MOMENTS IN TIME
LITHOGRAPHS FROM THE HWS ART COLLECTION

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HOBART & WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES
2009
Moments in Time: Lithographs from the HWS Art Collection

This exhibition is the first in a series intended to highlight the Hobart and William Smith Colleges art collection. The Art Collection of Hobart and William Smith Colleges is founded on the belief that the study and appreciation of original works of art is an indispensable part of a liberal arts education. In light of this educational mission, we offered an internship for one-half credit to students of high standing to research and write the catalogue entries, under our supervision, for each object in the exhibition. This gave students the opportunity to learn museum practice as well as to add a publication for their résumé.

For this first exhibition, we have chosen to highlight some of the more important artists in our large collection of lithographs as well as to highlight a print medium that played an influential role in the development and dissemination of modern art. Our print collection is the richest area of the HWS Collection, and this exhibition gives us the opportunity to highlight some of our major contributors. Robert North has been especially generous. In this small exhibition alone, he has donated, among others, works of the well-known artists Romare Bearden, George Bellows of which we have twelve, and Thomas Hart Benton – the great Regionalist artist and teacher of Jackson Pollock. Other generous gifts include works given by Theodore Max, Kenneth Halsband, and William Welsh.

Our selections intend to create a coherent exhibition that represents the range of the prints in the HWS Collection, as well as an historical overview of modern art from the late nineteenth century to contemporary art. We also sought visual correlations between the works.

The exhibition appropriately begins with an image of the HWS campus by Henry Walton, Hobart Free College, Geneva, N.Y., 1851. It is followed by the well-known image of Toulouse-Lautrec’s typical nightclub scene, Divan Japonais, 1893, here with his friends at the Cabaret in Montmartre – famous can-can dancer, the elegant Jane Avril, and art critic Édouard Dujardin. Next, another woman in black, George Bellows’ Girl Sewing, 1923. Thomas Hart Benton’s lonely and somber A Drink of Water, 1937, and Rockwell Kent’s desolate and dark image of Memory, 1928 follow.

Lovis Corinth’s Venus of 1917 offers a lighter note with an annoyed but patient cow attended by two peasants. The lightness of this image is carried forward into the following two works, each subsequently lighter than the next. However, these lightly sketched images begin a series of four darker subjects. George Grosz’s Untitled, 1918, caricatures paunchy German soldiers as they make their morning ablutions surrounded by weapons, empty liquor bottles, unmade beds and dirty floors. Giacometti’s print, Derrière le Miroir No.127: Seated Man and Sculpture, 1961, is still lighter - as though the litho crayon has barely scratched out the slight figure, so typical of his drawings and sculptures depicting alienation and isolation.

Then come darker and heavier images. Otto Dix’s print of the Repentance of St. Peter, 1960 depicts a powerful, darkly rich expressionist image of the cock crowing, signaling St. Peter’s betrayal of Christ. It is among the most moving works in the exhibition. The scratchy, ink-splattered surface of Arman’s Romantic Suite 2 of 1976 at first seems to respond emotionally to the Dix before it. Only when one realizes that violins are playing does one make sense of the title. This Romantic Suite seems to hark back to the mad violin of Paganini as depicted by the great Romantic painter Delacroix.

The dark range of color in Arman’s image offers a transition to the next “suite” of five brightly colored prints that follow it. One moves from the playful signs, ink splashes, and drawings of Miro’s child-like spontaneity in his Untitled, 1965, to Karl Appel’s brilliantly colored, distorted, stern, and almost threatening Important Persons, 1970. Alexander Calder’s Untitled, 1947 color fields with the face of a clown and the dimple made of the artist’s signature moves back to the lighter mood of Miro’s work. The tone changes dramatically once again, in Audrey Flack’s photo-realistic work, entitled Lady Madonna, 1975, an image she photographed and then painted and lithographed of the Madonna Dolorosa, the weeping Madonna. The bright colors and sharp detail only enhance the depth of sorrow in the face of the Lady. Once again the mood lifts in Romare Bearden’s Conjunction, 1979. The strong colors and dress of these three African men meeting in the street presents a friendly mood typical of Bearden’s African-American connection to his heritage.
The next two prints are reductive images in black contrasted against pristine whiteness. Leonard Baskin’s Safari, 1972, is a striking study in light and shadow of a solemn man whose helmet partially shades his face from the bright sunlight. Golub’s White Squad, also a dark-on-light image, has a more sinister composition, especially the grotesque perspective of the mercenary’s head, and a sinister narrative of white mercenaries killing a black African man. A trio of black from the bodies in Bearden’s image to the black and white in both Baskin and Golub produces a striking triptych of compositions from active Bearden to simple, frontal Baskin, to active Golub.

The final four works in the exhibition are all in color. The bodies and hands in Marisol’s Untitled, 1978, are aglow with color. Malcolm Morley’s Arles/Miami, 1980, with its disheveled, pop-like imagery and highly-saturated colors criss-crossed by black lines, humorously depicts an animated pile of vacation detritus. Alan Sonfist’s environmental recuperation project, View of Manhattan, No. 6, 1980, uses color to highlight areas of green space. His composition from aerial photograph of the area is in itself a fascinating abstract study of broken grids and indentations that gives the work an almost intimate physicality. The last piece in the exhibition is Rosenquist’s Sailor, Speed of Light, 1999. Its contrast of brilliant colors and forms, its sense of density and depth, its pacing from slowly waving areas to firmer areas with deep interiors makes this the liveliest work in the exhibition.

Overall, the exhibition has a flow from color to various shades of black and white and back that allows for a visual coherence paralleling the chronological movement of the works.

Patricia Mathews
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Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Perhaps it is not generally known to the citizens of Ithaca and its vicinity, that we have residing in our village an artist, who, though unpretending, is a proficient in the use of the pencil.”¹ So begins an editorial published May 23, 1838, in the Ithaca Journal, as Henry Walton embarks on his fifteen-year stay in the Finger Lakes region. Walton and his work remained virtually unknown until November 1937, when his portrait of J. P. Jenks was published on the cover of The Magazine of Antiques. The cover image and its accompanying editorial note brought the little-known artist out of obscurity and into the public eye briefly. Twenty years later, five of Henry Walton’s works were included in the exhibition, Rediscovered Painters of Upstate New York, which traveled through New York State from June 1958 to February 1959. Lithographs of Saratoga Springs, New York, published circa 1825-1830 are some of Walton’s earliest known town scenes. The certainty that Walton was in Saratoga Springs in the late 1820’s eventually lead researchers to discover that he was the son of Judge Henry Walton (1768-1844) who had significant land holdings in that same area.²

Walton arrived in Ithaca as early as 1835 and stayed in the area until heading west to California for the gold rush in 1851. Throughout his time in the Finger Lakes, Walton was steady in his execution of lithographs of town views in this region. Rehner describes “two themes prevalent in Walton’s town views: celebration of the topographical landscape and technical progress.”³ She notes Walton’s inclusion of civilization and progress in his town views, specifically his documentation and depiction of buildings in the towns he viewed.⁴ Others have noted Walton’s linear style, apparent skill in architectural draftsmanship, and overall technique. Rehner wonders if Walton did not use a ruler to achieve the linear qualities of his town views.⁵ Force enthuses about not only Walton’s technique, but also his use of color.

