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an international association of artists

Fall 2019

The Boston Printmakers *e-newsletter*

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Fall Quarterly 2019

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Letter from the President

The Boston Printmakers is gearing up for a full fall season!

The [2019 North American Print Biennial](#) opened August 26 at the Jewett Art Gallery, Wellesley College, and the 2019 juror, Shelley R. Langdale, was at the center of events during the artists' reception on September 8th. She spoke to Wellesley College students the following Monday to share her curatorial insights, leading them around the gallery explaining her choices and taking questions. Langdale characterizes the work as having "an increased focus on divisive social, political, and cultural issues - racism, immigration, climate change, and sexism - heightened by escalated tensions in the current political climate.... It is heartening to see, as represented here, a growing diversity of cultural references, ethnicity and gender represented in contemporary work that is more reflective of the U.S. population." Printmakers continue to play a vital role as voices of cultural change, and the 2019 Biennial illuminates their concerns while making strong visual statements.



Presentation of the first Advocacy Award to Justyne Fischer, right.
Also pictured Theo Tyson and John Buchtel from the Boston Athenaeum
and BP board member Bob Tomolillo

We hope many of you will see the [2019 Biennial](#), and please send your friends, students and colleagues to the show. Deborah Cornell, executive board member and printmaking professor at Boston University, will host *Looking at Prints* at 1pm on Saturday, September 21st in the [Jewett Art Gallery](#). *The 11th Boston Printmakers Student Print Exhibition* will happen later this fall at The Mazmanian Gallery, at Framingham State University (FSU). The show will feature works by 17 New England college and university art programs. This effort - so vital to our mission - not only shows the depth of printmaking in the region, but also the dedication of schools and instructors that provide opportunities to their students. Concurrently, *Prints From Campus: Selection from Faculty Teaching in New England* will be held at The [Danforth Art Museum](#) at FSU and will open on the same day, **Sunday, November 17th**, as the student show. Receptions will be from 1 - 3 pm at the student show and from 2 - 5pm at the Danforth. Please join us!

With two shows coming together on one campus, The Boston Printmakers is planning a student forum on **Saturday, December 7** at the [McCarthy Center at FSU](#). The purpose is to focus on opportunities for students seeking to continue in printmaking. We hope to provide "next steps" for young printmakers and to hear about their desires, hurdles and passions as they graduate, seek employment, establish studios and enter the wider print community. Any member reading this is welcome to direct current and former students living in New England to get in touch with me about attending this forum. If you have current/former students who recently completed a graduate program, internship or residency who would like to advertise or share experiences at the forum, please have them contact me. And if your studio, school or community offers programming for young printmakers, you are also welcome to take part in the forum. We would be grateful to include any places or spaces where young printmakers have found success. Please contact renee@bostonprintmakers.org.

I hope you will enjoy the Fall Quarterly articles: *Joel Janowitz: Painterly Printmaker, Revisiting Artist Proof Studio, Johannesburg and Beyond, Boston Printmakers in Amsterdam* and *BP Fellowship to the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica, Venice, Italy*. The 2020 Scuola fellow will be member [Carolyn Webb](#) of Williamsburg, MA. Congratulations Carolyn and thanks to each of you who apply to this fellowship - please keep trying and someday you may succeed!

Thanks to the writers who contributed to his newsletter.

All my best in printing,
[Renee Covalucci](#)
President
[Biennial 2019 Photo Gallery](#)

Joel Janowitz: Painterly Printmaker

Joel Janowitz has been honored with the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, as well as multiple Artist Fellowships from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and artist grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. A member of The Boston Printmakers, he is well known as a teacher in the Boston Area.

Interview by Susan Schmidt

SS: Your prints and paintings examine physical spaces and the fragmentary nature of the way that we see things. Could you talk about what has sustained your repeated investigation of this through the years?

JJ: It's true that in my paintings, watercolors, and monotypes, I focus on space, and I think that goes back to my beginnings as a painter. When I was in college one of my teachers was Michael Mazur, a wonderful drawing teacher and a great printmaker. I also studied with Philip Guston who painted powerful abstract canvases at that time. I went to school at Brandeis where Guston taught for a semester. This was in the mid-'60s before he started his figurative cartoon-like work. Both these teachers profoundly influenced me. Mazur gave me the skills and desire to work from observation and Guston taught me the richness of abstraction. They both stretched my curiosity about the expressive and psychological dimensions of pictorial space.

