

Printed Stories

Activity Guide

Anderson Gallery of Graphic Art
January 16–July 10, 2016

Join the Conversation

David Gilhooly, *Queen Victoria Presents the 20th Century*, 1983

The characters in David Gilhooly's *Queen Victoria Presents the 20th Century* seem to come out of a fairy tale. Take a moment to closely observe the figures in this print. What might be going on? What might the characters be saying? What might they be thinking? Begin the conversation by completing Queen Victoria's sentence. Continue the story by creating your own word or thought bubbles for other characters in the print.



Illustration by Anneliese Salgado, after David Gilhooly

Artists often tell stories in their art, using any of a number of strategies to represent events that unfold over a period of time. Stand-alone images may depict just one moment in a larger story, or they may compress time by incorporating details that indicate a longer sequence of events. An artist also may make a series of works that, taken together, reveal the exposition, action, climax, and resolution of a story's broad narrative arc.

Setting the scene is important, and artists frequently incorporate familiar objects into a composition to provide clues to its explicit or implicit subject or locale. Studying the iconography allows us to analyze such content. Creators also may echo previous interpretations of the same or similar stories in their works and rely upon viewers to use their prior knowledge as assistance in understanding the subject. Titles sometimes provide further points of reference.

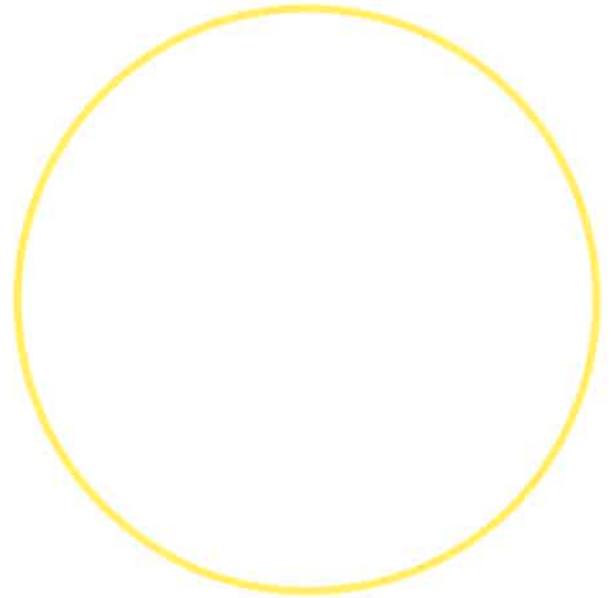
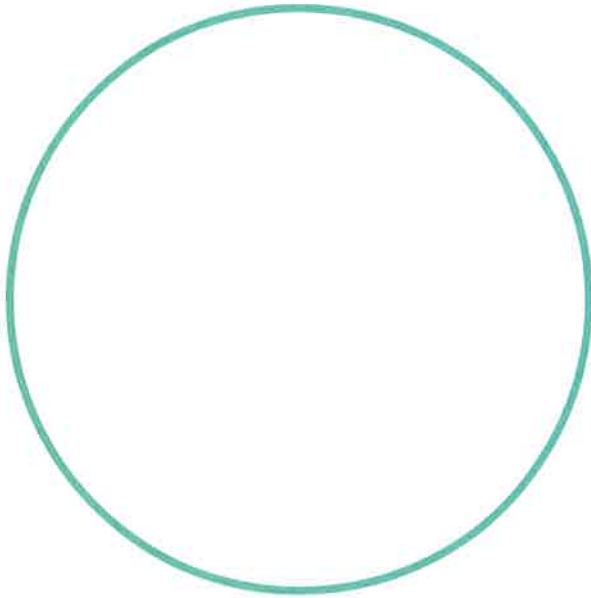
Printed Stories presents a selection of modern and contemporary prints from the Anderson Graphic Arts Collection into which narratives—whether or not they were intended by the artist—may be read or construed. The exhibition is inspired by the French literary theorist Roland Barthes's influential 1967 essay "The Death of the Author" ("La mort de l'auteur"), which suggests that the meaning of a text is not fixed. In Barthes's view, the reader may draw conclusions based on the personal experiences that shape his or her understanding of the words that together form a text. *Printed Stories* proposes a similar multiplicity of meanings for any artwork, derived from the viewers' individual experiences with the iconography featured in the piece. To that end, visitors are encouraged to look closely at the prints on display and to imagine their own stories based on the content that they see. The activities on the following pages provide additional strategies that may help you to discover alternative narratives in the images on view.

