two processes were so indissolubly related. He further declares that if the illustrations had been gillo-

10 Josef Maria Eder, *The History of Photography* (reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1972): 621–26.

11 Two reasonably accurate accounts in English are J. D. Hodson, “Modern Processes of Engraving, No. 1,” *Art Journal* (1885): 58–60; and Dr. Hornig, “Paniconography,” *The Photographic News* (16 September 1875): 567–68. The latter is reprinted below (pages 74–75).

12 Jules Adeline, *Les arts de reproduction vulgarisées* (Paris: c. 1894). Excerpt translated by Antony Griffiths, *Print Quarterly* 3 (June 1986).

13 Motteroz, *Essai sur les gravures chimiques en relief* (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1871).

14 Namely, that the etching bath must be kept constantly on the move. The Motteroz account, quoting Gillot's own patent, suggests that the ordinary gillotage is of “elementary simplicity” and that, although like the other graphic arts it requires skill and artistic feeling, the necessary qualities “will develop quickly and easily through practice, in a workman with a little intelligence.”

74 tages, then Alcan Levy would have printed them along with the relief text. Finally, he derides the "weak argument" advanced by both Druick and Fisher, that the use of "*dessins*" suggests the gillotage process, rather than an "original" one. Pointing to a precedent in Corot's transfer lithographs of 1872 entitled *Douze dessins et croquis originaux*, Griffiths suggests that Lesclide was noted for his attitude toward original illustrations and would have commissioned prints from artists, not merely designs.

The first thing one might say in counter argument is that if Lesclide was concerned to stress that his publication contained original prints, then advertising them as "illustrations" and "*dessins*" was a funny way of doing it. The word "*dessins*" can be called upon to prove almost anything. While Corot's 1872 transfer lithographs were certainly called "*dessins*" (although "*dessins originaux*," it should be noted), in 1873 the same artist's photo-processed *Souvenir of Solagne*, printed lithographically by Schmit et Cie,¹⁵ formed part of a portfolio entitled *Album contemporain: collection de dessins et croquis des meilleurs artistes de notre époque*.

Nor is it possible to accept unre-

servedly the visual evidence for a secure lithographic attribution that Barbara Shapiro put forward. One would need to know how vignettéd gillotages on this huge scale might have been finished and printed if a luxury rather than an industrial edition was at stake. Then, while the Australian National Gallery's Holland paper version also shows the oblique indentation that Shapiro reproduced with her review, there is no major technical treatise, from Senefelder to Tamarind via Lemerrier and Cumming, which does not emphasize the need to smooth and polish the corners and edges of stones by rasp, file, then pumice and snake-stone; filemarks on a jagged corner which was printed by being scraped to the very edge of the matrix would be evidence of second-rate workmen and a shoddy job. What is doubly perplexing is that in the ANG's impression, the smoothing of the Holland paper extends *beyond* the irregular contour of the stone (if that is what it is), so that the surface rugosity of the sheet is smoothed over a larger area which has distinctly squared corners, far more evocative of metal. Was this the printing matrix? Were there two printing matrices? Or has the paper merely

been smoothed by a blank metal sheet in advance of the printing, as has certainly been done on the text pages? If so, what aesthetic consideration determined the selection of a paper with a distinctive texture, only to flatten most of it, not only on the pages printed by letterpress but on the image sheets as well. If I were compelled to interpret *The Raven* illustrations as lithographs, I would select as stronger evidence the stretching of damp paper by lateral movement. This has caused heavier wrinkling on the right than on the left of *Under the Lamp*, as if the scraper had passed in that direction in its passage across the image. Once again, however, I am assuming that if it were a gillotage, this image would have been printed by vertical and not

- 15 Claiming a "New Process of Printing," this portfolio was published with a notice saying: "Here in fact, there are no longer those photographs done with silver salts whose inevitable alteration, in portfolios especially, is the despair of Collectors. . . . The New Process on the contrary, assures to our copies an unlimited duration . . ." See M. Melot, *The Graphic Art of the Pre-Impressionists* (New York: 1974), catalogue note C.34: 262.