Hobart Free College, the hand-colored lithograph, looks south on Geneva’s South Main Street and includes a view of Seneca Lake around 1851. On the left is Durfee House; the buildings on the right-hand side of the street are the Old Chapel, “Polyonymous,” and Geneva Hall. Beyond Geneva Hall is the Middle Building, used as the Medical School and later the college library. On the far side of the Middle Building is Trinity Hall.

The existence of this work may have been unknown to scholars as it was not noted or included in either of the exhibits curated by Leigh Rehner Jones in Ithaca (1968-1969 and 1988-1989), the catalogues of which are regarded as some of the most authoritative documentation on what is known of Henry Walton. Researchers have hypothesized that one reason for Walton’s obscurity for so long is that much of his work was purchased by locals and remained in the hands of private collectors and descendents of the original portrait sitters.

Sara Greenleaf

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¹Agnes Halsey Jones, Rediscovered Painters of Upstate New York, 1700-1875 (Utica, NY, 1958), 73.
⁴Ibid.
Henry Walton (1820-73)
Hobart Free College, Geneva, N.Y., 1851
Lithograph, 18 x 28 cm
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec was born into a French aristocratic family on November 24, 1864. In 1882, he moved to Paris against the wishes of his mother to study art, and although he studied with many different artists he never joined a formal theoretical art movement. Toulouse-Lautrec set up his own studio in 1884 in Rue Lépic, Montmartre, where he remained for the rest of his life. Living near the infamous Moulin Rouge, Toulouse-Lautrec and his friends experienced the “wildness and bohemianism” of the Parisian nightlife.¹ His alcoholic antics and fraternization with a lower class offended his family, but he continued to spend time with prostitutes, cabaret singers, and nightclub workers. Perhaps his greatest artistic skill was to capture the diverse people whom he portrayed.² Toulouse-Lautrec suffered a stroke in 1901 and, suffering from syphilis, he died at the age of 37.³

Although Toulouse-Lautrec did work in oils, his greatest contemporary impact was in the field of printmaking and lithography. He completed a series of 30 posters from 1891-1901 which elevated the concept of the poster to a respectable art form.⁴ Stylistically, Toulouse-Lautrec’s works incorporated many different ideas, from classical ideas about proportion to Impressionist use of color. He was influenced by Japanese woodblock prints, and this is seen in this work, Divan Japonais of 1893. This print was commissioned by Edouard Fournier, the owner of Divan Japonais, a Montmartre cabaret, as an advertisement for his business. The print matched the Oriental décor of the cabaret, and the stylized, silhouetted forms and the large, flat blocks of color were very indicative of Japanese prints.⁵

This work features Toulouse-Lautrec’s friend Jane Avril, the dancer seated in chic black clothing, and Edouard Dujardin, a music critic and contributor to the discourse on symbolist art.⁶ The figure in silhouette in the upper left is Yvette Guilbert, the singer who appears in many of Lautrec’s works.⁷ Avril and Dujardin are sitting on the edge of the orchestra and should be watching Guilbert’s performance, but instead they seem to be focused on other things—Dujardin looks down toward Avril, while she looks off into the distance. This is a tribute to Toulouse-Lautrec’s ability to capture a sense of the moment within an abstract form.

Anna Wager ‘09

²Ibid., p. 213.
³Ibid., p. 214.
⁴Ibid., p. 212
⁵Toulouse-Lautrec, Baldwin M. Baldwin Collection San Diego Museum of Art, p. 220.
⁶Ibid., 220.
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec
Divan Japonais, 1893
Chalk lithograph with brush and splatter, 80 x 61 cm
Theodore Max Collection
George Bellows was born in Columbus, Ohio on August 19, 1882. He enrolled in Ohio State University and began to study art; after graduation, he moved to New York City to study under Robert Henri at the New York School of Art.1

Once his graduate studies ended, Bellows rented a studio in Manhattan and produced works for galleries. His first great exhibition was in 1908, when he and other students of Robert Henri put on a show of works with urban themes.2 In 1909, Bellows taught for a short time at the Art Students League of New York, but continued to paint. Social activism also became an important component in the work of George Bellows. In the years before and during the First World War, Bellows joined a group of activists called “The Lyrical Left” who believed in anarchy and extreme social activism. Later in life, Bellows moved to Chicago and taught at the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1920, he began to alternate between Chicago and Woodstock New York, where he built a home for his wife Emma and two daughters Anne and Jean. George Bellows died five years later in New York City, from complications resulting from an untreated ruptured appendix. He was 43 years old.3

Lithography was a favorite medium of George Bellows, and he used it as a means of developing settings and subjects in order to work out his paintings.4 He is considered one of the foremost artists within this medium, and is in many ways responsible for elevating its standing within the art world. Bellows first utilized a lithographic press in 1916, and between 1921 and 1924, he collaborated with master printer Bolton Brown on several hundred images.5

This particular work, Girl Sewing, is a study of the artist’s wife, Emma S. Bellows. It is from a series of lithographs devoted to the middle class. As a result of his social activism in Manhattan, Bellows created hundreds of images of the middle class and the poor. These works are characterized by harsh lines and stark contrasts from light to dark which pay homage to the toil and plight of the less fortunate. Girl Sewing is an example of one of these works.

Timothy Starr ’08

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4The Frick Art & Historical Center (http://www.frickart.org/programs/exhibitions/detail/81.html)
5The Frick Art & Historical Center (http://www.frickart.org/programs/exhibitions/detail/81.html)
George Welsley Bellows  
Girl Sewing, 1923  
Lithograph, 30 x 17 cm  
Robert North Collection
Thomas Hart Benton was born in Neosho, Missouri into a wealthy family of politicians. He spent most of his childhood living in both Washington D.C. and Missouri due to his family’s political obligations. Instead of working on developing his future political career, Benton rebelled against his family and began to pursue a career in studio art. His first work was as a cartoonist for the Joplin American newspaper, in Joplin, Missouri.

Benton enrolled at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1907, but departed for Paris in 1909 to develop his skills at the Académie Julian. In 1913, Benton returned to New York City. Several years later in 1919, he took a job to make ends meet as a draftsman for the United States Navy. His work for the Navy changed his style significantly. It was at this time that Benton declared himself an “enemy of modernism” and began the naturalistic and representational work known as Regionalism. Benton also began to teach at the Art Students League of New York, and was active in leftist politics.

Relatively unknown up until 1932, Benton was chosen to produce the murals of Indiana life, which eventually became famous within American art. The murals he created were highly controversial because they contain images of the Klu Klux Klan. The resulting media buzz around his works landed him on the cover of Time Magazine with a full length article.

Benton left New York in 1935, and took a teaching job at the Kansas City Art Institute. Benton’s students at the Art Institute included many of the future painters of the Midwest heartland. Jackson Pollock was his most famous student, and became the icon of the Abstract Expressionist movement, a stark departure from Benton’s own style. Benton was removed from his duties at the Art Institute in 1941 after a long history of criticizing both the Institute and the art world. He spent the rest of his career doing paintings and murals as well as lithographs. He died in 1975 at work in his studio.

A Drink of Water is an example of one of Benton’s many works of daily life in rural Indiana. In this work, the daily toil of the poor farmer is represented by the gloomy atmosphere created by the dark lines of the lithograph. Benton was a leftist for most of his life, and as a result many of his works focus around the plight of the less fortunate.

