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Spring 2018

# The Boston Printmakers *e-newsletter*

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## Letter from the President



Award winning print by member Mark Sisson

*Portrait of Daniel King: Scouting, for Men and Boys*, linocut, woodcut, lithograph  
The Ture Bengtz Memorial Prize, purchased for the Art Complex Museum, Duxbury, MA

With the 2017 North American Print Biennial now behind us, I want to thank again all involved in its making. The Boston Printmakers is grateful to the Lesley University College Dean of Art and Design Richard Zauft, Gallery Director Bonnell Robinson and Assistant Gallery Director Andrew Mroczek for hosting the 2017 North American Print Biennial. We acknowledge each of their roles and appreciate their sincere cooperation in creating this event. Our longtime friend Vinnie Marasa designed the beautifully installed exhibition.

Our organization and members extend gratitude to all who contribute the Material Awards, along with the patrons who purchase works for their collections. These efforts realize the goals of the Biennial and the mission of our organization through continuous support of printmaking and printmakers.

We acknowledge the 707 artists from across North America who provided submissions to this highly competitive exhibition. Their passion, energy and productiveness confirm the vitality and relevancy of printmaking today, and help us all to thrive.

I must also thank the Executive Board of The Boston Printmakers for their hours of work and dedication. As volunteers, they perpetuate and nurture our founding goals: “to promote public knowledge, understanding, and support for printmaking.” We are truly grateful for Carolyn Muskat and Alex Gerashev, who organized the exhibition catalogs, and for Nancy Diessner, who single-handedly coordinated The Boston Printmakers Student Exhibition. Their generosity does not go unnoticed.

Every two years we rely on a sole juror to select the 2017 North American Print Biennial, and this year Judith Brodie selected a beautiful, compelling exhibition. For the catalog, she wrote an investigative essay based on the high number of relief prints present in her selection, which she then carried into her juror’s talk. Here are some excerpts:

Every two years we rely on a sole juror to select the 2017 North American Print Biennial, and this year Judith Brodie, Curator of Modern Prints and Drawings, National Gallery of Art, selected a beautiful, compelling exhibition. For the catalog, she wrote an investigative essay based on the high number of relief prints present in her selection, which she then carried into her juror’s talk. Here are some excerpts:

Investigating the “why” in her essay, Brodie quotes Rauschenberg from a statement made in the early 1960s. “Rauschenberg declared that ‘The second half of the twentieth century is no time to start writing on rocks.’ By ‘rocks,’ he was referring to stone-based lithography, a medium that struck him as outmoded in the Space Age.”

“Artists working today might similarly contend that the dawn of the third millennium is no time to start chipping away at wood. Nearly half of the works in this Biennial are woodcuts or linocuts, both techniques involving the physical incising or carving of an image into a hard surface, whether woodblock or a linoleum block.”

Brodie’s talk revealed some her interests, the successes of the relief prints, and pursuits of the artists making them, such as “Mark Sisson’s Portrait of Daniel King: Scouting, for Men and Boys represents a combination of techniques: linocut, woodcut, and lithography. The complexity of the mix, though subtle, is aptly and beautifully reflected in the complexity of the imagery: a bespectacled Boy Scout caught in a bright, almost accusing light, a series of knots at left in the background; various entwined wrestlers at right...and the word KNOTS printed at upper left, pronounced the same but spelled differently than N-O-T-S: NOTS, a word used to express negation, denial, refusal, or prohibition. Mark Sisson, questioned why anyone would [quote] ‘... use the onerous and often unforgiving traditional printmaking processes to make portraits in the digital millennium, when portraits of every kind are ubiquitous, thoughtlessly derivative, disposable and made by any pea brain with a cell phone.’ Sisson called his current work, ‘for better or worse...antiquated traditional portraiture,’ and said that for him, spending countless hours working in an obsolete medium is ‘perversely satisfying.’”