PANICONOGRAPHY

BY DR. HORNIG

For some years past, the firm of Gillot et Fils, of Paris have been working a process under this name, which consists in producing blocks in relief by etching upon zinc. The process is one which yields such excellent results that we feel it a duty to describe it to our readers, the more so as photography now plays a very important role in the matter. A recent visit to the establishment of MM. Gillot et Fils has afforded us an opportunity of witnessing the operations of the process, which finds valuable application in connection with photography.

The paper employed in the process may be purchased in commerce, or may be prepared by covering Indian paper with a film of starch paste, the paper being dried and pressed with much care, and kept as cleanly as possible. A particularly good autographic paper may be obtained by applying one or two films of gelatine solution, so that only a very thin and uniform coating is produced, which does not run on the paper being hung up to dry. When dry a coating of cold paste, made some days previously, is applied, and afterwards an application of gamboge dissolved in water. The paper is subsequently well rolled, so that no fatty matter shall come into contact with it.

The zinc plates employed must not be too soft, and should be rendered more favourable to the application of a greasy image by washing in potash or soda solution. Oxidised or moist plates will not take the colour; warm ones allow it to run.

The image produced in fatty ink upon the paper, however it may have been furnished, is placed upon the zinc plate face downwards; a sheet of paper moistened with very dilute hydrochloric acid is placed upon it, and above this are put sheets of dry paper, and the whole passed two or three times through a lithographic press. If a non-prepared paper is employed, the plate should only be passed once through the press, as the paper will not cling to the metal, but, being spread out by the pressure, causes a double image to be formed. A too powerful pressure makes the lines of the image thicker.

The back of the paper, with the image, is now well moistened with water, and then the paper-backing may be removed from the zinc, upon which remains the fatty image, as also the preparation, if any, which was in the first place applied to the paper. A soft sponge is now employed to wash the plate, and then it is washed over with gum-water to which a little hydrochloric acid has been added. The latter is allowed to dry upon the metal, which is slightly warmed on purpose. The acidified gum solution must first of all be tested upon a zinc surface, and should not attack the metal

with much energy. Solution of nut-galls may be employed in place of it, if preferred, as in the case of photo-zincography and lithography.

The plate must be allowed to stand in this dry condition as long as possible. The gum is then removed from the surface by washing, and the image is rubbed with a roller in the same way as in lithography. The first ink applied by Gillot is a composition of ordinary lithographic ink, white wax, resin, and lithographic varnish. The plate is again permitted to dry, and then over the whole surface is spread, by means of a tuft of cotton-wool, some finely powdered resin, which at once attaches to the greasy particles, and imparts to the colour a consistence sufficient to shelter the covered parts from the action of the sun. The powdered resin upon the other portions of the plate, between the lines and the letters, is removed by means of a second tuft of wool, and then the borders and back of the plate are covered with shellac varnish.

The etching is now proceeded with. A trough made from a mixture of gutta-percha and asphalte is made of proper dimensions, and of such a nature that it will rock. This rocking trough must be kept in motion the whole time that the etching operation is proceeding, so that the liquid moves to and fro over the plate, and washes away any salts which may become formed by the acid acting upon the zinc. In the establishment of the Messieurs

by horizontal pressure, and I have absolutely no evidence that this would *necessarily* have been the case.

Grounds for Continued Research

WHILE I AM NO NEARER to unravelling the mystery of these prints and accurately describing them, a few things seem very clear to me. It may be difficult to imagine the Raven drawings as gillotages, but it is every bit as difficult to situate them within lithographic practice at this date. If they really are transferred wash drawings, then they are without precedent and without obvious succession. Decades later, flannel and rubbing crayon

were being advised for tonal areas, and even direct wash drawings on stone were talked of with bated breath. So why would Manet have attempted this hazardous undertaking with a printer noted for a different technique?¹⁶ The chromolithographic *Polichinelle*, a second Mallarmé co-production with illustrations cut on wood by a reproductive engraver, and his last abortive attempt to reproduce his Salon painting *Jeanne*, reveal an artist less and less interested in making his prints himself. As Fisher points out, he was not so much threatened as liberated by the new technologies. Nor does it quite ring true that, following the fail-

ure of the brush version of *Au Café*, Manet, within a year, should have risked again the loss of ambitious autographic transfers, especially if the development of new expertise made it technically possible for him to preserve his drawings. The fact that these do not seem to have survived into our own time is neither here nor there.

