

NORTON SIMON MUSEUM FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Proof: The Rise of Printmaking in Southern California

October 1, 2011–April 2, 2012

Pasadena, CA—The Norton Simon Museum presents *Proof: The Rise of Printmaking in Southern California*, an exhibition that explores the significance of printmaking and its new possibilities as first re-envisioned in Southern California in the mid-20th century. Drawing from the Museum’s extensive print collection and a few select loans, the exhibition includes approximately 150 prints, portfolios and multiples, including works by the local founders of the movement, such as John Altoon, Garo Antreasian, Richard Diebenkorn, Sam Francis, Ed Moses, Ken Price, Ed Ruscha and June Wayne. *Proof* also includes works by a significant number of artists who traveled west to print specifically in Los Angeles, such as Josef Albers, Louise Nevelson, Claes Oldenburg and Robert Rauschenberg.



Sam Francis (American, 1923–1994)
An 8 Set - 3 from the *Pasadena Box*, 1963
Lithograph
Sheet: 15 x 11 1/4 in. (38.1 x 28.6 cm)
Printed by Joe Zirker at Joseph Press, Published
by the Pasadena Art Museum
Norton Simon Museum, Gift of the Pasadena Art
Alliance, 1966
© 2011 Sam Francis Foundation, California
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Printmaking had for centuries been explored by painters and sculptors alike—most notably Rembrandt van Rijn, Francisco de Goya y Lucientes and Pablo Picasso—but it was not embraced by the 20th-century American avant-garde, though there were a few exceptions. In 1960, Los Angeles-based artist June Wayne took it upon herself to “create a pool of master artisan-printers in the United States.” These words were spoken at the founding of the Tamarind Lithography Workshop in Los Angeles by Wayne, who, through her dedication and hard work, created a workshop that would educate printers, artists, curators and collectors alike. Indeed, Tamarind sparked a renaissance in the graphic arts—a revival that spread well beyond Los Angeles and the medium of lithography. In the next few decades, all methods of printmaking would be established and legitimized as viable and valuable forms of art making.

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Throughout the 1960s, Tamarind opened its doors to artists both experienced and inexperienced in printmaking. Many world-renowned painters and sculptors made the journey to Los Angeles to learn the craft at Tamarind. The artists' two-month fellowships were staggered so that no two artists were new at the same time. Wayne established the editioning of prints so that twenty from each edition went to the artist, and nine went to Tamarind. In this way, the workshop was able to donate a complete set of every work it produced to nine public institutions, thereby spreading the knowledge of printmaking and building enthusiasm for the medium among curators and collectors. The Norton Simon Museum is home to a near-complete set of prints created at the Tamarind Lithography Workshop, and *Proof: The Rise of Printmaking in Southern California* features nearly 70 of these works. The artists represented range from John Altoon, Billy Al Bengston, Vija Celmins, Bruce Conner, Richard Diebenkorn, Sam Francis, David Hockney, Ed Moses, Lee Mullican, Louise Nevelson, Ed Ruscha, and Norman Zammitt, to June Wayne herself.

In addition to works from Tamarind, the exhibition includes prints created at Gemini G.E.L., a lithography workshop established in Los Angeles in 1966 by master printer Ken Tyler and business partners Sidney Felsen and Stanley Grinstein. During its first decade, Gemini was known for working with East Coast-based artists, and the exhibition features works by Ellsworth Kelly, Claes Oldenburg, Robert Rauschenberg and Frank Stella. *Proof* also features a select group of prints created at Cirrus Editions, which was founded in 1970 by Jean Milant after his nearly two-year tenure as a printer at Tamarind. Unlike Gemini, Cirrus focused on Los Angeles-based artists. In this exhibition, works by John Baldessari, Chris Burden, Charles Christopher Hill and Greg Card are featured. Finally, several important examples of early local etching, screenprinting and lithography are presented, including works from the 1920s through the 1950s by such artists as Clinton Adams, Leonard Edmondson, Ynez Johnston, Paul Landacre and Rico LeBrun. All of the artworks have been selected to illustrate the variety of materials employed by artists, including ink on paper, acetate and uncommon synthetics, as well as the variety of forms, including portfolios, photolithos and three-dimensional prints. Special attention has been given to both artists and printers.

