

Lindenwood University

Digital Commons@Lindenwood University

Theses

Theses & Dissertations

12-1979

A Commentary on an Exhibition of Prints and Photographs

Janet Love-Seward

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/theses>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

Humly dedicated, with my infinite gratitude

To Richard Rickert, for reassurance

To Craig Eisendrath, for insight

To Arthur Kanak, for instruction

To the late Marvin Love, for faith

To Uncle Sam, for love

A Commentary on
An Exhibition of Prints and Photographs

To Carlin Seward, for patience

To Aaron By Janet Love-Seward

To my Mother and Father, for perseverance in lean days

Now, faith is the essence of things hoped for, and the evidence
of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1

Presented in partial completion of the
requirements leading to the Master of Arts
degree in Studio Art.

December 1979



Faculty Sponsors: Arthur Kanak, M.F.A.
Craig Eisendrath, Ph.D.
Faculty Administrator: Richard Rickert, Ph.D.

1941c
1979

Humbly dedicated, with my infinite gratitude

To Richard Rickert, for reassurance

To Craig Eisendrath, for insight

To Arthur Kanak, for instruction

To the late Marvin Love, for faith

To Uncle Sam, for funds

To Carlin Seward, for patience

To Aaron Seward, for eternal hope

To my Mother and Father, for perseverance in lean days

productive in the present stage of my career. I am younger,
and just beginning the process of shaping my style. I should find
it useful to be conscious of those masters whose works were working
as models for my own work. And at the point of retrospec-
tion, I might find it useful, in the style of Aaron Seward,
Now, faith is the essence of things hoped for, and the evidence
of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1

any kind of imitation, and to shape my work to keep my hand about
of immediate debt. I choose not to list my influences, but my
rather that I have done a great deal of looking, have attempted
to absorb and assimilate what I have seen, and have emerged with
the style or styles exhibited in my work.

PREFACE

My culminating project was an exhibition of twenty-two prints and fourteen photographs shown in the Harry Hendren Gallery of the Lindenwood Colleges. My motto has been "By their works you shall know them." The test of the works is the works themselves, and this essay is written as a gloss on the text of the exhibit.

In writing this paper, I have been asked at various times to trace those artistic influences which have most powerfully shaped my present work. Such an exercise, in my view, is not productive in the present stage of my career. Were I younger, and just beginning the process of shaping my style, I should find it useful to be conscious of those masters whose works were serving as models for my own; were I older, and at the point of retirement, I might find it useful, in the style of Marcus Aurelius, to sum up my life as a product of others' inputs. But as I am in mid-career, and very conscious of the need to keep my head about any kind of imitation, and to shape my own style without any sense of immediate debt, I chose not to list my influences, but say rather that I have done a great deal of looking, have attempted to absorb and assimilate what I have seen, and have emerged with the style or styles exhibited in my work.

Here prevails. We, as faltering human beings in search of truth, fail to see the forest for the trees; if we return to the source (Mother Earth and her Creator), all the truths of life are quickly revealed. If one could photograph the "Colossian Force" (Colossians 1:13-17) the results of being which men have

INTRODUCTION

We are born wondering "why?" and we die wondering "why?" In the interim we search for a "raison d'etre." We all leave our marks on this world in different ways. I will leave one son and a multitude of prints, drawings, paintings, and photographs for the world to decipher after I depart. Philosophers have defined this journey as a search for truth; for the purpose of establishing a single concrete known in this writing, let us accept this as so. In the interminable search for truth, man has ventured to the ocean floor, scaled the highest peaks, and even gone to the moon, only to find the elusive butterfly of truth flitting just beyond in the dimness. Those of us who have found a source of enlightenment in which to believe are not sure what to do with it, or how to pass it on. I have chosen to relate my message through the visual arts, specifically print-making and photography.

The most dynamic design is found in the common, and perhaps one could say, mundane forms. This collection of prints and photographs expresses only an infinitesimal amount of a small part of a slightly larger thought in the mind of one individual. However, in these thirty-six works, a smorgasbord of line and form prevails. We, as faltering human-beings in search of truth, fail to see the forest for the trees; if one returns to the source (Mother Earth and her Creator), all the truths of life are quietly revealed. If one could photograph the "Colossian Force" (Colossians 1:15-17) the riddle of being which men have

puzzled over for millennia would be answered and available for publication in every major newspaper in the world. However, our minds and equipment being inadequate, we must capture on paper those things showing only the evidence of its all-pervasive existence. Humbly, I present these works as undeniable evidence of the Force.

Truth and/or beauty have been presented in a myriad of ways by as many people. Rembrandt found his truth in visual as well as social honesty, and was damned for it. Three hundred years later, halfway around the world, Thomas Eakins discovered a similar truth, and found honesty still largely unpopular. Like Rembrandt, he was condemned for expressing unvarnished reality, though in more subtle ways. He none-the-less suffered lack of acceptance due to his frankness.

Throughout the history of man, his art works have revealed the path of his search for truth, and its relativity to his status in the world. It is still so today. We have seen in this country alone a multiplicity of movements in the arts, each expressing a slightly different approach to this question of truth. In the decades of Abstract Expressionism, the gargantuan works of deKooning and Pollock and others communicated their version of this truth so powerfully as to seem final, yet the succeeding generation has returned again to the same search in its time.