At the very least, some research would seem to be warranted concerning the details of Lefman's practice and the extent to which the confluence of techniques made transfers to various surfaces virtually interchangeable at this date.¹⁷ Motteroz makes it clear in his 1871 ac-

16 At the end of Chapter VI (54–57), in which he deals with "*Photogravure par le Bitume de Judée*," Motteroz writes: "In making gillotages on prepared zinc, one can obtain a relief from all kinds of engravings. M. Lefman, who for a long time has made industrial photogravures, does not operate in any other way for relief printing; only his transfers are different." In French: "*En gillotant des plaques de zinc ainsi préparées, on obtiendrait le relief de toute espèce de gravures. M. Lefman, qui depuis longtemps fait de la photogravure industrielle n'opère pas autrement pour la mise en relief; ses reports seuls différent.*"

17 What is particularly noticeable when reading the English *Photographic News* of 1874–75 (which frequently refers to French example) is the extent to which the volumes bristle with photo-transfer innovations involving gelatine. As examples: M. C. Borlinetto, "New Method of Preparing Photo Lithographic Transfers," 23 October 1874: 513; W. de W. Abney, "Photomechanical Printing," 3 July 1874: 316; and Alfred Slater, "Improvements in Photo-Lithography," 3 July 1874: 315. Slater states: "First. From a photographic negative I obtain a picture in gelatine leaf or other substance by processes known; then I pass

two inking rollers with lithographic printing inks of different densities over the leaf, and then I take or pull off from the leaf an impression or picture on lithographic transfer paper. I then transfer the impression from the transfer paper to a lithographic stone, from which impressions can be pulled as desired. Secondly. When the picture or impression is obtained in leaf I embed it into type or other similar metal by pressure as at present practised, thereby leaving a print. I then ink this print and pull off an impression on to lithographic transfer paper . . ."

Gillot there are two apparatus, each having four of these troughs, which are moved by a small steam engine. Each trough takes up an area of one-and-a-half square feet. The concentration of the acid governs the depth of the etching, and therefore it is considered desirable to have the acid mixture always of the same strength, the liquid falling from a dropping-bottle fixed above the trough. The first etching must be very weak, and should be confined to the white parts, which are the darkest portions. As soon as this is sufficiently accomplished, so that certain parts are placed in slight relief, the plate is taken out of the trough, washed, and dried, and brought into an oven mildly heated, when the resin fuses and runs down the walls of the relief already formed. It is a question now, not of producing a relief sufficient for printing in the printing-press, but to protect every separate etching, which gives the tones of the picture, from the subsequent action of the acid. A series of operations are necessary to do this, which necessarily require practical experience to carry out, and are not to be fulfilled by one who possesses mere theoretical knowledge.

As soon as the fused resin has formed a sufficient protective coating, the plate is taken from the oven and allowed to dry in the open air; it is then rolled up again with the re-transfer ink, together with two parts of fatty and resinous substance, and as much litho-

varnish as will permit the composition to run easily over the lines or letters of the image. The plate is strongly rolled, so that the black parts become pasty, and then powdered resin is applied, bringing the plate a second time into the trough. The second etching, which is required to attack the less dark parts, requires to be a more vigorous one. The plate must also be more highly warmed, so that the fused resin is more fluid, and spreads over and protects the parts graved in the last operation.

For six or nine times is the operation repeated in the same manner, until, by continued rolling up of the plate and fusing of the powdered resin applied, the image is completely etched by succeeding steps, the final etching being most powerful, in order to hollow out all the white portions. When there are large surfaces of white in the image, these must in the first place be protected with a solution of shellac, so as not to weaken the etching liquid too much at first, and to supply a point of vantage for the roller.

After the etching operations have come to an end, the plate is washed with great care, in the first place with caustic potash, and afterwards with benzole, to remove the resin and ink. The white portions which have not been acted upon are cut out with a narrow saw, and the graved plate is then fixed into a press.

As the work of MM. Gillot et Fils testifies,

and as I myself can also bear witness, the results of the process which I have here briefly sketched yields most excellent results, but some amount of practice and artistic skill are required on the part of those who carry on the operations. The etching of the plates must be carefully watched, so that the fine lines and delicate portions of the work may not suffer. The beginner is liable to etch some portions and cover up others too much; but with an intelligent operator successful and certain results are obtained in a very short time.

