Celebrating the
Anderson Graphic Arts Collection

FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO
Celebrating the Anderson Graphic Arts Collection: A Focus on Thirty Years of American Print Production

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The Anderson Graphic Arts Collection spans the years 1962 to 1991 and reflects the personal taste and collecting focus of Harry W. (Hunk) and Mary Margaret (Mae) Anderson. At the same time it chronicles one of the most exciting periods in this country’s print history. This essay summarizes that period with a discussion of specific works in the Anderson collection.

The Andersons began collecting contemporary American prints in the late 1960s, a time often referred to as “the American printmaking renaissance.” They were part of an enthusiastic audience attracted to new and different kinds of prints coming from a handful of fine art publishing workshops such as Crown Point Press, Gemini G.E.L., and Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE), among others. Earlier in the decade these workshops had established themselves as places where artists of international reputation could explore their ideas in depth in environments that were open to technical experimentation. The prints produced there were beautifully crafted, visually exciting, and, in many cases, precedent setting.

Gemini G.E.L. in Los Angeles, California, was and remains today one of the most versatile and innovative workshops. In 1966, its first year of operation, founder Ken Tyler invited Josef Albers to make prints. Albers created his first series, White Line Square, in a long-distance collaboration (via telephone and mail) with Tyler, who served as master printer. The following year, Frank Stella made his first prints at Gemini, the Star of Baviaans series, a technically demanding project involving metallic inks and precise printing on graph paper. For both artists these were relatively conservative, straightforward projects in which the formal arrangement of flat, geometric forms reiterated themes from their painted work. Robert Rauschenberg’s visit to the press in 1967, however, dramatically changed Gemini’s course. Rauschenberg came to Gemini with the idea to make the largest print ever produced by hand lithography. The six-foot-high lithograph Booster (1967) was the result—a tour de force of printmaking incorporating x-rays, photography, and offset rubbings. With Booster, Rauschenberg redefined the possibilities of size and scale in contemporary prints. By the mid-1970s, prints would become even larger, often rivalling paintings in terms of size and presence on a wall.

Rauschenberg’s enthusiasm with the “can-do” attitudes of printers at Gemini helped attract other artists to the press, including Jasper Johns and Roy Lichtenstein. Johns had made his first prints at ULAE and was accomplished in lithography. Not surprisingly, his first work at Gemini in 1968 was a series of lithographs, numerals 0 through 9 printed in black and gray. The stones and plates used for the Black Numerals series were used again the following year by Johns to create a second dynamic series, Color Numerals. These were followed by six Lead Reliefs (Bread, The Critic Smiles, High School Days, Flag, Light Bulb, and Numerals) that were produced from wax and plaster models made by the artist, manufactured at a nearby embossing press, and later finished in the Gemini studio. The overwhelmingly positive critical recognition of the Lead Reliefs project changed the prevailing conception of what a print could be and further reinforced Gemini’s reputation. When Claes Oldenburg approached the press to create the print/sculpture hybrid Profile Airflow (1968–69); and later the kinetic sculpture edition Ice Bag–Scale B, the heyday of the multiple had begun. Throughout the 1970s, Gemini continued to be in the forefront of innovative print production attracting artists such as Sam Francis, Philip Guston, and Robert Motherwell.

Francis, Motherwell, Johns, and Rauschenberg had all come to Gemini after working in lithography at ULAE. Founded in 1957 by Tatyana Grosman, and specializing in lithography
during its first decade, ULAE is credited with introducing established, well-known artists to printmaking and convincing them that it was an activity they could approach with confidence. Over the years, the press continually proved itself to be an accommodating and flexible workshop where a new generation of artists could stretch the limits of convention. For example, James Rosenquist, who painted billboards in his student days and whose paintings were monumental horizontal works, created Off the Continental Divide (1973–74) at ULAE on an offset lithography proofing press. Utilization of this basically commercial technique allowed for easier and faster printing, making it an appealing and preferred method for many artists.

The production of prints through the collaboration of artists and workshops continued at a rapid pace throughout the 1970s. Woodcut and screenprint were added to a repertoire of revitalized processes, as typified by Jim Dine’s monumental woodcut Babboe (1982) and Jennifer Bartlett’s lush screenprint In the Garden #118. The era also included developments in monotype and the use of pigmented paper pulp. A 1968 exhibition of Degas monotypes at the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University and a later 1980 exhibition of monotypes at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, were instrumental in the contemporary revival of the medium. Many American artists, including Nathan Oliveira and Mary Frank, tackled this solitary process, which does not require collaboration with a workshop. (Monotypes are made by painting or drawing on a smooth glass or metal plate that is run through a press in a single impression.) Their monotypes from the late 1970s are unique works of great beauty realized through the immediacy of the process.

Although the print boom rekindled an interest in fine art papers for printmaking, experimentation with paper pulp to make prints was an altogether new phenomenon. Garner Tullis had established the International Institute for Experimental Printmaking in Santa Cruz, California, in 1973 so that artists could work with paper pulp. Kenneth Noland, an artist who was not particularly interested in printmaking, found the process intriguing and created some of his first prints with Tullis by combining sections of colored paper pulp into compositions of concentric circles. Noland would continue to make paperworks through the late 1970s into the early 1980s at Tyler Graphics Ltd., where printing with paper pulp had attracted the attention of master printer Ken Tyler and numerous artists including David Hockney, Richard Smith, and Robert Zakanitch.

Using paper in new and different ways to make prints became a hallmark of workshop production in the 1980s. Elizabeth Murray’s Down Dog (1988), a print on twelve irregularly shaped sections of paper, and David Hockney’s four-panel screen, Caribbean Tea Time (1987), were two ambitious works, both tour de force productions for the artists and the workshops where they were produced. They are evidence of the kinds of exciting new work that continues to grow from the artistic and technical innovation in printing that has occurred in the last two decades.

