ADVENTURES IN PRINT COLLECTING

THE DAVID KABAKOFF COLLECTION

by David S Kabakoff

graduate and graduate school, but my interest in engraving, aquatint, mezzotint, drypoint, wood-

Drypoint (Kraeft & Kraeft 58). David Kabakoff Collection

Armin Landeck, "Studio Interior #2," 1936. Heights, Ohio. In our basement, I experimented with my chemistry set on a wooden work table.

The image of the workbench and etching beakers

reminded me of my childhood laboratory, and so

I acquired the work. I then researched Landeck's work and soon found the companion drypoint

"Studio Interior #1," a striking image of Landeck's

press created in 1935. I have since acquired

many other Landecks.

Later in 2005, I visited the Festival of Arts in Laguna Beach, California. At the art show, I saw "The Print Shop," a whimsical woodblock print by Donna Westerman, a local artist, who has since relocated to the Bay area. Again, it captured my attention and I acquired the work. I can't fully explain why and how the acquisition of my third "print about printmaking" sparked my interest in creating a specialized collection, but I take great pride in being able to share details about the collection that I have built over the past 14 years, about some of my prized works and about the wonderful people I have met on my adventures in print collecting.



Nicholas Henri Jacob, "La Génie de Lithographie" or "Hommage á Aloys Senefelder," 1819. Lithograph (MacAllister Johnson 5) David Kabakoff Collection

have focused my collection on prints about prints and printmakn 2005, I visited the Los Angeles Print Fair ing, artist's portraits and self-portraits, images of at LACMA. By chance, I viewed a print that studios, connoisseurs, connoisseuses and works

became a catalyst for assembling my large related to the history of printmaking. My specialcollection of prints about the art and history of ized collection now numbers about 700 prints, printmaking. That work was Armin Landeck's representing over 300 artists from more than 20 drypoint "Studio Interior #2," which he created countries and ranging from the 16th century to in 1936. Why did that work capture my atten- contemporary. The collection features many diftion? I was trained as a chemist in both under-ferent media, including lithography, etching, chemistry began while growing up in Cleveland block printing, and screen printing. I have mul-

> tiple works by many artists and have purposefully sought out works in important series or sets. Many of the works in my collection were acquired from well-known dealers, while I also identified numerous others through extensive internet searches or online and physical

> ince I left chemistry research Since Field Chemical, long ago, I enjoy the research and hunt for new and different works that fit my theme. Iconic images from the history of printmaking are among my most prized works. "La Genie de Lithographie" by Nicholas Henri Jacob, created in 1819, shows the Genius standing over a woman pulling a print from



the names of important French printmakers. The inscription at the top pays tribute to Aloys Senefelder, the inventor of lithography. "Sculptura in Aes" (Engraving in Copper), created c. 1600, is plate #19 from the series "Nova Reperta" (New Inventions of Modern Times) by Jan Collaert after J. Stradanus. This work may be familiar to many as it is reproduced on the cover of the "The Print



Jan Collaert after Johannes Stradanus, "Sculptura in Aes," c. 1591. Engraving. David Kabakoff Collection

Quarterly." These two works came to me from Joel Bergquist from whom I have also acquired other unusual prints.

Among the "series" works are the set of four prints on the arts created in 1632-33 by the French etcher Abraham Bosse, including "The Intaglio Printer" and "The Etcher and Engraver." (See images on page 9.) These works came to me from Martinez Estampes, along with many others.

n 2005, a dealer from whom I acquired several works first suggested I look at prints by 上 Erik Desmazières. I have acquired all eight etchings in the "Atelier René Tazé" series that Desmazières created between 1979 and 2006, as well as many of his other prints. (See image on page 9.) Some of these works came from Andy Fitch, who for many years was Desmazières' major U.S. dealer. Other Desmazières works came from the Childs Gallery, Davidson Galleries, and Jan Lewis Slavid of R.E. Lewis & Daughter, and I have been fortunate to have learned about and acquired works by other artists through each of these connections.

