SOME ASPECTS OF PRINTMAKING

by

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INTRODUCTION

In this study primary emphasis has been placed upon the woodcut and other forms of printmaking by the relief process.

Chapter I deals with certain aspects of the general field of printmaking. Here the writer has defined terms used in subsequent discussion, considered the use of fine printmaking techniques for production of individual or limited numbers of prints rather than the traditional multiple edition, and compared the relative values of manual and mechanical means as used for reproduction of the original print form.

Chapter II is devoted to an analysis of certain qualities found in the woodcuts of three artists. This analysis has been made on the basis of reading and a study of the prints.

Chapter III concerns prints made by the writer during the course of this study. The process of development of these works has been given in some detail, with major emphasis upon the technical handling of materials and experimentation with these techniques.

Some of the original prints discussed in Chapter III have been collected in a portfolio. The other prints, as well as a group of watercolors executed during the same period, have been photographed. Both portfolio and color slides may be found in the College Collection of the library of the Woman's College of the Consolidated University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Since this study has been chiefly confined to two types of material--discussion of technical matters and subjective analysis of

the prints of certain artists--the writer has felt use of footnotes to be unnecessary. A selected bibliography of writings and prints consulted by the writer has been included, and where reference is made to a specific work the source has been indicated by insertion of a number corresponding to the bibliographical listing.

CHAPTER I

PRINTMAKING: DEFINITIONS, TECHNIQUES, METHODS OF HANDLING*

A description of the usual techniques employed in the production of fine prints and definition of some of the terms used in discussing them have been felt essential for clarification of the differences in printmaking procedures and establishment of a basis for subsequent discussion. Since there are a number of technical books which describe in detail the processes involved, the intention has been to limit this portion of the paper to a very brief analysis of these techniques, rather than to attempt any full discussion of them or their variations.

The matter of edition size in terms of the number of prints which might best be made from a specific matrix has been of interest to the writer. It seemed desirable to present her thinking on this subject, in order to explain the approach which she has taken in making the prints discussed in Chapter III.

Relative values of manual and mechanical reproductive methods, and their use in printmaking have been discussed at length, the writer considering this particularly pertinent to any contemporary discussion of prints.

Techniques in fine printmaking. One might define printmaking in its most elementary form as the process by which an initial image is transferred through the application of pressure. Definition of the

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*Source material for this chapter is listed in the Bibliography, Section A.

boundaries of fine printmaking, the field with which this study was concerned, as distinct from printmaking in general, is difficult to make. It has become a general practice for the artist to perform all operations involved in the process, from development of the original matrix through the final stages of printing. However, exceptions to this practice have existed from the inception of printmaking and, as will become evident in subsequent discussion, no rigid delimitation can be applied.

The various print media have generally been divided into four broad classifications based upon techniques employed in creating the matrix (original form) from which the print impression is taken. Una Johnson (4), Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Brooklyn Museum, lists the processes as: stencil, planographic, intaglio, and relief.

The stencil method of the serigrapher involves the blocking out of areas of a fabric, usually silk, which has been stretched upon a frame. To make the silkscreen print (serigraph) a liquid pigment or substance to which pigment may subsequently be adhered is forced through the interstices of the fabric in the open areas upon the surface to be imprinted.

Lithographs are produced by a planographic technique; that is, the surface of the lithographic stone or plate is treated in such a way that certain areas (those drawn or painted on) will absorb the printing ink and the other areas will reject it.

Intaglio techniques, which include engraving and the various types of etchings, are based upon the use of bitten or incised lines or areas. In printing the intaglio plate, the paper is forced into

these recessed portions and their impression is made upon the paper. Inks employed in printing the intaglio must, therefore, be impelled into such areas and wiped from the surface of the plate before printing pressure is applied.

In the relief-process methods the print is taken from the "raised" areas of the plate or block. The woodcut, wood engraving and certain other relief-process techniques retain the original surface of the block with areas which are not to be printed cut away. Relief blocks may also be built up by adhering cardboard or other materials to a support.

Every element in printmaking, materials and techniques, contributes to the final effect. Papers and pigments must be chosen with consideration for their influence. Variations in inking or in printing pressures produce corresponding changes in the print.

