

GALLERY STRATFORD

STONE, PAPER, INK, PRINTS FROM THE 70's, 80's and 90's

April 11 – June 6, 2010

Guest Curator: Carla Garnet

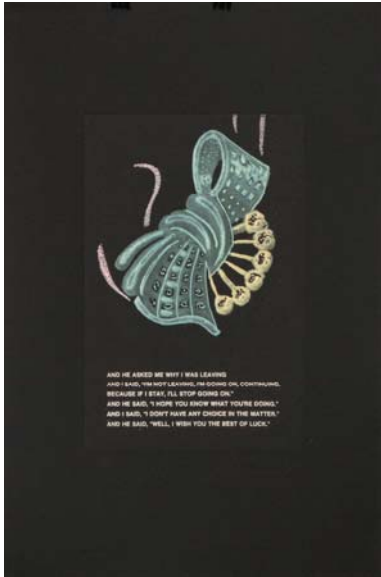
Gallery Stratford's collection show, **STONE, PAPER, INK** features etchings by **Les Levine** and **J. C. Heywood**, as well as stone and wood cut multiples by **Otis Tamasauskas** and **Harold Klunder**.

By showcasing the artists' engagement with early 20th century collage strategies, colour, technique and the possibilities of pressing ink on paper, this installation of fifteen prints playfully reveals the double potential of images to operate as both abstract signs and representational pictures encoded with history.

The exhibition title, **STONE, PAPER, INK**, is borrowed from the children's game **ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS**. On one hand, the title works to bring attention to the materials used to make the fine art prints; and on the other hand, the title mocks, as well as redeems, the artists for their use of outmoded mechanical printing and Cubist collage techniques.

Cubist collage is discussed as an art historical term and an ongoing practice with respect to the four artists' work because the categorical proposition, which applies to the first 20th century appearances of words (newspapers, poems or bus tickets) in artwork, also applies to the contemporary process of juxtapositioning diversely sourced images (fine art reproductions, advertisements, and posters, etc.) to create compositions that show new points of view.

With both Cubist collage and printmaking in mind, **STONE, PAPER, INK, PRINTS** explores how juxtaposition can be used to send messages simply by placing specific images side-by-side. This offers a look at what, and to some extent why, Levine, Heywood, Tamasauskas and Klunder combine a variety of antique reproduction techniques with collage principles in order to impart imaginative energy to the act and form of printing an edition.



Les Levine, Diamond Brooch Series, 1979
Etching 31 "H x 21"W

Dublin-born, New-York based conceptual artist, Les Levine's prints include representations of brooches in metallic colours on a black ground. These 1979 etchings could almost be mistaken for velvet paintings. Each print shows a highly detailed metallic floral form encrusted with cut gems occupying the upper two thirds of a dark velvety field, while the melodramatic text below takes up the lower third:

And he asked me why I was leaving, and I said, I'm not leaving, I'm going on, continuing. Because if I stay, I'll stop going on. And he said, I hope you know what you're doing. And I said, I don't have any choice in the matter. And he said, Well, in that case I wish you the best of luck.

Without possessing previous knowledge of Levine's conceptual practice these etchings may appear to be a straight forward comment about soap opera and art-making using jewels as a metaphor. However, even if you don't know about Levine's conceptual multi-media installation and performance practice, the jeweler's symbolism is so flowery that it becomes clear: the artist is parodying the object, "high art" for its own ambitions by exploring "low art" or advertising space, which juxtaposes image and text to sell. What makes Levine's Diamond Brooch series exciting is this double operation, that of mocking; and through mockery, redeeming the artwork as visual space, which may allow viewers to think about the power and influence of juxtaposing images.



J. C. Heywood
Braque Variations I to IV (1984)
4 Etchings
100 X 75 cm each

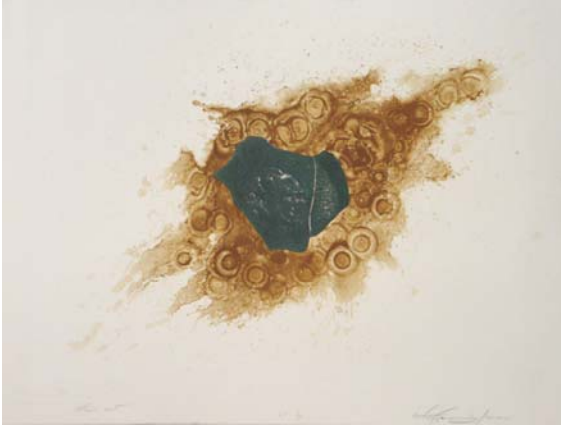
Montreal-based master print maker, John Carl Heywood, studied at the Ontario College of Art in Toronto from 1959-63, and at Hayter's Atelier 17 in Paris, France, from 1967-69. In an interview with the University of Alberta's celebrated Professor Emeriti, Walter Jule, Heywood recalls that the Paris studio was an exhilarating place to be. It was during his time there that Heywood learned about how Picasso and Braque invented collage early in the 20th century as a way of forcing together visual experiences that didn't belong together.¹

