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an international association of artists

Summer 2020

The Boston Printmakers e-newsletter



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Summer Quarterly 2020

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Letter from the President

I hope this newsletter finds everyone healthy and safe, well-adjusted and acclimated to the world today.

In this issue member Julia Shepley writes about the artist residency as a catalyst for creative practice. I am announcing the next BP Members' Show and the chance to become our next Boston Printmakers Fellow in Venice. Carolyn Webb writes a lively photo essay of her 2020 BP fellowship in Venice just before Covid-19 closed Italy.

Sadly, we have lost a legendary member of the executive board. Much of this newsletter is dedicated to her. Marjorie Javan, our much-loved, well-remembered friend and colleague died Feb. 27, 2020.

Marjorie was the principal leader and voice of The Boston Printmakers throughout the 1980s to 2000s. A member since the mid-1970s, she exhibited with BP through 2020. I believe that her vision and determination brought our organization to where we are today. She served in numerous executive roles for many years: newsletter editor, treasurer, biennial coordinator, and president. Spending time with Marjorie was always enlightening. Her memory was impeccable and she contextualized much of our history for the publication *60 Years of North American Prints*. Below is a 2011 photo of Marjorie on the Biennial awards team, Danforth Museum.



From left, Candy Nartonis (former BP president), Marjorie Javan, Katherine French (former Danforth director), Jim Dine (2011 juror), Clifford Ackley (curator of prints MFA), Marc Cote (2011 BP president), Vivian Berman (former BP president)

Personally, Marjorie was my mentor. It was with her encouragement that I joined the board, took on big projects and later became an officer. I realize now that I was emboldened because Marjorie always had my back. I will miss her greatly as will many others, some of whom have written tributes in this newsletter. Marjorie's family will hold a memorial service in Boston when it is safe to gather again. Information will be announced via BP news.

Lorenzo de Castro, director of international programs at Scuola Internazionale di Grafica has confirmed that the [2021 Visiting Guest Artist Full Fellowship](#) will move forward. This annual scholarship to Venice, Italy offers an exclusive fellowship to one member of The Boston Printmakers. The [application](#) is open until June 30, 2020. Member dues must be current to apply.

Southern Graphics Council International will be in Rhode Island next year. [Verified by Proof](#), will be held April 7-10 in Providence. This is the second time the conference will be held in New England. The Boston Printmakers will have an exhibition at the prominent [Providence Art Club](#) during the conference.

CONNECT: Small Prints by Members of The Boston Printmakers is an exhibition prompted by the theme of "communication." Members may create cellphone-size plates with a variety of "messaging, news" or whatever they want to "post." People around the world have been plunged into communicating through technology. Internet and cellphone communication have become lifelines to staying connected to family and friends and to gathering for momentous occasions. Artists have adapted to exhibiting, talking and visiting museums online as we await a solution to this world pandemic.

CONNECT will be shown at multiple venues over a period of two years, and will debut at the Art Club March 28 through April 16, with inclusion in SGCI Providence 2021. More information and a submission form are posted [here](#). This collection of prints will document a global spirit of togetherness through communication.

Please consider participating in these events.