Edition size. The capacity of printmaking techniques for producing numbers of nearly identical prints has traditionally been assumed to be not only inherent in the processes but a primary reason for its adoption by the artist as a method of working. Refinements in commercial printing methods, especially the introduction of photographic techniques, have somewhat altered the situation in regard to desirable edition size and have also placed the role of the artist printmaker in a different context. There are now two opposing schools of thought about the desirability of large editions of prints: Jean Charlot (1), expressing one point of view, emphasizes the function of printmaking as a means of creating popular art; Oliver Statler (10), speaking of the work of the contemporary Japanese printmakers, presents

their use of the medium as a creative rather than necessarily a reproductive process. Both these points of view merit respect and the individual artist will choose between them according to his own conception of the role of the artist in society. Another question, closely related to this, concerns the desirability of using machine processes in printmaking and the traditional distinction between "fine" prints and mechanically produced prints, whether this differentiation still has (or ever had) a valid basis.

Comparative values of manual and mechanical methods of handling in printmaking. It has now become possible to reproduce a print by mechanical means so skillfully that, in some cases, one may experience difficulty in determining which one of a pair of prints has been printed by hand and which is a machine product. This situation has raised questions with reference to the actual values of retaining manual operations in certain processes of "fine" printmaking. (Similar questions in other fields of art have been raised by improvements in the industrial processes of manufacture.) Should the efforts of the artist printmaker be reserved for the production of the printing matrix or of the single "perfect" print, and the entire reproductive function be relinquished to industrial methods? The writer has felt that it is impossible to give a simple affirmative or negative answer since, in any specific case a complex of factors determines appropriateness of the particular approach.

In any manual operation uniformity of product is possible only to a limited degree. Where nearly absolute uniformity is desired this

is more easily achieved by, and more suitable to, mechanical rather than manual handling. Also, in production of large numbers of prints the emphasis must necessarily be upon the repetition, not the individual print. Many artist printmakers who personally perform all operations involved in making their prints restrict themselves to production of editions of ten to fifty prints, sometimes even to a single print, and will make at one time only two or three prints. In this way they feel that the emphasis is placed upon the creative rather than the reproductive aspects of the process.

On the other hand, the traditional Japanese approach (now practiced by few Japanese) to the process of printmaking has been that of assembly line production. A team of technicians, each concerned with a single operation in the process, executes the entire printmaking procedure, working to reproduce the artist's sole contribution—a brush drawing. Although all the operations are performed manually, the conception and organization of the productive process is the reproductive and mechanical one of modern industrial methods. At the time they were made, the early Japanese prints were considered artistically inferior to other media because of this mass production approach. Today we find them valuable, not because of their rarity, but for their aesthetic qualities. (A similar point might be made in the case of the early European prints also intended for mass distribution, and, in the more recent period, the popular prints of China and Latin America.) Thus we see that the application of mass production methods is no recent development in the field of printmaking, and that such an approach does not necessarily preclude aesthetic value.

Each approach to printmaking has its own virtues and also its limitations. The final product of a mechanical method is completely bound by the model from which it works, and its successful use is dependent upon the accuracy with which translation from the original is made. Once the machinery for production has been set up and put into operation any departure or variation from this ideal is accidental and undesirable in the context of this approach. To deliberately attempt to produce by mechanical means a series of non-identical objects would be a violation of character of the means employed.

In the handmade product, on the other hand, variation is inevitable. The sensitivity of the artist to his tools and materials should not be limited to the initial stages of the process, but should remain operative throughout the entire course of the printmaking process. Each print then becomes, to a degree, an individual creation distinct from (though related to) every other print from the same block.

The writer believes that the special respect accorded the handmade product is not based only upon extrinsic criteria of rarity or exclusiveness, but is founded upon a very real quality possessed by the product of manual handling and denied by its nature to the machine or mechanical product. This peculiar quality, whether overt or obscure, enables the person who views and handles the work to experience a more vivid awareness of its attributes, of the materials from which it has been shaped, and of the tools and techniques employed in its creation. One might describe this response as a communion also with the creator of the work, a sense of his presence in the body of the work or of his

imprint upon it. Thus, the individually created print possesses a potential source of aesthetic experience which is absent from the mechanical product.

