

California Research in the Graphic Arts

Shirley Raphael

Number 59, Summer 1970

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/58074ac>

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Publisher(s)

La Société La Vie des Arts

ISSN

0042-5435 (print)

1923-3183 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Raphael, S. (1970). California: Research in the Graphic Arts. *Vie des arts*, (59), 50–53.



CALIFORNIA

1. NOVA SCOTIA COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN. Rayne print. Lithography Workshop. Bob Rogers and student helper Richard Jardin (Photo Michael Landerville.)
- 2./3. TAMARIND LITHOGRAPHY WORKSHOP. June Wayne Director, artist, painter and printmaker.
4. GEMINI, Claes Oldenburg (1929-). Giant Ice bag. Vinyl and wood with hydraulic mechanism. 16 feet high by 18 in diameter. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

RESEARCH IN THE



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This article will deal with prints mostly, i.e., print workshops and galleries I visited in a recent trip to California. In some ways, what originated in California has really spread, so that we have workshops throughout major U.S. cities and even one in Canada which recently opened at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, and is run by Jack Lemon, a Tamarind alumni. When I met Mr. Lemon, he mentioned that he has already collaborated with Canadian artists such as Greg Curnoe, David Bolduc, Robert Murray, Gordon Rayner, Iain Baxter, etc. and that the lithographs created at his workshop would be seen shortly in commercial galleries across Canada. He mentioned, too, the fact that the services of the workshop were available to any Canadian (or American artist) who would like to have his ideas printed by professional printers for a certain fee.

LOS ANGELES

Tamarind

June Wayne is Tamarind. When I visited the workshop, I could feel it and see that this remarkable woman was responsible for the lithography revival in the U.S. This was all helped with a Ford Foundation grant, which began in 1959 and was for a period of ten years. Tamarind is due to close its doors sometime this year, under this grant. The purpose of the workshop was to train master printers and thus perpetuate, i.e. spread out to other places so that others could be trained. The program consisted of printers, spending at least two post-graduate years learning the art of lithography in collaboration with some of the best artists in the world. Curatorial students were responsible for keeping a complete record on any given print—its paper, ink, making and circumstances of creation.

Miss Wayne believes that the artist should be more "business-like". She is concerned with the ability of the artist to receive monetary rewards for his work within our system of "free enter-

GRAPHIC ARTS

by Shirley RAPHAEL

prise". She believes that there should be a working arrangement between the fine arts and professional management technique. In other words, the arts, and the artist, can and should with professional management techniques be self-supporting and not have to look for aid from government, foundations, etc. She also feels that most artists become teachers and that they should realize that this is not the only area of work they can make a living in. Some can become professional printers, others can work as curators, and perhaps even as art gallery dealers.

There have been several publications such as a book called "A Study of the Marketing of the Original Print". It is a thorough survey of the outside art world, carefully drawn to put the original print on a business basis. In it are lessons for artists and dealers and collectors. From it comes a blueprint for the sale of fine graphics and a step by step marketing program.

Besides the publications and the training program, Tamarind has also been responsible for looking for materials: litho stones, which are hard to find, additional sources of paper, developing finer grades of ink. They also evolved a pneumatic grainer for the graining of stones, a small machine for metal plate graining which makes the workshop independent of industry, a big 12-inch roller (diameter) which is lighter in weight and easier to use; a frame, for mounting prints without damaging them; special furniture for storing prints such as end tables, coffee tables, etc.; new kinds of press design, and a research and development department for close contact between artists and artisan for inventing new ways. Miss Wayne told me that an Abrams paperback book will be out sometime this year called the "Tamarind Book of Lithography Art and Techniques" which will be a definitive resource book and will list suppliers in the back.

Her idea of training men capable of teaching lithography at the universities, and men who could open other lithography shops in other areas, and both printer and artist make a living, has been most successful as we shall see. She is proof that if things are operated in a businesslike way, they can succeed.