With wishes to all for a healthy and productive summer,



Memories of Marjorie Javan



Marjorie celebrating a birthday with her daughters, Lila and Maia

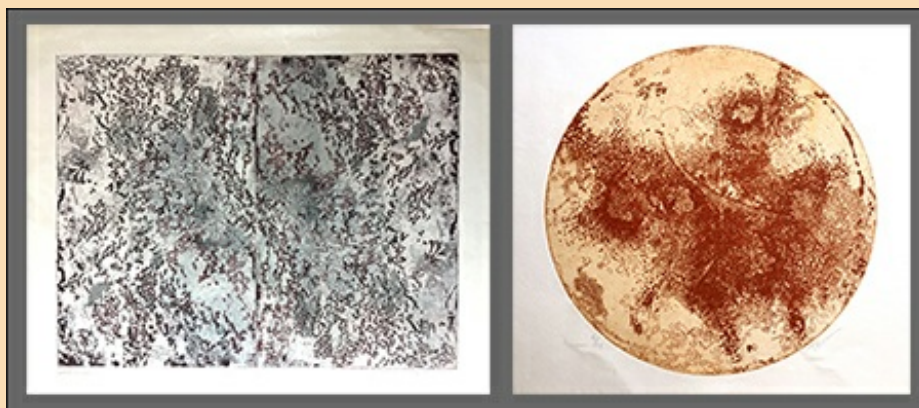


Marjorie and her grandchildren, Val and Riva, April 2019

Memories of Marjorie, “artist-as-mom” and “mom-as-artist,” she was both. She infused our childhoods with respect for the creative spirit, which was her touchstone for raising us well. Mom saw artistic expression everywhere, and was always excited to share ours, in whatever form we pursued. As we all know, Mom was free-thinking and creative, while also down-to-earth and practical. She celebrated any and all “outside-the-box” thinking, yet could organize and problem-solve like no other. We see her unique nature expressed in her prints and ceramics. Her work captures precise, dynamic moments of organic, flowing forms, and also celebrates the aesthetic and unity of the forms when seen collectively. Her role at the Boston Printmakers was so well suited to her, and was a very important part of her life. Late nights etching at our kitchen table, printing in her basement studio while the family slept, afternoons curing gravlax for Printmakers meetings—all are memories that capture what we love about our Mom, and what gave her life joy.

-- Maia and Lila

Javan



Marjorie Javan, Left, *Leaving Karáj*, soft ground etching, 21.5 x 27
Right, *Untitled*, soft ground etching, diameter of 8 inches

Marjorie was an early, active, contributing member of [Experimental Etching Studio](#), and a valued one. She joined when EES started in 1970, and printed with us for decades. I can recall her coming up the stairs each day with a cigarette and her coffee (remember, it was a long time ago), and launching into a joke ...usually starting something like “A fish went into a bar...” With her theatre training, her snappy delivery had us on the floor. She was full of ideas; her elegant, experimental images had a masterful touch in etching, successfully using bronzing powder on her ink to give it a sheen.

She was a classy lady - colorful, savvy, sparkly, smart, as kind as the day is long, and fun. She was

the one who had the idea to convince me to join The Boston Printmakers executive board – you couldn't say no to Marjorie, she was a *force*. She had remarkable and positive vision for BP, a true leader. Her clarity and understanding were unmatched – in a pinch she always had the right instincts, and somehow, unbelievably, always put everything right back on course. Even after she moved to LA, a heartbreaking moment, she remained a presence for us. We miss her.

–Deborah Cornell, Executive Board Member



Marjorie with Shlomith Haber-schaim at 2006 EES reunion

Marjorie may have been the most patient and understanding person I have ever known. We served for many years together on the executive board. While serving as president, especially after the sudden death of then president Sam Walker in 1999, Marjorie brought stability and extensive experience to the organization under extremely difficult circumstances. And she did so in her gentle but firm manner. It was not until several years later, when I served as the president of The Boston Printmakers, that I could fully understand what a great job she did holding the all-volunteer artist organization together. She enthusiastically served in many other board positions equally as well. She did this always with great compassion and her wonderful sense of humor. I will long miss her infectious laugh and big smile.

–C. David Thomas, Past President and Emeritus Board Member



Marjorie at Crane Beach, Ipswich, MA 1980

During my many years on the executive board of The Boston Printmakers, those in which Marjorie Javan participated were among the most rewarding. In her many roles on the board, she was always an effective force in bringing the organization to higher levels of accomplishment. Due to her ability to bring common sense and good will to the table, she had the ability to bring board members to

agreement on many issues that might have been contentious. Marjorie could always spot pretension and disarm it in a non-confrontational manner. She was a stylish woman who contributed immensely to the success of BP during her time on the board and even after her departure from the area. Plus, she often brought delicious Middle Eastern dishes to potluck dinners. She is greatly missed.

–Sidney Hurwitz, Emeritus Board Member



Marjorie at Parque John Lennon in Havana, Cuba

Marjorie Javan was the President of the Boston Printmakers for 16 years and saw the organization through many milestones. In the interest of brevity, I report on two examples of working with Marjorie.

