
PRINT
VOICE
PRECARIOUS BALANCE

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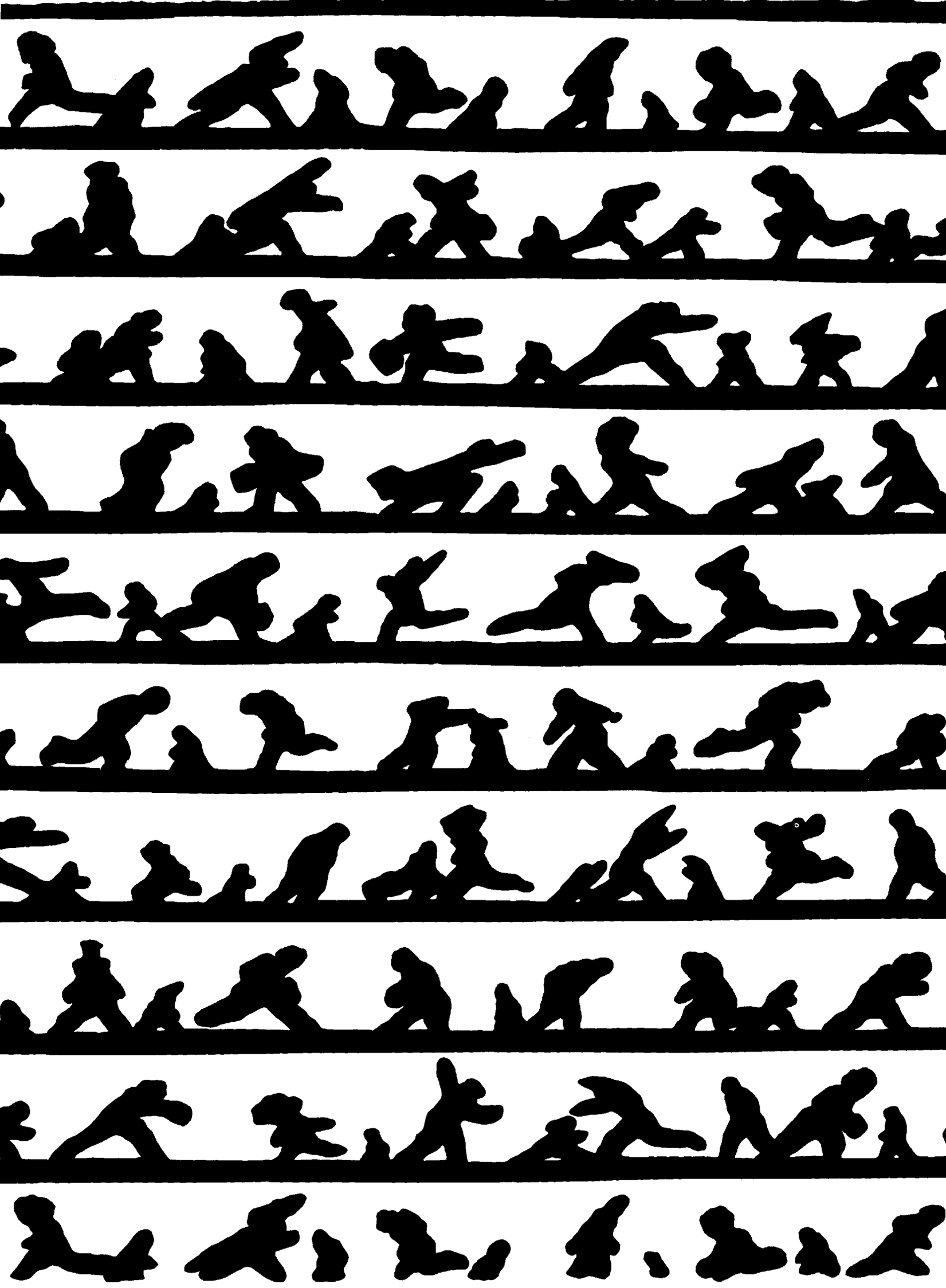

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PRINT

A PUBLICATION ON PRINTMAKING AND PRINT ARTISTS

EDITED BY WALTER JULE

VOICE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA PRESS

PRECARIOUS BALANCE

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The first *Print Voice* was published in 1985 and resulted from a research project undertaken with the help of the McCalla Professorship I was awarded at the University of Alberta. It is continuing due to the encouragement and support of the many artists, curators, and others from over twenty countries, who were kind enough to express their satisfaction with the prototype issue.

Balanced reporting on new work from around the world is impossible, of course, and whatever success the *Print Voice* series might enjoy will be due to the expertise, experience, and sound judgement of the international editorial advisors, on whose enthusiastic assistance I have gratefully relied.

Most especially, I would like to thank the authors and print artists without whom *Precarious Balance* could not exist. Together these international writers and artists have created a dialogue between text and image that reflects the diversity of contemporary printmaking.

The beautiful papers used to print the original works by Karen Dugas and Valgerdur Bergsdóttir were donated by Woolfit's Art Supplies, Toronto, and the superb relief and intaglio inks were donated by Daniel Smith, Inc., Seattle. The handmade paper box was produced by La Papeterie St. Armand, Montreal, under the watchful and caring eye of its director, David Carruthers.

Thanks must go to three of my colleagues in the Department of Art and Design at the University of Alberta, Marc Siegner and Steven Dixon who printed the original works contained in this edition and David Roles whose help with last minute corrections and additions to the text was invaluable. In addition, I must also express my appreciation to Susan Menzies for her assistance in layout and paste-up.

The interest and support of the University of Alberta Press was crucial to the realization of the project. Special recognition must go to its director, Mrs. Norma Gutteridge, who has from the beginning shared my enthusiasm and belief that a special limited edition publication on contemporary printmaking could contribute to scholarly study in the fine arts. Thanks also must go to Sylvia Vance for her careful editing of the manuscript and to Joanne Poon and Mary Mahoney-Robson for their help in design and production.

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INTRODUCTION

The latter half of the twentieth century has seen the acceptance of printmaking as significant art. Since the so-called print renaissance of the 1960s, artists the world over have been turning to printmaking in ever-increasing numbers to initiate aesthetic concepts.

The long and rich graphic tradition of Japan and eastern Europe are being revitalized and extended by a generation of young innovators. Artists in newer and emerging societies are energizing the scene with the power of both individual and collective visions.

Nowhere is this phenomenon more visible than in the proliferation of international print biennales and the continued vigour of established shows. Despite an uneasy world economy and the fickle appetite of the art market, these exhibitions and countless others in museums, galleries, universities, and workshops the world over command growing public and critical attention.

In an age of seemingly instantaneous communication, global interest in the creative potential of editional media lends credibility to the notion of a worldwide contemporary culture and supports the ideal that art can give expression to our common humanity.

The *Print Voice* series in which *Precarious Balance* is the second, endeavours to support that ideal by reporting on the best new work in the field by artists from Canada and abroad. It is my hope that these publications will encourage the development of a critical vocabulary appropriate to evaluating work in printmaking. The *Print Voice* series will serve as a useful reference for those historians, artists, curators, collectors, educators, and others who have a special interest in contemporary printmaking.

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Barbara Z. SUNGUR'S BALANCE

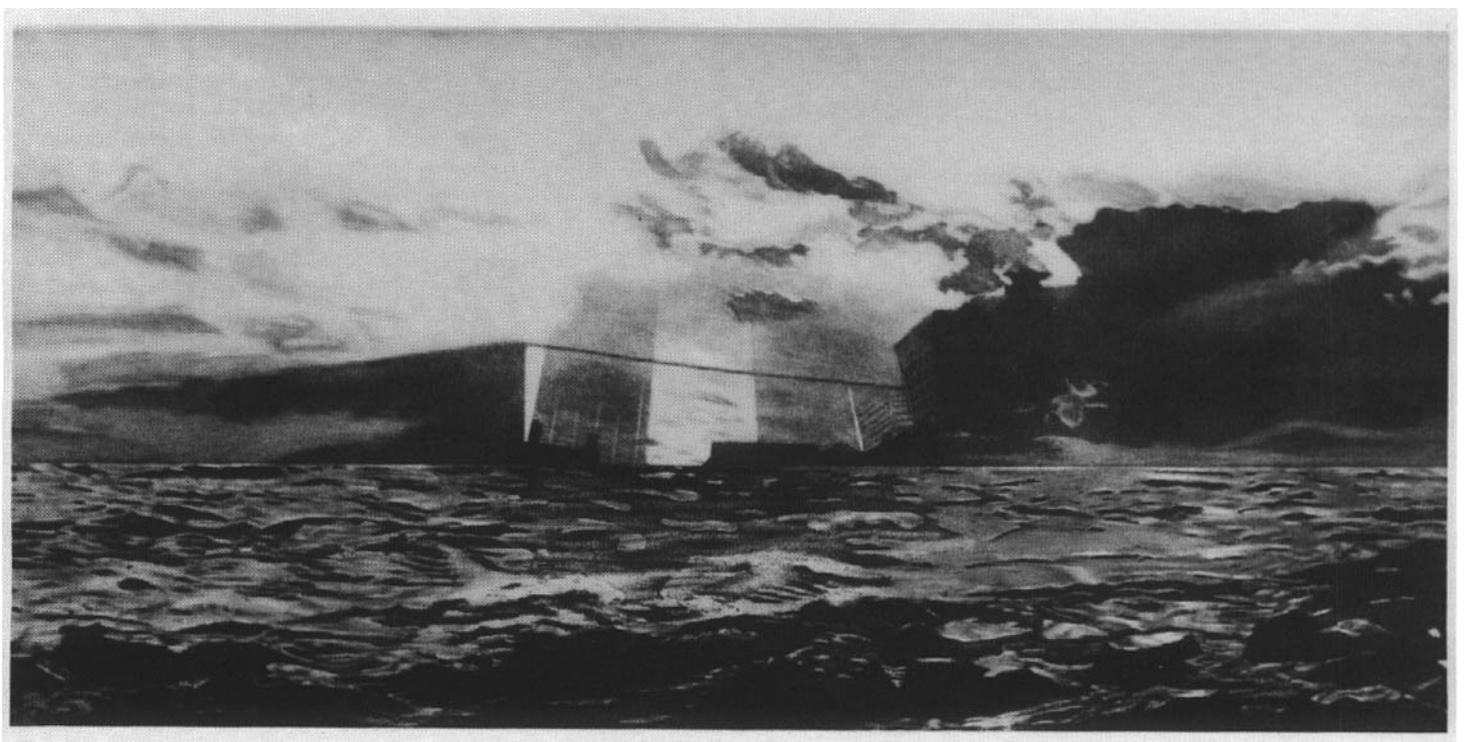
Jane Young

Barbara Z. Sungur's prints of the last decade display a unique vocabulary of images. It exploits the conventions of traditional printmaking in order to propose a critique of human ambition and delusion. She uses photographic sources, but she does not use them, like many contemporary artists, in the form of appropriated images as references to the ethos of popular culture projected by advertising, film, and journalism. Instead, she creates prints with images drawn after her own photographs or, more recently, by incorporating these directly by photo-etching and photolithography. Her subjects are often fantastical landscapes. By combining the pictorial veracity of photography with carefully rendered imaginative elements, Sungur has produced images which effectively convey her quietly cynical views of man's relationship to nature.

A small selection of prints executed since 1975 is sufficient to demonstrate these features of Sungur's work. These images provide an outline, an abbreviated survey of her canny development of traditional pictorial conventions for a critical examination of contemporary mores. *By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them...* of 1975, printed in rich sepia and modulated blacks and greys, depicts a barren landscape viewed from a higher ground. Sungur drew the cracked and fissured edge of the field, which occupies most of the surface of the print in the extreme foreground, to emphasize the ecological reality underlying an otherwise

Jane Young held a MA in art history from the University of British Columbia, where her thesis was "The Role of the Monotypes in Degas' Development of his Imagery of the Nude." She was curator at the Surry Art Gallery from 1981 to 1987 and wrote for *Vanguard* and *C* magazines. Jane Young died in 1989.

Barbara Zeigler Sungur
Anticipations
Etching
28.6×59 cm
1981
Photo: Franz Lindner

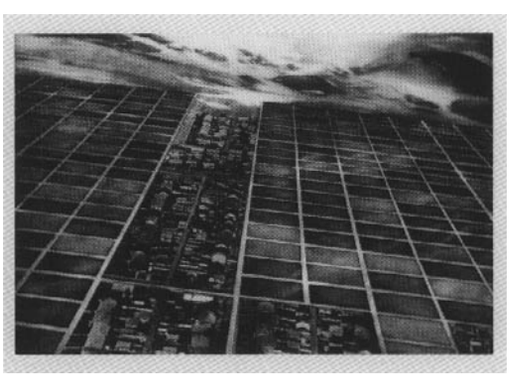


Barbara Zeigler Sungur
Sun Bathers
Etching
43.2×45.8 cm
1976

placid scene. Above the distant horizon of a town are cumulus clouds massed in a witty approximation of late eighteenth century mezzotints based on famous landscape paintings. Sungur's image substitutes the blasted landscape of the romantic period for a postindustrial, brutalized one by incorporating the convention of an elaborate cloud formation with the hard edge of the depleted earth.

In three later prints, Sungur explored human domination of the landscape by satirizing the grandiose constructions and patterns society imposes on it. *Sweet Misery* of 1978 uses the same bird's-eye view as *By Their Fruits* to survey a vast symmetrical grid of fields and crops flanking long rectangles of suburban housing, a settlement confined by its own notions of order. Only a strip of sky, airy and light-filled, at the top edge of the image offers relief from the rigidity of the landscape below. In *Perspectives #2* of 1976, Sungur drew the bottoms of huge, viaduct-like concrete forms which dwarf the neat rows of houses in the lower part of the print. The artist did not use the never-built fantasies of French architect Etienne-Louis Boulee (1728–1799) as a source, but her print does evoke Boulee's drawings with precise rendering and shading and, more directly, by ironically exemplifying his statement that "the architect's mission is to orchestrate nature."[1]

Sun Bathers of 1976 is rare in Sungur's earlier work in its use of the human figure. Nine people occupy the wide expanse of the patterned concrete terrace which constitutes the foreground plane, again steeply tilted as in *Sweet Misery* but from a point closer to the subject. Clouds in a dark, ominous sky cast shadows obscuring the frivolous pastime of the figures. She created an image of a rather insensate relationship to the environment from a single rendition of the venerable subject of bathers in a landscape.

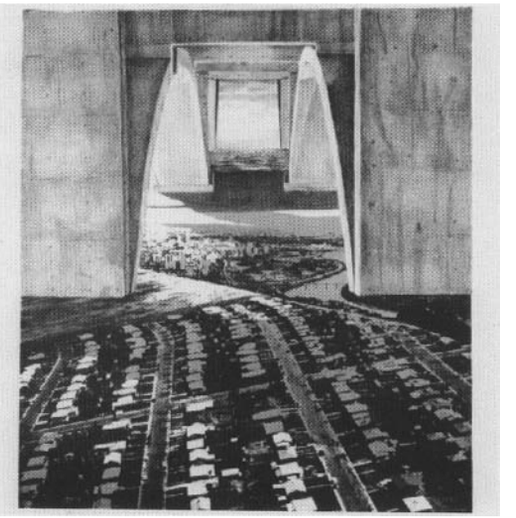


Barbara Zeigler Sungur
Sweet Misery
Etching
56×83 cm
1978

Anticipations of 1981 incorporates the artist's photographs of Toronto buildings and seascapes not as photo-etchings but as scraped aquatints. It is an apocalyptic vision of the modern city disintegrating, deluged by natural forces. The sleek architecture is ironic in the catastrophic context: the image mocks the utopian aims of the Bauhaus philosophy which sought to improve social conditions through better design while ignoring the physical realities of the environment.

Until 1981, Sungur stayed close to the pictorial conventions of eighteenth century and early nineteenth century printmaking. Her use of traditional intaglio techniques, her careful modulation of values, and her landscape subjects complete with towering masses of clouds were always sardonic. She reinterpreted the conventions of that distinctly western, post-Renaissance, anthropomorphic treatment of a relationship to nature exemplified in landscape subjects in order to demonstrate the menacing consequences of such narrow views in ecological terms.

Later in 1981, Sungur began work on a number of related pieces which eventually comprised the *Precarious Balances Print Series,* consisting of twelve prints and fifteen drawings. Not only did this series result in a new approach to and development of earlier themes, but the techniques used were new to Sungur. For the drawings, she used mylar, a matte drafting film which allowed her to substantially alter the composition while developing the image and to work from dark tones to light by using erasure.



Barbara Zeigler Sungur
Perspectives #2
Lithograph and screenprint
50 × 46 cm
1978

One of the earliest images of the series, *Precarious Balances Print Series #3,* a graphite drawing, depicts a seascape with a large, flat rectangular sheet in the foreground. Sky and sea are blurred irregular shapes of modulated soft greys, while the sheet of glass is hard-edged, perfect, regular. This drawing establishes features which recur in many of the later prints of the series: an emphasis on frontality, a symmetrical foreground shape, the depiction of deep, often infinite space, and the combination of man-made structures and natural forms. The man-made structures fulfill no purpose in the landscape they occupy, symbolizing unwarranted interference in the environment.

The creation of the series' prints was very complex. Sungur used a small three-dimensional structure as a starting point. She photographed it from different angles and with various lighting setups and used the negatives to make large transparencies. The artist then collaged these with sheets of clear acetate, drew on these sheets with drafting pens and brushes, and scraped away emulsion on the transparencies. She then exposed these composites on copper and zinc plates or on aluminum lithoplates which had been coated with photographic emulsion. The etching plates were further worked and used for extensive colour proofing. The lithoplates were processed and printed in black, with additional screenprintings in grey to increase depth and tonal modulation.

Precarious Balances Print Series #5 offers a definitive image for the lithographs of the series: a fantastical place, neither interior nor exterior, rendered with enough photographic veracity to seduce the viewer into its realm. Forms of transparency and opacity convolute the spatial depiction, and their geometric shapes promise some sort of rational order which is denied by their functionless nature. The absence of any recognizable machine or device confuses attempts to judge scale. The image presents a space and structures too realistically depicted to be random and chaotic, but the dreamscape quality is strengthened by the degree of pictorial veracity Sungur employs.

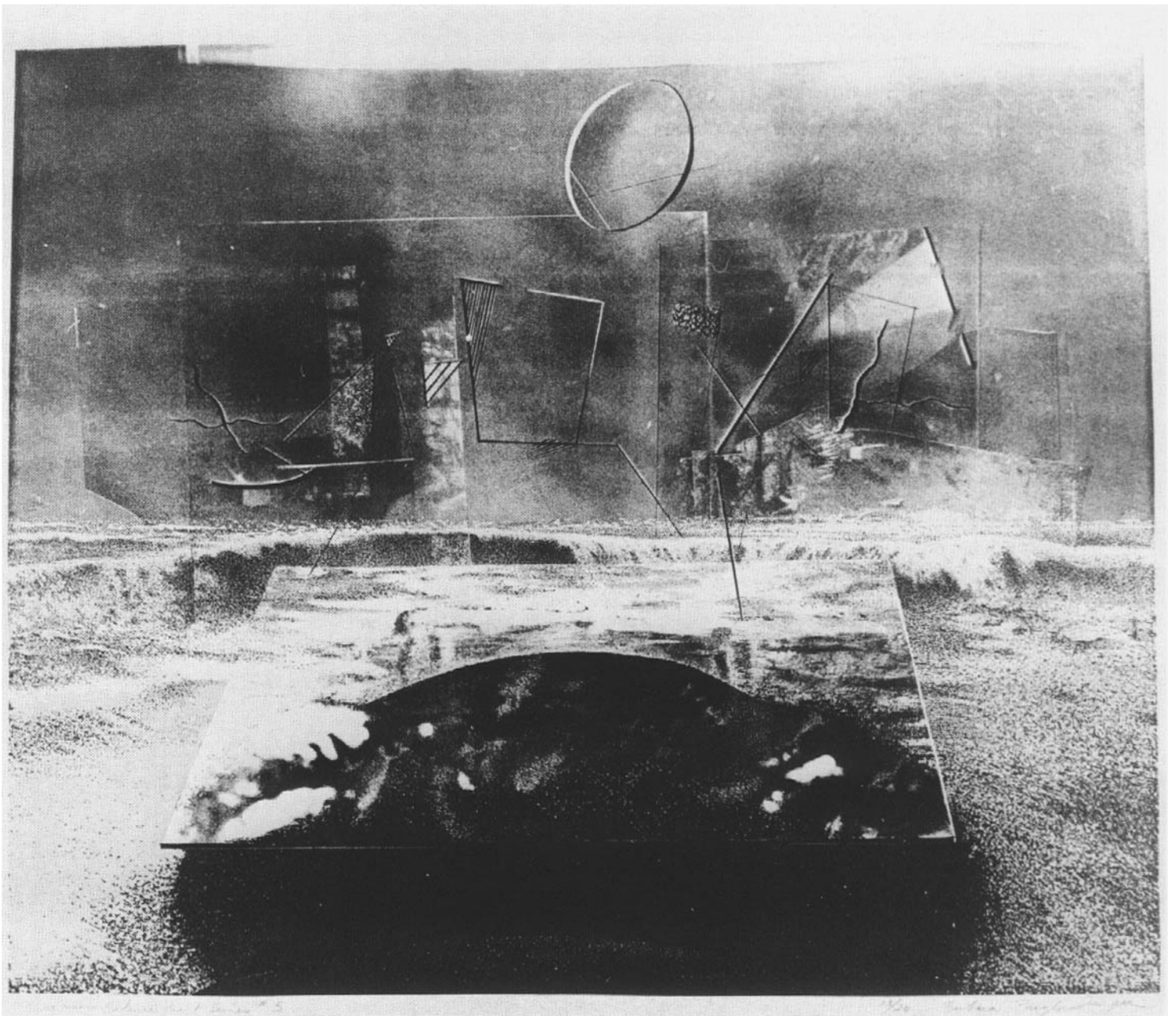
For *Precarious Balances Print Series #4: Line/Cycle* of 1984, the artist used two plates to produce the suggestion of a time lapse. Each depicts the end of an oar surrounded by foaming water. The allusions of this image include phrases such as "dipping one's oar in" for unnecessary interference in the natural world and, with the implied motion of the rowing arms, the cycles of natural change and transformation. The print exploits the use of viscosity printing by incorporating inks of different densities in successive wipings of single plates, each printed only once.[2] The luxuriousness of the two images is extended by the soft ground smudges which surround them.

Sungur's aim of creating images of impending disruption of the delicate equilibrium both in human affairs and in man's relationship to the natural world culminates in the colour intaglio piece *Precarious Balances Print Series #7.* Richly coloured and textured sheets and girders teeter in front of a seascape suggested with minimal pictorial means. At the very bottom edge of the image, the sheets seem to blend into the ground on which they rest. As with the drawing *Precarious Balances Print Series #3,* Sungur suggests wetness and wind off the water with her seascape, but in the

Notes

1. Helen Rosenau, ed., *Etienne-Louis Boulee: Treatise on architecture: a complete presentation of the Architecture, essai sur l'art, which forms part of the Boulee papers (MS 153) in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris* (London: A. Tiranti, 1953), p. 65.
2. Usually, viscosity printing consists of relief and intaglio printing on one plate.

Barbara Zeigler Sungur
By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them. . .
Etching
59.7 × 75.6 cm
1975



Barbara Zeigler Sungur
Precarious Balances Print Series #5
Lithograph and screenprint
60 × 70 cm
1984

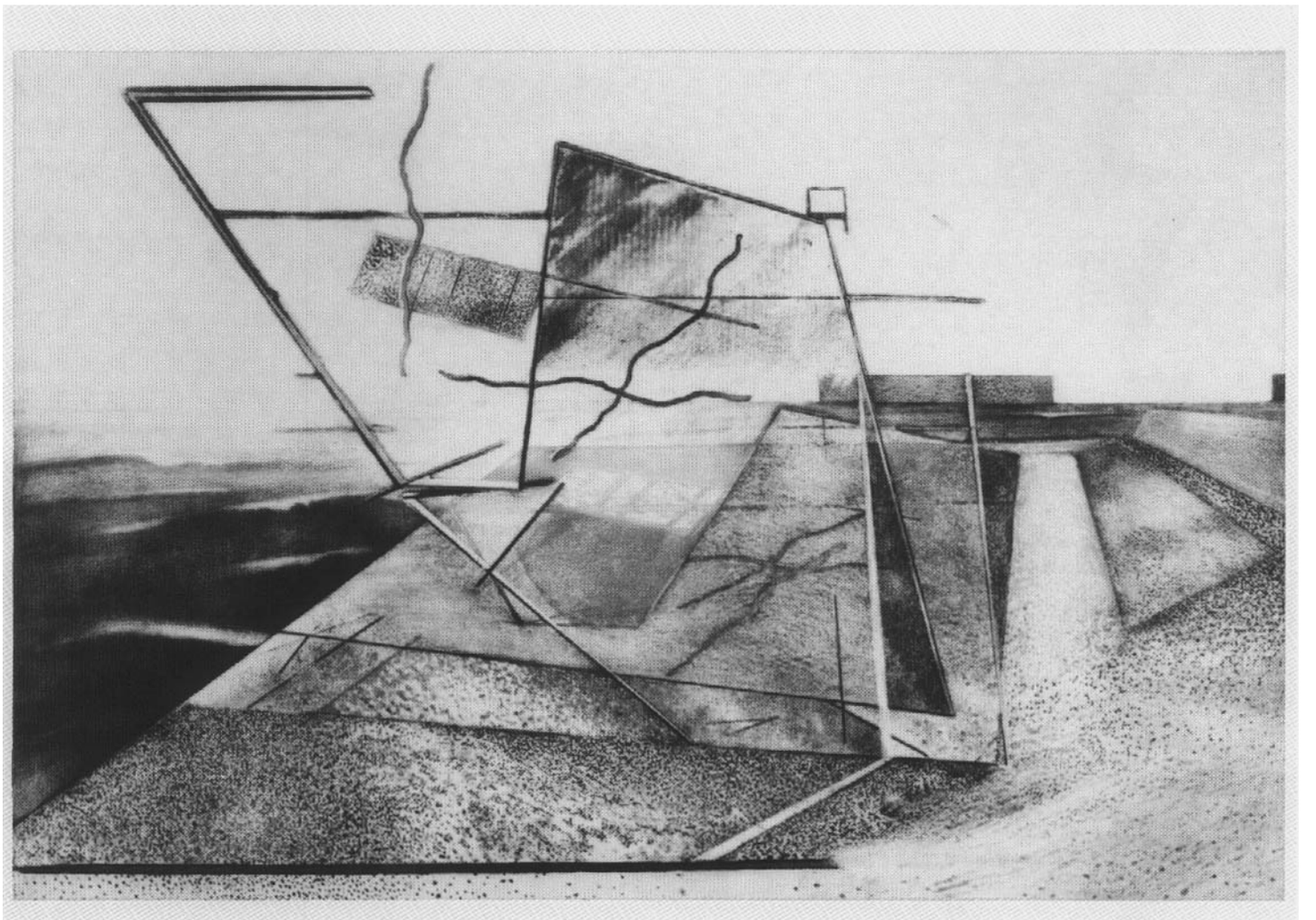
Barbara Zeigler Sungur
Precarious Balances Print Series #7
Etching
52 × 79 cm
1984

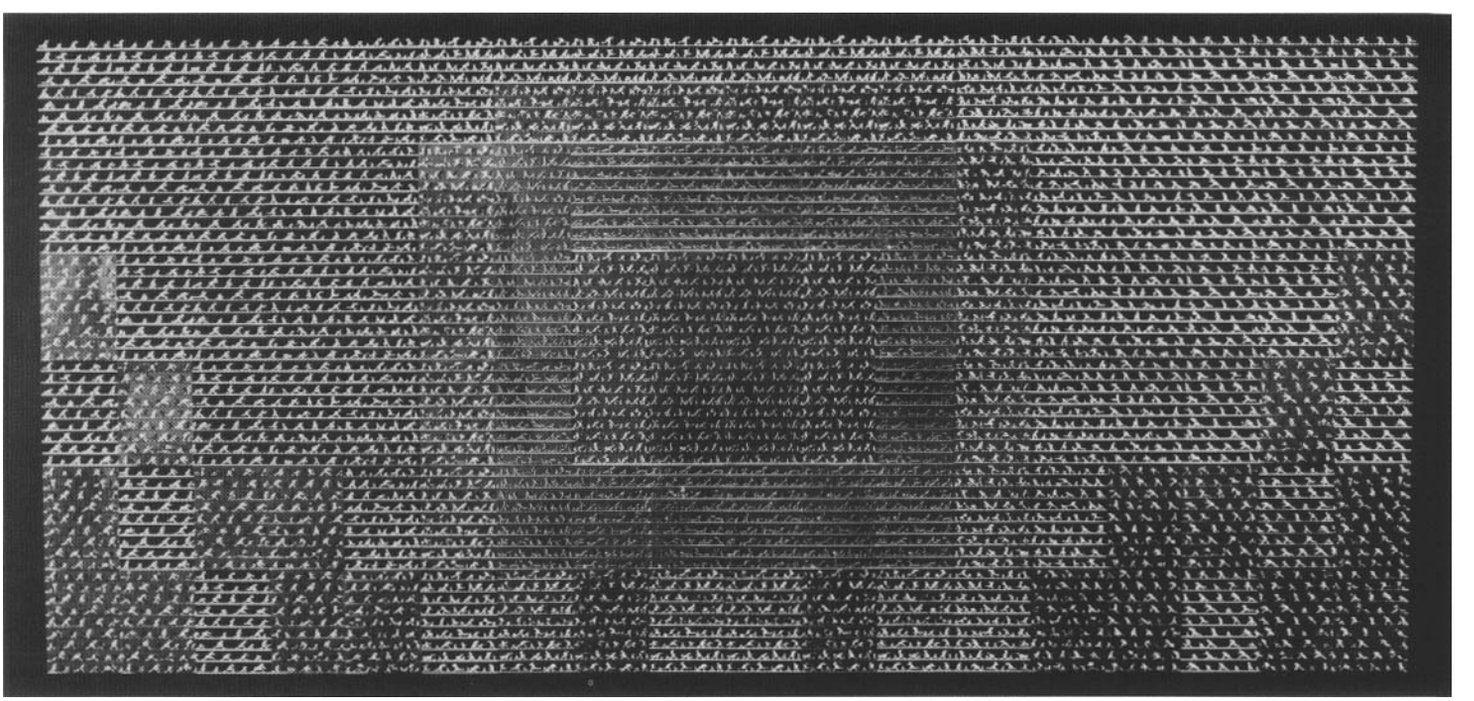
Barbara Zeigler Sungur
Frenzy's Template for the Time Deposit Memorial
Photography, drawing, and Xerox
194.9 × 388.6 cm
1985–86

later piece this element is reduced to a small section of the print in order to concentrate on the central image of instability. Here, the geometric forms and seeming chaotic structure underlines the continuing theme of a skewed equation between the earth's natural order and ever-present human engineering and manipulation.

Since completing the series in about 1985, Sungur has used human figures for two reasons. She wishes to refer more directly to the imbalance in human affairs and to return to a better defined sense of scale for thematic concerns. For *Frenzy's Template for the Time Deposit Memorial* of 1985–86, Sungur chose photography, drawing, and photocopying for an enormous, ambitious piece. Employing the contemporary technologies of Kodalith and Xerox was consistent with her interest in media used in earlier historical periods to disseminate pictorial information. The piece consists of thousands of tiny human figures repeated in rows: an endless procession of the same people engaged in the same frantic, mindless activity. By superimposing squares of the drawing over each other at particular places, the artist suggests the architecture and highly structured environment of the city, the metropolis of Fritz Lang's cinematic masterpiece updated for the post-modern 1980s.

Sungur has consistently offered images which subvert an attitude of passive acceptance of the deterioration of the landscape and the environment. By extending the premises inherent in the desolate, deserted prints of the mid 1970s, she has gradually incorporated more direct references to the effects of such obtuseness on people and the ways in which they structure their lives. In *Frenzy's Template,* the emphasis reaches its logical conclusion. Sungur's originality lies not only in her creation of fantastic images but in her inventive and adventurous exploration of the reprographic techniques used to render these complex visions of a contemporary apocalypse.





Professor Otto Breicha is a noted writer and director of the Museum Rupertinum in Salzburg, Austria.

Otto Breicha

g o i n g t o t h e l i m i t

Prints by ARNULF RAINER

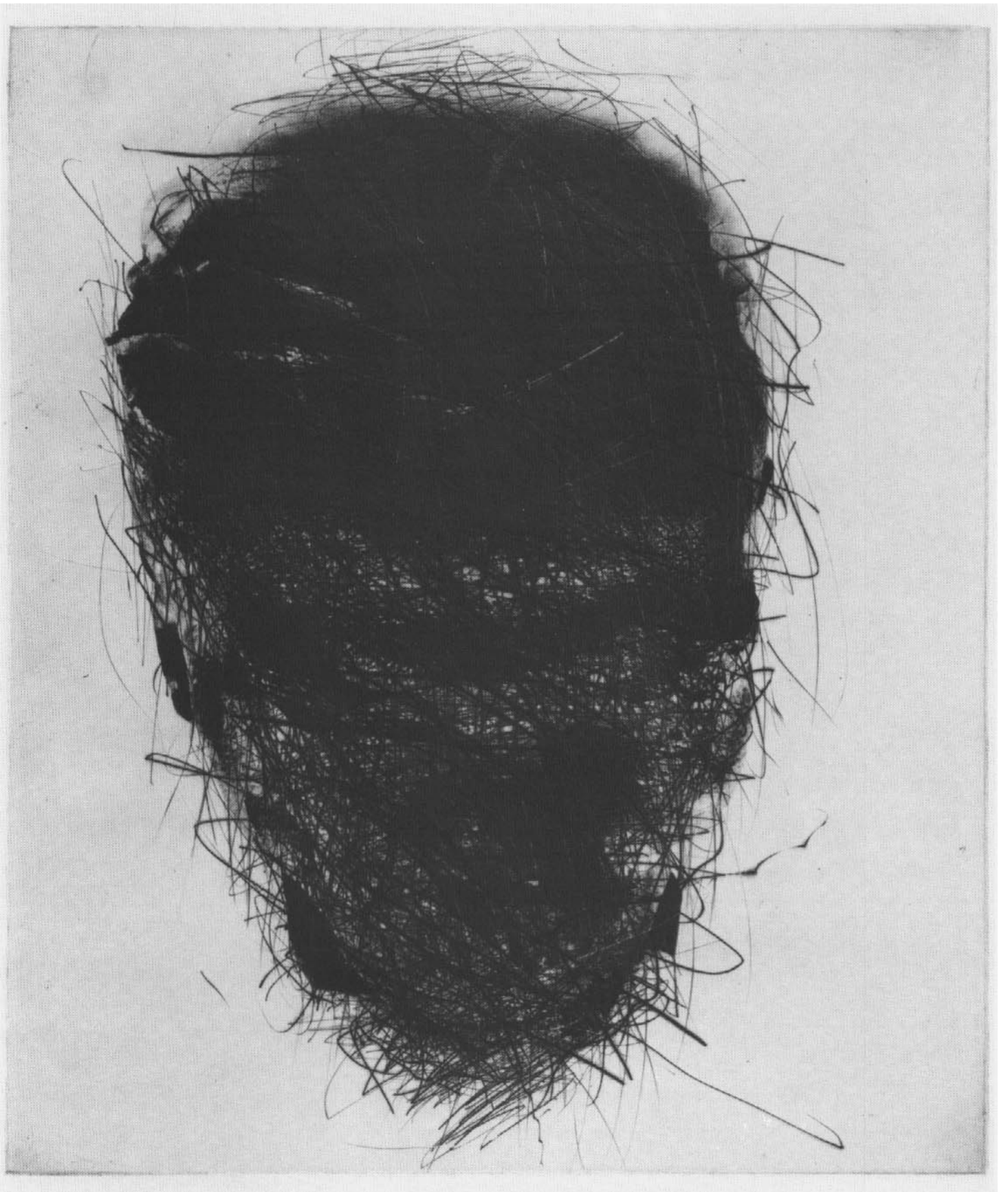
During his creative life, Arnulf Rainer has produced outstanding paintings in such great number there has never been the need to meet additional market demand by expanding his production to include prints. Also, unlike many other well-known artists, he has never been interested in reproducing painting motifs or drawings as original multiples. On the contrary, for nearly forty years, he has been involved in a kind of creative battle with lithography and etching. The number of prints produced since 1950–51 is impressive. The catalogue of his work published by me in 1972 records 170 etchings, fourteen screenprints, and eighty-five lithographs. Obviously, printmaking is very central to his interests.

In his early career, one motivation to produce prints may have been the possibility of publication in portfolios, and, to some extent, this may still be so. There have been several phases in his work well suited to an exploration in printmaking, and, at times, his ideas seemed predestined to be realized as prints. Nevertheless, Rainer's graphic work always picks up and expands impulses from his painting and drawing, and it would be impossible to conceive of them without his work in other media.

