CONCENTRATION RESEARCH PAPER

PRINTMAKING AFTER WORLD WAR II

Submitted by
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1. Introduction

Printmaking is a process of transformation. An image drawn, carved or gouged into a metal plate, a woodblock or a litho stone will acquire, when printed, a very special quality: considering only the print's physicality, this final product will not appear just like ink on paper; it will reveal, in a magic way, the unmistakable characteristics of the original material in which it was made.

There is also a dual aspect to printmaking which is unique among the fine arts: it gives the artist the possibility to explore a whole gamut of artistic mediums in the first stage of the making of a print and later provides the excitement of discovery and the personal satisfaction, the reward of a work well executed, in the final printing procedure itself.

This duality and the intriguing metamorphosis that occurs from matrix to paper has always been appealing for creative artists, has always been reason enough for making prints.

Even when printmaking was used mainly for informational or commercial purposes, as in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there have always been individual artists that understood that the artistic value of prints lies in the fact that they create visual statements that cannot be achieved by any other means.
The importance of these individuals with creative vision can never be overemphasized: they were the ones who first explored and later established printmaking's fine art potential.

Hercules Seghers, an original and inventive Dutch artist, contemporary of Rembrandt, did not confine his work to the traditional etching procedures of his time, but worked and reworked his plates depicting the landscape he saw around him, incorporating his new discoveries into his prints. He did not seek innovation for the sake of novelty nor as rebellion against tradition, but his inventiveness was rather a natural consequence of an honest creative mind at work, pursuing its inner vision, committed to its aesthetic beliefs (Fig. 1).

Rembrandt himself, the great Master of the seventeenth century, was not concerned with any school or trend, or in the exacting virtuosities of technique: in his almost three hundred etchings he utilized the simplest and in some cases the most unorthodox methods to achieve the effects he desired, yet the greatness of his imagery and the substance of his unique vision never ceases to fascinate us (Fig. 2).

Several other great artists, in earlier times, motivated by an honest searching for their own expression, also utilized creatively one or more of the printmaking techniques, occasionally or consistently: Albrecht Dürer, Piranesi, Goya, William Blake, Rodolphe Bresdin (Fig. 3). Many were solitary figures, visionaries, or just quiet and serious personalities, working with no other concern in their minds but the ultimate search for deeper insights.

A true artist works in loneliness, making no concessions to any kind of venality or hunger for publicity; he works solely to satisfy
Fig. 1. Hercules Seghers "The Big Tree." Etching, 8 3/8 x 10 7/8 in.
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
Fig. 2. Rembrandt Van Rijn "The Three Trees." Etching. Yale University Art Gallery.
Fig. 3. Rodolphe Bresdin "The Holy Family Beside a Stream"
Lithograph. 9 x 7 in. Art Institute of Chicago.
an inner need, as did Edvard Munch, Alberto Giacometti and Giorgio Morandi.

Matisse, Picasso, Klee and the German Expressionists, among many others, were also artists primarily concerned with making unique works of art, no matter which medium they chose for that purpose. These masters proved that printmaking could be visually and aesthetically as significant as any other fine art medium, contributing to the radical change of attitude towards these graphic processes that would occur later on.
2. Printmaking in Europe and America Before the War (1900-1939)

In Europe, especially in France, the heritage of a craft being taught by master printers to young apprentices was responsible for the proliferation of many print workshops where a hierarchy of technical quality in printed material was established and maintained as an honour code.

These establishments, however, were all commercially oriented; their supply of work to be done consisted of stamps, calendars, catalogs, labels for fine products and all sorts of print reproductions subordinated to the needs of the general public.

Printed material, though, regardless of its quality, has nothing whatsoever in common with a fine art print. A printer, the person who prints an edition of someone else's work, is a technician, while a printmaker, the one who does all the stages of the work by himself, from the idea, to the drawing, to the finished printed image, must be an artist.

The public's confusion about these matters was further aggravated by a peculiar situation: a situation that had, at the same time, one good and one bad side. In Europe, a few enterprising publishers and art collectors began to commission works from famous artists who allowed their work to be reproduced and printed by professional printers in those excellent print workshops. The intention was to
refine the printed material and to create a market for finely illustrated books and also for artist's prints.

While on the one hand, this helped to promote the artist's works by making them accessible to a larger public, on the other hand it further promoted the erroneous idea that the actual printing activity is something that is not for artists, something less important, best left to technicians.

In reality, the artist-printmaker feels that the final phase of printing an image that he had already created is an exciting and challenging activity in itself. In addition to the personal satisfaction that a good proof would give him, it also provides the repetition of that first magic moment of discovery.

Ambroise Vollard, Daniel Henry Kahnweiler and Albert Skira were the leaders of a publishing venture dedicated to create a market for art. Vollard's publishing business that was established in Paris would commission works from artists such as Picasso, Bracque, Matisse and Rouault, among others. He began with commissions for fine book illustrations and for the first albums of prints done by serious artists, like the color lithographs of Toulouse-Lautrec, Pierre Bonnard and Edouard Vuillard. Being a friend of the printer Eugene Delatre, Vollard provided work for artists and printers with these commissions. Some of Picasso's early prints were printed in the workshop of Delatre. The albums of prints published by Vollard were a most ambitious venture: they were intended to be issued with regularity and to stimulate the formation of print collections. "L'Estampe Originale," "La Revue Blanche," and "L'Album des Peintres
Graveurs” were some of the most significant, but the idea did not succeed as Vollard expected, and these publications were discontinued.

Daniel H. Kahnweiler, founder of an important gallery for painting and sculpture exhibitions in Paris, was also responsible for publishing and promoting the works of some of the most important artists of his time, providing work for the workshops of Fernand Mourlot, Desjobert and Lacouriere.  

Poets and writers at that time were also backing these enterprises, and this kind of collaboration produced publications like the volume of Paul Verlaine’s poems entitled “Parallèlement,” illustrated with 108 lithographs by Pierre Bonnard.

The poet Guillaume Apollinaire picked the artists of his preference to illustrate his works; among these were the "Fauves" Andre Derain and Raoul Dufy. Published by Kahnweiler, these literary works helped to promote the graphic art of the 'vanguard'.