In 2003, the Southern Graphics Council Conference was held in Boston. The conference was co-sponsored by BP and four university printmaking departments. Marjorie and I represented BP on the organizing team and the North American Print Biennial was a conference centerpiece. Along with Ky Ober, we suggested and implemented the now ongoing “Print Month,” a coordinated group of exhibitions at museums and galleries in Greater Boston that includes a pamphlet of events. Marjorie was a guiding light and a stabilizing influence. Her humor, kindness, and focus were a key factor in the harmony we achieved while working on the conference.

In 2008, the Fuller Craft Museum announced a planned exhibition of [contemporary ceramics](#) by Cuban and American artists. We saw the potential for the BP to support the project with a concurrent exhibition of Cuban printmakers. Thus, in 2009, [Making Connections: Contemporary Cuban Prints](#) opened at Laconia Gallery, including prints by ninety-three artists. The following year, Marjorie and I were able to travel to Cuba to meet many of the artists and provide them with gifts of ink and other supplies.

–Candy Nartonis, Past President and Executive Board Member



Marjorie with one of her ceramic sculptures
Beatrice Woods Center for the Arts, Ojai, CA, June 2016

I was first introduced to Marjorie Javan by David Murphy of Stanhope Framers who thought we'd like each other. We became good friends. Later we were part of a women artists reading group where Marjorie played a central role. A lively conversationalist and keen critic, she was well-read and up on the latest writings about art and artists as well as having a historical perspective. A superb artist herself, she was encouraging and supportive of others. Marjorie urged me to enter my non-traditional printmaking work into the The 2013 Boston Printmakers Biennial where it was accepted and led to my becoming a member of The Boston Printmakers. I am eternally grateful and miss Marjorie greatly.

—Phyllis Ewen, Member

Julia Shepley, the residency as catalyst

by Julia Shepley

In January of 2018 I undertook a two-week residency at Penland School of Craft in North Carolina. Through my anticipatory experience for this and a previous residency at Zea Mays Printmaking in Florence MA, I learned that the process and activities of preparation can be one of the most important and fertile components of a residency experience. Considering how best to use the resources of a particular site provides an incentive to stretch my practices and research a new skill or methodology, as well as obtain or revisit a variety of materials with which to experiment.



Muse, 2018, collaged woodblock prints on paper and scrim, thread, ink, 24 x 12 x 2"

As a sculptor and printmaker, I have always experimented with new processes and materials as a way to hover on the edge of unknown discoveries. I integrate printmaking into my drawing and sculpture practice by spending concentrated periods of time in a print shop or printmaking residency. The periodic experience of a collegial work environment with access to a range of equipment and methodologies is a nice balance to my solitary studio practice. My work in all media is a form of observational and exploratory drawing with parts pieced together in different configurations. Stitched marks and methods of joinery are integral to the image. Printmaking allows for experimental overlay of different drawn or photographed images as well as variations in perspective, scale and value of one drawing or image.



Left, *Light Shadow Capture*, 2018, collaged relief prints on paper, scrim, thread, 16 x 12 x 1"

Right, *Sunbeam Through the House Forest*, 2018, collaged relief prints on paper and scrim, thread, 17 x 12 x 1"

For my residency at Penland, I originally applied for a combination of print and sculpture shops. This combination was not available, so I was offered placement in their Letterpress Studio working with Vandercook presses. I took the opportunity as a challenge to learn how to work with equipment and methodology unfamiliar to me. The self-inking feature of these presses presented an opportunity to print multiples of an image on different materials with greater ease. This would further facilitate my practice of experimentation with overlay, dimension, and integration of different types of mark making. The restrictions of the Vandercook promised to be freeing as well, as the scale had to be relatively small and the image graphic. To become familiar with use and cleaning of a Vandercook press beforehand, I was able to take a short tutorial with Eli Epstein of Union Press in Somerville. Eli was able to help me to think about attributes of Vandercook printing that might prove advantageous to my working process.