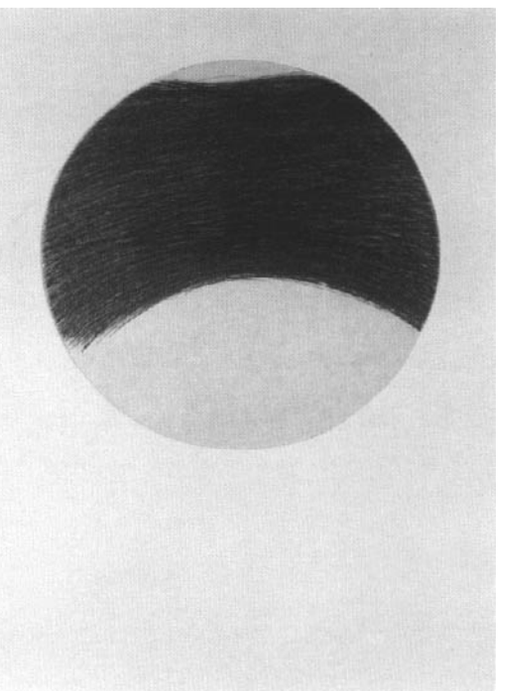
Shortly after the war, the avant-garde of Austrian artists, abstractionists as well as surrealist painters and sculptors, formed an Austrian section of the International Art Club. Rainer sought membership but was not accepted. Consequently, he joined forces with the Hunds-Gruppe (Hounds Group), made up of those artists who were dissatisfied with the philosophy of the Art Club, feeling it was oppositional and permissive. This splinter group tried to pursue mutual goals but lasted only long enough to present a single exhibition in 1951. Rainer made his debut as a print artist at this time, with two stone lithographs and one offset lithograph contained in the portfolio *Cave Canem,* which was published by the group and also included works by Ernst Fuchs, Maria Lassnig, Erich Brauer, and Anton Krejcar. All the works revealed unequivocal visionary and late-surrealistic character and originality. Rainer's contributions depicted underwater scenes, the skull of a diver, vague organic mesentery, and amoeba-like drifts of small particles. *Das Wasser eine nackte Schachtel (Water, a Naked Box), Die Gestürzten Stehenauf (The Fallen are Rising),* and *Verweigert Eure Geburt (Refuse to be Born)* were their telling titles.

With these phantasmagoric works in his luggage, Rainer, together with Maria Lassnig, travelled to Paris to see André Breton and to meet the remaining surrealists living there. However, Breton showed as little interest in Rainer's work as Freud had shown in Breton on his earlier visit to Vienna. Rainer went to Paris an enthusiastic young surrealist and returned to

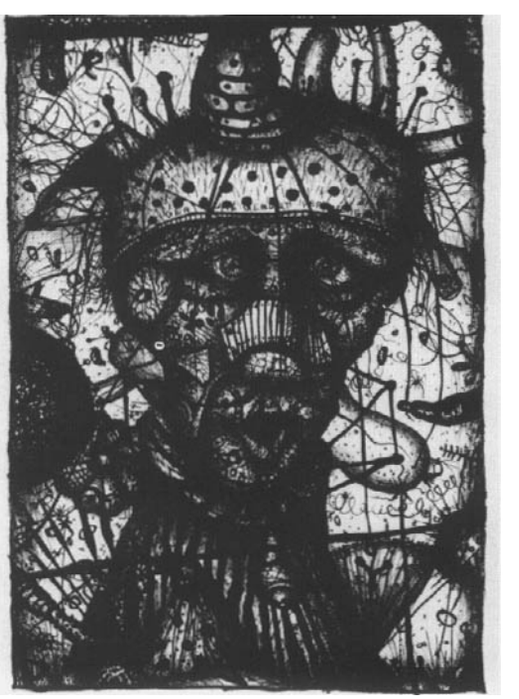
Arnulf Rainer
Karl Schönherr
From the portfolio:
Totenmasken
Drypoint over photo etching
29.5 × 24.5 cm
1982
Photo: Daniel Blau



Arnulf Rainer
Planet
Etching
54 × 39.5 cm (paper)
1985
Photo: Daniel Blau



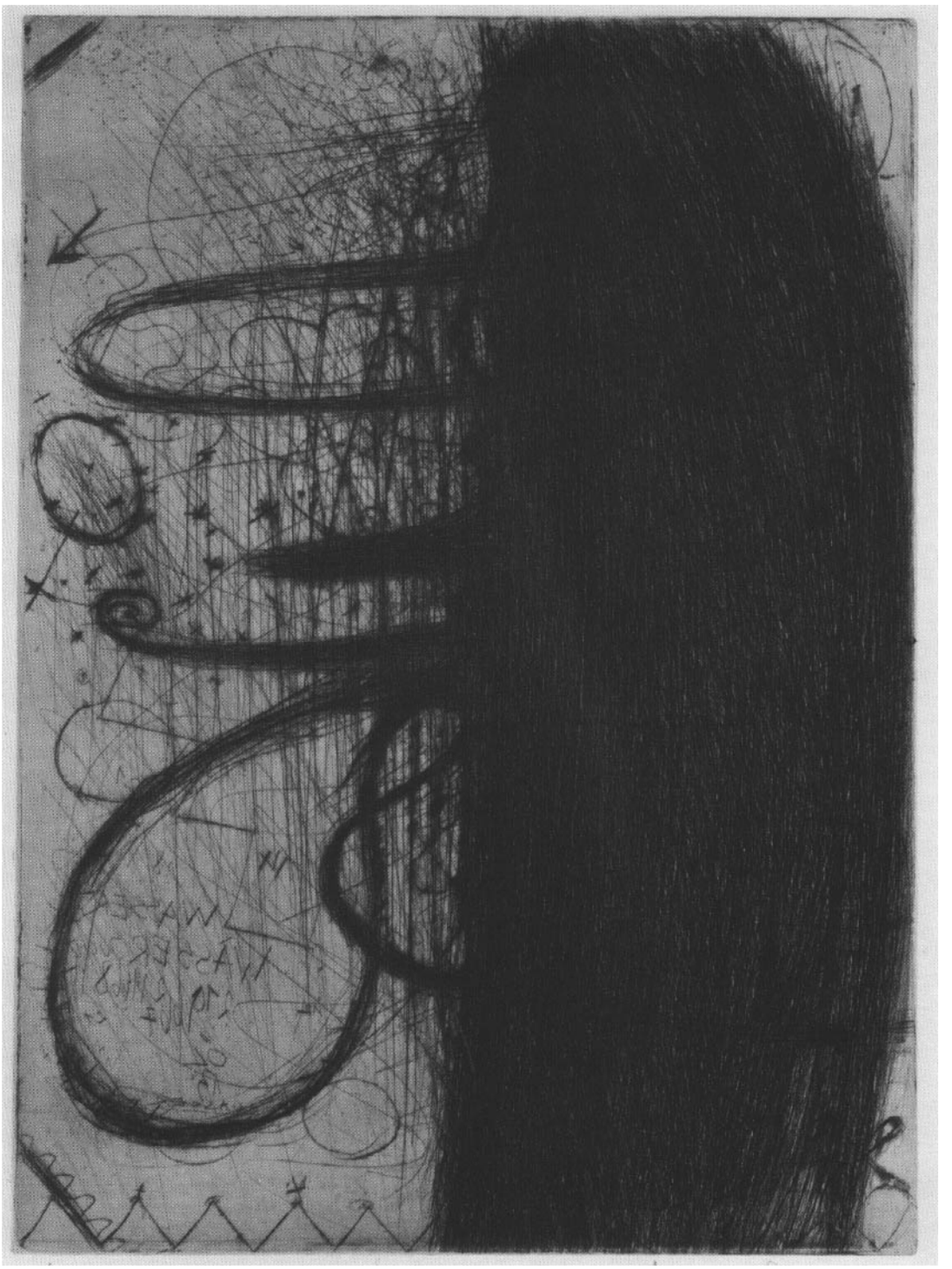
Arnulf Rainer
Kopf des Tauchers
(Verweigert eure Geburt)
From the portfolio: *Cave Canem*
Lithograph
28.5 × 20 cm
1950



Austria infected by informal and abstract expressionism. Within the context of informal and tachist painting, Rainer radically reformed local abstract art. He began in his own work with the introduction of atomic dot painting, bundles of lines and three-dimensional knots of what he calls "centralizations." At first, this dive into more and more abstract forms produced results in printmaking only incidentally, and these were seldom exhibited. From the middle fifties, however, he began a series of offset lithographs which were done in tandem with original prints by drawing over and covering up an existing image. In these images, used for posters issued in the smallest number of copies, it is the accumulation of frayed lines and bold brush strokes filling the surface that characterize the work.

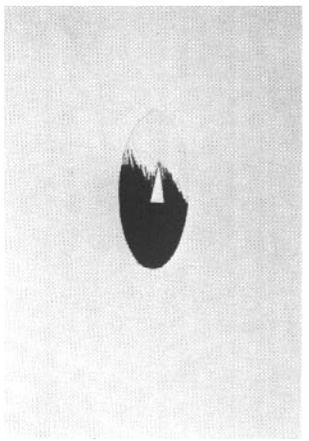
At first, images of heads were used to practise this method of overdrawing and to shape and develop form. This shrouding or covering up (what Rainer calls "surdrawing") is a process of correction and distillation at the same time. The aim is to shroud in order to balance and, eventually, to achieve monochromia. To Rainer's eye, one area after the other would appear somehow wrong, inadequate, or even hateful and, thereby, would provide a challenge to be shrouded, covered, and rectified by obliteration. He says, "The passion for gradual shrouding into darkness, the drowning of the image and the gradual acceptance of stillness and invisibility—the great ocean, could be compared to achieving utmost contemplation in religious life. Motion and quietude become one single phase, multiplicity one great emptiness. The abundance of this emptiness represents the absolute, and the artist must always, permanently be the great destroyer, as he is the true believer."

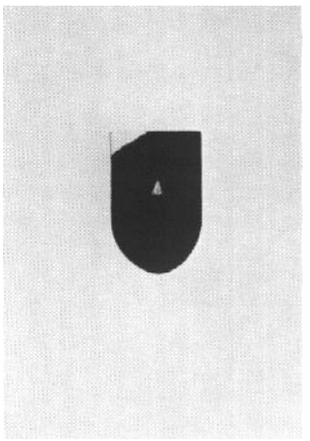
Such prints, mainly etchings, were begun in the early sixties. However, modification and further revision of the plates is continuing today. First, there was a veiled cross, vaguely recognizable by its contour, in a print simply titled *Nebel (Fog)*. Six dry-point

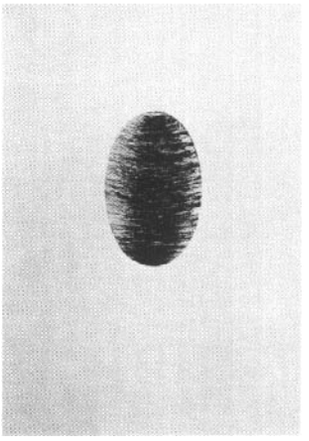


Arnulf Rainer
Wasser, Wasser
Etching
41.7 × 30 cm
1967
Photo: Daniel Blau

Arnulf Rainer
From the portfolio: *Acht Masken*
Drypoint
Various plate sizes
1971







works make up the portfolio *Uberdeckungen (Shrouding)* which was published in 1961 and which followed the portfolio *Haute Coiffure* two years later. Together, they illustrate both the range and imaginative and conceptual style of this overdrawing and gradual shrouding. In these works, a given motif is used as a starting point in each case: a tabernacle or some sepulchral monument, a cross perhaps. The motif is then worked over layer by layer to obtain the final, yet never-definitive state. Initially, changes were made by extending and enlarging existing contours. The colour black unfolds and becomes more and more prevalent, until only the form of the plate and the remaining open corners ensure the balance of the work. As with the early lithographs, the engravings on zinc, copper, or aluminium done at the same time show heads or busts extending into black towers, windows, and portals. Finally, the engraving becomes an icon of the soul of the subject.

Following the development of the numerous states of a single plate and noting the often extensive changes, one can experience this typical manoeuvre in action. The creative shrouding can be seen in the frequent twists and rotations of the outline and the web of scratched lines increasing and extending outward. This temporary quality and a now-notorious fragmentism are the essence of Rainer's shrouding. The prints in the portfolio *Haute Coiffure* are titled *Rübezahl* and *Apollo, Busenmonument (Bosom Monument)* or *Schwarze Schwimmerin (Black Female Swimmer), Liebesgrab (Lovers' Grave),* and *Nebenbuhlergruft (Tomb of the Rival Lover).*

At first, his principal shapes were tall, suggesting erectness. Later, they were oblong forms and shapes simply titled land, earth, or landscape, mountain or knoll, hillside or field. The initially frayed contours appear to be more distinct, somehow smoother, and calmed. Black, a naturally dominating colour in graphic art, is a very special colour in Rainer's creations. Only in the early seventies do other colours appear. For the sake of fundamental variation, a wide range of plate sizes has been used, from small miniatures to, most recently, almost monumental sizes in variations on the shape of a cross and irregular and unusual shapes formed like masks or escutcheons.

Shrouding techniques are still used to create contrast in application and to create reflection, even though all basic decisions have long been made: "To me, shrouding techniques are dialectic antipodes to the expressive physical language of my works," said Rainer in his introduction to the book *Reste (Remnants)* of 1978. He has even stated that he likes best to shroud over previous shroudings. In painting, the forms drown in the changes, but in lithographs the development and advancement from one step to the next continues to be visible in each impression. This illustrates, to at least some extent, the urge and compulsion to improve the artistic result through change, as often expressed by Rainer himself, the "ecstasy of shrouding, covering up," the "dictation to tie up the shapes, to choke them and to mask them." The artistic process may last over years, and the extreme image is the result.

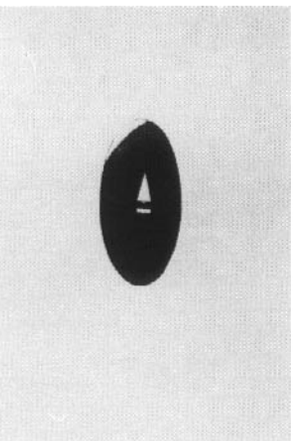
Within the complex artistic work of Arnulf Rainer, there seems to be a kind of pendulum at swing. On one hand, he seeks the greatest possible stillness and most balanced style through repetition and stereotyping, a near monotony in which emptiness represents abundance. On the other hand, he is drawn to vehemence, to the expressive, to act on the spur of the moment. The "not yet" principle is followed by a no-less-emphatic "now with a vengeance." His first lithographic prints show a direct expressive surrealism, a further extension of expressionism. In the neo-phantasmagoric phase of his work from 1966 to 1968, he revived this style in the twenty foil lithographs for the portfolio *Wahnhall (Echo of Madness),* produced in 1967. It included impressive figures in profile, such as masked heads, the *Fliegenfresser (Fly Gormandizer)* and other beak faces surrounded by lines, and *Haarhelden (Hair Heroes),* with feathers stuck in them.

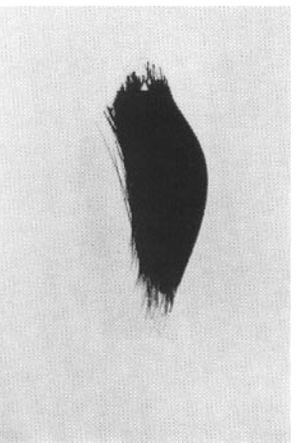
Rainer was already painting on transparent tracing linen at the end of the forties, to facilitate duplication in print, and this method was often used in the middle of the sixties to make foil offsets possible. These works show an intense pursuit of the psychopathological, and they refer unequivocally to that magical space of the explorers of new forms. In a focused but bizarre style full of character, there is in the prints of the portfolio *Wahnhall* a cross-section of the most varied abnormalities and exquisitely horrid horrors: grotesque gods and heroes, ludicrous proboscidean faces, or clouds formed like cheeks, vampire riffraff, and shadow fiends. Out of these grotesque grimaces and ludicrous profiles grew the line of the curved, arched forehead so typical in Rainer's drawings, often coming into being when he was in a drunken stupor or under the influence of drugs. Everything that followed his improvisations on imaginary portraits of prominent personalities, with their layered profiles, their twisted mouths, what he called "face designs," was linked to his autistic theatre of contorted bodies and grimacing faces. For this unique placing of lines, the yielding of the foreheads, his concise stumping along image contours was inherently suitable.

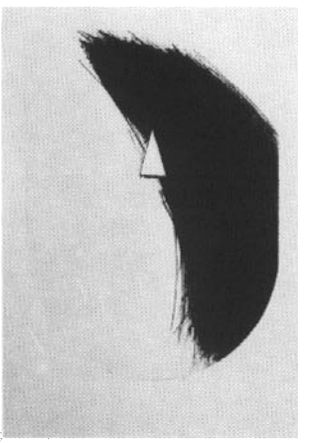
In 1967, Rainer promised to portray, in his style, sixty-five thousand of the most important personalities in the history of the human race. But then, understandably, he returned to himself as his almost exclusive subject. These visual dialogues began in 1968–69 when taking some snapshots in one of those automated photo cubicles at the Vienna West Railway Station. Rainer grimaced into the flash and saw the postcard-sized photos as his first, albeit inadequate, improvisations in the possibility of expression through physical language; he was now on the track of the blocked out, a nearly perfectly repressed human fundus in its prelanguage communication mannerism. He linked this also to elements of psychotic behaviour. He believed, in 1969, that the auto-theatre of the psychotic had advanced to a point at which theatrical intensity, dreams, hallucinations, even suicide, integrate: "Because of this danger, it is considered taboo for civilization, but its challenge affects everyone." In his own work, Rainer is looking for a "prospective full stop, where creator and creation become absolutely identical even materially," a state he knows from persons suffering a traumatic neurosis and from drunks, the antisocial, and the insane—a spectacular "manifestation of an intense inner dispute."

For Rainer, the artistic result of this conflict was the series of self-portraits titled *Face Farces*. In 1970, he began to revise photographs of his own facial contortions, with colour and various graphic elements. With lines, strokes, and strands, expressive areas were supported and intensified, turbulence and motion were suggested, or the image was mocked through additions and diverse annotations. Once again, he saw an artistic creation as not made simply for pleasurable viewing or as something finally and completely resolved but as something used as a provocation for his addiction to change and modification. In his shroudings, he worked by adding layers and by spreading darkness across the print surface. In his revision of photographs, he used intensifying methods such as edging, expansion, shifting, tracing, and the overlapping of graphic signs, exploring and developing new and novel ways of combining various media in a series of tragicomic acts.

Eventually, he shifted from manipulating his own photographic image to other subjects, searching for an inspiring motif with which to work. There were series of the massacre of Hiroshima through the atom bomb, of sensational poses of acrobats, and of the ecstasies of love. Rainer also took pictures from anatomical textbooks and herbariums and revised, interpreted, and incorporated these according to his own vision through drawing and painting. He also produced series using photographs of works by significant artist colleagues; for instance, the so-called character heads by





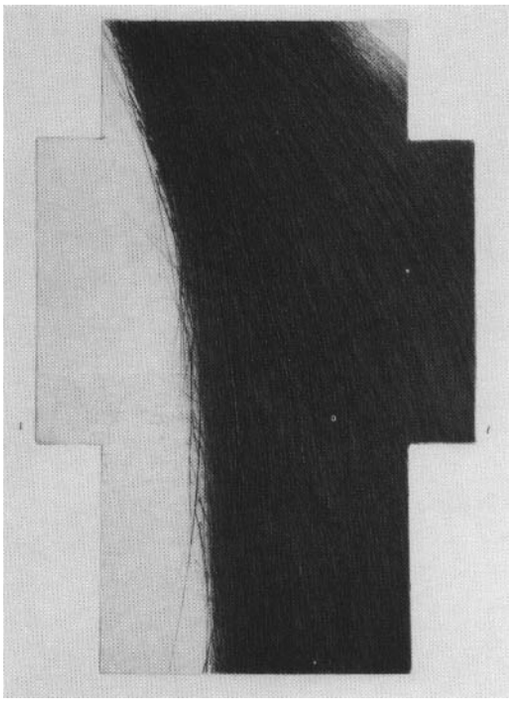


Arnulf Rainer
Untitled (self-portrait)
Etching over heliogravure
26×32 cm
1974
Photo: Daniel Blau

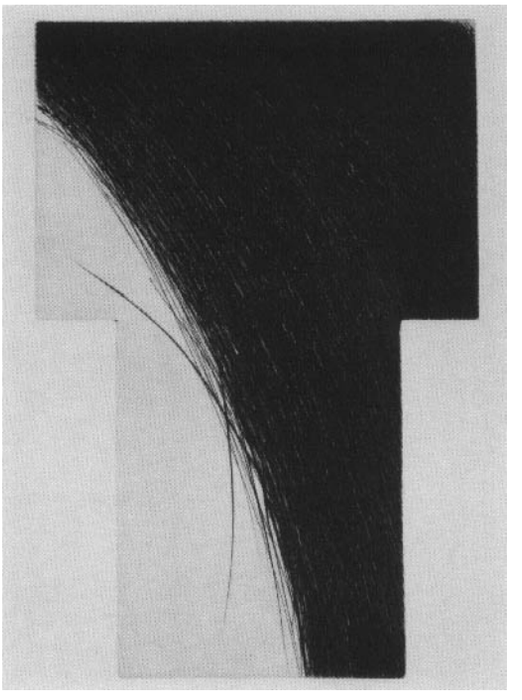
the late baroque sculptor Franz Xavier Messerschmidt or drawings by Leonardo da Vinci, Goya, Van Gogh, Klimt, and Schiele. In these works, the crucial point is always to search for the "effect of tension between the original drawing and the superimposed one," extending way beyond the subject matter to explore the "thrill and sensation created by the abyss between the original and the superposed image," searching for self-identification and rebelling against it at the same time. Under such contradictory terms, Rainer has often created his most spectacular and important work, bringing into action the most extreme based on his willingness to use anything imaginable to the extreme. This approach runs like Ariadne's thread through the maze of transformations and changes in his work.

All his prints in their own way reflect that which incites and impels him: searching for the utmost limits, being extreme in doing the extreme, as is shown in his singular struggle to express some idea, and disregarding current conventions in art and beauty. Altogether, Rainer's art can be viewed as one immense effort to, in his own words, "pick myself up and glue myself together again," an effort which can never come to a final resolution. Like many artists, Rainer feels art is a path to find one's own consciousness. It is a way to unfold oneself through shapes and to impart oneself to others.

Developing a print can be hard work and take substantial time. Rainer on this point: "If a human being does not make every effort possible, then he is a reduced creature. This is his own loss, as a reduced being is much less a human being and has much less in it for himself." That is why, for example, the lines and strokes added by Rainer, covering images right to the edges of the plate and monopolizing the surface, are more a symbol of profusion, of superabundance, than of putative vacuity. His drawing added to continue and further develop outlined shapes does not choke them or signify their expulsion but improves and rectifies them: a vision beyond the visual.



Arnulf Rainer
Weinkreuz
Etching
29.5 × 19.6 cm
1985
Photo: Daniel Blau

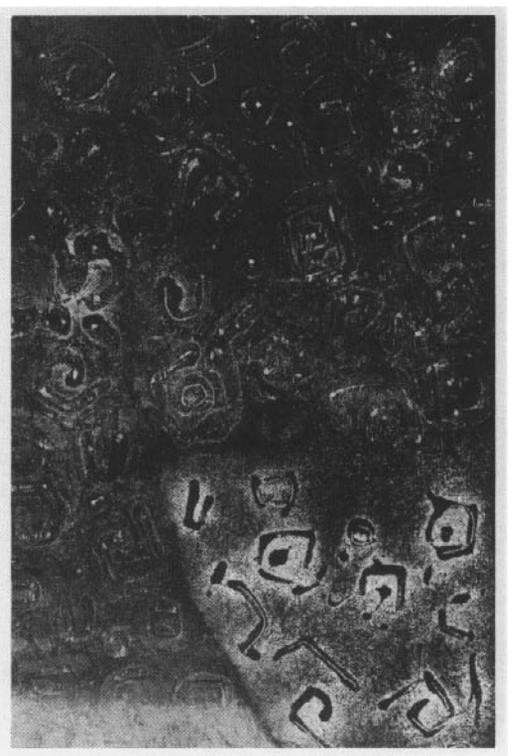


Arnulf Rainer
Blaues Halbkreuz
Etching
32.6 × 21.8 cm
1983
Photo: Daniel Blau

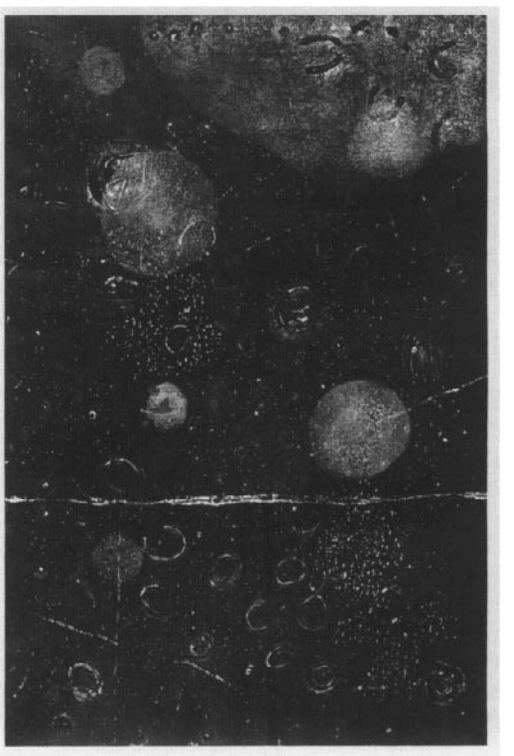
Lawrence Smith

Lawrence Smith is keeper of oriental antiques at the British Museum. An editorial advisor for *Print Voice,* he has written extensively on Japanese prints, including the book *Contemporary Japanese Prints: Symbols of a Society in Transition* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1985).

the FIFTY-FIFTH JAPAN PRINT ASSOCIATION SHOW REFLECTIONS



Hideo Hagiwara
Recollection No. 3
Woodcut
46×30 cm
1987



Hideo Hagiwara
Recollection No. 4
Woodcut
48×30 cm
1987

Japanese graphics have been around a long time—I mean, of course, modern Japanese graphics. Naturally, I am not forgetting the distinguished history of the traditional Japanese print which flourished in an unbroken line from the late seventeenth century until about 1910, but they belong to a rather different world from the international one in which contemporary printmakers work. I would date the early maturity of modern Japanese graphics from 1919, when what is now called the Japan Print Association (Nihon Hanga Kyokai) was founded. It has continued ever since and has held an annual show with only a very few gaps. Its exhibition in April 1987 was its fifty-fifth, and the more than four hundred works on display at the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum in Ueno Park provided a good opportunity to survey the state of the health of printmaking in this most enthusiastically energetic of modern cultures.

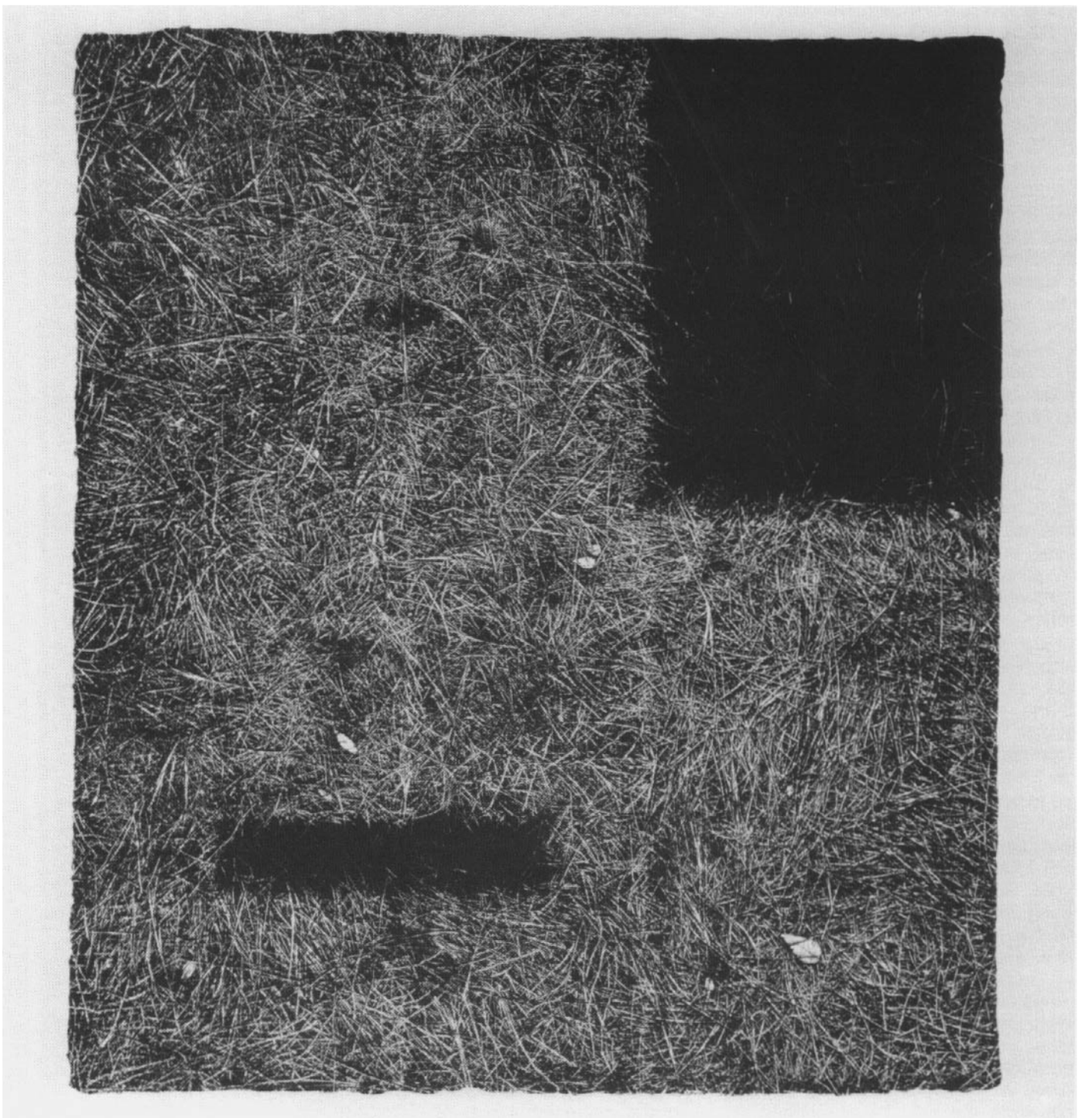
My first reaction, similar to the one on the same occasion in 1985, was of dismay. As in every prestigious show I have seen in Japan or elsewhere, there are far too many prints crowded together and shown with little sense of their effect on each other. Then there were the missing works of some artists—Yoshitoshi Mori was not represented, probably because of his advanced age; others were not there for the very simple reason that they belong to other groups and are therefore ineligible to show here.

I have to say that the missing artists comprise some of the finest established talent in recent Japanese printmaking, including Macanari Murai, Chimei Hamada, and Tetsuya Noda. Of these, only Noda is a relatively young man. Nevertheless, the JPA showed two works by its director, Hideo Hagiwara, and they were magnificent. In Japan, it is unusual indeed for such a major talent to go on producing work of such variety and vitality once his reputation has been established. His prints *Recollection No. 3* and *Recollection No. 4* were a model of the excitement which can be and ought to be produced from the woodblock medium in this culture where woodblock has much the oldest and most vigorous tradition. I think it can be safely claimed that of all artists in the world Hagiwara has done the most to extend the range of expression of the woodblock medium. His recent return to abstraction is much to be welcomed; especially impressive is the sombre depth which is found in his prints for almost the first time. Possibly, the most satisfying thing is their Japanese individuality. Although Hagiwara has done work in the past which was derivative from non-Japanese artists, his latest prints are entirely his and, at the same time, connect with the strong traditions of expressive texture in the paper which are so much of his country's cultural history.

Among the prints exhibited, there was one dominating tendency, which has grown faster and faster among younger artists in Japan in the last five years. It is the trend toward surrealism and fantasy, heavily tinged with expressionist neurosis. This may be inevitable for social reasons, but it is not leading anywhere. Nobody in this show comes anywhere near the psychological power of Chimei Hamada or the expressionist violence of Watanabe Junzo. The overall tendency, as so often happens in Japan, is to the eccentrically precious. It may be that the less-restricted nature of modern Japanese society allows younger artists to express their internal fantasies openly for the first time, but it does not automatically produce good art. Until the Pacific War, violent or sexual fantasy was generally expressed in a Japanese artistic underworld, producing diablerie and erotica. The artists were usually the same as those producing respectable work for open sale. I would argue that this bifurcation did result quite often in fine works on both sides of the barrier of the unconscious. Bringing fantasy into the open for general consumption often has the result of weakening it. It was certainly so with the majority of the artists shown in this exhibition.

One exception to this state was the work of the young printmaker Yasuhiro Sobajima,

Tadayoshi Nakabayashi
Transposition '84, Earth II
Etching
57 × 49 cm
1984
Photo: Shirota Gallery



Yasuhiro Sobajima
Nyan Nyan Nyako Nyako
Mixed technique
61 × 100 cm
1986

whose woodblock fantasies of Japanese people as cats include a good deal of satirical bite. It is quite obvious that his art comes from the postwar tradition of the newspaper and magazine cartoon, where social satire and comment have come out into the open for almost the first time in Japanese history. In these *manga,* Japanese people can be shown as ugly, greedy, violent, corrupt. One looks almost in vain for this anger about the social situation of modern Japan to be expressed by print artists. They are so respectable, so anxious not to offend anybody. Japan still awaits its Hogarth or Goya or Daumier or Grosz.

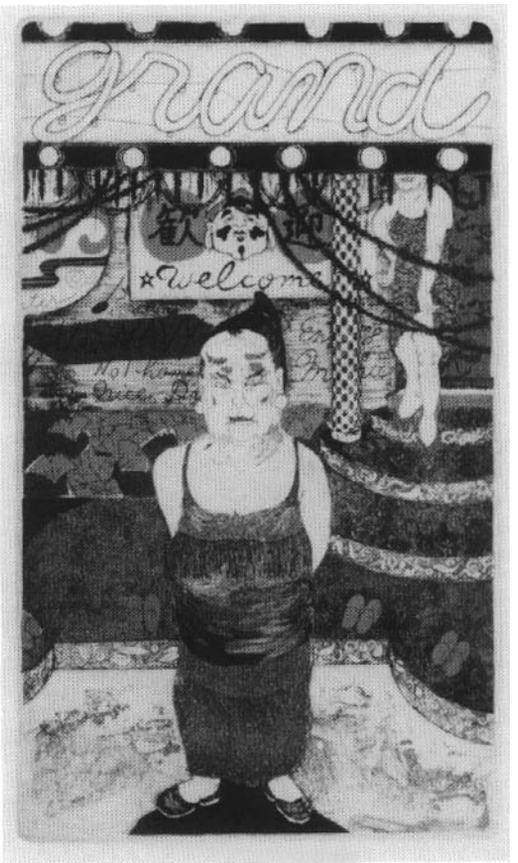
Perhaps the work of Kazuo Sugiyama, another younger artist, is a hopeful sign. His colour intaglio triptychs offered the only direct satire in the whole exhibition (Baba Kashio's work has become so jokingly mannered that it can hardly be considered satire any more). They were from his series on the sleazy Dobusaka district of Yokosuka, home of one of the American's biggest military bases. Here flourishes and has long flourished a demimonde typical of anywhere in the world where men from abroad gather in large numbers. If Sugiyama's pictorial language owes an obvious debt to the satirical prints of the Weimar Republic, now strongly influential in Japanese art, his subject matter is contemporary, and bitingly expressed.

Both *Hotel Grand Ebith* and *Japanesque* are composed of three sheets, which can be shown as a triptych or separately. Most interestingly, this technique follows the great woodblock triptychs originated by Torii Kiyonaga in the 1780s, which became one of the favourite formats in the traditional print for depicting the red-light districts of the great cities. They, too, aimed to produce a balance in each sheet as well as in the three-sheet composition as a whole. But, to my knowledge, the artists of that period never showed as sleazy the world they recorded, though much of it must have been. It is much to be hoped that Sugiyama

Kazuo Sugiyama
Hotel Grand Ebith
Etching
Each panel approx.
46 × 30 cm

will extend his subject matter into other areas of Japanese life.

The expressive range of the woodblock technique has, as mentioned above, been widely exploited by Hagiwara. In that range, history may see his true successor as the younger artist Seiko Kawachi, who has in recent years produced prints of great physical excitement. Their often very large surfaces pulse with the grain of the blocks and the energetic marks of *baren* (the pad used to impress the image into the paper). Unlike Hagiwara, Kawachi has consistently used his techniques in the service of social comment, though it has been oblique, translated into stressful images of motorways, cracking wood, falling crates. In 1985, Kawachi worked in New York for nearly a year, and the effects on his works of this even-more-stressed city than Tokyo were awaited with interest. Not unexpectedly, the effect seems to have been to move his subjects from breaking point to actual fracture. Two prints from the series *New*



York—Dimension (Heaven and *Earth)* made one of the strongest impressions of artistic commitment in the exhibition.

All these were exceptions, which I hope may become more of a rule. Meanwhile, the weaknesses of the Japanese print scene remain—traditionalism, precious sentimentality, obsession with craftsmanship over content, and the tendency to fantasy noted earlier. But there are strengths, too, which can be seen in the work of other printmakers—a great sensitivity to texture and surface, an acute feeling for place and atmosphere, a notable spiritual inwardness, and a natural ability to use and understand abstraction. These all have their origins in the earlier, nongraphic culture of Japan, but they have become integrated gradually into the print scene since 1945. Two other unobtrusive artists, one established and one not well known, displayed these strengths.

