

# Surface Tension

CONTEMPORARY PRINTS FROM THE ANDERSON COLLECTION



Anderson Gallery of Graphic Art  
July 30, 2011–January 22, 2012

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An artist's choice of paper can be critical to the success of his or her graphic work. Factors weighing into paper selection include a sheet's color and size as well as its texture and potential to absorb ink, which determine in part the quality of line that can be achieved in the printed work. Historically, heavy, textured sheets have been used for woodcuts and letterpress printing, while smooth surfaces have been preferred for intaglio prints, lithographs, and screenprints. Though these considerations have always been part of the printmaking process, it has only been in the last forty years that many artists have taken a marked interest in the paper ground itself, examining the art-making possibilities that it affords. The works included in this exhibition demonstrate some of the ways in which artists have thrust paper into the center of their printmaking activities—hand molding and coloring it, building with it, even mutilating it.

Since the 1970s, American artists have invested tremendous energy in thinking about the paper ground as a source of, not just a recipient for, artistic content. This is due in large part to the creative and technical innovations in papermaking that Kenneth Tyler achieved and promoted, first at Gemini Ltd. and Gemini G.E.L. in Los Angeles beginning in the mid-1960s, and later at Tyler Workshop and Tyler Graphics in New Bedford and Mount Kisco, New York. Other papermakers and publishers saw paper's



Edward Ruscha, *Dog*, 1995

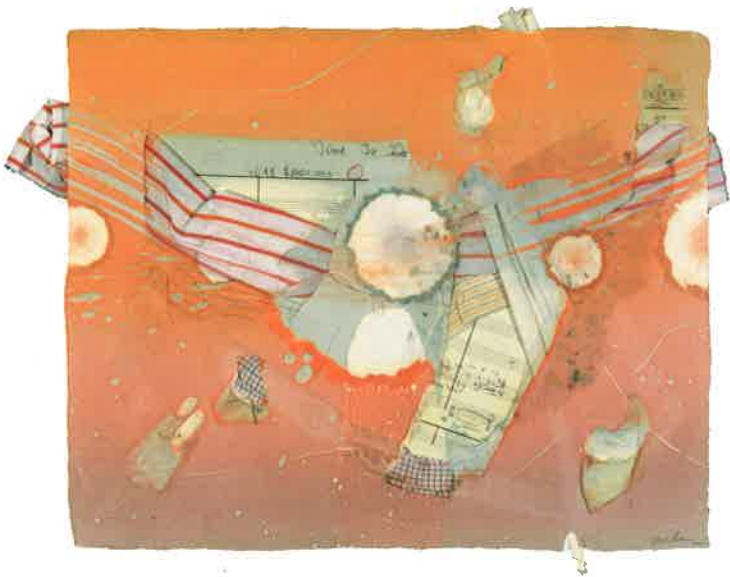
potential for expanding the boundaries of traditional printmaking as well, particularly Garner Tullis at the International Institute of Experimental Printmaking, founded in the 1970s in Santa Cruz, California; and Luis and Shaye Remba, creative and technical directors of the Los Angeles-based Mixografia Workshop, which was first established in Mexico City in the late 1960s. Even publishers who were not actively engaged in the papermaking process recognized the significance of paper choice and worked to make sure that their artists were aware of the possibilities. As Tatyana Grosman, founder and director of Universal Limited Art Editions, once explained, "The paper is a completely integral part of the graphic work of art—as much as the material of which a sculpture is made, for example, determines the sculpture."<sup>1</sup> With the help of such resourceful printmaking workshops, the artists included in the present exhibition have manipulated the dimensionality of their works on paper, sometimes literally pushing their paper surfaces to new heights. Though their approaches vary, all of these artists have challenged the traditional perception of editions on paper as merely layers of ink impressed upon a featureless ground.

Just as paper has become a primary consideration for artists working in print over the last forty years, so, too, has it become of interest to art historians who have produced an abundance of literature on its role in the finished artworks. As a result of this scholarly intervention, it has become common practice to consider the paper as it relates to the aesthetic quality of a graphic work in terms of its texture and level.<sup>2</sup>

## Texture

The texture of a sheet of paper depends on the physical components of its fibrous structure, the mold used to form it, and the level of refinement applied during the finishing processes. Handmade papers are crafted from organic fibers derived from cotton and linen rags broken down to a pulp through their submersion in water and the application of considerable mechanical agitation. A paper mold is lowered into a vat filled with the fibrous slurry, removed, and shaken so that a thin layer covers the mold.<sup>3</sup> The liquid is then drained through the sievelike mold so that only the matted fibers remain. Then, in a process known as "couching," the papermaker removes the sheet from the mold and places it between two woolen cloths called "felts." When a pile of papers and felts is amassed, they are placed in a heavy press and flattened to remove any remaining moisture. They are pressed numerous times, with increasing force, and then the sheets are separated and hung up to dry. Finally, depending on the intended paper use, the surface may be "polished," either in a run-through or roller press or burnished by hand.<sup>4</sup> The fibers, the characteristics of the paper mold, the consistency of the felts, and the polishing mechanisms all contribute to the texture of the finished sheet of paper.