Timothy Starr ‘08

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3Encyclopedia Britannica. Danbury CT: Grolier, 1995
Thomas Hart Benton
A Drink of Water, 1937
Lithograph, 27 x 37 cm
Robert North Collection
Rockwell Kent was born in Tarrytown, New York in 1882 and showed an early affinity for art and design. His mother was concerned about bohemianism among artists and so encouraged her son to apply to Columbia University's School of Architecture, where Kent won a full scholarship. However, he never finished his degree and instead studied in William Merritt Chase’s and Robert Henri’s studios. Kent excelled as a “painter, printmaker, illustrator, writer, and sailor.” He enjoyed exploring remote locations and loved adventure books and cold climates. In his travels to Alaska, Tierra del Fuego, and especially Greenland, Kent experienced the "rock-bound shores" which greatly influenced his artistic style.

Memory, a lithograph completed in 1928 has a monumental figure of a woman in the foreground, who is gazing away from the viewer to the rolling hills in the background. It looks like the light is slowly diffusing to the horizon, showing that it is sunset. There is strong chiaroscuro in this print, and the stark contrast between light and dark creates tension and drama in the figure. Memory was printed with two stones, and there were two versions created: one is black and white and one is light grey. There were 100 proofs printed before the images were cancelled and the stones were re-ground by the printer.

Kent created realistic and very precise landscapes with a strong sense of light and shadow. His experience in remote areas influenced his art, as is evident in the colossal woman and the rocky peaks behind her in Memory. The seclusion of the landscape offered many “physical and creative challenges” for Kent. Later in life, he also completed many book illustrations; the most renowned were those for Candide by Voltaire and Moby Dick by Herman Melville. Kent was also an author, and chronicled his travels in books such as N by E, Voyaging Southwards from the Strait of Magellan, and Salamina. In addition, Rockwellkentia is a work documenting Kent’s lithographs as well as his writings on aesthetics, art, culture, and museums. Rockwell Kent died in Au Sable Forks, New York in 1971.

Anna Wager ‘09

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7The Dictionary Of Art, Grove Vol. 17, p. 899.
Rockwell Kent
Memory, 1928
Lithograph 37 x 49 cm
Robert North Collection
Lovis Corinth was born in East Prussia on July 21, 1858. He showed an early affinity for art and received informal lessons from a local carpenter. Corinth entered the Königsberger Kunstakademie in 1876, initially planning to study history painting, but instead changed his focus to genre scenes. In 1880 Corinth began his studies at the Münchner Kunstakademie, where he learned to emphasize color, tonality and exact execution. Finally, Corinth moved to Paris and studied at the Académie Julian where he worked on drawing, however, Corinth left Paris in 1887 after a lengthy eleven years of training, and eventually settled in Berlin.

Although Corinth was predominantly known as a painter, his first important series of etchings, the Tragicomedies, was printed in 1894, and he continued to produce prints and lithographs until his death. He was active in the Berlin Secession art movement and became its President in 1915. He published multiple autobiographies, a handbook on painting, and essays on art, one of which was called “How I Learnt Etching” which was published in 1917. This essay details Corinth’s etchings of female nudes, which were a favorite subject of his work. Corinth also depicted working class women, founded an art school for women, and married one of his students, Charlotte Berend, in 1903. He used lithography and etching to depict his wife and two children, and preferred this medium for intimate scenes.

The ABC series of lithographs was completed in 1917 and were in lighter contrast to much of Corinth’s work completed during WWI. The 24 letters of the gothic alphabet are depicted, with each letter having a motif from the Bible, mythology, history, or literature, all of which were popular subjects with Corinth. His work considerably slowed down after the end of WWI, and Lovis Corinth died in the Netherlands in 1925, where he had traveled to see the works of Rembrandt and Frans Hals for the final time.

Anna Wager ‘09

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2Ibid., p. 855.
3Ibid., p. 855.
6Ibid., p. 12.
7Lovis Corinth, p. 134.
8The Dictionary Of Art, p. 856.
Lovis Corinth
ABC, 1917
Lithograph, 43 x 36 cm
George Grosz was born in Berlin, Germany, in 1893. When he was a young man he studied art in Dresden and Berlin, and took a job as a contributing cartoonist for several German magazines.  

In 1914, Grosz was conscripted into active service in his native Germany to fight the First World War. Grosz, like many young Germans, believed that WWI would be the end of all wars. After being wounded in battle in 1915, George Grosz was released from active duty, and he returned home to Berlin only to be called back in 1917. Once he returned to the front lines, Grosz developed shell shock and attempted to commit suicide. He was later discharged from the German army as permanently unfit for duty.

After his release from the army, Grosz immediately began to protest the war with other young artists. Grosz concentrated on using satire to criticize the German government for its propaganda campaigns against the Allied forces.

After the surrender of Germany, Grosz immediately joined the Communist party of Germany and began to contribute to several magazines supporting the Communist cause. He also joined the Dada group of post WWI German artists, most of whom saw active service on the front lines, and began to develop this genre of art. Grosz was committed to political commentary in his art and was nearly put in jail several times for criticizing the German government in the 1920s and 1930s.

George was forced to flee Germany in 1932 after openly attacking Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party with several drawings. He immediately settled in the United States and became a citizen in 1938. In 1959 Grosz returned to Germany for the first time since 1932. He died suddenly in a German hospital after a fall down a flight of stairs.

Untitled is an example of a lithograph produced by Grosz as part of a series chronicling life as a soldier in the German Army. This particular work embellishes the naïveté of many German soldiers of the First World War, as they are depicted as carefree, happy, and completely unknowing of the horrors of war. This work would clearly be the first in a set that slowly turns much more gruesome as time rolls on and the soldiers depicted experience battle.

Timothy Starr ’08

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4 Flavell, pg 781.
George Grosz
Untitled, 1918
Lithograph, 27 x 34 cm
Swiss-born Alberto Giacometti is a celebrated member of the twentieth century art scene for his innovative artistry in the fields of sculpture, printmaking, painting, and drawing. Giacometti is remembered most for his elongated and emaciated human sculptures. For Giacometti, the two-dimensionality of the lithographic print was as valuable in exploring spatial relationships as a freestanding sculpture.

Giacometti was born in Borgonovo, Switzerland on October 10, 1901, the son of Post-Impressionist painter, Giovanni Giacometti. By the age of twenty-seven Giacometti showed a natural talent for art, and after attending art school in Geneva, he shared his first show with his father. By 1934 Giacometti broke with the Parisian Surrealists because of a change in his artistic focus from creating abstract and sexual works to capturing his own perceptions and the feeling of distance. He began socializing with Jean-Paul Sartre, a friendship that foreshadowed Giacometti’s lifelong relationship with existentialist poets such as Jacques Dupin, Samuel Beckett, and Louis Aragon.¹

Seated Man and Sculpture is rich in texture, volume, and austerity, but speaks on another level to the goals Giacometti has for his art. The tall stiff figure, which is most likely a female because of the curved bust and static position (Giacometti’s male figures often had an active leg or arm) seems to be broken open by the rapid and spontaneous markings that both define and give texture to her body. She is unnaturally stiff due to the heavily marked base at her feet that acts like an unforgiving gravity rendering her immobile. The figure is a representation of Giacometti’s attempt to capture the naturalism of a human existing in and activating space.³

So much of what Giacometti conveys in his works is directed by the demands of the lithographic technique.⁴ Markings cannot be erased and are therefore momentary and spontaneous. Seated Man with Sculpture completely fuses form and content.