The process of paniconography, which is known in Paris under the name of "Gillotage," has rapidly spread and is employed in that metropolis for illustrating newspapers and other publications. Employed in conjunction with photography—or, rather, photolithography—it permits of obtaining a phototype plate for the printing-press of any drawing or design in a very short time, the reproduction being either on a larger or a smaller scale than the original. It would be desirable that every printing establishment of importance should possess a lithographic press and a workman skilled in this particular kind of work; and it would be well if our photographers were to practise more assiduously the chrome-gelatine photographic process and photo-lithography, so that they might become more conversant with the photo-mechanical processes of the day.

76 count of zincography that the problem of relief tone was the one at that moment being confronted and beaten. He also reveals that Lefman's innovations lay in the nature of his transfers and he describes the differential expansion (and therefore of subsequent ink absorption) following the gelatine's exposure to light. Describing the way bichromated gelatine on paper was sensitized, Motteroz confirms that it can then be used to make intaglio surfaces, gillotages, or transfers to lithographic plate or stone. Of two other practitioners, he says

... after having produced an image on the surface under a print or photographic negative, they damp the proof on the paper side and put the gelatinous side on to the stone; by passing it through a press, the gelatine not acted upon by light sticks to the stone and furnishes the imprint destined to receive the lithographic ink. By operating in this way on a plate it would be simple to obtain by gillotage all kinds of marks, one would have, in this fashion, a variation on Lefman's process. This artist, who was the first to apply paniconography to photogravure, obtained his transfer proofs with bichromated gelatine paper which he inked with the help of a lithographic roller after exposure to light, and which he then transferred like an ordinary proof onto zinc plate. These extremely simple processes are patented, and it is thanks to them that Mr. Lefman has been able to make of photogravure a veritable industry.¹⁸

As to the possibility of photolithography, we have certainly been advised by Antony Griffiths (prophetically placing his remarks beneath a reproduction of *Under the Lamp*) that lithographs and photolithographs are very hard to tell apart: "A lithograph cannot really be confused with any print produced by one of the non-photomechanical processes, but can very easily be confused with a photolithograph."¹⁹

It has never seemed clear, despite protracted discussions about *The Raven*, exactly the nature of the book and whether pennies were being watched or not. It appears that Mallarmé had an offer to make a further edition of 1,000 copies for an American publisher which was never taken up,²⁰ but that later Manet's illustrations were reproduced in the poet's collected volume of Poe's work.²¹ Perhaps gillotage was initially proposed because a much larger edition had been hoped for, and then, when this did not

eventuate, lithographs were pulled from chromated gelatine.

One of the most amusing things about the whole affair is how a person's mental set or predisposition conditions the interpretation of identical facts. Michael Twyman, attuned to the pearly greys of early topographic lithography, commented how badly printed the Manet illustrations were. Jacob Kainen, on the other hand, an aficionado of extremely handmade prints by German Expressionists, imagined, in a letter written to me earlier this year, that Manet had modelled his image on the stone with acid, "preferring expressive hoarseness to brilliant edition printing." Ken Tyler, who inspected *The Raven* at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, said if he had printed lithographs which looked like this, he would have consigned them to the garbage can. He noticed how badly burned and marred by wipe-marks the washes were, and that the ends of the brush strokes had been lost in the transfer. He also felt it possible that the use of photography at some stage might explain the ruptured look of the images, and it was he who suggested a possible scenario of bastardized processes that have rendered the prints impervious to conventional description.

What is so interesting about Fisher's thesis is not so much that it may lead us to an accurate description of Manet's work, as that it offers fresh insight into the way in which too narrow definitions of originality have forced us to compartmentalize knowledge. We have adopted modes of enquiry remote from the reality in which "original" and commercial prints co-exist. Druick started this particular hare running in *La Pierre Parle*;²² Fisher, in continuing the debate, whatever the ultimate truth about *The Raven*, has stimulated us and set minds working on at least three continents.

