Photo Image in American Prints 1960s–1990s

Anderson Gallery of Contemporary Graphic Art
March 13 – July 18, 2004

Like the 1998 exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, that inspired it, Photo Image in American Prints investigates the cross-fertilization of printmaking and photography in contemporary art. The Boston exhibition, organized by curator Cliff Ackley, looked at an international group of artists; this exhibition has as its focus American painters, sculptors, and conceptual artists (with a few exceptions such as Richard Hamilton and Jannis Kounellis).

Several of the exhibited works are screenprints and offset lithographs by Andy Warhol who first began to silkscreen photomechanical imagery onto canvases in the early 1960s. Soon thereafter he began making prints with provocative photo images: icons of Hollywood culture such as Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor, or highly charged current events such as the 1963 Birmingham race riots and the 1963 Kennedy assassination. Robert Rauschenberg began using photographs in his paintings and assemblages even earlier than Warhol. In his prints, however, Rauschenberg combined different kinds of photographic images (such as photographs selected from newspaper archives, movie stills, and photographs of actual objects, including old master paintings) for an all-over collage effect. His continued use of photo image in printmaking is seen in works spanning a twenty-year period, from Breakthrough II (1965) to Bellini #1 (1986).

Several artists are included who have used photographic imagery to explore issues of art and illusion in their prints, among them Jasper Johns, Vito Acconci, and John Baldessari. Johns, like Rauschenberg, sometimes included actual objects in his paintings and introduced photographic elements into his prints in the early 1960s. In Fool's House, Johns introduced a reduced-scale photograph of a broom that "sweeps" the background wall on which it hangs, creating the illusion of movement within the two-dimensional picture plane.

Baldessari abandoned painting in 1970 to work exclusively with photographs and text. "Presumably most people keep magazines and newspapers, maybe books, in their houses, so at least you speak the language of the realm," he said in 1990 of his decision to use photography and words in his art.* He is represented by his work in photogravure, a nineteenth-century photo process revived in the 1990s by artists who were exploring photo imagery in printmaking. (In photogravure, an image is put on a printing plate photographically, using a gelatin ground. It is then printed through traditional metal plate printing processes.) Gravure Group, a publication from Crown Point Press with photogravures by Christopher Brown, Tom Marioni, Gay Outlaw, and Ed Ruscha, is featured as an example of the versatility of the medium.
Also included in the exhibition are prints by artists often identified with the Photo Realist movement: Robert Bechtie, Chuck Close, and Vija Celmins. In each of their prints, the image was inspired by a photograph but was actually hand drawn. The finished prints, especially Sunset Street by Bechtie and Untitled (Desert) by Celmins, each have a distinctly photographic look without the actual use of photomechanical processes.

Many of the artists in the exhibition who used their own photographs in their printed work found that experimentation with photography led to new forms of art making. Kiki Smith attempted to transform the single-perspective photograph in her 1995 print My Blue Lake. Smith made her self-portrait image by photographing her body with a peripheral camera (a camera that takes a cylindrical object and makes it flat). The negatives were blown up and made into photogravures; then she added colored ink to the photogravure plate for the red hair and blue face, making each version of the print unique.


Clockwise from far left:

Robert Rauschenberg, *Bellini #1*, 1986

Andy Warhol, *Electric Chair*, 1971

Andy Warhol, *Liza*, 1984

Sherry Levine, *No. 5*, from *Barcham Green Portfolio*, 1988


Tom Marioni, *The Hand of the Artist*, from the portfolio *Gravure Group*, 1995

Cover:

John Baldessari, *Six Colorful Gags (Male)*, 1991
Checklist of the Exhibition

Unless otherwise noted, sheet measurements for prints are in inches, height preceding width.