Throughout graduate school at the University of California, Santa Barbara, I made abstract paintings and representational drawings. Gradually my paintings became more and more minimal until I was putting blended stripes of subtle colors at the borders of large fields of uninflected quiet color. These large minimal paintings gave a sense of space without any figuration at all; the experience was akin to swimming underwater and feeling the watery space without seeing any forms whatsoever.



Joel Janowitz, *Plunge*, monoprint/etching,
2000, 72 x 38.5," collection of the MFA Boston

After college I dead-ended with this work. At that time I was working with kids with emotional and behavioral challenges as a child care worker. This was an all-consuming job. I had one day a week to get to my studio and I found I couldn't bring myself back to the state I needed to be in to do the abstract paintings. I needed more structure. I began drawing a series of highway images. These sustained me because I could return to the same imagery and structure, despite the gaps in my schedule, and continue working. This process of working in series became more and more useful and has continued for over 40 years now. One result of working in series is that I become completely absorbed by the spatial and painterly relationships I'm working with, rather than the subject matter or narrative. I pay close attention to how one moves virtually through the space of my paintings, and I think a lot about the psychology and specific character of the space itself. What is its expressive quality? How do I feel in relation to it, and how can I influence the viewer to feel physically involved in the paintings? I'll often tip horizon lines and build angular elements into the works that make one feel a little off balance, or feel that one is floating into the space rather than standing in front of it.



Joel Janowitz, *Venice Bridge a/b*, monotype, 2011, 40 x 88"

SS: Do you think having figures in the space affects how the viewer feels?

JJ: I do, and so I rarely have figures in my paintings. As soon as you put a figure into a print or a painting, that's where the viewer focuses, and the work begins to function as a narrative about that figure. I'm much more interested in creating work where the viewer herself becomes the protagonist. One of my favorite painters is Vermeer. He is startlingly inventive in how he brings the viewer directly into his paintings and makes his painted spaces equal in importance with his figures. His is a remarkable conception that one rarely sees in 17th century work. Sometimes he paints a rug or a map in the foreground that one has to visually step around. Or one finds oneself outside of a doorway voyeuristically peering in at the harmonies and tensions of a private moment.



Joel Janowitz, *Arsenale Cafe II*, monotype, 2010, 22 x 30"

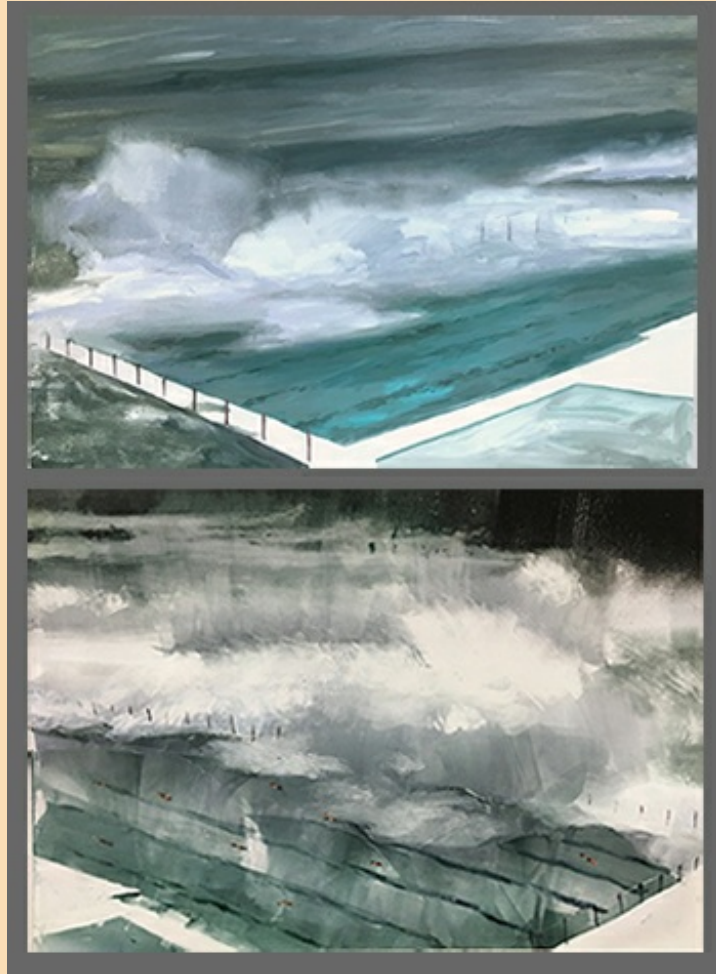
SS: As you move back and forth between painting and monotype, what does monotype offer you?