Altogether, the artworks featured in *Proof: The Rise of Printmaking in Southern California* tell the fascinating but seldom-explored story of the renaissance of fine-art lithography in Los Angeles in the 20th century. Starting with small local efforts in the first half of the century, to June Wayne and the founding of the Tamarind Lithography Workshop in the 1960s, and on to the establishment of Gemini G.E.L. and Cirrus Editions in the mid-1960s and 1970s, printmaking became an essential medium in an artist's oeuvre, and Los Angeles was the birthplace of this effort. What is more, the exhibition illustrates how some of the era's most cutting-edge artists transformed the medium, pushing the boundaries of what was possible with their embrace of new materials and techniques.



Proof: The Rise of Printmaking in Southern California is curated by Leah Lehmbbeck, Associate Curator at the Norton Simon Museum. The exhibition is part of Pacific Standard Time, an unprecedented collaboration of more than sixty cultural institutions across Southern California, coming together to tell the story of the birth of the L.A. art scene. Pacific Standard Time, an initiative of the Getty, will take place for six months beginning October 2011.

About the Publication

Accompanying the *Proof* exhibition is a publication of the same name. With essays by established print scholars as well as fresh, new voices on the subject, this lavishly illustrated catalogue introduces the pioneers of printmaking in Los Angeles who nurtured an environment suitable for the founding of the country's most significant print shop in 1960. By tracing the local printmaking communities, the academic establishment, as well as the significant influence of the Tamarind Lithography Workshop and other venerable workshops founded by Tamarind-trained printers, like Gemini G.E.L. and Cirrus Editions, the catalogue addresses the spectacularly rapid spread of printmaking from its modern beginnings in Southern California. *Proof* is the first catalogue to discuss Los Angeles printmaking within the larger narrative of postwar American art.

About “The Original Print,” a companion exhibition

In conjunction with *Proof: The Rise of Printmaking in Southern California*, the Museum presents *The Original Print*, an exhibition that looks at the technical aspects of printmaking. Held in the small, rotating gallery on the Museum's main level, the exhibition combines explanatory texts, archival documentation, photographs, video footage and the actual implements of printmaking (a woodblock, an etching plate, a lithography stone and a screen). A select group of prints on view serves to illustrate these concepts directly, in an effort to familiarize visitors with the methods and terminology used to describe the graphic arts.

Related Events

Below is a selection of related events:

Lecture: A Meditation on the History of Los Angeles Art: Thinking through Dennis Hopper's “Double Standard”
Damon M. Willick, Associate Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History, Loyola Marymount University
Saturday, November 12, 4:00–5:00 p.m.

This lecture takes Dennis Hopper's “Double Standard” (1961) photograph as the starting point for a series of case studies on the city's art history. The gelatin silver print captures Hopper's view of the three-way intersection of Melrose, Santa Monica and Doheny boulevards from the driver's seat of his convertible. A close reading of the three vanishing points of the intersection along with the other elements of the photograph inspire a broader discussion of commercial culture, car culture, landscape and feminist art, each a significant component of the history of art in Los Angeles. Held in the theater.

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Offsite Demonstration: Behind the Scenes at Gemini G.E.L.

Saturday, October 22, 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Join us at Gemini G.E.L. (Graphics Editions Limited), one of Los Angeles's most venerable printshops.

Established in 1966 by Sidney Felsen and Stan Grinstein with master printer Ken Tyler, Gemini has worked with America's leading artists, including John Baldessari, Robert Rauschenberg and Richard Serra. Guests will be given a short history of the workshop as well as a hands-on demonstration of lithography by a workshop printer. This demonstration is free, and space is limited to 20 participants. Guests meet at the printshop. Advance registration is required and can be made at nortonsimon.org/education/adults.

Art-Making Workshop: Pronto Plate Printmaking

Sunday, November 13, 11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Linda Lyke, Professor of Art at Occidental College, leads a workshop in Pronto plate lithography, a recently developed process that involves a nontoxic form of lithography printing. Participants meet at the Museum for a tour of "Proof: The Rise of Printmaking in Southern California" and then drive themselves to Occidental College (three miles away) to use the printmaking lab. Bring a drawing, photo or found image to use in the imaging of the Pronto plate, and then learn how to ink and print the plate to produce a lithograph. The fee of \$30 (\$24 for members) includes all materials and admission to the galleries on the day of class. Advance registration is required and can be made at nortonsimon.org/education/adults.

Afternoon Salons

Join a Museum educator on select Sunday afternoons for a dynamic discussion of art. This fall's Afternoon Salons examine the dynamics of printmaking; how to identify the differences between types of prints; the history of the seminal Tamarind Lithography Workshop and its role in contemporary printmaking; and artists as printmakers. The program is free with admission and limited to 20 participants. Please sign up at the Information Desk no later than 15 minutes prior to each session.

Print Primer

Sunday, October 9, 2:00–3:00 p.m.