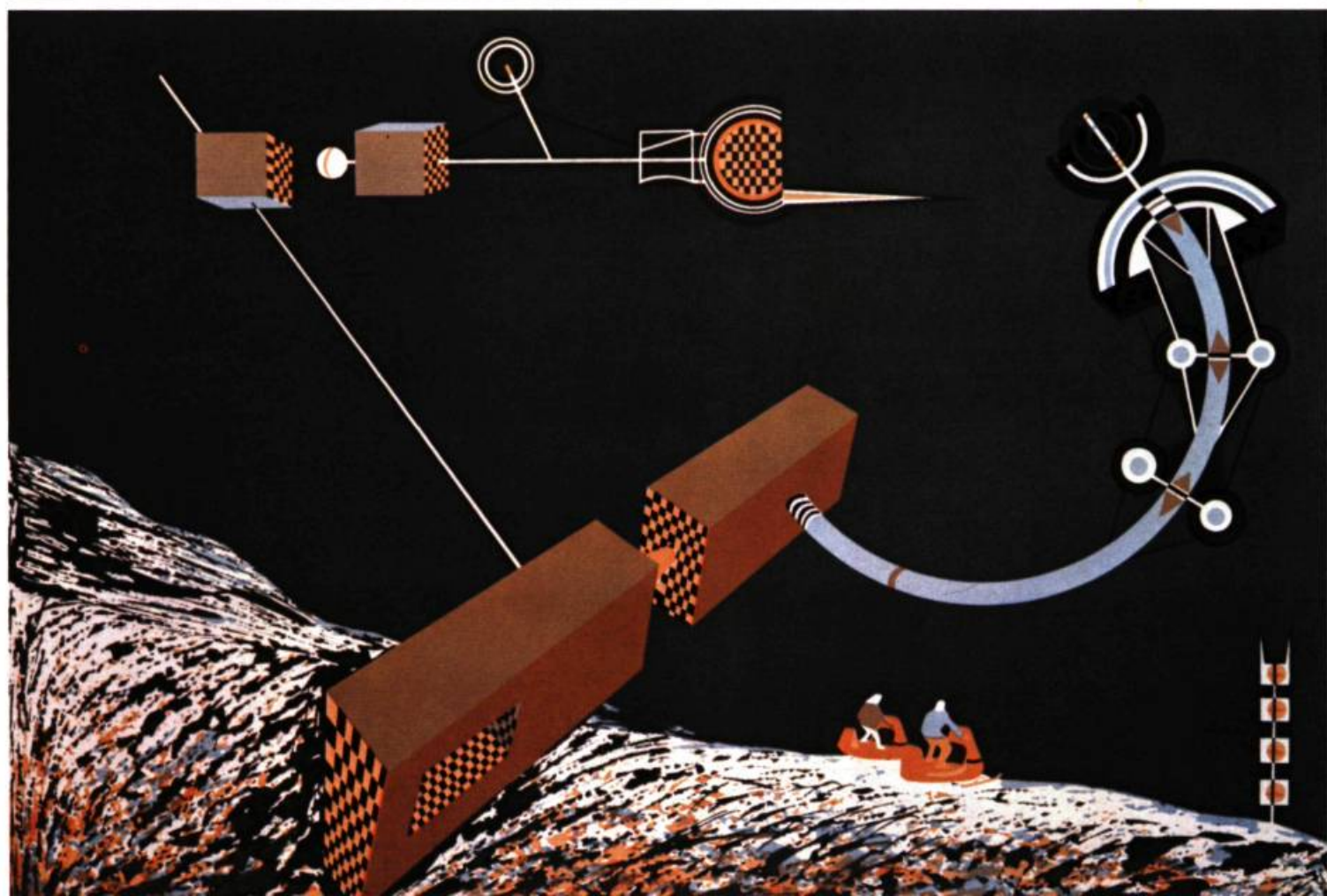