Emily Sarokin ’10

Alberto Giacometti
Derriere le Miroir No.127:
Seated Man and Sculpture, 1961
Lithograph, 37 x 27 cm
Otto Dix was born in Unternhaus, Germany, on September 28, 1891. Brought up by an ironworker and a poet, he grew up in an artistic milieu and began painting in the studio of his elder cousin Fritz Amann. In 1910, he went to Dresden to attend the Schools of Arts and Crafts. After four years of portrait painting, he volunteered for the army in 1914 and didn’t return until 1919. During World War I, Dix had witnessed the evil of man and used this experience to shape the rest of his artistic career. Upon his return to Dresden, he began the Dresdener Sezession Gruppe: a Dadaist and Expressionist group for artists. All was well until the 1930s and rise of the Nazi party in Germany when all of his work became subject to censorship or was destroyed. He was arrested in 1939 under suspicion of plotting against Hitler. When he was allowed to return to Dresden, he completed many series of lithographs based on religious subjects. Dix passed away in 1969 at the age of 78 after having suffered from two strokes.

While participating in both World Wars as a volunteer machine gunner and soldier on the Western Front, Dix used his sketchbook as his diary to document the terrors of combat. Lithographs became the medium Expressionist artists used to make political statements and depict religious allegories. With his excellent drawing and painting skills, it was simple for Dix to manifest these expressionist yet realist values on paper and mass-produced media. He completed monochromatic religious series in the nineteen-fifties and sixties which are graphic and immediate. Yet, it is obvious he took cues from masters such as Albrecht Dürer in technical execution. His technique was from Old Master painters, yet his messages were honest and direct, if grotesque and unsettling at times.

This specific lithograph The Repentance of St. Peter is one of thirty-seven lithographs in the series the Gospel According to Saint Matthew. The lithographs make a strong statement about the self-destructive nature of organized religion and dogma. The Repentance of Saint Peter in particular shows Peter completely distraught, covered in his tears. The rooster looms over him crowing in the moment Peter realizes he had denied Christ three times. Dix’s biblical series were heavily influenced by his Protestant upbringing and his attempt to bring biblical themes to life in modern day. Dix embodied in his lithographs for the Gospel of Saint Matthew that religion was not always about rejoicing and worship, but also about the hardships and personal tragedies the followers of Christ experienced.

Diana Haydock ’09

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Otto Dix, German, 1891-1969
Die Verleugnung des Petrus / The Repentance of St. Peter,
from the series The Gospel of Matthew, 1960
Lithograph, 29 x 22cm
Armand Pierre Fernandez was born November 17, 1928, in Nice, France. The name Arman was due to a spelling error in the catalogue of a 1957 exhibition in Paris and he satirically adopted it as his name. From a young age he demonstrated artistic promise learning painting and photography from his father Antonio. In 1946 he entered the National School of Decorative Arts in Nice but later transferred to L’Ecole du Louvre to study Oriental art and archeology. In 1970 he settled down in New York and exhibited around the United States showing his many talents ranging from sculpture to printmaking. Arman died in New York City on October 22, 2000 from cancer.

Before 1950 his influences were Dada and Cubism but eventually he joined the New Realist movement. Dada was extreme in its anti-aesthetics and anti-art sentiment, whereas New Realism focused on taking from life to create art and awareness. In the fifties and sixties he began to explore print media and create accumulations or assemblages. He was interested in redefining objects that the everyday consumer saw with the rise of an industrial society1: “I have always been very much involved in the pseudo biological cycle of production, consumption and destruction. And for a long time, I have been anguished by the fact that one of its most conspicuous material results is the flooding of our world with junk and rejected odd objects.”2 Many of his works are objects cut precisely and pieced with other objects, then he burnt the edges or cast his three-dimensional accumulations. He revisited the studies he made with stamps and prints combining printmaking with his skills accumulating objects. The objects used in his pieces were no doubt influenced by his father’s professions as an antiques dealer, artist, photographer and cellist.

Arman’s Romantic Suite is a series of six color lithographs. The first lithograph of the series, Violin with a Bow, displays the same consideration he took in producing his sculptural accumulations: by destroying the physical object and its significance and reconstructing the parts as a composition with a new meaning. The outlines of violin silhouettes repeat and echo each other in their overlapped and disjointed state. The image we see consists of shattered instruments, bows and strings. No longer do we look at the violin but lines and shapes which are aesthetically pleasing. We experience the multi-colored composition after, as Arman explained, “The bow on the strings releases an explosion of sounds.”3 The artist was passionate about music and instruments throughout his career in each of his media, but his lithographs express the dynamism and vivacity of music as sound even in its fragmentation.

DIANA HAYDOCK ’09

Arman, Armand Pierre Fernandez (1928-2005)
Romantic Suite: Violin with the Bow, 1976
Color Lithograph, 97 x 63 cm
The Welsh Collection of Contemporary Art
Born on April 20, 1893, Joan Miro grew up to revolutionize the art world. As the son of a goldsmith and cabinetmaker in Barcelona, Spain, Miro understood the fundamentals of design and composition. In 1907, Miro studied at the art academy of La Llotja in Barcelona. Subsequent to attending Francesc d’Assis Gali’s progressive Escola d’Art, Miro became inspired and took drawing classes at Cerde Artistic de Sant Lluc. By 1917, he developed an interest in poetry and began reading “avant-garde Catalan and French literary journals.” Miro was a renaissance man who did not restrict himself to painting and sculpture. He designed costumes, worked with ceramics, and illustrated texts using lithography. Miro suffered from heart disease late in his life, and died on December 25, 1983 in Palma de Mallorca, Spain.

In his career, Miro explored a variety of art styles, and probed through different forms of media. Whether it was Fauvism, Surrealism or Cubism, Miro never fully adhered to art movements. Miro’s primary objective was to expand the notions of how one perceives art, and not restrict it to mere representations of the natural world. Using watercolors, Indian inks, oils and even blackberry jam, Miro composed “distortions of fantasy.” Interchange of geometric shapes, splotches, dots and lines became trademarks of Miro’s work. He used symbols and color to compose images that reflected childhood memories, Spanish political tensions, and the night sky. By the 1940s and 50s, Miro engaged in printmaking, especially lithography. Initially his pallet was restricted to black and white, but expanded to contain a “wider range of color lithographs.”

By the 1960s, Miro gained prominence as a printmaker and began illustrating the works of poets and novelists. Literature by Michel Leiris and Tristan Tzara contain color lithograph illustrations by Miro. His color lithographs were prominently featured on several publications of Aimé Maeght’s Derriere le Miroir.

Untitled from Derriere le Miroir, published in 1965, showcases Miro’s trademark style. Though the lithograph gives the appearance of spontaneity, this image was carefully planned and executed. Miro would always create several drafts before producing the end result. Miro proclaimed that he was “fanatically neat and orderly.” The juxtaposition of forms and the color scheme were cautiously coordinated. The bold use of color, splotches of ink, and lack of distinguishable subject matter are all representative of Miro’s later work.

Barry Samaha ‘10

Joan Miro
Untitled, from Derriere le Miroir 1965
Lithograph, 37 x 27 cm
Karel Appel, born in Amsterdam in 1921, was fundamental in expanding the boundaries of art during the twentieth century. His earliest influence was his uncle who encouraged him to paint at the age of fifteen by giving him his first paint set. During his formidable twenties, Karel studied at the Rijksakademie of Amsterdam where he met another burgeoning talent, Pierre Corneille. The two would later become the founders of the internationally acclaimed COBRA movement along with three others, Constant, Asger Jorn, and Christian Dotremont. The movement, invaluable to the development of Appel’s artistic style, promoted a powerfully colorful style of art that was free from the constraints of convention. By 1952, however, Appel broke from the COBRA movement and joined the Art Autre which boasted members such as Willem DeKooning and Jackson Pollock. Appel painted until the last year of his life in 2006 when he died at the age of eighty-five in his home in Zürich.