The interesting contribution that artists brought to book illustration was the fact that they did not find it necessary to stay true to the text; in other words, they did not find themselves obliged to make "literal" illustrations reproducing the texts, but rather preferred to make drawings that would evoke the ideas or feelings comprised in the texts. Concerning this way of thinking, according to Jean Adhémar, the French artist André Jacquemin said:

Although for me illustrating a book is a battle, I do not want to be a killer; I do not want to kill the dreams of the reader, all the images that his imagination conjures up as he reads. I hate 'literal' illustrations, illustrations that tend to reproduce exactly such and such a scene which the text evokes, of which each reader has his own vision.
This was also the opinion of other artists who illustrated books, like Bracque, Matisse and Chagall (Fig. 4).

Matisse went a step further, considering not only the reader's imagination, but respecting the literary work in itself, when he affirmed: "Illustrations do not supply much; moreover, in my books the men of letters had not left me anything to do, they had said everything." The significance of this comment lies in the belief that the substance of every art form, of every art medium exists within itself; that literary works do not need to be "complemented" with visual forms. Conversely, this idea liberated the graphic works from that accessory, subservient, inferior position of mere "illustrations," setting them free to stand by themselves, as personal and separate visual statements.

Respect for things as they are is also very much my own way of thinking: I firmly believe that no art form can be translated into something else; that a work of art has the power to speak for itself. If a literary work needs an illustration to be "completed," or a drawing needs an explanation to be "understood," both the text and the image failed to make use of their respective expressive potential.

Another interesting consequence of the contact between some of those great artists, who were until then primarily painters, and the print workshops, was their awakened interest in printmaking as a fine medium for artists. Many of them began making prints and trying their hands at printing them by themselves.
Fig. 4. Marc Chagall "The Raven and the Fox." Etching 29.4 x 24.7 cm. Private collection.
Shortly before World War II, Paris had become the meeting place of artists of all nations, and different kinds of artistic expression could be seen, from Cubism to Realism or to Abstraction.

In Germany, the artists formed groups interested in the same issues and stated their ideas in written manifestos. With an old popular craft tradition and a strong nationalistic sense, they developed a style charged with emotionalism. The dramatic black and white contrast of woodcut and the immediacy of lithography were their preferred mediums of expression. The legacy of the German Expressionist groups such as "Die Brücke," formed by Ernst Kirchner, Erich Heckel, Karl Schmidt-Rottluf and Fritz Bleyl, the Berlin group called the "Neue Sezession" and "Der Blaue Reiter," with their enormous production of prints continued to exert a powerful influence in modern printmaking (Fig. 5).

Nevertheless, in the restless years that preceded the Second World War, financial difficulties greatly reduced the public support for art. Left alone, the artists began to do increasingly experimental work. Some individual artists turned to nature in search of peace and quiet, away from chaos, in search of fundamental truth. Dunoyer de Segonzac was one of these artists who, taking his copper plates with him to the woods near Paris, did etchings directly from nature. He explained his feelings for nature in these words:

> When drawing or etching in the country, I enjoy communing with nature; I have tried simply to remain sincere in the face of the marvellous spectacle of nature and of life.⁶ (Fig. 6)

De Segonzac was a friend and admirer of another French artist, Jean Frélaut, who also used to make sketches and watercolors directly
Fig. 5. Michael Schoenholtz "Woman sitting at a table."
Fig. 6. Dunoyer de Segonzac "The Grape Harvest." Etching. 1929. 32.5 x 26.8 cm. Private collection.
from nature and engrave his plates after them in his studio. Frélaut had his own press and printed his proofs himself. When he died, in 1954, Segonzac wrote about him:

My friend Jean Frélaut was one of the very few contemporary artists who deserved to be called 'saints'. His work is the mirror reflection of his soul. It is the result of pious meditation on nature and on life. He will always be one of the greatest poets of Brittany, the land of his birth, and of the noble, grave Armorican countryside where he found his inspiration.7 (Fig. 7)

In England, Anthony Gross did poetic etchings and engravings of fields, brambles and thickets with an outstanding delicacy and simplicity.8 Being a sensitive printmaker, Anthony Gross understood the expressive power of black and white and used to say that from these two colors one could get as much as one needed9 (Figs. 8-9).

Another example of how artistic vision and originality of mind can transform even trivial or commonplace things into high art is very visible in the prints of the Italian artist Giorgio Morandi: a quiet light envelops the stillness of simple objects put together on top of a table; the apparent simplicity of the cross hatching reveals, at a closer observation, a myriad of subtle changes that softens contours and makes the space around the forms shimmer in the mysterious light (Fig. 10).

In America, the situation was very different from that of Europe: workshops for the making of intaglio prints like those existing in France have never existed. The activity of etching and engraving was practiced, however, by many painters and teachers in art schools or in small private studios. Those earlier etchers admired and followed the inspiration of James McNeill Whistler, Mary Cassat and Meryon.
Fig. 7. Jean Frélaut "Winter Night." Etching. 1941. 14.8 x 19.9 cm. Private collection.
Fig. 8. Anthony Gross "Pujol." Etching and engraving. 1932. Brooklyn Museum, New York.

Fig. 9. Anthony Gross "The Thicket." Etching. 1932.
Fig. 10. Giorgio Morandi "Still Life." Etching. 1931. 9 5/8 x 12 1/4". The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
The powerful influence of Whistler is due to the refreshing spontaneity of his etchings and drypoints and the soft atmospheric quality of his lithographs. Whistler was a commanding personality who defended his own opinions about art with conviction. He disliked any reference to "storytelling" in prints or paintings, saying that a print should rely on its own worth. He sometimes printed his own prints, leaving a light film of ink on the surface of the plate, which gave the print a special look that was unduplicable and superior to the proofs pulled by a printer (Fig. 11).

One of the important teachers of etching at that time was Joseph Pennell (Fig. 12), who himself admired Whistler's works. Ernest Haskell (Fig. 13), who studied in Paris for two years, developed an interest in printmaking when he saw Whistler's etchings, but very soon found his own personal interpretation of nature.