For many years, Tadayoshi Nakabayashi has explored the possibility of etching in black and white alone, with more and more sophisticated results. There have been times, when he has incorporated too-obtrusive leaf patterns into his prints, that I have feared he was headed for the sentimentality which can arise from the deep love the Japanese have for the natural world. An example of such a near thing is his *Transposition '85, Earth—V.* However, his latest work allays that fear, as he has moved to a pure and intense abstraction, in variations of either black or white. Prints like these, unfortunately, lose much of their impact when photographed, or even when being viewed in a glazed frame. Nakabayashi's *Transposition '86, Earth—V* is a notable casualty. I prefer his slightly earlier *Transposition '84, Earth—II,* which, on a theme of grasses on an intense black ground, prefigures his more recent work in its drive toward abstract darkness. I recommend anyone going to Tokyo to visit the Shirota Gallery which has a good stock of his works. They are a joy to handle and contemplate in the enlightened environment of

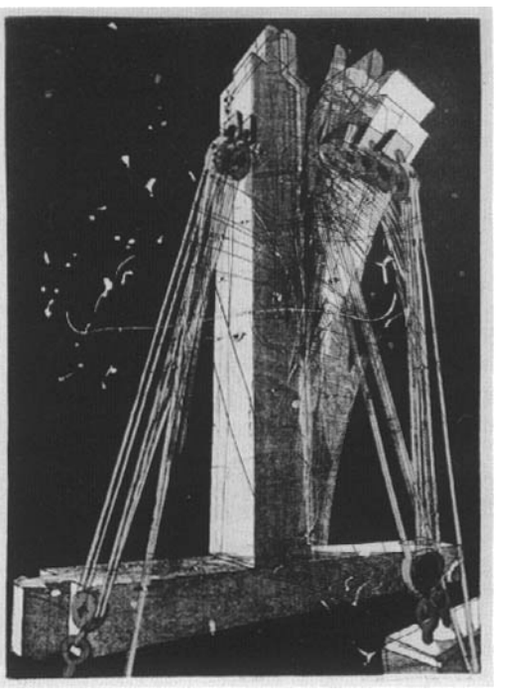
one of Japan's most sophisticated print galleries.

The lesser-known artist Hideaki Goto shows a sense of the atmosphere and texture of a place, which has been long-nurtured in Japanese culture, especially through the Shinto religion. In the last generation, this tendency found a new outlet in prints based on photography, of which Tetsuya Noda is the unquestioned master in Japan. In this land of photography and cameras, I feel this is a form which has come to stay for a very long time. Once it has lost its novelty, as it obviously has by now, it depends, as in every other established form, on the skill and inspiration of the artist. Goto's two prints *Road E* and *Road F* are most promising—dark, threatening, full of atmosphere, and, as in every good print in this form, transforming the photographic medium into effects the camera could not capture.

Another younger artist worth picking out was Hidefumi Mori, whose abstract woodblock *Polyphonic Plane 17 (A)* was an improvement over the earlier titles of this series by the wider scope of the two-sheet composition and the addition of a subtle red tone to his usual blacks and whites. Among the silkscreen artists, Yukihiko Tajima's *Rakan 87-1* used traditional Buddhist motifs with verve, but the impression grows that this medium, Japanese in origin, is losing out as a source of inspiration. Finally, I would mention Kizashi Kakizaki's charmingly atmospheric woodblock *Cherry Tree in School Garden,* which was the only print among the twenty-five prizewinners and prize nominations of any interest or originality.

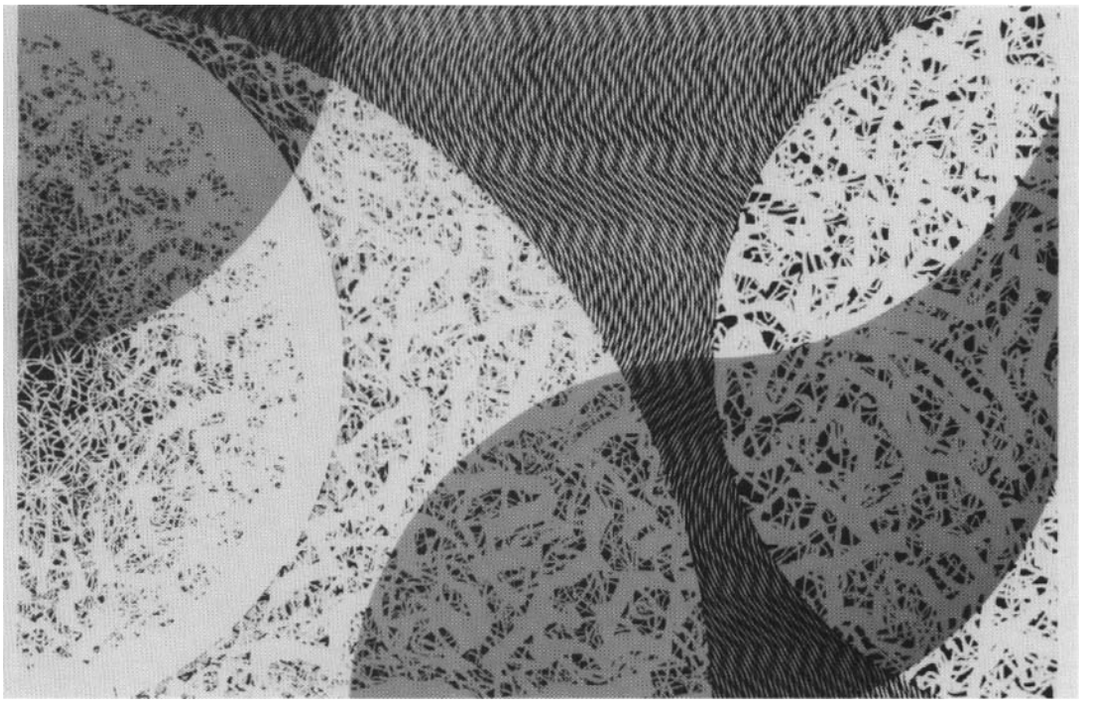
The Hanga Kyokai Exhibition is certainly too staid, but there are talents shown in it. I look forward with interest to the autumn exhibitions of the College Women's Association of Japan, which are nearly as prestigious and which are often more adventurous. I wish, however, that both would reduce the number of artists they show. There cannot be hundreds of good artists in one country at one time.

Kizashi Kakizaki
Cherry Tree in School Garden
Woodcut
46×69 cm
1987



Seiko Kawachi
'84 Katsura (XII)
Woodcut
71×51 cm
1984
Not in exhibition

Yukihiko Tajima
Rakan 87-1
Screenprint
50 × 70 cm
1987



Hidefumi Mori
Polyphonic Plane 17 (A), Part II
Woodcut
61 × 91 cm
1987

Hideaki Goto
Road F
Lithograph
50 × 64 cm
1987

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Paul Béliveau's

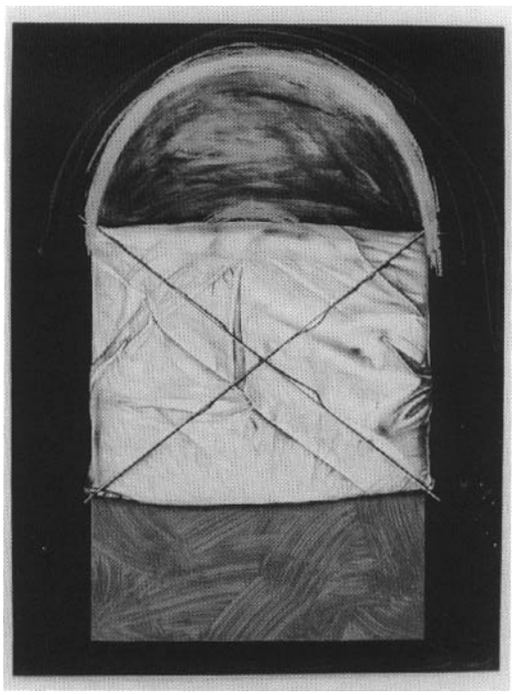
WORK *in* BLACK

Louise Déry

Lithographer, drafter, and prolific painter, Paul Béliveau has produced, to date, several thematic series whose analytical character and treatment reveal a cultured, versatile mind. His career, although still in its early stages, has been evolving since 1980 with a success due in large part to his exceptional productivity, his recognized technical facility, his ease in expressing himself in many formats, materials, and techniques, and his fine sense of what is right in the plastic arts.

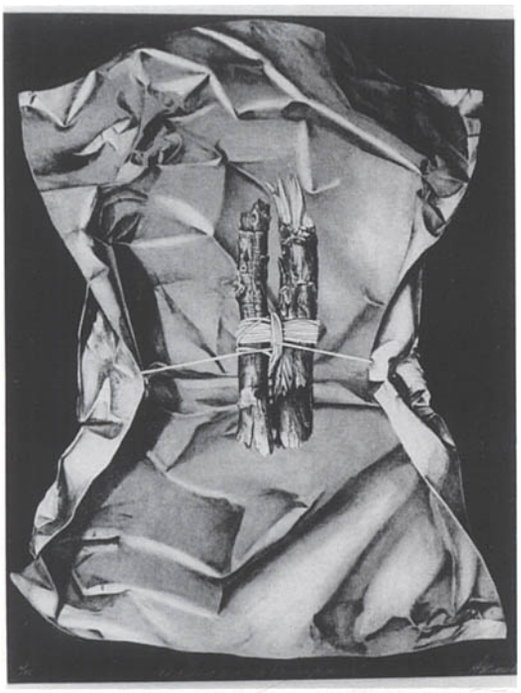
After having presented in his drawings and lithographs some very realistic fragments of everyday life, Paul Béliveau took the time, in the early eighties, to analyze the effects of time and the duration of things. With weatherworn stones, ethereal gashes, gaps in the space of time, or breathtaking chasms, he sets up states of reality in a temporal continuum, in a fluid space. This iconography is closely connected to his cultural environment. A reading of Proust, and especially of *Remembrance of Things Past,* would be in no way unrelated to such preoccupations.

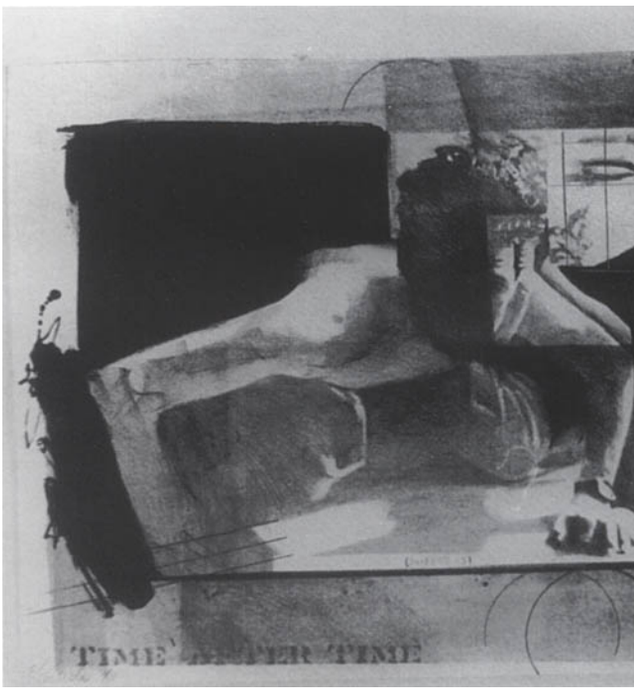
In 1983, the fertile dualities of colour and design were exploited in images which incorporate many contrasts: representation and nonrepresentation, black/white and colour, precise design, and gestural effects. The introduction of colour demanded a larger format, and although Béliveau continued to practise lithography he did so only intermittently, suddenly focusing his energies on trying to curb the compelling intrusion of colour. He produced an "elegant and cultured painting which makes intelligent use of elements borrowed from a rich cultural heritage and elements borrowed from his own personal history, combining them in his search for the most effective way to communicate new meanings."[1]



Paul Béliveau
Little Trap for a Critic I
Lithograph and screenprint
76.2 × 56 cm
1983

Louise Déry holds a MA in art history from Laval University and is curator of contemporary art at the Musée du Québec. She is a regular contributor to *Vie des Arts, Cahiers,* and *Parachute* magazines.





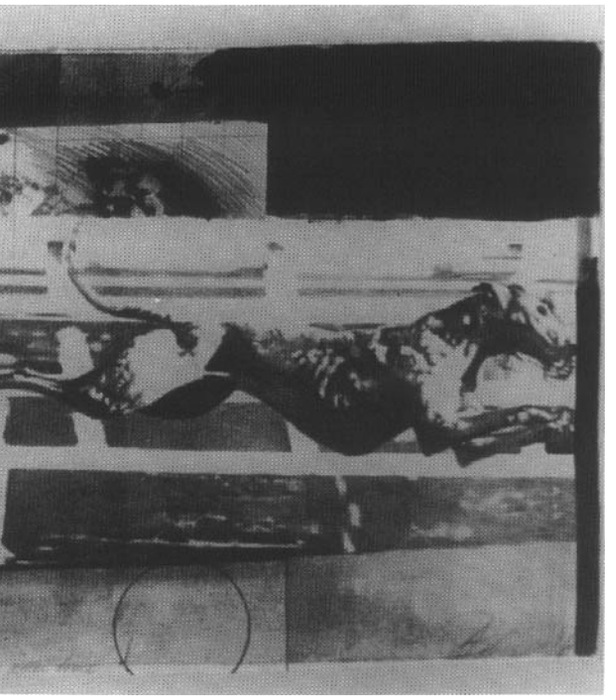
Paul Béliveau
From the Man of Nature to the Man of Reason I
Lithograph
66 × 50.8 cm
1982

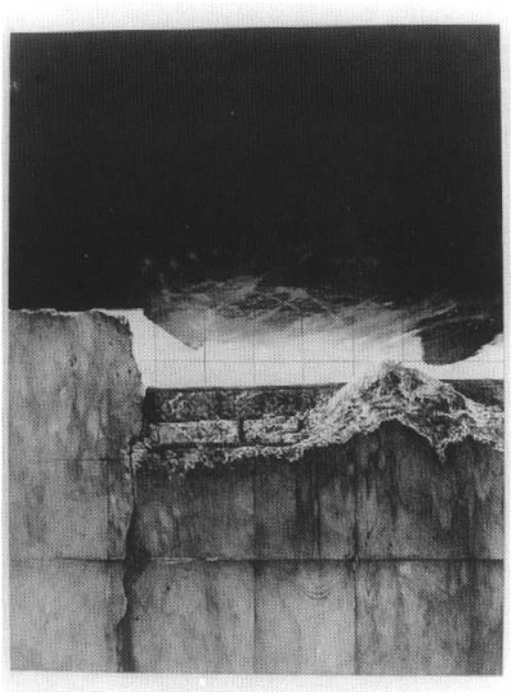
Paul Béliveau
Time After Time
Lithograph
56 × 76.2 cm
1986

It is evident that colour in Béliveau's work holds the key to a multitude of physical methods and materials which prove to be extremely productive for the artist. As well as adding to the polysemic effects of a content whose baroque, hybrid character bristles with contrasts, the interplay of the works, of their structure and their content, creates a taste for freedom and the rejection of constraints. While he found himself engrossed in the construction of boxes and relief paintings, Paul Béliveau was witness to the feverish activity of Otis Taumassaskas, who spent several weeks at the Atelier de réalisations graphiques de Québec. It is the image of freedom, of the lifting of constraints, of the explosion of colour.

The following phase was one of exciting pictorial activity in which the artist's personal allegories gave precedence to the austerity of the night. In *Ronde de nuit,* a greyhound roams around the tombs of a cemetery. This spectral form wandering through famous monuments is recaptured in the lithograph *Time After Time* (1986) and evokes a reflection on the self-portrait: "The form of the dogs conjures up apparitions who seem to want to come out of the picture, while the monuments disintegrate and have scarcely more substance than the glazes which were used to depict them. It is, obviously, an insistent vision which needed to be exorcized and a whole reflection on the self-portrait which had to be pursued."[2]

Béliveau treats the lithographic image the same way he treated the very large paintings which preceded this production. He gives an impression of wax to the application of ink, an illusion of glaze, which has the effect of creating a process of separation and distance calling into question the relationship between the spectator and the work. He retains, as well, the effects of colour such as those produced in paintings. One cannot deny, in this respect, the obvious reciprocity which is at





play between the two forms of expression.

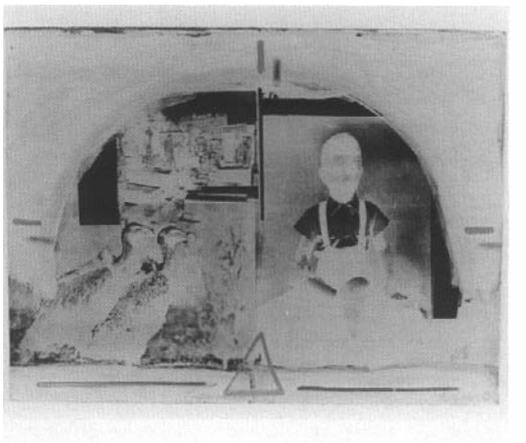
It is the same with the more recent pictures and lithographs, where childhood filters through. It could be a question, in a way, of a self-portrait going back through time. *Incompleted Childhood,* 1986, reconstructs fragments of previous works, luminous figures which return like phantoms in the night of the image, for, undoubtedly, Béliveau has returned to the night, to black and to white, as much in the black series of his paintings as in his lithographs. In the supercoded universe of this practice, only colour has subsided to leave room for the spectres of reality.

In the long series of lithographs drawn from large pictures where the painter appears in the guise of his son, formal and symbolic preoccupations contribute to the internal mirroring of reality. A character who is not completely himself occupies a space which is a transposition of the imaginary space of a monumental picture. The given treatment establishes illusory visual connections with painting, although we are dealing with a lithograph. But far beyond the medium used, other artificial aspects indicate the part played by lies in this art: "For me, painting means lying. For a painting will never be more than a film of matter on a surface; it is trompe l'oeil, illusion, falsehood. On the other hand, I use the lie to tell a certain truth, taken from my everyday life. That is, I believe, one of the paradoxes of art."[3]

It is easy to see, by observing recent lithographs, that these images are largely dependent on Béliveau's pictorial frenzy and the well-thought-out disorder which he has shown for the past three years. He who accustomed us to his amazing facility in combining stone and ink is urging the onlooker to assimilate an eclectic sequence of treatments of material. The conceptual richness of the works and their symbolic and narrative content affirms without question the idea that the medium is not the message. That is perhaps why his approach to

Paul Béliveau
Excess IV
Lithograph
50.8 × 66 cm
1982

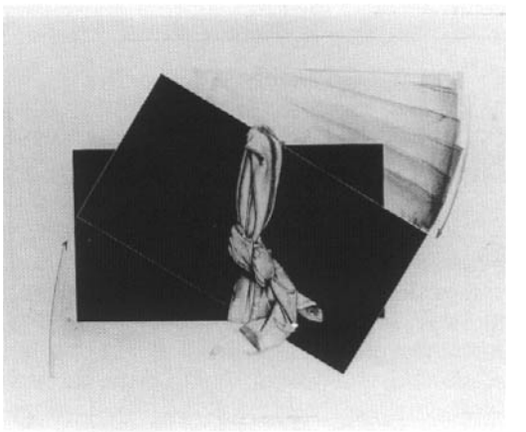
Paul Béliveau
Incompleted Childhood
Lithograph
56×76.2 cm
1986



lithography has little in common with the learned orthodoxy of the discipline. Prints made in the past two or three years carry, on each one of the proofs, a further intervention on the part of the artist. Acrylic touches, serigraphic passages, and additions in pencil personalize each image, thereby sweeping away any notion of the multiple as it is commonly understood.

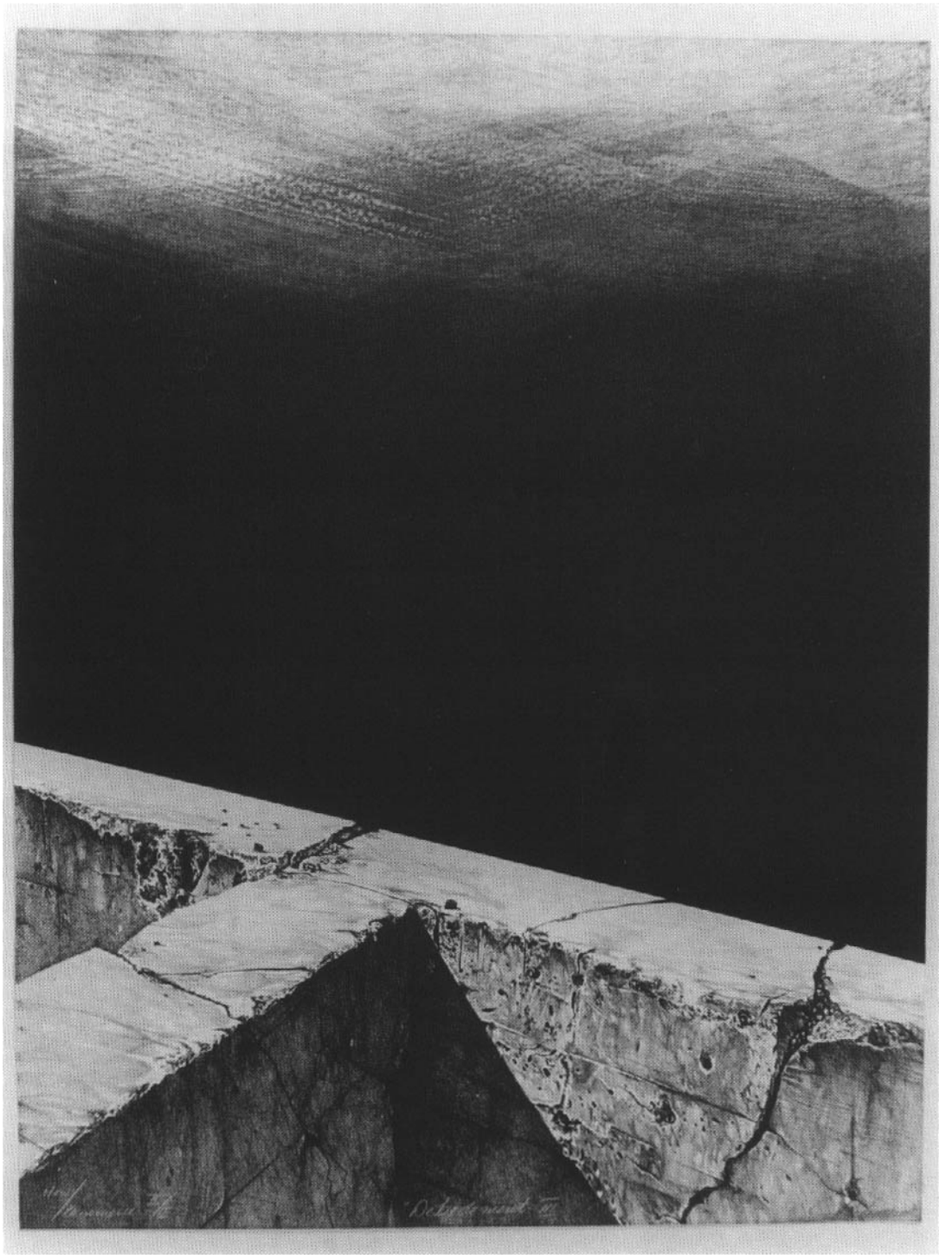
It is necessary, above all, to recognize in this artist a competence which entitles him to every freedom as well as to all of the controls which he, moreover, does not hesitate to impose upon himself by means of an uncompromising critical filter. Through trial and error, searching, and numerous and astonishingly diversified experiments, works or series of works are emerging which are breaking like waves under his exorcising power. At this time, the strength of Paul Béliveau's production reveals an inner universe coloured more and more by his daily life. After having cited the history of art for a long time, it is to himself that he now refers, and he skillfully makes us witnesses to his torments.

Paul Béliveau
Where is time
Lithograph
50.8×66 cm
1980



Perhaps that is why the untimely burgeoning of his recent experiments has led him more often than ever to violate technical constraints, driving him to free himself from learning and technique and to emancipate the creative process from the influences of faultless technical execution which he considers to be too restrictive. The style and content of the work follow, in this sense, a similar pattern of evolution, for it is simply a question of knocking down barriers, confounding inhibitions, and refusing constraints. Béliveau experiences freedom by allowing himself any physical or conceptual act and any pleasure. His pictorial writings illustrate hybrid states which, nonetheless, leave no room for confusion. Rather, they create suggestive and fragile balances between contradictory, disconcerting images. They place us on the threshold of our night, where the blinding figures of reality are stirring. They beckon us to the dream as our only escape from darkness.

Paul Béliveau
The Amusements of Laupine
Lithograph
25.4×41.7 cm
1984



Paul Béliveau
Excess III
Lithograph
50.8 × 66 cm
1982

Notes

1. Gilles Daigneault, "Paul Béliveau chez Noctuelle; l'art baroque à Ottawa," *Le Devoir* (Montreal), 8 March 1986, p. 29.
2. Ibid.
3. Marie Delagrave, "Le peintre Béliveau et l'enfance revisité," *Le Soleil* (Quebec), 25 October 1986, p. D-7.

Connections

POLISH PRINTS *and*

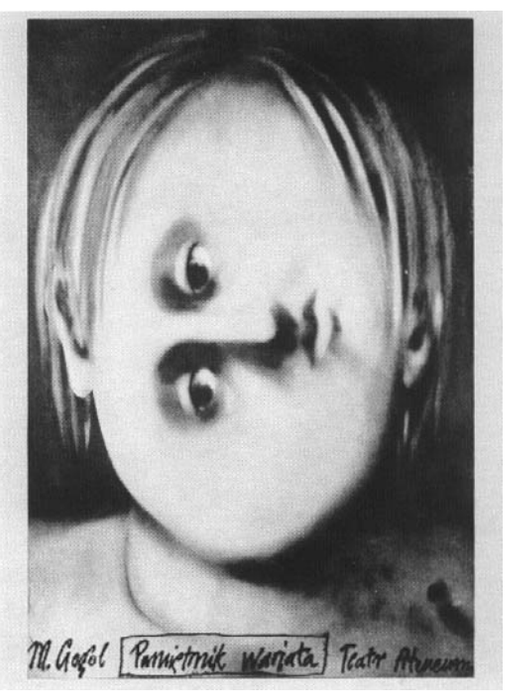
Danuta Wróblewska

Danuta Wróblewska is a critic and editor formerly associated with one of Poland's largest publishing houses. She has written frequently for *Projekt* magazine and is curator of the Vatican Antiquities Museum in Cracow.

Translation:
Marytka Kosinski

Different forms of graphic art, regardless of their medium and ultimate venue, whether a poster on the street or a print in a private folder, have one common denominator—technology. In all cases, a mechanical process of multiplication and the same supporting material, paper, are used. But all the rest is a question of the individual expression and interpretation of the artist.

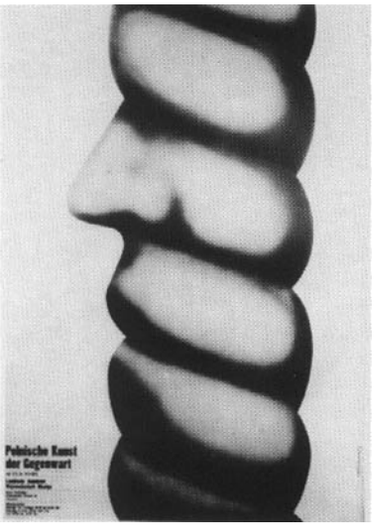
The history of Polish poster art reveals different trends through time, the fluctuation of artistic ideas, and the use of different techniques. It has been customary to see and interpret the Polish postwar poster art almost exclusively in relation to painting. It is true that painting as well as the colourful and expressive Polish folk art and children's art made a great impact on posters. These sources could be clearly identified in postwar posters, in contrast to the prewar tendency to use synthesized images and a certain postconstructivist order. Much less attention has been paid to the relationship between poster art and printmaking, a kind of fine art traditionally more concerned with content.



Jerzy Czerniawski
Poster
100×70 cm
1974
Photo: Michal Sielewicz

The close relationship between poster art and printmaking, particularly lithography and woodcut, has existed for a long time and was manifested in earlier posters from the interwar period. Since the war, the situation has changed. The general trends in art, the new forms of expression, together with the development of printing techniques and, particularly, of photography combined with typography, opened great possibilities for poster art. Almost everything became feasible, especially all the various ways of transformation and distortion.

In spite of all the innovations and the new technical possibilities, Polish poster art has remained basically within the sphere of fine arts such as painting and drawing. It shares with them a concept of art understood as individual expression, but, at the same time, it retains respect for an almost aca-



POSTER

demic discipline and cultivates analytic humanist thinking. These characteristics have a lot to do with the country's art education.

In Polish art schools, students of poster design are confronted with a structured program which allows them to freely explore different media. This is, perhaps, the only education program in which as many hours are devoted to painting and drawing as to design. Students of poster art are also required to practise all printmaking techniques. The technical process of poster production and the new technological possibilities are emphasized less; in this respect, the program is clearly deficient. The printing shops are also poorly equipped. Since contemporary advances in technology are unavailable, it is not surprising that artists are turning to traditional means and trying constantly to renew them.

In addition to the two factors mentioned above, the educational system and technical problems, which are shaping Polish poster art, there is also a third factor worth noting. Before the war, posters were designed by a very small group of specialists, including Tadeusz Trepkowski and Henryk Tomaszewski. After 1945, however, there appeared an exceptionally large political and social demand for posters. Many artists working in different media, such as painters, drawers, illustrators, decorators, architects, and also printmakers, turned to poster design, mainly for economic reasons. But at the same time, they introduced to poster art specific ways of thinking in a particular discipline, as well as their own personal experiences. Posters from the late 1940s and 1950s were characterized by a certain narrative quality and a strong emphasis on drawing. They remind us also of linocuts and metal techniques. At first, the ideas adopted from different media became transformed into a homogeneous and genuine form of poster art. The artists who were perhaps the most interesting during the 1950s and, later, in the 1960s were Walerian Borowczyk, Julian Palka, Wojciech Fangor, and Anna Huskowska. Their movie posters combined subtle psychological imagery with an exquisite line structure that was grey and delicate. The fine quality of these compositions continues drawing traditions.

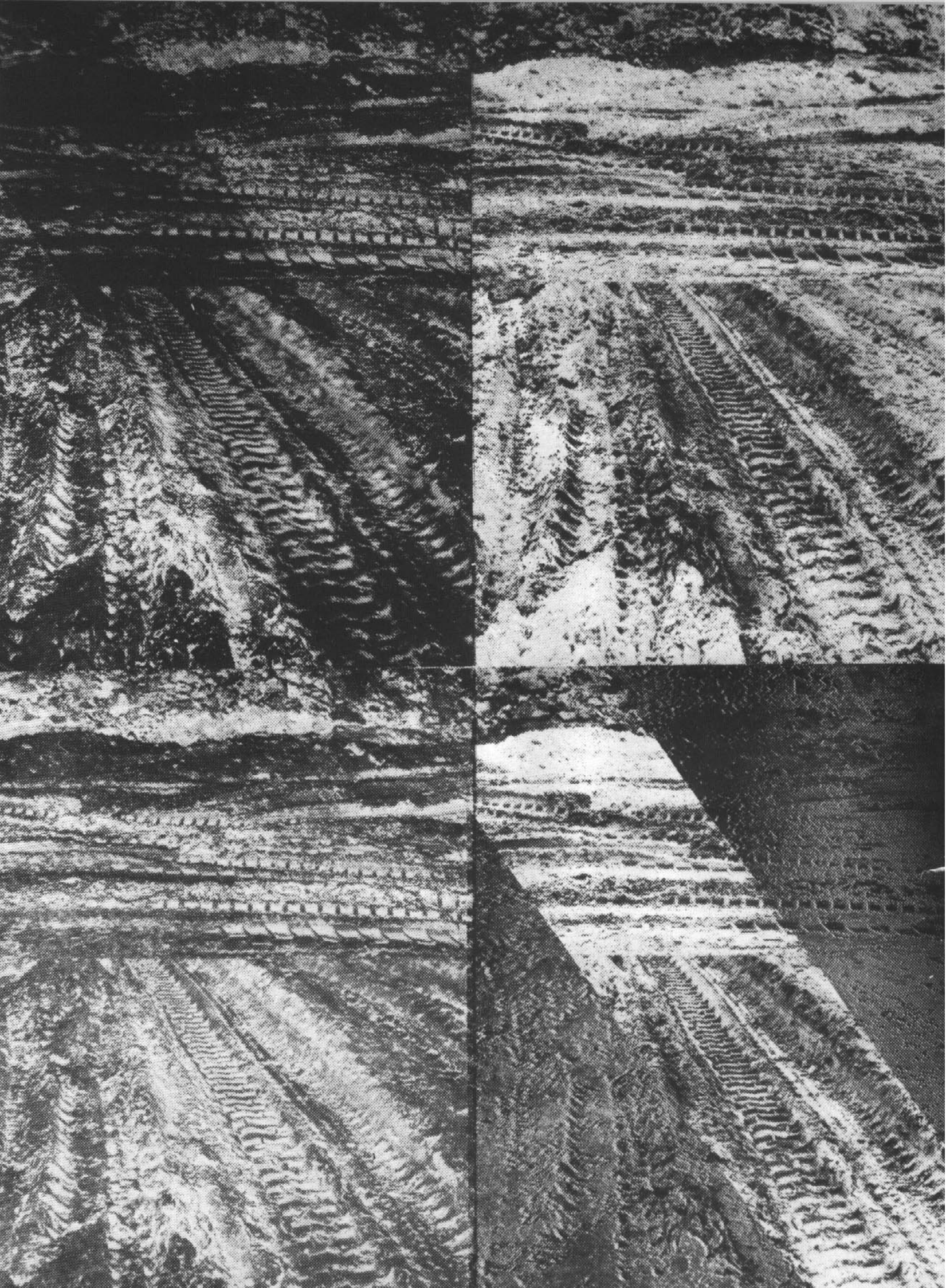
The later years brought the formation of so-called modern imagery, marked by bright colours and the use of texture. At that time, the legacy of the surrealists counted more than ever, based as it was on

Bozena Jankowska
Poster
100×70 cm
1979

Jerzy Panek
Searching the Amber
Woodcut
30×51 cm
1973
Photo: J. Sergo Kuruliszwili

since

1945.



Andrzej Nawrot
An Industrial Landscape
Mixed Technique
76×56 cm
1977
Photo: J. Sergo Kuruliszwili

the play of the very material used in the design. Collage triumphed. Artists used torn paper and shreds of photographs, but these were subordinated to the aesthetics of geometric design. The most important artists of this period were Joseph Mroszczak, Wojciech Zamecznik, Jan Lenica, and Roman Cieslewicz.

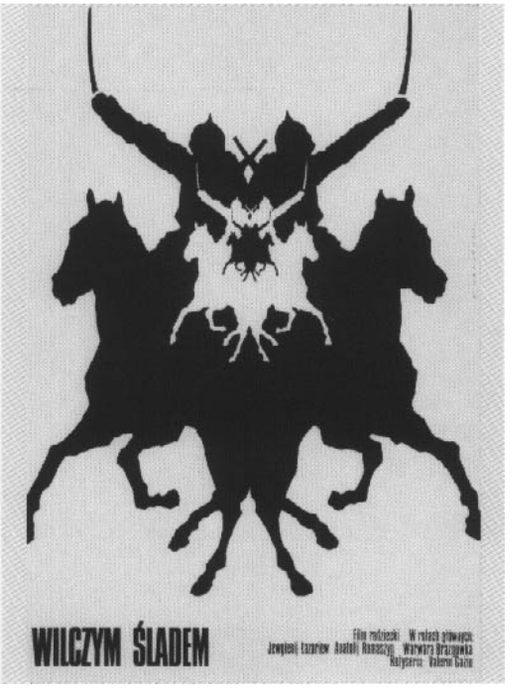
The first had an exceptional sensitivity to expressing space by graphic line; the second was an outstanding photographer-printmaker; the latter two were great draughtsmen, bringing back the lithographic traditions of the poster. Their art marks the beginning of the Polish poster school as an independent art form aggressive in its use of all sources and converting them into a new medium.

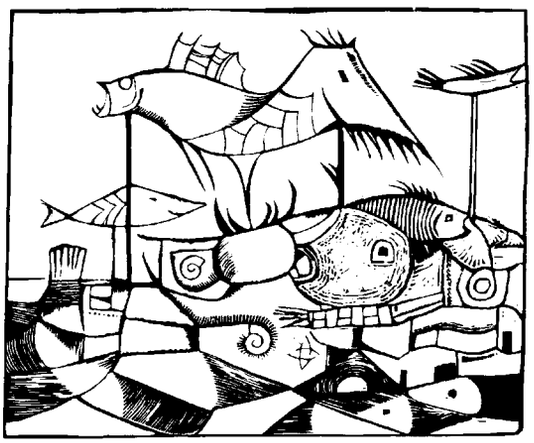
Against the background of the distinct presence of this school of the Polish poster, Henryk Tomaszewski retained his individual and independent position. This artist began to work in poster design as early as the 1930s and has been designing ever since.