Vito Acconci
American, b. 1940
3 Flags for 1 Space and 6 Regions, 1979–1981
Color photolithograph and aquatint printed on six sheets of paper, 70 5/16 x 62 1/16 in. (overall)
Printed by Nancy Anello
Published by Crown Point Press, Oakland
(now San Francisco)
Crown Point Press Archive, gift of Kathrin Brown
1991.28.4a–f

Radcliffe Bailey
American, b. 1968
Until I Die/Minor Keys, 1997
Color aquatint and photogravure on zinc, 37 x 30 in.
Printed by Pamela Paulson
Published by Paulson Press, Berkeley
Museum purchase, Judith Clancy Fund
1999.3

John Baldessari
American, b. 1931
Six Colorful Gags (Maile), 1991
Color photogravure, 41 5/8 x 53 11/16 in.
Printed by Lothar Osterburg
Published by Crown Point Press, San Francisco
1993.51.283

Robert Bechtie
American, b. 1932
Sunset Street, 1982
Color soft-ground etching, 22 1/2 x 30 in.
Printed by Peter Pettengill
Published by Crown Point Press, Oakland
(now San Francisco)
1992.167.208

Christopher Brown
American, b. 1951
Between the Eyes, from the portfolio Gravure Group, 1995
Photogravure, color aquatint, and soft-ground etching, 16 1/16 x 20 1/16 in.
Printed by Dani Sywulak
Published by Crown Point Press, San Francisco
1996.55.2.1

Vije Celmins
American, b. 1939
Untitled (Desert), 1971
Lithograph, 22 1/4 x 29 in.
Printed by Ed Hamilton
Published by Cirrus Editions, Los Angeles
Anderson Graphic Arts Collection, gift of the Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson
Charitable Foundation
1996.74.52

Chuck Close
American, b. 1940
Self-Portrait, Black on White, 1977
Etching, 54 1/8 x 40 3/4 in.
Printed by Patrick Foy
Published by Crown Point Press, Oakland
(now San Francisco)
Anderson Graphic Arts Collection, gift of the Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson
Charitable Foundation
1996.74.65

Richard Hamilton
American, b. 1922
Kent State, 1970
Color screenprint, 28 1/8 x 40 1/8 in.
Printed by Dietz Olfen, Linz, Austria
Published by Galerie Dorothea Leonhart, Munich
Museum purchase, Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts Endowment Fund
1977.1, 45

Jasper Johns
American, b. 1930
Foot's House, 1971
Color lithograph, UALAE 109, 44 x 29 in.
Printed by Sorge Lozogot
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Anderson Graphic Arts Collection, gift of the Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson
Charitable Foundation
1996.74.221

Jannis Kounellis
Greek, b. 1936
Manifesto per un Teatro Utopistico (Manifest for a Utopian Theater), 1979
Color photo etching and aquatint, 35 x 26 in.
Printed by Stephen Thomas
Published by Crown Point Press, Oakland
(now San Francisco)
Crown Point Press Archive, gift of Kathrin Brown
1991.28.1205

Barbara Kruger
American, b. 1945
My Pretty Pony, by Stephen King
Illustrated book with nine color lithographs and eight screenprints, 20 x 13 1/2 in. (page size)
Printed by Domiziana L'Estoire (lithographers), and Pinwheel (screenprint), New York
Reina and David Logan Collection of Illustrated Books, Museum purchase, Reina and David Logan Fund
2002.150.1–23

Sherrie Levine
American, b. 1947
No. 5, from Barcham Green Portfolio, 1986
Photogravure and aquatint on Robin Cover Brown paper, 31 x 22 1/2 in.
Printed by Hidekatsu Takada
Published by Crown Point Press, Oakland
(now San Francisco)
1992.187.707

Legion of Honor
March 13 – July 18, 2004

Anderson Gallery of Contemporary Graphic Art
in Gallery 2

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 monotype—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 western 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.
Tom Marioni
American, b. 1937
The Hand of the Artist, from the portfolio Gravure Group, 1995
Photogravure, color aquatint, and fingerprints applied by the artist, 20 1/16 x 16 1/16 in.
Printed by Daria Szymulak
Published by Crown Point Press, San Francisco
1998.55.2.2