Many of the prints in this exhibition make use of handmade papers, and several have been produced by the artist or to the artist's specifications. When Tyler extended an invitation to Robert Rauschenberg to make paper at the fourteenth-century Richard de Bas paper mill in Ambert,



Joseph Zirker, *Untitled (JZ-SA-17-78)*, 1978

France, he could hardly have imagined how momentous it would prove for the incorporation of papermaking into contemporary art making practice.<sup>5</sup> Rauschenberg, who created the series *Pages and Fuses* (1974) during his stay, remembered that he had approached the opportunity with no preconceived ideas, saying that "it offered the possibility of being more direct than ever before—the flexibility of paper being open instead of assuming a neutral ground and my imposing the artistic concept on it. It was a very welcome way of getting close to the artwork."<sup>6</sup> The fact that Rauschenberg, already a well-known artist, actively experimented with papermaking helped to imbue the process with artistic legitimacy.

Color Field artist Kenneth Noland was introduced to the possibilities of papermaking in 1976 at the International Institute of Experimental Printmaking. Tullis used color to entice Noland to visit his Santa Cruz, California, workshop, convincing the artist that "he could come and not make paper but make watercolors with me with colored fibers, and that when he'd made the sheet he would have made the image and that he could pioneer a new medium."<sup>7</sup> A similar concept is at play in *Horizontal Stripes III-24*, from the *Handmade Paper Project* (1978), which the artist completed while later working with Tyler at his New York facility. Throughout the project, which totals nearly four hundred unique paper works, Noland experimented with color and texture, embedding wool, silk thread, and bits of colored paper between layers of pigmented pulp, in essence creating art of the paper itself, rather than on its surface. This new medium so entranced Noland that he eventually established his own papermaking facility.

## Level

When artists physically manipulate the paper's surface to change its dimensionality, they are engaging with the sheet's level. One of the most common ways to add level to a graphic work is through embossing, which results in a bas-relief-like dimensionality that Josef Albers used to great effect in his *Embossed Linear Construction* portfolio (1969). Embossing is a process in which a damp paper is run through a press on top of an inkless printing plate containing incised lines and shapes; the paper is pushed into the incised lines, forming raised areas. Graphic artists have long applied this technique to their paper surfaces, either to complement or to provide a foil to an artwork's ink-based content. In *Dog* (1995), Ed Ruscha achieved a similar result, building dimensionality using the Mixografia® process, which involves the production of thick, textured prints with very fine surfaces created by deep metal molds and moist pulp. Joe Goode disrupted the

paper surfaces of his color lithographs by mutilating them with razor blades and tearing into his layered paper constructions in what can be understood as a subtractive process; while Robert Motherwell's collages, which include paper augmentations, demonstrate an additive alteration of the paper surface.

The fourteen sheets of hand-torn paper that form Elizabeth Murray's *Up Dog* (1987-1988) contribute to a varied level across the work's surface. Hinged together along the top edge, the sheets are free to lift from the bottom, revealing an intentional dimensionality that the artist built into her compositional conceit. In an altogether different approach to varying the level of her print, Ann Hamilton combined eight lithographs, folded accordion-style, attached to one another, and splayed open as a fan, to construct *Ciliary* (2010). Bamboo and wooden dowels are attached to the back of the print to reinforce the ribbed surface.

In his manipulation of level Frank Stella's *The Cabin. Ahab and Starbuck (Dome)* (1992) pushes the limits of the graphic arts into the realm of sculpture—its surface manipulated so that it extends into the viewer's physical space. Summing up his impressions on the state of printmaking, Stella proclaimed in a 1995 lecture series that the goal of printing "now seems to be to make a print in which the paper—itsself the recipient of the print image—is made into a pictorial surface so that the graphic apprehension of a print is, and must be, a pictorial apprehension as well. This development could signal the end of graphic art as we know it. On the other hand, it could well be the beginning of graphic art as we never imagined it."<sup>8</sup> The further conception and physical construction of such prints over the last two decades and into the present is continuing evidence of the experimental nature of printmaking and the significant consideration that may be paid to the paper support.