John Marin's etchings showed lines with an abstract quality and a very innovative sense of agitation and excitement that made them unique (Fig. 14).

Childe Hassam was an American painter who studied and traveled Europe, where he became very interested in the Impressionists' work. Returning to his country, he did a series of wonderful prints depicting the play of light and shadow in typical American tree lined streets, small town houses and country scenes (Fig. 15).

George Elbert Burr also had a feeling for the American landscape, for its vastness and its untouched quality. He made a series of prints about the desert southwest country in which he captured the luminous atmosphere and rich solitude of those places (Fig. 16).
Fig. 11. James McNeill Whistler "Two Doorways." Etching. 8 x 11 1/2". Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Fig. 12. Joseph Pennell "Gleisdreieck Station, Berlin."
Lithograph. 40.5 x 53.5 cm. 1905.
Fig. 13. Ernest Haskell "Mirror of the Goddess." Etching and drypoint. 1920-22. 8 x 10". The Brooklyn Museum.
Fig. 14. John Marin "Woolworth Building (The Dance)." 1914. Etching and drypoint.
Fig. 15. Childe Hassam "Lion Gardner House, East Hampton." Etching. 1920. 9 7/8 x 14".
Fig. 16. George Elbert Burr "Whirlwinds, Mojave Desert." Drypoint. 1921. Collection of the Library of Congress.
John Taylor Arms, interested in detailed realism, was a very disciplined printmaker who believed in the merits of craftsmanship.

Realism and the American scene was also the theme of John Sloan's and Edward Hopper's works. While Sloan was interested in people's behavior and other social realities of his time, Hopper captured a deep sense of loneliness in the urban landscape bathed in a bleaching light.

In the 1930's, when the world's economic depression reached America, the artists were the first to suffer its effects. It was a time of change, and this began to be reflected in their work. The Federal Government subsidized a Graphic Art's Section within the Works Progress Administration which organized and set up graphic workshops as well as studios for painting and sculpture in various cities throughout the country. These workshops and studios were planned to give employment to artists and also help the continuity and promotion of their work.

As a consequence of this Federal Project, the artists could work more freely, and this accelerated many important changes: with the new facilities, the artists began new experiments in all print media, and hundreds of them had their first opportunities to explore print-making as a full-time vocation. But certainly the most important consequence of the five years-long Project was that many artists that became active printmakers, later joined the staffs of schools and universities where they helped to promote this medium to the younger generations on a more advanced level than ever before.
3. The War and Its Consequences for Printmaking

The reason for mentioning the Second World War in the history of Printmaking is the fact that it forced the displacement of many European artists who could no longer work in their native countries causing, as a consequence, a much quicker and vital exchange of influences and a widening of experiences that would be reflected in artistic expression.

Some years before the conflict, many artists had already left their countries in search of better working conditions or relief from persecution: Josef Albers, Lionel Feininger, George Grosz and Max Beckmann moved to the United States and Oskar Kokoschka and Kurt Schwitters to Great Britain. When France was occupied, Marc Chagall, Jacques Lipchitz, Max Ernst, Fernand Leger, Andre Masson, Matta and the Surrealist writer Andre Breton fled to New York.

To leave one's country behind, not only for a period of time, but perhaps forever, is one of the most self-consciousness provoking experiences a person can have. It doesn't mean simply having to confront another place to live or another language to speak; it means a confrontation with oneself, with one's values, a questioning of one's way of seeing. According to the philosopher Ernest Cassirer, in his essay about the formation of language:

The form of observation which underlies all speech and language development, always expresses a peculiar spiritual character,
a special way of conceiving and apprehending. The difference between the several languages, therefore, is not a matter of different sounds and marks, but of different world conceptions. 12

The group of artists that had to leave their countries brought with them, then, a different cultural baggage and their different ways of seeing the world. Many were already very knowledgeable and dedicated to their media. They enlarged the horizons of the American artists, bringing them an international point of view, displaying their different perceptions in every gesture, in every mark.

These artists, in turn, were even more strongly influenced by their new environment, by the youth and vitality of the American artists and their creative interest in development and change.

This was, in my point of view, the good thing that came from the evil of war: an interchange of rich life experiences that could not have happened otherwise. It is one thing to look at a book reproduction of a work of art; another, to look at the work itself in a museum wall or in a gallery; but nothing can compare with the lively and exciting experience of working side by side with an artist, sharing daily impressions, witnessing the creation of a different conception of the same environment. It is true that the most important part of an artist's work is created in solitude, but this supportive condition of working vitality is very important.

When, in 1940, Stanley William Hayter (Fig. 17) decided to come to the United States and established his Atelier 17 in New York, he found a propitious atmosphere of interest in research. He had been working enthusiastically in printmaking since 1927. His seriousness, dedication and determination attracted to his workshop a great number
Fig. 17. Stanley William Hayter "Sorcerer." Etching and line engraving. 1953. 19 1/4 x 15 3/8".
of artists interested in the print media as another means of creative expression. Max Ernst, Chagall, Miro, Jacques Lipchitz, Yves Tanguy, Giacometti, Bracque, Picasso and other artists interested in the Surrealistic ideas had worked in his Atelier 17 when it was located in Paris. When it moved to America, many of these famous artists followed, and the whole atmosphere of the place was transported to the new country. All these factors, together with the greater number of American printmakers with freshly acquired WPA printmaking experience, contributed to the extraordinary appeal of Atelier 17. However, the revolutionary ideas of its mentor and founder, were the real catalyst ingredients that set a new course for Printmaking in this century.

Hayter himself describes them in his book About Prints, published in 1962:

Unlike the traditional workshops, this Atelier has to do with an idea rather than with a fixed place, a permanent band of workers or artists, or a uniform unvarying application of a known technique.13

He goes on to describe other important aspects, emphasizing the fact that there is no voice of authority; every member of the group works independently, and from the beginning, the work is originated in the plate itself and not copied from a previous drawing. The idea is to involve a student in experiments, in conditions completely unfamiliar to him in which a development, not necessarily by logical means, is carried on until the plate is destroyed.14

The primary concern is the realization that a technique must be subordinated to the artist's imagination; that it is only a means to excite that imagination and make visible an image that is latent, and
not only "a series of mechanical devices to produce or repeat a previously formulated image on paper." \(^{15}\)

Following this orientation, Atelier 17 was a lively place, where mature artists and young printmakers from several countries worked together, discussed their discoveries and printed their own plates.