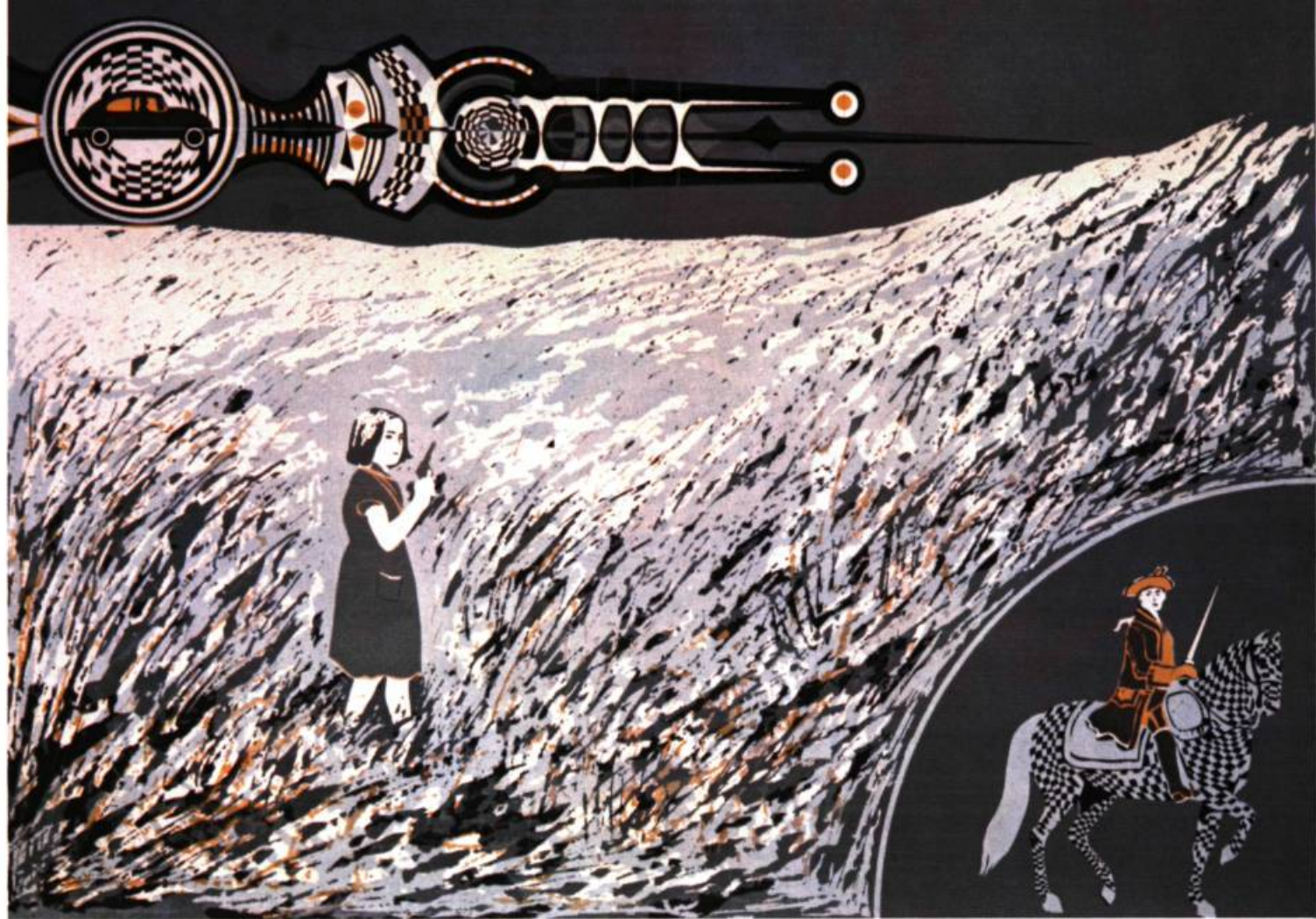