By integrating collage, a Cubist metaphor for pictorial incongruity or rupture, into his practice Heywood also incorporates Jacques Ranciere's theoretical principle of the 'reversible equivalence between the silence of images and what they say'. Ranciere explains: "Both play on the same inter-convertibility between two potentialities of the image: the image as raw material presence and the image as discourse encoding history."² This principle is instrumental to collage, which depends on the selection of incongruent images and their organization into unexpected patterns to make new meaning(s).

Heywood's suite of lyrical photo-engravings entitled "Braque Variations II to IV" (1984) on display in STONE, PAPER, INK, further demonstrate how etching techniques can be used to act as a unifying field transmuting disparate parts into compositions that appear to be seamless and meaningful in their entirety.

¹ <http://www.jcheywood.com/pages/artindex.html>

² Jacques Ranciere, *The Future of the Image*, Verso Books, London/New York, 2007, pp



Otis Tamasukas
Stone Cut 1998
4 prints

Born 1947 in Terscheneuth Germany, Otis Tamasauskas is a master printer who has assumed the role of Director of Etching at Open Studio, Toronto, and Fine Art Professor at McMaster University, Hamilton, University of Toronto and Queen's University, Kingston.³

Working on a litho stone Tamasaukas builds his image up layer by layer, often incorporating found objects (pelts, clumps of horsehair, and wood panels) by integrating rapidly changing successions of negations, which effectively efface the memory of the layer before each time the printer wipes the slate clean to roll out a new layer of colour.

Most immediately Tamasaukas' litho-prints operate on an abstract level as wall art, but closely viewed, his formally conceived positive/negative compositions reveal evidence of the residual influence of Cubist skepticism towards 'Impressionisms' insistence on 'retinal' and 'naturalist' colour, which originally lead to the idea of giving up the idea of pictorial realism all together.

At this point, 'the end of images' is understood as a historical project that is behind the concept of modern art that came about between the time of Symbolism and that of Constructivism (1880's and the 1920's). Art historians now realize that art since that time has not so much been released from images but from old ideas about representation. The corollary of a Cubist call for a tabula rasa was to free artists from conceptual and visual realism.

³ <http://art-history.concordia.ca/eea/artists/tamasauskas.html>



Harold Klunder, Untitled (crucifixion) 1999
4-color woodcut, 30 x 42 inches

Born in 1943, in Netherlands, Harold Klunder is a senior Canadian artist known for combing elements of abstraction with the visceral presence of art media and physicality of process, and in so doing, permitting the frequently rendered image(s) of beauty that may be described as a trace of the true. This claim could be ascribed to Klunder's three untitled woodcuts on display here.

Each print clearly shows the artist's exercise of engraving crosshatch lines into a wood plate to differentiate tonal values, add volume and create form, while also enhancing the edgy affect of the work on paper's iconic composition. Printing with a fictional palette of yellow, orange, olive green and black; these four-colour woodcuts depict abstracted and stylized engravings of a crucifixion, a face with figure holding an eye, and a head with a figure in the upper left, respectively. At the same time that Klunder's Untitled (crucifixion) can be linked to expressionist artist Georges Rouault's, *Ecce homo*, Klunder's work, as an outcome of incorporating a variety of images such as a tree, an angel, a goat's head and random abstract shapes around the central figure, also references early Christian icons and Cubist collage.

The selection of fifteen prints, spanning three decades, that comprise *STONE, PAPER, INK*, brightly explore how printmakers Levine, Heywood, Tamasauskas and Klunder utilize early 20th century collage concepts, fictive colour, and printmaking processes to make works that by simply placing certain images side-by-side re-sequence reality, returning it to its precarious nature, if only for a brief moment.

Carla Garnet, A.O.C.A., M.A.
Guest Curator

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