Another artist whose work I admire is Evan Lindquist, a master engraver who has created a large series of works on famous engravers, including Dürer, Hogarth, Mellan, Peterdi, Hayter, Landeck, and Lasansky.

In 2001, before I began to build my collection focused on printmaking, I met Tony Kirk a master printer who for many years has printed mezzotints by Robert Kipniss, an artist whose work I have collected ever since. Over time, I learned that Tony had also printed works by Armin Landeck and Karl Schrag, another artist whose prints I have collected. Some years later, Tony suggested that I seek out works by Warrington Colescott and I discovered the rich diversity of his printmaking. I have collected his entire series titled the "History of Printmaking." These fanciful, colorful works, created between 1975 and 1981, are Colescott's renditions of scenes from the lives and works of famous artists, including Rembrandt, Picasso, Toulouse-Lautrec, Goya, Rauschenberg, Hayter, Dürer, Lasansky, and even the great diplomat, inventor, and printmaker Benjamin Franklin.



Donna Westerman, "The Print Shop," 2004. Woodblock print. David Kabakoff Collection

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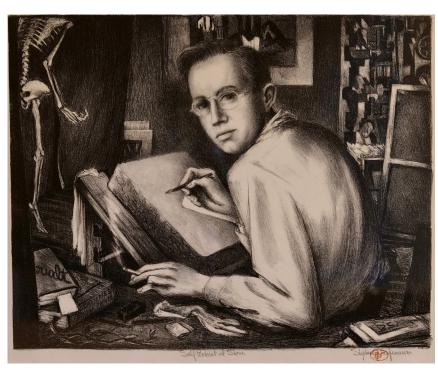
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Colescott's "Picasso at the Zoo" was featured in the Jan/Feb 2019 edition of this Journal, **Journal of the Print World.** I had the privilege of meeting Warrington Colescott in 2010 at the exhibition at the Milwaukee Art Museum, which coincided with the publication of the Catalogue Raisonne of his work. I have acquired over 40 prints by Colescott from many sources with some of the rarer works, including two watercolors, coming from the late Cissie Peltz of the Peltz Gallery in Milwaukee.



Warrington Colescott, "The History of Printmaking: Senefelder Receives the Secrets of Lithography," small plate, 1976. Softground etching and aquatint with vibrograver (Chapin, 241). David Kabakoff Collection

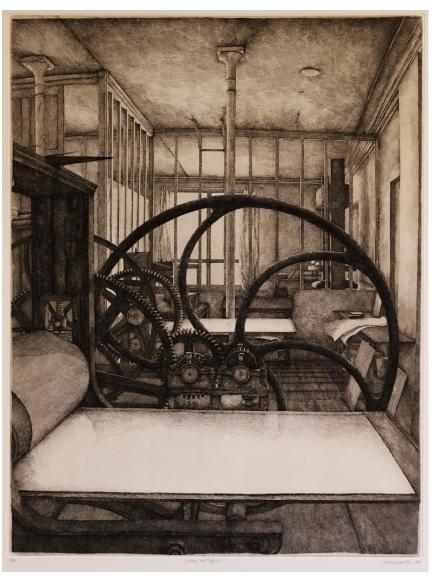
nother dealer from whom I sought and acquired work by Robert Kipniss was Jane Haslem. In addition to showing me works for sale, she was gracious to show me selections from her personal collection through which I first learned of the American printmaker Benton Spruance. I searched for many years to find his "Self Portrait at Stone," a piece that I first saw hanging in her home. I have added other Spruance works over time.



Benton Spruance, "Self Portrait at Stone," 1942. Lithograph (Fine & Looney 204). David Kabakoff Collection

Of course, I am not the only collector with an interest in prints about prints. Some years ago, I came across the book **Prints about Prints** by Diana Ewan Wolfe, published in 1981, which displayed 70 works from the collection of Martin Gordon. To date, I have succeeded in collecting about half of those prints. In 2011, the dealer Harris Schrank offered me a group of prints related to my interests, and I noted that all of them appeared in **Prints about Prints**. I selected seven works to purchase and when I asked Harris about their origin, he told me he had purchased a large group of prints from Gordon's collection. So seven works in my collection are the actual impressions from Gordon's.