- 1 Quoted in Michael Knigin and Murray Zimiles, *The Contemporary Lithographic Workshop Around the World* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1974): 171.
- 2 Andrew Robison first identified these primary characteristics of paper surface in his publication *Paper in Prints* (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1977). Other significant studies of the role of paper in art have also adopted these criteria for discussions of surface; see, for example, Sheila Webb, *Paper, the Continuous Thread* (Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Museum of Art; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982) and Jane M. Farmer, *Paper as Medium* (Washington, DC: The Service, 1978). Robison also identified a third criterion with which to consider surface in the context of printmaking: receptivity. The relative absorbency of ink into the paper is described as its receptivity, which is determined by the type of fibers and how much they've been broken down. A paper's natural receptivity can be changed with the application of a thin coating of sizing (starch or animal glues), which, when applied to the paper's surface, limits the amount of ink that will soak into the paper. Without such a coating, the paper will absorb ink like a blotter; however with too much sizing, the ink will not stay on the sheet at all. A paper's pliability also will play a role in how much of the paper surface is capable of touching or being pushed into the engraved and inked lines on the matrix.
- 3 At its most basic, a paper mold is composed of a frame spanned by closely placed wires such that a screen is formed. The wires are either laid down, parallel to one another, or are woven together. These different formats account for the descriptive terms "laid" and "wove" that are often used in the descriptions of fine handmade papers.
- 4 The standard source on the history of papermaking more generally remains Dard Hunter's *Papermaking: The History and Technique of an Ancient Craft* (1947; repr., New York: Dover Publications, 1978).
- 5 The story was picked up in the mainstream press in an article describing the state of contemporary art practice; see Douglas Davis, "Art Without Limits," *Newsweek* (December 24, 1973): 73.
- 6 Quoted in Gerrit Henry, "Paper in Transition," *The Print Collector's Newsletter* 10 (July-August 1979): 84.
- 7 Quoted in Charles Millard, "Garner Tullis," *Print Quarterly* VI, no. 2 (June 1989): 146.
- 8 Frank Stella, excerpted from lectures presented in Fukushima, Japan (April 20, 1995) and Columbus, Ohio (May 16, 1995), transcribed in Siri Engberg, *Frank Stella at Tyler Graphics* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1997): 50.



# Works in the Exhibition

Unless otherwise noted, all works are from the Anderson Graphic Arts Collection of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, gift of the Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson Charitable Foundation. Sheet measurements for prints are in inches, height preceding width. When available, catalogue raisonné information is included following the medium description.

**Josef Albers** (American, 1888–1976)  
*Embossed Linear Construction 2-A, 2-B, 2-C, and 2-D*, from a portfolio of eight inkless embossings, 1969  
Four inkless embossings on 300-gram Arches watercolor paper, D 186.5–186.8 20 1/8 x 26 1/8 in., each  
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles  
Printed by Kenneth Tyler  
1996.74.17.5–8

**Joe Goode** (American, b. 1937)  
*Untitled, State II*, 1974  
Color lithograph on two sheets of Rives BFK paper  
30 x 40 1/2 in.  
Published by Cirrus Editions, Los Angeles  
Printed by Christopher D. Cordes  
1996.74.157

**Joe Goode** (American, b. 1937)  
*Untitled*, 1978  
Color lithograph with razor cuts on Copperplate Deluxe paper  
28 x 40 in.  
Published by Cirrus Editions, Los Angeles  
Printed by William Law III  
1996.74.159

**Ann Hamilton** (American, b. 1956)  
*Ciliary*, 2010  
Color lithograph on Mitsumata paper and fabric assemblage with bamboo and wood support  
58 in. diameter  
Published and printed by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles  
Collection of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson  
2010.012

**Roy Lichtenstein** (American, 1923–1997)  
*Mirror #4*, from the *Mirror* series, 1972  
Color linocut and screenprint with embossing on Arjomari paper, C. 109  
28 x 28 in.  
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles  
Printed by Ron McPherson  
1996.74.251

**Robert Motherwell** (American, 1915–1991)  
*Harvest, with Blue Shadow*, from the series *Summer Light*, 1973  
Color lithograph with collage on Hawthorne of Larroque handmade paper, BT 125  
36 x 18 1/16 in.  
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles  
Printed by Dan Freeman and Ron McPherson  
1996.74.322