JJ: Primarily monotype offers freedom and surprise. Sometimes my paintings can get too fussy for my own liking. I get trapped by my original idea. Working with monotype, and especially viscosity inking, I am responding constantly as the imagery evolves. I feel swept into a kind of 'call and response' with the developing plate. Making monotypes is like taking a dive into unknown waters. There's so much that happens that stretches beyond my own boundaries. To a certain extent, watercolor also leads me to new ideas, but watercolor is much more constricting because of the limitations and challenges of the medium. With monotype I feel like I can begin with or without an idea. I can start working and ideas emerge through the medium itself.

SS: Do your monotypes and paintings go back and forth within the same series?

JJ: I usually stay within the same series for up to a year or more. My original sources include on site

drawings and watercolors and snapshots I take for added information. Often a new series, such as the *Ocean and Pools*, actually starts with the monotypes which I then use to develop my oil paintings. I also take ideas from the oil paintings and watercolors back again to the monotypes.



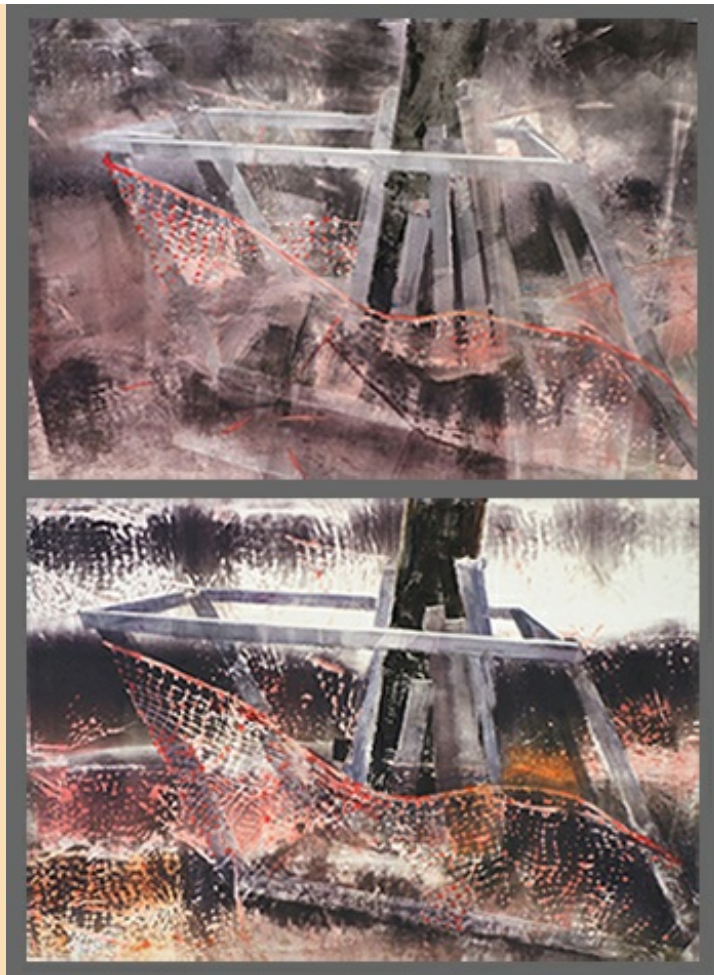
Joel Janowitz, Top, *Storm Waves*, oil on linen, 2018, 30 x 44"
Bottom, *Still Rising b/b*, monotype, 2018, 21 x 30"

SS: Is the speed of monotypes a factor?