Each of the printmaking techniques has its special requirements; some media lend themselves relatively easily to mechanical reproduction, others lose so much in the process of translation that they are better suited to individual handling. However, the relative importance of this factor depends also upon the manner in which the individual artist handles his materials. In general, the highly polished surface of the lithographic stone or the end-grain block employed by the wood engraver would seem, equally with the uniform coarseness of the linoleum block, to admit of few variations in the final printing and thus, be more compatible with machine processes than, for example, the rough plank-grain wood employed by some woodcut artists. Along the same lines there has been, from their inception, a tendency to have those types of fine printmaking which require relatively heavy pressure for printing (and, therefore, use of a printing press of some sort) handled in this final stage by technicians working with the artist, rather than by the artist alone.

One example might serve to clarify the way in which the artist's approach to the particular medium determines applicability of mechanical handling. In the field of woodcut, one artist may seek uniformity of tone in the printed areas and, hence, choose a smooth-surfaced block, lay the pigment on in a consistent film, and print with careful attention to even pressure; another artist wishing a variety of tone might employ a

rough-surfaced block and apply pigment and pressure in a manner calculated to emphasize its unevenness. The latter approach would demand manual handling, the former would be consistent with the use of mechanical means for execution of some operations in the process.

Thus we see that, for some purposes, mechanical methods are superior; for other purposes the requirements can only be adequately fulfilled by a limited edition of prints produced by the artist performing all operations involved in the process. Determination of the method to be employed in handling the reproductive portions of the printmaking process must be based upon the specific factors operative in each individual case.

Since this is not a choice between superior and inferior techniques, resort to the use of either method does not necessarily imply any lowering of standards. Use of the machine should not be regarded as a shortcut but as the addition of another tool; manual handling is no justification for a slipshod approach to the process. If, for example, optimum results in making a specific print can only be achieved by a succession of printings with thin layers of pigment, one cannot substitute a single printing with a thicker layer of pigment without loss of quality; this will be true whether one is performing these operations manually or is using mechanical aids. The same general rule applies to all printmaking operations, the requirements remain the same whatever the means employed. (This is not meant to imply that a controlled use of "accidentals" is undesirable, a certain freedom in handling the materials and processes can be very effective but requires

exercise of discrimination on the part of the artist and rejection of work, perhaps more often than would be necessary with the more rigid approach.)

CHAPTER II

ASPECTS OF LIFE EXPRESSED THROUGH THREE ARTISTS' WOODCUTS*

No artist develops in isolation; everything which affects him also affects his work. Among these formative experiences must be included the impact of the works of other artists. The effect conveyed by a work of art is determined not only by the expressive intentions of the artist, but also by latent content of which the artist may be unconscious, and finally by that which the viewer discovers in it. Each individual will respond differently since the work of art is not only, figuratively speaking, a window through which one may see, but is also a mirror reflecting the seer.

The three artists discussed here (Gauguin, Kollwitz, and Munch) are allied not only in their choice of woodcut as one of their media, but also the writer feels by an expression in their work of intensely experienced life. They possess in common an awareness of and sensitivity to human emotion (though Munch's was chiefly an introverted view), and their prints are an expression of this. Not that these artists were unconcerned with the apparent formal values of the work of art, but that their emphasis was placed upon essential emotional expression. The intention in this chapter has been to show through study of the individual artist's woodcuts how this has been effected. The material upon which this discussion is based has been partially derived from readings which include the writings of the artists them-

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*Source material for this chapter is listed in the Bibliography, Section B.

selves; however, emphasis has been placed upon the artists' works as being the truest statement. Since this is a personal interpretation, in the main, the writer can speak with authority only as it relates to her own experience.

In attempting to discuss the content of works of art, one inevitably rediscovers the inadequacy of verbal language for translating another medium. What may be comprehensible to one experiencing the work itself, becomes almost undecipherable when set down for the reader. Either one presents it baldly and oversimplifies, or else one is forced to elaborate and go on at such length that the original impact is lost. The reader is therefore urged to refer to the prints themselves, rather than depend solely upon this written word.