Pat Gilmour

18 Motteroz: In French: "... après avoir impressionné la surface sous une gravure ou un cliché photographique, ils mouillent l'épreuve du côté du papier et mettent le côté gélatiné sur la pierre; au moyen d'une pression, la gélatine non-impressionnée se colle à la pierre et fournit l'empreinte destinée à recevoir l'encre lithographique. En opérant ainsi sur plaque, il doit être facile d'obtenir par le gillotage toute espèce de dessin au trait; on aurait, de cette façon, une variante des procédés de M. Lefman. Cet artiste, qui le premier a appliqué la paniconographie à la photogravure, obtient ses épreuves de report avec du papier gélatiné et bichromé qu'il encre à aide d'un rouleau lithographique, après l'exposition à la lumière, et qu'il décalque ensuite, comme une épreuve ordinaire, sur la plaque de zinc. Ces procédés extrêmement simples sont brevetés, et c'est grâce à eux que M. Lefman a pu faire de la photogravure une véritable industrie."

19 Antony Griffiths, *Prints and Printmaking* (London: British Museum, 1980): 104.

20 Mention is made of an American publisher proposing to take a thousand. *Manet, 1832-1883*: 382.

21 In a letter (1881) Mallarmé stated his intention to publish his complete translations of Poe's poems (ibid.: 383). According to Moreau-Nélaton, this edition, with reproductions of Manet's Raven drawings, was published by Vanier in 1889.

22 Douglas Druick and Peter Zegers, *La Pierre Parle: Lithography in France, 1848-1900* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1981).

The Prints of Benton Murdoch Spruance: A Catalogue Raisonné.

By Ruth E. Fine and Robert F. Looney.

Published by University of Pennsylvania Press in cooperation with The Free Library of Philadelphia, 1986. 340 pp. \$49.95 (hardcover).

CARL ZIGROSSER OBSERVED (in *The Artist in America*) that his friend Benton Spruance was so thoroughly an artist concerned with rendering a graphic synthesis of his own time that his "just recognition" would come only after "the present has become the past." Forty-four years after that was written and nineteen years after the artist's death, it is at last possible through this admirable and handsome study of Spruance's prints to assess his achievement and to test the accuracy of Zigrosser's prediction.

Certainly time and the ever-quicken- ing pace of new movements in the art world—serious, ephemeral, or other- wise—have been unkind to the reputa- tions of some departed artists, Spruance among them. Although one of the con- tributors to this catalogue raisonné calls Spruance one of the "major talents" of the decades of the thirties, forties, and fifties, little of substance has been re- cently published about his work. Al- though prominent for many years in the Philadelphia art community where he was a respected teacher, Spruance at- tracted notice outside his region only briefly in the 1930s, the decade of his emergence. Among the authors of re- cently published histories of American printmaking only Clinton Adams gives attention to Spruance; his name is barely mentioned by Una E. Johnson and James Watrous, neither of whom chose to il- lustrate his work—a lack of critical and scholarly interest which may be inter- preted as a *de facto* consignment to the past.

One imagines that Ruth E. Fine and Robert F. Looney compiled this cata- logue of the artist's 555 prints—all but nineteen of them lithographs—to cor- rect this misjudgment of history. Along with two of Spruance's friends, Jerome Kaplan and Samuel Maitin, who con- tributed short, warm, and moving rem- iniscences of the artist, Fine and Looney present a brief portrait of the man as an activist concerned with the protection of artist's rights (Spruance was a founder of the Philadelphia Chapter of Artists Equity) and with the improvement of the cultural life of his native city. They



Benton Spruance (1904–1967). *From the Sea—Pieta*, 1943. Lithograph, 256 × 384 [Fine-Looney 220]. Probably printed by Theodore Cuno.

also offer an analysis of his subject mat- ter, trace the development of his style, and describe his extensive experimen- tation in the lithographic process, es- pecially his innovative work in color printing. Implicit in this collaborative enterprise (an undertaking so curiously like the division of labor in the printer's workshop) are the contributors' collec- tive convictions that Spruance had and still has important things to say to us through his work, and, moreover, that he was one of the master lithographers of his time. After living with this book and Spruance's absorbing work for sev- eral weeks, I am inclined to agree with them.