Repose, 2018, collaged woodblock prints on paper and translucent silk, thread, 12 x 12 x 2"

The letterpress/printmaking shop at Penland had an excellent set up for making photopolymer plates, so I also took the opportunity to learn the process for making photopolymer relief plates from scans of my brush ink drawings. Because the Vandercook is a relief printing press I needed to learn to prepare the photopolymer plates specifically for relief printing. I had already taken an excellent photopolymer etching workshop the year before with Nancy Diessner at Zea Mays, and she kindly agreed to give me

a private lesson on the relief plate process at her studio.

Because of my long experience as a printmaker, I found I could use these one-on-one tutorials very efficiently and productively. Thanks to the pressure of a short deadline to get ready for the residency, I was able to discover the effectiveness and economy of individual tutorials for learning a very specific skill, and could look forward to the more general kind of cross pollination and camaraderie, as usually experienced in skill-building workshops with other artists, while at the residency.

In addition, I prepared several hand-carved woodblocks in order to be able to experiment with overlays of carved marks with brush or drawn marks in one image. I gathered different drawing media to experiment with on paper, to be used later for scanning different types of marks. Printed on film, these would be the positives for my photopolymer relief plates.



Julia Shepley printing at Penland School of Craft

As a result of my preparation, I was able to work intensively and fruitfully during the short two-week period of my residency. I appreciated the learning opportunities presented by “letterpress folks”, working around me in the open shop using different methodologies from my own printmaking practice, and enjoyed the anonymity of being an outlier. The printmaking studio was right next door in the same building with some shared equipment and would be my preferable choice if I were to go again because there is a wider range of equipment and types of artwork being done there. However, I was happy to have had the experience of preparing for and working in the Letterpress Studio as an impetus for experimenting with new methods. In addition, the view from the Letterpress Shop of the Smokey Mountains is breathtaking!



Left, *Into the Shadows*, 2018, collaged relief prints on paper and scrim, thread, 16 x12 x .5"

Right, *Light Shadow Corner*, 2018, collaged relief prints on paper
and translucent silk, thread, 16 x 10 x 1.5"

Shown above are images of works done at Penland during the residency, with the following descriptions of two to exemplify my working methods. To make *Lightshadow Corner* I used three photopolymer relief plates made from positive and negative film versions of two scanned drawings. I printed multiple versions on different materials, then layered, folded, cut and tailored them together to create real and implied dimension. The work *Into the Shadows* is comprised of a photopolymer relief print on fabric over a woodcut print on mulberry paper. I created a space between the layers as well as stitched marks on the surface with stiffened knotted thread.

[Julia Shepley website](#)

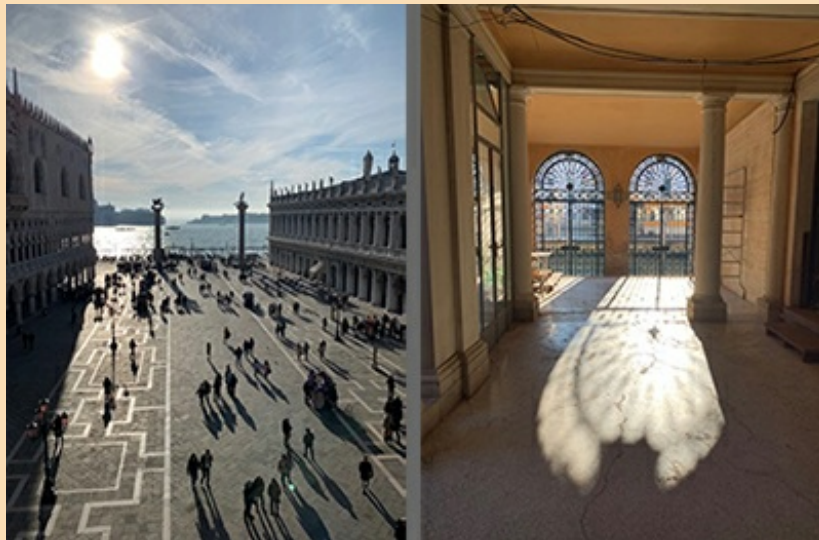
Carolyn Webb, Boston Printmakers Fellowship in Venice

by Carolyn Webb

I was honored to be selected as the 2020 Boston Printmakers Fellow at the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica in Venice. Luckily for me, the date of the residency was changed last summer from February to January. I was able to complete five of the six weeks of the residency and avoid contact with the coronavirus which was suddenly rampant in northern Italy by late January. I am determined to return to the Scuola and complete my last week! If not this winter, the next!