I have collected many color etchings, aquatints, and lithographs by French printmakers from the late 19th and early 20th century, including Bottini, Lunois, and Robbe, that depict women admiring prints. Such works were



Erik Desmazières, "L'atelier René Tazé (III)," 1981. David Kabakoff Collection



Abraham Bosse, "The Engraver and the Etcher," 1643. Etching. David Kabakoff Collection

often used as advertising for print dealers like Edmund Sagot. One of the rarer works is the acquatint "La Connoisseuse" by Pierre Gatier created in 1910. A wonderful and rare example showing active printmaking is the color woodblock print created in 1921 by Robert Bonfils tilted "Graveur Tirant Une Planche" (Engraver pulling a Proof). (See image on page 18.) Works in this category and others have come to me from Ed Ogul at Paramour Fine Arts, Bernard Derroitte at Armstrong Fine Art, and Georgina Kelman.

While Japanese artists are not well represented in my collection, one notable work is the portrait of the printmaker Koshiro Onchi by Junichio Sekino, a large woodblock print created in 1952. (See image on page 18.)

British printmakers are well represented in my collection. William Strang's detailed etching from 1889 titled "A Sale of Prints at Sotheby's" is a classic continued on page 18

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Robert Bonfils, "Graveur Tirant une Planche," 1921. Woodblock print. Collection of David Kabakoff.

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as is the drypoint portrait "Bone at the Press" by Francis Dodd, created in 1908. Among my most recent acquisitions is "The Etching Class," created by Julian Trevelyan in 1973.

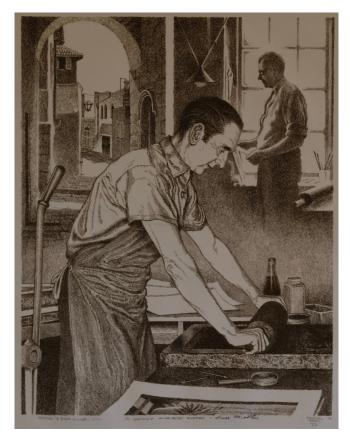
A final note on a specific sub-theme of interest to me: "prints in prints" or "art in art."

Again, there is a connection to my Kipniss collection. I acquired a lithograph created in 1978 by Emanuel Schary titled "George and Burr Miller" from Lee Stone, a dealer in Saratoga, CA, who knew of my specific collecting interest. The print shows Burr Miller, son of George, inking a stone. Below the stone, the visible fragment of a print immediately looked familiar to me. Indeed that fragment is from a Kipniss work which I also have in the collection. I wrote to Robert Kipniss and inquired about the Schary work. He confirmed that he often encountered Schary in Miller's studio and identified his "print in print." He also guided me to seek out another work embedded in the Schary print. Some years later, I found the print "George Miller, Lithographer" by Ellison Hoover, which was reproduced in reverse by Schary in his print.

I hope these vignettes about my print collecting journey provide some insight into the origin and richness of my collection. I would like to thank my many contacts in the print world for sharing their knowledge and passion for printmaking with me along the journey.

A selection of works from the Kabakoff collection is being displayed as part of the exhibition Press/Process: The Art of Prints at the University of San Diego Hoehn Family Galleries from February 21 to May 17, 2019. A more extensive exhibition of works from the Kabakoff collection is planned for the later in 2019 at the Kala Art Institute in Berkeley, CA. It will be a pleasure to share a small part of the collection with print lovers in these communities.

David Kabakoff, a life science venture capital investor, has lived in Rancho Santa Fe, CA with his wife Susan for over 30 years. He may be reached via email at dkabakoff@cox.net



Emmanuel Schary, "George & Burr Miller," 1978. Lithograph. David Kabakoff Collection



Junichiro Sekino, "Portrait of Koshiro Onchi," 1952. Woodblock print. David Kabakoff Collection



Julian Trevelyan, "The Etching Class," 1973. Etching and Aquatint. David Kabakoff Collection