If Spruance was never one of our greatest artists—and the authors make no such claim for him—he was clearly one of this country's most prolific. Al- though he also painted in oil and carried out several mural commissions, Spru- ance's graphic output was, I believe, sel- dom surpassed among fellow American practitioners of his caliber (Joseph Pen- nell comes to mind). One cannot ex- amine this book, in which all of the artist's prints are illustrated, and remain un- impressed by the sheer energy of his

production. As Zigrosser pointed out in his 1942 essay, and as Maitin confirms in these pages, Spruance could have made even more prints had he not given his time so unselfishly to community ac- tivities. Indeed, convincing evidence is presented that Spruance led an exem- plary life as an artist.

The reader is cautioned, however, not to expect this book to be a thorough- going study. The text is brief and in part insubstantial: a foreword by Looney, a short introductory essay by Fine, the even shorter contributions by Kaplan and Maitin, and a chronology of the artist's life. These will inevitably leave the in- terested reader wanting to know more about Spruance, especially about the cir- cumstances of his times and the nature of the personality that gave rise to such a dark and brooding art. Kaplan's state- ment that Spruance "leaned toward so- cialism" is the first and last reference to the artist's politics. Perhaps the authors are deferring to Spruance's biographer Lloyd M. Abernathy, whose *Benton Spruance: The Artist and the Man* will be published next year (Philadelphia Art Alliance Press, forthcoming).

While Looney and Fine have thus not

published the last word on Spruance, they have given us a catalogue that could serve as a model for this form of scholarship. Most of their work was carried out at the Free Library of Philadelphia, which houses some 450 of Spruance's prints and a wealth of other materials from his studio. The catalogue is organized by medium with the lithographs given precedence over the handful of etchings, drypoints, aquatints, woodcuts, and monotypes; listed and illustrated in that order. The work is organized chronologically within each medium, beginning with Spruance's rather hesitant but charming lithographs of 1928 and ending with prints published in 1967, the year of the artist's death. The catalogue provides titles, variant titles, edition sizes, dimensions, ink colors, notes on signatures and the identity of printers, and references to collections.

The book's format is one of its most appealing qualities. Each print is illustrated in clear, rich halftones; six appear again as color plates. Illustrations are adequate in size and appear two to the page, with catalogue notes placed below them; the prints thus seem nicely "matted" by the ample white margins. Good book design is extremely important in publications such as this; if the layout is botched, everyone is cheated. The writers of this volume were fortunate to have a designer of exceptional ability and taste. Why, I wonder, isn't the designer given credit? He or she certainly should be.

Among the essays, the reader will find Ruth Fine's introduction the most informative and helpful guide to the prints. Especially interesting are her brief discussions of the evolution of Spruance's style, of his selection of subjects, and of the stages he passed through on the way to perfecting his understanding of the technical aspects of lithography.

Spruance was an enthusiastic contributor to the great revival of lithography in the period between the two world wars. His earliest lithographs were executed at the shop of the Desjobert brothers while on a fellowship for travel to Paris in 1928. These first efforts were lightly and sketchily (but very carefully) drawn with lithograph crayon. The initial influence of George Wesley Bellows—a force few American artists could ignore in the late 1920s—is evident in Spruance's renderings of portrait heads and in several prints based on fondly observed aspects of urban life. Around 1932 the spontaneous drawing gives way to a masterful control of the crayon, which

is used as a tool to create the most subtle transitions of values and sharply focused contour lines. The strength and success of the design in these works derives from contrasts of dark against light. *Late Departure* [No. 89, 1933], a fine drawing of a suburban train station and a locomotive with a trail of smoke as palpable as any cloud drawn by Thomas Hart Benton—or by Poussin—is a typical Spruance of the early 1930s. With one or two exceptions (judging from the illustrations) Spruance employed this tight, rather reserved mode of drawing until about 1940, when hatching and cross-hatching began to reappear.