For myself, though I have read the words and studied the works of a hundred major artists, both European and American, I must fill the creative need with my own mind and means. The

lives and works of those before me serve only as signposts in the gigantic labyrinth I must decipher for myself in the time I am given to do so. All the variables are mine, like an algebraic equation with no knowns.

The next phase of this paper will be to discuss the individual works in both technical and aesthetic detail. For the sake of clarity, they will be grouped according to process rather than listed chronologically. The major categories are intaglio and relief printing, with intaglio having three subheadings of etching, engraving, and collagraphy. Each process will be defined once, and any variations in individual work will be added to the discussion of that work. For the sake of space, only a brief survey of the history of each type of printing process will be given.

ETCHING

For the sake of establishing for the reader a brief historical setting---as stated in The Art of Etching by E. S. Lumsden, "No one seems yet to have discovered precisely when etching designs upon metal objects--purely for ornament's sake--began first to be practiced, but in all probability it was used by the armourers and jewelers long before the fifteenth century, when we first find any definite record of art."¹ There are records of mordant recipes dating as far back as 1431, but etching as we know it is

not authenticated until the beginning of the sixteenth century. A German, Daniel Hopfer (1439?-1536) is supposed to have produced the first portrait, an etching on iron dating back to 1500. His name is found entered in the register of one of the guilds of Augsburg and his profession is listed as "engraver on copper," but since all his plates were etched on iron one must assume a very liberal translation of the terms involved.² It is apparent that etching as an art form had its birth in Middle Europe prior to the Renaissance.

Although Rembrandt is preceded by a mammoth tradition of etching (not to be discussed here), the very term "etching" has become synonymous with his name in most printmakers' circles. He did probably the greatest work on metal plates that the world has ever known (at least in this writer's opinion). In spite of his working almost totally in the tradition of Flemish naturalism, there is hardly an etcher after Rembrandt who has not been influenced, either directly or indirectly, by his all-embracing genius. In the words of E. S. Lumsden,

No great artist of Rembrandt's caliber has time in the space of a working life to explore all the possibilities of even one medium, and though he may feel that in certain directions things might be accomplished, he can only hint at them and pass on along the main track which he has selected, or the circumstances have forced upon him. These hints of what were but side-tracks on the road of the master are often followed up and carried further by his many followers, each working along a gradually diverging path, until, at the end, it is sometimes difficult to trace them back to the common source and the inspiration of their setting out.³

It is one of these diverging paths I follow in my experimentation with etching. It could be said Rembrandt's influence on my work has been primarily technical as I am using methodology established in his era.

My re-introduction (after some twelve years) to the processes of etching began with a series of small (6"x6") works titled "Alberta's Best." Subjectively, the series is a semi-impressionistic drawing of a bunch of onions. My choice of subject matter was less important, at this point, than my re-acquainting myself with the processes of etching. I chose the bunch of onions for its biomorphic form and immense line structure. I felt they would satisfy the experimental needs of a first plate without complicating it subjectively. A total of three zinc plates were etched in various techniques: line, aquatint, and a small amount of sugar-lift. I chose zinc plates due to their less expensive cost. Copper is by far more desirable, but prohibitive in cost for experimental plates. The first step in processing was grounding the line plate with asphaltum hard ground. The drawing was put on the grounded plate with a Whistler etching needle. The plate was then "bitten" for three different time lengths in Dutch Mordant (hydrochloric acid with potassium chlorate crystals). Dutch Mordant was the bath available in the printmaking lab, but it is also the bath of choice owing to its regularity of bite. My original plan for the prints was to do a triple-color series; however, due to an error in judgment, the aquatint and sugar-lift on the line plate became overpowering to the aquatint on the color plate. Fortunately,

the spoiled line plate was printed alone quite successfully. The second plate, bitten totally in aquatint, was printed in color, and later overprinted with another line plate in black, giving the desired results. I adhered to a relatively realistic color harmony, yellow ochres and burnt umbers for the color prints, and black for the single plate. I printed exclusively on "All Purpose" etching paper available through the campus bookstore. It is a high rag content paper exhibiting good wet strength and the cream tone I prefer. It was readily available and of good quality so I found it unnecessary to look further. The resulting two prints were a very satisfactory re-introduction to etching.

The next etching, called "Cotton Top," was quite an undertaking. It was eighteen inches square, an enormous size for an etching. It was an experimental project in many respects. The initial drawing was quite realistically rendered. In a series of lines and dots, cotton bolls in their fully ripened state were drawn onto the hardground. The first bite was for forty-five minutes. The result was a deeply etched line and dot. The second step was re-grounding the plate, and adding a landscape plane with a simplified drawing of a small boy running with a balloon. This was in turn etched for about thirty minutes. The plate was then proofed. The drawing phase relatively complete, the plate was ready for aquatint. The day I chose to do the aquatint process there was no workable can of spray paint available in the lab. (Spray paint is now used in place of resin dust and a box.) I decided to experiment with flat or straight bite. I carefully blocked out the line drawings with lacquer stop-out

and proceeded. I first stopped out a cloud-type formation in the area behind the cotton. I put the plate into the acid bath for only five minutes. I stopped out again in the same cloud pattern, and bit again for another five minutes. I repeated this process two more times. The resulting effect changed the entire feeling of the print. It took on depth and an almost eerie, surrealistic quality. Because of the inconsistency of flat biting, it was necessary to "clean-up" some of the areas with a more orthodox aquatint, which I did later. The resulting print was unusual in its surrealism combined with an almost "children's book illustration" quality. I did the final proof in a warm brown tone, (a mixture of black, burnt umber, yellow ochre, and red inks) on A P paper. The warmth of the ink color brought a feeling of sunshine and fantasy to the print. It was a long time-consuming labor, but I feel the experience and the resulting print was well worth the effort.