Making Meaning, Searching for Change

Jennifer Bartlett, *The Four Seasons*, 1990–1993

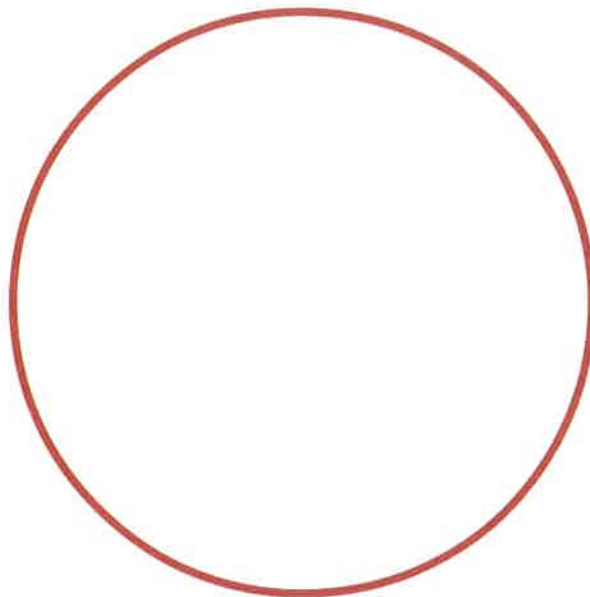
There is a sense of time passing in Jennifer Bartlett's *The Four Seasons*. What details does the artist include to show the marking of time? Look closely for representations of weather, types of flowers, animals, and insects, for example. What images reappear throughout all four seasons?

Draw two details or symbols from Bartlett's prints that might represent change.



What are meaningful markers of time in your life? (An example might be the number of birthday candles on a cake or the warm jacket that is pulled from the back of the closet on a chilly day.)

Create your own symbol to represent this idea.

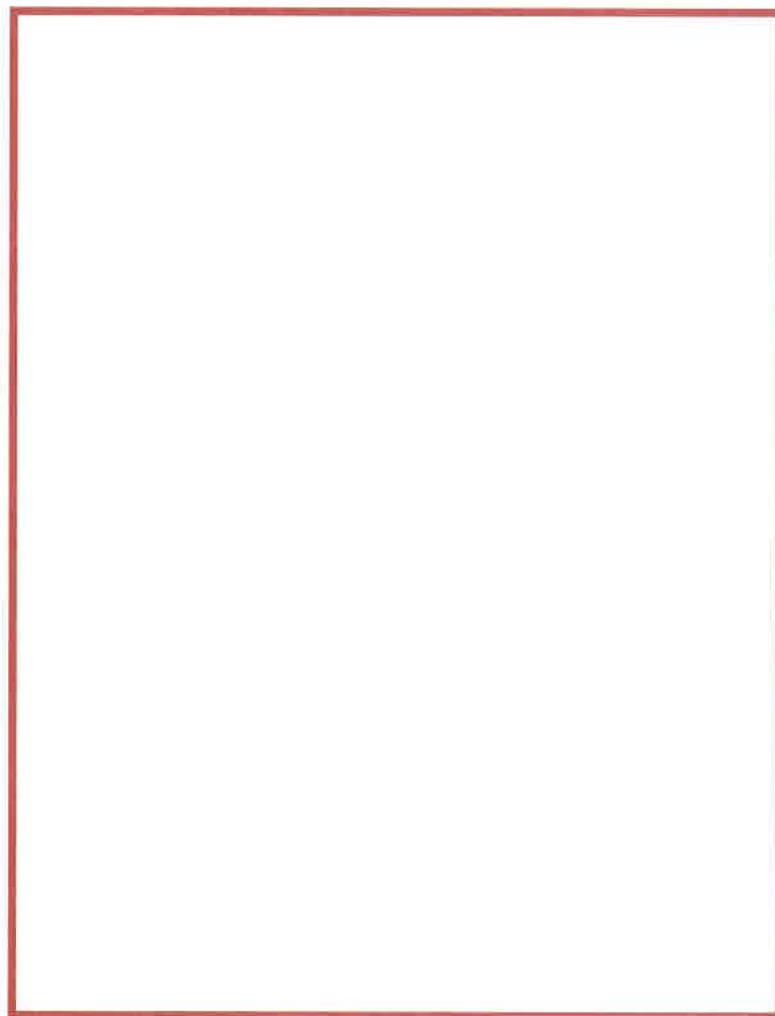


A Line of Thought

Ben Shahn, *Rilke Portfolio: For the Sake of a Single Verse*, 1968

Artist Ben Shahn often used the written word for inspiration. In this series, Shahn made a set of lithographs illustrating his responses to lines from Rainer Maria Rilke's *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910). Shahn's titles derive from Rilke's text, as highlighted below. Choose one of these lines and create your own illustration in response.