The genuine enthusiasm of this workshop produced high standards of work in which the old traditional methods of printmaking were reapplied and renewed together with fresh ideas. The Atelier 17 operated for nearly a decade and a half without the support of special grants or other funds. In 1955, when the building in which the workshop was located received a mark to be demolished, Hayter closed it and re-established it in Paris, where it is still operating.

The importance of this atelier was, and still is, immense, not only in the United States, but throughout the world. Many printmakers who worked there later joined the staff of universities or important art schools in many countries, spreading the ideas of that creative approach.

Between 1944 and 1945 Jackson Pollock worked at Atelier 17, where he produced a small number of prints, influenced by Surrealism and the works of Picasso, Gorky, Masson and Miro. Some other American artists who produced fine prints in that workshop were: Armin Landeck, who began his first etching in 1927, went to Atelier 17 especially to work with copper engraving. Five years later he produced very personal engravings and drypoints, utilizing precise straight lines. One of these is the print entitled "Rooftops, 14th Street" \(^{16}\) (Fig. 18).
Fig. 18. Armin Landeck "Rooftops, 14th Street." Engraving and drypoint. 1946. 8 1/4 x 14". The Brooklyn Museum Collection.
Alice Mason Trumbull was one of the first American printmakers who utilized abstract forms in her sensitive prints. Gabor Peterdi, a Hungarian artist who had worked with Hayter in the Paris workshop for several years, developed his experiments with combinations of the various intaglio techniques (Fig. 19). He also worked extensively with the burin, producing elaborate engravings. He later taught printmaking at Yale University. His disciples now teach and work in universities or art schools all over the country: Peter Milton at Maryland Art Institute (Figs. 20-24), Michael Mazur at Brandeis University (Fig. 22), Richard Zieman at Hunter College (Fig. 23).

Karl Schrag, born in Germany, led the Atelier 17 in New York from 1950 on after Hayter returned to Paris. Mauricio Lasanski, an Argentine printmaker who had received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1953, worked with Hayter for two years while he developed his skills in engraving, becoming very well known as an excellent engraver (Fig. 24). In 1945 he was appointed to lead the Printmaking workshop at the University of Iowa, where he set up what Hayter describes as "one of the most important centers of printmaking in the United States." The year of 1947 was very significant for the history of printmaking in the United States, because of the first National Print Exhibition, which was also a retrospective show entitled "American Printmaking: 1913-1947." It was organized by the Brooklyn Museum of Art, with the purpose: "to recognize and encourage artists who are working in the graphic arts and to stimulate the public interest in fine art printmaking."
Fig. 19. Gabor Peterdi "Apocalypse." Etching and engraving. 23 1/4 x 35". 1952. The Brooklyn Museum, New York.
Fig. 20. Peter Milton "Brueghelscape #1" Intaglio. 1964.
Fig. 21. Peter Milton "Julia Passing" Intaglio. 1968.
Fig. 22. Michael Mazur "Closed Ward #2" Etching, drypoint and aquatint. 1962-63. 24 x 33 1/2 in.
Fig. 23. Richard Claude Zieman "Landscape." Etching and engraving. 1957.
Fig. 24. Mauricio Lasanski "Self-portrait." Engraving. 1957. The Brooklyn Museum Collection.
This period after the war was a time of important changes in American art. Several painters were attracting attention with their works: Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, Arshile Gorky and Franz Kline, among others, began to express themselves in a very dynamic, spontaneous and personal way. They gave a new dimension to the concept of "content" in a work of art. Very soon, their attitudes and the works they produced began to shake the American consciousness and the way American art was received in Europe, focusing the whole world's attention on New York instead of Paris.21

This interest in large paintings, the expansion of the art market in America and also in Europe as a result of post-war economy, and a renewed interest in color, together with the proliferation of print workshops, began to affect printmaking in a dubious way. On the one hand, it stimulated the public interest in prints and many more art students were trying to become printmakers, but, on the other hand, this generalized interest triggered experimentation of all kinds. New materials, larger scale, and the use of color became major considerations.

Printmakers had different opinions about these changes. Some approved this kind of wild research, but others felt closer to the simpler characteristics of the medium: the appropriateness of black and white, the craftlike approach and the unique intimacy of a smaller size. Unfortunately, these latter opinions remained in a minority, and the following years would witness an accelerating "boom" in the graphic arts, not always with the best results. There was, at a certain time in the 1960's, an overproduction of poor experiments in printmaking
that only proved that a technique by itself, without the support of a true artistic inventiveness, means nothing at all.

With the increasing demand for prints came, also, the proliferation of print workshops and of master printers ready to execute brilliantly anything, regardless of quality, that was left in their hands.

The revival of lithography as a fine art medium, though, was one good consequence of all this renewed interest.

The artist June Wayne decided to look for help in promoting the long time neglected processes of lithography, which she considered a very fine medium for artists. She discussed her ideas with the Director of the Program in Humanities and the Arts of the Ford Foundation, and with his and the Foundation's support, she founded, in Los Angeles, the Tamarind Lithography Workshop. The project was a complete success, attracting the interest of many artists who produced works of outstanding quality. The consequence was a restoration of the prestige of lithography within the fine arts. This workshop was later affiliated to the University of New Mexico, under the name of The Tamarind Institute.

The installation of graphic workshops within the curriculum of a university or college has been an important influence on the modern print in the United States. These shops, under the direction of well known professional artists, have been significant to many students who later became professional artists themselves. Important art schools also maintained distinguished print workshops in various parts of the country: The Art Students League in New York, the school of the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Brooklyn Museum Art School.
Several other establishments dedicated to the lithography processes were founded about the same time: the ULAE, Universal Limited Arts Editions, was initiated by Tatyana Grosman in New York; the Gemini G.E.L. and Cirrus Editions were established in Los Angeles; the Collectors Press in San Francisco; Landfall Press in Chicago; the Hollander Graphic Workshop and Tyler Graphics Ltd. in New York and the Graphicstudio of the University of South Florida, in Tampa.