JJ: Yes, I can do several in a day. I might come in to work with a blank mind and just get started to see what happens. Usually I'll begin by making a quick full-size drawing on newsprint to give me some structure. I'll put the drawing under the plexi plate as a loose guide and start to build the image. The great thing about monotypes is that you get instant feedback. You've inked the plate; you've pulled the print; you can look at the print as well as the ink remaining on the plate and consider: where might you go from here? Surprising ideas bubble up.

SS: Are there other things you want to talk about, related to monotypes?

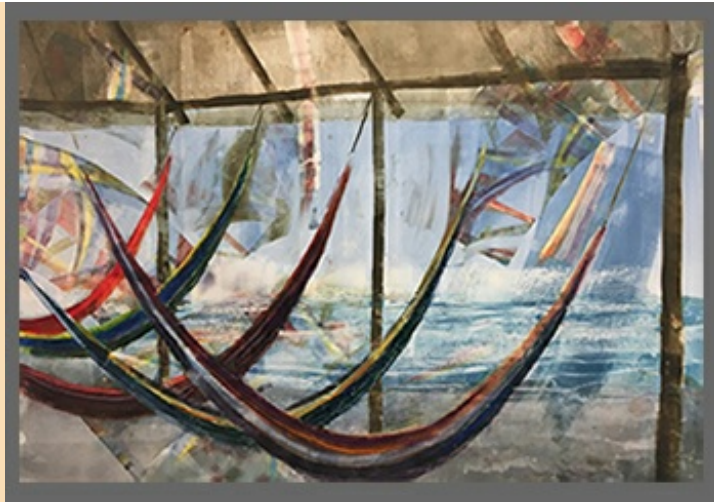
JJ: Aside from monotype's tremendous freedom and surprise, two things I'll mention. I often use my monotypes as the primary image source for my paintings. Since the monotype already offers a convincing but abstracted spatial structure, working from it frees my oil paintings from being too tied to the literal and facilitates distilling the psychological and emotive implications of the work. Secondly, I have come to use various monotype techniques directly in my painting process – for example, in addition to brushes, I work with brayers to lay down color, blend, and offset painted imagery.



Joel Janowitz, Top, *Abandon b/b*, monotype, 2015, 22.25 x 30.5"
 Bottom, *Abandon a/b*, monotype, 2015, 22.25 x 30.5"

SS: Could you comment on your monotype series on protected trees?

JJ: I had already painted a Spruce Trees series when I noticed that all the trees around my Cambridge neighborhood were being wrapped by plastic fencing and two-by-fours to protect them from heavy machinery while the city rebuilt the sewer system. This construction work went on and on and gradually the protection started to deteriorate. At some point I started paying attention to how interesting and disturbing this new landscape had become, both visually and metaphorically. I did a couple of paintings on site and went all over the neighborhood snapping pictures. The work gathered momentum. I discovered that the imagery was perfect for my viscosity monotypes: when I painted the plastic fencing with oily ink I could then add the tree and two by four structures behind the fence by using stickier ink (since the oily ink acted as a resist). I could also brayer over one section of the fencing and then transfer the offset image to other parts of the plate. As I worked the brayers and rollers continued to multiply and transform the image developing on the plate. It felt magical as if the monotype started to build itself.



Joel Janowitz, *Five Hammocks II*, monotype, 2019, 26.25 x 36.5"

SS: You are an artist who's really committed to the work of the hand and now we're living in an age of screens and digital media. How are painting and printmaking still important?

JJ: One thing that I think is really crucial and is getting lost is how smart our hands are. When you make something by hand, your hand takes you to places you might never go otherwise. It's not that the hand is out-of-control or in-control, it's that it is thinking and much of that thinking lies outside our consciousness. This intelligence gets benched when we rely primarily on the computer. The hand is under-appreciated now but fashions change and the awareness of its importance will come back.



Joel Janowitz in his studio in the South End, Boston

[Joel Janowitz website](#)

BP Fellowship to the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica, Venice, Italy

by PD Packard

Arriving in Venice right at the start of the highly anticipated annual Carnival Festival, I had an immediate understanding of what it's like to be one among the many, many tourists. And getting lost in Venice, now that's a given. Even so, the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica, with its vibrant community of artists,

does have the power to steal your heart.