ENGRAVING

Feeling very confident at this point, I decided to try my hand at engraving. I was given, by my instructor, a small scrap of copper on which to experiment. Copper is the optimum metal for engraving and drypoint because it has a more regular molecular structure and it is a good bit harder than zinc. The piece I was given had been etched quite heavily on the good side, so I chose to work on the back even though it was covered with acid-resist enamel. I had had some experience with the burin twelve

years ago in undergraduate printmaking, so learning to handle it again was not too difficult. The plate, which began only as a series of lines, began to take on a pleasing, abstract design quality. Fascinated by the feel of the burin and the spontaneous emerging design, I worked on the plate until very late one evening. Realizing that this practice plate had become more than just a discard, I scraped and sanded off the acid-resist, exposing the copper underneath. I then worked back into some of the areas with a drypoint needle to create a Dali-esque surrealist print. The emery paper used to remove the acid-resist had created a brushed surface on the plate, which I altered again in areas with a burnisher to bring the surface to a high polish. The resulting print has an African-primitive quality. I titled the piece "Feminine Mystique." It was printed in warm black on A P paper.

My major effort in engraving came to a print titled "Tiger's Lilies." It is a fairly realistic portrait head of my son done on a sixteen-inch-square copper plate. After having arrived at an acceptable preliminary drawing, I transferred it to the plate by means of red carbon paper. I blocked off with lacquer stop-out the areas to be engraved, and sprayed the background for aquatint. It was bitten for fifty-five minutes to insure a good deep bite. I then set to work with burin and drypoint needle. The engraved lines appear mainly in the flat areas of the lilies, while the face, hands, and hair are incised more softly with the drypoint needle. Drypoint gives a much softer effect due to the irregular burr created by the needle. This plate was worked and

reworked and proofed numerous times before even the slightest hint of success appeared. *and overprinted with the line plate*

Of all the prints I have done, this one gave me the greatest frustration. It is a subject that demands control and exactness done in a tedious medium. When it was nearly complete technically, I decided I was not happy with the anatomical structure of the head and shoulder line; thus began the process of scraping out and burnishing to remedy the undesirable area. After three more proof prints, I felt it had reached a stopping point. I then began to experiment with ink tone. Although the warm black I usually prefer was aesthetically acceptable, I was not totally pleased with the mood it created. I tried burnt umber, but it was too pale. I finally decided on the same mixture I had used on "Cotton Top," and the results were excellent. As usual, I printed on A P paper. I ran a small edition of five prints. Drypoint has a tendency to break down rapidly under the pressure of the press; this was beginning to happen on the fifth print, so I stopped. The drypoint areas can be reworked later should I choose to run a second edition. This plate was a real learning experience, both technically and psychologically, but I feel the effort was well rewarded in the results. *done into the background.*

The "Through the Glass Darkly" was a small two-plate etching (6"x8") using line and aquatint as the main methods. It is a surrealistic work with a scriptural theme symbolizing our lack of understanding of the universal plan. The line plate was accomplished in a single thirty-five minute bite, while the aquatint plate was done in three fifteen minute steps. The color or

aquatint plate was printed in an ultramarine blue of lowered intensity, dried, re-wet, and overprinted with the line plate in black. The ink on the prints from the first plate was allowed to dry before the second plate was overprinted to avoid smashing the small beads of ink left by the aquatint plate. Clarity and sparkle were maintained by printing in this manner. Again, it was printed on A P paper. Also, a small edition of this work was run.

The next work was a three-plate print called "Yesterday's Beauty." The subject matter was inspired by an overripened tomato I found in the garden in late October. The voluptuous forms, vivid colors, and strong lines I thought fascinating. The first or green plate became an experiment in feather-biting. This is accomplished by working directly onto a wet plate with nitric acid. The acid is dropped onto the areas where the greatest bite is desired, and moved about with a feather into the water on the surface of the plate. It is a very difficult method to control, but the results are pleasingly spontaneous. The second plate, which is the body of the tomato, was done in traditional red, and treated in the standard, block-out, Dutch Mordant method. The top or line plate was a line drawing done into the hardground. The dot and stipple technique was employed heavily here, also. The red and green plates were printed with no drying time allowed between so that a slight fusion of the colors would take place. The prints were then allowed to dry before the line plate was printed. The red and green inks used were lowered in intensity (by adding their complements). The line plate was printed in a

warm black. The resulting prints have a slightly primitive and abstract quality which works together for an aesthetically pleasing overall effect.

COLLAGRAPHY

The next phase of my printmaking experience was collagraphy, a medium I found most exciting and challenging. I share feelings with Robert Motherwell on the mystique of collage as he so aptly stated in 1946 in connection with an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The sensation of physically operating on the world is very strong in the medium of "papiers colle" or collage, in which various kinds of paper are pasted to the canvas. One cuts and chooses and shifts and pastes, and sometimes tears off and begins again. In any case, shaping and arranging such a relational structure obliterates the need, and often the awareness, of representation. Without reference to likeness, it possesses feeling because all the decisions in regard to it are ultimately made on the grounds of feeling. 4

So it is also with a collagraph print. One experiences the same feeling of spontaneity when printing a pasted up plate. Often times, the greatest thrill can be pulling the first proof, and discovering pleasing results. The first, or experimental plate, was one I titled "Ode to a Tree Trunk." The main components of its construction were string and paper. The results were acceptable, but not earth-shattering. I tried to exert too much control over the plate, thus rendering it tight and stiff. However, it did serve as a good learning experience in what not to do again!

Needless to say, it did not appear in the show.

The next work is a symbolic piece, the subject of which is based on a quote from the Bible. "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men," (Matthew 4:19), portrays fish as the central theme, with the line and hook being the cross of Jesus' final sacrifice. The story means different things to each individual, depending on his particular religious bent, but no one could help chuckling over the reversal of roles apparent in the print. The final proof was printed in a greyed ultramarine blue on A P paper. After many different color proofs, I chose blue for its cool, reserved quality, and its representation of water. This color selection seemed to complete the theme and yet not interfere with the textured effects inherent in a collagraph.

The next two pieces were the most stimulating to work on due to the circular plates. For me, the circle is the basis of all form and symbolizes all beginnings. "The Enigma of a Weaving" is a smorgasbord of textural effects inspired by the work of weaver Barbara Hunter. The circle is repeated numerous times, in many ways, lending an overall unity to the work. The proofs were printed in the dark warm brown ink I mixed that appears on some previous prints. There was little reworking of the plate necessary. The only problem was the deeper recessed areas were holding too much ink, which in turn, left too much on the print, causing a surface shine. This problem was easily remedied by adding more layers of polymer to the deep areas. The resulting print was exciting both in size and form.

"An Infinity of Mirrors," another round print the same size

as "Weaving," was a success immediately. After the experience of three plates, I began to know what to expect from various surfaces when printed. Subjectively, the piece is a series of tangent and concentric profiles (of the artist) in a variation of textures. I was a good deal freer in the making of this plate, as my confidence had risen from the success of the last one. I did some totally spontaneous experiments on this work using polymer in a forced-drying situation. The results were effective, it looked like shattered glass. Again, I printed this plate in my favorite brown on A P paper. The print had an optical illusion that emerged with the proof, but it was not noticable on the plate. It was aesthetically sound, or stable in form, yet it possessed a great deal of visual movement. It was one of the most fascinating of all the collagraph plates I built.

Stimulated by success with collagraph, I decided to attempt one larger and more diversified than before. Appropriately titled "Ego," it demanded much arranging and rearranging. I worked for weeks on this plate before a single thing was glued down. It began to grate on my nerves, because I could not arrive at an acceptable format from which to start. Finally, in desperation, I went back almost to the first arrangement I had worked out. I then began to work on achieving the polymer shattered-glass effect, but with a more subtle fading out on the edges. In order for this to be done effectively, the hottest and driest day must be selected. The polymer reacts differently under cooler, more humid temperatures. Finally, the right day came; I poured on the plastic and waited for the sun to do its work. It seemed to be

accomplishing the desired effect, but I would not know for sure until it was proofed. I allowed it to dry for several days before printing to insure hardness of the thick areas. The first proof was a success, needing only the subtlest lightening of the circular areas. The polymer and sun had worked, giving the rippled, almost brain-like effect for which I was striving. I did the print in warm black, as it needed the visual weight of the darkest ink. Its conception and gestation--they were agonizing, but the results, I feel, were successful, thus leaving my "Ego" intact.

"Beginnings" is perhaps a bit anti-climactic, but I wished to experiment with cutting into the collagraph plate, as well as building it up. The first proof showed the lines to be much too deep (the ink oozed out under the pressure of the press), so it was necessary to work back and fill them. I built up and sanded again those surfaces I wanted light, and added more variation in texture to some areas. The plate and resulting print were much improved over the first proof. Again, I used the dark brown ink, as I felt this print needed a warmth that is inherent in brown and not black. The imagery was a fusion between the beginnings of man and plant. I felt it had as much strength of aesthetic statement as the larger plates, and I was pleased with the results.

RELIEF PRINTING - LINOCUT

For all the time I've spent in the pursuit of the arts,

and as diversified as are my tastes, my greatest love is for the relief print. It satisfies in me the need to proliferate. The process is simple; it does not get in the way of production of thought. I working with woodcut or linocut, one is free to conceive and produce idea and revelation without the time-consuming hindrances of technicality. It is to the Chinese we give credit for the first woodcuts. Some six centuries before the art reached Western Europe, Chinese artists were already making religious illustrations in the woodcut medium. The oldest example of these is thought to have appeared in the Diamond Sutra, dated 868 A.D., a Buddhist scripture found in the Caves of a Thousand Buddhas in western China. Thus, the Chinese made printmaking possible by both their invention of paper, and development of the technique of relief printing. Concerning the European heritage of relief printmaking, Jules Heller, in his book Printmaking Today states,

Curiously enough, such heterogeneous factors as the desire for gambling and the need for forgiveness of sin combined to create a thriving market for the first printmakers of the Western World. During the fifteenth century, playing cards were produced in great number and variety, to satisfy those who dreamed of riches; while images of St. Christopher, St. Sabastian, St. Gertrude, and the Virgin Mary, and others met the needs of those seeking salvation or honoring the patron saint of their professions or occupations. In 1414 the Council of Constance debated the system of indulgences and pondered the propriety of selling or distributing these popular woodcuts of saints, as an alternative to penance for the faithful. 5

Therefore, one sees that the art of relief printing has a wide and varied heritage. For my needs, I have chosen linoleum

as the material of choice over wood. It cuts easily in any direction, and this easy, curving line gives the linocut print a unique quality of its own. Also, linoleum of good quality will hold up indefinitely for a remarkable number of impressions. It can be printed as a single plate of one color only, or many plates and many colors can be combined. It is a truly versatile yet technically simple medium. Pablo Picasso is well known as a linocut artist and has lent much prestige to the medium. He used linoleum so extensively that the term "linocut" is strongly identified with his name. His work serves to demonstrate how brilliantly and how boldly a design can be executed in this medium.⁶ For those of us who are prolific, as well as like to work with more speed than the cutting of wood normally allows, linoleum is the material of choice. In my work, I used primarily unmounted battleship linoleum with Speedball gouges. The linoleum is available in a multitude of hardnesses and sizes at reasonable prices. I used both Prang and Speedball oil-base inks, and Troya rice paper. After much experimentation with various types of papers, I found the Troya paper to be most suited to my needs. It is heavy enough to have a good amount of opacity, yet soft enough to absorb the ink nicely for a strong and solid image. I preferred the soft rubber brayers for inking the block, and a wooden spoon for transferring the image to the paper.

I have been actively working in this medium for years. It is said that people, like wine and cheese, improve with age. My work during the past year shows the mellowness that accompanies maturity of philosophy and technical experience. I will discuss

in chronological order, the prints I accomplished during my graduate studies. The first in the series of works is "The Way We Were #2," a fourteen-inch round portrait of a pre-teen girl in wedding party attire. She was a child of my memory that I felt typifies the look of a fleeting age. Our children pass so quickly from childhood, to teenage, to adulthood that we seldom are aware of that infinitesimal time labeled "pre-teen." Her face and style of dress bear witness to an almost-past childhood. However, present in her somber expression, one sees impending womanhood. The circular form of the block reiterates the concept of no beginning, no end, to the cycle of life. In the realistic portrayal of her face was an intrinsic quality of abstractness. It was a penetrating face that stares somewhere beyond the viewer into an enchanted future.

The next block I cut was a representational drawing of a pine cone, quite enlarged. The fact that it was a fifteen-inch circle made it somewhat imposing, but not spectacular. I added a small seven and a half-inch block of a hand holding a pine cone which improved it, but it still lacked real punch. I experimented with placement of the blocks on the page, but to no avail. It just had nothing to say but "pine cone," and philosophically, that's not too profound! Needless to say, it did not appear in the show.

At this point, I worked on many blocks simultaneously, but my favorite of the time was a four-plate print titled "Infinity." There were four nine-inch-round blocks placed in a square formation in which the design continues from block to block. I had

originally planned to do a multi-color series from these blocks, but adding color to the print destroyed the design and aesthetic punch. It is printed as a single color work in a brown-black ink. Again, I chose my own mixture of inks to maintain the visual strength; the black ink was too harsh, and burnt umber had a washed out look, so I mixed the two for a dark, dark brown.

The vision of this work had its birth as my personal reaction to the ERA movement. I feel the strength and power of the female of the species is infinite. She must be all things to all people: a mother, a lover, a wife, and an identity to herself. An instrument of creation, she perpetuates the race with instincts as basic as lilies of the field, and yet her influence determines the attitudes and expectations of the future. She must be tender and soft, subtle but strong, and always a diplomat of the first order. In this print I have tried to portray these qualities in a stylized design fashion, again relying on the circular form to reiterate the continuous nature of it all.

Accomplished simultaneously with "Infinity" was a multi-block work titled "Eternal Yucca." The subject is a yucca pod, rendered quite realistically at the top of the print, and gradually becoming more abstract as it terminates at the bottom. The main body of the pod is enclosed in a circle, which is repeated again in the red eye below. The total concept of the work lies in the similarity of abstract and realistic form. Philosophically, everything is intrinsically abstract, depending on the reference point of the viewer, which in this work is symbolized by the eye peering through the mass. I originally tried printing this work

in the intensity range of orange and blue, but the overwhelming effect of the colors grossly upstaged the design, so I went to solid black with only the background of the eye in red. I was pleased with the results; it was an imposing form when printed.

Everyone active in the visual arts must at sometime or other consider a crucifix--providing ones background and bent are Christian in nature. My fulfillment of that need was manifest in a work called "The master Plan." Subjectively, it was an Easter Lily portrayed as a cross on which the Christ figure appeared in a sacrificed demeanor. It was a nine-block composition simulating a church window. The top left and right blocks admonish the viewer to believe and receive, while the lower left and right blocks list the scriptural references for the Biblical plan of salvation. This work involved much time and divine inspiration. Perhaps aesthetically this piece is not as profound as some of the others, but in information rendered forth I feel it is far and away the most important. For those who understand, no explanation is necessary; for those who don't, no explanation would suffice.

The next three works were done in conjunction with my studies of twentieth century American Art. I hoped to pay homage to three artists whose styles I felt had a profound effect on the Abstract Expressionist movement. Arshille Gorky was an enigma to his peers because he was able to master successfully the style of every major painter of the day. He is quoted as saying proudly, "If he drips, I drip," when chided once for emulating Picasso. Yet in his short life, only forty-four years, he was able to develop

a style unique to himself and unique to the Abstract Expressionist movement. His influences came from mythology, African Primitive, and those impressionists who preceded him. In the print "The Enigma of Arshille Gorky," I tried to capture some of the biomorphic qualities found in his works. Gorky's style was perhaps the epitome of biomorphism and cannot be discussed without constant awareness of the influence biomorphic form had on his painting. I was most touched by his "Garden of Sochi" series.

"Homage to Motherwell," a play on his Spanish Civil War series, is characterized by strong, solid blacks and imposing forms. Of the three artists I chose to emulate, Motherwell was the most difficult. His work has a nebulous quality that is unique only to him, and those of us looking in can only surmise the internal strivings that lead to the painted work. Nonetheless, I tried to capture, in his style, the impressions I received from studying his works.

The most obvious style to emulate was that of the late, great Jackson Pollock and his drip series. With these works Pollock reached the pinnacle of abstraction in which all the barriers were obliterated. His works abandoned all representation in exchange for pure form on top of form, totally free in concept. Emotion and kinetic expression are paramount in the large, overwhelming works he conceived and birthed simultaneously. "In Remembrance of Jackson Pollock" was an attempt at an infinitesimal peephole into the mind of a man tormented, yet brilliant in his concept of aesthetics. I attempted to approach the block as I imagined Pollock might approach the blank canvas. I worked

directly on the linoleum with India ink, shoving and splashing and dashing with total abandonment much as Jackson must have done. Happily, the printed results contain a glimpse of the spontaneity achieved in his gargantuan works.

"Scorpio" is a large two-block linocut executed with a sumi brush and India ink directly onto the blocks. The inspiration for this method of working came from the success of "In Remembrance of Jackson Pollock." Subjectively, the influence is from a scorpion-shaped mollusk shell. I found the design and texture of the remains of this small creature fascinating and fairly teeming with possibilities for drawings. The resulting print was somewhat representational, but upon closer examination of the detail, one is able to relate to the work as totally abstract. This work proves quite clearly the thesis of my year's study that the greatest source of biomorphic design is found in nature herself, and that all things are intrinsically abstract. The title "Scorpio" has an astrological reference. Theoretically, those born under the sign of Scorpio are said to be of a volatile nature, somewhat violent and restless. I feel this mood was created in the design of the work, therefore, I chose black ink for the print for reinforcement of this idea. I feel the resulting print was one of the more imposing works in the collection.

"The Scream" was an effort in psychotherapy, a momentary acting out of frustration. In it I imagined myself as a trapped animal, we all do at times, caught in the mesh of tangled situations. The animal is portrayed in feline form, and yet becomes indistinguishable from her abstract surroundings. The forms are

repeated numerous times, and the top and bottom of the print seem to reach into infinity, as does frustration and the screams it inspires. Black was the most obvious ink color, no color at all.

The last major work I completed was a rather large multi-block piece inspired by the story of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospel of John. The specific scriptural reference is "Before Abraham was, I AM," John 8:58. In this work I attempted to capture the omnipresent quality of Christ as it is discussed many times in the Bible. The female figure shown only in profile represents Mary, the woman chosen to mother the God-child and to be the ideal of womanhood in general. To analyze this work much further would be to destroy its impact. With that in mind, I will let the viewer do his own analyzing according to his own internal relationship with his maker. I saw fit to print this work in a deep, dark blue as opposed to black. Blue seemed to add depth, with black ink it was much more flat. I also felt that a dark stellar blue added to the timeless quality inherent in the subject. Of all the prints accomplished in the year, I feel it was most appropriate to end with this one. I feel this work, like "The Master Plan," says it all.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The next section of this paper is a discussion of the work done in photography during the past year. The fourteen photographs discussed are the results of a year's labors in the

darkroom, many rolls of film, and much reading about and reviewing the portfolios of the major photographers of this century. I feel the photographers' credo is basically documentary; his aesthetic judgment is concerned primarily with selection rather than creation. With this thought in mind, I went about recording those things that reinforced my aesthetic point of view or "vision." I believe the basis for man's aesthetic expression is found in nature--biomorphic design. Man has taken his strength and his vision from Mother Earth since the beginning of recorded history. However today, in a world of glass and steel, we tend to lose sight of our true source. In these photographs I have attempted to relate everything back to its beginnings, whether it be man-made or God-made.

"Yesterday's Beauty" is simply just that--a tomato in October, its time long since past, left to rot on the vine. But in this state of mellowness, it is a splendid example of aesthetic form. The voluptuous quality of the overripe fruit, split from moisture of fall rain, exhibits a near-perfect radial pattern subtly hidden in a network of lines and values. The picture was taken in late afternoon under slightly hazy conditions. The f-stop was 2.8 with a shutter speed of 1/500 of a second. It was printed on a satin finish Kodabromide paper in a No. 2 contrast grade. The results for which I had striven were achieved; subtle greys, not much high contrast, with the negative space or background only perceived. This photograph influenced an etching that has been previously discussed in this paper.

"Sweet Gum-Summer Sun" was taken under similar conditions

as "Yesterday's Beauty." It was an experiment in the light subtle values of late afternoon sun. I chose a back-lighted situation and a low f-stop to create a mood of ethereal airiness. The subject, a hanging sweet gum ball, was in light shadow, rendering it darkest in the composition. The surrounding leaves form a subtle pattern of line and visual texture that fades into a fairly sparkling, soft-focus background. The mood was dreamy and vaguely nostalgic. It was printed on Kodabromide N-2 paper.

"Humming Bird's Happiness" was taken at sunset at an f-stop of 1.8 with a shutter speed of 1/250 of a second. I attempted to capture only a small area in sharp focus while the remaining images were soft, blurred, and only perceived. The roundness of the bell of the honeysuckle blossom was repeated throughout the composition becoming only dark shapes at the perimeter. Often those areas spoken of as negative play as important a role as do the positive or subjective areas, such was the case with this work. It was printed on Kodabromide N-2 paper.

In the photograph titled "Time's Up" I attempted to show the hard, crisp, crackling quality of fall. The leaves themselves were in sharp focus while the perimeter of the photo begins to fade out. This work represents the terminal quality of life itself; each of us must come to a point of withering of the body. Each is given by the Creator a time span, known only by Him, in which to fulfill our function on this Earth. In a sense we are all leaves on the tree of life. In this photograph I tried to capture the enigma of time. It was taken in late afternoon at an f-stop of 4 and a shutter speed of 1/250, and printed on

Kodabromide N-2 paper.

"Homage to Saarinen" is a change of pace work from the strictly nature-oriented subject matter I had been concentrating on for some time. It dignifies the architectural work of Eero Saarinen in his famous Gateway Arch in St. Louis. Saarinen's basis for his design of the arch was the curve of a hanging chain; the concept is that of a mathematical parabola. Saarinen's monument to westward expansion exemplifies perfection of form both from an artistic as well as a mathematical viewpoint. Unhappily, Saarinen did not live to see his "Monument to a Dream" become a reality. The photograph was taken in bright sun with an aperture setting of 8 and a shutter speed of 1/500 of a second.

Having established my own darkroom by this time, I switched to all Ilford chemicals and papers. I found the clarity of image to be far superior to what I was achieving with Kodak products. After experimenting with both bromide and resin-coated papers, I settled on Ilfospeed grade 3 pearl finish paper. "Homage to Saarinen" was printed on that paper.

"Brackets are Beautiful" is a photographic ode to the industrial world. The pieces themselves combine functionality and beauty in a geometric form. The overall visual texture of the work is strengthened by the randomness of the arrangement. This work is a tribute to the subtle but stark beauty of geometric form. The focal point created by the bright reflection on a single central bracket gives emphasis and contrast to the work. It was taken in low light inside a warehouse and manufacturing plant. The shutter speed was 1/60 of a second with an aperture of f-4,

and the camera was hand-held. In such low-light circumstances a tripod would have been helpful. It was printed on Ilfospeed grade 3 paper in pearl finish.

In the photograph "Ode to a Termite" a smorgasbord of imagery prevails. One can imagine a city of the future with towering skyscrapers, or the transient clay forms of Bryce Canyon in Southwestern United States, or perhaps just the total destruction rendered by hordes of hungry insects. The work is an example of visual texture at its height. The subtleties of biomorphic form prevail throughout the nature-created pattern. In this work and "Brackets Are Beautiful" I attempted to show how overall pattern can maintain visual interest as adequately as the traditional "striking center of interest" concept of composition. Subtlety of form and theme has its own aesthetic relevance. "Ode" was taken on a light overcast day at an f-stop of 4 and a shutter speed of 1/500. It was printed on Ilfospeed grade 3 pearl finish paper.

"Birch" is an experiment in contrast. The photograph was taken in late afternoon with the bright sun casting shadows on the textured surface of the birch bark. The already high contrast of the tree trunk was accentuated by the light and shadow pattern created by the sun. Many shots were taken in hopes of arriving at the perfect composition and contrast simultaneously. In the photograph selected, I feel this was achieved. It was taken in late afternoon under bright sun at an f-stop of 4 and a shutter speed of 1/250. It was printed on Ilfospeed grade 3 paper, pearl finish.