I found the artist's broad range of subject matter during the 1930s intriguing, not to say disconcerting. In addition to the portraits, figure studies, and nudes (which he continued to do in a more or less naturalistic style throughout his career), Spruance drew landscapes; cityscapes; the dynamism of traffic and crowds; cartoon-like, anecdotal subjects reminiscent of Gropper; the action of statuesque, streamlined football players throwing their bodies across the picture plane; and, finally, the prints that the artist probably wished us to accept as his most serious work: a series of allegories in modern dress through which he hoped to convey his response to the major events of his time and his concern for the future of the human race. As Fine nicely observes, Spruance's work of the thirties embraces both the observed and the imagined, while alternating stylistically between "nuance" and "starkness." Put more specifically, Spruance's work passes through a stylistic spectrum from synthetic cubism to futurism, then to an expressionism reminiscent of Siqueros (borrowing occasionally the somber monumentality of Rivera), and finally to a naturalism with which Spruance seems most comfortable. I also detect more than a hint of Louis Lozowick in the cool planarities of two cityscapes, *Shells for the Living* [No. 80] and *Bridge from Race Street* [No. 165]. And in the kaleidoscopic print *The People Play* [No. 170], a rather cartoon-like drawing of an amusement park midway, there appears to be a respectful nod in the direction of Spruance's friend and Germantown neighbor Robert Riggs, whose dark visions of Americans at play date from 1932.

All the work of the 1930s, from the daringly modernist (for Spruance) to middle-of-the-road, depression-era realism, is characterized by the uniform accessibility of its content and the unre-

mitting cheerlessness of its mood. Surely Spruance was one of the most consistently somber American artists of the 1930s. He found that a minor key suited him and he stayed with it, giving even to the game of football a grim and funereal air. Although Spruance's depictions of football are superior by far to those of LeRoy Neiman, the Wayne Newton of the graphic arts, in my opinion he forced the material, attempting to give it a heroic and mythical dimension that this ephemeral pastime infrequently exhibits.

Most impressive of all are Spruance's monumental series *The People Work* [Nos. 141–144] of 1937 and *The People Play* [Nos. 156–157] of 1938—reprinted in 1944 as *The People Play—Summer* [No. 228]. *The People Work* series is Spruance's hymn of praise to the American city, conceived as four multi-level, compartmentalized, stage sets, jammed with crowds of Philadelphians rushing to catch commuter trains, pausing to gawk at a construction project, dodging traffic, or having a beer with the boys. Like Hogarth, Spruance shows us the times of the day—morning, noon, evening, and night. Like Rivera, whose work Spruance must certainly have known, he captures the rhythmic throb of urban life within a sectioned, architectural framework in which street levels, piers, and girders function as framing devices within the lithograph's rectangular format. Each print resembles a small-scale mural; it is easy to imagine the prints enlarged as wall-sized paintings and grouped together on the four sides of a room.

But I do not mean to indulge myself in the art historian's parlor game of "find the influence." Spruance knew the history of prints so well that he became locally well known for his lectures at the Alverthorpe Gallery in Philadelphia where he often illustrated his talks with prints from the collection of his friend Lessing Rosenwald. He was quite conscious of his identity as an artist shaped by tradition and as one committed to contributing to it. Fine quotes from Spruance's 1937 essay, "The Place of the Printmaker," in which the artist observed that "more than any of his fellow artists [the printmaker] has realized and worked within the great tradition of western art. This tradition commands all creative men to work, integrated into the civilization in which they live, to use as their symbols the broadly understood symbols of the people, and to use them in such a way that their aesthetic value

is communicable." That trait in Spruance—a commitment to mirror and to come to terms with the heroic and tragic dimensions of the American experience—links him with socially conscious artists of the past—Callot, Hogarth, Daumier, and Kollwitz—who made prints, the most accessible and intimate of the great art forms, as agents to awaken consciousness. Spruance's urge to be a "useful" artist reminded Zigrosser of Benjamin Franklin; I am reminded more of another Philadelphian, Charles Willson Peale, who demonstrated a similar commitment to serve his country with his art.