Bruce Nauman
American, b. 1941
Lip, from Studies for Holograms, 1970
Color photoscreenprint, 26 x 26 1/16 in.
Printed by Astra Studios, New York
Published by Castelli Graphics, New York
Gift of Ronald E. Borstein
1988.102.5

Gay Outlaw
American, b. 1959
Tetlin, from the portfolio Gravure Group, 1995
Photogravure, 20 1/16 x 15 1/16 in.
Printed by Daria Szymulak
Published by Crown Point Press, San Francisco
1996.55.2.5

Robert Rauschenberg
American, b. 1925
Breakthrough II, 1965
Color lithograph, 48 3/8 x 34 in.
Printed by Ben Berns
Published by Universal Limited Art Editions, West Islip, New York
Museum purchase, Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts Endowment Fund
1986.80.60

Storyline, I, from the series Reel B+C, 1968
Color lithograph, 21 1/2 x 17 in.
Printed by Don Gundlach
Published by Gemini G. E. L., Los Angeles
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Sinton
1969

Bellini #1, 1986
Color photogravure, 58 1/4 x 38 1/4 in.
Printed by Shelly Beech, Richard Dawson, and Hitoishi Kido
Published by Universal Limited Art Editions, West Islip, New York
Anderson Graphic Arts Collection, gift of the Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson Charitable Foundation
1996.74.414

Edward Ruscha
American, b. 1937
Section 22 from the portfolio Gravure Group, 1995
Photogravure, E. 234, 20 1/16 x 16 1/16 in.
Printed by Daria Szymulak
Published by Crown Point Press, San Francisco
1996.55.2.6

Sweets, Meats, Sheets, from the Tropical Fish Series, 1975
Color screenprint with varnish overprint, E. 83
32 3/4 x 25 3/4 in.
Printed by Robert Knaul
Published by Gemini G. E. L., Los Angeles
Museum purchase, Mrs. Paul L. Wattis Fund
2000.131.72

Kiki Smith
American, b. 1954
My Blue Lulu, 1985
Color lithograph and photogravure
43 1/2 x 24 3/4 in.
Printed by Craig Zammello
Published by Universal Limited Art Editions, West Islip, New York
Anderson Graphic Arts Collection, Museum purchase, gift of Michael Witzey and the Lucille Bruh Fund
1987.143

Andy Warhol
American, 1928–1987
Birmingham Race Riot, from the portfolio Ten Works by Ten Painters, 1964
Screenprint, F. & S. 3, 20 x 24 in.
Printed by Leo Stollman, Inc., New Haven, Connecticut
Published by the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut
Museum purchase, Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts Endowment Fund
1978.1.431.5

Flowers, 1964
Offset lithograph, F. & S. 6, 20 x 23 in.
Printed by Total Color, New York
Published by Leo Castelli Gallery, New York
Museum purchase, Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts Endowment Fund
2001.35

Liz, 1964
Offset lithograph, F. & S. 7, 20 1/8 x 23 1/8 in.
Printed by Total Color, New York
Published by Leo Castelli Gallery, New York
Museum purchase, Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts Endowment Fund
1965.60.124

Jacqueline Kennedy II (Jackie II), from the portfolio 11 Pop Artists, vol. 2, 1966
Screenprint, F. & S. 14, 24 x 30 in.
Printed by KMF Inc. (Knickerbokker Machine & Foundry, Inc.), New York
Published by Original Editions, New York
Museum purchase, Patrons of Art and Music Fund
1966.80.106.16

Electric Chair, from the portfolio Electric Chair, 1971
Color screenprint, F. & S. 81
35 1/2 x 48 in.
Printed by Silkprint Kettner, Zurich
Published by Bruno Bischofberger, Zurich
Museum purchase, Prints and Drawings Art Trust Fund, gift of Bruce and Jean Conner by exchange
1990.15.3

References

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