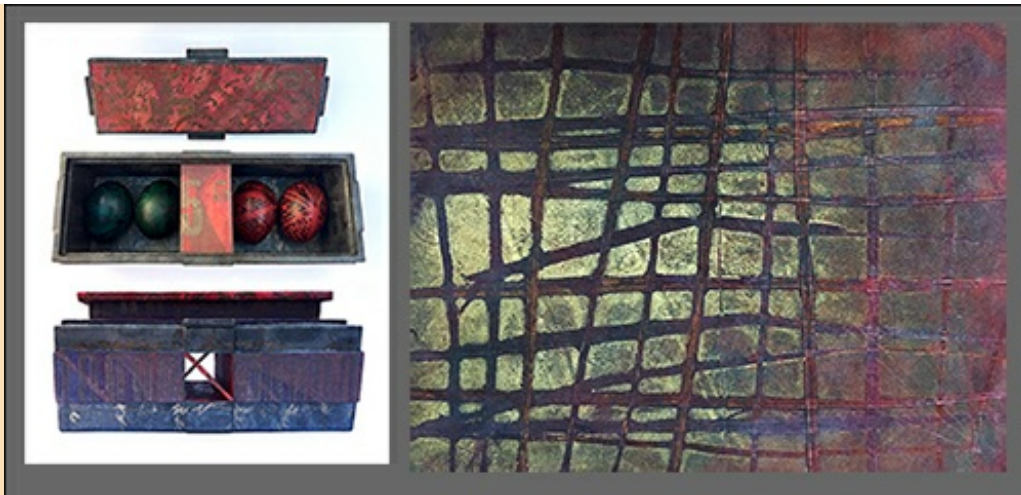
The Scuola is co-directed by the brilliant artist Matilde Dolcetti de Castro, together with her son, Lorenzo, an artist in his own right. They invite and encourage a continual flow of visiting artists, exhibits, and events into the school. Poetry readings, an Eatable Book Arts Festival, an invitation to a private tour in the Museo Di Palazzo Mocenigo, art courses, and much more were all open to the resident artists during my stay.

The printshop is run like a tight ship by the talented fellow printmaker, Roberta Feoli de Lucia. Roberta affectionately oversees her brood of Erasmus interns, an EU funded program that organizes student exchanges overseas for work or study. She instills in them a love of collaboration, and the importance of an all-inclusive workplace. In Roberta's words, "...we are trying to unite the two worlds, the foreign one and the chattering and imaginative style of the peninsula...that could only happen on this island and with the artists in this residency."



Working on watercolor paintings in the courtyard of the Scuola

During my residency I had the opportunity to work on my on-going series called, *Love More*, where I created prints, box art, and video vignettes influenced by a visit to the prisons housed in the Doge's Palace (Palazzo Ducale). The palace was the residence of the Doge of Venice, the chief magistrate and leader of the Republic of Venice between 726 and 1797. It also held the political bodies of the state and law courts that pronounced prison and death sentences. The architecture, stonework, and ironwork combine Byzantine, Gothic, and Islamic cultures with the burgeoning Venetian Renaissance symbolizing the power of the Republic, governed by divine splendor. Although very simplified, the Doge's prison was also built with the same stunning mastery as the palace. This inspired me to convey through my work that even imprisoned within the depths of hell, beauty can still be found.



Left, Love More series, PD Packard, box art,
influenced by a visit to the prisons housed in Palazzo Ducale
Right, Love More, print from the same series

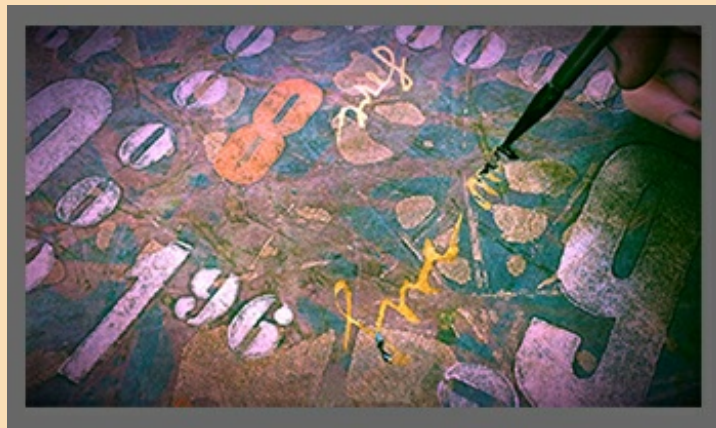


Image still of my print from the video, thirst to Love more,
with vignettes influenced by Venice during my residency.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5eU3aKDGjI8&t=58s>