An approach to printmaking. In many ways the artists to be discussed are quite different; the writer feels, however, that they share a common concern with life which, despite their obvious dissimilarities, is essential to the work of them all and a vital element in the content of their prints. All are tied to the "substantial," the corporeal element of life. They are sensitive to the vitality of material things and to the force of human emotions, to life in its elemental aspects. This reveals itself not only through the subject matter of their prints, but also in their handling of the tools and the materials with which they work. Their approach is not that of subjecting the materials to the artist's will, but of working with and through these materials, so that in the final print this becomes an integral part of the total statement.

Paul Gauguin. One of the first of a number of artists who, in the latter portion of the nineteenth century, found in the woodcut, (neglected in Europe for several centuries as a major art form) a means compatible with what they wished to express, was Paul Gauguin (1848-1903). Though Gauguin had made a successful career in the French business world and also gained some recognition as an artist, a profound dissatisfaction with this mode of life compelled him to abandon it and he turned to the primitive society of the Polynesians. During his years on the island of Tahiti he executed a number of woodcuts which are expressive of the animistic view of life peculiar to such a culture. All the components of primitive man's world are presented to us as vital entities: rocks, trees, the land, the very atmosphere, and man himself, all are moved by the same unknowable forces. One feels the passions and also the passiveness of man, who is not master of his fate but subject to that which created him and by which he will be destroyed.

Gauguin's choice of the woodcut medium in particular (among his other media) seems almost inevitable. Here is a direct method of working, a material produced by nature, and one of man's primary tools, the knife. In woodcut as practiced on the rough plankgrain* there is little room for sophistication or pettiness. One can force the wood into forms alien to its nature, yet its very roughness and resistance to such uses force the craftsman to approach it with respect, to consider it an entity to be persuaded rather than subdued. The artist

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*There is some disagreement about the type of woodblock which Gauguin used; however, the manner of working is that of woodcut. (11, 17, 22)

responds to the material as he induces the material to respond to his own will. Gauguin conveys through his prints, not only the world depicted, but also the means by which his representation has been achieved. One is aware of the material, and of the cutting, scraping, rasping, and sanding employed in shaping the wood; aware also of the colors of the pigments as light coming through, piercing the darkness of other colors; and of the pressures imposed upon the elements to weld them into a dynamic whole. The writer feels that in his prints, Gauguin's techniques for handling the materials are expressive elements of importance equal to the forms, lines, and relationships shaped from them in creating the totality, the content, of the work.

Kathe Kollwitz. The world of Kathe Kollwitz's prints seems far removed from that of Gauguin. Her subjects are the peasants and the city workers of the industrialized Germany of her time (1867-1945), and of the period of unrest immediately preceding, when the changing economic situation had so affected the lives of these people. Concerned with social questions, she dedicated her art to expressions of concern and of protest against repression, war and poverty, as well as to presentations of the gentler relations between parent and child, and treatments of the theme of death in its many aspects. Though by upbringing and financial circumstances Kollwitz was not a member of the poorest class, her sympathies were with them in their sufferings and struggles. Her identification with them enabled her to express their feelings; perhaps the fact that she was not really one of them as Gauguin could never really see life as a Polynesian, enabled her to

state their case more clearly than if she had actually been one of them in fact as well as in sentiment.

Kollwitz's woodcuts display little of the freedom of handling the materials which one finds in Gauguin's work. The treatment is more deliberate, yet no less valid for the medium. Her prints are solely black and white, and the emphasis is entirely upon the figures, where there is any indication of background it is chiefly used to create a setting for the figures. She has used a minimum of such techniques as roughened printing areas, "accidental" inking in the cut-away areas, and ragged-edged cuts. One feels that in using such, she has employed them with great care and attention to the final effect; nothing is superfluous. These prints are never simple propaganda statements, nor are they merely representational or narrative in content. The black forms and the starkly white lines carry a double weight, they are not only descriptive but also expressive. As much as facial contours and body posture, the formative elements through which they are presented convey the meanings of the print, the content of her printslies in the presentation of her subject matter as much as in what is presented.