For further reading on the subject of graphic workshop production in the United States, 1960-1990:
Exhibition Checklist

All works are from the Anderson Graphic Arts Collection, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, gift of the Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson Charitable Foundation. They are listed in chronological order with sheet measurements in inches, height preceding width.

Josef Albers
Bottrop, Germany, 1888–1976
New Haven, Connecticut

White Line Square VI, 1966
Color lithograph
21 x 21 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by James Webb and Octavio Pereira
1996.74.13

Frank Stella
b. Malden, Massachusetts, 1936

Irving Blum Memorial Edition, 1967
From the series Star of Persia
Lithograph printed in metallic silver on English Vellum graph paper, Axon 3
26 x 31 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by James Webb
1996.74.457

Robert Rauschenberg
b. Port Arthur, Texas, 1925

Booster, 1967
Color lithograph and screenprint
72 x 36 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by Kenneth Tyler assisted by Robert Bigelow
1996.74.401

Jasper Johns
b. Augusta, Georgia, 1930

Figure 7, 1968
From the series Black Numerals
Lithograph printed in black and transparent gray, Field 101
37 x 29 1/2 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by Kenneth Tyler
1996.74.201

Figure 7, 1969
From the series Color Numerals
Color lithograph, Field 111
38 x 31 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by Chuck Ritt
1996.74.211

Bread, 1969
From the series Lead Reliefs
Sheet-lead relief and embossed rag paper, hand painted by the artist, Field 122
23 x 17 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by Kenneth Tyler
1996.74.215

High School Days, 1969
From the series Lead Reliefs
Sheet-lead relief with mirror, Field 118
23 x 17 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by Kenneth Tyler
1996.74.215

Claes Oldenburg
b. Stockholm, Sweden, 1929

Ice Bag-Scale B, 1971
Programmed kinetic sculpture, yellow nylon, fiberglass, and mechanical movement
40 in. (height) 48 in. (diameter)
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Fabrication supervised by Kenneth Tyler and Jeff Sanders assisted by Lou Faibush, Frank Doose, Pete Hoefer, Paul Mulf, Bud Rogers, Frank Arnott, and Myron Judson
1996.74.354

Roy Lichtenstein
b. New York, New York, 1923

Cathedral #5, 1969
From the Cathedral Series
Color lithograph, Corlett 79
48 1/2 x 32 1/2 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by Dan Freeman
1996.74.242

Claes Oldenburg,
Ice Bag-Scale B, 1971
Sam Francis
San Mateo, California, 1923–1994
Santa Monica, California
Yunan, State IV, 1971
Color lithograph, Lembark L138
21 x 29 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by Lloyd Baggs
1996.74.121

Robert Motherwell
Aberdeen, Washington, 1915–1991,
Provincetown, Massachusetts
Pauillac, #1, 1973
From the Summer Light Series
Color lithograph with collage and embossing, Belknap 119
36 1/4 x 23 7/8 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by Kenneth Tyler and Ron McPherson
1996.74.320

James Rosenquist
b. Grand Forks, North Dakota, 1933
Off the Continental
Divide, 1973–1974
Color lithograph, Varian 61
42 x 78 in.
Published by Universal Limited
Art Editions, West Isip
Printed by Bill Goldston and James Smith
1996.74.426

Mary Frank
b. London, England, 1933
Untitled, 1978
Color monotype
31 3/4 x 35 1/4 in.
1996.74.133

Nathan Oliveira
b. Oakland, California, 1928
Site with Colored Bundle, 1978
Monotype with acrylic
29 1/4 x 22 3/8 in.
1996.74.374

Kenneth Noland
b. Asheville, North Carolina, 1924
Concentric Circles, 1978
Pigment in artist-made paper
34 7/8 x 34 7/8 in.
Published by International Institute of
Experimental Printmaking Editions, Santa Cruz, California
Printed by Garner Tullis
1996.74.331

Philip Guston
Montreal, Canada, 1913–1980,
Woodstock, New York
Elements, 1979
Lithograph
32 3/4 x 42 1/2 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by James Reid and Larry Krueger
1996.74.163
Jim Dine
b. Cincinnati, Ohio, 1935

Fourteen Color Woodcut Bathrobe, 1982
Color woodcut, D’Oench/Feinberg 112
77 1/2 x 42 in.
Published by Pace Editions, New York
Printed by Garner Tullis at Experimental
Printmaking Workshop, San Francisco
1996.74.102

Jennifer Bartlett
b. Long Beach, California, 1941

In the Garden #118, 1982
Color screenprint
29 x 38 1/2 in.
Co-published by Jennifer Bartlett
and Simca Print Artists, New York
1996.74.30

David Hockney

Caribbean Tea Time, 1987
Double-sided four-panel folding screen,
the front printed in color lithograph
with hand coloring and collage,
the back in color screenprint
84 5/8 x 134 1/2 in. (overall)
Published by Tyler Graphics Ltd.,
Mount Kisco, New York
Printed by Kenneth Tyler, Lee Funderburg,
Tom Strianese, Michael Herstand,
and Roger Campbell
1996.74.184

Elizabeth Murray
b. Chicago, Illinois, 1940

Down Dog, 1988
Color lithograph on twelve pieces
of Arches paper attached to a
Japanese paper backing and formed
into an irregular shape
45 x 42 in.
Published by Universal Limited
Art Editions, West Islip
Printed by Keith Brintzenhofe,
Douglas Volle, and Richard Dawson
1996.74.326

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