

**PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE TECHNICAL AND AESTHETIC
DEVELOPMENT OF ORIGINAL PRINTS**

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by

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Table of Contents

Chapter I: The Distinction Between Original Prints and Reproductions.	1
Chapter II: Major Developments in Contemporary Printmaking	16
Chapter III: Technical Developments in Printmaking.	22
Scale.	22
Materials	29
The Photo Image	32
Nik Semenoff's Non-Traditional Lithographic Tusche Wash.	34
Chapter IV: Printmaking in Universities and Professional Print Workshops	38
Chapter V: Exclusive Print Shows	47
Chapter VI: Aesthetics of Original Prints and Concluding Remarks.	53
Notes.	66
Bibliography.	70

List of Illustrations

Figure	Page
1. Robert Rauschenberg, <i>Booster</i> . 1967. Coloured Lithograph & Silkscreen, 71 9/16" x 35 1/8". Edition 38. Published by Gemini G. E. L., Los Angeles, California.	23
2. Frank Stella, <i>Swan Engraving VII</i> . 1982. Intaglio Etching, 51 1/4" x 54 1/4". Edition 20. Published by Tyler Graphics Ltd., Bedford Village, New York.	26
3. Christine Christos, <i>Knossos</i> . 1986. Coloured Lithograph & Silkscreen, 22 1/2" x 30". Edition 5. Printed by artist, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.	31
4. Vito Acconci, <i>Building-Blocks for a Doorway</i> . 1983- 85. Intaglio Etching, 93 7/8" x 94 1/2". Edition 8. Published by Graphicstudio, University of South Florida.	50
5. Christine Christos, <i>Journey</i> . 1986. Coloured Lithograph & Silkscreen, 22 1/2" x 30". Edition 10. Printed by artist, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.	54
6. Christine Christos, <i>Minoan World</i> . 1986. Coloured Lithograph & Silkscreen, 22 1/2" x 30". Edition 5. Printed by artist, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.	58

7. Frank Stella, *Bogoria (VI)*. 1975.
Paper Pulp Relief, 22 1/4" x 29 1/2" x 1 3/4".
Edition 8. Published by Tyler Graphics Ltd.,
Bedford Village, New York.60

8. Christine Christos, *Monna*. 1986.
Etching & Silkscreen, 11 1/2" x 17 1/4".
Edition 15. Printed by artist, University of
Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan63

Chapter I

The Distinction Between Original Prints and Reproductions

For the past nine years printmaking has challenged me to develop and refine a notion of aesthetics. Lithography, etching, silkscreening, and monoprinting have provided me with many avenues for creative expression.

My experience has led me to explore the concept of what constitutes a print. The question of defining an original print, while at the same time taking into account the technical and aesthetic aspects, and of distinguishing between an "original print" and a "reproduction" is a source of ongoing controversy in the art world. The purpose of this thesis is to elucidate an area where there are many misconceptions.

An original print employs tools and techniques which allow the artist to directly control and manipulate the image at every stage of its development. The artist, at

each stage of the print's development, makes aesthetic decisions which contribute to the resolution of the aesthetic image. The original print is unique because it is produced by hand. The artist creates the image on the stones, plates, or screens used in the printing. Whether the image is hand drawn, or photographic techniques are employed, the artist maintains continual contact with the image on the print matrix. In the etching medium, for instance, there is continual manipulation of forms, lines, and aquatints. Hand drawn images may stand alone or in combination with photographic images, which may themselves be altered by hand. The inks are often hand mixed and the paper is either handmade or mould-made with a high rag content. The edition is also printed by hand, either by the printmaker or a qualified printer. While working with original prints, the artist is free to add, delete, or otherwise change any aspect, from colour to form to etching aquatint at any stage of the process. It is the artist who takes the risks and who assumes full

responsibility for the final aesthetic image of the original print. Although multiple copies exist, each print is still an original and should be described as such, because the artist is directly involved with each print.

Reproductions, on the other hand, are images that have been photomechanically reproduced. The artist's involvement can be either minimal or non-existent.

Lack of concensus about the distinction between original prints and reproductions allows unscrupulous dealers to take unfair advantage of unknowledgable buyers who believe they are investing in original prints.

Otis Tamasauskas, a Canadian lithographer, said:

People -- even artists -- don't understand what an original print is. An artist will do a watercolour, it's photographed and 1,000 prints are run off. People pay \$300 or \$400 for something that costs 50 cents to do, and artists will even sign them. But original prints are created from stone. The artist draws directly on to the stone. You can see its actual grain. ¹

Original prints thus should not be confused with

reproductions. Reproductions, whether for books, magazines, posters, or facsimilies, are copies of photographed art works and should not be considered original prints. Artists often sign photographic reproductions of their art works; such signatures increase the price but do not increase the value. An original print appreciates in value because of its uniqueness. The reproduction is a manufactured copy stripped of all individuality, while the original print is a personal creation.

Each print is an individual statement by the artist. There is an apparent contradiction between the idea of similarity and difference in prints from one edition. The artist strives each time for the perfect individual print knowing that many factors contribute to that print's creation, and it is unlikely the print will emerge exactly as expected. The slight variations which result from the lithographic rolling patterns, the sponging of the lithographic stone, as well as the wiping of the etching plate, inevitably leave the artist's individual mark on each

print.

Artists are printing smaller editions of original prints as June Wayne, founder of the Tamarind Lithography Workshop, says, "I have noticed that the smaller the edition, the easier it is for the public to accept a print's 'originality.' So, easier times are ahead, because editions of prints are growing smaller as artists attempt more and more difficult images that take more and more time to create and pull."² According to Glen Warner, in Canada usually only twenty-five to fifty impressions are made from one or several print surface(s).³ As a printmaker, I usually print five to seventeen impressions from a previously worked matrix of metal, stone, or silkscreen. In a small, limited edition, there is less likelihood that the etching aquatints, for example, will break down and the consistency of the edition is maintained making each impression more precious.

A printmaker may spend weeks, months, or even years completing the drawing on a stone, plate, or other

printing surface. Before arriving at the *bon à tirer*, the artist must complete a proofing session by printing trial proofs of the different stages of the image's development. These are called trial proofs or colour trial proofs. Only after the artist has developed the *bon à tirer* print is the print ready to be editioned. The *bon à tirer* is the first impression that meets all of the technical and aesthetic standards of the individual artist. It is used as the standard for the final print edition, and becomes the property of the master printer if the edition is printed in a professional studio rather than by the artist.

At the end of the edition run each print is given an edition number. For example, 3/20, 4/20 and so on, is usually marked in the lower left-hand corner of the print. The number 3/20 on a print means that, of an edition of twenty similar high-quality prints, this one has received the number three. This does not necessarily mean that this was the third impression pulled, nor is the number any indication of the print's relative quality. In fact, impressions which

do not conform to the artist's edition standards are destroyed. To be included in the edition, the print has met the artist's standards; the assigning of the numbers is arbitrary. The signature of the artist is most often placed on the lower right-hand corner while the title is centred between the edition number and the signature.