Although Appel’s colors are vibrant and his themes fantastical, the lithograph Important Person and the seven other lithographs it appeared with in Personages ’70 exemplify the seriousness of his works.

Having lived through the terrors of the Second World War and the tensions and restraints of the Cold War, the artist’s use of color is far more than a reflection of childhood whimsicality. The blocks of color in Appel’s work are the very answer to the restraints Europe felt as a result of the social and political turbulence of the Cold War.

Karel Appel’s works trap emotion and experience in the intense realms of color, shape and line. Important Person, signed by the artist on the lower right, is accorded all the markings of an important person. The furrow on the right brow and the slight frown speak emphatically to the man’s condescending and critical gaze. Similarly the delineation of the eyes that are surrounded by blocks of contrasting primary and secondary colors adds a dimension of temper, tension, and ferocity. Appel often referred to his works as schizophrenic, primal, and anxious all under the guise of being childlike. The artist once commented, “I have often said that life is a kind of game: funny or serious, it’s always a game.”

Emily Sarokin ’10

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Karel Appel (1921-2006)
Personages '70: Important Person, 1970
Lithograph, 93 x 72 cm
Alexander Calder revolutionized the art world with his innovative creations. Born in 1896, Calder became the first twentieth century artist to win international acclaim. A native of Lawton, Pennsylvania, Calder was the son of two artist parents. His father, Alexander Stirling Calder, was a renowned sculptor, and his mother was a portrait painter. Creating wired figures since the age of five, Calder would apply his interest of metals to a mechanical engineering degree from Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey. A slew of odd jobs preceded his enrollment in the Art Students League in 1923. And by 1924, Calder began using inks and small wire sculptures to articulate his fascination with animals and the circus. His attraction to the circus became the inspiration of his first exhibit in New York City.

Bringing his circus performances to Paris in 1927, Alexander Calder became acquainted with renowned artists such as Joan Miro and Piet Mondrian. These two men would greatly influence Calder’s work and ideology. The geometric forms and basic color palette that characterized the styles of Miro and Mondrian appealed to Calder and fueled his attraction to metal and machinery. By 1931, Calder combined these facets to create abstract sculptures with moving parts.

Mobiles, a term coined by Marcel Duchamp, awarded Calder a permanent place in art history. Art in motion provided Calder with the ability to see his creations come to life. Exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, a retrospective at the Guggenheim, and various commissions were a result of his idea to create sculptures in motion.

Though primarily known for his mobiles, Calder was an artist who did not restrict himself to one medium. He was an accomplished painter, sculptor, jewelry maker and lithographer. Untitled, by Calder, shows how he applied his principles to all his works. The use of only three colors, combined with simple forms gives this print a sense of gaiety and whimsy that defines many of his circus figures. Though constructed on a two-dimensional surface, Untitled still retains the sensation of motion that can be seen in his mobiles. The contrast of the colors and the fluidity of the forms are indicative of Calder’s style.

Barry Samaha ’10

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Alexander Calder (1898-1976)
Untitled 1947
Lithograph 18.5 x 25 cm
AUDREY FLACK WAS BORN IN 1931 IN NEW YORK CITY WHERE SHE STILL LIVES TODAY. EARLY IN HER CAREER SHE WAS CONSIDERED AN ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONIST BUT FOUND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO MESH WITH THE PREDOMINANTLY MASCULINE MOVEMENT. IN 1951 SHE CONTINUED HER FORMAL ART EDUCATION AT YALE UNIVERSITY WITH JOSEF ALBERS WHO ADVISED HER TO USE REALISM TO COMMUNICATE HER DISCONTENT WITH THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE ART WORLD. THROUGHOUT THE FIFTIES AND SIXTIES SHE FOCUSED ON PHOTOREALISM AND STILL LIFE PAINTING. IN RETROSPECT, FLACK EXPLAINED IN AN INTERVIEW, “INITIALLY MODERN CRITICS COULDN’T GET BEYOND THE SURFACE RECOGNITION OF THE OBJECT, LABELING IT AS LITERAL AND DUMB. ART HISTORIANS ARE NOW REVIEWING PHOTO-REALISM AND REALIZING THAT THERE WAS MUCH MORE TO IT COMPOSITIONALLY, AESTHETICALLY, AND PHILOSOPHICALLY…” TODAY FLACK TEACHES AT MANY DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES AND HAS WRITTEN TWO BOOKS.

BEING PHOTOREALIST, FLACK’S WORK DEPENDED ON THE PHOTOGRAPH, A DEVICE TO TRANSFER THE IMAGE TO HER CANVAS AND HER TECHNIQUE. HER COLORS ARE VIBRANT PASTELS AND THE OBJECTS SHE PAINTS CATCH AND REFLECT LIGHT TO MAKE THEM SPARKLE. THE SURFACES OF HER PAINTINGS ARE HANDLED IN A WAY TO CREATE THE ILLUSION OF REAL SPACE AND OBJECTS. HER SKILL AS A PHOTOREALIST PAINTER LANDED HER A SPOT IN THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART IN NEW YORK IN 1966. THIS WAS A MONUMENTAL FEAT CONSIDERING SHE WAS A WOMAN ARTIST. MANY FEMINISTS HAD A PROBLEM WITH FLACK’S WORK BECAUSE IT WAS NOT OVERTLY FEMINIST, WITH LIPSTICK, PERFUME, OR PICTURES OF MARILYN MONROE. THE STRUGGLE TO UNDERSTAND WHETHER SHE WAS FEMININE OR A FEMINIST MAY HAVE AFFECTED HER EARLY SUPPORTERS WHO COULD NOT SEE PAST THE MATERIAL OBJECTS TO THE POWER AND STRENGTH OF WOMEN.

FLACK MADE A SERIES, MACARENAS, OF THE VIRGIN MARY IN THE 1970s. ONE PIECE IN THE SERIES, LADY MADONNA, IS RADIANT AND RICH IN COLOR AND GOLDEN SPLENDOR BASED ON A STATUE OF THE VIRGIN SHE MUST HAVE SEEN IN HER TRAVELS OR DUE TO HER INTEREST IN SPANISH BAROQUE ART.4 THE MACARENA IMAGE OF THE VIRGIN IS AN IMPORTANT SYMBOL IN HISPANIC CULTURE, ESPECIALLY DURING HOLY WEEK. HER USUAL MAJESTIC PRESENCE IS INTERRUPTED BY HER TRAGIC GAZE, OVERSIZED TEARS AND HER SLIGHTLY OPENED MOUTH SHOWING HER SORROW AT THE CORRUPTION IN THE WORLD. THIS WORK IS MEANT TO ASSIMILATE FLACK’S EARLIER STILL LIFE WORKS, INSTEAD OF A RELIGIOUS SUBJECT RELATING TO VALUES OF THE HISPANIC CULTURE WHICH HAD LITTLE OR NO VOICE IN AMERICA AT THE TIME. THE VIRGIN IS NOT ONLY A RELIGIOUS, FEMALE FIGURE OF POWER, BUT ADVOCATES THAT EVEN WITH SORROW THERE IS HOPE.