Edvard Munch. The Norwegian, Edvard Munch (1864-1944) was a contemporary of Kathe Kollwitz and spent several years in the city of Berlin, yet a study of his woodcuts reveals a world far removed from hers. Deeply involved in the social and intellectual upheavals of the late nineteenth century, Munch presents them as they were reflected in himself, his personal insecurities and anxieties. Due to the nature of his subject matter, his emphasis upon psychological states, some of his

early work in woodcut is heavily symbolic with meaning sometimes obscure and sometimes quite obvious. In his later work Munch's mastery of technique and perhaps more controlled approach enabled him to express himself more through his handling of materials and processes and less in literary terms. After Munch's treatment in a Copenhagen sanitarium (1908-09) he had withdrawn from active participation in the intellectual and artistic movements of the period and devoted himself to a rather solitary life, seeing friends occasionally but no longer immediately involved in current events. This mode of life, continued until his death in 1944, perhaps is partially responsible for the broader view of humanity expressed in his later work which repeats some of his earlier themes but in a quieter and less obsessive manner.

Munch carried further the expressive use of materials and techniques peculiar to woodcut already initiated by Gauguin. He utilized the surface textures inherent in the plankgrain wood in many of his works to achieve a variation in value and texture, and used the knife expressively rather than simply descriptively. The writer has not been able through reading to determine how he achieved some of his other effects, but study of his reproduced prints and her own experience in woodcut have suggested certain methods of procedure: variations in inking and in printing pressures, wiping ink into the cutout portions of the block to reveal tool marks in these areas and to add variations in tone, and making multiple impressions from the same block with alterations in inking and registry within the single print.

More than any of his technical innovations, however, Munch's free way of handling the materials and processes, and his emphasis upon the introspective were suggestive for printmakers (as well as for artists in other media) of his period and later.

CHAPTER III

A GROUP OF THE WRITER'S PRINTS

A group of prints executed by the relief process of printmaking has been produced by the writer during the course of this study. The majority are woodcuts but some have included other materials in addition to the basic woodblock. In this portion of the paper the writer has given an account of her general approach to the medium, referring to certain influences upon her method of working, and has discussed how the individual prints were developed.

Approach taken by the printmaker. From her first contact with the medium, the writer has felt a particular satisfaction in working with woodcut. The demands of processes and materials exercise both a restraining and a suggestive influence upon the development of the print, and apparently she produces her most effective work under such conditions, rather than those of more pliant media. The writer has felt it necessary to acquire a control of the techniques which would enable her to produce uniformly printed areas, and to print from a single block or a group of blocks an edition of several nearly identical prints; her preference, however, is not for a rigidly controlled approach to the medium. She prefers to exercise only a tentative control over the development of the print form (directing rather than forcing), utilizing variations in the surface texture of the rough plankgrain block due to sawing, exposure to moisture, and other causes, allowing the wood grain to influence the cutting and the

resultant character of line and form, and making use of the "accidental," only partially controllable, effects produced by variations in application of pigments and in printing pressures.

The writer feels that some of the printmakers most influential in her own development have been those referred to in Chapter II: Gauguin, Kollwitz, and Munch. Suggestions of techniques new to her have also been found in writings about the work of others in the field (3, 4, 6). Finally, a particular influence in helping to clarify her own thinking about printmaking has been the work and statements of the contemporary Japanese working in "hanga" as these are presented in Oliver Statler's book (10).

In this section the writer has explained by discussion of the techniques and processes of creation how the prints in this study developed. There has been in some cases an attempt also to discuss the intention of the printmaker in terms of content, or the interpretation by her of content perceived on completion of the print. For clarity, in discussing particular areas of the block worked upon, the writer has located them as they appeared in the print rather than by their reversed position on the block.

have Print 1 - Seated Figure. This woodcut originated in the remembered mood of a trip to the mountains, the atmosphere of late autumn with its fading colors and sense of departure. The irregularly cut form of a block of plywood suggested its use for the representation of a friend with whom this trip had been made, in the position in which the writer had sketched her at the time.