The letters AP on a print stand for Artist's Proof, or, by the French name, *épreuve d'artiste*. The artist's proofs are pulled as a result of printing the edition; these prints are intended for the artist's personal use and are not numbered as part of the edition. To insure that no further prints are pulled after the edition, the image that the artist created on the stone, plate, wood block, or other material is effaced at the end of a printing run. A cancellation proof is pulled as evidence that the edition is limited.

Reproductions, on the other hand, are by no means "limited." As long as the original exists, any number of reproduction copies can be made. In fact, it is not even necessary for the original to exist at all:

Even if the original source for the image has disappeared, more copies can be printed from stored plates or [coloured] separations. In some cases reproductions can even be re-shot [photographically] from an existing reproduction. It is not necessary for an artist to be involved in the process at all. 4

With recent improvements in technology and chemical processes, the notion of a "limited edition" reproduction has become, instead, "limitless copies." To identify a reproduction as "limited edition" is therefore fraudulent.

Stanley William Hayter, founder of Atelier 17 in Paris, said in an interview with Judith Goldman that:

At that time, we thought we would replace reproduction -- "reproduction" in the sense of the vulgarization of the image. An original thing that somebody does is his choice; he decided, he picked it out. . . . But of course with the commerce, the thing has gone full circle. Now we are drowned with a colossal mass of reproductions masquerading as originals.⁵

In an interview with Canadian printmaker, Carl Heywood, I asked him the question, "How would you make the distinction between an original print and a

reproduction?" Mr. Heywood replied:

Well, this is fairly easy for the artist to distinguish. The key is in the word "reproduction" as opposed to the word "production." When you start out a print with your mind already made up as to how it should look, and a completed image to produce, again, in the print medium, you are reproducing it.

When you use the print medium to shape the thinking and the nature of the image, you are making an original print. Of course, you will start out with a plan or a drawing, but that is just to get you going. It usually gets thrown away as the dialogue develops between the artist and his materials. So the original print contains a willingness to change as you go along.⁶

Although Mr. Heywood's definition does not deal with the technical aspect of a reproduction, it still has a great deal of value. He is emphasizing that creating original prints is a constantly changing activity. As long as the artist is in contact with the work, the work is evolving. The printmaker is open to the possibility of surprise and has the experience and judgment to intervene at any time in the

process. Reproductions, on the other hand, begin with a fixed idea, a definite drawing or painting that is going to be reproduced. There is no room in the manufacturing of reproductions for creative development or expression; there is certainly no room for surprise.

Printmaker Anne Meredith Barry says that she "is attracted to printmaking for the creative stimulus that is derived from working with the tools of the craft."⁷ She continues:

For me, the greatest creative 'highs' are achieved from the intimate act of carving a matrix out of a simple block of wood. I love working with the sharp tools; the sensual pleasure of cutting through the wood. I love the feel of it! The smell of it! It's also a great challenge to work and rework the matrix until it takes on a life of its own. Often the act of creating it is more satisfying than viewing the final image itself.⁸

In my own printmaking, I have experienced a similar creative 'high' when I have produced bold, vivid colours, sensitive lithographic washes, and delicate etching

aquatints. These exquisite elements of the printmaking medium inspire me to resolve the aesthetic image and provide the stimulation to create new print images.

"The hand and the heart of the artist are intimately involved in the creation of *each* impression,"⁹ says etcher Stephanie Rayner.

That's the big distinction between original prints and reproductions. The act of inking a plate and printing it is a bit like a composer playing the same piece of music over and over. Each impression is to some extent different from the others; each one is an individual act of creation. By the time an edition is completed, an artist knows the lines on his printing plate better than the lines on a lover's face.¹⁰

In 1965, print-artist Victor Vasarely suggested an answer to the question of reproductions versus original prints by writing:

The aestheticising and literal world under the cloak of the human and the sensitive, wages its battle against the new and proscribes the use of the conquests of technique in art . . . the stone cutter, the weaver, the mosaicist, make way for the helio engraver, the cameraman, the

master printer. The tool is the prolongation of the hand, the machine of the tool.¹¹

As Victor Vasarely and Stephanie Rayner have pointed out, the hand is vital to the creation of an original print. This vital human element results in a special intimacy between printmaker and print. The direct relationship that exists between printmaker and original print is not found when a reproduction is manufactured. In the case of a reproduction, it is not necessary to have the artist present; at times, it is even impossible, as in a reproduction of a Manet, Matisse, or Picasso.

June Wayne describes the awareness of the artist's absence from a reproduction in the following way: "[You] feel the misery of the images suffocating in a prison of inept processing, place the ugly paper in the sun and watch the colors fade."¹² Glen Warner quotes Stephanie Rayner's reaction to a question about reproductions:

"I grind my teeth over them! For me, there is a very special, mute exchange

that goes on between the artist and the person who makes the commitment to buy a work of art. I hate to see that person taken advantage of. To me, the intrusion of reproductions into the print market is like someone with muddy feet tracking through my temple" -- a temple that Canadian printmakers will no doubt continue to defend, and expand. ¹³

The distinction can be made between "original prints" and "reproductions." This difference cannot adequately define the notion of original printmaking. As with the notion of an original print, various definitions can be used to explain printmaking. During my years of printing, I have arrived at a personal definition which continues to expand. Printmaking today has gone beyond the creation of repeatable images from an inked image on a plate or stone that is transferred to paper by immense pressure. Today, a print can be an image or form made by a single process or a combination of processes that may create a one-of-a-kind monotype or be repeated to create multiple editioned prints.

A unique aspect of printmaking is that an artist can

take a step ahead in the work, try something, decide it does not work, and go back to try something new without having to start afresh. A printmaker can compare colour options in a multicolour print before making a final aesthetic decision. Printmaking is a form of visual expression which is not as instantaneous as drawing or painting. The length of the process allows the artist to deliberate over decisions. Artist Jim Dine says, "Lithographs take enough time, more than anything else I do, so that they make me think about everything."¹⁴ The very nature of the process allows the printmaker time to consider possible changes and also gives time to reflect on the development of the aesthetic image.

As the medium keeps changing, the definition of "printmaking" also changes. The print disclosure sheet, which the Print and Drawing Council of Canada circulates for artists, provides one avenue for artists to keep track of new innovations by their peers, as well as a record of their own printmaking processes. A copy of this sheet is

completed by the individual artist and included with each original print sold. It provides details about the medium and the paper used to create the image, the number of runs and colours, the number of impressions created, when and where the edition was printed, and so on. Including this sheet with the original prints makes the buyer more knowledgeable about the nature of an original print, and allows buyers to exercise their own personal judgment of the print's technical excellence.