With the beginning of the 1940s, Spruance began to give his work an increased sense of monumentality and a darker and even more serious emotional tone. Much as he attempted to effect a synthesis between tradition and modernism in his handling of form, he sought also a unity of the past and present when he drew religious subjects in modern dress. In *Gifts from the King* [Nos. 185–187, 1940] the three Magi are played by a physician, a professor, and a minister/priest; in *The Conversion of Paul* [Nos. 194–196], a crashing airplane provides the burst of light for Saul's conversion. In the 1940s the artist also tried out new idioms. If his work of the 1930s recalled the art of the Mexican muralists (among others), his work of the next decade suggested an interest in Max Beckmann, as in *The Credo Triptych* [Nos. 207–209, 1942], and in Georges Rouault, as in *The Women in Front of Their Houses* [No. 255, 1947]. But the swings back to an almost stylistically neutral naturalism also continued. Who but an American artist of this period could be capable of such stylistic counter-marching as is seen in the prosaic portrait, *Carl Zigrosser* [No. 214, 1942]? Is this the real Benton Spruance, or does he show his true identity when he speaks in one or more of a half dozen other artistic dialects? The answer, of course, is that he is the sum of all 555 prints collected here in a manner that allows us to see how a skillful (if not brilliant) artist coped with the irresistible demands of modern formalism while trying to make sense out of the agonies of the Great Depression and the war that followed it in terms that his fellow Americans could understand. Spruance was conscious of the need to balance traditional themes and modernist forms; that he refused or simply could not abandon accessible subject matter may have cost him the great commercial success and

fame enjoyed by a younger generation of abstract artists. But Spruance could make only his kind of art. One could more easily imagine Thomas Eakins painting the inauguration of Rutherford B. Hayes than to expect Spruance to create a totally self-indulgent art. Above all, his life's work is characterized by its moral earnestness and steadfastness of purpose.

One area in which Spruance did enjoy the adventure of discovery and innovation was in the technical manipulation of his medium. When he first began drawing lithographs his printer was Theodore Cuno, who also printed for Riggs and other Philadelphians. With the exception of a few editions printed in black and yellow (in imitation of *chine collé* impressions), Spruance then used black ink alone. In 1943 he began experimenting in color; after 1950 he printed in color almost exclusively. At first, working with Cuno, he used color in a traditional manner. After 1950, as he grew more confident of his own abilities as a printer, he developed a novel "subtractive" method. According to Fine:

After drawing his complete key, or main image onto the stone and printing an edition of it in a first color, Spruance would remove areas of the image by strongly etching away certain areas of the drawing from the stone. . . . A second color then would be printed, covering the first except in those areas that had been removed from the etch. Any number of areas could be removed—subtracted—by this process, and the process could be repeated any number of times, allowing for the successive overprinting of the desired number of colors.

In time, however, he found this method unsatisfactory and returned to the more conventional technique of printing color additively from a series of separately grained and drawn stones.

Spruance's habit of drawing the same subject in slightly varying forms may be found throughout his life's work. Especially interesting is the artist's practice of drawing an image on the stone, printing it, then removing the image and (possibly) working from a "ghost image" of the first drawing, printing the second "state," and then following that with still another interpretation. *From the Sea* [Nos. 218–220, 1943] is an excellent example of such a three-part handling of the same subject. (Could Spruance have used a "ghost image" offset from a still fresh

impression of No. 219 to achieve the mirror image of No. 220?) There is a surprising number of such related series among his graphic output. As Fine observes, "it is clear that Spruance did not necessarily consider a printed image to be any more precious than a study drawing and that, at times, his printed images were used in the same manner as study drawings."

In the late 1940s Spruance tried to arrive at a form of accommodation with modernism by subjecting forms increasingly to a process of simplification and abstraction. He used the device of dividing the picture's surface into areas defined by veils of color or compartmentalized by framing contour lines. As he entered the 1950s he quite obviously became more and more interested in Picasso. Forms from this time into the 1960s take on a splintered or ragged appearance as he grappled with ever more powerful and universal themes. His long, curious, and honorable artistic odyssey ended with an extensive series inspired by Melville's *Moby Dick*, an effort that is, for me, rather disappointing except for the magnificent color print, *Moby Dick 22: The Death of the Pequod* [No. 522, 1966], which may be among the artist's finest works.

One wonders what Spruance or, for that matter, any artist would think if he could see the work of a lifetime brought together in a way such as this: one that allows a review and judgment of his art not to be had in any other way. Certainly he could count himself fortunate in having the cataloguers, friends, and publishers of this volume, all of whom demonstrate great care and enormous respect for their subject, as together they accord Benton Spruance his deserved place in the history of the graphic arts of this country.

Ben Bassham

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