For directness, the artist originally intended to confine the print to black on white; work was therefore restricted to the single block. As work on the block progressed, a tendency of the wood to splinter, especially when cut with the square-ended chisel, gave the lines a jagged quality which seemed to suggest a melancholy not intended in the original conception. Since this effect was not alien to the work but appeared to be the expression of a feeling previously subconscious, the printmaker decided to abandon further use of the curved gouge by which she had cut most of the background and portions of the figure, and use only the chisel and a gouge with a v-shaped cutting edge to finish carving the figure.

When the writer felt that the major cutting had been completed she made a trial proof of the block, Print 1 (trial proof). At this time she discovered that a general working over of the entire surface of the block had resulted in a total impression in which the figure was almost obscured as a form. For this reason, after additional cutting and another trial proof, most of the upper background was blocked off by a paper stencil, a minimum of ink was applied to the small portion left exposed near the head and shoulders of the figure, and a lighter pressure was used in printing this area. By this means the figure was restored to its original importance in Print 1(a).

Since the writer was not completely satisfied with the print in this form, additional prints were made in color, using the paper stencil to block out areas as new colors were added. When the printmaker felt that a satisfactory sequence of printings had been found, she made a

final edition of this print. For the first few printings in each color, she again employed a paper stencil to block out undesired areas; these areas were then cut away and several additional printings of the color made. The prints made by these two methods differed somewhat, the blocking-out method producing a less sharply defined edge in Print 1(b) because of difficulty in maintaining the position of the stencil, and the cut block, a more distinct contrast in Print 1(c).

In spite of the varied printing treatment of this block, the writer feels that none of the prints are entirely successful. The addition of color (which was made several months after the original printing) reinforced the mood intended, but the original cutting of the block had been too greatly restricted by the sketch on which it had been based. Since the block had been completely destroyed in the final color printing, she now felt free to cut a new block, Print 10, which will be discussed in its place.

Print 2 - Colloquy. This print was made from two blocks of plankgrain pine. When one of the blocks was used in testing inks for another print, the printmaker noticed that after several applications of ink the grain figure in the wood became more prominent, the harder summerwood area rising slightly higher on the surface than the more absorbent springwood. The block was inked and a print was made which showed the expected variation in texture due to uneven surface. Since the writer wished to utilize this effect but was reluctant to confine the print to the small block, she decided to use both blocks together, cutting and printing them as a single block. In planning the form

which this print was to take, the printmaker's first consideration was to work out a composition which would carry across the division in the center of the block, and secondly, to retain much of the grain texture. Subject matter was not definitely decided upon except that there would be a figure in the right hand area of the print. To place this figure in such a restricted space without making it quite small seemed to require a seated, bending, or otherwise flexed position. From this necessity and the decision to carry lines across the blocks in upper and lower areas, the kneeling figure and the overhanging drapery evolved. The figure was outlined in white and a second figure was similarly cut out on the far edge of the opposite block. When the blocks had been inked it became obvious, without printing the blocks, that the excessive darkness would not produce a satisfactory effect. The square-ended chisel and v-shaped gouge used up to this point were laid aside, and a curved gouge was employed to clear out certain areas. In working around and into the form on the left, which had been somewhat undefined in the printmaker's mind as well as on the block, the writer became aware that a change was taking place. From this point on the working was not controlled by any considerations except those which the blocks seemed to demand, almost as though the forms were developing themselves. The white-line character of the figure on the left disappeared as a more powerful form took its place. After some additional cutting on the right-hand figure, the square-ended chisel was rocked across the area surrounding the figure on the left, lightening it to a grey tone. When a small portion of this area had been entirely cut away, the printmaker,

to whom each step had seemed inevitable up to this point, became uncertain and could no longer see what needed to be done. She therefore decided to make a trial proof with the hope that this might suggest a method of completing the work. The initial proof was made on thick white Hosho paper and the starkness of the resultant print was so unpleasant that the blocks were almost discarded. However, a single sheet of rather coarse paper (purchased several years before and left unused because no woodcut had seemed suitable for its yellowish tinge and hard surface) suggested itself as possibly compatible with this strange print. When the writer had printed this single impression, she felt her work was complete and no other prints have been made from these blocks.