Chapter II

Major Developments in Contemporary Printmaking

To properly understand printmaking today, we must look at the major developments in the field of printmaking over the last three decades. According to American print expert Gene Baro, the American art market flourished during the decade of the 1960's. European museums and collectors, as a result of the post-war economic recovery, were also becoming active in acquiring American art.¹⁵ Judith Goldman notes that "The economic climate was perfect for editioned art. The economy was high; society was mobile; culture was a hot commodity, and the American art market boomed like a frontier town."¹⁶ Printmaking began to prosper and the print publisher of the early 1960's was there to serve the artist and act as his collaborator. Ruth Fine offers the following distinction between the role of the publisher and the artist : "The publisher formulate[d] a broad aesthetic position and then provide[d] support -- both financial and moral -- for artists whose work [fell]

within its scope of interest."¹⁷ June Wayne, publisher and founder of the Tamarind Lithography Workshop in Los Angeles, was not only responsible for the expansion of lithography workshops across America, but, along with other publishers, such as Tatyana Grosman of Long Island and Ken Tyler of Los Angeles, she helped revive the fine art of lithography. Clinton Adams, who at different times has functioned as Tamarind's Associate Director, program Consultant, member of the Panel of Selection, and artist fellow, summed up Wayne's contribution as follows:

The test of the value of the Tamarind program to artists and to lithography is that while few American artists made lithographs in the 1950's, there are few in the 1960's who have not done so, either at Tamarind or at the workshops established as a consequence of the Tamarind program.¹⁸

Between July, 1960, and June, 1970, Tamarind led the way to innovative developments, restoring lithography's reputation as a fine art, opening new markets for the lithograph, developing artists into master

printers of the lithographic medium, and bringing artists and printers together in a close, collaborative relationship. The master printer takes care of the technical details. He or she is knowledgeable about inks, papers, printing surfaces, chemical processes and formulas, and registration. The printer is careful not to under-ink, over-ink or misregister, and, with great care, translates the artist's aesthetic image from stone, plates, or woodblocks to the paper. Tamarind artist Adja Yunkers describes this special relationship of collaboration when he says:

I was chiefly concerned with the 'grays' in a print, difficult to preserve when printing an edition. Thanks to the master printer Horak who printed my stones we succeeded in producing grays light as a whisper.¹⁹

This profound development of collaborative printmaking allowed the artist to take leave of the solitude of a studio and work in a more structured environment, where the artist could call possibilities into a print that he or she could not possibly have realized when working alone.

Robert Rauschenberg observes:

. . . printmaking is a collaboration: not only with people, but with materials too. I'm a strong believer that two people having good ideas can produce more together than two people with good ideas working separately. Collaboration not only takes the self-consciousness out of the artist, but the total result is generally so much greater, almost immeasurably.²⁰

Hand in hand with artist/printer collaboration came an acceptance of silkscreen as an artistic medium. Its acceptance was connected with the Pop Art and Op art movements of the early 1960's. Silkscreen, also known as serigraphy, offered to artists, such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, and Jasper Johns, sharp or hard edges; colour that was flat, transparent, textured, opaque, or dégradé; and coloured forms that had painterly suggestions. The 1960's accepted silkscreen as a printmaking medium. Roy Lichtenstein's silkscreen print, *Sweet Dreams, Baby!(or Pow!)*, 1965, is a particularly successful example of how silkscreen lent itself naturally to the images and symbols of

American culture. In this print, Lichtenstein elevates the comic strip into fine art. The sharp edges, which the silkscreen medium makes possible, allowed him to convert the original newsprint benday dots into a purely formal device. Andy Warhol's silkscreens *Campbell's Soup Can I*, 1968, and *Empire State Building*, 1966, are also worthy examples of the successful integration of silkscreen with the popular images of the American culture. Today, silkscreen continues to be used in the fine art of printmaking and is even combined with other printmaking media such as lithography and etching.

All these developments in printmaking (the litho revival and the expansion of lithography workshops in the United States, collaborative printmaking and the acceptance of silkscreen as an artistic medium) have helped increase expectations for the aesthetic visual possibilities of prints. These developments also have given printmaking a strength as a visual medium that it did not have before. Andrew Stasik, director of the Pratt Graphics Center, says

that printmaking is "very much a medium for our time."²¹

Chapter III

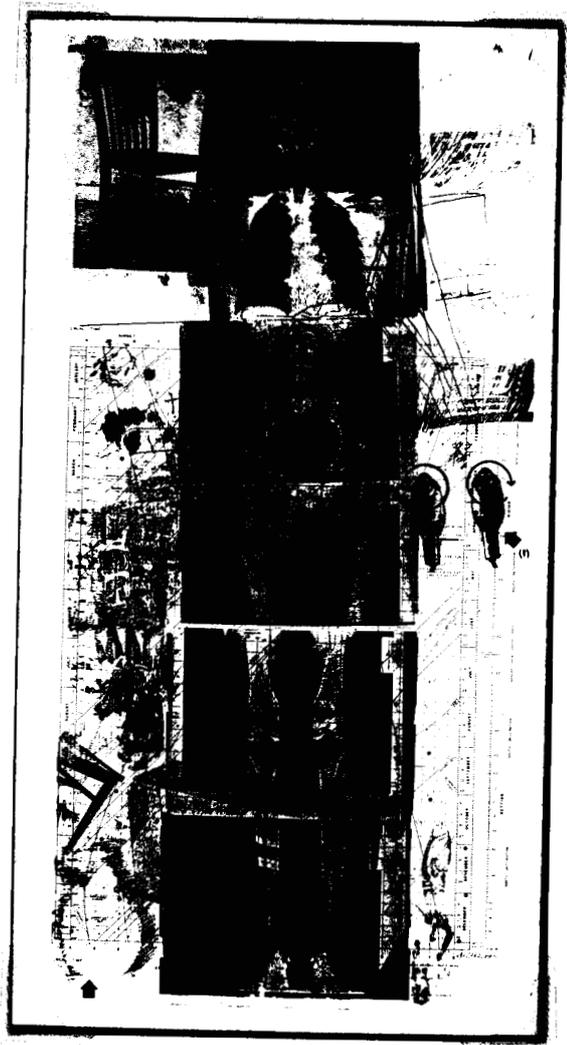
Technical Developments in Printmaking

Scale

One of the important technical developments in printmaking has been the increase in print size. Ken Tyler, master printer at Gemini Graphic Editions Limited in Los Angeles and now at his workshop in Bedford Village, New York, introduced large scale to the printing medium of lithography. Tyler, instead of using standard-size sheets of Rives or Arches, commissioned rolls of 100 per cent rag mould-made paper from Arjomari, a French paper mill. The availability of larger paper allowed artist Robert Rauschenberg to print his six foot high lithograph-silkscreen *Booster*, 1967, (fig. 1), "publicized at the time as the largest hand-pulled lithograph ever made in America."²²

Booster depicts a five-part x-ray of the artist's figure with a photo-image of a chair in the upper left-hand

corner. The x-rays are surrounded by images from a newspaper which have been manipulated by scratching. The life-size skeleton emerging from the dark negative space juxtaposed with the two rockets makes this print particularly chilling.



(Fig 1) Robert Rauschenberg, Booster. 1967.