Nevertheless, amidst this feverish atmosphere of experimentation, and the collaboration of artists and printers, the last decade has seen a number of artists who continue to be involved in the complete process of printmaking, from the drawing of the images to the entire run of an edition. Some young artists are coming back to a craft-like approach, beginning with the making of the paper itself. Others prefer to use only the traditional vocabulary of black and white. Among these are Peter Milton and Richard Zieman (Figs. 25 and 26), both disciples of Gabor Peterdi. To me, this simpler, but nevertheless harder approach seems closer to the truth. I believe that the search for art involves hard work and perpetual beginnings. No matter how intensely or with how much excitement an artist works, he can never be sure whether or not the miracle will happen. An artist's life is a constant search for the miraculous moment when everything will fit into a marvellous whole that would speak for itself. Nevertheless, these moments are rare, mysterious, and sometimes quite unexpected. This search leaves an artist with his uncertainties, but also with his hopes and determination, because, as Franz Kafka said:
we drift in doubt, but also in an inconceivably beautiful diversity; so the accomplishment of hopes remains an always unexpected miracle, but in compensation, the miracle remains forever possible.
Fig. 25. Peter Milton "Victoria's Children." Intaglio. 1967.
Fig. 26. Richard Claude Zieman "Winter Tree." Etching. 24 x 18".
4. Printmaking in Brazil

This brief selection of Brazilian printmakers is very personal. It is also incomplete. I would have liked to include in it several other printmakers whose work I really appreciate but who are not listed here because of insufficient documented information. However, I thought I should mention a few names of my fellow countrymen who dedicated their lives to this fascinating art medium; not because of an empty nationalistic notion, but for two important reasons. First, in my opinion, they are very good printmakers, and second, some of them were responsible for revealing to me, for the first time in my life, the wonders of a fine print.
Osvaldo Goeldi is considered in his country and abroad as one of the most important printmakers that Brazil has produced. This reputation is due to his dedication and sincerity towards the medium of his choice.

Born in Rio de Janeiro, his family took him to Switzerland, at the age of six, where he lived until his return to Brazil in 1919. During these formative years, he came under the spell of Expressionism, which remained a powerful influence for the rest of his life. He was also impressed by the work of Van Gogh and Edvard Munch, but the strongest and most direct influence came from the Austrian artist Alfred Kubin, through whom — as Goeldi himself acknowledged — he was enabled to find his own creative path.

He had the tragic sense of life, tempered by his romantic bent. According to the critic Antonio Bento:

> In common with the Romantics, Goeldi was in love with the mystery of the night, with humble streets, with old houses, with unhappy lovers, and with the tragedy of death.

His sense of compassion, of empathy with sad and lonely people is evident in much of his work.\(^2\)

At the first Sao Paulo Biennial in 1951 Goeldi was awarded the prize for Best National Engraver, and, thereafter, his fame rapidly increased. He won the First Prize for engraving at the Second Interamerican Biennial of Mexico in 1960. In 1961, the year of his
death, he was given two important retrospective exhibitions, one at the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro, consisting of engravings, drawings and watercolors. The catalog of this exhibit reads like an inventory of romantic themes: "Promise," "Blue Afternoon," "Lagoon," "Parting," "Calm Sea," "Tropical Night."  

There is sentiment but no sentimentality in the many scenes of life among the poor and forsaken — the vagabonds, the beggars, the humble toilers of the city and the countryside, and in the three series of drawings on World War II, Goeldi bears witness to the tragedy of his time. He was an artist deeply dedicated to his craft and a sensitive personality greatly involved in the observation of life and the simple things around him (Figs. 27-28).
Fig. 27. Osvaldo Goeldi "Fisherman." Woodcut. 23 x 36 cm. Private collection. Rio de Janeiro.
Fig. 28. Osvaldo Goeldi "Fishermen." Woodcut. 1940.
Contemporary Art Museum, São Paulo.
LIVIO ABRAMO

Born in São Paulo in 1903, Livio Abramo began working as a self-taught engraver in 1926. Although he has done line engravings, drawings, gouaches and watercolors, his major accomplishment has been in the medium of wood engraving. Beginning under the influence of Goeldi and Segall, his works gradually evolved toward a distinctive style of his own. A very personal statement of rhythm and light characterizes his woodcuts of folkloric Brazilian dances and rituals and of lonely towns and landscapes beaten by winds and tropical rain. The meticulous technique of wood engraving never overpowers his fantasy and personal freedom of expression.

In his book Contemporary Art of Latin America, the American critic Gilbert Chase wrote:

During the 1950's, Abramo moved toward great abstraction, though without abandoning the figure completely. The most representative work of this period is the series entitled 'Rio,' (1951-1954), in which elements of the urban landscape are atomized and rearranged with a dazzling virtuosity of form and texture. During this period he was also doing a series of drawings, gouaches and xylographs on the 'Macumba,' which is the name given to the Afro-Brazilian religious cults in the region of Rio de Janeiro. Abramo's work has greatly enriched the repertory of Brazilian themes and of that 'tropical civilization' which the sociologist and writer Gilberto Freyre sees as the essence of Brazilian culture. All this he has reinterpreted in terms of exacting artistry that shuns compromise of any kind, and that transmutes the human environment into visual poetry. There is every reason for
regarding Livio Abramo as 'one of the most significant plastic artists of Brazil.' 25