I also dedicated my time to teaching an afternoon printmaking class over a period of four weeks. Specializing in color and the use of Akua Liquid Pigments, I taught my techniques of printed decorative papers, tinting and creating painterly backgrounds for etchings, and the Japanese decorative papermaking, Itajime Shibori. I had students from Spain, Germany, Sweden, Latvia, and of course, Italy. All were committed, and motivated artists making the best students and the best friends.



Students in my workshop on Printed Decorative Papers



A student's work station during my workshop

I had the pleasure of residing in the ridiculously beautiful, and authentic Venetian apartment owned by Matilde Dolcetti de Castro. Her family has owned the entire palazzo for several generations. My apartment was filled with gorgeous artwork, doors, windows, and furniture. It overlooks the Grand Canal, with the front gate entrance just a few steps from the San Tom   vaporetto stop. I frequented the nearby Dorsoduro neighborhood that is out of the mainstream, and has many wonderful b  cari (wine bars) for cichetti that are delicious small finger food somewhat like Spanish tapas.

On the occasion that I did have the desire to travel outside of Venice to visit friends in the city of Milan, the Santa Lucia train station was only a 10 -15 minute walk from either direction of the apartment or the Scuola. The trains are modern, comfortable, and tickets can easily be bought online prior to departure. The only hiccup was that the trains and transportation went on strike every other week while I was in Venice and always on a Friday!

This experience has been an amazing gift from both the Boston Printmakers and the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica for which I am truly grateful. Thank you!

[PD Packard Website](#)

Revisiting Artist Proof Studio, Johannesburg and Beyond

by Peter Scott

The School of the Museum of Fine Arts has had a history of cross-cultural exchanges between the Print and Paper area at SMFA at Tufts and our colleagues in Johannesburg. This relationship began unofficially in the early 1990s, as South Africa was stepping into a new shape as a democracy. Twenty-eight years ago, SMFA/Tufts alumna Kim Berman returned home to South Africa to establish [Artist Proof Studio](#) (APS), a racially integrated community print studio. Ms. Berman is also a full professor in the School of Visual Arts at the University of Johannesburg (UJ). Over the years, our ties with Kim have been the inspiration for our ever-expanding network of collaborations at APS, UJ and beyond.

APS has a two-part mission: (1) professional print production with South African artists; and (2) civic engagement through educational programs for disadvantaged youth. Largely through funding from

sponsors and the sale of prints, APS offers, tuition-free, a three-year course of study in printmaking and graphic arts, along with marketing and professional practices. While Kim Berman serves as Director, APS operates its professional print studio and its educational programs with a full board of directors and a staff of thirty. Currently it is able to accept thirty new students each year; with a full capacity of ninety.



First year students working on plates, Artist Proof Studio



First year students putting up work for final critique, Artist Proof Studio

This past April, while on sabbatical from SMFA, I was fortunate to receive funding from the Tufts University Tisch College for Civic Life to return for my fourth visit to Johannesburg since 1995, to work with students at APS. Over a two-week period, I enjoyed working with first year students on collaborative print projects dealing with team building and identity diversity, a workshop with second year students on group critique protocol and strategies, and observing third year students as they were collaborating on a print exchange portfolio project with their counterparts at UJ. I also presented talks at both APS and UJ on our history of Boston-Johannesburg exchanges, sat in on APS staff meetings, and met with APS and UJ faculty. Of particular interest was a three-day field visit and home stay out into the North West province with Kim, fellow UJ faculty and students from both UJ and APS. Through UJ, Kim has been directing a 3-year project in Lotlhakane, collaborating with village elders and the Khosi (chief) on building a community center. There were also visits with William Kentridge and productions at his [Center for the Less Good Idea](#), as well as with Jack Ginsberg and his recently installed collection of artists' books at the Witswatersrand University Art Museum. Those of us who are familiar with working for Kim know well that there will be precious little free time -- as a fellow colleague

once remarked: no tourists allowed.