Helen Frankenthaler's lithograph, *Lot's Wife*, 1968, is approximately eleven feet long. In this print, Frankenthaler used the large scale to which she was accustomed in her paintings. She believed in the need for a continuous image that could be assembled out of three large litho stones. Her description of this process reveals her commitment to a larger scale:

They had the stones at waist-level on a table, the way we usually work, and I had them move all three to the floor as if it were a twelve-foot vertical canvas -- and I went to work on it as a painting, knowing that it took a hoist instead of a flick of the wrist to get the stones on the floor and there was something crazy about it. . . . And at certain moments when it became technical, I called and said, "Look, I want to take this crayon and join these two stones with this line that goes all the way down the right. If I do this and this, is it possible to register it so, even though you know it's three stones, it's going to look like one line?"²³

Along with her use of three separate litho stones, Frankenthaler also used three separate sheets of Japanese

paper to print *Lot's Wife*. Even though this large print was constructed from separate sheets of paper and litho stones, Frankenthaler still managed to evoke "an overwhelming sense of wholeness and unity . . . *Lot's Wife* reads as one print."²⁴

In my own experience as a printmaker, I have discovered that larger scale prints give me the freedom to create larger lithographic brush strokes on the surface of the lithographic plate or stone. This provides the image with a greater spontaneity and fluidity of form. The larger scale requires the viewer to stand back from the work in order to see the entire aesthetic image and to come close to it in order to appreciate the finer details. When viewed from a close perspective, the print reveals the completely different world of delicate lithographic washes or lithographic crayon textures.

During the late sixties, even the intaglio plates were getting bigger. In 1968, artist Joan Miro created intaglio plates that were 41" x 29" at Maeght's Arte workshop in

Paris.²⁵ In the United States, artists such as Chuck Close and Frank Stella became interested in the larger intaglio plates.



(Fig. 2) Frank Stella, *Swan Engraving VII*. 1982.

This interest in larger intaglio plates can be seen in Chuck Close's mezzotint of *Keith*, 1972, which measures 4'4" x 3'6", and Frank Stella's *Swan Engraving* series, 1982, which measures from 66 1/2" x 51 1/2" to 53 1/2" x 51 1/2". These intaglio plates allow these artists to create larger shapes and areas of colour, giving the works strong physical presence. Stella's *Swan Engraving* series received widespread critical acclaim. One of the etchings within this series is *Swan Engraving III*, 1982 (fig. 2). Clifford Ackley, of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, describes the series as "a 'creative breakthrough'. . . . Their 'visual heft and punch' accounted for the frequent comment that the installation looked 'like a painting show rather than a print show. . . . The prints have their own independence and integrity, a rich new materiality and physicality of surface conceived strictly in terms of the properties of the printed image and the fabric of the paper itself."²⁶ The "visual heft and punch" of Stella's *Swan Engraving III* intaglio print has been largely created and sustained by the physical size of

the print. The piece is unified by the swirled forms that he has created on this collaged intaglio plate. The contrast between dark and light also contributes to the dramatic presence. This large print allows viewers to perceive the work from a greater distance which in turn gives it the same physicality as a painting.

Along with the increased size of plates and litho stones came the use of larger printing presses. The need for larger presses was accommodated in New York by the Charles Brand Manufacturing Company and in Berkeley, California, by the Griffin Press Company. The increase in print size also resulted in the need for the offset litho press. Rauschenberg's three panel lithograph, *Autobiography*, 1968, measuring 16 1/2' high by 4' wide, would not have been possible if it were not printed on an offset litho press. In my personal experience, I have been able to create much larger surfaces of uniform blended colour and larger forms with the aid of an offset press than I could have accomplished with a conventional

lithographic press.

Materials

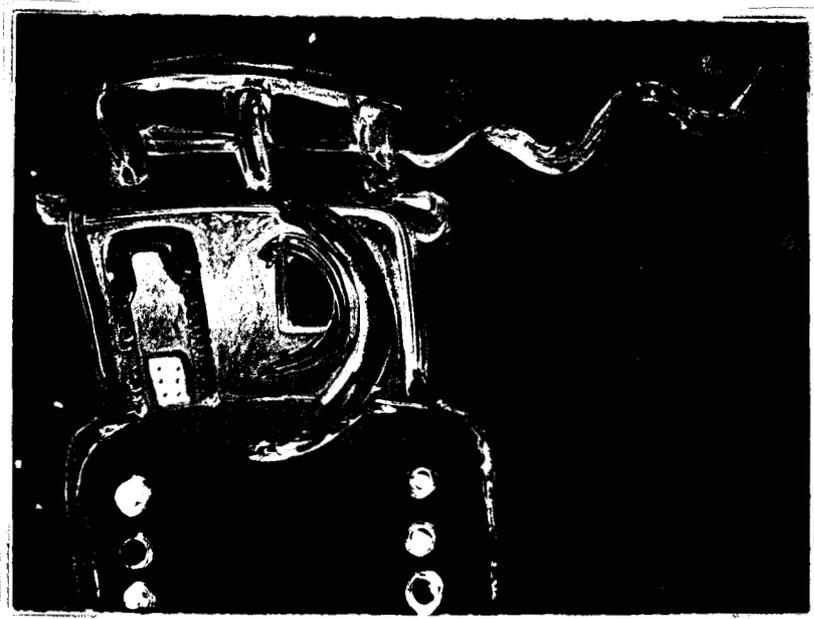
More artists were attracted to the possibilities of larger prints as an unprecedented supply of paper and materials became available.

When Ken Tyler was master printer at Gemini, approximately "one-fourth of Gemini's time [was] devoted to print and material research, experimentation, and testing."²⁷ Pat Gilmour wrote that "Tyler always hoped that his concentration on research and development would enable artists to make more than 'a signature print' and that opportunities to expand the various media would lead to something far more ambitious than anything which could be achieved in their own studios or even in other graphic workshops."²⁸ These investigations have contributed to the improvement of print materials on the market. Today, the print supply market has an array of products from photo-sensitized etching plates to coloured handmade

papers, and from fluorescent, metallic, and matte-finish inks to inks that can print on surfaces such as canvas, fabric, wood, or even plastic. These inks are permanent and do not fade. Robert Rauschenberg's *Revolver*, 1967, is a mechanized construction of five silkscreened plexiglass discs held in a metal base. The ink that was used to print on the plexiglass discs is a specialized silkscreen ink that was formulated to adhere to the surface of the plexiglass and assure permanence.

As printmakers continue to explore the visual possibilities of printmaking technology, the print market will continue to be challenged. Artists, too, continue to be challenged as they combine print media such as etching with silkscreen, lithography with embossing, and even wood engraving with etching and silkscreen. Jim Dine's *A Girl and Her Dog*, 1971, is a combination of etching, embossing, and watercolours. By using combinations of media, artists such as Jim Dine are capable of creating an aesthetic visual image which possesses a greater

excitement and a richness of colour and texture. In my lithograph-silkscreen *Knossos*, 1986, (fig. 3) the combination of these two print media allowed me to create a bold, striking image with bright colours and delicately textured lithographic washes.