DIANA HAYDOCK ’09

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1 The American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, Jewish Virtual Library, 2008.
4 Brigham 5
Audrey Flack (1931 - )
Lady Madonna, 1975 Print 133/150
Lithograph 86 x 61 cm
The Welsh Collection of Contemporary Art
Romare Bearden has shocked, thrilled, and liberated his audiences since the onset of his career. A child of the Harlem Renaissance, Bearden was undoubtedly influenced by Duke Ellington, Fats Waller, Langston Hughes, and W.E.B Du Bois - all were friends of his parents and visitors to his Harlem home. In the sixties, Bearden inspired his contemporaries with the founding of the Spiral Group, an art-based civil rights organization. Trained at the New York University and the prestigious Art Students League, Bearden’s talents did not go unnoticed. In 1945 the Samuel Kootz Gallery gave Bearden a series of exhibitions that secured him popularity and permanence on the New York art scene. However, it was not until his exploration of collage that his career took flight.

Conjunction, a lithograph from 1979, was modeled after its namesake collage from 1971. Aside from a few differences in color the two are nearly identical. Bearden’s interest in lithography did not begin until his friend, master printmaker Robert Blackburn, opened his studio to the public.1 Bearden took full advantage of the new medium as it required the same focus and planning as his, by then celebrated, collages. Lithographs also provided a characteristic he preferred in his lacquer-coated collages: a formally unified surface with even luminosity.

Flatly patterned and textile-like, the image is saved from the distraction of texture and apparent brushstroke. Although the subject of three black men meeting is simple, it is highly stylized and abstracted, evoking a consideration of the iconography of his figures. The frontal, side, and three-quarter views as well as the treatment of hands portray the development of Bearden’s interest in ancient Egyptian and Greek art. It is apparent with Conjunction that well into the second half of his career the universality of the black community’s experience was his primary concern.

Pulitzer prize winner and playwright, August Wilson said of Romare Bearden’s art, “What I saw was Black life presented on its own terms, on a grand and epic scale, with all its richness and fullness. It was the art of a large and generous spirit that defined not only the character of Black American life, but also its conscience.”

Emily Sarokin ’10

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Romare Bearden (1911-1988)
Conjunction, 1979
Lithograph, 72 x 54 cm
Kenneth Halsband Collection
Leonard Baskin grew up in New Brunswick, New Jersey, in a prominent Jewish family. Both his father and brother were rabbis and he often felt pressure to work at the synagogue. His religious orientation remained a key influence in his life and work. After serving in the Navy during World War II he went to college to study art. Later in his life he taught Jewish Studies at Smith College and was very demanding of his students, encouraging them to be diligent and uphold high standards for themselves like he did with his artwork. He was a painter, sculptor, etcher and lithographer: a true “Renaissance man.” Over a period of 60 years, Baskin had 40 one-man exhibitions and received numerous awards and recognitions. In June 2000, Baskin passed away at his home in Massachusetts.

Baskin remained loyal to traditional printmaking, “seeking for guidance in prints both learned and unlearned, ever aware of its long popular tradition, seeing in its quintessential black and whiteness, the savagery of Goya, the methodology of Dürer and the gentleness of Rembrandt.” His main influence throughout his career was William Blake, the renowned eighteenth-century Romantic poet and printmaker. Baskin’s subjects derive from mid-twentieth century post-war and later cold war sentiment on the bleak state of mankind. Throughout his career he stressed the importance of making a statement about human experience:

There’s a tremendous tendency not to make a statement, not to be committed in that ultimate sense. Photo-realism is the same thing as minimal abstraction. Both are unwilling to say anything about the nature of reality, about their own involvement with reality, the evolvement of forms, their expressive [and] deepest involvement with human reality…

His lithograph, Safari, from 1972, was not a part of a series and this figure’s identity remains ambiguous. His presence is strong and solid, yet the swooping diagonals and curves of the hat soften the man’s cold stare and add movement. The form of the figure resembles a sculptural bust in its volume and stillness. His use of line and its variation in thickness ranging from pencil-like markings to heavy blocks of black ink is typical of his work in this period of his career. Baskin’s manipulation of line aids in defining the figure’s facial details with sharp contrasts of light and deep shadow. The subject of Safari may reference back to his idea of man versus nature, which is an ideal of romanticism, and also power, strength and dignity against earthly evils.

Diana Haydock ’09

Leonard Baskin (1922-2000)
Safari, 1972
Lithograph, 64 x 42 cm
Robert North Collection
Leon Golub, born in Chicago, Illinois in 1922 has a reputation of artistically tackling some of the most controversial topics of modern history. Beginning his artistic career in an atmosphere that preferred minimalism and conceptual art, Golub not only grappled with taboo subjects, but also made a niche for his art by forcing together the recognizable and the abstract. Golub attended the University of Chicago and the Art Institute of Chicago until he served as a cartographer in Europe during the Second World War. After the war Golub and his wife lived in Paris, where he hoped his artwork would be better received than in the United States. In 1964 Golub and his family moved to New York where his art was both applauded and ignored, an inconsistency that nearly pushed him to giving up the profession. During the seventies, however, Golub’s antiwar and existential images began to take the form of a universal portrayal of the dichotomy of the powerful and powerless.

White Squad, which is not a part of the White Squad series of eleven works fictionally documenting police brutality, assaults the viewer with as much immediate force as the cocked semi-automatic pistol in the right corner of the print. The image was drawn on transfer paper and reworked on the stone with crayon and tusche. The print is haunting, disturbing, and void of any relief in color. The elongated face squeezed into the top of the print keeps us from diverting our eyes from the imminent brutality. White Squad is a nightmarish realization of anxiety in which the disproportion of the elongated head to the broader cowering body of the victim mimics the swelling of the viewer’s pupils in a physical reaction to fear. Despite the sparseness of the image, there is a notion of movement- the black crayon lines squirm, as they are forced to the surface in an endless expanse of white. The markings are aggressive, the violence unprovoked, and the viewer, a witness.

Golub remarked on the subjects of his works that he “reported on these monsters because these monsters actually exist.” Although pictures and newsreels were Golub’s primary influence, he managed to capture rage and fear, the primal brutality that lurks in the side of human nature we wish to ignore. Leon Golub died in New York in 2004 but is commemorated by his artwork’s continuing relevance and his heroic stance against injustice.

Emily Sarokin ‘10

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2Katy Kline, and Helaine Posner, Leon Golub and Nancy Spero : War and Memory. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1995, p. 29
Leon Golub (1922-2004)
White Squad, 1987
Lithograph 74 x 105 cm
Marisol has become an icon since her emergence in the art scene in the 1950s. Born Marisol Escobar in Paris in 1930, Marisol experienced a comfortable upbringing due to her family’s financial stability. After her mother’s death and the start of World War II, the family, of Venetian decent, moved to Los Angeles where Marisol attended the Jepson Art Institute. It was during her adolescence where “Catholicism imbued Marisol with beliefs in mystery, miracles . . . and awareness of spiritual/ supernatural aspect of life.”1 With the encouragement of her father, Marisol moved to Paris in 1949 to study at the École des Beaux-Arts. She would continue her studies at the Art Students League of New York and The Hans Hofmann School. Marisol has stated that Hofmann, an Abstract Expressionist, “was the only teacher I ever learned anything from.”2 Her interest in acquiring knowledge of different cultures and art styles has greatly influenced her work as an artist.