He has participated in the Venice Biennials in the years of 1950, 1952 and 1954. In the São Paulo Biennial in 1953, he won the Best National Engraver Prize. He has also had many individual shows in Europe and America (Figs. 29, 30, 31).
Fig. 29. Livio Abramo "Rhythms and Architecture." 1957. Woodcut. 21 x 29 cm.
Contemporary Art Museum, São Paulo.
Fig. 30. Livio Abramo "Macumba." Woodcut. 1954. 22 x 24 cm.
Fig. 31. Livio Abramo "Macumba." Woodcut. 1957. 10 1/2 x 13 1/2".
Born in São Paulo, in 1925, self taught in art, Marcelo Grassmann began exhibiting in 1946, and in 1952 he obtained a travel award at the National Salon of Modern Art that took him to Europe for two years. In 1955, at the third São Paulo Biennial, he won the prize for the Best National Engraver, and at the fifth Biennial, in 1959, the prize for Drawing. In 1958 he received a special prize for sacred art at the Venice Biennale, and in 1965 he had a one-man show in Mexico City that was highly acclaimed. In the Walker Art Center's show entitled "New art of Brazil," in 1962, he was represented by eight watercolors in the series "The Knight and Other Themes." In Gilbert Chase's words: "his work shows kinship with the monstrous images of Hieronimus Bosch and the nightmarish fantasies of Goya."27

When looking at his drawings and prints, we perceive that he is perfectly aware, as a real printmaker, of the almost magical transformations between a drawing and a print. For him, dealing with acids, varnishes and printmaking tools is an essential part of the ritual that will allow that magic to happen. His imagery consists of fantastic horsemen and animals which, in a dreamlike atmosphere, portray the ambiguity of fear and fascination of humankind in the face of mystery and the supernatural (Figs. 32, 33, 34).
Fig. 32. Marcelo Grassmann "Untitled." Etching. 34 x 29 cm. 1980.
Fig. 33. Marcelo Grassmann "Drawing II." 1976. Drawing.
Fig. 34. Marcelo Grassmann "Fantastic Figure on Horseback." Etching.
ARTHUR LUIZ PIZA

Born in São Paulo, in 1928. Presently lives in Paris. He began his art studies in painting, but later went to Paris and studied intaglio with Johnny Friedlaender. He was always interested in relief, and worked with collages of different materials in order to achieve a tactile effect. In 1959 he began exploring a very personal way of gouging and engraving his copper plates very deeply with burins and chisels. This way of directly modifying the surface of metal plates became his main field of interest and has won him international acclamation.

He has participated in the São Paulo Biennials (from the First through the Seventh); in the May Salon in Paris in 1953, 1956, 1958 and 1965; in the International Printmaking Exhibition of Ljubljana (since 1957, winning a prize in 1961); in the Grenchen Triennial (since 1958, winning a prize in 1961); in the Second American Biennial in Chile; in the XXXIII Venice Biennial (David Bright prize) and also in the Biennials of Paris, Tokyo, Cincinnati and Cracovia. His works can be seen in several museums around the world, including the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro, the Museum of Modern Art of New York, the Museum of Modern Art of Belgrade and the Guggenheim Museum.28

His imagery explores subtle movement of abstract or geometric shapes orchestrated in several directional patterns. The ink accumulated in the deep cuts appears printed in relief on the surface of the paper. He utilizes muted colors to enhance the sculptural
effect. In contrast with the deeply gouged areas, he sometimes uses the drypoint technique with delicate scratches of color surrounding the central engraved motif. In the presence of these elemental, simple shapes with their ambiguous, internal complexities the viewer is reminded of mysterious primeval undecoded messages (Figs. 35, 36, 37, 38).
Fig. 35. Artur Luiz Piza "Untitled." Intaglio. 1981.  
43 x 32 cm.
Fig. 36. Artur Luiz Piza "Untitled." Intaglio. 1966.
23 1/4 x 17 11/16". Gallery of Graphic Arts, New York.
Fig. 37. Artur Luiz Piza "La Grande Verte." Intaglio. 1969.
76.5 x 56 cm.
Fig. 38. Artur Luis Piza "Grande Moitie." Engraving.
MARIA BONOMI

Born in Meina, Italy, in 1935, Bonomi moved to Brazil in 1944 and studied painting until 1953; after that, she studied painting until 1953; after that, she studied printmaking with Livio Abramo. Between 1957 and 1959 she studied at the University of Columbia in New York, with Hans Muller. Back in Brazil, in the same year of 1959 she studied intaglio with Johnny Friedlaender, who was teaching at the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro at that time. In 1960 she founded, together with Livio Abramo, the printmaking workshop entitled "Estudio Gravura," where she taught until 1963. She is a dynamic and prolific artist, exhibiting in several shows in Brazil and abroad, receiving very important prizes, among which are the prizes for the Best National Printmaker at the São Paulo Biennial in 1965, I and V Paris Biennials, Prints Biennial of Cincinnati in 1960, the Second Biennial of Mexico, the IV, V and VI Ljubljana Biennials, the II Tokyo International Prints Biennial and the XXXII Venice Biennial in 1964, with 15 prints.29

She has also had individual shows around the world. Her abstract imagery deals with big, solid masses overlapping in vibrant rhythms. She sometimes utilizes a subtle counterpoint of straight and curved lines perceived as edges of other bigger, imposing shapes. Her use of color accentuates the sense of the massive and the monumental (Fig. 39).
Fig. 39. Maria Bonomi "Caudal dos Improvaveis." Woodcut. 1976. 250 cm x 100 cm. (detail).
FAYGA OSTROWER

Born in Lodz, Poland, in 1920, Ostrower lived in Germany from 1921 to 1933, then moved to Brazil, where she settled and became a naturalized citizen. Living in Rio de Janeiro, she studied drawing and intaglio. Her teachers were Axel Leskoschek (woodcut) and Carlos Oswald (intaglio). In the 1950's she dedicated herself to abstract forms in her art. In 1955 she received a Fulbright scholarship which allowed her to go to New York where she worked at Stanley William Hayter's Atelier 17.

She participated in several exhibitions in Brazil and abroad, winning very important prizes, such as the big prize for intaglio in the International Venice Biennial in 1958. She was exhibited in a special room in the Venice Biennial in 1962. Other international shows in which she participated were the Second Interamerican Biennial of Mexico, First Latin American Printmaking show in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1960, several shows of Brazilian Contemporary art in South American countries, in London, Vienna and Bonn in 1965, and at Cornell University in 1966. She also showed her work in Washington, D.C., at the Panamerican Union in 1955, the Museum of Modern Art of San Francisco in 1957, the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro in 1958 and 1966, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, in 1959 and at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1960.