For the sake of a single verse, one must see many cities, men and things, one must know the animals, one must feel how the birds fly and know the gesture with which the little flowers open in the morning. One must be able to think back to roads in unknown regions, to unexpected meetings and to partings one had long seen coming; to days of childhood that are still unexplained, to parents whom one had to hurt when they brought one some joy and one did not grasp it (it was a joy for someone else); to childhood illnesses that so strangely begin with such a number of profound and grave transformations, to days in rooms withdrawn and quiet and to mornings by the sea, to the sea itself, to seas, to nights of travel that rushed along on high and flew with all the stars—and it is not yet enough if one may think of all this. One must have memories of many nights of love, none of which was like the others, of the screams of women in labor, and of light, white, sleeping women in childbed, closing again. But one must also have been beside the dying, must have sat beside the dead in the room with the open window and the fitful noises. And still it is not yet enough to have memories. One must be able to forget them when they are many and one must have the great patience to wait until they come again. For it is not yet the memories themselves. Not till they have turned to blood within us, to glance and gesture, nameless and no longer to be distinguished from ourselves—not till then can it happen that in a most rare hour the first word of a verse arises in their midst and goes forth from them.



Now find a print from the series that speaks to you. Come up with your own line of poetry that responds to the image.

Make Your Move

Christopher Brown, *Station*, 1993

How would it feel for you to be in this busy station? How has Christopher Brown used color to direct your eye through the bustling crowd? What has the artist done to create a sense of movement in a crowded space? Movement is a key aspect to telling a story. Study the marks below that help to show movement.



Pick one figure from the print and draw it in the first box below. Show how the figure is moving through the frame by including different types of marks. Use the second and third boxes to continue exploring mark-making: Where is the figure going? Show how and where the figure is moving through the space. Below each of your sketches write a word that expresses your figure's mood.

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Write a short story in response to your drawings.

Checklist of the Exhibition

Dimensions document sheet size with height preceding width. Unless otherwise noted, all works in the exhibition are holdings of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Anderson Graphic Arts Collection, gift of the Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson Charitable Foundation.

Jennifer Bartlett (American, b. 1941)

The Four Seasons, 1990–1993

Four color screenprints

33 x 34 3/4 in. each

Printed by Simca Print Artists, New York

Published by Simca Print Artists and Jennifer Bartlett

Autumn (1990, 1996.74.32) and *Winter* (1991, 1996.74.33): Gift of the Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson Charitable Foundation

Spring (1992) and *Summer* (1993): Collection of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson

Christopher Brown (American, b. 1951)

Station, 1993

Color soft-ground etching with spit-bite aquatint
30 3/4 x 30 in.

Printed by Pamela Paulson

Published by Crown Point Press, San Francisco

Crown Point Press Archive, gift of Kathan Brown
1995.131.5

Vija Celmins (American, b. Latvia, 1938)

Alliance, 1983

Aquatint, mezzotint, and drypoint

23 3/4 x 19 3/8 in.

Printed by Kenneth Farley and Doris Simmelink

Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles

1996.74.57

Vija Celmins (American, b. Latvia, 1938)

Constellation—Uccello, 1983

Aquatint and etching

27 1/4 x 23 in.

Printed by Kenneth Farley and Doris Simmelink

Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles

1996.74.56

David Gilhooly (American, 1943–2013)

Queen Victoria Presents the 20th Century, 1983

Color monoprint

30 x 70 1/4 in.

Printed by Ikuru Kuwahara

Published by 3EP Ltd., Palo Alto

1996.74.148

Robert Gober (American, b. 1954)

Untitled, 2002

Lithograph

51 x 36 in.

Printed by Xavier Fumat and Carmen Schilaci

Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles

Collection of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson

Nathan Oliveira (American, 1928–2010)

To Edgar Allan Poe, 1971

Portfolio of seven lithographs

31 1/2 x 23 in. or 23 x 31 1/2 in. each

Printed by Nathan Oliveira, Richard Newlin, and

Charles Hine

Published by Yankee Press, Stanford, California

1996.74.368.1–7

Ben Shahn (American, b. Lithuania, 1898–1969)

Rilke Portfolio: For the Sake of a Single Verse, 1968

Portfolio of twenty-three lithographs

25 1/2 x 19 in. each

Printed and published by Atelier Mourlot Ltd.,

New York

1996.74.434.1, 1996.74.434.3–24

Saul Steinberg (American, b. Romania, 1914–1999)

The Museum (H.C.), 1972

Color lithograph with embossing on gray paper

20 3/4 x 28 1/2 in.

Printed by Zigmunds Priede and Dick Sonnen

Published by Universal Limited Art Editions,

West Islip, New York

1996.74.437