My heart goes out to all the staff, students and artists who welcomed me so kindly at the Scuola. They not only had to endure the terrible November acqua alta floods, but the pandemic came to Italy early and still dominates their lives.

Venice is a visually overwhelming city! There was not one square inch that did not interest me. Here are a few images of my experience.



Above left - Piazza San Marco early morning, January 17, 2020.

Above right - Morning light through the water gate at the 17th Century Palazzo Dandolo Parisi where I was a guest of the generous and talented Matilde Dolcetti, the arts director of the Scuola. The Palazzo is located right at the San Toma vaporetto stop on the Grand Canal. I loved being a daily vaporetto commuter, choosing to ride and look around from the deck at any time of the day or night.



Above - Every day I picked a new favorite Murano chandelier at the Palazzo. There were six, including one flying overhead in my bedroom.



Above - My exhibit (me in orange) at the Scuola Gallery. It was great to share my work with the students and to see the subsequent exhibits.



Above - I was able to visit many churches and museums virtually alone; this is an impossibility during high tourist season! Carpaccio's famous little white dog from the Gallerie dell'Accademia lives on in

nearly every street in Venice to this day.



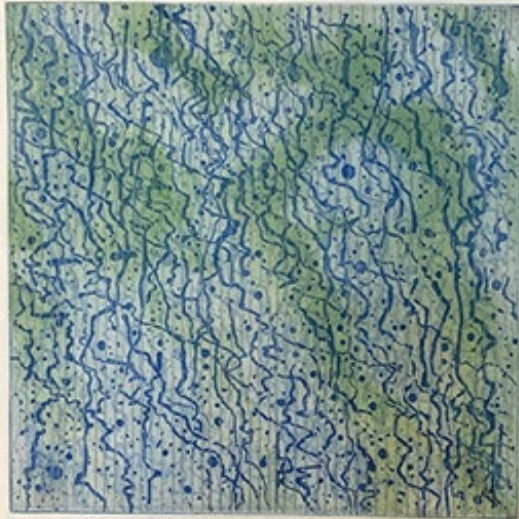
Above left - I taught five workshop sessions using B.I.G. Ground on aluminum plate with copper sulfate etch. Alessia De Bortoli, my teaching assistant and the studio manager, was a nimble translator and problem solver; eager to learn and to share non-toxic printing methods. Here she is with our first etching bath. Perfecto! as she would say!

Above right - My students were enthusiastic and eager to learn. Class time always flew by too quickly!



Above left - I enjoyed Thursday afternoon watercolor classes taught by Matilde (in red at back left) on the giant palazzo dining table with a group of dedicated painters. Four hours of easy silence, sometimes music, pleasant conversation amidst the interesting objects and various papers she would bring to the table. Interrupted of course, by prosecco and cake in the kitchen at break time!

Above right - I made numerous plates, tried different techniques, made a ton of unfinished works; had a bit of an explosion in an idea factory. Here is my workspace in the visiting artist studio with some of the proofs I pulled.



Above - A print I left with the Scuola for their collection, titled *Gibigiana*, a copperplate aquatint, coffee lift on aluminium plate, etched aluminium plate print on Toyo Gampi paper, 6 x 6". *Gibigiana* is a word I learned from my Italian friends/students meaning the dancing play of reflected light on a surface from moving water. I am eager to complete a *Gibigiana Suite* based on the work I did in Venice, just as soon as my "home studio", Zea Mays Printmaking, re-opens.

I will always be grateful to Lorenzo de Castro, the director of the Scuola and his mother Matilde Dolcetti for this amazing Venetian experience. It is clear that their kind of generosity is a life-long passionate habit that has built numerous connections and spawned wonderful creativity throughout the world. As Matilde said to me on my leaving, "This is my favorite way to make friends."

Grazie Mille, as well to the Boston Printmakers for fostering the connection with the Scuola!

[Carolyn Webb Website](#)

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