It has not been possible to discover the significance of this print, though the writer feels that it does hold some meaning for her. The forms seemed to develop of themselves from the materials at hand and though it may be inferred that something within the printmaker's mind did exercise a measure of control over this development, the forces which produced it are not clear to her.

have Print 3 - Fantasy. The third print of the series, though based on a block of cedar, is not in the strictest sense a woodcut since the printmaker (as in certain earlier prints) used a liquid cement (DuPont Duco) to create certain forms on the surface of the block, in addition to the conventional cutting of the wood. In some way this technique seemed appropriate to express the rather hectic and humorous, yet also serious, mood in which this particular work was undertaken.

The cement was dribbled across the board in a series of sweeping loops, most of which sank into the wood. Certain of the original lines were built up by additional coats of cement which gave a blobby character to some areas. Parts of the block were then sanded and other parts cut away with a large round gouge, used to take a full cut and also turned on its side for thinner lines.

Ink had to be applied in several coats to the slick cemented areas though the wood surface took the initial inking quite smoothly. Due to the variations in inking and the irregularity of the surface, each print made from this block differed noticeably from every other.

Print 4 - Color Forms 1959. Print 4 (brayer sketch) was made in order to work out the composition before cutting into the woodblock. An impression was made of the uncut block and this print was then worked on directly with the inked brayer.

From that sketch, Print 4(a) developed. The uncut block was again printed, using the thin Troya paper of the sketch and also a heavier Hosho paper. Since the Hosho was quite absorbent it required a second printing of the first color, otherwise it was handled in the same manner as the Troya prints. The woodblock was cut and certain areas masked so that ink was applied to only a portion of the block. After printing additional cuts were made and another color applied. This printing was carried through six stages and the print on Hosho paper seemed finished.

Since the Troya prints were not satisfactory, they were laid aside for a time. When the printmaker noticed the effect of this print being laid over another print in which a heavy woodgrain line had been

used, a possible solution suggested itself. Print 4(b) was made by cutting a new block and printing this on the reverse side of the Troya paper prints.

With the sole exception of the final printing in Print 4(b) all inks used in Prints 4(a) and 4(b) were mixed with extender. This is a transparent medium made by R. Shiva and normally used in small amounts to stretch a given quantity of ink to cover more area than usual. In this instance the printmaker wanted to render the inks lighter without adding white and thus making them somewhat more opaque. She therefore employed equal proportions of ink and extender. This addition kept the inks moist far longer than usual and though the printing required several days each additional color was therefore applied to a surface which was still damp. The writer found the resultant blending of color desirable but the oily surface quality unpleasant.

Print 5 - Episode with Two Figures. Certain portions of the grain pattern of this piece of Douglas fir plywood suggested a landscape to the writer. The character of the foreground, and perhaps thoughts of approaching summer, determined its development as a seashore scene. Originally this was conceived as a peaceful group of three children, one seated and two playing tag, with a small area of ocean visible above the dunes and a quiet pool of water in the foreground. The seated figure by the pool was discarded since its position made it overly important and the major portion of the block was cut as planned. After working out most of the composition, the writer decided to make a trial proof before cutting into the area which forms the lower left part of the print. This

proof revealed a complete alteration in feeling from the original conception. This change seemed due partially to the effect on the printmaker of the extremely active grain pattern in the upper area which had influenced her cutting in such a way that an unintended dramatic treatment had been given the sky, clouds, and sun. Even more important than this, the uncut area assumed the character of the sea and seemed to be rushing formward to engulf the neglected toy and wash about the feet of the nearest figure. Because of the strong movement in these two areas the two figures, instead of moving gently across the beach appeared frozen at the point preceding action. This combination of unintended effects produced a sense of tension quite contrary to the original intention of the writer. However, she decided that rather than attempting to restore the earlier scene, she would clarify and enforce the tendencies which were now evident. Therefore, she cut out only a small area on the left to soften the impact of the dark water form, cleaned out some overly fussy lines in the figures and in other areas and printed the block in its new character.