“Jean Gumpfer said the woodcut’s greatest appeal is, in her words, the ‘physicality of carving and printing.’ She even likens the experience to the physical movement of hiking, ‘with many steps along the way adding to the completed print.’ Maria Doering, [who works in linoleum] wrote of carving for hours and letting her thoughts ‘weave in and out of the medium as [her] whole body engaged in the process of carving.’ Raluca Iancu, whose prints combine woodcut, linocut, collage, and computer technology, expressed the enjoyment ‘that comes from carving directly into the matrix.’ Charles Norris called the making of a woodcut a ‘zen-like experience,’ adding (with credit to Marshall McLuhan) that ‘perhaps for some woodcut artists, the medium is also part of the message.’ It seems that, indeed, that is the case and that the

Boston Printmakers 2017 North American Print Biennial is sending a clear message: that the touchscreen culture leaves many artists hungering for labor-intensive, hands-on experiences.”

Whatever the case, the noteworthy point is that we seem to be witnessing a rise in the number of artists making arresting woodcuts and linocuts today—a rise that might strike some as oddly anachronistic in the digital age, the way “writing on rocks” struck Rauschenberg as anachronistic in the sixties, despite the fact he went on to create so many ground-breaking lithographs.

I thank Judith Brodie for her investigative insight and for selecting a powerful exhibition, she is a pleasure to watch work and engage with as she formed her thoughts and words for the catalog.

I must also acknowledge the admiration and delight expressed in the many emails, face to face comments, and letters from members that I received praising the Special Edition Newsletter and Presentation Print! Thank you to Nomi Silverman and Carolyn Muskat for the beautiful lithograph given to all to mark this specific anniversary. To Alex Gerasev, Stephanie Stigliano and the envelope stuffing team, thank you for the newsletter itself.

I hope you will enjoy the lineup for this Quarterly Newsletter. Stephanie Stigliano has produced a photo-essay of the 2017 North American Print Biennial; Peter Scott will report on ***The Boston Printmakers: 70 Years***, at the anniversary print symposium; Esther S. White and Catherine Kernan report on their recently completed member travel programs offered through our partnerships, and a photo-documentation of ***Iron Print 6***, the annual student competition held at MassArt.

*Renee Covalucci*  
President

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## Biennial Photo Essay

*By Stephanie Stigliano*

There was a lot to see at the Biennial reception--it was a fun day to see some spectacular prints, meet with old friends and make new ones. For this essay I wanted to focus mainly on artists standing with their prints. I couldn't get to all the artists, but here are a few memorable moments. Christiane Corcelle has posted many pictures of the reception on The Boston Printmakers website and they can be viewed through this link.

<https://www.facebook.com/The-Boston-Printmakers-228758027149943/>



Jim Lee and Anne Beresford with their prints





Charles Norris with his print



Paul DeRuvo with his print (top) and Mark Bischel with his artist's book



Visitors admiring Florin Hategan's print



Deborah Cornell (left), Barbara Putnam (center); Annie Silverman (right) with her print



Visitor to the exhibit and Judith Brody (center) with Renee Covalucci (right)



Liz Banish with her print





Visitor looking at Elizabeth Myers print (left), visitors looking at J. L. Abraham's prints (right)



Exhibiting artists Maria Doering (left) and Jane Goldman (right)



Elanna Bernstein with her print



Eric Avery's print installation (left) and Mark Cote's print installation (right)

## 70th Anniversary Symposium

*By Peter Scott*

On March 3rd, the Boston Printmakers celebrated a closing of sorts to the 2017 North American Print Biennial and the 10th Student Exhibition with a 70th anniversary symposium that began at the Boston Public Library (BPL) with "The Common Wealth of Prints: A Dialog between Five Bay State Collections." Held in the new Rabb Lecture Hall at the BPL, the event was hosted by David Leonard, President of the Boston Public Library. The panel featured curators from five notable area collections: Clifford S. Ackley, the Ruth and Carl J. Shapiro Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Karen S. Shafts, the Assistant Keeper of Prints at the Boston Public Library; Elizabeth Rudy, the Carl A. Weyerhaeuser Associate Curator of Prints at the Harvard Art Museums; Nancy Kathryn Burns, the Associate Curator of Prints, Drawings & Photographs at the Worcester Art Museum; and Martina Tanga, the Koch Curatorial Fellow at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum.