Besides exhibiting her work, Fayga is also a teacher at the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro and a visitor teacher at several
other universities in her country. She taught at Spellman College in Atlanta in 1964. In 1963 she participated in the IV Unesco International Congress as Vice-President for the Brazilian Committee of Fine Arts. She works with several printmaking techniques but has specialized in intaglio, her favorite. She is a serious and coherent artist who has written about art and the creative processes. In her lectures she has reiterated the idea that the intaglio process involves much more than the ability to deal with formal games or virtuosity with the technique. For her, intaglio is "the chamber music of the Visual Arts" (Figs. 40-41).
Fig. 40. Fayga Ostrower "6621" Woodcut, 1966. 58 x 40 cm.
Fig. 41. Fayga Ostrower "Abstraction 40." Aquatint.
ISABEL PONS

Born in Barcelona, Spain in 1912, Pons studied at the School of Fine Arts of Barcelona from 1925 to 1930. In 1948 she moved to Rio de Janeiro and became a naturalized citizen. In 1959 she studied intaglio with Johnny Friedlaender at the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro, and, since then, she has dedicated herself to printmaking, specifically intaglio.

Her work has been shown in several national shows and biennials and also in many other international exhibitions such as the Lugano Biennial in 1959, the São Paulo Biennials, where she won important prizes, the Second Inter American Biennial of Mexico, where she won the gold medal in 1960 and the XXXI Venice Biennial in 1962, in which she was awarded the Fiat prize. Pons has exhibited in shows abroad dedicated to contemporary Brazilian art, including London and Vienna in 1965, Bucholz Gallery in Munich, Germany in 1967; at the Sala Nebli, Madrid in 1967; at 11 Segno Gallery, Rome in 1968, and at A Gravura Gallery, Lisbon in 1968.31

Her imagery consists of poetic figurativism or abstraction, using color very sparingly and ideally integrated with the characteristics of the medium (Fig. 42).
Fig. 42. Isabel Pons "Untitled." Intaglio (detail).
ROBERTO DE LAMONICA

Born in Brazil in 1933, Roberto De Lamonica studied with many teachers, among them Friedlaender. He traveled extensively through Europe, China and the Soviet Union. Returning to Brazil, he continued his studies in printmaking in Rio de Janeiro. He gave courses in engraving in Lima, Peru in 1961 and in Chicago in 1964. After that he was awarded a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, and in 1966 he had one-man shows in Rome and Milan.32

He has dedicated himself to intaglio and metal engraving. His imagery consists purely of abstract formal compositions which are very rich in texture and detail, yet giving the visual impression of balanced and controlled simplicity.
EDITH BEHRING

Born in Rio de Janeiro in 1916, Behring studied painting with Portinari and woodcut with Axel Leskoschek. In 1953 she went to Paris and studied printmaking with Friedlaender for four years. Back in Brazil, she became a printmaker instructor at the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro.

A very dedicated artist and teacher, she has participated in several national and international shows, winning important prizes, such as the Ljubljana II International Prints Show in 1957, first prize at the First American Printmaking Biennial in Chile in 1963, and Best National Engraver in 1966.

Her imagery consists of severe formal structures, very meticulously planned, which utilize the refinements of the technique only as a means to achieve the desired effects and never as an end in itself. This refined balance is revealed also in her use of color which range from heavy blacks to the softest combinations of greys and greens.

Some of her works can be seen in the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro and the Museum of Modern Art in New York (drawings), in the Museum of Contemporary Art of São Paulo University, at the National Library in Rio de Janeiro and at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. (Fig. 43).
Fig. 43. Edith Behring "Composition 4." Intaglio.
SAINT CLAIR OLIVEIRA CEMIN

Born in Brazil in 1951, Cemin studied printmaking in Paris, at the Atelier Calavaert-Brun and also at the Ecole Nationale Superieure des Beaux Arts. He has worked in the ateliers of Tristan Bastit and Joelle Serve. At the present time, Cemin lives in New York and teaches intaglio in Robert Blackburn's printmaking workshop and at the Pratt Graphic Center.

A very dedicated printmaker, Saint Clair believes that an artist should excel in every aspect of his "metier," and his prints bespeak of this notion in the excellency of imagery and technique. His perfectly controlled aquatints reveal transparencies similar to those we see in watercolors. His imagery, figures of a fantastic and sophisticated world, are masterfully worked within the medium's special characteristics. In the presence of his luminous and intriguing prints, we feel drawn into another powerful and mysterious world, where everything fits together in a convincing whole. Every inch of the print speaks of thoughtful craftsmanship rewarded with a visual illusion of simplicity.

He has received many important prizes, including the "Merit Award" at the Annual Print Show of the Pratt Graphic Center in New York in 1979, in the Scuola Internationale de Grafica in Venice in 1978, and in many national shows in Brazil. 34
CARLOS MARTINS

Being a printmaker and also an art critic, Carlos Martins is presently the director of the Print's Cabinet of the National Museum of Fine Arts in Rio de Janeiro. He graduated in architecture from the Mackenzie State University of São Paulo and later dedicated himself to printmaking.

He has shown his work in several national exhibits as well as international shows. Very recently (April 1984) he had a show of his works in Washington, D.C., at the Brazilian American Cultural Institute, about which the critic for the Art News magazine, Marc Berkowitz wrote:

Brazilian graphic artists, particularly printmakers, have acquired a solid international reputation. Piza, Ostrower, Delamonica and Bonomi have successfully shown abroad and won important international prizes. Printmaker Carlos Martins comes from a younger generation of fine Brazilian artists who are also attracting wide attention. Already recognized as a significant figure in his field, Martins has produced a host of small poetical etchings of objects, landscapes, interiors and facades that are notable for their meticulous style and suggestive, mystical quality. The artist, who holds a degree in architecture from Mackenzie University in his native São Paulo, studied printmaking in Italy and at the Slade School in London. He now lives in Rio de Janeiro, where he teaches and devotes his artistic energy to printmaking. This was Martins' first one-man show in the United States. Covering a ten year period, it consistently revealed the artist's ability to endow commonplace subjects — the front of a house, the corner of a room — with a sense of quiet mystery. Even his smallest prints are able to convey a silence, a strange metaphysical emptiness. He sometimes combines natural elements with architectural features
and pure geometric forms to produce lyrical, surrealistic effects...