(Fig.3) Christine Christos, *Knossos*. 1986.

Perhaps no other medium would have permitted me to create this particular work. The new materials and techniques available to the printmaker open further possibilities for discovery and innovation.

The Photo Image

Photo images also became prevalent in the fine art of printmaking. Robert Rauschenberg's lithographs, *Booster*, 1967, and *Stoned Moon*, 1970, transferred front-page newspaper photographs onto litho stones and combined these images with handwork. Riva Castleman notes:

Photographs have become, for many artists . . . merely objects which, like a chair or a face, are used in image making . . . [and] contemporary artists . . . ultimately produced a change in attitude toward what art work is . . . and broadened expectations of the aesthetic experience.²⁹

The photo image became widely accepted as an aesthetic image during the 1960's. Along with this acceptance came

the teaching of photo-silkscreen, photo-etching, and photo-lithography in art departments in the United States and Canada. As artist-printmaker Margaret Lovejoy states, "The artists who explored this technology made perhaps the most important advance in printmaking in the past twenty-five years."³⁰

My personal experiences have allowed me not only to gain greater knowledge of the technical aspects involved in the creation of a photo image, but have also allowed me to experience the freedom and flexibility inherent in the process. The freedom and flexibility start at the stage of the kodalith photographic transparency. Here, I can scratch onto the surface of the image, add or delete forms, or even make a collage with other transparencies. Even after the kodalith image has been exposed onto the surface of a photo-sensitized etching plate, for example, it is still possible to manipulate the plate by adding lines or shapes, or blurring the image by burnishing.

Nik Semenoff's Non-Traditional Lithographic Tusche Wash

A recent technical development in Canada has been Nik Semenoff's non-traditional lithographic tusche washes using dry copier toners. Semenoff has developed a method by which the copier toner replaces the traditional grease tusche wash. After this toner is applied, the artist can still make changes to the image. If the changes are not satisfactory, the toner can be wiped off with a damp sponge: the image will not fill in and no ghost images will appear on the surface of the lithographic plate and in the printed edition. This gives the artist a freedom not possible with the traditional grease tusche:

If the wash is reworked in the slightest after first being laid down, the outcome of the image is uncertain. Unseen grease particles in the wash may adhere to the plate surface. As a result, some areas print darker than indicated in the drawing. Also, very fine textures can be lost through too strong an etch in processing, and heavy areas can fill in because of insufficient desensitization. For these reasons, tusche wash has been one of the most unpredictable and difficult techniques in lithography.³¹

During April , 1986, Nik Semenoff went to New York to demonstrate his newly found non-traditional lithographic technique. I interviewed Nik Semenoff after this visit, and he told me the results of his demonstrations. He reported Ken Tyler's response:

It will be interesting to see what change there will be in the lithographic image in about ten years' time. Since this is not a photographic technique, artists will readily use it because of the freedom it obviously gives them. It will change lithography just as positive plates have had an influence on the kind of image the artist produces.³²

After Semenoff visited the Solo Press Workshop in New York, Judith Solodkin wrote him a letter in which she said: "We used the wash technique for a new lithograph by Howard Hodgkin. He is a very established artist who took to it immediately and with great gusto."³³ Rosina A. Florio, executive director at the Art Students League of New York, also wrote to Semenoff, stating that his demonstration had caused "... a minor revolution ...".³⁴

For the past year I have been using Nik Semenoff's non-traditional lithographic technique, and I have found that his method has become a very important part of my artistic expression. This technique has not only given me the freedom to control and alter my images, but it has also allowed me to create exquisite textures. It is a technique that gives me the emotional power to create spontaneous images and playful gestures. I believe this is an extremely important discovery for lithographers, and its importance has not, as yet, been fully appreciated. It is deceptively simple -- and revolutionary in its potential. As more printmakers discover this method, I think it will enrich the traditional grease tusche wash.

Semenoff makes the following observations about his technique:

Artists are not as ready to experiment with techniques as we give them credit. It would be a pity that this technique stays with just a few practitioners and does not become well-known in the printmaking community. The freedom of expression it gives to the artist is

unbelievable; most printmaking, painting and drawing techniques are more difficult to correct or change.

I believe that any technique the artist chooses will have some effect on the kind of image they produce. The medium plays an important part in the expression of an artist; much more than most artists will admit. Historically, there are few great lithographs which have been produced with a tusche wash technique, probably because the washes were unpredictable. In the future, washes should become more prominent in the lithographic artist's vocabulary.³⁵

The dry copier toner wash technique can also be used on mylar and exposed onto photo-sensitized silk screens, lithographic plates, or intaglio plates. When using this technique on a photo-sensitized screen, the delicate detail is lost. On the other hand, when used on a photo-sensitized intaglio plate, all of the fine details are exposed and the textures are just as sensitive as those that can be created on a photo-lithographic plate. Nik Semenov's discoveries are fascinating, and, as Judith Solodkin wrote to him, "this new piece of information glistens like a gem." ³⁶

Chapter IV

Printmaking in Universities and Professional Print Workshops

The other big development in printmaking in Canada and the United States has been the establishment of art departments, including printmaking sections, in most universities. Canadian printmaker and professor Carl Heywood states:

Until the 1960's, there were not many places in Canada where a person could go to study art after high school. Now there are dozens of good art departments that include printmaking both in the United States and Canada. This is good for the students, of course, and also provides a support system for a core of artist-educators who are able to get on with their own work without having to wash dishes to support their art habit.³⁷

The printmaking workshops within universities and colleges have educated students about printmaking materials, facilities, and aesthetics. Many students who graduate from these programs have become artists, teachers,

dealers, and even master printers at professional print workshops. Una E. Johnson wrote:

Among the earliest and best-known graphic workshops [in the United States] are those at Yale under the direction of Gabor Peterdi and at the University of Iowa under Mauricio Lasansky. Other universities have established active shops at Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, at a number of branches of New York University, at Tamarind Institute at the University of New Mexico, at Wisconsin, Tyler School of Art at Temple University, and others throughout the United States.³⁸

Canadian universities and colleges which have active printshops are: The Ontario College of Art in Toronto, Queen's University in Kingston, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Concordia University in Montreal, University of British Columbia in Vancouver and others throughout this country.

Along with the establishment of art departments that include printmaking came the growth of a network of

printshops from coast to coast in North America and elsewhere in the world. These printshops provide equipment and an atmosphere of inspiration for printmakers. Tatyana Grosman's Universal Limited Art Editions at West Islip, Long Island and June Wayne's Tamarind Lithography Workshop at Los Angeles brought about the print renaissance. These printshops brought to artists a new vision and interest in printmaking (lithography in particular), allowed artists to learn from their discoveries and experiences, and gave them the opportunity to work in collaboration with skilled printers. These workshops also inspired the establishment of other print workshops. Una E. Johnson describes the developments in the United States:

The first shop, established by a Tamarind-trained printer, was Kanthos Press in Los Angeles in 1963. It was initiated by the master printer Joe Funk, who was later joined by Joe Zirker. Kanthos Press was followed by others in various cities in the United States.

Irwin Hollander and Ken Tyler were among the first to receive training as

master printers in lithography at the Tamarind Lithography Workshop. Hollander established his own workshop in New York in 1964, the first such establishment in the eastern section of the United States to grow out of the Tamarind operation. . . . In 1965 Kenneth Tyler, . . . opened his graphic workshop, Gemini Ltd., in Los Angeles. It soon became the most fully equipped and venturesome workshop in new as well as traditional fine printing methods.³⁹

Ken Tyler provided a positive attitude at Gemini and strived to create an atmosphere in which anything was possible. Pat Gilmour discusses Tyler and his influence on artist Robert Motherwell: "[Tyler] was the greatest technical genius in America, companionable and understanding, 'an artistic Don Juan' who had seduced [Motherwell] with the miracle of printmaking."⁴⁰ Tyler was involved with a number of printmaking achievements at Gemini such as Josef Albers' *White Line Squares*, completed in 1966, Frank Stella's work, including his *Star of Persia* series of 1967, Jasper Johns's lithographic series, *0 Through 9*, of 1968-69, and Robert Rauschenberg's *Booster*, 1967.

In 1973, Tyler decided to leave Gemini and start a similar operation which he established in Bedford Village, New York. In an interview with Susan DeChillo of the New York Times, he pointed out how much Tyler Graphics differed from Gemini:

It's a country shop, a quiet place. There are fewer people. What happens here happens slowly. The shop is not on a time schedule as it was in California. Here the editions are much smaller . . . we're not interested in numbers.⁴¹

While Gemini was more sympathetic to working with men artists, Tyler at his Bedford workshop began to work with women artists such as Helen Frankenthaler, Joan Mitchell, and Nancy Graves. He wanted to explore the complete range of media and the possibilities of combining them. To accomplish this, Tyler had an array of facilities such as a DUFA VII Steinmesse and Stollberg flatbed offset press, which had a refrigerated bed that kept the image on the lithographic plate cool so it would not fill in. He also had etching presses and silkscreen facilities, and he involved

himself with hand papermaking.⁴²

In the United States, several other print workshops were established such as Collector's Press in San Francisco, which works mostly with West Coast artists and artists from Mexico. Jean Milant opened Cirrus Editions on January 1, 1970 in Los Angeles, and Jack Lemon brought into existence Landfall Press in Chicago during September, 1971. Both these print workshops produced excellent lithographic and intaglio editions. Another well-known workshop is the Crown Point Press in Oakland, California, which was established in 1962 and directed by Kathan Brown. This print workshop concentrates on intaglio printing and is greatly praised for intaglios by artists such as Richard Diebenkorn, Beth van Hoesen in 1965, and, in 1970-76, Chuck Close, who created, along with other important pieces, his large mezzotint, *Keith*.⁴³

In Canada, there was a need for print workshops so that artists could create original prints. The Lithography Workshop at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in

Halifax provided artists with lithographic facilities. In 1967, Garry Kennedy, president of the college, hired Jack Lemon as director to organize a printmaking program for the college and a professional workshop for educational stimulus. In April, 1969, Robert Rogers came from Tamarind as master printer and, in May, 1970, Gerald Ferguson became the new director when Jack Lemon went to Chicago to establish Landfall Press. The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design printshop was an educational asset to the students of the college. Some students even had the opportunity to be hired as assistants and printer trainees. Artists, such as Uito Acconci, Jack Chambers, Guido Molinari, Christopher Pratt, and Joyce Weiland created prints at the college print workshop and contributed prints to the college's collection. These prints were displayed at the college, thereby providing visual stimulation for the art students to create their own original prints.⁴⁴

Richard Sewell and Barbara Hall rented a little storefront on Queen Street West in Toronto in August, 1970.

This was the beginning of a very special and important Canadian print workshop named Open Studio. The name, Open Studio, was adopted to express the founders' central aim:

... to be an unaffiliated workshop under professional direction, prepared to do high-quality graphic printing on a contract basis as a part of its support, but also [to be] open to artists who might, for a fee, do their own work with proper equipment or receive technical instruction in a professional atmosphere.⁴⁵

In 1972, Don Holman from Chicago was invited to come to Toronto to research and set up a lithography shop at Open Studio. During this time, Open Studio was also legally incorporated as a non-profit corporation. Open Studio received its first Canada Council grant in the summer of 1972. Two-thirds of the \$9,000 went to establish the lithography shop in the studio's new location, 520 King Street West. By now, the studio had facilities for intaglio, silkscreen, and lithography; public educational programs

were expanded; there was room to accommodate more artists (a maximum of 35); and the studio was in a position to print commissions for other artists. Open Studio has also, over the years, exhibited many print shows in North America and Europe which raised public consciousness about the different media of printmaking. Open Studio has also become the model for several other printshops, notably Don Phillip's Sword Street Press in Toronto.⁴⁶ Other notable print workshops in Canada are: Graff in Montreal, Quebec; St. Michael's Printshop in St. Michael's, Newfoundland; and Crown Printers in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Chapter II

Exclusive Print Shows

The flourishing of the printmaking medium has also brought a change in the attitudes of art dealers and museum curators. As Toronto corporate art advisor Eve Baxter claims:

. . . the quality of Canadian printmaking is second to none, and . . . prints by some of our best practitioners of the craft are collected by prestigious institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.⁴⁷

The Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto has added a curatorial department for prints: it has allocated funds to purchase original prints; designated space for the study and storage of prints; and has organized travelling exhibitions.⁴⁸

Exclusive print shows have taken place at many Canadian galleries, from the Mira Godard Gallery in Toronto to a print exhibition, in January, 1986, at the Gordon Snelgrove Gallery in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Other

notable Canadian print exhibitions have been held by the Art Gallery of Brant in Brantford, Ontario; the Print and Drawing Council of Canada in Toronto, Ontario; and the Burnaby Art Gallery in Burnaby, British Columbia. During the spring of 1986, the Burnaby Print Show represented the revival of the old Burnaby Print Biennial, which was first held in 1961 and was held every two years until the Ninth Biennial in 1977. After that, the absence of funding from the Canada Council prevented the gallery from continuing the 1979 Biennial show of original prints. The 1986 Print Biennial was supported by the Department of Communications and by private supporters. The show was a success: a total of 372 artists sent 681 prints in all media. The juror of this show was Leslie Luebbers, a former Director of the World Print Council and the Council's Curatorial Consultant; Ms. Luebbers selected 66 works for the exhibition.⁴⁹

These exclusive print exhibitions have also taken place at American museums such as the Brooklyn Museum,

The Museum of Modern Art, and The Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. During the month of February, 1986, I visited New York and found that all three of these American museums were exhibiting prints.

The Brooklyn Museum had the largest print exhibition, entitled *Public and Private: American Prints Today*. This national show displayed a variety of prints from Richard Hambleton's silkscreen print with hand-colouring, *Figure (Monsoon)*, 1985, to Charles Arnoldi's wood relief monoprint, *Rathway*, 1985. The show demonstrated that many exciting and innovative prints, such as Uito Acconci's etching, *Building-Blocks for a Doorway*, 1983-85, (fig.4) are being done in large format. This print, which is almost eight feet by eight feet, is composed of sixty-two etching plates and has an arch which signifies passage into a new space. Although viewers cannot physically walk through the arch, they can mentally imagine physical interaction with it. A print this large requires viewers to perceive it from a distance in order to appreciate its scope. The size of this

etching is important to evoke its architectural theme. Close examination of the print reveals the rich and subtle aquatints that are unique to the etching medium. The impulse towards large scale prints which began in the sixties has remained prevalent today.



Fig. 4. Vito Acconci, Building-Blocks for a Doorway. 1983-85.

In the same show, Chuck Close's handmade paper multiple, *Georgia*, 1984, also clearly exemplified the diversity of work in this show. Here, Close used glued paper chips to create an unconventional portrait of his daughter. His use of handmade paper chips not only created the rich, textural surface which is so natural to handmade pulp, but also became the aesthetic image.

This print exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum also exhibited a new form in printmaking -- monotypes. Rather than being one of multiple originals, a monotype is a unique image that is created by printmaking techniques. The monotypes in this show varied from Mary Frank's *Astronomy*, 1985, with its sharp-edged figures and its use of richly-coloured transparent and opaque inks, to Robert Gordy's monotype, *Figure in Landscape*, 1985, with its muddy colours and gestural marks.

These exclusive print exhibitions take place not only at a national, but also at an international level where

prints by artists from all over the world are adjudicated. The proliferation of important "Print Biennials" indicates the impact that printmaking has had on the art world. Rosemarie Tovell, associate curator of prints and drawings at the National Gallery of Canada, says, "If you look at the international printmaking competitions, the Canadians are certainly there as contenders."⁵⁰

Chapter VI

Aesthetics of Original Prints and Concluding Remarks

Printmaking is important because its media are used singly or in combination to project visual statements that cannot be made by other means. Each print has an aesthetic value, a preciousness; it is an interplay between special materials and the artist's sensibility. It is, perhaps, a commonplace aesthetic notion that all creativity springs from the imagination, and that each medium has its own visual language of images and symbols by which artists communicate their sense of order. The particular discipline which a printmaker must bring to the medium dictates a high degree of technical order and organization; within this framework, each individual printmaker will bring his or her particular conceptions of creative order. Even a print which appears to be haphazard or disorganized embodies orderly qualities which may not be immediately apparent. The forms and colours have been deliberately chosen by the

printmaker. In my own print lithograph-silkscreen, *Journey*, 1986, (fig. 5) the centre two-thirds of the print is agitated -- one might even say disorderly -- while the arches at the top are formal and calm.



(Fig. 5) Christine Christos, *Journey*. 1986.

The richly textured dark blue ink of the ocean, which dominates the center of the print, creates an expressive

quality of agitation. The agitation that is within the ocean image has an impact because of the large space it occupies. The swift, gestural marks and washes also contribute to the expressive quality of agitation. This is contrasted by the semi-circular arch forms in the top portion which evoke calmness and provide the print with an area of rest. The variety of forms and surfaces I create with the marks that I draw on a print matrix are an integral part of creating the aesthetic image's expressive qualities. *Journey* expresses my own aesthetic sensibility; in it I express my love of the ocean, the turmoil of its waves, and the calm at its bottom which can be seen in the small round area in the lower left-hand corner, while the architectural structures at the top of the print provide concrete stability. The orange-gold sand at the bottom of this print corresponds to the colour of the arches at the top and balances the composition, creating colour relationships which are further enhanced by the red and turquoise-blue shapes at the top and bottom of the print. The ocean is apparently held between the sand

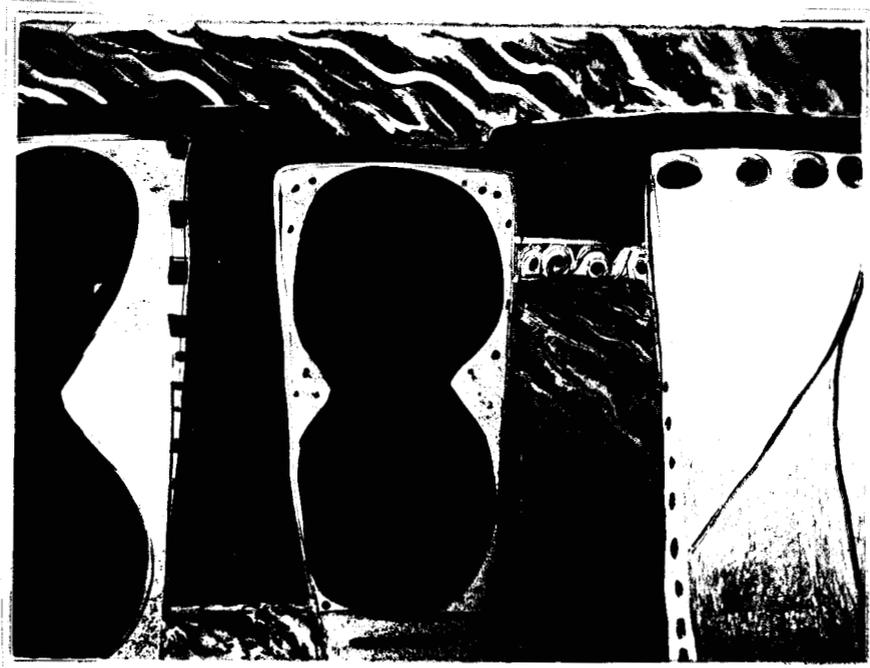
and the arches. I know that the ocean cannot be encased in such a way, but as a printmaker, I have the freedom and flexibility to create an aesthetic image of this idea. This print interprets my experience to me in a very personal way, which is different from the personal interpretation others will bring to it. The order which I express in my work does not necessarily reflect the order I bring to the creative process. I have found it helpful to avoid a fixed and predictable working system, for this can result in a static and uncreative working atmosphere. To be creative, I have found I must detach myself from habits and working systems in order to be open to new possibilities. For instance, I try to be open to considering new materials and the new possibilities they bring to my work.

Paper has been used as a material for art since papyrus was invented by the ancient Egyptians, and I am exhilarated by the idea of being part of a historical chain. Papyrus is still considered special and connects with the special qualities of today's handmade and mould-made

papers. Paper has an aesthetic quality which enables artists to communicate and express their thoughts and ideas. Paper is more fragile than canvas or board, yet it has endured throughout the centuries. The wide choice of paper allows the artist more versatility. The successful execution of the original print depends to a large degree on the paper the artist chooses. The aesthetic effect of the choice of paper is clearly displayed in my lithograph-silkscreen *Minoan World*, 1986, (fig. 6). I used a Rives BFK white, mould-made 100 per cent rag paper which has two natural and two torn deckled edges. I used the deckled edge of the paper as part of the image. When closely perceiving the top portion of the print, one can see how I have incorporated the feathery-edged deckle with the playful and spontaneous litho marks of the image. Rag paper is archival quality; that is, it does not discolour like conventional paper, and it has a life span of hundreds of years.

This paper was particularly receptive to the bold, clear

statement I wished to make. The surface of this paper accepted the lithographic ink without resistance. This print juxtaposes two blue-mauve Minoan shields which contain an emerald green central feathery shape.



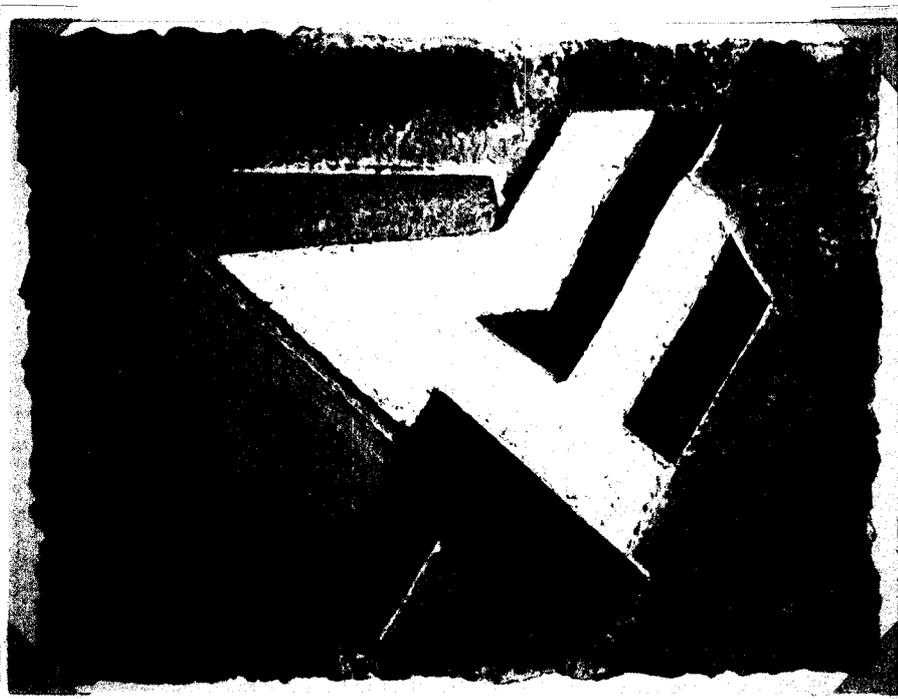
(Fig.6) Christine Christos, Minoan World. 1986.

The emerald green is repeated on the outer rims of the

shields which are encased in boxes of light. The brilliant red of the field surrounding the boxes of light is echoed by dots on the blue-mauve shields. Further colour relationships are made by the blue-mauve and emerald green circular forms in the box on the extreme right-hand side which, in turn, connect to the shields. This box contains a flowing, eloquent line which directs the eye to the encased ocean with its delicately textured lithographic washes and its dégradé, or graduated, colour from dark to light blue. The light blue leads to the transparent blue ocean surface at the top of the print and leads the eye to the small rectangular ocean on the lower left-hand side, returning to the dégradé area. The bold colours are silkscreened and the blue-black colour is lithographed. The paper received both the silkscreen and lithographic inks clearly which satisfied my aspirations for this print.

Paper has become more than just the carrying agent of the aesthetic image. It has, in some cases, *become* the aesthetic image. Chuck Close's *Georgia*, discussed earlier,

is made entirely from paper chips. Printmakers use both mould-made and handmade paper. At times, they even make the paper themselves and create paper pulp reliefs such as Frank Stella's *Bogoria (III)*, 1975 (fig. 7) and Michael Ponce de Leon's experiments with paper sculpture in the late 1950's.



(Fig. 7) Frank Stella. *Bogoria(VI)*. 1975.

Here, in Stella's relief *Bogoria (III)*, the paper's texture is fully utilized. The handpainted shapes seem to grow out of the rough surface of the paper pulp. I have found paper pulp to be a flexible material. I can create different shapes from wet pulp with shaped moulds. I can dye it with watercolours or handpaint it with acrylics, add bark shavings to it, or even make a collage with other papers onto its surface. I have scooped the wet pulp from a vat onto a mould, couched it onto a dampened felt, and pressed it with a paper press. This paper has irregular edges and a distinct textural surface. I have also couched the pulp onto a metal mesh screen and allowed it to dry, achieving a paper which has a mesh pattern on one side and a highly playful texture on the other.

Paper can be embossed, cut, torn, punctured; it can be thick or tissue-thin, relatively transparent or opaque, and can have widely varying absorbant properties. Paper is available in the entire spectrum of colours. The printmaker becomes intimate with all these qualities of paper and

learns to make the paper work with the aesthetic image.

The printmaker must also become familiar with the wide range of inks. The dégradé is a colour quality unique to printmaking. Two or more colours are blended and printed simultaneously to achieve maximum colour range. The colours in the blend are either subtly delineated or bold, depending on the proportion of coloured inks to the transparent base. Carl Heywood states that the dégradé "is to printmaking what brush texture is to painting. It arises naturally out of the medium and is a quality we have to take into account."⁵¹

I have used the dégradé to add depth in the etching-silkscreen print, *Monaha*, 1986, (fig. 8). I dégradéd the floor portion of this print from a transparent dark mauve to a light mauve which effectively deepened the space. The wall in this print is intended to be flat, so I printed it with a transparent yellow-cream silkscreen ink. The dégradéd mauve works with the flat transparent yellow-cream to enhance the sense of mid-afternoon

sunlight.



(Fig. 8) Christine Christos, Monaxa. 1986.

It is the aesthetic decision of the artist whether or not the coloured inks will be transparent or opaque, layered or veiled, used singly or in combination.

The materials that I use have become an extension of myself, and I have allowed my technical and creative methodology to evolve, develop, and grow. With printmaking, I am able to find the perfect means of uniting images of all print media and to exercise the freedom of combining collaged, photographed, printed, and drawn images. As a printmaker, I have discovered that the marks that I draw on a plate, stone, or screen are not instantaneous; they are the result of extended technical processes. While printmaking is not as immediate as painting or drawing, I find the nature of the process compatible with my own temperament since it allows me to reflect and make my decisions over an extended period. At each phase of the work, I am able to deposit not only layers of ink, but also levels of reflection.

The task of putting together and executing a vision is rarely easy, but once I establish a dialogue with my work by placing the marks on a pictorial surface, the surface responds. This ongoing dialogue with the work allows me to

be more aware of the possible changes, relationships, and interactions between myself and the work.

Printmaking provides me with an impetus to create. It has become the touchstone of my existence and an inspiration to a fuller life. In the words of printmaker, Bob Evermon:

I am a visual composer.
I orchestrate visual excitement.
I give life to ideas with line and colour.
I find great depth and beauty
through a finely tuned eye.

Eye that gives me growing pleasure
from nature and from life,
Eye into the work of other artists,
seen in their own light,
Eye into myself.

Eye am I. 52

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