**Elizabeth Murray** (American, 1940–2007)  
*Down Dog*, 1988  
Color lithograph on twelve sheets of hand-torn Arches paper, BB 17  
41 x 50 3/4 in., irregular  
Published by Universal Limited Art Editions Inc., West Islip, New York  
Printed by Keith Brintzenhofe, Douglas Volle, and Richard Dawson  
1996.74.326

**Elizabeth Murray** (American, 1940–2007)  
*Up Dog*, 1987–1988  
Color lithograph on fourteen sheets of hand-torn Arches paper, BB 18  
45 1/2 x 46 1/2 in., irregular  
Published by Universal Limited Art Editions Inc., West Islip, New York  
Printed by Keith Brintzenhofe, Douglas Volle, and Richard Dawson  
1996.74.325

**Louise Nevelson**  
(American, b. Ukraine, 1899–1988)  
*Dawnscape*, 1975  
Cast paper relief  
27 1/2 x 30 1/2 in.  
Published by Pace Editions, New York  
Printed by Garner Tullis and Ann McLaughlin, International Institute of Experimental Printmaking, Santa Cruz  
1996.74.330

**Kenneth Noland** (American, 1924–2010)  
*Concentric Circle*, 1978  
Pigment in artist-made paper  
34 5/8 x 34 5/8 in.  
Papermaking and coloring by the artist in collaboration with Garner Tullis, International Institute of Experimental Printmaking, Santa Cruz  
1996.74.331

**Kenneth Noland** (American, 1924–2010)  
*Horizontal Stripes III-24*, from the *Handmade Paper Project*, 1978  
Colored paper pulp in six layers  
49 5/8 x 32 7/8 in.  
Published by Tyler Graphics Ltd., Bedford Village, New York  
Papermaking and coloring by the artist with the assistance of Kenneth Tyler and Lindsay Green  
Collection of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson  
1978.054

**Robert Rauschenberg**  
(American, 1925–2008)  
*Page 1*, from the series *Pages and Fuses*, 1974  
Handmade paper  
23 x 28 in.  
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles  
Papermaking and shaping by the artist, Moulin à Papier Richard de Bas, Ambert, France  
Collection of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson  
1974.04301

**Robert Rauschenberg**  
(American, 1925–2008)  
*Link*, from the series *Pages and Fuses*, 1974  
Handmade paper, pigment, and screenprinted tissue laminated to paper pulp  
25 x 20 in.  
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles  
Papermaking by Marius Peraudeau, Moulin à Papier Richard de Bas, Ambert, France  
Printed by Richard Ewen, Marie Porter, Gary Reams, and Jeff Wasserman

Collection of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson  
1974.04302

**James Rosenquist** (American, b. 1933)  
*Where the Water Goes*, from the series *Welcome to the Water Planet*, 1989  
Colored and pressed paper pulp with lithographed collage elements, G. 215  
102 3/4 x 58 in.  
Published by Tyler Graphics Ltd., Mount Kisco, New York  
Papermaking by Tom Strianese, Paul Imboden, and John Fulton, Tyler Graphics Ltd.  
Paper coloring by the artist assisted by Strianese, Imboden, Fulton, and Kenneth Tyler  
Printed by Lee Funderburg and John Hutcheson  
Anderson Graphic Arts Collection, gift of Elaine McKeon  
2004.22

**Edward Ruscha** (American, b. 1937)  
*Dog*, 1995  
Mixografia® on handmade paper, E. 222  
27 1/4 x 38 1/2 in.  
Published by Mixografia Workshop, Los Angeles  
Printed by Luis Remba  
Anderson Graphic Arts Collection, gift of Mrs. Gunther R. Detert, Prints and Drawings Art Trust Fund, funds in memory of Suzanne Reger, Dr. Saliga Reger, Katharine Hanrahan, Jenicka Rosekrans, Allen Swayze, Edward C. "Chuck" Bassett, Pat Steger, John Langley Howard, Hilda Mary "Johnny" Danforth, Dorothy Munn, and other memorial funds  
2000.28

**Alan J. Shields** (American, 1944–2005)  
*Wets Yoog*, from the series *Soft and Fluffy Gears*, 1987  
Assembled, torn, sewn, and glued paper construction  
28 x 28 in.  
Published by Tandem Press, Madison, Wisconsin; Omar Space Corporation Ltd., and the Spring Street Print Shop, Pace Editions, New York  
Collaboration between the artist, William Weege, Joseph Wilfer, and graduate student assistants at Tandem Press  
Papermaking by Joseph Wilfer, Spring Street Print Shop  
1996.74.436

**Frank Stella** (American, b. 1936)  
*The Cabin. Ahab and Starbuck (Dome)*, from the series *Moby Dick Domes*, 1992  
Color relief-printed etching, aquatint, and engraving on shaped handmade, hand-colored TGL paper  
73 1/2 x 53 x 6 in.  
Published by Tyler Graphics Ltd., Mount Kisco, New York  
Preparation and design of dome-shaped paper mold and papermaking processes by Kenneth Tyler and Lee S. McDonald, Tyler Graphics Ltd.