Pre-Columbian, Egyptian, Native American and Italian Renaissance are only some of the influences that are reflected in Marisol’s work. After her first exhibition in The Leo Castelli Gallery in 1958, Marisol immersed herself in woodcarving. Experimenting with “Cubist-based assemblages,”3 Marisol incorporated realism with “ambiguity and forceful expression.”4 Her work, drawn from minimalist sources, would be defined by large wooden figures that surveyed the range of sentiments in modern society. They would often merge or overlap one another to represent the psychological insight into contemporary culture. The search for identity was a theme that characterized much of Marisol’s works.

Though predominantly known for her sculpture, Marisol also experimented with other media including lithography. Untitled Suite is one of six prints that adhere to the ideologies of Marisol. The stark nature of the figures could be attributed to Pre-Columbia and Egyptian influences. The mysterious and divine quality of the image could be accredited to the Marisol’s Catholic background. The bright jubilant colors could possibly correlate with Marisol’s fascination with Native American colors and her close association with the Pop art movement.5 Using all these influences, Marisol creates works that celebrate a woman’s body. The figures portray women as ethereal beings rather than symbols of sex and sensuality.

Barry Samaha ’10

1Westmacott, Jean. Marisol Escobar.
2Glueck, Grace. It’s Not Pop, It’s Not Op - It’s Marisol. pp. SM34
3Dichtl, Carol. Eye of the Heart. pp. 158
4Buhmann, Stephanie. Marisol Stories of the Self. pp. 52
5Buhmann. pp.52-55
Marisol (1930- )
Untitled Suite 1978
Lithograph, 134 x 99 cm
The Welsh Collection of Contemporary Art
Malcolm Morley, a leader of the Photorealism movement, has become a major force in the art world. Born in Highgate, North London in 1931, Morley was raised in a single parent household until the age of six. His childhood was beleaguered by the onset of World War II. Rebellious during his youth, Morley was imprisoned in Borstal for theft. Drawing became a source of personal rehabilitation and in 1952 Morley enrolled in the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts. Two years later, Morley registered at the Royal College of Art in London. After attending an exhibition of Abstract Expressionist paintings of American art at the Tate Museum, he was inspired and moved to New York in 1958.

Along with contemporaries Chuck Close and Audrey Flack, Morley created a style of painting and printmaking that involved “the precise reproduction of a photograph.” Disliking the word Photorealism, Morley classified himself as a Super-realist, “a term he coined.” Combining facets of Expressionism, Surrealism and Pop Art, he toyed with concepts of reality. Morley’s interests rested upon style and design, rather than the subject. As Morley states, “I see form and content as being integrated.” By the 1970s, Morley abandoned Photorealism for a more expressionist style.

Arles/Miami, as the title suggests, represents Morley’s interest in representing highly stylized depictions of Sundrenched cities near the ocean. In accordance with Nick de Ville, “Morley produced a significant body of paintings which represented, at much greater scale, beach and cruise scenes taken from postcards or calendar illustrations.” These “vacation” scenes were flattened and rendered with loose and energetic strokes, a style that was indicative of his images in the 1970s. His works became much more aggressive and assertive. Spontaneous applications of his marks gave works a sense of movement and reinforced his inspiration in Abstract Expressionism. He avoided details by applying the medium with great vigor creating a seemingly rough texture on the surface. Primarily a painter, Morley also used lithography to express his ideologies. Arles/Miami is a lithograph that exemplifies Morley’s stylistic change. The painterly technique that defines his work can also be attributed to this print. The brusque lines and swirls that make up this distorted figure are greatly representative of Morley’s method of emphasizing the design of work.

Barry Samaha ’10

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1Falconer, Morgan. An American Romance. pp. 52
Malcolm Morley
Arles/Miami
Lithograph, 86 x 61 cm
The Welsh Collection of Contemporary Art
Alan Sonfist was born and raised in the South Bronx, and became interested in the relationship between humans and nature at a young age. His sanctuary as a child was the Bronx River Forest. Sonfist wrote in an essay published in Natural Phenomena as Public Monuments in 1968: “As in war monuments that record the life and death of soldiers, the life and death of natural phenomena such as rivers, springs, and natural outcroppings need to be remembered. Public art can be a reminder that the city was once a forest or a marsh.” Sonfist’s forty-year career and his personal journey as a bio-historian and artist continue to be an inspiration and reminder to the public of the beauty we must conserve and help to flourish.

Sonfist is one of the forerunners of the Earth Art movement. Michael Brenson of the New York Times once stated, “His concern for the fragility of nature rather than for its sublimeness or monumentality makes him a forerunner of the new ecological sensibility.” In the sixties and seventies, Earth Artists were interested in manipulating the earth whereas Sonfist sought to preserve nature and ensure its renewal.

View of Manhattan is a component of Sonfist’s long-term project and a manifestation of his research, Time Landscapes, which he began in 1965 when he began studying Dutch surveyor maps and documentation from the sixteenth century. This project involved negotiating with the City of New York to obtain land to restore to its pre-Colonial conditions. His first Time Landscape was realized in 1978 on a forty-foot by two hundred-foot plot of land in Greenwich Village and is still present, growing and thriving today as a city landmark. Sonfist studied the ecology of plants from the era and planted them in his earthen canvas.

The View of Manhattan series consists of twelve blue-toned lithographs. He collaged six small, rectangular blocks of orange-toned photographs with images of vegetation on the map, which are aligned with the city blocks horizontally. A brighter blue-tone distinguishes the river from the monotone background, and brown is present over a baseball field which is connected to a park, green tinted areas represent areas where there actually is some urban green space. The lithographs are precise aerial maps of the city and seem almost to be topographical maps instead of a commentary on nature’s demise. The sixth print in the series is an aerial view of the Manhattan – Bronx border along Route 87 near Yankee Stadium.

Diana Haydock ‘09

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View of Manhattan, no. 6, 1980
Lithograph, 72 x 72 cm

Alan Sonfist (1946 - )
View of Manhattan, no. 6, 1980
Lithograph, 72 x 72 cm
The Welsh Collection of Contemporary Art
James Rosenquist was born in 1933 in Grand Forks, North Dakota. He commanded a talent for the arts throughout his childhood and attended various art schools in the Midwest. By his early twenties he earned himself admittance to the prestigious Art Students League in New York and made a living as a billboard painter. Working on the gigantic scale of billboards stayed with Rosenquist whose staggeringly larger than life works gave him an introduction to Pop Art.

Rosenquist’s early works show a collage-like portrayal of pop culture items. Marilyn Monroe, President Kennedy, and cars were frequent subjects of Rosenquist’s work, but his Pop Art style is recognizably more abstract than the movement’s most famous leaders, Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol. Rosenquist, in fact, never really considered himself a pop artist. He said in an interview, “They called me a Pop artist because I used recognizable imagery. I didn’t meet Andy until 1964. I met Roy a little earlier, but I didn’t really know these guys at all.” Rosenquist’s later works move farther from Pop Art into the realm of an abstracted new realism. Working in this style, Rosenquist created his series, Speed of Light.

The Speed of Light series is an autobiographical culmination of Rosenquist’s history as a painter portrayed under the influence of Einstein’s theory of relativity. Rosenquist explored the theory as it illuminated the reasons his viewers had different reactions to his work. Some traveled at his speed, others were spectators.