Final collaborative prints from a team of first year students

Working with students and staff at APS is a remarkable gift. They have always been generous and engaged, fully dedicated to their work and enthusiastic to join in on new projects and workshops. The first- and second-year students were energetic and required little prompting. I was especially impressed with the third-year students in their discussions with their fellow collaborators from UJ: an open exchange of ideas and a co-equal level of artistic/critical sophistication. Over the years, I have been happy to see how the population of students has shifted from being almost entirely male to a much more co-equal gender balance. South Africa has its challenges -- politically, economically and culturally -- but it also has an astonishingly rich and potent art scene. Students like this provide a promising future and are a privilege to work with.



Kim Berman discussing exchange portfolio with third year students

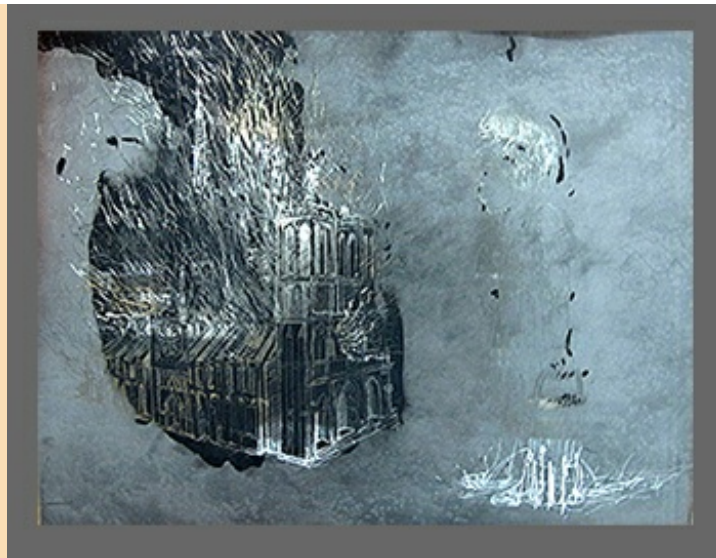


First year students printing at APS

After the workshops at APS, my wife and I were able to travel North to Mpumalanga province to visit Mark Attwood and Tamar Mason who run the Artist Press outside of White River. This is a professional print shop that specializes in production printing for most of the premier South African artists. When we visited, Mark has just finished working with Diane Victor on a series of multi-color lithographs. In order to maintain Diane's distinctive line work, I was intrigued to see how Mark had provided an inked glass plate for her to use as a scratch board and then expose it as a cliché verre on to a photo litho plate. The studio and residences are spectacularly beautiful. Since their establishment at White River in 2003, they have progressively followed green strategies to make the entire operation almost completely off the grid. I recommend the reader to read more about this on their website as well as view their [gallery of artists' prints](#).



Proof of Diane Victor print, Artist Press



Cliché verre plate used in preparation of Diane Victor print



The print shop at Artist Press, White River

There are many people and institutions here in Boston who have had productive exchanges with APS and fellow artists in South Africa: printmakers in Boston and members of The Boston Printmakers, Mass Art, Boston University, Boston Arts Academy, among others. We are all familiar with Kim Berman's outstanding work. I can only encourage others to explore additional exchanges.

Boston Printmakers in Amsterdam

by Candy Nartonis



Amsterdam – along a canal

Led by Bob Tomolillo, members of Boston Printmakers and their guests travelled to Amsterdam June 15-22, 2019. With a lively population of 885,000, this small city is filled with water and light. Our first stop was to Aad Hekker's lithography workshop on the topmost floor of a typical Dutch shop and home. After we climbed up the very steep ladder and stair, assisted by a rope to tug on, we had a great view of the beam and hook, block and tackle, and strong rope used to bring loads to the upper floors of these historic buildings. We were inside 17th century Amsterdam – a center of world trade and of fresh thinking about the stature and value of every human being. Aad prints and publishes artist's lithographs in an immaculate and perfect print shop. Aad mentioned that there are guest houses nearby for artists who work with him. His other pursuits include publishing a magazine on printmaking entitled RAAM Grafiekmagazine (Graphic Art Platform). It was a bit discouraging to learn that, in this city with an important printing history, lithography is no longer strongly valued. In fact, Aad is the last lithographer printing in Amsterdam. [Aad Hekker](#)