Papermaking by Tom Strianese and Jed Marshall  
Printed by Kathy Cho  
Anderson Graphic Arts Collection, gift of Richard Guggenheim  
2004.14.2

**Terry Winters** (American, b. 1949)  
*Metal Virus*, 2003  
Mixografia® on handmade paper  
27 x 29 1/2 in.  
Published by Mixografia Workshop, Los Angeles  
Printed by Luis Remba  
Collection of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson  
2004.045

**Joseph Zirker** (American, b. 1924)  
*Untitled (JZ-SA-27-78)*, 1978  
Color monotype with assemblage on vacuum-formed paper made by the artist  
16 x 21 in.  
1996.74.488

**Joseph Zirker** (American, b. 1924)  
*Untitled (JZ-SA-17-78)*, 1978  
Color monotype with assemblage on vacuum-formed paper made by the artist  
15 7/8 x 20 3/8 in.  
1996.74.489

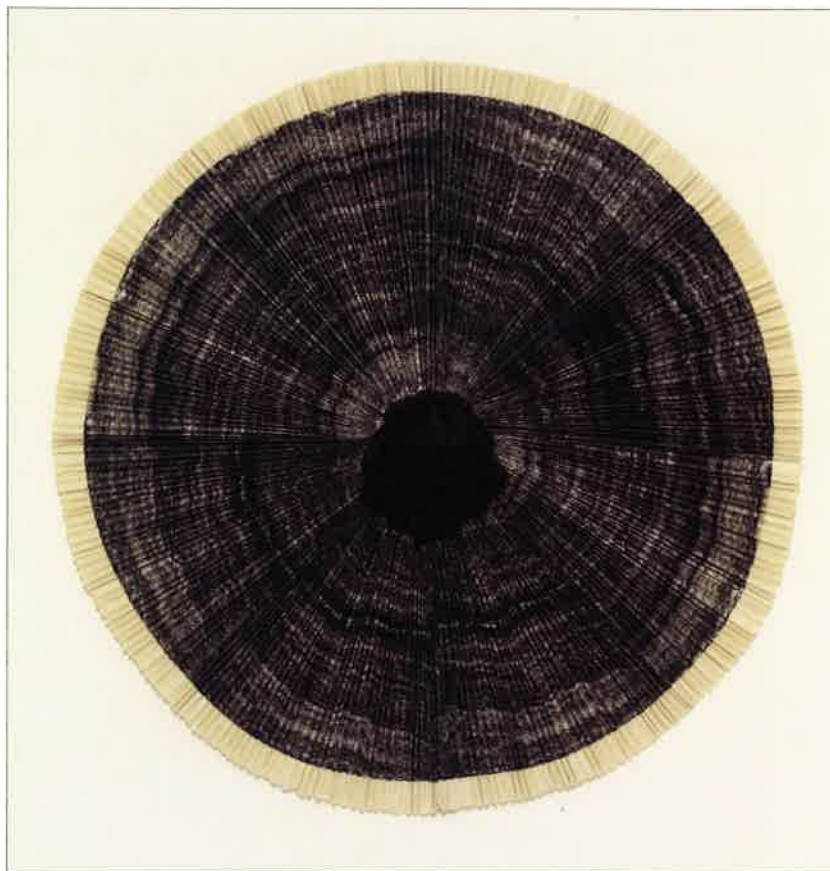
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Images, clockwise from top left: Frank Stella, *The Cabin, Ahab and Starbuck (Dome)*, 1992. Kenneth Noland, *Horizontal Stripes III-24*, 1978. Louise Nevelson, *Downscape*, 1975. Robert Rauschenberg, *Link*, 1974. Alan J. Shields, *Wets Yocg*, 1987

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Ann Hamilton, *Ciliary*, 2010. © Ann Hamilton and Gemini G.E.L. LLC  
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**de Young**

Fine Arts Museums  
of San Francisco

Cover image: Joe Goode, *Untitled State II*, 1974