It seems unlikely to the writer that such a drastic revision is purely due to accident, but she cannot explain what the causes might have been other than those mentioned. The tension present in this print's final version seems unwarranted by the apparent features of the event depicted, which suggests that there are some unexplained circumstances behind the visible ones.

have Print 6 - Textures and Movement of Light. Basic influences in developing this print were a pottery form and the woodblock, a weather-

beaten piece of plywood. The outline of a ceramic vase seen earlier was sketched almost in the center of the block. It was placed in relation to the textures of the wood surface, the base projecting into the rough area in the lower portion of the block and the neck rising between two slightly irregular areas in the upper portion. This lower portion of the block had become splintery because of water soaking into it; the textures already present were modified by partial sanding and gouging out, and a fine v-blade gouge was used in other parts of the block to create related textural areas. A prominent knothold in the upper portion of the block was cut around and partially into so that its form could be incorporated with the rest of the composition. The central shape, based on the ceramic form, was carved out by a series of short cuts in the upper section and longer cuts toward the base. The dark area incorporated in the base developed into a related bottle shape. To separate the large form from the background, a wide area was cut around one side and a narrower area opposite. Repetitions of the forms and textures were developed in the process of cutting over the surface of the block. After a trial proof and some minor additional cutting, the final print was made.

have Print 7 - Encounter. Birch plywood was used in making this print. The extreme hardness of the wood made it somewhat difficult to cut and also provided a surface so firm that the water base ink (used here for the first time in this series) was not absorbed. In order to cut the fine lines in the figure in the center of the block the printmaker used a curved rasp which was also employed in texturing the right-hand area.

The paper which had previously been sized and dampened for use

with the water base ink was quite responsive to the pressures of the raised portions of the block. However, it absorbed the ink (which had been applied heavily due to the hard wood surface mentioned above) so well that an extremely strong black was produced. In the final printing the printmaker avoided an excessively dark print by applying the ink, pressing a sheet of paper lightly over the entire surface of the block and removing it; the paper to be printed was then placed on the block and the print was made from the ink still remaining on the surface.

Print 8 - Wood Textures 1959. In the course of this study the writer experimented with the use of water base inks. Their effect when overprinted was similar to that achieved in an earlier print, Print 4, with extender mixed into the oil base inks except that they did not have the oily glazed surface. Print 7, Encounter, was printed in black only and did not differ greatly from the thin oil base ink used in other prints. Print 8 was conceived in terms of the special qualities of water base colors when overprinted on dampened papers, their blending with each other and mat, or non-glossy, surface.

The composition utilized contrasting textures of different types of wood. These blocks were treated in various ways to bring out their individual textures. Dampened mahogany scoured with a wire brush to remove the softer portions exhibited a series of straight parallel lines. Pine blocks, after soaking in water to raise the surface, were scraped, cut, and sanded to produce a series of broader lines which printed with a variation of values. Other blocks used were textured with a rasp and various pointed objects as well as the gouge and woodcut knife.

have Print 9 - Color Print 1959. This print was similar to Print 8 in its emphasis upon wood texture and water base inks overprinted. However, it was made from a single block of Douglas fir plywood with a conspicuous grain pattern; white was mixed with all colors used; and ink was applied to the block with a brush as well as with the brayer. One side of the block was used for the background colors, the pinkish tone applied to the whole area and printed first. After cleaning the block, the blue and yellow ink were applied freely to the block and printed.

The reverse side of the block had been cut previously, and while the background colors were still damp, this block was printed into them. Ink was applied to the head, body and texture on the left with a brayer, then additional color was brushed on the block in the head and textured area and also to the outline of the arm and the print was made.

The writer felt that her use of color in this print was the most satisfactory of any up to this time.

have Print 10 - Recollection of Autumn. In writing on Print 1, Seated Figure, the printmaker mentioned her intention of reworking the original idea of that print. The quite different treatment in this woodcut resulted from a changed approach to the working out of the figure. In this print only a very crude sketch was placed on the block and the cutting was worked out more in terms of the woodblock itself. Since the proportions of the block were not the same as the original block, the placement of the figure and treatment of the background changed. The writer feels that this is a more successful print than the earlier one because of the freer approach and the greater use of the wood in its own character rather than imposing upon the block a design which had been worked out in another medium.

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