Learn to identify the difference between a lithograph, engraving and woodcut as you discuss the imagery found in such works as Arthur Millier's "Our Lady Queen of Angels," 1928, etching; Clinton Adams's "Golden Tablet," 1961, lithograph; and Donald Judd's "Untitled," 1969, woodcut.

Tamarind Lithography Workshop

Sunday, November 13, 2:00–3:00 p.m.

Discuss the renaissance and revival of the medium of fine-art lithography by Tamarind Lithography Workshop, which was founded in Los Angeles in 1960. Examine such works as June Wayne's "The Bride," 1951; Claire Falkenstein's "The Moving Point," 1965; Louise Nevelson's "Untitled," 1967; and Charles White's "Wanted Poster Series #11," 1970.

Artists as Printmakers

Sunday, December 11, 2:00–3:00 p.m.

From Edgar Degas to Ed Ruscha, artists have used the print not just as a vehicle for reproduction but also as a means of expression. Consider the distinct types of images and concepts portrayed by joining message and medium in the following artworks: Edgar Degas's "Woman Drying Herself after the Bath," 1876–77; Sam Francis's "An 8 Set – 3" from the "Pasadena Box," 1963; and Ed Ruscha's "Anchovy," 1969.

Exhibition tours led by Associate Curator Leah Lehmbeck

Friday, October 28, 6:00–7:00 p.m.

Friday, November 18, 6:00–7:00 p.m.

Friday, December 9, 6:00–7:00 p.m.

Family Program: Making Impressions with Shapes and Words

Sunday, October 30, 12:30–1:45 p.m. and 2:00–3:15 p.m.

During the 1960s, artists in Southern California used printing techniques that left lasting impressions in the fine-art world. Join art educator Carlos Ramirez in exploring the relationship between words and the visual arts. Taking inspiration from prints in the exhibition “Proof: The Rise of Printmaking in Southern California,” students create original works of art by using word association to construct narratives of their own. Tell your story using images, sounds and words. The workshop is free and limited to 20 students per session, ages 8–13. Advance registration is required and can be made at nortonsimon.org/family-children.

Teen Arts Academy: The Power of Printmaking

Saturday, November 5, 1:00–4:00 p.m. and Sunday, November 6, 1:00–4:00 p.m.

In conjunction with the exhibition “Proof: The Rise of Printmaking in Southern California,” discover the different printing techniques that Southern California artists employed during the 1960s. Los Angeles-based collective Outpost for Contemporary Art conducts a two-day workshop in which teens produce original works of art through a variety of printmaking processes. Learn about the history of printmaking and how artists still use it today. Create a single edition or multiples to share! The two-day course is free, and space is limited to 18 participants. All materials are provided. Advance registration is required and can be made at nortonsimon.org/education/teens.

About the Norton Simon Museum

The Norton Simon Museum is known around the world as one of the most remarkable private art collections ever assembled. Over a 30-year period, industrialist Norton Simon (1907–1993) amassed an astonishing collection of European art from the Renaissance to the 20th century, and a stellar collection of South and Southeast Asian art spanning 2,000 years. Modern and Contemporary Art from Europe and the United States, acquired by the former Pasadena Art Museum, also occupies an important place in the Museum’s collections. The Museum houses more than 12,000 objects, roughly 1,000 of which are on view in the galleries and gardens. Two temporary exhibition spaces feature rotating installations of artworks not on permanent display.

Location: The Norton Simon Museum is located at 411 West Colorado Blvd. at Orange Grove Blvd. in Pasadena, California, at the intersection of the Foothill (210) and Ventura (134) freeways. For general Museum information, please call (626) 449-6840 or visit www.nortonsimon.org. **Hours:** The Museum is open every day except Tuesday, from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and 12:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Friday. **Admission:** General admission is \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for seniors. Members, students with I.D., and patrons age 18 and under are admitted free of charge. Admission is free for everyone on the first Friday of every month from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. All public programs, unless stated otherwise, are free. The Museum is wheelchair accessible. **Parking:** Parking is free and no reservations are necessary. **Public Transportation:** The City of Pasadena provides a shuttle bus to transport passengers through the Pasadena Playhouse district, the Lake Avenue shopping district and Old Pasadena. A shuttle stop is located in front of the Museum. Please visit www.cityofpasadena.net/artsbus for schedules. The MTA bus line #180/181 stops in front of the Museum. The Memorial Park Station on the MTA Gold Line, the closest Metro Rail station to the Museum, is located at 125 East Holly Street at Arroyo Parkway. Please visit www.metro.net for schedules.