Aad Hekker demonstrating his proofing press



Renee & Bob give Aad Hekker our BP Book

Our next adventure was in the Cuypers Library of the Rijksmuseum. This beautiful three-story library within the museum houses a print cabinet, where we were invited to see the work of Hercules Segers. Segers was a contemporary of Rembrandt, a fellow artist, a great innovator, and most likely a friend. His lovely prints were a revelation for all of us. He hand modified the inking of his prints, creating a series of outstanding monoprints from one plate. [Rijksmuseum-Cuypers Library-Print Cabinet-Segers](#)

We were also shown a print that was clearly a large Rembrandt, given the obviously Rembrandt-created figures of *The Flight into Egypt*. Our attention was directed to the abraded area around the figures. In fact, Rembrandt purchased an old plate by Segers of *Tobias and the Angel* in a flea market or second-hand shop -- scraped away *Tobias and the Angel* from the plate, reworked it, added the figures for the *Flight into Egypt*, and signed the prints as his own! <https://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/now-at-the-met/2017/hercules-segers-rembrandt>



Detail of Rembrandt's *Flight into Egypt* on Seger's old reworked plate.
Note the handling of the figures vs. the trees.

We also visited Ruijgrok Piëzografie, a family company producing an exceedingly high level of digital imagery for museums. They also serve artists, many of whom order prints only when one of the limited-edition is sold. The artist's complete file is cared for by the company and prints are made from it until the edition is complete. The company also translates artwork originally in other media into fine reproductions. We watched as they reproduced a series of Hercules Segers' works for the Rijksmuseum. These fine reproductions will be promotional gifts to large donors, as well as educational tools. They are always printed in a different size from the original and stamped on the back as a reproduction to make sure they are not mistaken for the real thing. The firm has completed a special portfolio of every state of one of Chagall's prints. They are masters at catching the spirit of each project. A printmakers' detail: They recommend Hahnemuhle German Etching for digital work.

<http://piezografie.com/>



We learned about contemporary digital fine art printing
and reproduction work at Ruijgrok Piëzografie.

We were given lots of free time and were able to visit many sites on our own. Small groups returned to visit the Rijksmuseum to see work by Vermeer, Frans Hals, Jan Steen, Pieter de Hooch and Rembrandt, along with the glorious blown glass, Delft Blue pottery, and ship models from the Golden Age of Amsterdam. In small groups we went to the Van Gogh Museum, the Stedelijk Museum for modern and contemporary art, and such special places as the Rembrandt home, the Anne Frank House, the Jewish Historical Museum, the Verzetsmuseum detailing the WWII Dutch resistance, and more. Some of us also visited the Eye Film Institute which is housed in a cantilevered building on the water. Here, the current exhibition was a new room-sized video installation by William Kentridge, along with his tapestries and videos. [The Eye Film Institute](#)

We packed in as many events and experiences as possible. At the annual Holland Festival, William Kentridge's opera *Paper Music*, with music by Philip Miller, was outstanding. The Dutch National Opera and Ballet performed *Kleines Requiem*, a powerful and very topical contemporary dance piece. The Koninklijk Concertgebouworkest was a highlight featuring Smetana and Tchaikovsky. We stayed at the Bilderberg Garden Hotel, and I'd recommend it. It is a short walk to the Museum center, and an even shorter walk to the beautiful and grand Vondelpark.



Amsterdam is famous for swing bridges and houseboats

The group was led by Bob Tomolillo and included Katherine Hanlon, Candy Nartonis, Ky Ober, Sharron Pollack, Renee Covalucci, Joe Weixlmann, Michael David and Gene Dorgan. Others included Sloat Shaw, Mark Rosen, Janet Yagoda Shagam, Richard Shagam, Phyllis Ewen, James Campden, Randy Garber, Stanley Cole, and Stephanie and Charles Stigliano.

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