### Boston Public Library panelists:

left to right: Karen Shafts, Elizabeth Rudy, Martina Tanga, Nancy Kathryn Burns, Cliff Ackley, David Leonard

Following opening remarks by Renee Covalucci, President of the Boston Printmakers Executive Board, David Leonard introduced the panelists and noted the recent passing of Sinclair Hitchings, the longtime Keeper of Prints at the BPL (over 4 decades), and his legacy of acquisitions of prints and drawings by “artists with ties to Boston.” Mr. Leonard also announced the establishment of a fund in memory of Sinclair to continue this tradition. Each of the curators presented a profile of their institution’s print collections, their histories and missions, as well as some background on their respective involvement with The Boston Printmakers – such as The Boston Printmakers archive in the BPL collection and the history of Boston Printmakers exhibits at the deCordova from the early years up into the 1990’s. Elizabeth Rudy noted the Fogg Museum’s print collection’s history under Marjorie Cohn, their acquisition of contemporary prints as well as the print rental offered to Harvard students. She also profiled the Fogg’s integration of works on paper into the stream of gallery exhibits. The Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) and the Worcester Art Museum are well known for their extensive holdings in prints and drawings from old masters into contemporary work and this was well illustrated with slide show examples from Cliff Ackley and Nancy Burns. Martina Tanga’s presentation focused on the many Boston Printmakers exhibitions held at the deCordova and the number of works purchased by the museum from them. As David Leonard moderated the discussion and asked each member to address their particular initiatives and interests, Mr. Ackley also offered a short presentation of his career-long research of Dutch Art Nouveau prints and his recent book on the subject.

Following the panel discussion, there were city-wide events available. In addition to The Boston Printmakers Biennial exhibition and Student Exhibit at Lesley University College of Art and Design, three Area institutions hosted presentations of work from their collections: The Museum of Fine Arts, the Boston Athenaeum and the Harvard Art Museums.



Patrick Murphy making a point at the Morse Study Room at the MFA

The MFA Department of Prints and Drawings hosted two viewing sessions. Contributing to the sessions were Clifford Ackley and Patrick Murphy, Lia and William Poorvu Assistant Curator of Prints and Drawings. Attendees were treated to a display of 33 highlights from the Museum’s collection, including two etchings and a monotype by Michael Mazur (created as illustrations for Dante’s *Inferno*), engravings by James Siena, a 2010 diptych by Jasper Johns, a suite of photo-lithos by Lesley Dill, and prints by Vija Celmins, Richard Hamilton, Pat Steir, Helen Frankenthaler, Francesco Clemente, Tetsuya Noda, Willie Cole, and seven members of The Boston Printmakers.

Visitors to the Athenaeum were similarly split up, allowing for a rotation of presentations: while one group was given a tour of the building with Hannah Weisman, Director of Education, the other half viewed work in the

Special Collections and Print Study rooms with Catherina Slautterback, Curator Emerita of Prints and Photographs. In addition to examples of 19th century virtuoso prints from the Athenaeum's rare book and print collections, Ms. Slautterback presented contemporary examples by New England area artists. 19th Century selections included work by Ellen Day Hale, John Rubens Smith, J. F. Earhart, Louis Prang and natural history illustrations for Louis Agassiz. 20th-21st century work included prints by Reba Stewart, Stow Wengenroth, Thomas Nason, Mary Teichman, Lisa Houck, and Sean Hurley among others.

Elizabeth Rudy hosted the visit at Harvard. Beginning the tour in the Harvard Art Museums' Calderwood Courtyard, she presented a brief history of the restoration and joining of the three museums into one and highlighted a feature of the exhibits here in the way the curators use their collection. Prints are exhibited alongside paintings and sculpture instead of being in their own gallery, opening a conversation between works and encouraging the viewer to find relationships between the pieces on view.



Panelists, left to right:

Carolyn Muskat, Constance Jacobson, Liz Chalfin, Liz Shepherd, Catherine Kernan, Jane Goldman

Another event of note during the afternoon was "Pressing Forward: Print Shops in Boston," a Symposium panel involving five artists who run print studios in Boston and beyond. Moderated by Jane Goldman, it included Liz Chalfin, Zea Mays Printmaking, Constance Jacobson, Full Tilt Print Studio, Catherine Kernan, Mixit Print Studio, Carolyn Muskat, Muskat Studios, and Liz Shepherd, Shepherd Studio. They discussed the origins and goals of each studio, the difficulty of finding affordable space and the need for a business plan. These shops serve different purposes, including contract printing, a research center, cooperative studios and rental studios. All agreed on the need to mentor young printmakers. Zea Mays has an active program for interns researching safer, greener materials and techniques. Four interns at Muskat Studios have gone on to train in lithography at Tamarind Institute. All of these highly skilled, independent artists are eager to press forward by encouraging the next generation of independent, artist-run print shops.

Additional presentations included a print workshop with John Thompson at Childs Gallery, a print installation and artist talk by Randy Garber at the Boston Printmakers Biennial venue as well as a talk at the Student Exhibition by Josh Brennan from Boston University.



Renee Covalucci thanking Pam Allara at Emerson College Urban Arts Media Gallery

The closing event was a reception at the Emerson College Urban Arts Media Gallery for the exhibit "William Kentridge: Triumphs and Laments." Co-curated by Joe Ketner, Gallery Director, and Pamela Allara, Professor Emerita at Brandeis University, this exhibit featured prints evolved out of Kentridge's 2016 Tiber River mural in Rome. The large collaged woodcuts were produced by David Krut Prints while the series of monumental etchings were produced at Artist Proof Studios (APS) in Johannesburg. Many of us in Boston Printmakers are familiar with APS, now into its 27th year, and its founder Kim Berman. Accompanying the prints are projections of the opening performance in Rome and a maquette of the entire mural. Dr. Allara gave a gallery talk, elucidating the development of this project and its historical references, both ancient and contemporary. These are outstanding prints, remarkable both for their epic scale and their immediacy; the event provided a resounding closing chord to the day's 70th anniversary celebration. The exhibition remains open until April 14, 2018.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to and attended the 70th Anniversary Symposium!

## Anderson Ranch Residency 2017

*By Esther S. White*

I spent the first week of July immersed in book making at the lovely printmaking studio at Anderson Ranch in Snowmass, Colorado. The workshop, "The Art of the Book: Bound Monotypes," was taught by Aurora De Armendi, a NYC-based artist, fine art printmaker, and curator. Aurora was wonderful to work with. She was generous, knowledgeable, and full of energy. Each day opened with a few hours of demonstrations and then we had open studio time for the rest of the day. The facilities were comfortable, well equipped, and supported by great shop techs, all in a beautiful setting.

It was very exciting for me to take a week out of "regular life" to focus on my practice. I have a young son and balance my studio practice at Zea Mays Printmaking with occasional teaching, curatorial work, and serving on the board of the Local Cultural Council. For the past year, I have been immersed in a self-imposed Artist Residency in Motherhood, exploring the competing roles of the Artist-Mother, Mother-Artist.

My week at the Ranch was the longest period I have been away from my son since he was born, and the first time I have travelled alone since I was married eight years ago. The time apart was exhilarating, and yet I was not really alone. My creative energies have been transformed by motherhood: the thrill of recognizing my son's growing artistic voice pulsed through my work that week.

I learned a number of book art techniques that were new to me, spent almost all my waking hours in the studio, and got a chance to practice practice folding and cutting paper. The icing on the cake: I completed a drumleaf book with wrapped board covers and a paper spine that was included in a group exhibition at the ECA+ gallery in Easthampton, MA last



summer and curated by  
Hannah Richards.



Esther S. White, above and below, *Untitled*, 2017; artist book: frottage silkscreen monotype, suminagashi “floating ink” paper marbling, toddler drawings; 6.75”x10.25”

The frottage silkscreen monotype prints were made by taking rubbings of the architecture of the studios and insulated coffee sleeves provided by the Ranch Café. The monotypes that make up the book’s pages are sequenced to relate my experience of immersion in my practice at the Ranch. Collaged drawings and marbled papers interrupt, intercept, and influence the book’s unfolding.

Thank you, Boston Printmakers, for sending me on this journey!



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## Thirty Days in Venice

By Catherine Kernan



Catherine Kernan, left: *Wave Icon #1*, and right, *Nocturnal Canal*, 2017

Venice out the door, and daily access to a printmaking studio for an entire month: this sounds like a fantasy, but it was one I was lucky to live in November 2017, thanks to a fellowship awarded by the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica to a member of The Boston Printmakers.

The experience was simultaneously exhilarating, demanding, and hugely rewarding, as the circumstances challenged my technical and aesthetic adaptability. Armed with some specialized supplies, and my visual vocabulary, I responded to my new environment.

Of countless possible visual stimuli, I focused on some of the fascinating dualities of Venice, an improbable city of crass contemporary tourism and historical commercialism tempered by time. Venice is visually and artistically rich to excess, contrasting the decay of centuries, the power of religious institutions, and the march of contemporary culture. It is an exquisite beast with an underbelly; a living city, and a museum without walls; a city encompassing high art and hawkers, gondolas and freight barges, encrusted with the ancient and shocked with the new.

I found the colors earthy and ethereal, dense as stone and brick, and transparent as Murano glass. Venice shatters orthogonal organization and defies spatial reason, although somewhere there is genetic logic in its agrarian past. The city's spatial gestalt alternates between the broad open lagoon and the canyon-like vertical compression of side canals and streets. Solid structures seem to float—a conundrum mirrored in the water that ripples and distorts with the wake of passing boats. The city breathes as the tides rise and fall, measured by stairs into the water. By day, light ricochets endlessly from surface to surface; at night eerie darkness envelops the city with twinkling lights

multiplied by reflections that animate, but reveal little. Absorbing this mysterious architecture, I pursued both the particular and the universal in my imagery, attempting to incorporate some of these myriad distinctions and dualities. Venice is, as a friend wrote, “a place where magic is accessible, an amazing place to nourish the creative subconscious.”



Catherine Kernan, left: *Venice Canal #1*, center: *Venice Canal #5* and right, *Venice Canal #3*, 2017

## ***Iron Printmakers***

by Renee Covalucci

On Saturday, February 24, 2018, four student teams competed in the sixth annual "Iron Printmakers Competition." The event is the inspired creation of Carolyn Muskat who, with some culinary assistance from her husband Seth Read, modeled a student printmaking competition after "Iron Chef." Muskat Studios organizes and presents the annual event that is hosted by the Print Department of Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt). The 2018 winning team is MassArt, pictured with Carolyn Muskat. Boston University was a close second. The School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University and Lesley University College of Art and Design were third and fourth, respectively. Iron Print 6 is a healthy, fun-filled competition to watch between serious, impressive, young printmakers. The Boston Printmakers is proud to be a contributing sponsor!



Above: MassArt team from left to right:

WINNERS!!!!!! Anna Markham, July Millet, Andrew Eckhardt, Andrew Stearns (coach), Andrew Palladino with



Carolyn Muskat (event organizer)



Above: Boston University team from left to right: Morgan Lindsay, Johnny Doley, Gus (William) Wheeler, Colleen Kinslow with “Cleanest Team” trophy, Josh Brennan (coach)



Above: SMFA team from left to right: Brooke Stewart, Julie Playl (coach), Mea Duke (coach), Louis Meola, Khadine Caines, Katie Haley



Above: Lesley team from left to right:

Jisun Lee (co-coach), Rebecca Baranovski, Hayley Coleman, Morgan French, Aurora Brush, Rocky Cotard (co-coach)

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