...In all these works Martins' use of black and white and of monochromatic, subdued color is superb. The images, which are impressive individually, take on an added dimension when viewed collectively — as if we have entered a very private, meditative, yet oddly seductive world.35 (Fig. 44)
Fig. 44. Carlos Martins "Interior with Mirrors." Etching. 1977.
LOTUS LOBO

After her beginning studies at the Escola Guignard in Brazil, this young generation artist has dedicated herself to lithography and is being considered today as making one of the most significant contributions to the artistic scene of her native state of Minas Gerais, Brazil. Interested in the specifics of the lithographic medium in a non-objective or abstract vision, disregarding 'easy' effects of texture or transparencies, she works intensively and honestly in search of her own imagery. She first explored simple sign-like shapes in very dense blacks and in a very big scale. Recently she is working with the subtle poetic relationships of pale color tints. Her study of stamps for regional products of her native state was the source for aesthetic formal speculations which transformed the original shapes into other visual forms.

She has participated in several international shows, such as the São Paulo Biennial, the Tokyo Biennial, and several national exhibitions. In 1970 she won the first prize at a show in her native state which consisted of a scholarship for art studies in France. After two years in Europe, she returned to Brazil, where she teaches at the Escola Guignard and also at the lithographic atelier she has helped to establish, the "Casa Litografica de Belo Horizonte" (Lithographic House of Belo Horizonte). This workshop is one of the most important centers for lithography in Brazil.
Lotus Lobo won the first prize in the recent (1982) V Biennial of Latin American Printmaking in Puerto Rico\textsuperscript{36} (Fig. 45).
Fig. 45. Lotus Lobo "Untitled." 1981. Lithograph. 50 cm x 60 cm.
EVANDRO CARLOS JARDIM

Born in São Paulo in 1953, Jardim studied at the Fine Arts School in São Paulo between 1953 and 1958. He was one of the artists that participated in the Brazilian Printmakers show at the Brazilian-American Cultural Institute Gallery, Washington, D.C. in 1966. He has also shown his prints at Indiana University in 1968.37

He is a seriously dedicated artist who works steadily and constantly, utilizing only the simplest resources of the technique with surprising visual impact. It is very clear that he masters the difficult secrets of the medium, but he declares that he is only interested in the technique as far as it serves his expressive needs. The quality of his prints reveals to the viewer a special atmosphere that involves even the simplest image or commonplace object. His imagery makes reference to reality, but in a very subtle, ambiguous and poetic way. At the first look, the prints attract our attention for their simplicity and purity, but at a closer look, the subtle mastery of the precisely handled technique describes an emotive richness that is very powerful and seductive. Birds, trees, mountains or locomotives, his elements articulate themselves as if in a big mysterious puzzle. There is unity between one print and the next, a link, a reference, even if not direct, something like a mirrored thought.

He utilizes few and simple sources, personal references, which are full of emotional richness. However, he never becomes sentimental, and
his poetic imagery is above all discreet, rigorous, intense and remains indelible in our minds (Fig. 46).
Fig. 46. Evandro Jardim "The Picture of the Tree and the House." 1981. Etching.
5. Conclusion

An artist's emotions and the medium of his choice are intimately related. His subject matter, though, and the way he handles the medium is something that he arrives at by means of that relationship, very frequently in spite of himself. What I mean is that for a visual artist, the primary concern lies in the visual or formal considerations and not in the "literary" content.

Osvaldo Goeldi, who brought to Brazil the Expressionists heritage in the art of woodcut, depicted Brazilian scenes and popular themes in his work. Through his honest vision, that early influence was gradually transformed according to his personal experience of the Brazilian environment.

The subject matter of all the other artists that I mention here is more elusive of 'placement.' Their primary concerns lie with considerations of form tied to their emotions on a personal or universal level.

Livio Abramo, who worked at Atelier 17 with Hayter in New York, also depicted Brazilian popular themes such as folcloric dances or festivities, images of the land and people, but his intentions were not to illustrate or to make social comment about them. Rather, he intended to express the dynamism of certain scenes, the abstract qualities of rhythm, excitement or movement; in other words, the abstract pattern of emotions that those themes and places evoked within himself.
Whether or not the choice of Brazilian themes as a subject matter is considered to be more 'nationalistic' than a less definable one is something best left for art critics to define. My own opinion is that an honest artist relates to the environment in which he is living and expresses his experiences about it whether he intends to or not, and he would continue to react in this manner no matter in which country he happens to be: whether the one in which he was born or any other. It is true that childhood memories and homeland attachments have a lingering effect in our emotional life, but I also believe that our creative imagination is continually collecting a myriad of subtle impressions throughout our life, and the importance we assign to these insights will ultimately shape our individuality, and consequently, our artistic expression.

Many Brazilian printmakers were born in different countries and brought to Brazil different backgrounds. Many went to the United States or to Europe in their formative years to study and to grow. Many went back to Brazil to live and a few decided to live abroad. The life experiences they 'collected' in all these places and the way they felt about them must necessarily be ingrained in their personalities. In addition to all these factors, the influence of famous teachers such as Stanley William Hayter and Johnny Friedlaender was very significant and in a way divided the direction of the imagery of all their respective disciples.

My conclusion is that all art should be considered only by its aesthetic values and for its power of communication, regardless of 'subject matter.'
What these artists have to offer us is the unique vision of their personal experience as sensitive human beings. In that sense, their "Brazilian experiences" echo universal themes.
ENDNOTES


6. Adhemar, p. 162.


13. Hayter, op. cit., p. 94.

15 Hayter, op. cit., p. 94.


17 Johnson, p. 78.


19 Hayter, op. cit., p. 100.


21 Baro, p. 9.


24 Chase, p. 215.

25 Chase, p. 216.

26 Chase, p. 217.

27 Chase.


29 Pontual, p. 65.

30 Pontual, p. 396.

31 Pontual, p. 431.

32 Chase, op. cit., p. 219.

33 Pontual, op. cit., p. 65.


37. Pontual, op. cit., p. 277.
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