The compositions are unpredictable, have many different focal points, and are activated by swirling colors in the shapes of DNA strands and sci-fi vortexes. When asked if his series was influenced by energy, Rosenquist said, “Of course! What do you do on a two-dimensional picture plane, how do you activate it? You give it a whirl.” The dizzying aspect of Sailor is attributed to the work’s ability to capture the complexity of perspective. Through color, shape, and multiple points of focus, Rosenquist exploits the sensation of perspective and the mechanics of the eye. Sailor even seems organic, with elements reminiscent of veins and the undulating lines surrounding the circular center almost suggesting an eye. The series is more than scientific, however. Typical to Rosenquist’s style, the print is erotic and forceful, but Sailor is contained by movements of sensuous curving lines and calming fields of grey with the reflective property of a warped mirror. Despite the difficulty Rosenquist had with downsizing his art and working with the very intimate media of lithography, there is no notion of hesitancy in the Speed of Light series.

Emily Sarokin '10

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2Ibid., p. 107.
3Ibid., p. 107.
5Ibid.
James Rosenquist (1933-)
Speed of Light, Sailor, 1999
Lithograph 71 x 61 cm
George N. Abraham Collection
Alongtime supporter of the Hobart and William Smith Art Collection, Robert North, Jr., has donated nearly 100 important pieces of art to Hobart and William Smith in memory of his wife, Marion de Mauriac North ’32, L.H.D. ’78, including 12 Bellows lithographs. After earning a B.A. from Harvard, North went on to earn an M.S. in Library Science from the University of Buffalo in 1938. Throughout his career as a reference librarian and library administrator, he worked at the Emory University Library, the Charleston, W. Va., Public Library and the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library in New York. Since his retirement in 1973, he has been an active member of the Hobart and William Smith community, attending art shows, meeting with students and making several generous gifts of art. North has also sponsored an Art Restoration and Preservation Fund, helping to protect the beauty and value of the Colleges Art Collection in perpetuity.

Melissa Sorrells ’05
THE TALE: Legend has it that one day Alois Senefelder was writing a laundry list for his mother on a freshly polished stone using a greasy crayon. Interested in how the two objects interacted with one another, Senefelder experimented with the stone and found that, when chemically treated and inked, impressions could be pulled from it. This ultimately led to his discovery of the printing technique of lithography in 1796.

THE STONE: Traditionally in lithography, the artist’s canvas is a blank, flat piece of limestone. Using limestone allows the artist to obtain a wide tonal range.

ANOTHER ADVANTAGE OF LIMESTONE IS THAT THE STONE CAN BE GROUND DOWN TO A CLEAN SURFACE AND RE-USED REPEATEDLY.

THE PROCESS: Lithography is a planographic printing process. The image areas are neither raised nor depressed, as in letterpress and etching, rather they remain on the same plane surface of the printing plate as the non-image areas. The two areas are differentiated chemically: the image areas are made grease-receptive and water-repellent, and non-image areas are made water-receptive and grease-repellent. The image areas accept the ink.

THE DRAWING: Artists create their images using a variety of techniques. One traditional method involves the making of a drawing on a separate sheet of paper and the transfer of the image.
THE PREPARATION: When the image is finished, it becomes "fixed" to the stone. This is done by applying an etch, which is a solution comprised of gum arabic and nitric acid. The greasy image area is resistant to the solution causing a chemical reaction to only occur on the non-image area of the stone.

THE PRINTING: The stone is lightly covered with water and then rolled with ink. A piece of print-making paper is placed onto the stone and covered by a backing sheet or blotter. Carefully the objects are placed on the press bed and aligned with the scrapper bar. A pressure lever is engaged to bring the two together thereby transferring the object from the stone to the paper.

THE INFLUENCE: Today artists and printmakers continue to both expand and refine lithography as a fine art practice. Additionally, high-volume lithography is used to produce posters, maps, books, newspapers, and packaging — just about any smooth, mass-produced item with print and graphics on it. Most books, indeed all types of high-volume text, are now printed using a specific type of lithography referred to as offset lithography.
Lithographs in the Art Collection of Hobart & William Smith Colleges


Comme Une Roche. 20th century. Color lithograph, 51 x 51 cm. Robert North Collection.

Cosy Face. 1970. Color lithograph, 93 x 73 cm.

Important Person. 1970. Color lithograph, 93 x 72 cm.

Smile Again. 1970. Color lithograph, 93 x 72 cm.


Untitled. 1970. Color lithograph, 93 x 72 cm.

What Are They Waiting For. 1970. Color lithograph, 76 x 88 cm.


Elsie. 1921. Lithograph, 27 x 19 cm. Robert North Collection.

Elsie, Emma and Marjorie. 1921. Lithograph, 29 x 35 cm. Robert North Collection.

Girl Sewing. 1923. Lithograph, 30 x 17 cm. Robert North Collection.

In the Park. 1916. Lithograph, 45 x 56 cm. Robert North Collection.

Jean. 1921. Lithograph, 13 x 11 cm. Robert North Collection.

Murder of Edith Cavell. 1918. Lithograph, 48 x 63 cm. Robert North Collection.


Preliminaries. 1916. Lithograph, 40 x 50 cm. Robert North Collection.

The Life Class. 1917. Lithograph, 35 x 49 cm. Robert North Collection.


Of Land and Sea. 1939. Lithograph, 28 x 27 cm. Robert North Collection.

Corinth, Lovis. ABC. 1917. Lithograph, 43 x 36 cm.

Venus. 1917. Lithograph, 36 x 28 cm.


Self Portrait. 20th century. Lithograph, 34 x 25 cm.


Aquarium. 1940s. Lithograph, 30 x 41 cm. Robert North Collection.
The Sand Fence. 1940s. Lithograph, 25 x 32 cm. Robert North Collection.
Mala. 1933. Lithograph, 29 x 25 cm. Robert North Collection.
Memory. 1928. Lithograph, 37 x 49 cm. Robert North Collection.
Sermilik Fjord. 1931. Lithograph, 37 x 49 cm. Robert North Collection.
Kipnis, Robert. Mountains. 20th century. Lithograph, 32 x 24 cm. Robert North Collection.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE LIST OF PEOPLE WITHOUT WHOM THIS EXHIBITION AND CATALOG WOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED IS ENDLESS, BUT A FEW NEED SPECIAL MENTION.

THE ART DEPARTMENT AS A WHOLE HAS BEEN INCREDIBLY SUPPORTIVE AND THE CHAIR, NICK RUTH, ESPECIALLY SO.

THE LIBRARIANS OF WILLIAM HUNTING SMITH LIBRARY HAVE COOPERATED WITH US ABOVE AND BEYOND OUR WILDEST HOPES. VINCENT BOISELLE, JOSEPH CHMURA AND MOST ASSUREDLY SARA GREENLEAF HAVE WON OUR UNDYING GRATITUDE.

THE ADVANCEMENT OFFICE HAS BEEN VERY SUPPORTIVE IN TERMS OF THEIR TIME AND FUNDING. WE WISH TO GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE HELP GIVEN US BY KELLY YOUNG AND OTHERS.

IN ADDITION, WE HAVE HAD EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE INCLUDING MARY LECLAIR, MICHAEL DIMAURUO AND OUR PHOTOGRAPHER, LAUREN LONG.

AND LAST, BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST, WE WILL BE FOREVER GRATEFUL TO THE PROVOST AND DEAN OF FACULTY, TERESA AMOTT, FOR ORIGINATING THIS PROJECT AND SUPPORTING IT THROUGH THE TWO VERY LONG YEARS OF ITS REALIZATION.

References: