



Anderson Gallery
of Contemporary
Graphic Art

Big Prints

**Contemporary
American
Graphic Art,
1967-2000**

Fine Arts
Museums of
San Francisco

Legion of Honor

**Anderson Gallery of
Contemporary Graphic Art**

in Gallery One
Legion of Honor

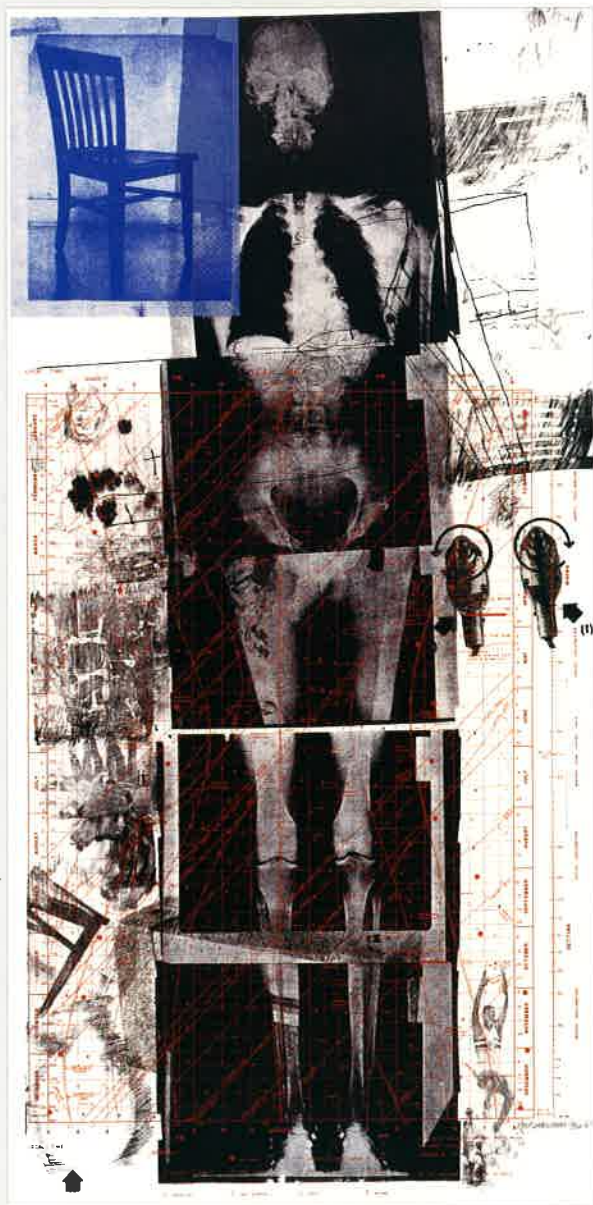
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**Big Prints:
Contemporary American Graphic Art, 1967–2000**

Louise Siddons, Achenbach Graphic Arts Council Intern, 2002

Big Prints: Contemporary American Graphic Art, 1967–2000 examines the graphic response to changing aesthetics concerning the size of artworks in the years after Abstract Expressionism. Of the eleven works in this exhibition, only one is less than six feet long in at least one dimension; almost half are ten feet or more. Because its formation coincided with the rise of the large-format print, the Anderson Graphic Arts Collection offers key examples of work that challenged technical and artistic assumptions about the nature of print media.

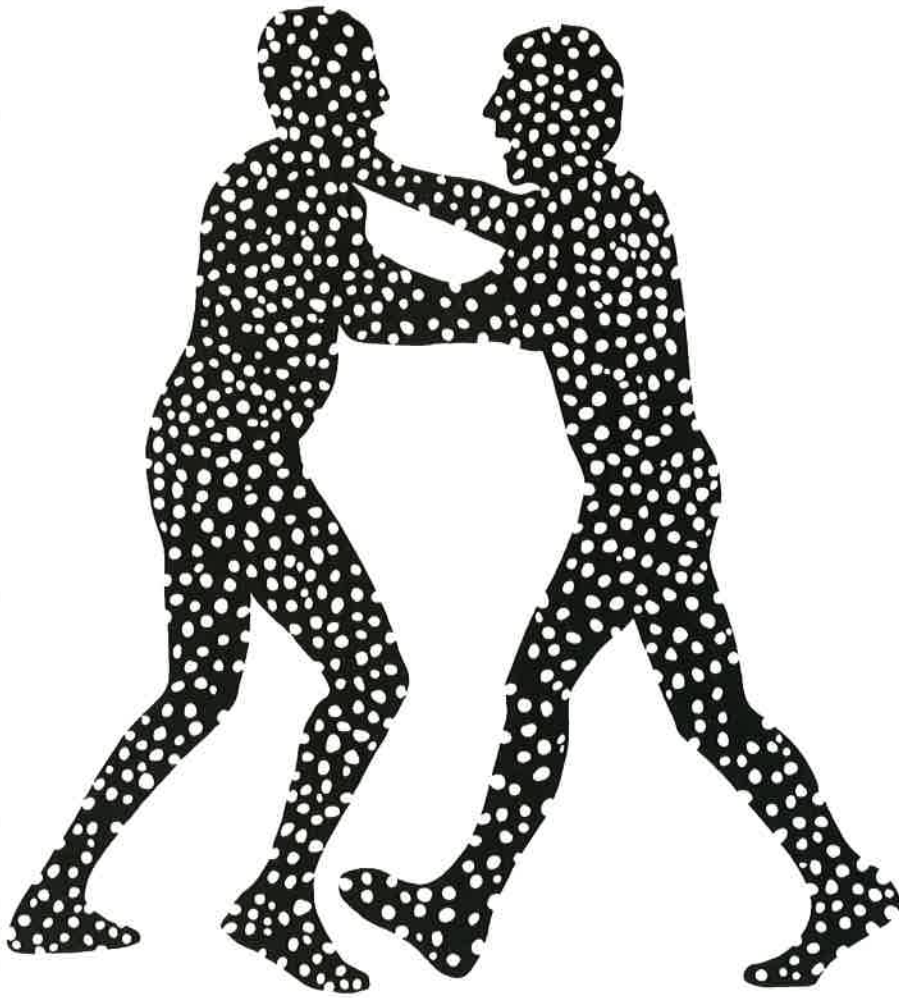
Robert Rauschenberg, *Booster*, 1967



By the middle of the twentieth century, American printmaking was on the margins, suffering in relation to the contemporary painterly values of expressiveness, scale, and immediacy. Artists in the 1940s and 1950s saw printmaking in relation to the lithographs of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a New Deal program of the previous decade that produced predominantly small-scale works depicting regional subjects. Nothing could have been farther from the paintings being produced by Abstract Expressionists of the mid-1950s. By the end of that decade, printmaking had solidified its position as a separate, specialized endeavor.

In the 1950s and 1960s, many new presses were founded that shared the goal of encouraging contemporary painters to experiment with printmaking technologies. Represented in this exhibition are works published by Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE), located on the East Coast, and Crown Point Press and Gemini G.E.L., both in the West.¹ These presses invited painters such as Frank Stella and Jasper Johns to work with them. It soon became clear that the technical challenge was going to be on a basic level—size. Artists used to working on canvases many times larger than themselves refused to be limited to the standard sheet size at the time, 22 x 30 inches.

Successfully printed at Gemini G.E.L. in 1967, Robert Rauschenberg's color lithograph and screenprint *Booster* was revolutionary because of its size. Even before it was begun, the printers at Gemini realized that it would require significant technical innovation. "In order to make larger prints the presses had to be not only larger but more precisely balanced; registration had to be more exact; paper had to be made in larger sizes with less elasticity; and changes had to be made to lessen the strain of printing in the printers themselves ... (a stone 35 inches high by 50 inches wide by 3 inches deep weighs 350 pounds)."² In order to print *Booster's* life-sized x-ray image of Rauschenberg's body, printer Kenneth Tyler used two lithographic



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Jonathan Borofsky, *Molecule Men*, 1982

stones in separate printings on a single sheet of paper. In 1970, Helen Frankenthaler was working at Tatyana Grosman's press, ULAE. *Lot's Wife* is the only large-scale print Frankenthaler created at ULAE, but it required both Grosman and the printers to adjust themselves to her demanding working habits. For *Lot's Wife*, three large stones were laid side-by-side on the floor where the artist could draw, paint, or throw water across them in much the same way that she painted large canvases in her own studio. The resulting triptych clearly demonstrates the potential for large-scale prints to dominate galleries designed for out-sized contemporary paintings. Using multiple sheets of paper for the work, Frankenthaler was able practically to eliminate limitations of size.

Printmaking took another controversial technical step with James Rosenquist's lithograph of 1973–1974, *Off the Continental Divide*. Printed from twenty-nine plates, this work exemplifies the demands placed by the artist on both the printers and the medium. To make the image, Rosenquist experimented with an air-brush and eraser rather than using the traditional crayon and tusche. *Off the Continental Divide* was printed on a single sheet of paper using an offset lithography press, which because of its commercial origin and applications Mrs. Grosman had originally rejected for

Ellsworth Kelly, *Purple/Red/Gray/Orange*, 1988



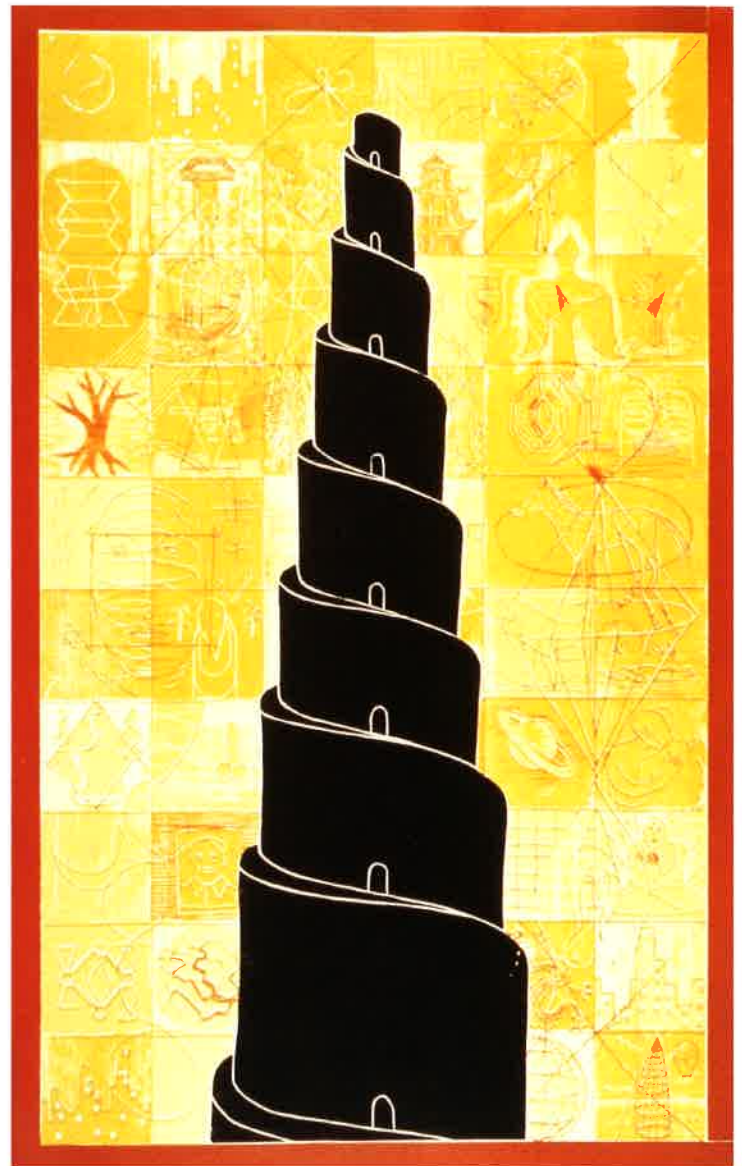
fine-art printing. Several inches larger than Rauschenberg's *Booster* in each dimension, *Off the Continental Divide* was another breakthrough in printmaking. At the same time, it set a precedent whereby future artists could routinely expect large-format prints as a possibility.

The challenges presented by big prints meant that up to a quarter of a press's time could be spent on experimentation and research. Works such as Jonathan Borofsky's *Molecule Men* (1982) were created using the largest-size roll paper available. Kathan Brown, founder of Crown Point Press, wrote in 1998 that she thought their chances of success were "50-50" when printing Robert Colescott's *Pontchartrain* (1997). The most recent print in this exhibition, *Wooden Sutra* (1999) by Jeff King, presents an even greater challenge to its curators and conservators, as well as to its viewers. The print is composed of sixteen sheets of paper painstakingly joined to form a 10-x-10-foot print that also incorporates the wooden sticks used in the printing process.

¹ Tatyana Grosman founded ULAE in 1957 in West Islip, New York; in 1962 Kathan Brown founded Crown Point Press in the San Francisco Bay Area; and Gemini G.E.L. was founded by Sidney Felsen, Stanley Grinstein, and Kenneth Tyler in 1966, in Los Angeles, California.

² Riva Castleman, quoted in Ruth E. Fine, *Gemini G.E.L.: Art and Collaboration* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1984), 42.

John Buck, *The Language of the Times*, 1990



The Anderson Graphic Arts Collection at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

Many of the prints in this exhibition are from the Anderson Graphic Arts Collection, over 650 works given to the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco in 1996 by Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson and their daughter, Mary Patricia Anderson Pence. The collection spans over thirty years of print production, from 1962 to 1999, with outstanding examples of print processes—woodcut, intaglio, lithography, screenprint, and mono-type—from major American fine art presses. Since 1997 the Fine Arts Museums have provided a series of exhibitions from the collection as well as interpretive publications and programs in order to share this important educational and art historical resource with museum audiences.

The Fine Arts Museums are also dedicated to pursuing an active collection-sharing program, which makes the Anderson Graphic Arts Collection accessible as a resource to museums and galleries throughout the eastern United States. Individual loans, self-organized exhibitions, or exhibitions previously presented at the Fine Arts Museums are available to small and mid-size institutions with no rental or participation fees.

This brochure is the internship project for Louise Siddons, Achenbach Graphic Arts Council Intern for 2002.

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Unless otherwise noted, all prints are from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Anderson Graphic Arts Collection, gift of the Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson Charitable Foundation. Sheet measurements for prints are in inches, height preceding width.

Jonathan Borofsky
b. Boston, Massachusetts, 1942

Molecule Men, 1982
Screenprint, 96 1/2 x 79 3/4 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by Ron McPherson, Robert Sexton,
and Ernie Garcia
1996.74.44

John Buck
b. Ames, Iowa, 1946
The Language of the Times, 1990
Color woodcut and drypoint, 80 x 52 1/2 in.
Printed by Andrew M. Rubin
Published by Tandem Press, Madison,
Wisconsin
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Kohs
1993.25.1

James Rosenquist, *Off the Continental Divide*,
1973–1974

Robert Colescott
b. Oakland, California, 1925

Pontchartrain, 1997
Color sugar-lift aquatint, spit-bite aquatint,
aquatint, soft-ground etching, and drypoint,
printed on four sheets of paper; 46 1/4 x 117 in.
Printed by Dena Schuckit
Published by Crown Point Press, San Francisco
Crown Point Press Archive, gift of Crown
Point Press
1999.90.5a–d

Joel Fisher
b. Salem, Ohio, 1947
Tree, 1990
Color aquatint printed on four sheets of paper;
86 x 64 in.
Printed by Pamela Paulson
Published by Crown Point Press, San Francisco
Crown Point Press Archive, Gift of Crown
Point Press
1991.28.1279a–d



Helen Frankenthaler
b. New York, New York, 1928
Lot's Wife, 1970–1971
Color lithograph printed on three sheets of paper, Harrison 32
135 1/2 x 36 in.
Printed by Fred Akers and David Umholz
Published by Universal Limited Art Editions, West Islip, New York
1996.74.137

Roger Herman
b. Saarbruecken, Germany 1947
Marat, 1985
Color woodcut printed on two sheets of paper, 113 1/2 x 120 in.
Gift of the Graphic Arts Council and Eaton-Schoen Gallery
1985.1.119

Ellsworth Kelly
b. Newburgh, New York, 1923
Purple/Red/Gray/Orange, 1988
Color lithograph, 51 3/4 x 225 1/2 in.
Printed by James Reid, Claudio Sticker, Diana Kingsley, Maggie Parr, and Andrew Rubin
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
1996.74.236

Jeff King
b. Boulder, Colorado, 1965
Wooden Sutra, 1999
Woodcut on sixteen sheets of *uda-gami* paper with wood sticks, 120 x 120 x 36 in.
Printed by Paul Mallowney at Tokugenji Press, Nara, Japan
Museum purchase, gift of the Achenbach Graphic Arts Council, Andrew C. McLaughlin III, Arlene Gray, Larry Warnock, William Clark, Willis Deming, Susan Land, Clara Morrissey, Michael Powanda, Morton G. Rivo, Charles Schlozman, Evans Wyro, Nancy Falls, Norman Grabstein, Robert Flynn Johnson, Ruth Lycette, Eleanor Miller, and Louise Russell in memory of Nancy Constine.
2002.13.3

Roy Lichtenstein
New York, New York 1923–1997 New York, New York

Landscape with Poet, 1996
Color lithograph and screenprint, 90 1/2 x 36 1/8 in.
Printed by Eric Donato, Paul Gellman, Robert Meyer, James Reid, Claudio Sticker, and Matthew Thomason
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Museum purchase, gift of the Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson Charitable Foundation, Judith Clancy Fund, Achenbach Graphic Arts Council, and Dr. and Mrs. Donald Heyneman Fund
1997.36

Robert Rauschenberg
b. Port Arthur, Texas, 1925
Booster, 1967
Color lithograph and screenprint, 72 x 36 in.
Printed by Robert Bigelow and Kenneth Tyler
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
1996.74.401

James Rosenquist
b. Grand Forks, North Dakota, 1933
Off the Continental Divide, 1973–1974
Color lithograph, Glenn 69
42 x 78 in.
Printed by James V. Smith and Bill Goldston
Published by Universal Limited Art Editions, West Islip, New York
1996.74.426

CATALOGUE REFERENCES

Glenn, Constance W. **Time, Dust: James Rosenquist. Complete Graphics 1962–1992**. New York: Rizzoli International, 1993.

Harrison, Pegram. **Frankenthaler: A Catalogue Raisonné. Prints 1961–1994**. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1996.

Cover:
Helen Frankenthaler, **Lot's Wife**, 1971