Gemini, G.E.L.

The Gemini, G.E.L. Workshop on Melrose Ave., is operated by Kenneth Tyler, who was technical director of Tamarind from 1964-1965. One can say that he took lithography out of the non-profit niceties of subsidized life and shoved it into the cruel, competitive world. The Gemini workshop has produced some of the best prints by many of the top artists in America. They are responsible for the largest lithograph ever produced in the world, a Robert Rauschenberg called "Booster" standing 6-feet tall, 3-feet wide and featuring an X-ray vision of Robert Rauschenberg. This print was sold for the highest price ever asked for a print at the time it was done. They also have the largest lithography press ever developed, a seven-foot giant that will give artists like Rauschenberg and others something to grow on. Gemini is based on the idea, like the print workshops, of making the total resources of an experimental lithography workshop available to one artist for whatever time is needed to accomplish the work. Gemini is successful commercially, so much so that practically everything printed there has been sold and is pre-sold before it is produced. When I was in Los Angeles, Gemini held a press preview to launch Claes Oldenburg's 16-ft. giant vinyl ice bag sculpture, which is on exhibit at Osaka. With this venture, Gemini announced that they will branch into "multiples" as well.

A lot of the editions have been experiments, in colour, material or form. Kosso, a sculptor, who is living in Toronto and married to artist Rita Letendre, turned out a series of three-dimensional fold-out lithographs that resembled no other prints, at the time they were done, several years ago.

As a business, the workshop picks up all expenses for the creators who use the premises. Many artists are anxious to work at Gemini, aside from the commercial value. For here technique is used to serve as a vehicle for the artist's vision. Because of the skill of the printer, we see only the artist when looking at the print and not the printer's technical virtuosity.





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SAN FRANCISCO Collectors Press

Collectors Press was founded in January 1967, under the direction of Ernest de Soto, another recipient of a Tamarind Grant Fellowship. Since its beginning, artists from all over the country as well as Europe and South America have come to San Francisco to create fine works of original art. Artists such as Cuevas, Peter Voulkos, Jules Olitski, Ikeda, etc. have done some stunning prints at this workshop. At Collectors Press, like Gemini, published works, commissions given to artists of professional stature whose work would warrant the investment, account for 75% of the shop's output. Editions are kept small, usually around 75 so that each is a perfect print. Most of the "printers" who work at Collectors Press are former University of New Mexico, at Albuquerque, students of master printer Garo Antreasian or Tamarind trained. A series of lithographs by Jose Luis Cuevas entitled "Homage to Cuevedo" is outstanding. One print in this series, "La Mascara" has a black printed on gold acetate "mask", which opens to reveal a face beneath. Collectors Press has experimented with printing on foil, with silver inks, etc. and will continue to experiment with new materials as they become available.

The Graphic Gallery

This gallery is run by Hank Baum, former associate director of Tamarind, the Atelier Moulrot in New York and Collectors Press. It specializes in "works of art on paper" which include: original prints, drawings, gouaches and collages created by artists working in many parts of the world. The work is all of a high level and "names" are included along with work by artists who are not well-known but worth knowing better. The day I was in the gallery, I was pleased to see an exhibit of silk screen prints done by the Vancouver artist Toni Onley. Montreal artist René Derouin is also represented here, and there are plans for a one-man show at a later date.

These were just some of the many places I visited. I also went to commercial galleries, museums, art schools etc. to see how they compare to the Canadian ones. In many cases, I found that the facilities (in the art schools) were worse than the Canadian ones and this was a big surprise. Graphics are very much alive and well in California. More and more artists are working in the various media and more and more galleries are devoting themselves to graphics. However, the Canadian scene is pretty much the same, except for the fact that in California they had this place called Tamarind, which provided such a good training ground.

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5./6. THE GRAPHIC GALLERY. René Derouin. Deux illustrations de Deadline, sérigraphies d'un ouvrage imprimé à Montréal en 1969.

7. COLLECTORS PRESS. Jose Luis Cuevas. La Vida, 1969. (Photo Rudy Bender—Eye Now.)

8. COLLECTORS PRESS. Jose Luis Cuevas (right), Artist; Ernest De Soto (left) Printer.