"Catalpa" was another experiment in visual texture and contrast, but approached from a different viewpoint. The imagery in this photograph was more subtle in nature, and the identity of the decaying leaf was transcended entirely. In this work, emphasis on the cell-like biomorphic form becomes the primary consideration. The shadow pattern on the leaf also adds to the subtlety of the form. The photo was taken in late afternoon with the subject slightly backlighted. The aperture setting was f.4 with a shutter speed of 1/500 of a second. It was printed on Ilfospeed pearl finish grade 3 paper.

The photograph titled "Birth of a Canna" exemplifies perfection in composition. The negative suffered somewhat, technically, (phone call during processing), so the quality of the print was reduced significantly. Also, had the photograph been taken in color, it would have been a magnificent tribute to complementary color harmony. The veins in the leaves were deep blood red, while the remainder of the leaf was bright green. The vortex of the leaves graduated from dark green to dark red accentuating the mysterious depth of the composition. Some of this beauty is lost in the neutral black and white photograph. In spite of all the technical difficulties, it remained one of the strongest compositions in the collection. It was taken in bright, early-morning sun, slightly backlighted, at an f-stop of 4 and a shutter speed of 1/1000 of a second. It was printed on Ilfospeed grade 3 pearl finish paper.

The next four photographs and the collection out of which these were chosen holds a special place in my heart. They

represent the very pinnacle of biomorphic form. Human anatomy, or any part or variation of human anatomy, exhibits total perfection of design. In the opinion of this writer, nothing on the face of the earth is so aesthetically perfect as the human body. In these photographs I have given the viewer a small, but profound glimpse of human perfection.

"I Am Woman" was one of a self-portrait portfolio. In this work I attempted to portray feminine humanity with the strength and eternal quality of God's most dynamic plant-form, trees. The relationship between man and plant is truly a symbiotic one; in this photograph, the forms created by both tree and person seem to blend, one into the other, leaving the viewer with a feeling of immovable solidarity. More subtly, woman is perceived as eternal strength and a direct connection to the source, Mother Earth. The broken background, created by the soft-focus on the leaves and the beam of sun in the upper right, represents the ethereal nature of the female. She, chosen of God for a many-faceted existence, combines infallible strength and maternal tenderness, yet she is relegated to a life of submission. As the tree bends to the wind and bears the rain and snow, yet prevails to green again and produce life sustaining oxygen, so the human female must weather the storms of fertility, fecundity, and the maintenance of both. "I Am Woman" is a tribute to that universal female. It was taken at an f-stop of 4 at a shutter speed of 1/250 of a second and printed on Kodabromide N-2 paper.

"Susan," a portrait of a young girl, in essence is representative of all teenage girls. The childhood, since past, still

remains in the freshness of the features, while impending womanhood lurks behind the eyes, waiting to emerge. The subtle darkness, and the soft-focus quality of the work reminds one of a ballerina waiting in the wings--waiting for time to beckon her on stage. The light from the glaring floods dances across a face that will someday be seen as a temptress, a companion, a lover, and a mother. "Susan" is the stereotyped American girl, but with ties to a northern European heritage. The photograph was taken in bright sun with a shutter speed of 1/100 of a second at an f-stop of 16. It was printed on Ilfospeed grade 3 pearl finish paper. I am too close to evaluate, with any accuracy.

In the work titled "Extremities" I attempted to expound visually on the smorgasbord of form found in hands and feet. Looking at the human form one sees a variety of lines and shapes, from the long, flowing lines of the torso to the small, intricate detail of face, hands, and feet. "Extremities" presents the subtle details found in light and dark shadows, in line and form, while transcending the common view of these appendages. It was taken in bright sun at an f-stop of 5.6 and a shutter speed of 1/500. It was printed on Ilfospeed grade 3 pearl finish paper.

"Power" was a work done tongue-in-cheek, yet with an echo of times past when the clinched fist meant the determination of a people to overcome persecution. In this case, the power was only in the ability to hold the camera, focus, and press the shutter release, with one hand while photographing the other! This work was one of many photographs of hands and feet from various points of view. It exhibited a great deal of visual

solidarity and strong design. It was taken in bright sun at a shutter speed of 1/250 and an f-stop of 8. It was printed on Ilfospeed grade 3 pearl finish paper.

CONCLUSION

The past year has been a time of great expectations, great search, and great perseverance. I have researched diligently, worked unrelentingly, and prayed fervently for guidance in the prior two. I feel I have accomplished much, and yet, little. At this point, I am too close to evaluate, with any accuracy, my progress. I must say, sincerely, I did the best I could given the circumstances I had.

For efforts put forth, and accomplishments made;

Should any bouquets be tossed my way,

I must pass them along and, humbly, say

To God be the Glory.

FOOTNOTES

- 1) The Art of Etching, E. S. Lumsden, page 165
- 2) " " " " " 168
- 3) The Art of Etching, E. S. Lumsden, pages 185, 186
- 4) Printmaking Today, Jules Heller, page 260
- 5) " " " " " 129
- 6) Printmaking Today, Jules Heller, page 156

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 1) Heller, Jules, Printmaking Today
Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., New York, 1972
- 2) Lumsden, E. S., The Art of Etching
Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1962