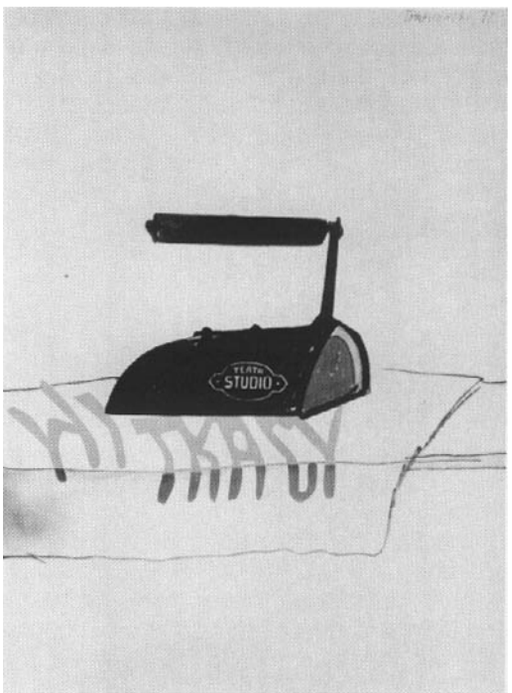
Henryk Tomaszewski
Poster
100×70 cm
1967
Photo: Michal Sielewicz

Jan Sawka
Poster
100×70 cm
1973

Mieczyslaw Wasilewski
Poster
100×60 cm
1979
Photo: Jerzy Sabara







Leszek Rozga
A Mythic Place
Linocut
46 × 56 cm
1964

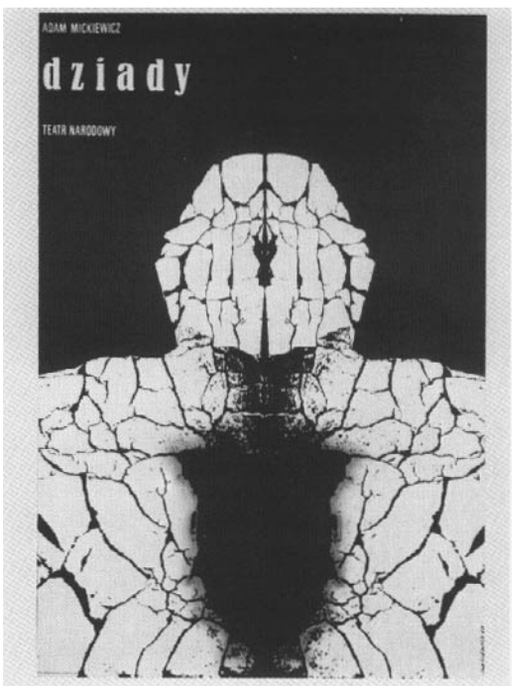
Henryk Tomaszewski
Poster
100 × 70 cm
1972
Photo: Michal Sielewicz

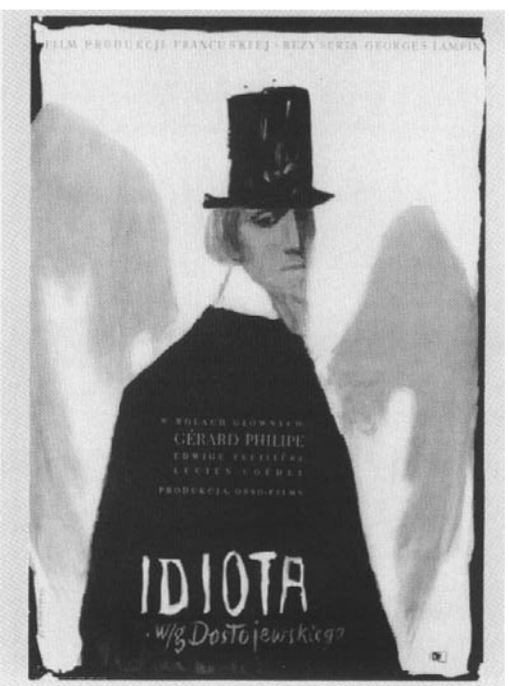
Roman Cieslewicz
Poster
100 × 65 cm
1967
Photo: Michal Sielewicz

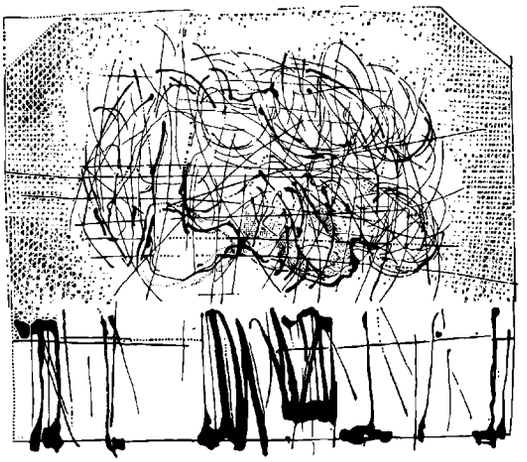
Anna Huskowska
Poster
100 × 70 cm
1958
Photo: Michal Sielewicz

He not only attained a unique position in Poland but also has had considerable influence on international graphic design. It is rather remarkable that Tomaszewski's style has little in common with what the professional in the field recognizes as customary. His discerning, almost sneering attitude and his feeling for drama and the paradoxes of life were essentially incompatible with the simplicity of the poster, and, yet, he succeeded in making them congenial. In Tomaszewski's poster, line has a leading role. His drawing is aesthetically pleasing, but it seems to have clear links with the free art of the graffiti scratched on walls and fences. His posters are as intimate and as private as printmaking for one's own personal portfolio.

Tomaszewski not only consciously opposed the influence on posters of painting but also questioned all of modern graphic design. He brought the poster back to the black and white drawing tradition and to the idea of the sign. He combined the word and





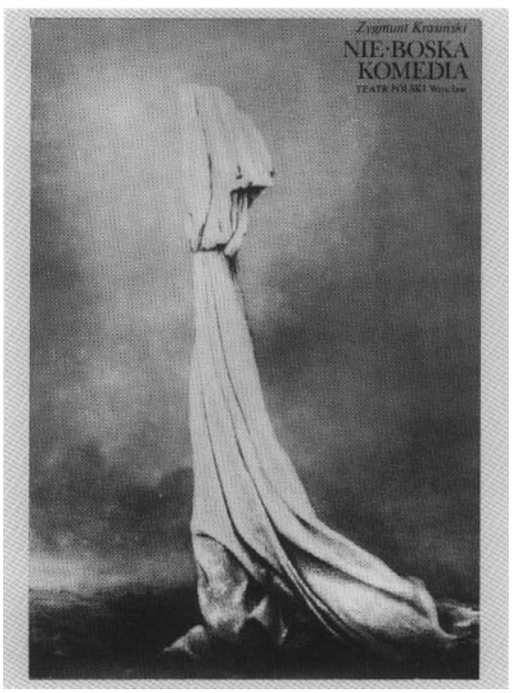


the drawing into an integrated image. Such elementary unity was typical of the early religious morality plays and militant woodcuts of some five hundred years ago.

In the 1970s, poster art became very popular. At the same time, the tendency to sign the posters intensified as artists tried to express their individuality. The relationship between printmaking and graphic design tightened. Linocut, and especially serigraphy and photo-offset, served both fields. The exchanges and linkages between fine art and so-called utilitarian art became very close. In these years, four artists gained importance, Jan Jaromir Aleksiun, Jerzy Czerniawski, Jan Sawka, and Eugeniusz Stankiewicz. They also happened to be close friends, stimulating and influencing one another, who formed a very dynamic group. All of them were printmakers above all: Aleksiun practised lithography and mixed-media techniques, Czerniawski drew, Sawka worked in metal techniques and serigraphy, Stankiewicz in cop-

Roman Poziemski
One Day...
Linocut
56×61 cm
1978
Photo: J. Sergo Kuruliszwili

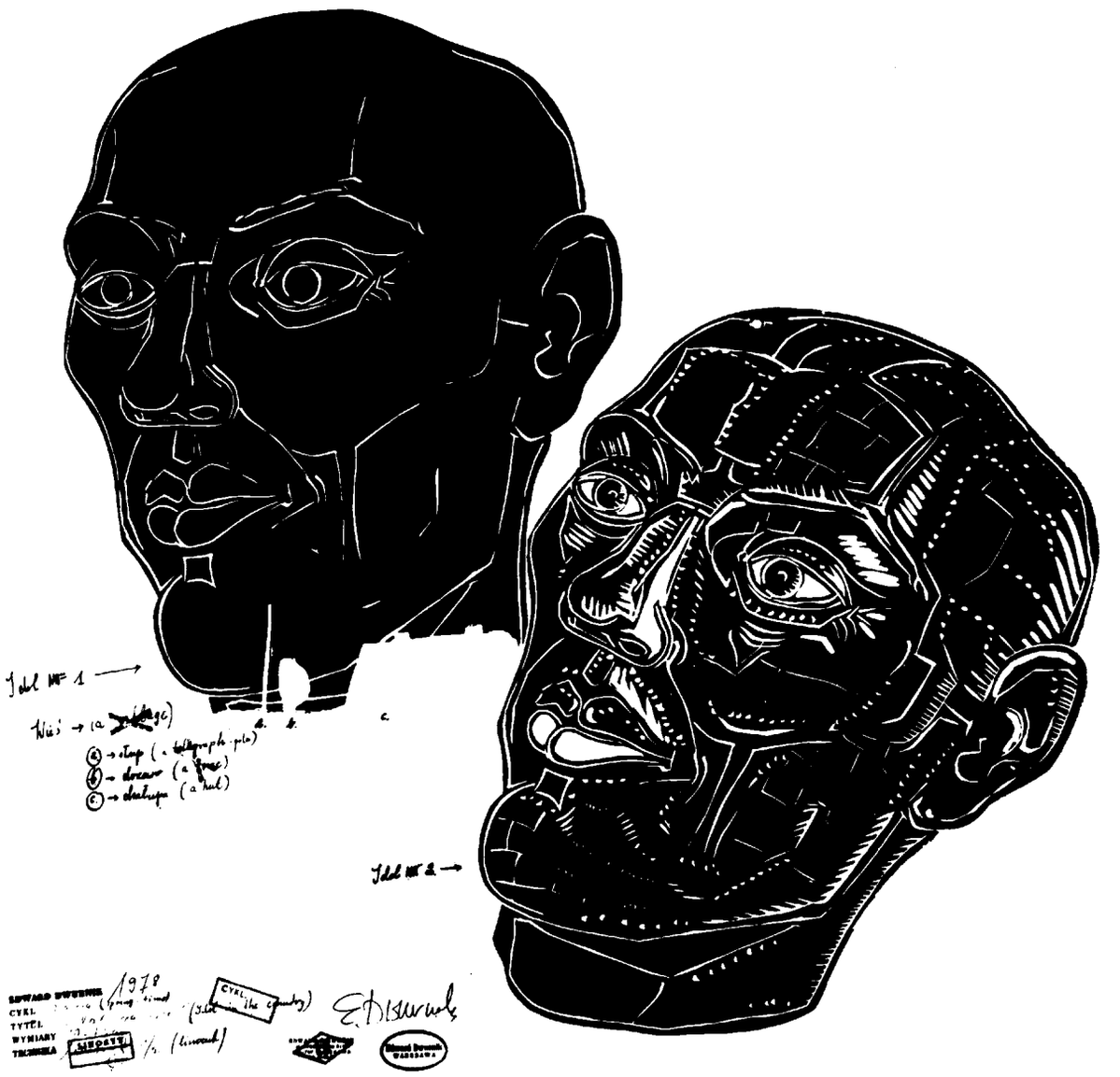
Eugeniusz Stankiewicz
Poster
76×50 cm
1974
Photo: Jerzy Sabara



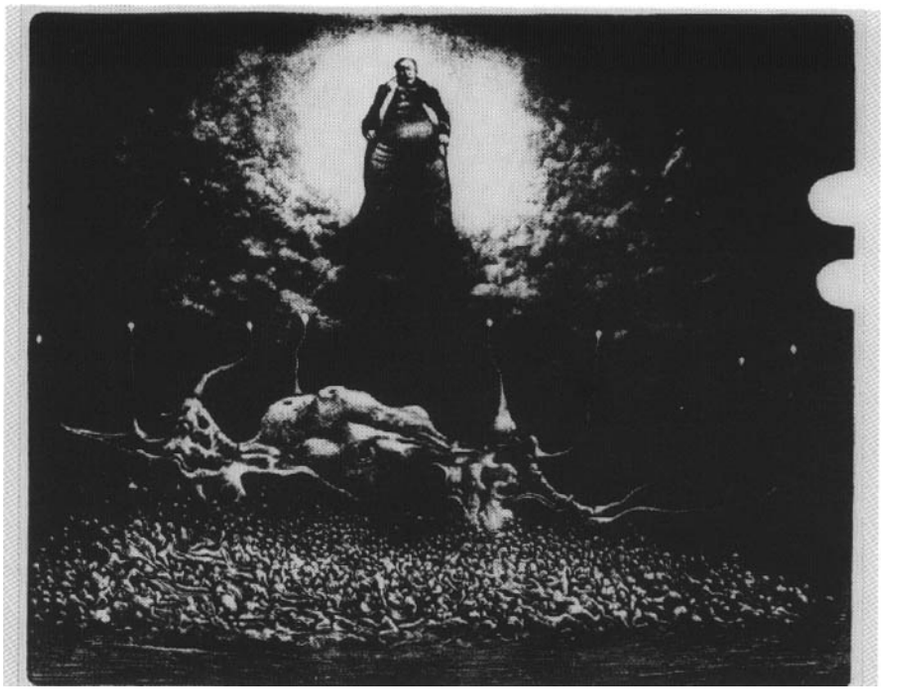
Jan Jaromir Aleksiun
Poster
100×70 cm
1979
Photo: Jerzy Sabara

Roman Kowalik
Poster
100×70 cm
1978
Photo: Michał Sielewicz

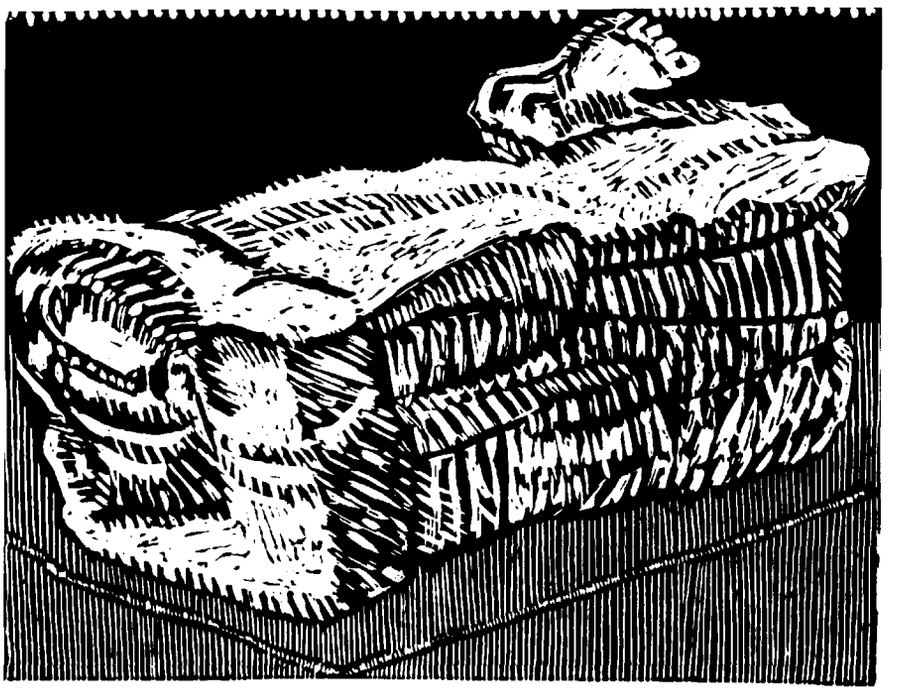
Edward Dwurnik
Idol in the Country
Linocut
90 × 73 cm
1980



Wladyslaw Winiecki
Untitled
Lithograph
46×56 cm
1979
Photo: Jerzy Subara



Marian Malina
A Reclining Figure
Linocut
17×21 cm
1975

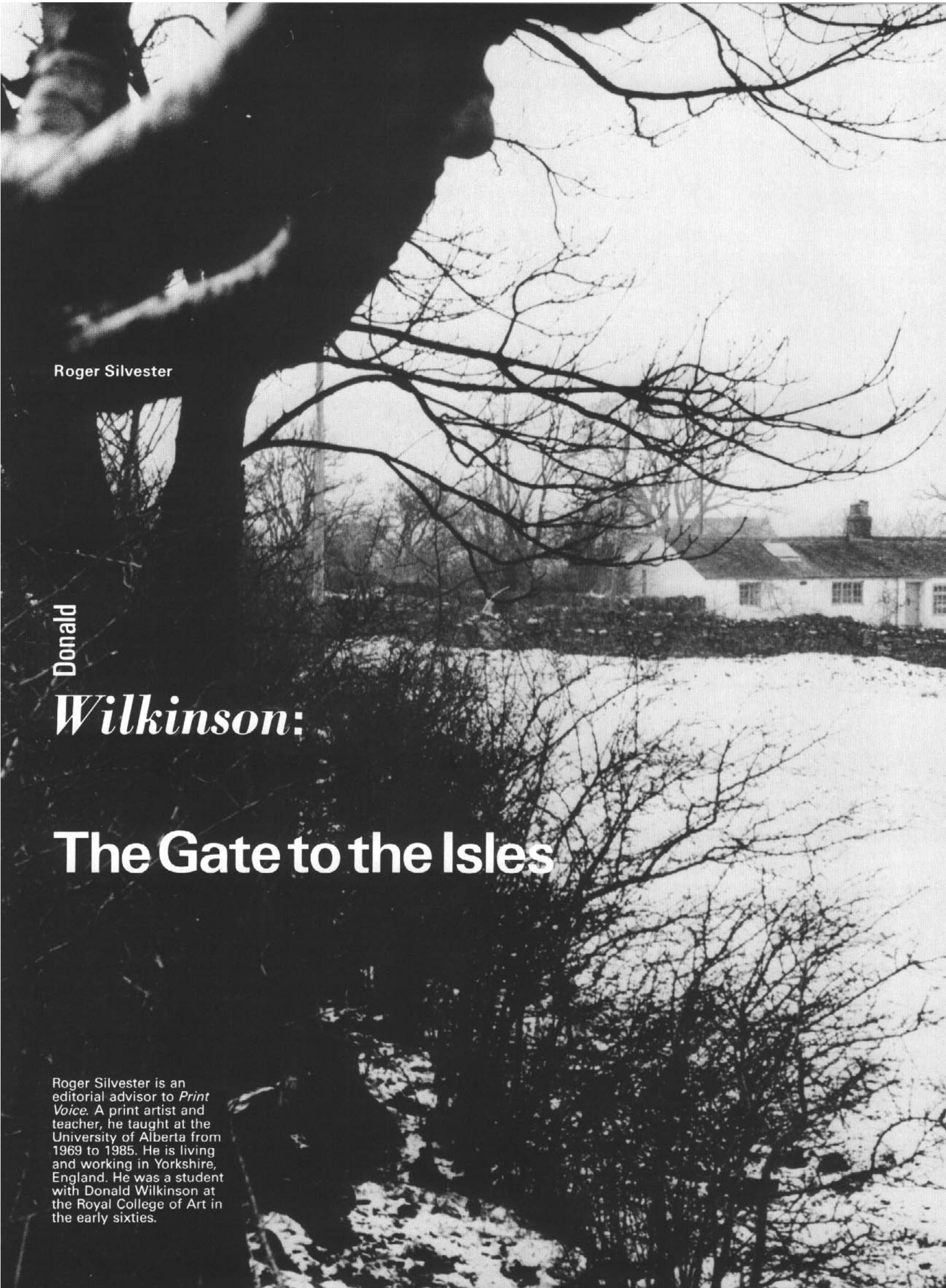


per and steel plate. They enriched both the applied arts and the fine arts, and they tied printmaking and poster art even more closely. Their courage, rivalry, and mutual influence are reflected in the work of a younger generation of poster artists. The 1970s created a strong base for subsequent impressive developments.

In the 1980s, as a result of the internal political situation in Poland, one could observe the growth in importance of posters and paraposter forms. The printing arts, printmaking and the poster, abandoned colour and more aesthetic attitudes and looked to black and white and abbreviated form as more suitable to front-line modes of expression. Fast, volatile forms such as handbills and xerographs were widely used. The best examples of the new tendency are the small editions of works by Jan Bokiewicz and, in a different way, the works of Piotr Mlodozeniec. They can be placed at the intersection of pure art and propaganda, with drawing as their leading form of expression. It is not easy to place this type of austere art generically, but there seems little doubt that it continues the long tradition of militant printmaking. One can also see some analogies with Tomaszewski's not-so-distant art.

Most recently, another trend has appeared in poster art. The theme of the Dance of Death, so often used by Franciszek Starowieyski in his poster, appears again in the works of a young artist, Victor Sadowski. He uses it symbolically, but, at the same time, he introduces more colour, following the example of a great poster designer, Waldemar Swierzy.

In Sadowski's movie and theatre posters, the influence of painting is balanced by that of printmaking and drawing. In spite of this new cry for colour, the restrained forms of predominantly black and white posters still dominate the streets. These compositions, close to linocuts in their effect, are mostly designed by Mieczyslaw Wasilewski and Wojciech Freudenreich. The greater use of colour and the exploration of its effects are still to come.



Roger Silvester

Donald *Wilkinson*: The Gate to the Isles

Roger Silvester is an editorial advisor to *Print Voice*. A print artist and teacher, he taught at the University of Alberta from 1969 to 1985. He is living and working in Yorkshire, England. He was a student with Donald Wilkinson at the Royal College of Art in the early sixties.

Fair seed time had my soul, and I grew up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear:
Much favoured in my birth-place. . . .
Wordsworth—*The Prelude*

The journey from Yorkshire to Cumbria, which for much of its distance follows the old Roman Road, is made through a landscape of spectacular variety, often amplified and punctuated by climatic conditions which can alter dramatically in a matter of just a few miles. Being conscious of the forthcoming meeting with Donald Wilkinson, I was more than usually aware of my surroundings and of the fact that landscape, this landscape, had been for so long the source and inspiration of his work. We had arranged to meet in early March. Over the high ground, snowplows were out and the crags were shrouded in mist and low cloud, but, farther north, the road descended through diffused sunlight into the shelter and brightness of early spring valleys.

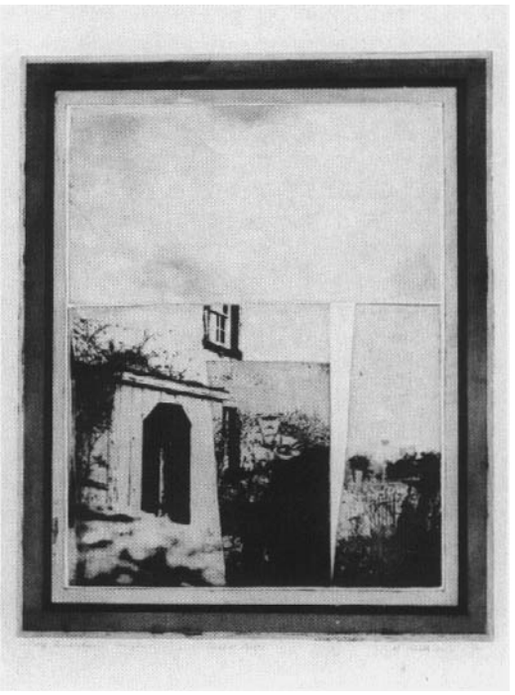
Skirting Carlisle, turning east and beyond the town of Brampton, the road forks left, narrows, and begins a winding ascent beside the remains of Hadrian's Wall, past well-spaced sturdy cottages which climb the Banks. The Wilkinson family have lived here, in a traditional Cumbrian cottage with suitable modifications to permit the essential assimilation of his printing studio, since 1980. From the advantage of this high position, the view into Cumbria across a broad open valley is one of exceptional peace and natural beauty, and, therefore, it was no great surprise to me to awake the following morning to the attendance of a small flock of curious sheep a few feet from the window.

Donald Wilkinson was born in Keswick in 1937 and attended the Carlisle College of Art from 1953 to 1957; first, he completed the Ministry of Education's Intermediate Examination in Art and Crafts (1955), followed by the National Diploma in Design, for which he specialized in painting and, coincidentally, produced a small number of unremarkable lithographs. His main memories of printmaking at Carlisle are of students being left largely to their own devices, of the near-lethal speed of motorized presses, and of the frustrations of an unreliable chemistry which, as often as not, resulted in days of laborious work disappearing from the surface of the stone.

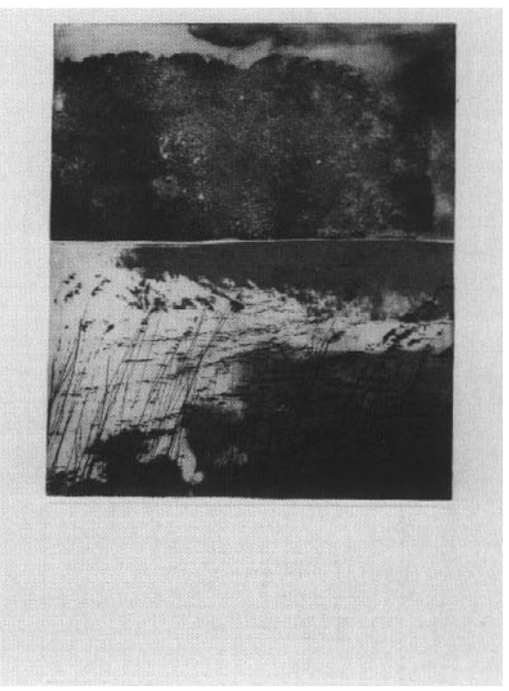
His younger brother had joined him at the college, and the economic pressure on available family resources had increased to the point which his parents decided to open a small shop to help pay the bills. The Local Education Authority grant was minimal—five pounds per year per student for materials, plus an additional thirteen pounds assistance for maintenance and accommodation. A ten-shilling note given on Monday was thus intended to be kept in the pocket throughout the week, only to be used in extreme emergency and of no practical value in supplementing even the most basic range of equipment, a particular embarrassment given the predilection for impasto painting of John Bratby, one of his painting instructors at this time. Such circumstances increasingly focused Wilkinson's attention on the use of relatively inexpensive media and resulted in his (fortuitous) concentration on drawing, particularly drawings of the local landscape, to a far greater extent that otherwise may have occurred. It was the quality and potential of these drawings, as he later discovered, which were mainly responsible for his successful application, in 1957, for a place at the Royal College of Art in London.

His satisfaction at having secured the opportunity of three more years of study, however, was accompanied by simultaneous reactions of surprise, uncertainty, and resignation; surprise that he had been offered a place in the Department of Engraving not in the School of Painting for which he had originally applied; uncertainty arising from his lack of experience and, at that time, from his lack of interest in the concept of a full-time commitment to printmaking; and resignation to the fact that his entry would need to be postponed for two

Donald Wilkinson
Cumbrian Landscape
Etching
32 × 42 cm
1960



Donald Wilkinson
Haltcliffe Reflections
Etching
56 × 45.5 cm
1971



Donald Wilkinson
Here Sometimes Doth a Leaping Fish—Wordsworth
Etching
65.5 × 40 cm
1973

years of National Service in the Royal Army Dental Corps.

Although he found it invigorating to be in London, his time at the RCA was neither as satisfactory nor as productive as he had hoped. He obtained an early release from the army just four days prior to the beginning of term in September 1959 and found difficult the move back to a full-time creative schedule after having been asleep for two years. With the exception of the helpful advice and support from the etching tutor Julian Trevelyan, he discovered that the atmosphere at the college was too competitive, not as instructive or encouraging as he then needed, and he was increasingly drawn to the Slade School of Fine Art, where his brother was then studying in the School of Sculpture. So it was at the Slade, where Reg Butler was teaching sculpture and Anthony Gross instructed printmaking, that he found the creative contact and companionship lacking at South Kensington.

Despite considerable dissatisfaction with the direction of his work and the negative feelings and self doubt, he gained a measure of compensation from the discovery of etching at the RCA, which was for him a new and absorbing medium. As is often the case when answers to persistent questions concerning the purpose of the work are elusive, a shift of concentration, in this case to the exploration and acquisition of new skills and techniques, may help to provide a foundation for the eventual development of alternative modes of expression. For Wilkinson, this process of metamorphosis, begun in London and emerging with increasing confidence at Chesterfield some ten years later, was long and hard won, but exceedingly thorough.

Following the completion of his program in 1962, he left the college conscious of the fact that he had not acquitted himself as he would have wished yet with a deep determination to succeed despite what those there may have thought of his work and future prospects. Most of the prints he had produced during those three years were quickly and deliberately destroyed. In the

few which still remain (for example, *Cumbrian Landscape),* there is a willingness to accept and incorporate accidental occurrences in the nature of the subject and there is an unselfconscious preoccupation with the characteristics of pure marks. Here may be seen the early hints of those qualities which characterize and embellish his later works. After leaving college, he obtained a post at the College of Art in Chesterfield, where he remained until 1980, teaching printmaking and foundation studies. At Chesterfield, faced with the responsibility of assessing and improving the condition of his new environment, of equipping and maintaining it, of exploring new concepts and processes, and of devising a satisfactory teaching philosophy, the knowledge that the tide of his own creativity was at one of its lowest ebbs could be temporarily set aside. Although no prints were produced for some time, on his day off each week he continued his habit of walking, absorbing impressions, and making notes and drawings. He also found at Chesterfield and for the first time that he was in the company of colleagues who shared his interest in constructing an atmosphere in which the exchange of creative ideas and attitudes would not only be encouraged but considered a fundamental necessity in establishing a healthy and dynamic environment. After years of having worked in highly competitive climates in which, although the acquisition of perceptual and manipulative skills was applauded, any serious attempt to examine the nature of creativity was mostly unknown, this was new and exciting territory. Working within the congenial climate at Chesterfield and contributing to the ideology developed there proved to be a sufficiently secure and stimulating platform from which to recommence his own creative effort.

At the outset, a clear direction was unimportant. All that was necessary was that beginnings should be made, without past pressures to resolve anything or to keep up appearances. It was sufficient to feel free and relaxed enough to allow the new experiences, notably experiments he was then undertaking with photography, to influence and infiltrate the work. He recalls that for subject matter he was still, "nibbling here and nibbling there," exploring his feelings for landscape mostly by means of drawing, but the most interesting of his prints of this period emerged from the stimulus of childhood memories combined with the inspiring impact of the photo-intaglio process. Typical of these images is *Haltcliffe Reflections,* one of a series of prints using cut plates and delicate applications of colour and based on sections of photographs taken during family visits to his great-grandfather. Although substantially different in treatment to prints of the later seventies and eighties, the construction of this image by means of juxtaposing several separate elements appears to forecast the physical separation of related parts in his later use of the diptych and triptych. Referring to his decision to incorporate photography into these prints, he not only emphasizes the importance of the qualities of crispness and clarity it produces but also his fascination with its unique capability of freezing a moment in time. It is a process equal to the task of both recording a meaningful event and transmitting it, when required, to the surface of a plate. Due to early limitations, he initially was able only to transfer an image indirectly by the use of silkscreen, yet, even with the level of sophistication he has now achieved, he still speaks of the magic of the technology with infectious pleasure.

In the production of the suite *Reflections on Wordsworth* in 1973, those qualities which he had been patiently building in his work in the ten years since leaving college produced the first significant wave of wider interest and signalled the beginning of an upward trend of increasing proportions. For the first time, in these important prints, he manages to crystallize and combine all the concerns which had hitherto been explored independently or in less complex ways. Not only, therefore, do they express his interest in subject (landscape and poetry) and

method (photography, drawing, and colour), they also represent a release from self-consciousness and inhibition. Their appearance signifies the end of a long phase of transformation and reveals the true romantic nature of his work. Assuming that the character of romanticism is easier to detect than describe but that it most commonly shows its presence in the artist's choice of subject together with an attitude toward it, then in this group of prints may be seen clear connections with those same objectives which motivated the best of the English romantic poets. *Reflections on Wordsworth,* together with another group of six prints entitled *Mr. Gray's Journal* and produced in 1974, established Wilkinson's reputation as a notable British printmaker. Their combined impact resulted in purchases by the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Arts Council, and other public collections, the award of the Giles Bequest in the 1974 Bradford Biennale, and the considerable interest of many major commercial galleries. With the incorporation of large areas of embossed or printed text, in both suites there is the superficial but, I believe, wholly inaccurate association with illustration. Given my own past preoccupations with the attempt to create a sympathetic partnership between image and text, in which the independence of the elements is maintained within an interdependent framework, I was particularly interested in the following response to questions concerning this, as well as the related issue of the use of poetry, in his work:

> One of the things which set me off using text was the fascination of an exhibition held at the Tate, of Blake's illustrations to some of the poems of Thomas Gray, which happened to coincide with a concept I had been wanting to explore. Blake had made the most beautiful watercolours, and in the centre of each he had inserted a page of Gray's writing. The combination of fresh flowing watercolour with the quality and content of the text

was, I thought, exceptionally successful—a fantastically satisfying marriage between the intellectual, emotional, and visual. That set me thinking that what I really wanted to do was to try to create a harmony between the severity of the shape of the written word and the more ethereal qualities of an image. I very much admire and envy the person who is able to string words together with such skill that they become charged with the power to evoke an experience. Language used in this way seems able to jump time and speak directly to our senses more profoundly than can a print or painting. So in these prints—and even more in subsequent attempts—I wanted the image to be broad enough to leave room for the imagination of the spectator. To leave hints, the edge of a rock, the presence of a cloud. Generally, I want to suggest space or imply a mood, not to specify them, and through the use of colour to convey a time of day or the unique quality of moonlight; the creation of contrasts between what is clear and recognizable, against what is undefinable—that which may only be sensed. It's a difficult problem in pictures, there's so much more mileage in words, so much can be "said" in just a few sentences. I suspect, however, that all artists, whatever the medium, share similar difficulties. It's just the means of solving them which differs. A constantly fascinating thought for me is that, whatever may be its final outcome, the work has never existed before. An experience occurs and responses to it are recorded by exposing film or making marks in a sketchbook. Of these things a distillation is made, components rearranged or redefined. Since I never know exactly what I want and only have perhaps an inkling of the mood and how it might be put together, each time this process is embarked upon is for me as difficult as the first time. Sometimes, I will need to rejig the colour, or reverse the sequence of the plates, or, perhaps, even scrape everything out, attempting always to make more and more of less and less.

Wilkinson recognizes that those prints employing elements of text are less successful commercially than others might be, but such is his admiration of the work of the nineteen Lakeland poets and such is the depth and scope of his reaction to those same conditions which inspired their words that he continues to be intrigued by the potential of this format. In more recent prints, *The New Moon Winter Bright—Coleridge* and *The Moon Stood Naked in the Heavens—Wordsworth "Prelude"* (commissioned by the Wordsworth Museum), text is incorporated in the form of a facsimile of the author's own handwriting. Here, the use of the facsimile is an attempt to bring his own pictorial vision in direct apposition to the words as written at the moment of their inspiration.

The response to his prints in the early seventies was a great incentive. He felt right about what he was doing, knew his instincts were sound, and, as a result of increasing commercial success, was able to more rapidly extend and develop his creative horizons. The comprehensive range of work which now emerges has a new authority and confidence, its scope is wider, and its treatment is more varied. A feature begins to predominate at this time—his use of multiple images in the form of the diptych, triptych, and four-part print. Such composites derive, in part, from the panoramic character of landscape, especially as it is found in Cumbria, but they are also an attempt to slow down the viewing process and to impress upon the spectator how essential to our experience of nature is the role played by the dimension of time. In *Beside the Lake: Evening,* the viewer is confronted by the movement of reflections across a wide expanse of water; in *Storm Over Derwentwater,* a sequential series of

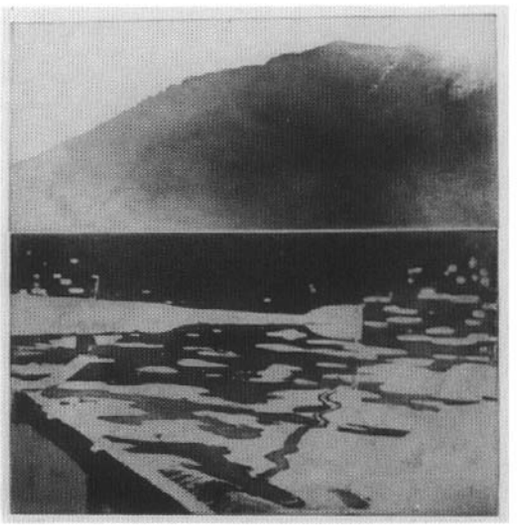
images present the changing appearance of a passing thunderstorm; and in *The Lake,* three separate prints explore the stirrings of the surface of a lake made by an oar as the shoreline slowly changes. Like other similar works, *The Lake* sequence has been constructed in such a way that while each element may stand independently of the others it is only when they are placed together that the full intention of the concept may be entirely understood.

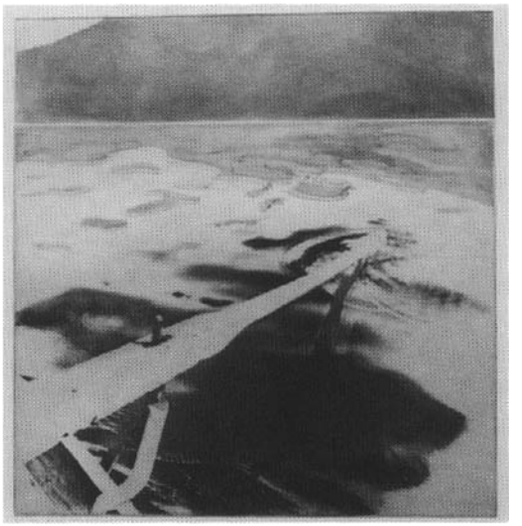
In acknowledging the intrinsic connection between the activities of drawing, watercolour painting, and photography to the content and character of this print, he says:

> What I like about photography now is no longer so much the full topographical record. I use it now for surfaces—the differences between the marks of rocks, the texture of water, folds in mountains, or particular structural facets in landscape. Quite often my photographic stencils are very broad, almost minimal—just a horizon. But it is that *special* horizon, the essential souvenir of that *particular* place, the one uniqueness which unlocks memory and produces the creative chemistry necessary for the development of an image. It may take any form—a sudden unevenness of contour, the knoll on a hill, a fragment of texture, or an unexpected diffusion of light. All unremarkable, perhaps even unnoticed to the eye unused to the special relationship of nature and climate in this landscape, but for me the vital seed from which the mature image will be grown.
>
> All the things I do, the things I feel strongly about, are recollections of places which I have visited, and the "snaps" I have taken at the time are very much to do with isolating and fixing those moments.

The relationship of the drawings and watercolours to the prints appears at the same time similar yet very different from the function of the photographs. Certainly, in many cases, such as the pastel and watercolour studies entitled *Bedroom Window, Eigg,* they are ends in themselves —complete expressions of the conditions of light, colour, texture, movement, and space which caused their creation. The fact that they take the form of drawing or watercolour rather than print have to do with the desire for a direct, immediate expression of experience. But there are other instances, like pastel studies done in 1977 and 1978 and a charcoal study of Eigg, in which their function seems to be more closely connected to an exploration of the ways and means of dealing with the complexity or intangibility of nature. In any event, it is inconceivable that the prints could be as they are or impress one as profoundly as they do without the fundamental and private contact with the subject provided through drawing and painting. Wilkinson continues:

> Well, really, it's the business of making marks on the spot. Although they do serve as a reminder of the experience afterwards, and they will often be pinned up in the studio as related work is later developed, I'm not much interested in a record of appearance. More important is to keep alive the challenge of communicating the experience of the senses through wholly visual means. What it *feels* like to be on a cliff confronted by the sea, with space between and beyond. Then you've got the weather, the light, combinations of different sorts of surfaces. How *does* one draw space when it is made up of water disappearing into sky? Or ripples, or the light on incoming waves? How are these things to be conveyed with pastel, charcoal, or watercolour? Not to reproduce events or occurrences but to try to suggest them—that's the challenge. Working directly from landscape is where the essential contact with my subject is made, though only a portion of the total experience



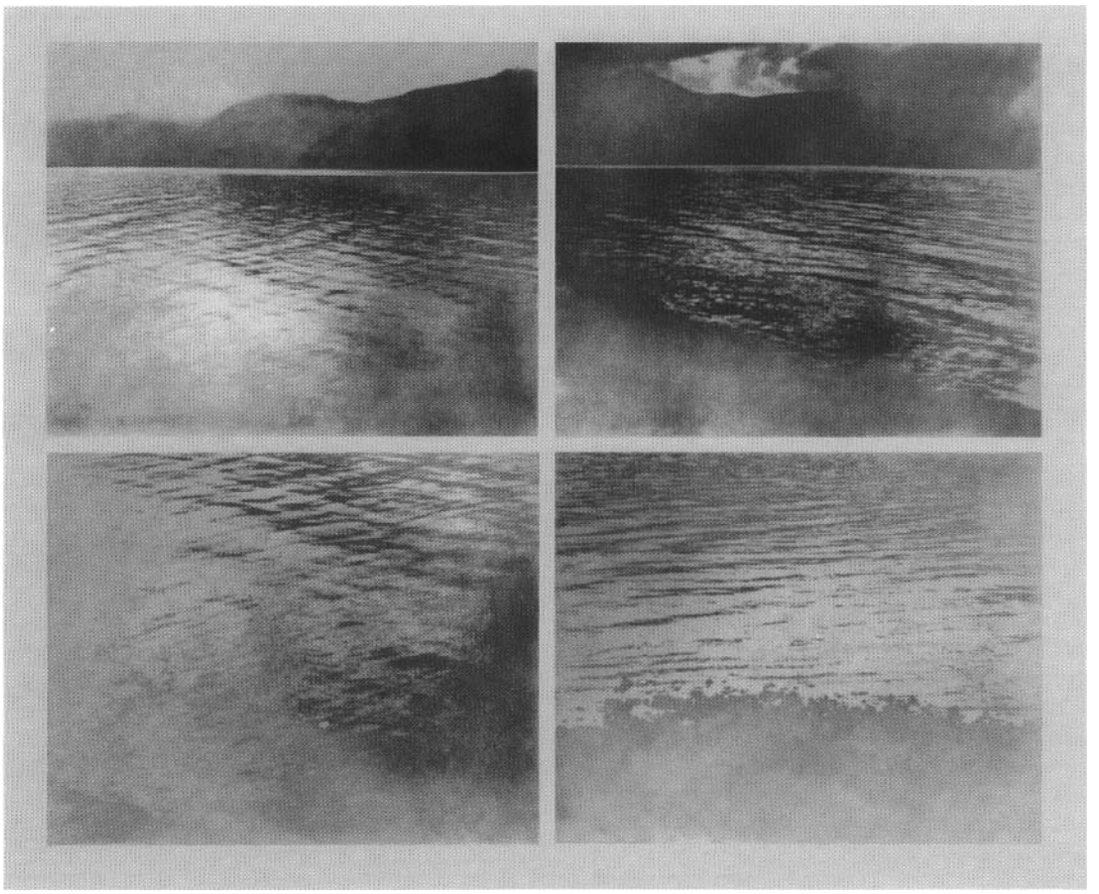


Donald Wilkinson
The Lake I, II, III
Etching
51 × 149 cm
1976

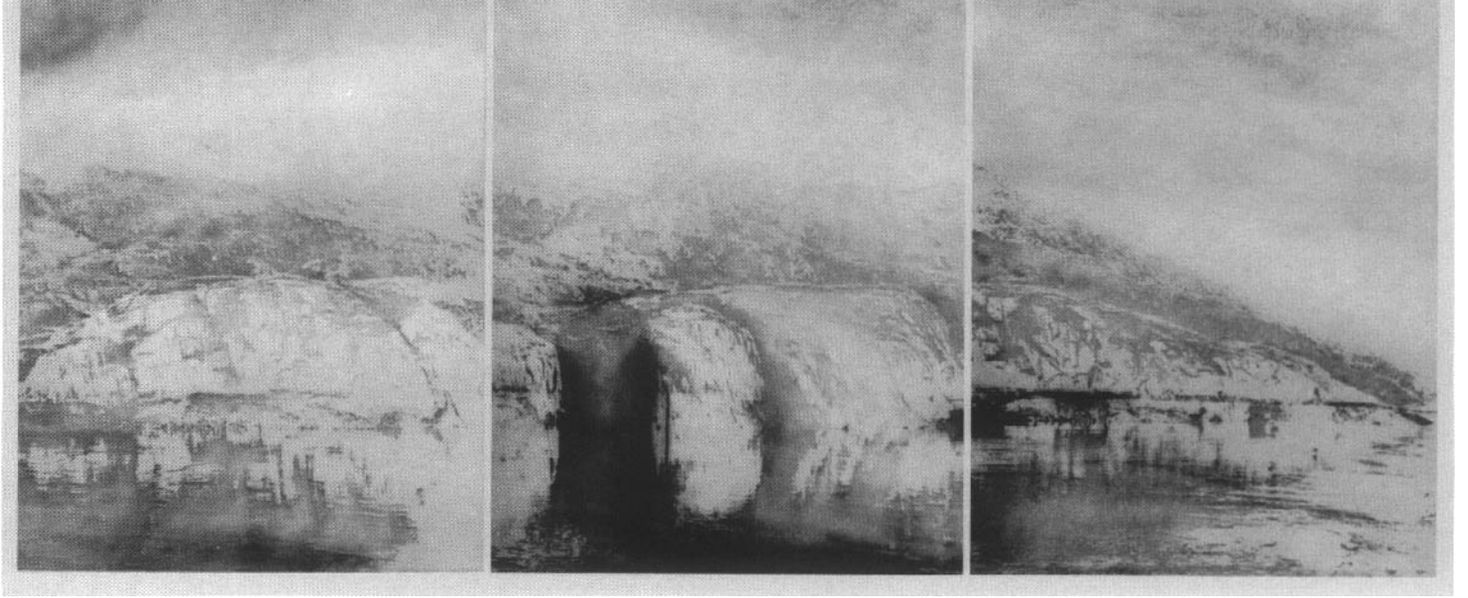
ever emerges on paper. When I later come to develop the print, the drawings are there to rekindle an experience which I hope the print may differently—and perhaps more completely—communicate.

Closer inspection of the working methods employed by the artist often provides a deeper understanding of the subtleties of cause and effect which help to shape the final result. In Wilkinson's case, these procedures, though frequently modified to meet changing circumstances, tend to follow a fairly predictable basic pattern.

Having established the photographic image, often hardly more than the merest suggestion of a shape, an aquatint is laid over the plate and the metal is etched, from the outset, using brushes and acid rather than by full immersion in a bath. The progressive process of painting with acid and flushing with water clearly echoes those techniques he uses when working in watercolour. The photostencil, once established, is neither especially protected nor considered as an integral component of the eventual result—on that point Wilkinson is most emphatic. It is used exclusively in the initial phase and then only to provide a basic silhouette which may or may not survive to form a soft, almost undetectable presence in the finished result. Often, the action of the acid will burn through the resist, or



Donald Wilkinson
Beside the Lake: Evening
Etching
77.5 × 96 cm
1973–74



Donald Wilkinson
Shoreline in Summer Sunlight
From the triptych:
Loch Nevis
Etching
55.5 × 132 cm
1982

undermine it, and such incidents, though not consciously sought after, are absorbed into the image, creating unplanned and unexpected features of form and texture.

Although he continues to rely upon photography in a variety of ways—still using the camera in part as a recording device and in part as a compositional tool, combining and manipulating negatives in the production of a suitable panorama—its direct function within the image has now become reduced mostly to a means of establishing basic boundaries. It is a way of "breaking the ice" of a new plate, of gaining entry to a new image, in order that the tougher and more demanding processes of forming the concept can proceed more quickly.

Most often, a number of prints are worked on simultaneously, allowing for the possibility of cross-fertilization as well as for the subconscious contemplation of one during the physical preoccupation with another. Limited proofs of each plate are taken, usually in black and white, and these are worked upon with pastel, explóring the potential of tonal change, of alterations to shape, or of contour and deciding on possible colour combinations. The results of these decisions are incorporated into a second plate and are followed by more proofs and additional colour and structural experiments. "Occasionally," he says, "I find the image is too static, nothing seems to be happening. Then a change of gear is sometimes helpful. The process of working more broadly and aggressively on the proof in chalk, then back on the plate in a similar way with a scraper, may serve to lift the image onto a new threshold."

In response to a variety of questions I had put to him throughout our conversation, Wilkinson repeatedly had stressed the fact that for many years his work had been involved with sensations and feelings which transcend purely visual appearance. I was curious, therefore, to discover the extent to which he would agree that his work might be viewed at least as much as an expression of internal preoccupations as it is a translation of the external world: an examination of the ambiguities and anomalies of the internal landscape by means of reference to the external one.

> I would accept that to a large extent. Obviously, landscape is much more, now, a starting point, the ultimate objective of which is an ever deeper, more accurate, and lucid expression of mood. A lot of the time I don't know what it is that I'm aiming at. I just know there's something there that I feel strongly about, and I know when I've reached the point that, for the moment, I've said all I can say about it. I find I am unable to follow any form of logical sequence in my work. Neither is it possible to apply the solutions which worked yesterday to today's new problems. I use sheet steel because it's cheaper, so that I will not be inhibited as I might be if I used copper and so that I can abandon a plate if it's not going the way I want it. But I can only say that if the concerns you raise do exist in the work, then they must be manifested through the subtle combination of all the choices and decisions which contribute to the image, rather than by any conscious process of rationalization.

The essential character of the central theme of mood and atmosphere in Wilkinson's work is perhaps no better exemplified than in the prints, *Loch Nevis Triptych, Shoreline in Summer Sunlight; A Winter Triptych—Westwater;* and *Towards Lonscale and Saddleback—Snow Clouds.* In these three powerfully evocative works, we see the combination and orchestration of all the methods and objectives to which he refers. Their elements complement or flow into each other within a skillfully controlled organic structure. They are at once disturbing yet inviting images, as difficult to read in parts as nature itself may be at times. Full of visual contrast and emotional nuance—texture, contour, sharp definitions

and soft transitions, passion, tenderness, knowing and unknowing, the drama of sunlight and the threat of storm—these prints are not windows through which changing expressions on the face of nature may be viewed in comfort. Their strength is in their power to transport the spectator beyond an illusion of nature into the sensation of its actual presence.

By the end of the 1970s, consistent demand for his work, together with the confidence he had in his ability to sustain a suitable standard of output, created the conditions which made it possible for him to give up teaching and to concentrate his entire effort on his own work. In view of his love of the Lake District, and his deep ties to it, it was natural that he should seek his new permanent home in Cumbria.

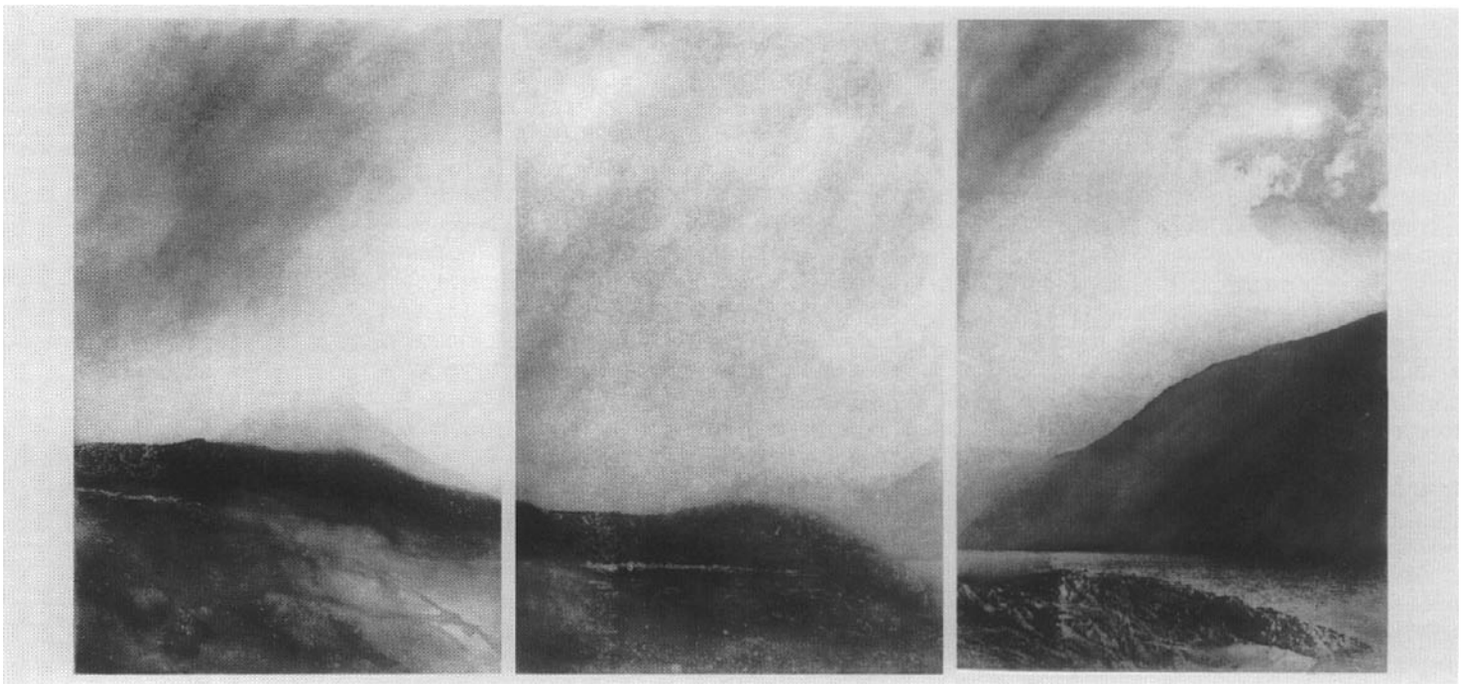
His move to the Banks at Brampton was encouraged by the painter Winifred Nicholson (first wife of Ben Nicholson), who lived in the area and admired Wilkinson's work, and who was to become his neighbour until her death in 1981. Through many hours of conversation, with mutual respect, understanding, and a shared love of nature, they developed such a friendship that he recalls it as "one of the greatest experiences of my life." Her direct involvement with the British avant-garde movement of the 1920s and 1930s and her knowledge of the members of that circle of important and influential artists made, for the first time, contemporary art history come alive for him. Through her creative presence, her own work, and through the lives and work of others she had known, she brought him (at a crucial transitional time) back to that historical continuum of figurative, lyrical landscape painting to which he is so closely tied.

The constant awareness of his historical connections and his unspoken sense of association with the great names of English landscape painting of the past provide him with an essential focus. The views he sees daily from his studio window are those views painted by Paul Nash and Christopher Wood. They comfort and create for him a sense of belonging, allowing him, in his own words, to "feel less alone." It is partly this desire for contact, the need to feel less isolated, which has led him to seek out and work from the identical locations which inspired many of J.M.W. Turner's watercolours. A print of Buttermere, for example, was developed from studies made at the spot which Turner chose for his painting *Buttermere with Part of Cromack.* In this print, in celebration of the association and as a gesture to Turner's mastery, Wilkinson inserted his own ghost image of a rainbow. In his print *Greta Bridge,* he faced a different problem. This print was made at the same location used in a watercolour by John Sell Cotman during the time he was employed as a drawing master at the Rokeby Park estate. In this instance, the foreground rocks so vital to Cotman's picture had been dredged out to improve the waterway in the 1930s. In order to remain faithful to the original view, to maintain the closeness of his intended link with the picture, and to reinstate an important element of compositional structure, Wilkinson chose to make accurate stencils directly from the Cotman and to reintroduce the rocks in watercolour within the print.

To all the other influences upon Wilkinson's life and work so far discussed must be added the island of Eigg. Located off the west coast of Scotland in the Inner Hebrides, it is a place of both relaxation and work—a place he tries to return to at least once a year to walk, to absorb its richness and variety, and to draw and paint.

In the desire to do justice to the uncompromising honesty of Donald Wilkinson's art and to those attitudes and ideals which inform it, and in the hope that what I have omitted or been unable to convey may be communicated by the eloquent simplicity of his own words, I conclude with the following extracts of his account of a family visit to Eigg in 1980, in the company of Winifred Nicholson:

> The isle of Eigg lies off Ardnamurchan on the west coast of Scotland, over its



Donald Wilkinson
A Winter Triptych—Westwater
Etching
60 × 121 cm
1985

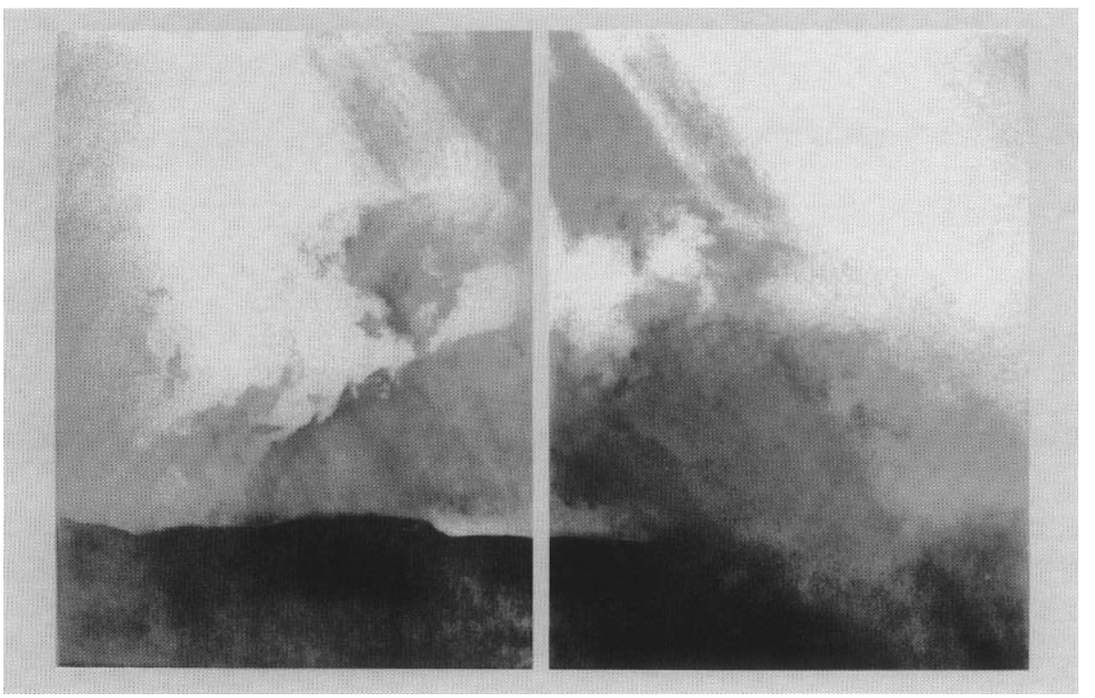
shoulder lies Rhum and farther north Skye. It is sometimes visible from the mainland, at other times it is a more mysterious place veiled in mist or enveloped in cloud. There is a feeling of being close to the elements here, to the wind and storms and to sunlight. It is still the home of the golden eagle and corncrake; seals and otter live and swim in the coves below the cliffs. In the early summer, there are drifts of bluebells in the woods, primroses and violets cover the ground among the hazel thickets, and yellow flags abound. Wild orchids and marsh marigolds grow on the wetter ground on the cliff-top fields.

Winifred Nicholson had visited the Hebrides on numerous occasions and had stayed on the island of Eigg in the 1950s with her friend, the poet Kathleen Raine—Winifred to paint and Kathleen to write. When she heard that we had just returned from Eigg, Winifred remarked that she would like to go back there one day. . . .

She had wanted to experience the light of the Hebrides again, to see the rainbows, to absorb the atmosphere of the place for a while, and to include its particular strange magic in her paintings.

It is a long journey by car from the Banks in Cumbria to the ferry point for Eigg and an early start was necessary at 6:30 in the morning, and it was well after 7:30 in the evening when we arrived at Game Keeper's Cottage. . . .

That first evening after bags had been unpacked and the stove lit we all sat down to supper. The talk was about the colours of the island, and in the room the brightest colour was the cobalt violet of the wild rhododendron in a glass on the table in front of us. After supper, I was shown Winifred's prism and how she used it to make rainbows appear for her on the edges



of objects, and for looking at flowers and landscape.

One is wakened on Eigg by natural sounds, birds singing in the fir wood behind the cottage, a cuckoo quite often starting very early, by the sound of the wind in the trees. There is at this time of day an absence of mechanical noise, no generators or tractors, only natural sounds and silence. . . . On the first morning there, a clear, sunny beginning to the day, Winifred handed me one of the poems by Kathleen Raine copied out on a sheet of paper, with the words, "A poem for this morning":

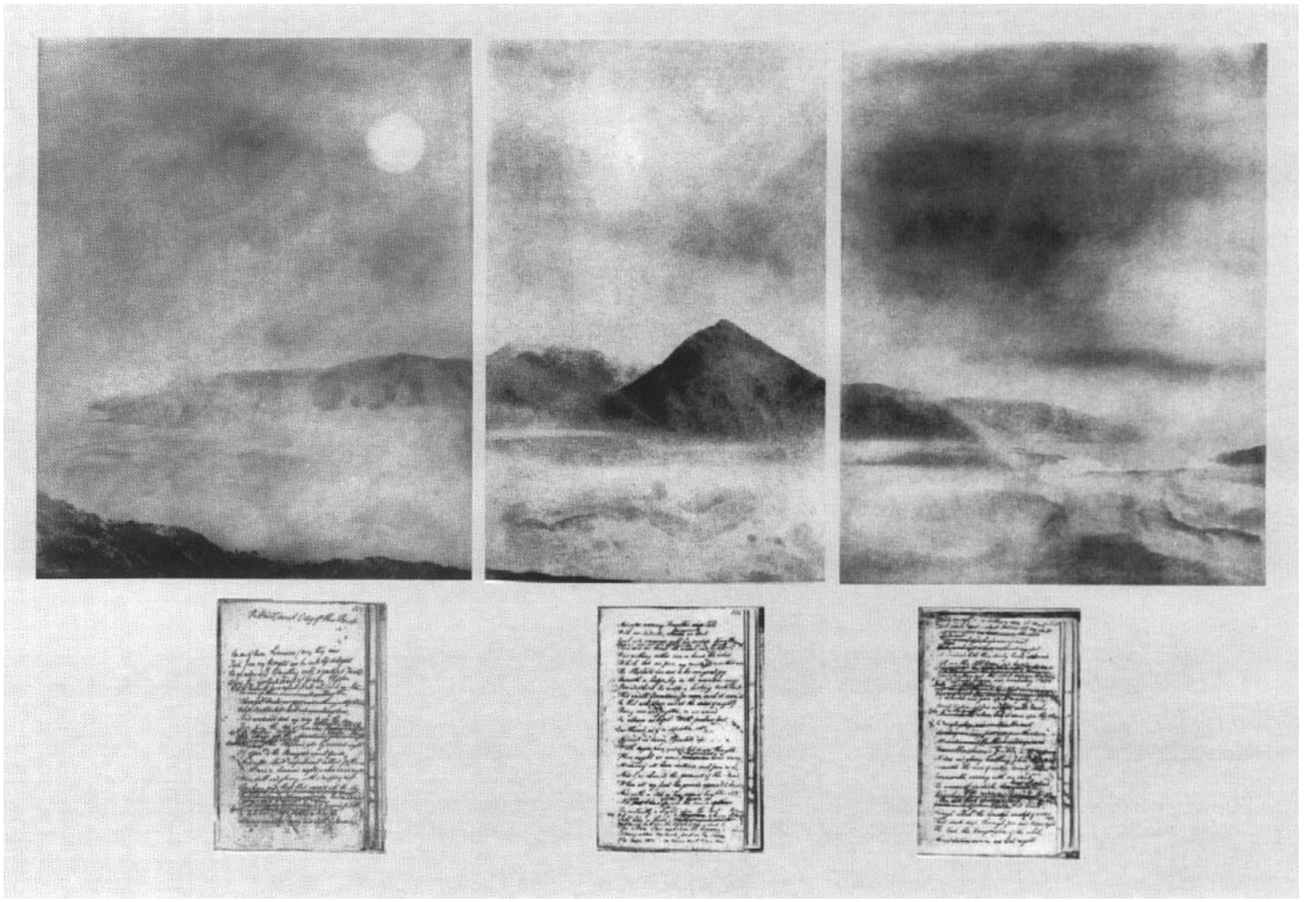
Today as I
looked up at the sky's great face
I saw the bright heavens gaze
Down upon me.

. . . We often had lunch outside. I carried chairs out onto the grassy knoll, and we ate sandwiches while we looked at the view. We watched the clouds moving across the mainland mountains, the light changing, and the colour of the sea. Winifred talked about this light, the Hebridean light, and how it falls slant-wise and through things, instead of directly onto things like the light in Greece. She talked about painters she knew, about Paul Nash and Mondrian, and about her painting in different places with Ben Nicholson. . . .

Another bright, clear morning after breakfast when all was cleared away, Winifred painted the wild rhododendrons with the pink striped seersucker cloth and the fir wood and sea beyond the window. We had lunch outside again, looking at the sea and view all around, the Sgurr behind the cottage, and the sea to Mallaig and down to the point of Ardnamurchan changing light and colour. . . .

Donald Wilkinson
Towards Lonscale and Saddleback-Snow Clouds
Etching
52 × 79 cm
1982

Donald Wilkinson
A Heavenly Day: Mr Gray's Journal
Etching
64 × 45 cm
1974

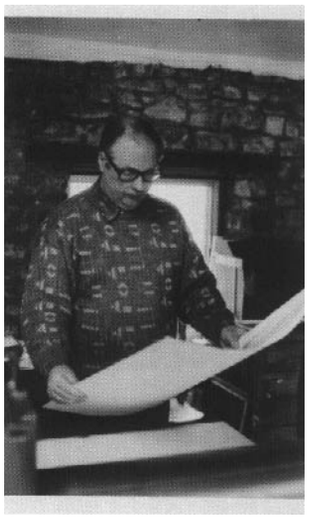


Donald Wilkinson
The Moon Stood Naked in the Heavens—Wordsworth Prelude
Etching
71.5 × 109.5 cm
1981

Oct. 3. A heavenly day; roſe at ſeven, and walked out under the conduct of my landlord to *Borrowdale;* the graſs was covered with a hoar-froſt, which ſoon melted and exhaled in a thin bluiſh ſmoke; croſſed the meadows, obliquely catching a diverſity of views among the hills over the lake and iſlands, and changing proſpect at every ten paces. Left *Cockſhut* (which we formerly mounted) and *Caſtle-hill,* a loftier and more rugged hill behind me, and drew near the foot of *Wallow-crag,* whoſe bare and rocky brow cut perpendicularly down above 400 feet (as I gueſs, though the people call it much more) awfully overlooks the way. Our path here tends to the left, and the ground gently riſing and covered with a glade of ſcattering trees and buſhes on the very margin of the water, opens both ways the moſt delicious view that my eyes ever beheld.

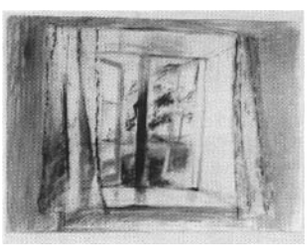
Donald Wilkinson
The Moon Stood Naked in the Heavens—Wordsworth Prelude
Etching
71.5×109.5 cm
1981
(Detail)

Donald Wilkinson



Donald Wilkinson
Untitled
Pastel
56.5×76 cm
1977

Donald Wilkinson
Bedroom Window, Eigg
Pastel
56×76.5 cm
1980



Shirley and I walked to Cleardale and watched the light over Rhum. Rhum was mauve through to violet with a suggestion of a deep purple reflection in the sea. We heard a corncrake in the fields which run down to the bay.

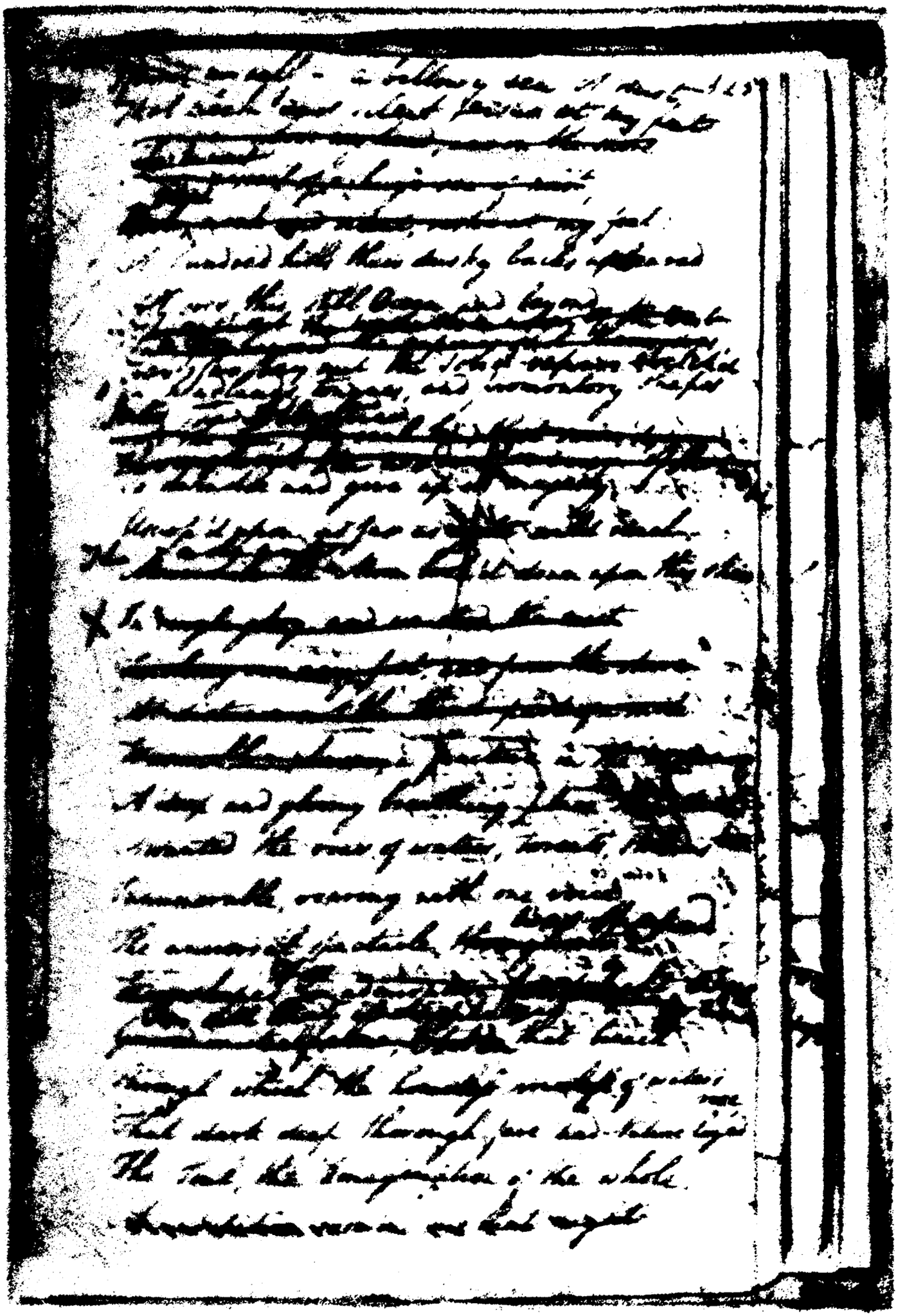
In the living room of the cottage, the early morning sunlight is reflected from the sea's surface onto the ceiling and lights up the whole room, the low window prevents direct sunlight shining in.

One particular morning, we looked down upon the sea moving and glittering in the clear sunlight, the mainland a presence in the distance with clouds making delicate shadows on the mountains. . . .

Winifred had wanted to see the rainbows again. She was not disappointed, for it seemed that each time we sat down to a meal in the evening the rainbows started to happen. We would all go outside and watch these rainbows over the sea until they faded away.

On another day, I decided that I would walk above the cliffs and try and make drawings looking down onto the sea. When I got back, . . . Winifred was painting in the open doorway, being kept warm by wearing her painting mac and head scarves. She was working on a painting of the blue gate at the entrance to the small garden, with the sea and distant hills beyond. At the end of the day, she was not satisfied with the painting. She felt that it was too "academic," and so the canvas was put to one side for the rest of the week. . . .

Our week on Eigg was almost over. Kate and Winifred were to stay for another week, with Valerie and Michael Chase taking our place. I called at Banks Head a few weeks after their return, and after tea Winifred took me up to her balcony studio to see the paintings that had been completed during their second week. A painting of the window in the tiny bedroom looking out on the trunks of pine trees, the window lit by a single candle that turned the whole into a magical cave. Another of yellow flags in a brown pot on a windowsill. A number on paper, one of a rainbow over the sea—the arc stretching from one edge of the painting to the other. There was also the painting of the blue gate; it was the same canvas but completely transformed. The gate opens on to a sea that is all movement, with a gathering sky above. All that remains of the earlier painting is a glimpse of the mountains through cloud. A new inspiration, it is full of the wonder at being on an island surrounded by sea. The painting is spontaneous, the idea and the way it is painted completely resolved—she called it *The Gate to the Isles.*



Jim Edwards

Jim Edwards is a painter, holds a MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute, 1969, and was a Rockefeller Fellow in museum education and community studies in 1973–74. He has been a curator at several museums in the United States and is presently curator of contemporary art at the San Antonio Museum of Art, Texas.

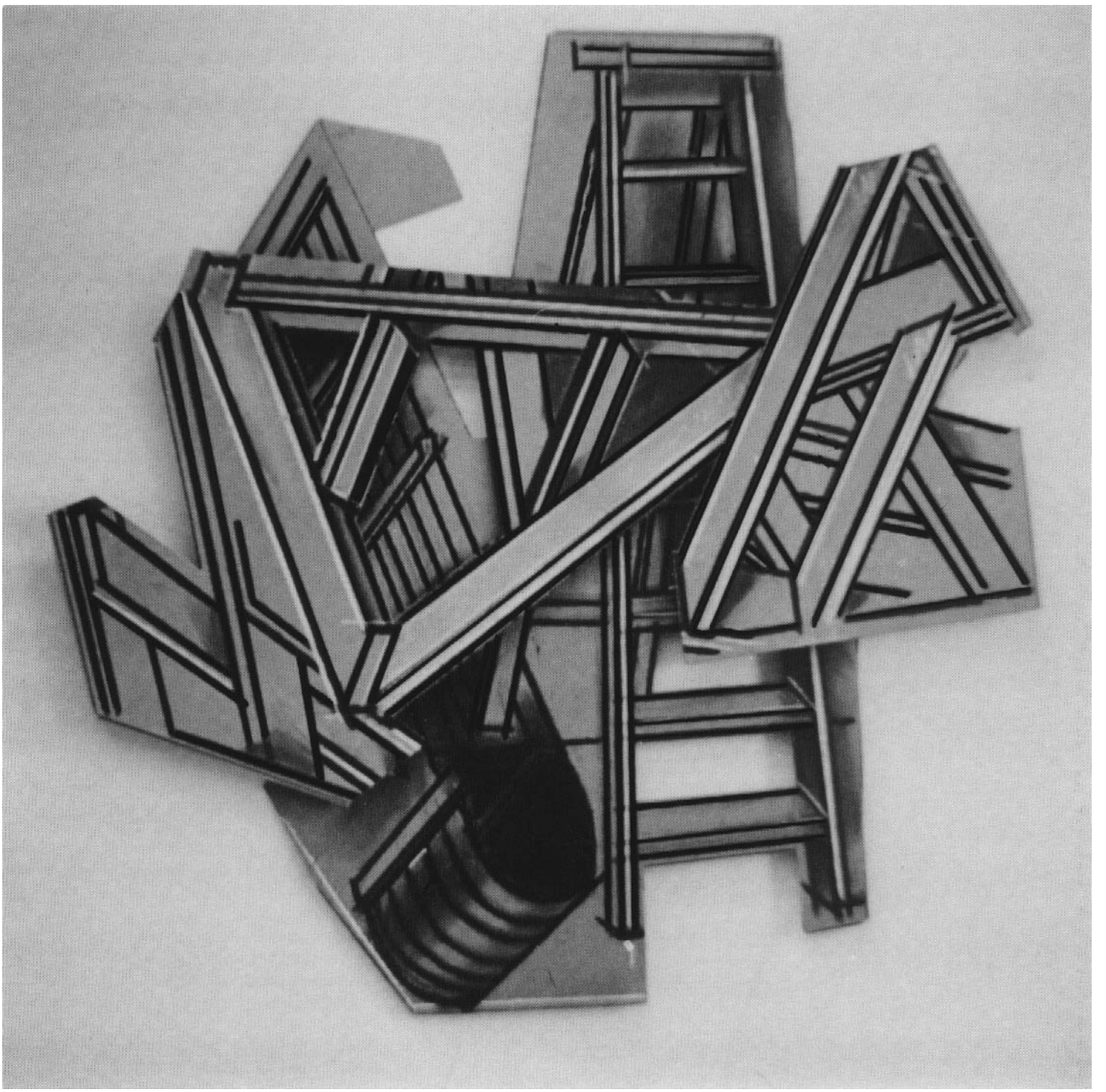
d e r e k
B E S A N T

NEW WORK

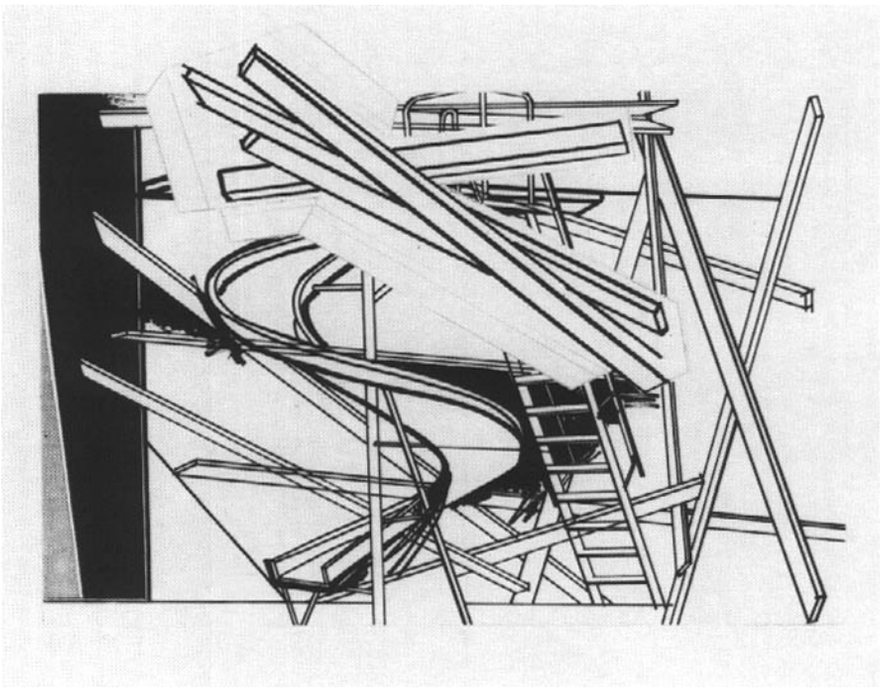
To be confronted by Derek Besant's sculptured drawings and prints is to be placed squarely in the present. His *Diagrams* and *Sites* are constructed graphics which seem to be caught at the instant of the reordering of their own space. The work appears so fresh that we feel almost as if we are invading the artist's space, that the artist himself, having only momentarily left the room, will soon return to place this apparent chaos in order. This sense of being in process supersedes any impression that the final product is unfinished. Besant's methods are so open-ended that we accept as fact a scene's state of chaos in the act of being ordered as the work's salient point. One can move from print to print and drawing to drawing with the same sense of adventure experienced picking one's way through the rubble of a construction site.

With his recent series of *Diagrams* and *Sites,* Derek Besant has abandoned an exclusively two-dimensional format in favour of a stacking and folding of rectangular planes. His orchestration of subject and space is highly influenced by his studio life. In a recent interview, he explains, "I find the way I live my life is about the studio here. You see I move things around, pile things up, and lean things up against the

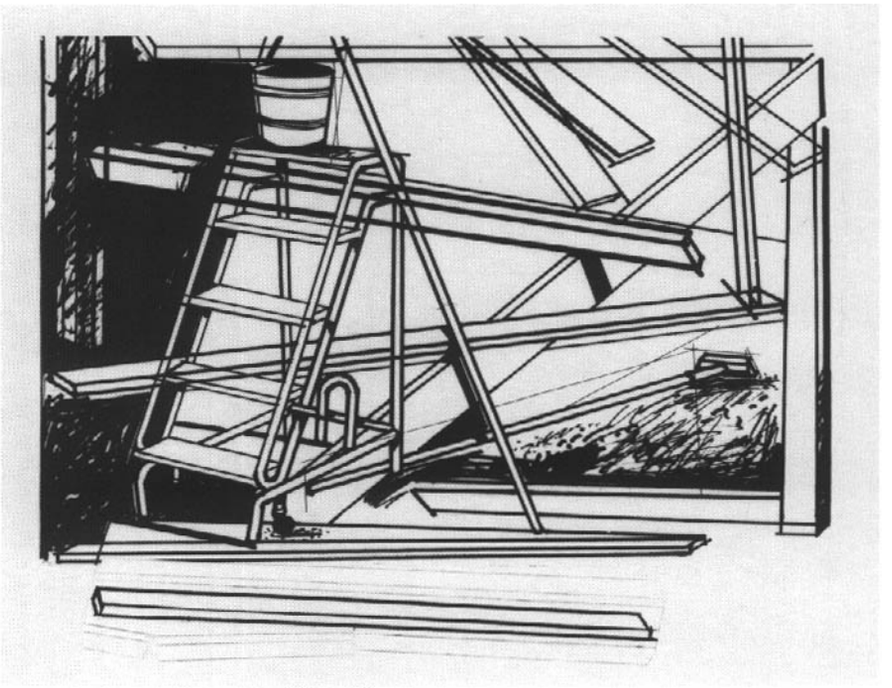
Derek Besant
Steep
Drawing
45 x 45 x 10 cm
1986



Derek Besant
Diagram III
Etching
46 × 61 cm
1986



Derek Besant
Diagram I
Etching
46 × 61 cm
1986



wall. The work is very true to how I organize my own space."[1] Besant's subjects are inspired by the architectural setting, in particular the builder's construction site or the dishevelment of the artist's own studio.

Besant is aware that his leaning ladders, stacked luggage, and tumbling two by fours will visually break our normal pattern of movement and sense of equilibrium. As viewers of art, we have become accustomed to, and basically feel more comfortable with, the gridded path of one-point perspective, so Besant's studio imbroglio would normally be skirted rather than be something we would attempt to pass through. Besant's drawings and prints immediately challenge our sense of spatial balance, while, at the same time, encouraging us to regain our equilibrium by moving through the work fold by fold, fixing the objects in the tumultuous space until we right ourselves.

Preceding the *Diagrams* and the *Sites,* from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, Besant produced a series of watercolours. Hauntingly beautiful and precise, these watercolours of vacant stairwells, corridors, and escalators are bathed in stillness and remain coolly static and illusionistically fixed to the two-dimensional. Now, with his series of *Diagrams* and *Sites,* Besant has agitated space. The cerebral watercolours have been replaced by kinetically charged constructions. Both physically and perceptually, these new works leap outward toward the viewer rather than visually receding away. Furthermore, this move from a purely two-dimensional illusionism has been accompanied by a sense of active involvement with the physical environment. The collaged protruding paper and cardboard imbricated throughout the work allows us to identify quickly with the mechanics as well as with the illusion these constructions produce.

Derek Besant's move from an exclusively two-dimensional domain to his current series of planar constructions is not dissimilar to the development of analytical cubism, which began with drawings and

Notes

1. Nancy Townshend, interview with Derek Besant, *Besant/ Sites* (London, England: Canada House Cultural Centre Gallery, 1987), p. 15.

Derek Besant
Diagram II
Etching
46 × 61 cm
1986

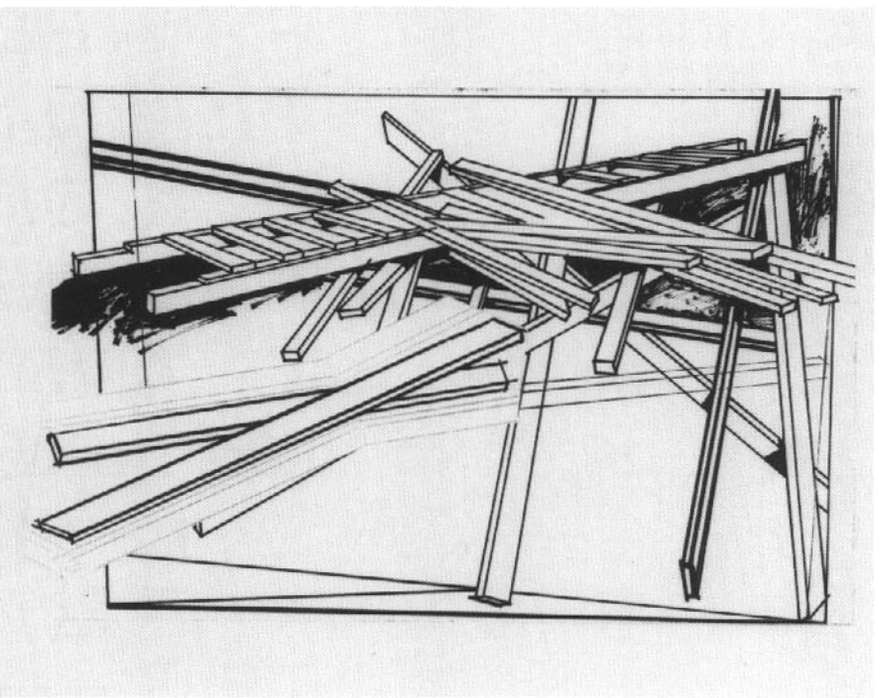
Derek Besant
Diagram IV
Etching
46 × 61 cm
1986

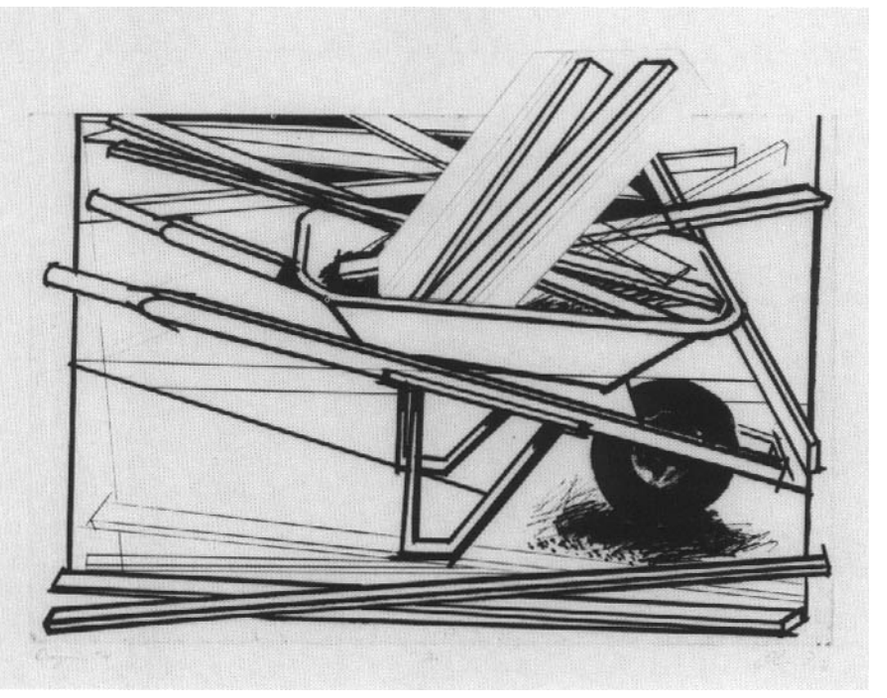
paintings and culminated with Picasso's famous planar construction *Guitar* of 1912. Fashioned from a piece of sheet metal, a tin can, and a wire, Picasso's *Guitar* defined volume by the folding and overlapping of flat planes. Likewise, Besant articulates space and volume by the continued use of perspective as drawn upon the flat plane and by the three-dimensional projections and recessions of cardboard that has been cut and folded.

Besant has also begun to challenge the rectilinear format by allowing collaged additions to spill beyond the framing edge. In *Diagram/China Beach #5,* an intaglio from 1986, lines parallel and lines tangent are represented by a shattered pile of lumber. Two by fours are sent scattered through space like so many pickup sticks tossed in the air. Only the canoe resting upon the sawhorses seems to counterbalance the visual explosion, and two pieces of drawn lumber collaged to the face of the print fall out of the picture plane and, in the process, disrupt the integrity of the framing edge.

Derek Besant's drawings and prints are becoming increasingly sculptural. As a support for his planar constructions, he has recently switched from the white museum board of the *Diagrams* to the brown corrugated cardboard of the *Site* works. The corrugated cardboard has the added feature of thickness without any loss of flexibility. This pliable material allows Besant to bend, fold, and cut as he wishes, as well as draw upon the flat surfaces and shade to create the illusionism of the two-dimensional plane.

Ultimately, the success of the *Diagrams* and *Sites* can be attributed to Besant's ability to activate the surface of his two-dimensional planes while projecting his cut and folded papers into the third dimension. Rather than holding back at arms length, he invites our participation. Now, with the inclusion of his most recent prints, he invites us to physically reassemble the print into a three-dimensional paper sculpture, thus allowing us to experience first hand his unique process of architectural origami.





Sarah Yates

Sarah Yates is a Toronto writer, who has written on such diverse subjects as computer training and the history of the Royal Alexandra Theatre. Her major publications include *A Street Guide to Artists' Survival* and *Toronto Then and Now,* co-written with J. Clarence Duff.

THE DILEMMA OF DEFINITION: THE ORIGINAL PRINT AND THE REPRODUCTION

A satisfactory definition of the limited edition print has long eluded printmakers. Since 1890, the evolution of photographic halftone illustrations and other commercial print technology has created the potential to produce high-quality reproductions of any image existing in another form.

Print technology has become increasingly sophisticated, making facsimiles, reproductions, and photocopies more readily available. These are often accompanied by sophisticated and creative marketing techniques which baffle and confuse a buying public. What is a print and what is a reproduction?

Though many artists argue that definition and documentation are antithetical to their work as artists, any of those exhibiting and selling in the marketplace are already affected by the caveat emptor aspect of the print market.[1]

In Windsor, Ontario (May 1984), a lawsuit brought against the group of professional visual artists known as Canadian Artists Representation Ontario (CARO) and three of its artist/officers by Museum Editions Limited seemed likely to resolve the issue legally. The crux of the dispute was the difference between an original print and a reproduction.

CARO Windsor had been informed of a co-publishing venture in which the Art Gallery of Windsor had contracted with the privately owned company, Museum Editions Limited, to make photoreproductions of seven well-known paintings from the gallery's permanent collection, including the work of five artists already dead. These works, offered for sale as "handmade prints," were advertised for sale for prices between $200 and $465.

The problem was in the promotional literature which accompanied the offering. The brochure cover read, "Just tell them it's an Original Museum Edition." Inside, the copy made frequent use of words like "original," "handmade print," and "limited edition"—phrases with commonly accepted meanings in the art world. No mention was made of the fact that these were reproductions.

As CARO's letter to the president of the board of directors of the Art Gallery of Windsor explained, "... the Gallery is lending its endorsement to a marketing process which is extremely deceptive in promoting photo-mechanical reproductions of works of art... as 'hand-made limited edition *prints.*'"[2]

At a meeting with the gallery's board of directors, CARO Windsor's spokesperson David Renaud stated his objections clearly. Later, he allowed the board to copy his speaking notes.

These same notes provided the substance for a writ issued to David Renaud, Cyndra MacDowell, and Blair Sharpe as members of CARO, to the organization of CARO, and to CARO Windsor, accusing them of libel and defamy of character of Museum Editions Limited (MEL). The writ also cited them for inducing the Art Gallery of Windsor to break its contract with MEL. Damages were set at $11.5 million.

"Clearly it was a scare tactic which backfired. The protagonists expected the artists to run and hide, but instead the defendants became the aggressors," explained lawyer Thomas Lockwood, Q.C.

"We countered by identifying the issue as, What is a print? The word has very specific use in the art world, and this word was being misused.

"We needed to have a trial after which the judge would make a decision stating publicly recognized definitions of the original limited edition print and reproduction."[3]

The lawsuit attracted widespread interest and support for the artists, especially from other artists working in the medium of printmaking. Many recognized the need for some clarification in the marketplace, where questionable practices had already begun to impugn the credibility of their own original prints.

But the instigation of the suit halted all public discussion by the artists until the lawsuit had been settled. After a year, the plaintiff had disappeared and on 17 June 1985 the court dismissed the action, awarding the defendants' costs.

Despite widespread interest and pleas for a resolution to the issue by professionals in the field, the matter remained without legal clarification. No costs were ever paid to the defendants, nor was a verdict rendered which might have set a precedent and laid the groundwork for the government to draft legislation protecting artists, dealers, and collectors in the printmaking field.

In Canada, there is still no protective legislation in place, although on 15 May 1987 the federal government announced that all "limited edition prints should be exempt from federal sales tax."[4] In the same release, they announced their intention to develop an appropriate definition of an original print.

The Art Multiples Disclosure Law was passed in New York State in 1981 to cover "those works as Multiples and applies only to those Multiples which cost over $100 exclusive of frame."[5] Similar legislation had already been passed in California in 1970, in Illinois in 1972, in Maryland in 1975, and in Hawaii in 1978, which required buyers of prints to be provided with the following information: the name of the artist and the year printed (as nearly accurate as possible for prints older than 1950); the medium or process which produced the multiple; whether or not the master was created during the artist's life; the total number in the edition, including the number of studio and artist's proofs when applicable; and whether or not the print is a restrike issued posthumously or made and signed by the artist during the artist's lifetime.

Some variations occur in the specifics of each law. In Canada, there is no unanimous commitment to this type of legislation. The Print and Drawing Council of Canada has recommended that all artists issue documentation sheets to accompany prints being sold or exhibited publicly. This action acknowledges public confusion resulting from the multiplicity of terms currently in use to describe original limited edition prints and the various techniques by which they have been created. The council has developed its

Notes

1. The modern print market born in the 1950s was estimated to be worth in excess of $10 million annually by the 1970s. Robert S. Warshaw, "But is it Art?", *Art & The Law* (February, March 1975), p. 3.
2. Cyndra MacDowell, executive director, and Blair Sharpe, spokesperson, CARO, to Molly Briggs, president, board of directors, the Art Gallery of Windsor, 17 June 1974.
3. Thomas J. Lockwood, Q.C., 1987: personal interview.
4. Government of Canada, news release/communique, Ottawa, 15 May 1987, p. 2.
5. Philip Trager and Paul Berg, New York Art Multiples Disclosure Law, New York, 1981.
6. Author unknown, *Print News* 2, no. 3 (June–July 1980).
7. In 1844, William Henry Fox Talbot published the initial instalment of the first book illustrated with photographically reproduced images, *The Pencil of Nature.* Lee D. Witkin and Barbara London, *The Photographer Collector's Guide* (Boston and New York: Graphic Society, 1979).

own documents for the purpose. Open Studio, Toronto's professional printmaking studio, keeps similar records for all works in its archives and issues them to all purchasers of work published by the studio.

The artists themselves are divided in their acceptance of this principle. As Gustav von Groschwitz stated in the catalogue *International Prints 1962* (Cincinnati Art Museum), "Artists will not allow rules to be imposed on them by others. However, they should agree on and publish their own definitions and rules through their national and international organizations. This must be done now before misconceptions are firmly fixed in the public mind that it will take years to eradicate."

"These are the kinds of problems which arise from the collision of artistic ethics and the capitalist system, an inevitable conflict between the aesthetic bases of art and the financial superstructure which is the art market."[6]

What part should the market play in determining the worth of art? In his book, *Prints and Visual Communication,* William Ivins Jr. theorizes that the context of a work is critically important.

In the fifteenth century, prints began to pervade the life and thought of western Europe. When the handmade woodcut disappeared from books and was replaced in the mid-nineteenth century by the photomechanically reproduced image, little note was taken of the impact of this change.[7]

In earlier centuries, art served an essential role, first, as religious imagery and, often, as the only visual imagery publicly accessible.[8] As art lost this role in either book publishing or religion, it assumed a role as a commodity. This change compromised its integral value and enabled an arbitrary monetary figure to assume importance in the judgement of its worth.

Today, many corporations have become major art collectors in Canada and are so influenced by the concept of art as a precious object that they will not purchase prints. They assume their value is compromised by the multiplicity of the original image. This belief is difficult to combat when both artists and dealers practise in an unregulated marketplace.

Accordingly, the Professional Art Dealers Association of Canada (PADAC), the marketing arm of the art world, has drawn up and accepted its own definition of both an original print and a reproduction. These are accepted by all major arts organizations in the country. The original print is:

> . . . an image that has been conceived by the artist as a print and executed solely as a print, usually in a numbered edition, and signed by the artist. Each print in the edition is an original, printed from a plate, stone, screen, block or other matrix created for that purpose. There is no one original print from which copies are made. Each print is inked and pulled individually; it is a multi-original medium. The number of prints in the edition is decided by the artist. The sequential numbering provides an accounting for the number of prints in the edition. Each print has a specific number; i.e. 12/25 (The edition is 25, the particular print is number 12).
>
> The only exception to this is the "drypoint" explained in a later paragraph. It is interesting to note that the numbering of prints has only recently become a standard convention. Early prints were usually not numbered or signed; in some cases the artist might have signed the plate or stone itself, with no pencilled signature on each print.
>
> A reproduction (although often called a print) has no relationship whatsoever to an original print. It is a copy of a work of art conceived by the artist in another medium (painting, watercolour, etc.). The reproduction has usually been made by photomechanical means. Numbering and signing a reproduction does not change its essence; it is still a reproduction of a painting, watercolour, etc. It is not an original print.[9]

In 1960, the U.S. Treasury Department, le Chambre Syndicale de l'Estampe, and the International Association of Plastic Arts affiliated with UNESCO accepted as their definition of originals those prints in which "the artist alone has created the master image in or upon the plate, stone, woodblock, or other material for the purpose of creating the print; the print is made from the said material by the artist or pursuant to his directions; and finally, the finished print is approved by the artist."[10]

The issue is complicated by a number of factors in addition to the artists' dislike of the imposition of rules or limitations on their creativity. Between 1959 and 1974, the Inuit in Cape Dorset produced more than forty-eight thousand prints under

1,058 titles and catalogued in fifteen editions.[11]

Inuit artists draw original images which are purchased, curated, and later traced on lithographic stone and printed by other artist/printers working in the same co-operative. Seldom does the artist draw the image directly on the stone, nor does the artist necessarily approve it after printing. All drawings are stored in the archives and no other prints are pulled from this image. This system of working differs markedly from that of most of Canada's southern artists.

The market for Inuit prints is strictly controlled by the Eskimo Arts Co-operative. No challenge to a print's originality has been raised. Does this alter the terms of reference which define the original limited edition print?

The difference is one of philosophy, according to artist/printmaker Don Holman, who has spent a good deal of time printmaking with the Inuit: "To the Inuit, the concept of ownership is a form of sharing. So the issue of who prints whose image and what is original is not relevant in that context."[12]

As Ivins suggests, the *context* of a print is important: "The subject matter of a print, like its purpose and the social group at which it is directed, has always had a great deal to do with how it is made."[13]

To Holman, the critical issue is "integrity and intent." Artist Richard Sewell, co-founder of Open Studio, concurs. As he wrote in the catalogue *Open Studio: Ten Years* (Toronto, 1980), "It is the intent of the visual statement that suggests the difference between an original print and a reproduction. If the intent is to replicate or suggest an image best created as a drawing, a painting, or even hand lettering, it does not matter whether the technique used is hand drawn or photomechanical. The intent and the result is a reproduction. . . . The intent to make a reproduction is an achievement of printing, but the intent to make an original print is an achievement of art."

The issue is not whether the image is drawn, photomechanically reproduced, photocopied, or achieved by offset lithography, nor is there any one process necessarily reproductive.

The photomechanical reproduction of the image, originally introduced as a labour-saving device, has come into creative use by many of Canada's most innovative printmakers since the late sixties and early 1970s.

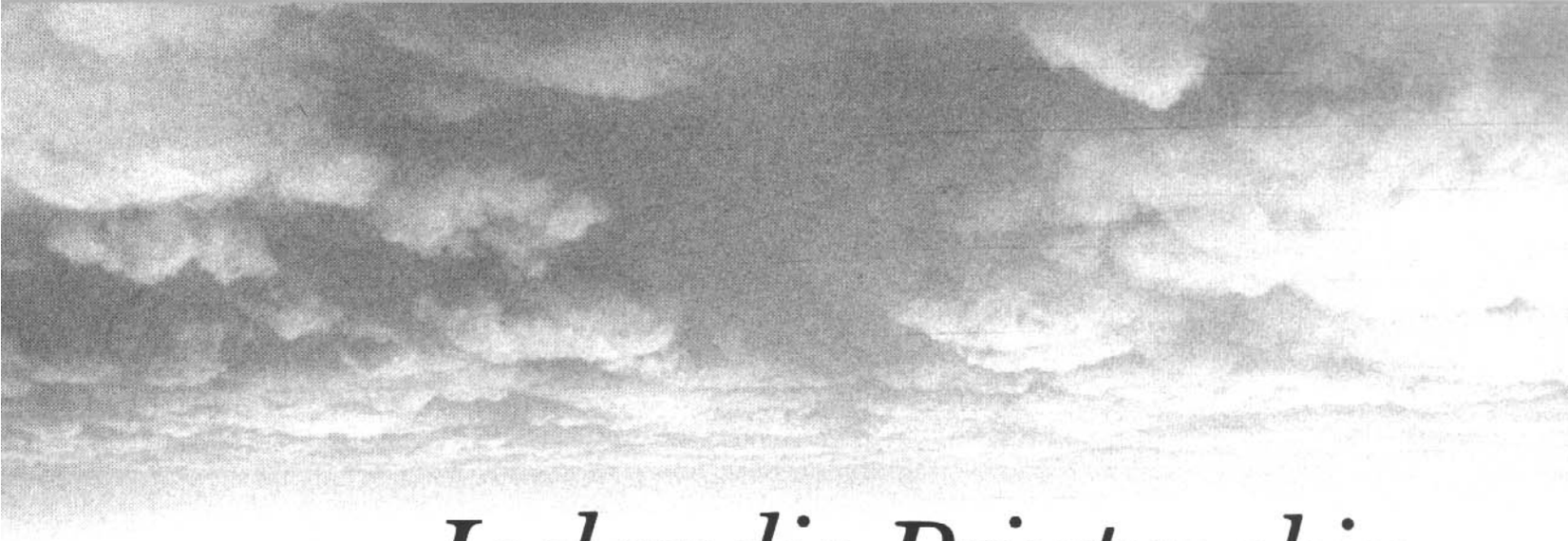
"When a print is completed, one considers the elements and the processes used in an aesthetic evaluation of an original work. However, upon completion of a reproduction, the elements of process must be denied since they can only be evaluated against the original they have been used to emulate," comments E.J. Howorth.

"Using the elements in a reproductive manner to reproduce the essence of what we had before rather than taking the same elements and using them to create an original piece identifies the final difference between the reproduction and the original limited edition print."[14]

Jennifer Dickson agrees with this perspective:

> The original print is a creative statement that could not have been executed in any other medium. All means for creating this multiple image are valid; the only crime is the inability to make up one's mind. Some of the problem may also reside in using technique to prop up the mediocre image.
>
> But since 1974 the situation in Canada has been confused and muddy. Certain dealers and certain artists have used the situation to their own ends and we are now reaping a bitter harvest from all of this.
>
> The dilemma created by a lack of definition has been fostered by practices used with a certain deliberateness by both dealers and artists who fail to act in a professional manner.
>
> If artists would work toward a commonly accepted definition which could be legislated by the government, the dilemma could be resolved and printmaking could resume its rightful place in the art world today.[15]

8. Margaret R. Miles, *Image as Insight* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985).
9. Professional Art Dealers' Association, *Prints, . . . Recommendations, Guidelines and Definition Proposed by the Print Committee* (Toronto, 1982, revised 1984).
10. Joshua Binion Cahn, *Prints, What is an Original Print?,* Principles recommended by the Print Council of America (New York, 1967).
11. Mary M. Craig, "The Cape Dorset Prints," *The Beaver,* Spring 1975, p. 23.
12. Don Holman, 1987: personal communication.
13. William M. Ivins, Jr., *Prints and Visual Communication* (Cambridge and London: M.I.T. Press, 1982), p. 28.
14. E.J. Howorth, 1987: personal interview.
15. Jennifer Dickson, lecture at Open Studio, Toronto, 24 October 1985.



Icelandic Printmaking

& GRAPHICA ATLANTICA

Valgerdur Hauksdóttir

Valgerdur Hauksdóttir was educated in Iceland and the United States, holding a MFA, University of Illinois, 1983. Now residing in Iceland, she heads the printmaking department at the College of Arts and Crafts, Reykjavik, and chairs the Icelandic Printmakers' Association.

In June 1987, the Icelandic Printmakers Association and the City of Reyjkavik presented Graphica Atlantica, a symposium and international exhibition of contemporary prints focusing on recent developments in printmaking in the Western world. The curatorial committee carefully researched printmaking in each country and invited ninety-nine artists to exhibit up to five works each. The resulting show of over four hundred prints was hung at the Kjarvalstadir Museum, the major exhibition hall in Reyjkavik. The city's cultural committee published a catalogue and awarded prizes equaling US $5,000, through an international jury. Karen Kunc of the United States received the first award and Yngve Naesheim, Norway, and Jacek Sroka, Poland, second and third prizes, respectively.

Approximately eighty Icelandic and foreign artists and lecturers from each participating country attended the symposium, where they exchanged practical information and discussed theoretical issues of interest to printmakers in the West.

Graphica Atlantica was one of the largest exhibitions held in Iceland and was the most ambitious and extensive event organized by the Icelandic print artists. Significantly, neither the ideas presented in the works nor the issues discussed by symposium speakers were unfamiliar to Icelandic artists.

Geographically isolated but in the mainstream of influences, Icelanders are drawn to international events of all kinds. It is common for Icelandic artists to travel in order to broaden their experience, and many complete their education at universities and academies abroad. Of those who finally settle in other countries, most return to Iceland frequently to exhibit their work and maintain contact with families and colleagues, which, in turn, serves to acquaint Icelandic culture with the newest developments abroad. Other artists who feel a need to remain in close contact with their heritage, and the influences both cultural and environmental that are the source of their expression, return and settle permanently in their homeland. Well aware of the international art scene, they elect to remain at a distance, isolated in a sense but in a better position to effect the art of the nation directly.

The origins of printing in Iceland can be traced as far back as 1575, with the establishment of the first commercial printing house. It was not until the twentieth century, however, that Icelandic artists began to use printing as a fine art. In 1954, the Icelandic Printmaker's Association was

founded by artists who had gained experience with printmaking abroad. The association was revitalized in 1969 and, today, has forty-one members. They qualify by holding advanced degrees in printmaking or by having established reputations and extensive experience in the medium.

Central to the aims of the association is the introduction of Icelandic prints in the country and abroad. Since 1969, it has organized biannual exhibitions of members' work in Reykjavik, alternated with publishing suites of prints by members. Exhibitions of Icelandic prints have also been shown in Germany, France, the United States, and Japan, as well as in the Scandinavian countries. A member of the Nordic Graphic Union (including Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland), the IPA has participated in their biennale since 1969. Today, a number of Icelandic printmakers have international reputations and have received awards at major international print biennales.

As yet, there are no collective or contract print shops in Iceland. Most artists prefer to establish their own studios, usually specializing in one of the print media. Intaglio, relief, linocut, and screenprinting are the most favoured mediums, but all techniques are taught and the imagery and methods of expression are extremely varied, ranging from traditional to experimental.

Two distinct influences are clearly visible in a number of artists' work, which can be defined as distinctly Icelandic: Icelandic literature and the landscape. The sagas, Iceland's ancient manuscripts, are held in high regard. These books, beautifully illustrated, are art objects themselves. Literature and the written word are all departure points for a number of artists, and bookmaking and the influence of the book format is fascinating to others. The influence of the natural environment can be felt in some of the strongest works. The powerful forces of nature, so dominant in this sparsely populated country, dwarf man's technology, and the landscape as image becomes a metaphor for fundamental issues of existence.

Recently in Iceland, as elsewhere, distinctions between media have been questioned, and younger artists are hesitant to be labelled solely as printmakers. Many of them work in various mediums, often bringing new elements to the field of printmaking. The result has been to extend traditional approaches while remaining true to the fundamental concept of the original print.

The following statements by Sigrid Valtingojer, Thórdur Hall, Ragnheidur Jónsdóttir, Jóhanna Boga, and Svala Sigurleifsdóttir were made in response to a series of questions centred on attitudes about contemporary printmaking: Is printmaking in a state of revival or rigor mortis? How does work in print relate to new work in other media? Is printmaking capable of inventing new forms? What are their individual reasons for pursuing work in printmaking and what most influences their current work? (Walter Jule)

Sigrid Valtingojer
Landscape VII
Etching
35×80 cm
1986

Sigrid Valtingojer
Landscape I
Etching
30×80 cm
1986

SIGRID

Sigrid Valtingojer was born in Czechoslovakia in 1935 and settled in Iceland in 1961. She studied printmaking at the College of Fine Arts in Reykjavik from 1975 to 1979. She has exhibited in a number of international print exhibitions and has won awards at the Hanga Annual, Tokyo, 1986, and the International Biennale of Prints in Wakayama and the Premio Internationàle Bièlla per L'Incisione in 1987.

Why do I choose the print medium? There are many reasons, some of which I am aware and others of which I am unaware. There is the element of accident involved, too. Now, printmaking is a part of me.

I am fascinated by the old techniques of etching and aquatint. It has been more or less the same process for centuries. To me, it is a contrast to today's way of life and its mass production. Preserving the old techniques—one can see I am a traditionalist—is important, but I don't feel in conflict with today's culture.

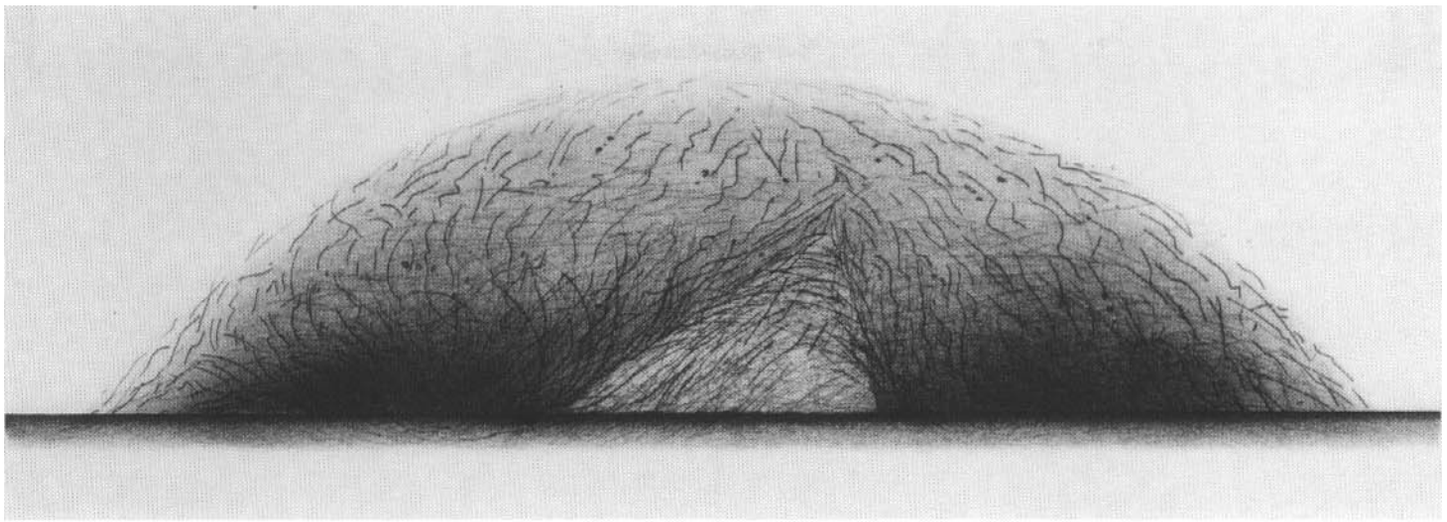
I can't see a renaissance or the opposite in printmaking. There are always trends, and, in Iceland, we do have our own climate and trends. Buying prints is still very popular, which is encouraging. But I suppose there will always be a group of artists, fighting with copper and zinc plates and feeling sometimes like a fool because there are easier ways to express oneself. I like the long ceremony. I need the distance from the paper, the stopover of the plate, the time. I am not a spontaneous person, so the ritual with the plate, the colophonium, and the paper helps me to forget my fear.

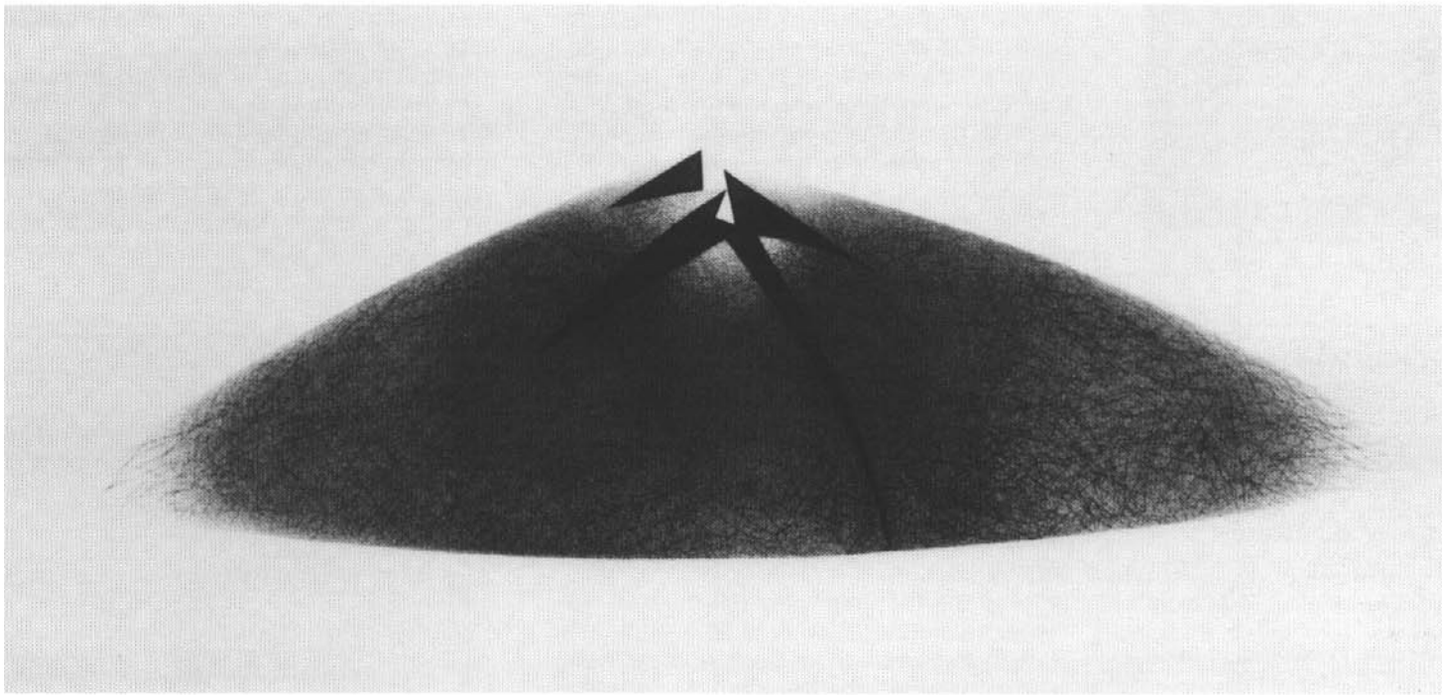
Working in Iceland has been stimulating to me in two ways: the fantastic landscape and the enormous interest by the people in art. On the other hand, there are limits—the Icelandic population is about 260,000—and it is very important for us to exhibit abroad, travel abroad, and share experiences with foreign artists.

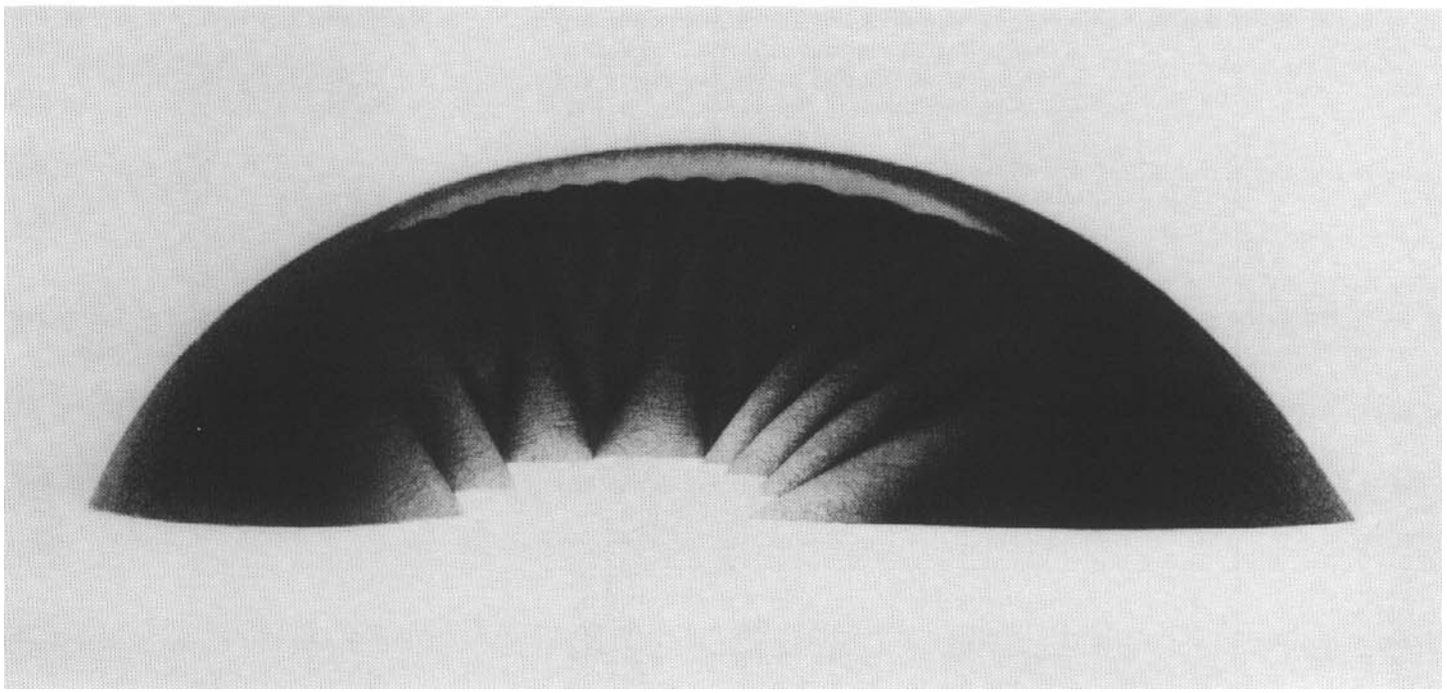
Looking back, my thinking and feelings were very much influenced by music and literature earlier than by visual arts: Slavic folksongs, Tschechow, Kafka, Japanese woodcuts, the skyscraping gothic churches, and so on.

Since I settled in Iceland in 1962, the untouched nature, the changing of light and darkness have been what most impressed me. In winter, I feel like retiring into convent-like silence for work, until summer releases body and soul with a magic and most extensive brightness.

Sigrid Valtingojer
Landscape V
Etching
30×80 cm
1986







H A L L

THÓRDUR

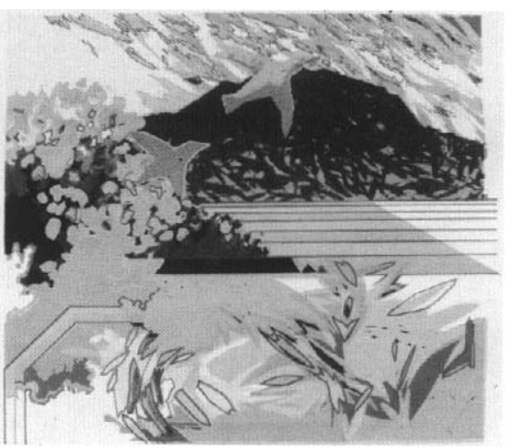
Thórdur Hall was born in Reykjavik in 1949. He studied at the Royal Academy of Art in Stockholm and the Icelandic College of Arts and Crafts where he now teaches. Past president of the Icelandic Printmakers' Association (1978–81), he has participated in their annual exhibitions in Iceland and abroad. International biennales include Baden-Baden, Bradford, Cabo Frio, Fredrikstad, and the Swedish Graphic-triennale in Malmö in 1983. His work is represented in a number of public collections in Iceland.

I work in graphics because the material suits the composition of my pictures and produces the results I seek. Here, I am referring to serigraphy, which is the medium I use most. And I find that graphics make a good complement to painting, in which I also work.

With graphics, as with other art forms, it is natural that evolution should take place and that individual artists should explore the expressive resources of the technique in their own way, generally to the benefit of the medium. Despite the fact that graphics are produced today with practically the same techniques and equipment as in previous ages, there is nothing to indicate that the medium is not still fully valid and full of fresh potential. One of the advantages of graphics is how easy it is to send works between countries and to exhibitions. Also, there is the fact that it is possible to have the same picture on view in several places at once and, even, to produce whole exhibitions in several copies and have them running in several places simultaneously, in three or four different countries. In this respect, graphics, in all their simplicity, come off well compared to all the technology that is needed to transmit pictures of events in the arts, for example, around the world by satellite. International dissemination of graphics in exhibitions has the advantage that more people can enjoy the works, get a glimpse of other cultures, and, for that matter, come to own graphics themselves.

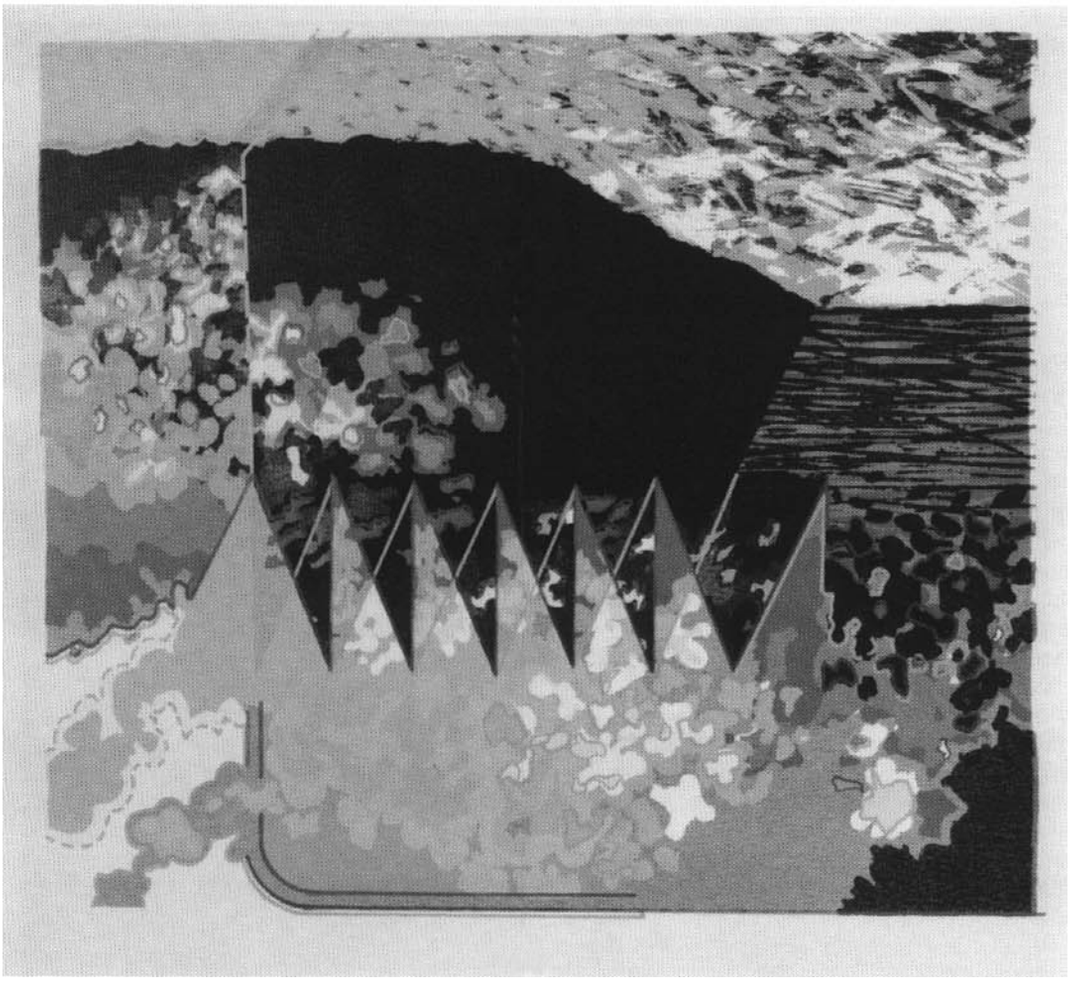
It can be difficult to identify one's formative influences, and even more so to assess one's position in relation to particular artistic movements. When I was a student, pop art was the most influential movement on both sides of the Atlantic and was certainly the strongest influence on those of us who were beginning their careers then.

Working as an artist in Iceland can be rewarding for those who are sensitive to the natural environment. For me, it is important to be in contact with nature and to get out into the country, which I find a rich source of material. Many of my pictures are based on ideas derived from nature, its multiplicity and the interplay of forms and light in different seasons and under different weather conditions. The calm of the uninhabited wasteland, with all its terrifying strength, also has a deep effect on me: it is almost possible to hear the breathing of the living land still in the process of formation.



Thórdur Hall
Harbinger of Spring
Screenprint
22×25 cm
1987

Thórdur Hall
In Green Quiet
Screenprint
22 × 25 cm
1987



Thórdur Hall
Solstice
Screenprint
22 × 25 cm
1987

J Ó N S D Ó T T I R

RAGNHEIDUR

Ragnheidur Jónsdóttir has been exhibiting internationally since 1969. A veteran of all the important graphic biennales and winner of major awards in Cracow, Frechen, Ibiza, and Fredrikstad, she has been extremely influential in the development of printmaking in her country. Her work is represented in major collections, including the Bibliothèque National, Paris; the National Museum, Oslo; and the National Museum, Stockholm. Ragnheidur Jónsdóttir had a solo exhibition at the University of Alberta in 1979.

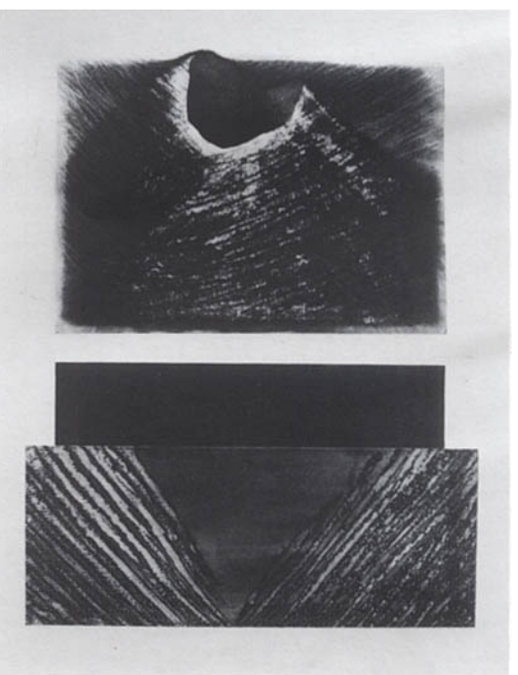
Why does one artist choose painting, another sculpture, the third prints? Some artists work in many different mediums, while others concentrate on one. Painting and sculpture, with their strong colours and structures, can handle distance and a large group of viewers. Prints, on the other hand, need one viewer at a time, because of their size and the quietness that surrounds them. Prints are more related to the book in terms of expression; reading the artist's thoughts and dreams. Questions to take home with you. I like to think of my prints as related to books. Maybe, it is the tradition of Icelandic storytelling. And the making of pictures of books. They undergo certain metamorphoses: pages fold out to reveal how grass sprouts from what is printed, a haystack comes to light under a page, a feather hovers above the book, and other matters are found in this set of pictures—pages are rolled up, wreathed, and covered with grass hair.

For a long time, I worked in many different mediums, painting, drawings, ceramics, until I got introduced to prints. And there it was. Painting always irritated me; I felt as though I was floating on the surface. Etching is the total opposite, a new world in another dimension. I could move, I could fly, like experiencing a book. You're alone in an unknown world, and you wonder what the next page will bring you. In the same sense, the metal plate is an unknown area with a lot of surprises.

Unexpected things force themselves on to the plate unintended, accidents you can't erase. Just as we have to live with our own fingerprints, footprints, lines in our hands, which sometimes reveal more about us than we might care to or want to be known.

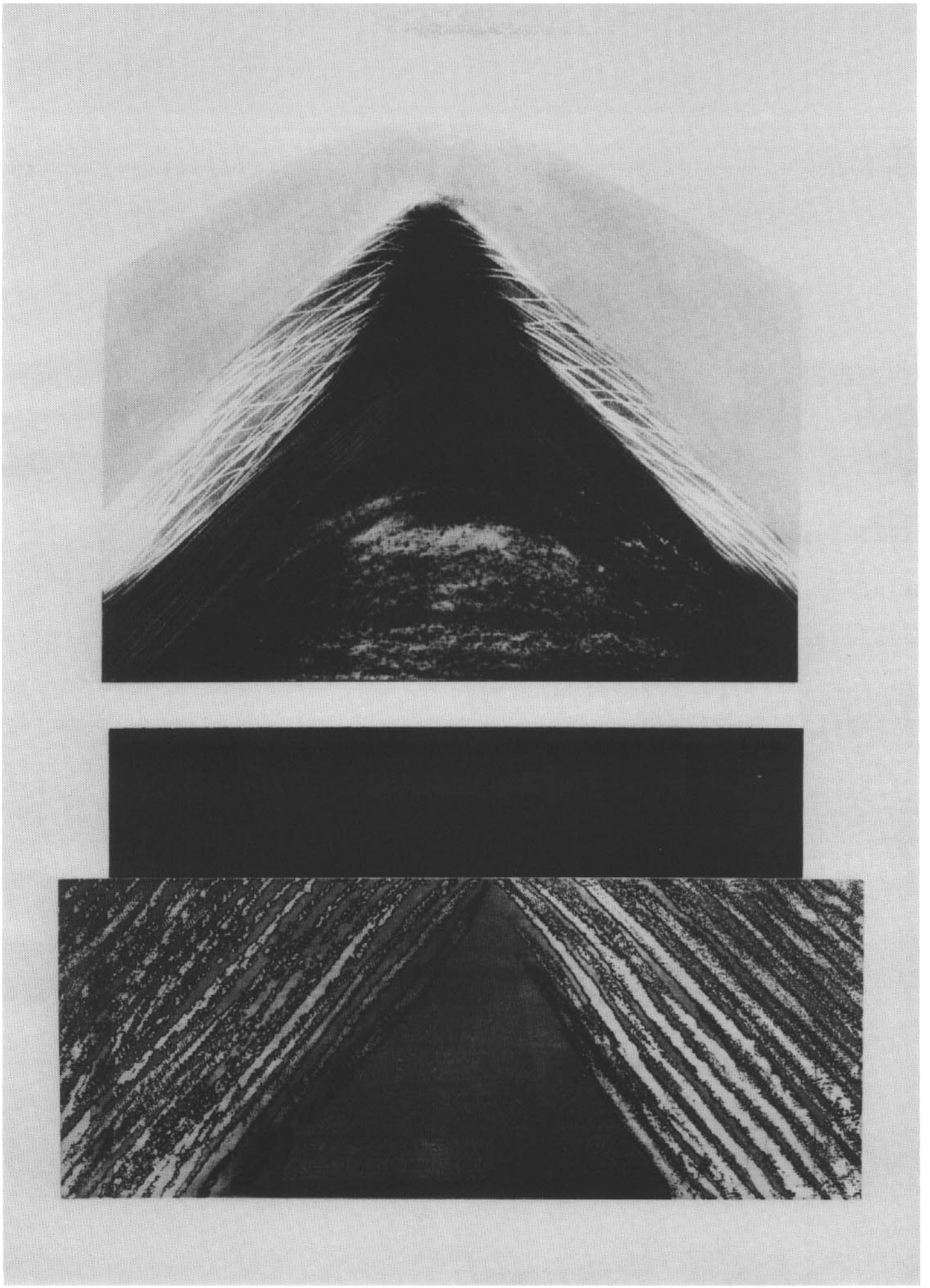
Therefore, printmaking, and art as such, can't become academic. It is an odyssey with no end. Renaissance or rigor mortis? Who is to tell at this time. Twenty years from now we might be able to look back and judge. I'm too close to the present to tell.

What influences my art is my surroundings, my daily life. My feelings. In today's world, the world becomes our daily life. Even though we're geographically isolated living in Iceland, the outside world is at our doorstep, so all those things effect my work as an artist. In my judgement, it is not so important whether or not I'm wrong or right. It is important to be true to myself and to give a mirror image of my thoughts.



Ragnheidur Jónsdóttir
Land II
Etching
80 × 60 cm
1987

Ragnheidur Jónsdóttir
Land I
Etching
80 × 60 cm
1987



B O G A

JÓHANNA

Jóhanna Boga was born in 1944 and studied in art academies in France and Sweden. She has had solo exhibitions in Iceland, Norway, Finland, and Sweden. Group exhibitions include international biennales in Bradford, Ibiza, Frechen, Fredrikstand, and Baden-Baden. Her work is represented in a number of important collections, including the Atheueun Art Museum, Helsinki; the Alvar Aalto Art Museum, Jyväskyla; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

In the sea, in the storm and the calm that follows, in the tremble of the volcano, the presence of the mountain, or the running of the stream, in fire and water, in broken glass or burning wood, in life and death—thus has Icelandic nature provided me with my main source of inspiration. My deepest roots are here in Icelandic culture, although I have always been fascinated by the world out there, as well, and have explored and lived abroad. But I have returned home in the end. There are too many things here which I value too highly to imagine I could leave them behind forever.

For me, printmaking as an art form means that one must have the need to work with the materials and the process one chooses. How the picture or the idea develops is a long process influenced, again, by the medium I use (chalk on paper, oils, or printmaking). To be able to express the mysterious and manifold reasons for the works of life itself, the work must have time to grow and evolve. Two or three years may pass from the first sketch, a period with a number of trials, sketches, and stage proofs, until the final result. To work with print gives the possibility of a new dimension of expression through the mixture of indirect and direct processes. In that way, the technique itself becomes a source of inspiration. Then, it lies within the nature of printmaking to be multiplied. That is also a stimulating factor.

Whatever medium I may choose to work in, the elements that influence my work are always the main issue. I feel the pull of the outside world against the Icelandic reality. Therefore, I travel, but I do return. The same search takes place in my work. To create a work of art is often like going on a journey or a search, where you find things at once new and unexpected, which strike one, at the same time, as strangely familiar.

Jóhanna Boga
Elements I
Lithograph
76×60 cm
1987

SIGURLEIFSDÓTTIR

SVALA

Svala Sigurleifsdóttir was born in Isafjördur, Iceland, in 1950. She received a B.A. from Colorado Women's College in 1976 and an M.F.A. from Pratt Institute, New York, in 1984. She has also studied at the State Art Academy in Oslo, Norway, the Icelandic College of Arts and Crafts, and the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. She has had five solo exhibitions in Iceland and has been in numerous national and international group exhibitions. She lives in Reykjavik.

Svala Sigurleifsdóttir
245.472 Rooms with a Kitchen and Bath
Etching with watercolour
42×56 cm
1986

Once upon a time, it was a dark and stormy night in the cities built of brick houses—WHERE the people can't see the mountains very clearly from the subway, WHERE the sun stubbornly sleeps during the summer nights, WHERE no one understands the language I think in. The fairytale land is elsewhere, reality is here.

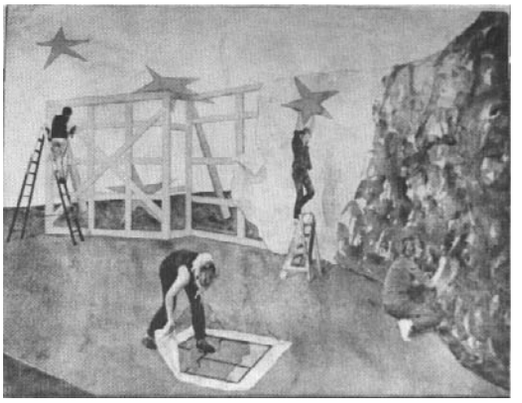
As I write this, Glenn Gould finishes playing a fugue by Bach, and as I turn on the radio Carly Simon is singing, "Don't give me fountains, I need waterfalls." Postmodernism? Well, this is the way so many of us live today, absorbed in high and low culture. I love Bach and I love the Eurythmics. I love Proust and I love Peanuts comics. I love Kurosawa and I love Woody Allen. Today's culture is not only "Dallas" and "Dynasty" but also Bergman and Bertolucci, Fellini and Tarkovski. The mixture of high and low, ancient and modern culture is very complex and chaotic. The complexity intoxicates me, and I make pictures trying to understand the chaos, trying to transfer the chaos into a kind of personal order.

My reality is here in the global village of Reykjavik. What makes Iceland feel like home is the feeling that the fundamental forces of life are close. The fire. The ice. The coexistence of fire and ice. If I make a waterfall a symbol of those natural forces, a fountain is a symbol of culture. When living close to a waterfall, it is easy to make a fountain. Living by the fountains of New York or Berlin lets no one make waterfalls.

I make paintings, drawings, photographs, and prints. I make the prints neither because of the market nor the possibility of political propaganda but because etching gives me ways of expressing myself that no other medium does. Partly, I have been using photographs in my prints. I like the feeling of reality that photographs falsely give us.

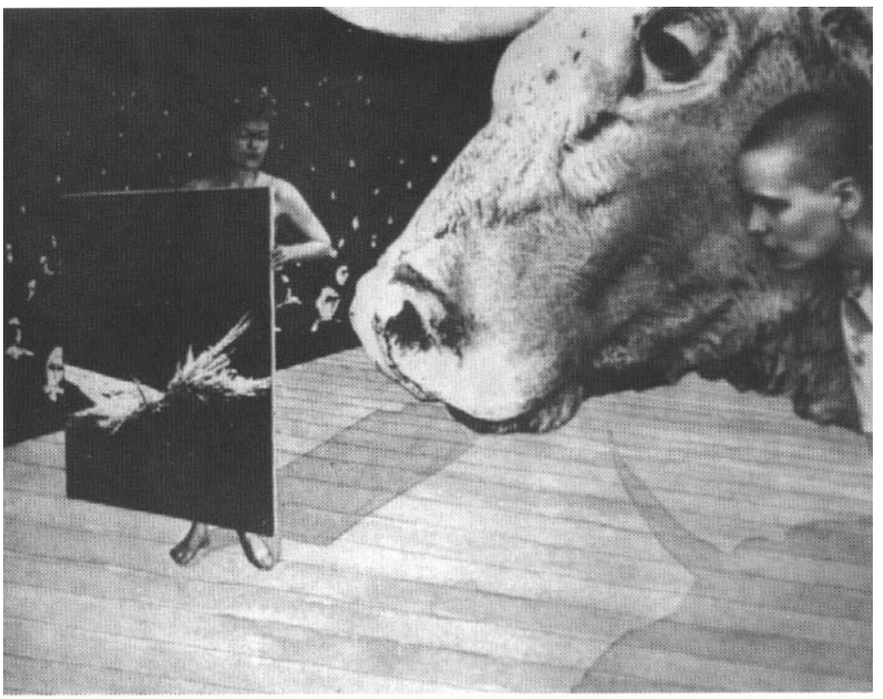
Artists have shaped my vision—artists like René Magritte, Frida Kahlo, Henri Rousseau, or Artemisia Gentileschi—but so has music, literature, photography, and art history. More than many artists, Lucy Lippard, Arnold Hauser, and Joseph Campbell have changed the way I see. Even epics have strongly affected how I view art. I read *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* as a kid, and now I feel that Greek sculpture is the remains of my childhood fantasy. And Homer's myths have stayed with me. In literature and the arts, I am fascinated by the mythomaniacs. Even in photography, I like Duane Michals the most.

In the end, there is no absolute truth, no absolute reality except FIRE and ICE. The rest is interpretation.



Svala Sigurleifsdóttir
Who is She?
Etching
26×30 cm
1984

Svala Sigurleifsdóttir
A Handful of Good Supporting Players
Etching
26×30 cm
1984



Soren Nygard

A REVIEW

KAREN DUGAS *in* LJUBLJANA

> It is not by painting that photography touches art, but by theatre.
> Roland Barthes

Since the early eighties, Karen Dugas has startled the print community with her powerful and technically ambitious work. She has shown in most of the major international print exhibitions, winning awards in Miami, Boston, Philadelphia, and Seoul, Korea. In 1985, she became the first Canadian artist to win a Prix by the Jury at the prestigious 17th International Print Biennale in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia. As part of the award, she was invited with other winners, Joe Tilson, Susan Rothenberg, Harumi Sonoyama, and Kladij Tutta, to present a show of her work at the Rutard Jakopic gallery during the run of the biennale in 1987.

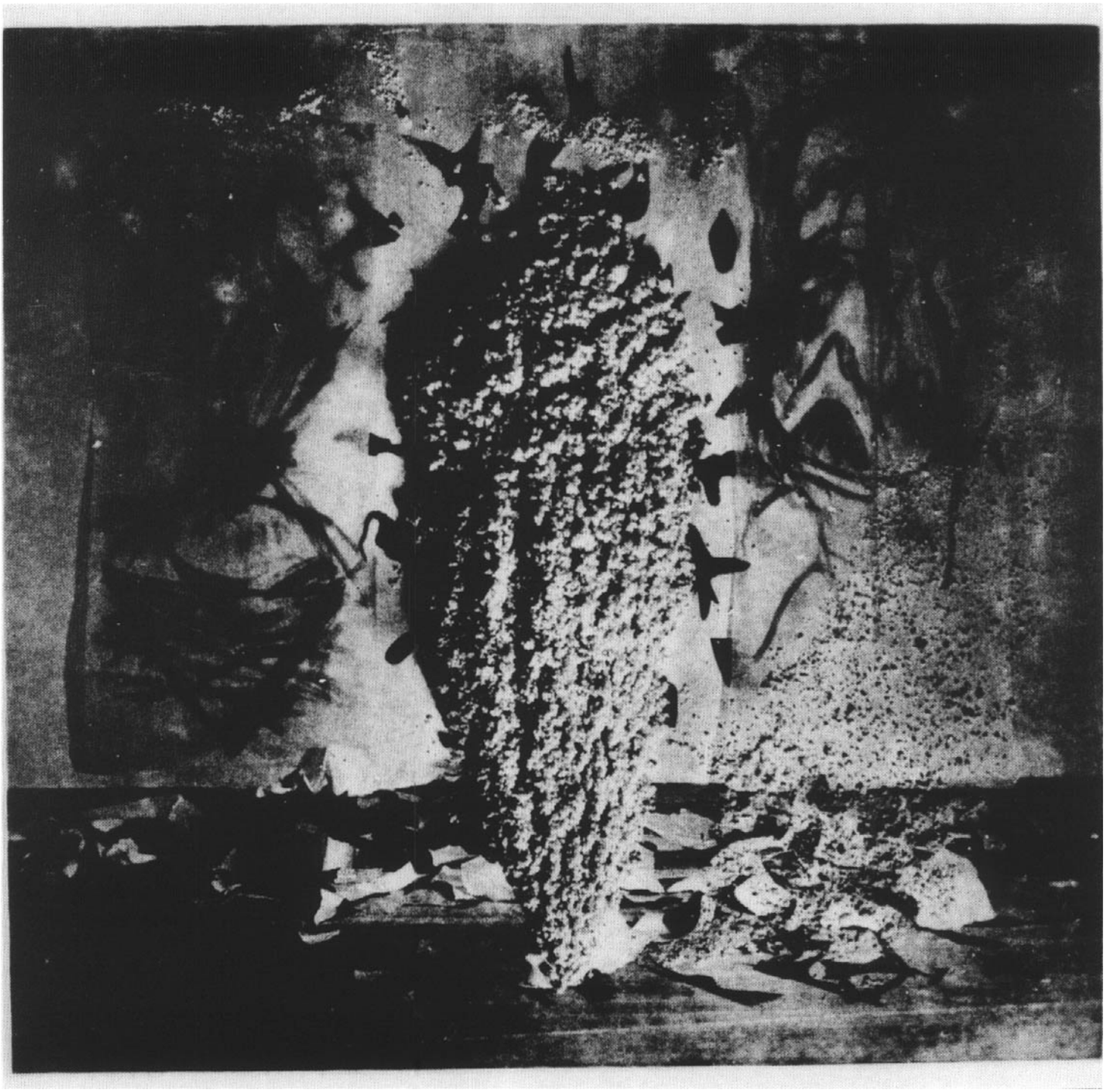
Dugas's exhibition, her first solo effort outside Canada, contained work of substantial visual and psychological impact. Formally elegant, simultaneously compelling, and strangely distanced, the seventeen, sometimes huge (up to one hundred by two hundred centimetres), photo-etchings present images of machines or mechanical interiors, female figures, and biomorphic fragments with unblinking intensity.

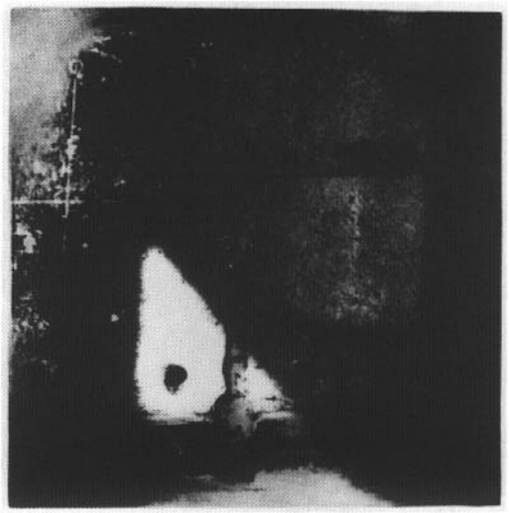
Dugas was raised Roman Catholic and claims to have been fascinated by her childhood fears of religious images of good and evil. Thus aroused, her willing imagination saw demons at every turn. Her physical vulnerability frightened her. Even the pools of water at the filtration plant where her father worked proved fertile breeding ground for invisible terrors. Now, she says, "I want to understand the nature of fear, how the fear, real or imagined, that we all carry with us, influences our behaviour."

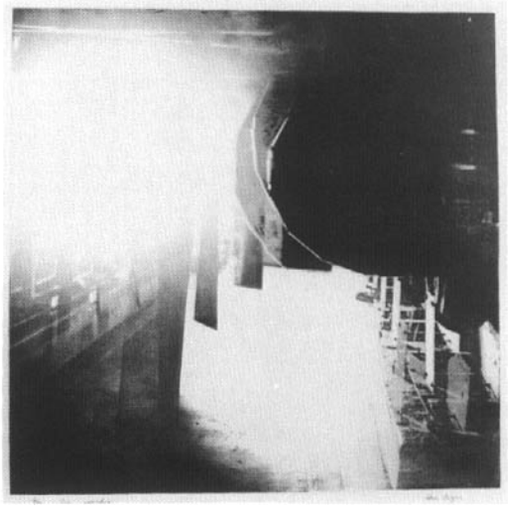
For the earliest work in the exhibition (which is comprised of three distinct series), done while she was still a student,

Soren Nygard is an artist who writes on art. A longtime observer of the international print scene, he was in Ljubljana during the biennale in 1987.

Karen Dugas
Exploding
Etching
45 x 45 cm
1989







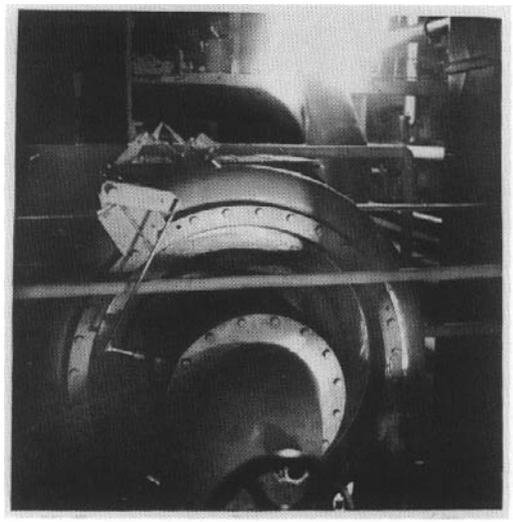
Karen Dugas
Intersecting Matrix
Etching
50 × 65 cm
1980

Karen Dugas
Zero Grounding
Etching
69.5 × 71 cm
1982

Dugas spent nights exploring the miles of service tunnels which circulate heat and power to the buildings on the University of Alberta campus. "During the winter, the whole place is kept alive by the tunnels—the machines," she says, "but most people don't know they exist."

Prints from this period depict an oneiric world of eerie silence, where boilers and walls of pipes have been jostled into a translucent futurist dance by a jerky motion of the camera. Here, machines and the idea of automation stand in for Dugas's fear, but the works' particular resonance derives less from the things we see than from the way light is used. That is not to suggest that light becomes the subject, since it functions more as a kind of atmosphere generating both material and immaterial space.

Appropriately, Bergmanesque tonalities sift and shift volume in a way that suggests the subject may be movement, transience, the flux of existence itself. In the apocalyptic vision of *Zero Grounding* (read, ground zero), light is used typically as both symbol and substance, swelling out of darkness like the flash of an atomic detonation. The skeletal forms momentarily revealed in silhouette are already being vaporized in the searing heat. It is clear Dugas is at home with art history, including the history of photography, as she draws on Renaissance, contemporary, and metaphysical traditions. She is also influenced directly by popular culture and media images, and her eclectic interests range from Lynda Benglis to Vermeer, from William Blake and Odilon Redon to David Lynch (*Eraserhead* is one of her favourite films). Like Lynch (but without his humour), she is intrigued by an imagined secret life of inanimate objects. In some of the most straightforward photographic representations reminiscent of the industrial photographs of Bernd and Hilda Becher, the dense immobility of the image is offset by the suspicion that it's all just too simple, that what we see may not be what we get. The real power of the other may be



waiting just under the skin of the photograph. In all the works, it is the hypnotic gaze of the photo-image that stops you in your tracks. The gritty, even banal machines have undergone a transformation—into something almost sublime. They have become icons of a darker side which if not a palpable other is the greater terror of nothingness, emptiness, the void. These interiors seem to have been stared through, emptied out.

In 1982, dissatisfied with the claustrophobic emotional tone of the machine images, Dugas began creating small tableaus consisting of paper photographs on which she placed palm-sized clay sculptures she calls "internal gestures." Intricately lit and photographed, the images were greatly enlarged, setting the scale adrift. The gestures have a raw, primitive look and function like crude masks without quite suggesting human form.

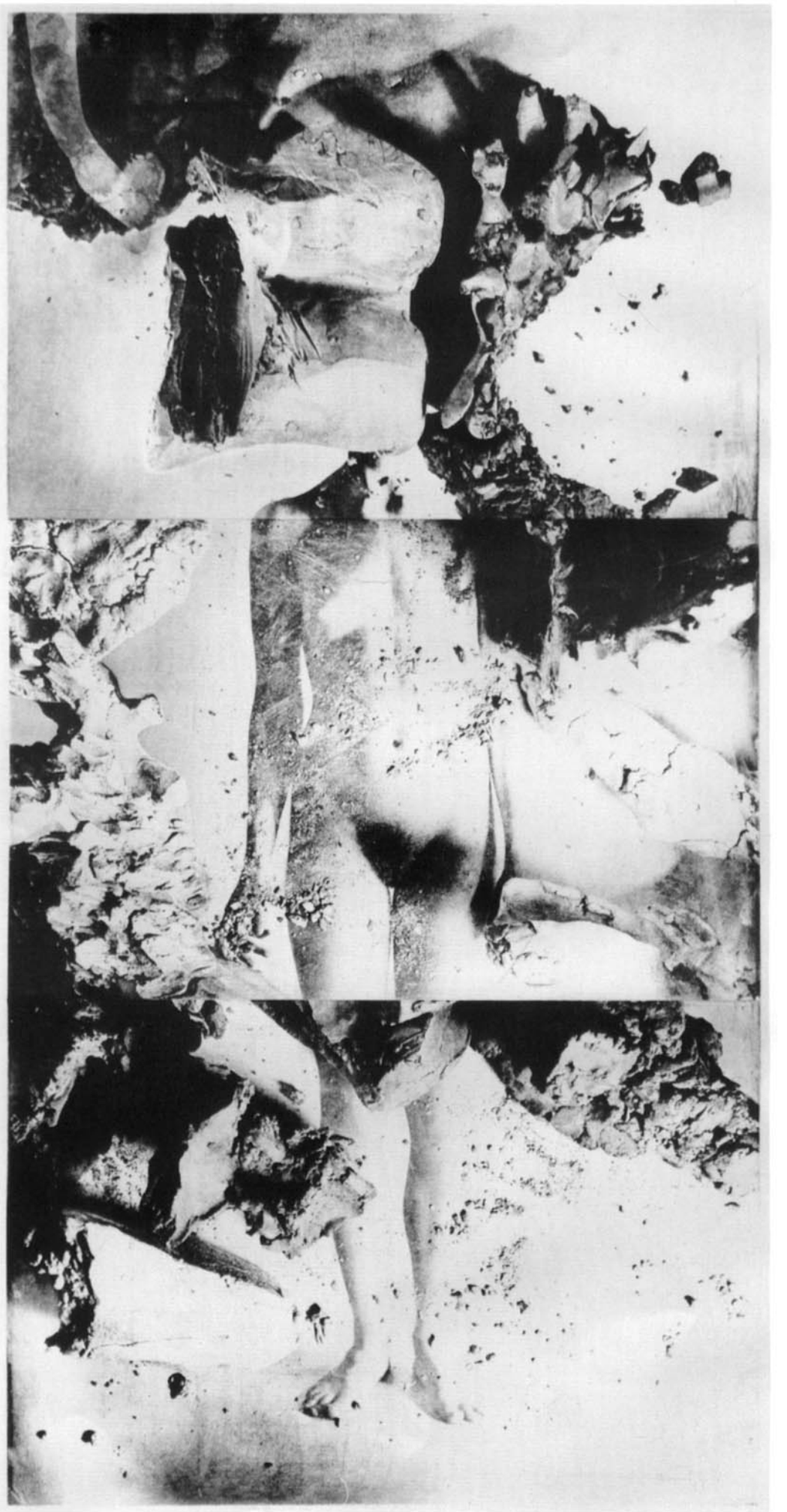
She is clearly at her best in *Blue Hot in Deep Freeze* and *Position of Exchange,* both from 1983. Back-lit volumes combine with rectilinear shadows in angular compressions twisting on a central axis. Floating particles and what look like scratches or traces activate the works' outer edges and seem to have resulted from the forming of the clay shapes. In both prints, the light source turns out to be pairs of outsized light bulbs in cheap ceramic clip sockets, which mock the seriousness of the image with their functional bluntness. The sculptural gestures refuse to agree with the scale of the light bulbs. The result is a magnificent tension between real and apparent size and works which are closer to magical events than they are pictures of shaman.

In 1985, the human figure appears. In the *Guard* series, an almost androgynous female stands facing the viewer in a neutral pose reminiscent of an Egyptian sculpture or a photograph in a medical journal. Parts of the figure are obscured by more clay gestures, now literally masking the face while looking more like geological outcroppings.

Karen Dugas
Dissolved Shelter
Etching
72 × 72 cm
1981

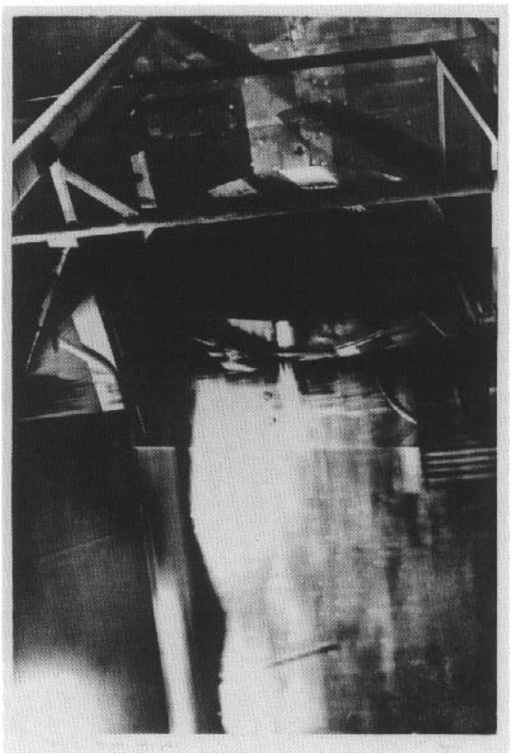
Karen Dugas
Position of Exchange
Etching and relief
84 × 84 cm
1983

Karen Dugas
Installation view, Rytard
Jakopic Gallery, Ljubljana



Karen Dugas
Guard
Etching
3000 × 1990 cm
1986

Karen Dugas
Relic of the Future Past
Etching
65×50 cm
1987



Karen Dugas
Mysteries: Falling Plane
Etching
100×71 cm
1981

Although sympathetic to the feminist reading of these works which sees a vulnerable woman threatened by a male environment, she explains, "The figure is female because I am. Fear is genderless."

Her most recent works, which include *Meeting Point,* 1987, and *History of the Observed,* 1985, develop the use of the figure and are less guarded in their narrative. In *Relic of the Future Past,* 1986, the figure reclines on a bed or examination table and moves as if dreaming: naked, swimming, stirring the air which appears as thick as syrup around her legs. Above and below, opaque and transparent objects float or hang like Freudian thought bubbles in a surrealist cartoon. A heart, a branch, a brittle accretion? The scene presented in elevation is framed like a shallow stage by bands of modulated value. Here is Dugas's psychological theatre, where the unconscious material that comes to the surface is placed on the stage not so much to be analyzed as recognized/acknowledged.

Sometimes, the intensity of her work, the pointedness of the narrative seems to suggest a faith that personal transformation might be accomplished by force of will alone—clarity gained through unwavering attention. This sense of earnest striving, which in her earlier work threatens to become a restrictive sincerity, gives way to more open inquiry and a willingness to shift strategies as her vision broadens. Karen Dugas's work is rooted in the mythopoetic tradition which finds eternal and universal principles in the inner life of subjective personal experience.

She is struggling through her work and the intense self-observation it demands to understand the conditioning that too often determines our feelings and responses. Central to her belief is the conviction that the culprit is not the evermore mechanically determined social environment but the self. For Dugas, the final blinding light of the apocalypse does not signal the destruction of the phenomenal world but the destruction of our illusions about it and, hence, about ourselves.

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ULTRA-GRAPHICS

Makoto Saito
Poster
63 × 100 cm
1982
(Detail)

A definitive phenomenon of the end of the century?

Susumu Sakane

Susumu Sakane is an internationally known packaging designer and is vice-president of JAGDA, the Japanese Advertising and Graphic Design Association. He has written extensively on the subject of design.

Translation: Sonja Arntzen

Up to this juncture, the decade of the eighties, three events have happened that symbolize the twentieth century. These are the shooting of the most powerful political leader in the world, the shooting of the leader of the most powerful religious faith in the world, and, finally, the shooting of one member of the four-member band which commanded the greatest popularity from the masses of the world. The development of art in the twentieth century, since its dawn, has been enfolded in the atmosphere of violence. The First World War, the Second World War, and the various wars occurring in local regions can be said to have had a primary influence on the world of artistic expression as well. Starting with nuclear weapons, which may not stop short of destroying the entire world, is it not true that all kinds of violence indiscriminately seem to cast a shadow over our everyday lives?

From another point of view, something else that is beginning to exert a fundamental influence on artistic expression is the advent of the gigantic computer syndicates which are becoming the heroes of the latter quarter of this century. Starting with architectural and engineering design up to computer graphics, the computer, which originally was simply a tool of calculation, has developed rapidly and now, as a tool of expression, has even taken a role as assistant to artists and creators. Just as the industrial revolution gave birth to a new age in art and design, these monsters, which have become a practical reality in the latter quarter of the twentieth century, will undoubtably change art and design. Just what will happen is a subject of inexhaustible fascination.

When we look at the shifts in the artistic activity of each century, it is interesting that almost always a radical movement arises at the end of the century which is the culmination of the expressive style of the century and, in turn, foreshadows the development of the next period. In terms of human psychology, just as every year when the year is about to change we make resolu-

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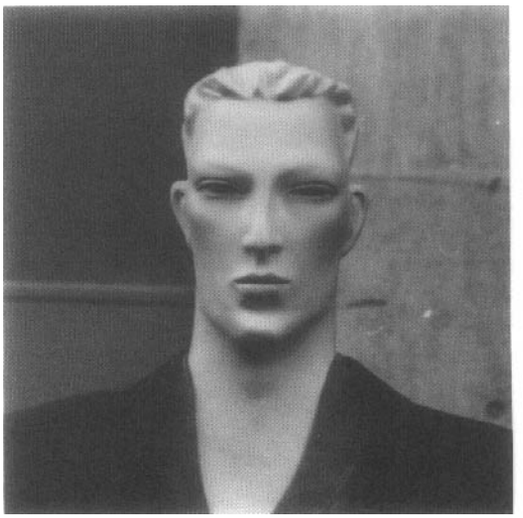

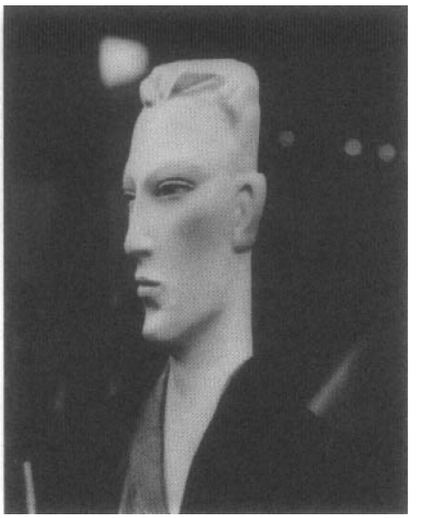

Fashion mannequin,
Kanagawa, Japan 1985

Paul Klee
Poster
1938

tions to shift certain things in our lives, so there is no doubt that there is a special effort of consciousness that is applied to a change in the century. This radical shift in expressive style at the end of a century will reflect all the various happenings in politics, economics, religion, culture, and industry that have passed through the century. This is somewhat like the wrinkles on the face of the aged. The various undulations in the culture of the century come together in vigorous movement at the end of the century. And there are many cases where this energy becomes the nucleus of the artistic movement of the next century, giving rise to some splendid activity at the century's beginning. This was the pattern for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Is it not likely that we will see this kind of movement at the end of the twentieth century?

Not only limited to styles in art and design, the changes in an age move in a spiral way. With the intertwining threads of quietness and activity, round and square, dark and light, the history of a century is woven. Particularly in the twentieth century, where art history is concerned, there have been repeated radical shifts. New waves in art and design have risen one after another—art nouveau, esprit, nouveau fauvism, cubism, surrealism, dadaism, suprematism, algonomics, école de Paris, unformal, modernism, Bauhaus, art deco, pop art, conceptual art, hyper-realism, etc. I have not listed these in chronological order and there have been a few other movements as well. There is certainly no lack of subject matter. If we were to sum up twentieth century art and design, it would be the "age of styles" or the "age of -isms," and the activity continues to the present moment. Accordingly, the wrinkles of the age will surely display some complicated configurations at the end of the century.

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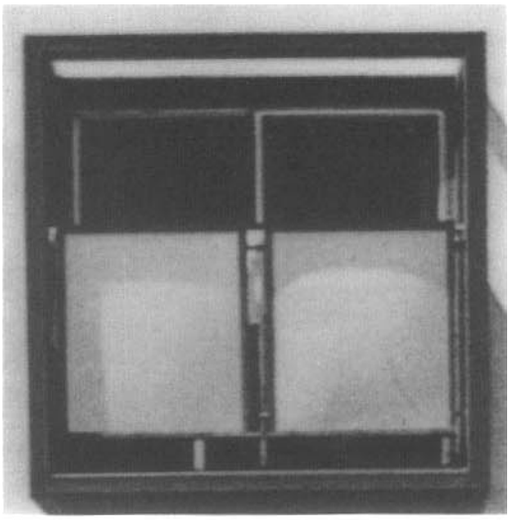
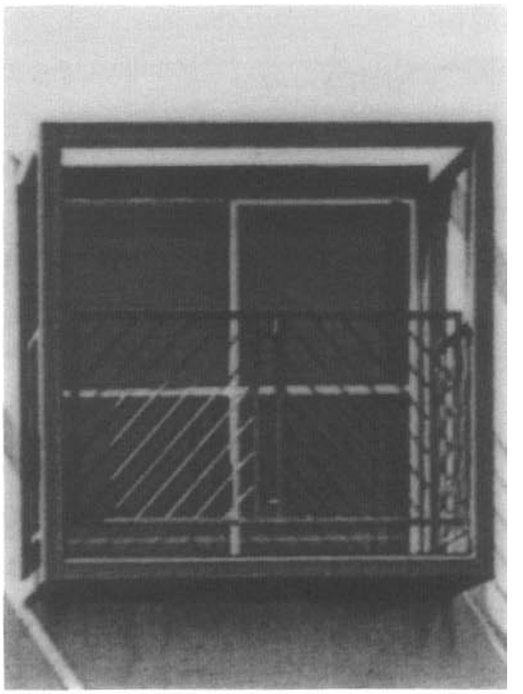
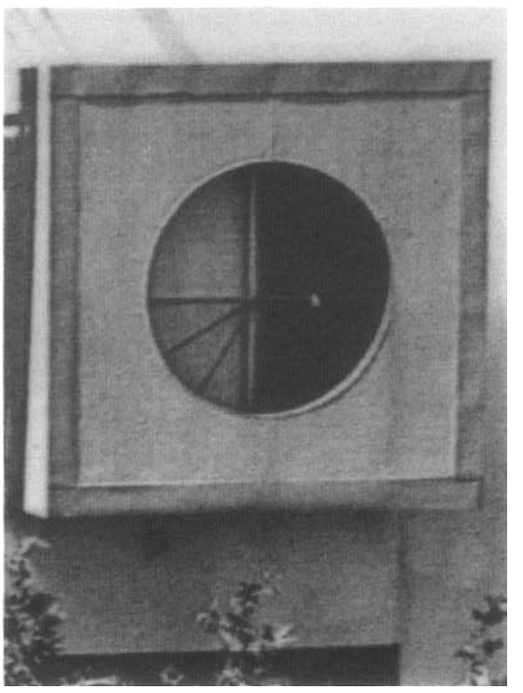




Kazuhiro Ishii
54 Windows (detail)
1976



A new expression for the age?

Recently, two movements have come into being and occupied centre stage. One is post-modernism, which arose conceptually from the desire to return to a spiritually rich, free, and human environment given that life has been corrupted by distorted social circumstances and various technological developments in the twentieth century. The other is new painting, which aims at freer human expression. Both of them have the similar goal of breaking away from the rigid molds of the past while at the same time representing a kind of protest against this age symbolized by computerization and robotization. What is interesting about this is that at the end of the nineteenth century, when the industrial revolution had gone too far, there arose a movement in industrial design and applied art that had a similar intention. It is also similar in that it eventually became a very large movement, indeed

This is the movement in artistic form that Ruskin expounded and Morris promoted that soon found sympathizers in the league of German engineering, the art and design graphic movement, and art nouveau, which developed the ideas further. This movement came to have a great influence not only in Europe but on the art and design of the entire world. What I would like to call attention to, in this movement, is the large role played by graphic elements. Incorporating graphic elements from the crafts and painting and prints of China and Japan were the large-scale posters that were made possible by improved large-size, multicolour printers, the wallpaper of Morris, the books of Kelmscott, the dyeing of Voysey, and the publication of superb books on art and design such as *Jungend, Art et Decoration, L'Art Decoratif,* and *Deutch Kunst und Decorashun.* All these directly or indirectly contributed to the strength of this new movement in nineteenth century art. Let me present one example.

From about 1890 on, there was an increase in the number of Paris art shops selling posters. There was even one store with more than two thousand posters in stock. Not even a modern poster shop could rival

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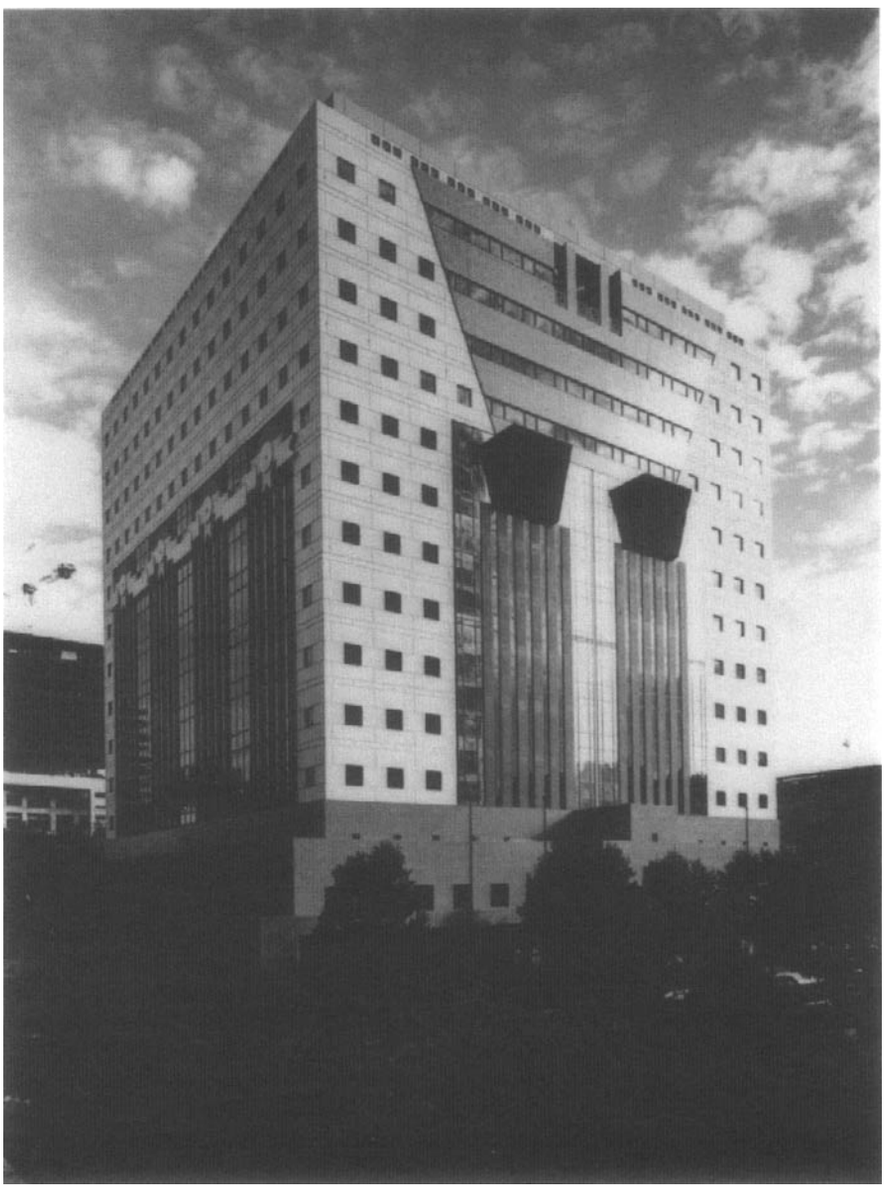
Lyonel Feininger
Cathedral
Frontispiece from the first Bauhaus Manifesto
Woodcut
33 × 20 cm
1919

Michael Graves
Portland Building
1980



this. Thus arose the social practice of treating posters as wall decoration replacing paintings, and this, in turn, added fuel to the new movement. Poster printing with its advanced colouring, printing techniques, and line, as the top media in the communication technology of the age, came to exert a powerful influence in other fields and, later, became one of the mainstays of art nouveau expression. In latter years as the style flourished, it was given many names, often with a hint of sarcasm, such as noodle style, eel style, lily style, yacht style, subway style, whip style. Is it not possible to say that in some part the grotesqueness of the plastic forms of art nouveau go back to the fact that they express an unreasonable bending and extension of two-dimensional design to three-dimensional forms?

The two movements in fine arts that are drawing attention right now, post-modernism and new painting, are also heavily influenced by graphism. In this way, they are no different from the movements at the end of the nineteenth century. That the radical movements in art and design at the end of a century should be influenced so strongly by graphism is an interesting phenomenon and deserves in-depth analysis. It would require inquiring into each artist's area of activity and tracing the roots of each individual work. Needless to say, there is an intimate connection between an artist's statements, behaviour, and so on, to an artist's activity, and that should be addressed as well—there is simply not enough room here. Here, I want to raise a few issues concerned with the influences that have consciously or unconsciously effected artists.

First, one issue is that of the media. Keeping in mind the social efficacy of the various forms of visual media like printed materials, movies, television, and photographs, it is important to realize that all this information is conveyed to us in two-dimensional images. Therefore, even in fields like architecture, industrial design, and display, where the design is necessarily three-dimensional, the information input

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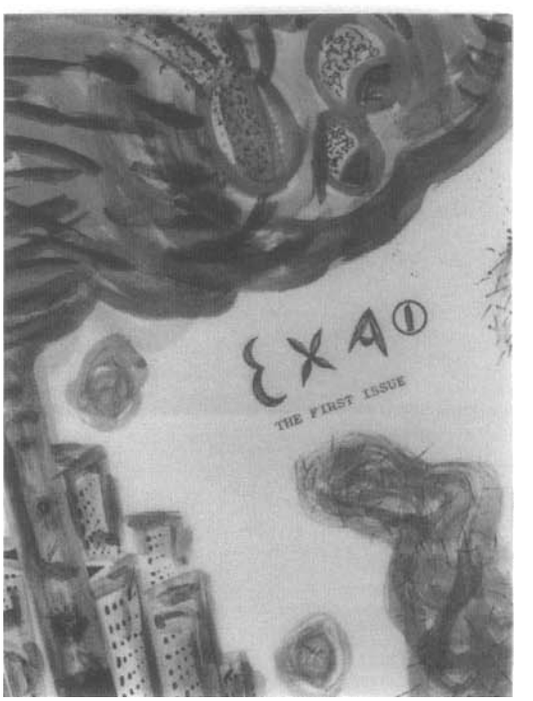
Masatoshi Toda
Poster
64 × 97 cm
1983

into the mind of the artist has been almost exclusively two-dimensional and not much has been from the spacial experience of real objects. This is a rather important condition for the creator, and this situation was quite different for artists and designers of the pre-nineteenth century period, whose information was largely gained from the accumulation of experience in everyday life. Is this not why there has been an increase in the influence of graphic images on artistic conception? Furthermore, we cannot overlook the powerful influence on artistic conception of the advances in the precision of industrial manufacturing in various fields. Iron can be tempered into sheets as thin as paper, which means something three-dimensional becomes two-dimensional, and oil changes form and becomes a thin plastic membrane. In this world of ours, where we are surrounded by processes by which lumber, earth, and food are transformed into something flat, it will likely lead to an increase in cases where artists and designers work in a two-dimensional realm and where that realm will be at the core of their graphic ideas. And if we bear in mind that now all architecture and industrial design is produced from flat drawings compared to the age of craftsmanship, when things had to be produced from the molding of clay or the direct carving of wood, then it is only to be expected that the influence of the two-dimensional world should have become so strong.

To cite no more than one or two examples: in modern design, it is not only with choice of colour and form but at the very time of conception that the influence of graphism is strong. When we look at the works of the post-moderns, we can feel that while calling up the images of art deco of the 1920s and the early period of De Stijl and Bauhaus they also incorporate the graphic images of artists like Fernand Léger, Joan Miró, Rene Magritte, and Giorgio de Chirico. Is this not due to the reasons I have mentioned above?

K2
Poster
100 × 70 cm
1981



Koji Takashima
Magazine cover
1983

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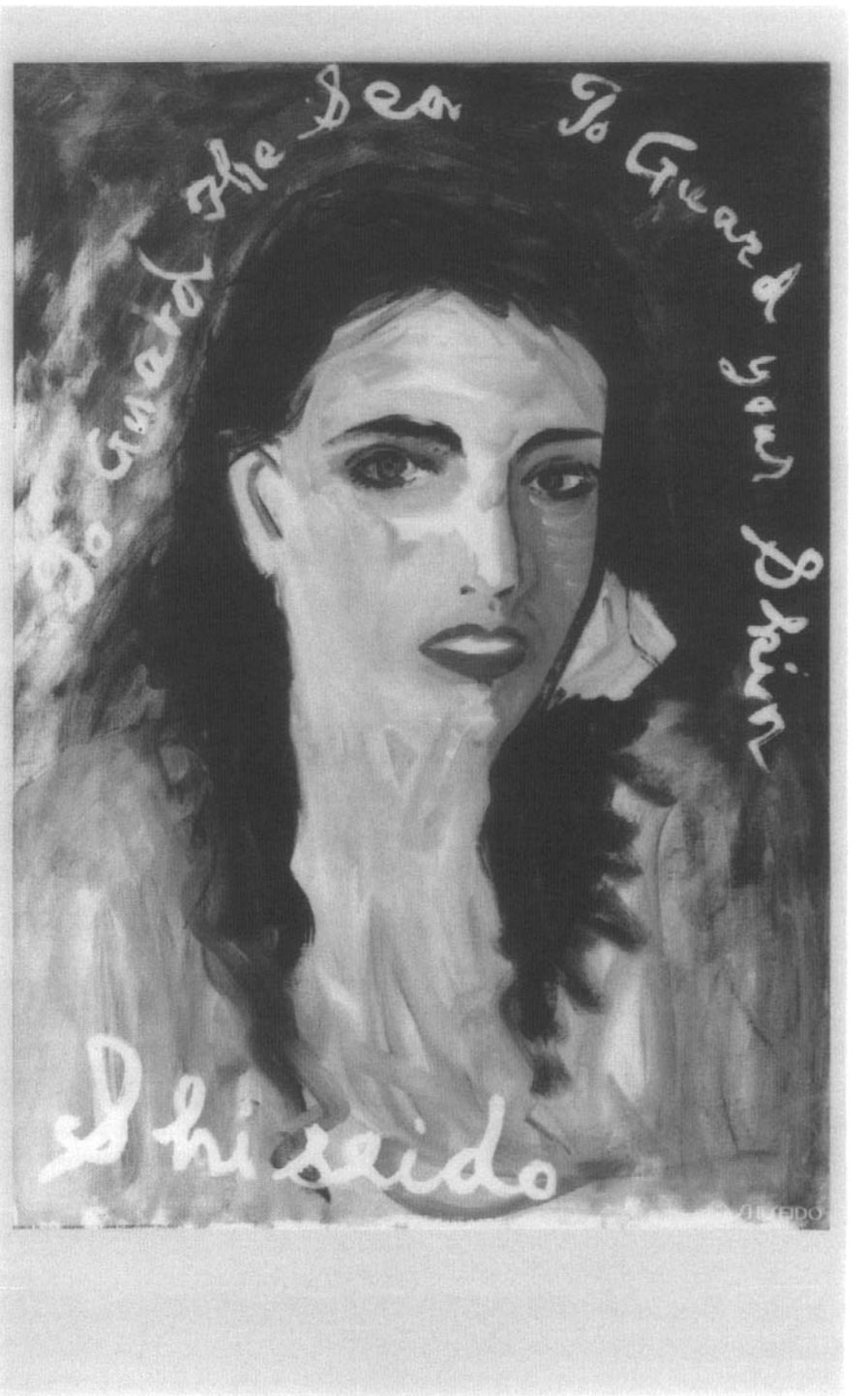
Seizo Tajima
Picture Book
Illustration
1981

Tadanori Yokoo
Poster
97 × 64 cm
1982

New painting

The twentieth-century painting and two-dimensional design that had exerted such a powerful influence on other fields of design had undergone such a bewildering range of changes that it was in decline and seemed to be losing energy. While new painting has not put as much emphasis as post-modernism on going against "form follows function," nonetheless, with the arrival of what must be called new materials, the new media (computer graphics, holography) and the shifts in style over such a short period, new painting's search for a new way out has been energetic. From about the mid-seventies, a tendency has appeared in the new painting with artists like Julian Schnabel and others to emphasize the act of drawing, something that might be called "getting back to the origin of painting." However, it is not that this style just suddenly appeared on the scene. If we trace it in terms of pictorial effects from Cézanne, Munch, Lautrec, and Van Gogh down to the fauve period of Matisse and Klee and the early period of Pollock and Picasso, can it not be said that this is the style that has, in terms of technique, represented most faithfully a continuity in the history of modern painting?

That being said, judging from the experience up to now, it is not likely that the art and design of the end of the twentieth century will finish with only post-modernism and new painting. It will be interesting to see whether or not, like the fauvism of former times, they will undergo a change within just a few years or continue as they are to the end of the century. At the present moment, both styles can be perceived as being just too robust to express the end of the century. At this time, it is of great interest that these styles are still continuing to exert influence on practically all fields of design from the communication media on down.



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Ultragraphics and Japan

Those involved in the world of graphic design, including advertisements and editorials, are a group with a keen sense of smell, and one would not expect them to overlook the shifts in the world art scene described above. Graphic design in Japan, having incorporated once again within itself the thinking and phenomena that have changed under the influence of graphism, has leaped beyond hypergraphics and supergraphics and is now entering the world of ultragraphics. To the world of advertising which seemed somewhat stagnant and the world of publishing which spends its time in exhaustive competition, this radical, wild, and energetic design has had the stimulating effect of an alarm bell. With the contribution of the skills of many younger people, this style will only continue to grow.

Within this trend toward ultragraphics design, we can distinguish several groups. The first one is a group of younger artists who had already formed their own individual style and technique before the advent of new painting, artists like Katsu Yoshida, Teruhiko Yumura, Tsugunori Inoue, Koichi Hara, Masanori Togawa, and Seizo Tajima. The second group is those artists who, while already having a different style of expression, dared to venture into the world of ultragraphics, like Tadanori Yokoo and Masatoshi Toda. Finally, there are those young artists who from the beginning leaped into ultragraphics, like Nobuo Otake and Makoto Saito. The works of these artists, by means of their fresh perception and radical effects, pushed ultragraphics from a minor field in advertising and publishing to a major style. It may be said that right now is the mature period of the style, especially flourishing in the areas of illustration, typography, and editorials. However, eventually it will likely spread to all fields of graphic design. I think we can say that Rei Kawakubo's audacious presentation of cut-up-rags clothing design in the fashion world is also part of this trend. As for what kind of a role ultragraphics will play at the end of the century and on into the twenty-first, at the moment no one knows.

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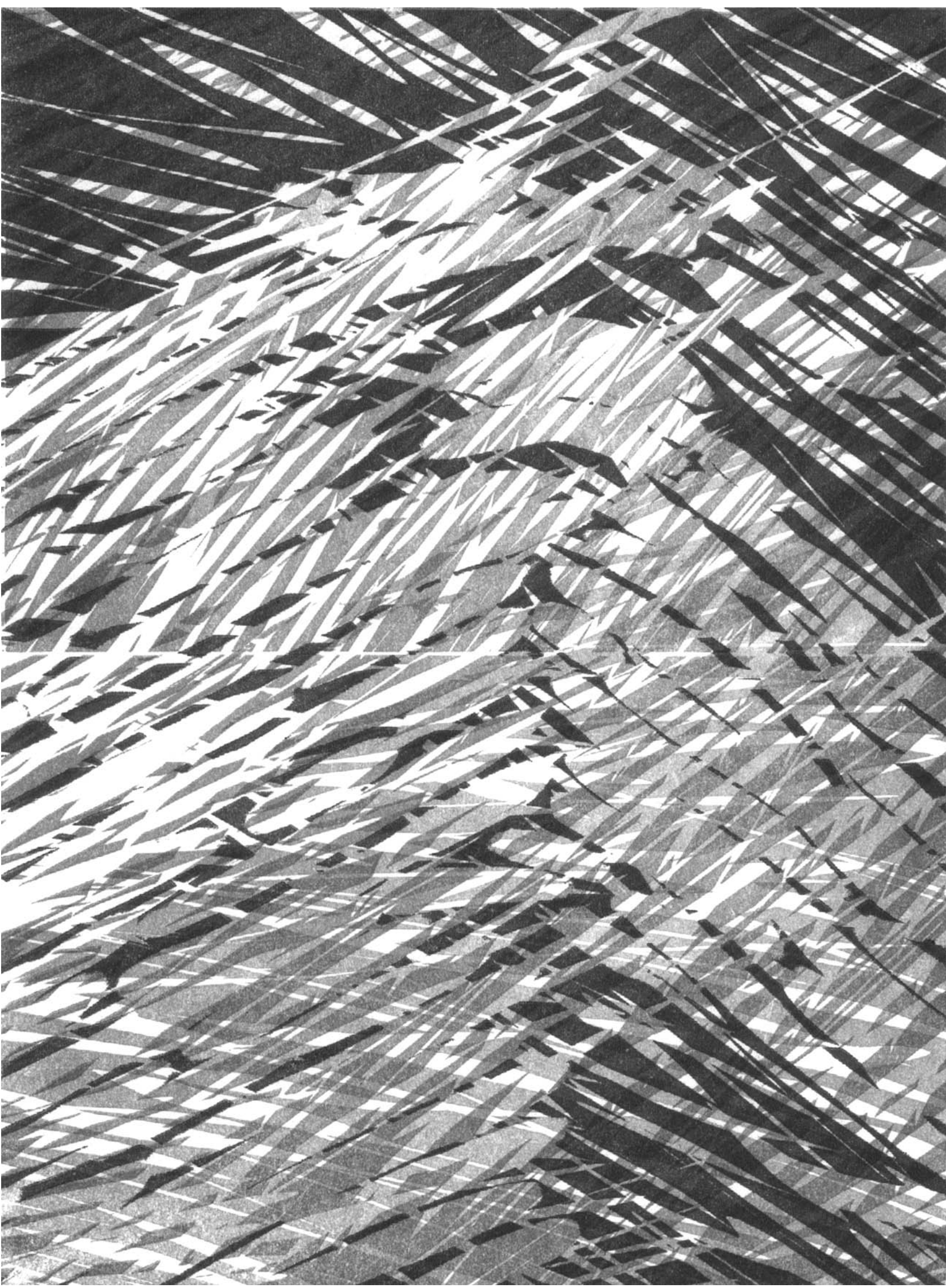

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Valgerdur Bergsdóttir
Seaseeing
Linoleum cut
27 x 20 cm
Paper: Mulberry
Ink: Daniel Smith
Traditional Relief Black
Edition: 1000

Valgerdur Bergsdóttir studied at the Icelandic College of Arts and Crafts and at the Seatens Kunst-og Kuntshandvaetker-skole, Oslo. Among her many international exhibitions are the print bienniales in Buenos Aries, Fredrikstad, Bradford and Ljubljana. Her work is represented in collections of the National Gallery of Art, Iceland; the Swedish State Gallery and the Art Gallery of Trondheim, Norway. She teaches printmaking at the Reykjavik School of Art.

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Karen Dugas
Fixed Idea
Etching
23 x 59 cm
1988
Paper: Stonehenge
Ink: Daniel Smith
Intense Black
Edition: 1000

Karen Dugas studied at Queen's University and the University of Alberta. She has exhibited in the print bienniales in Cracow, Frechen, Ljubljana, Rio de Janeiro, Taipei, Fredrikstad, Ibiza, Seoul and Wakayama. She has won a number of international awards. She is currently teaching print-making at the University of Alberta.

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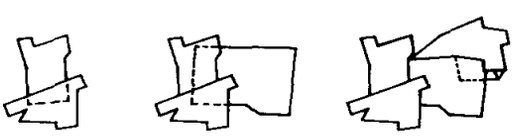
Derek Besant
Untitled
Screenprint in four panels
30.5 x 23 x 1.3 cm
1988

Derek Besant studied at the Alberta College of Art. He has exhibited internationally for many years and has shown in most of the major print bienniales including Biella, Kanagawa, Ljubljana, Seoul, Taipei and Cracow. He is also well known for his monumental architectural murals. He teaches at the Alberta College of Art.



To assemble, line up holes A, B, C, D and pass string through (front to back). Tie together as indicated.