

A singular vision, prints from Landfall Press

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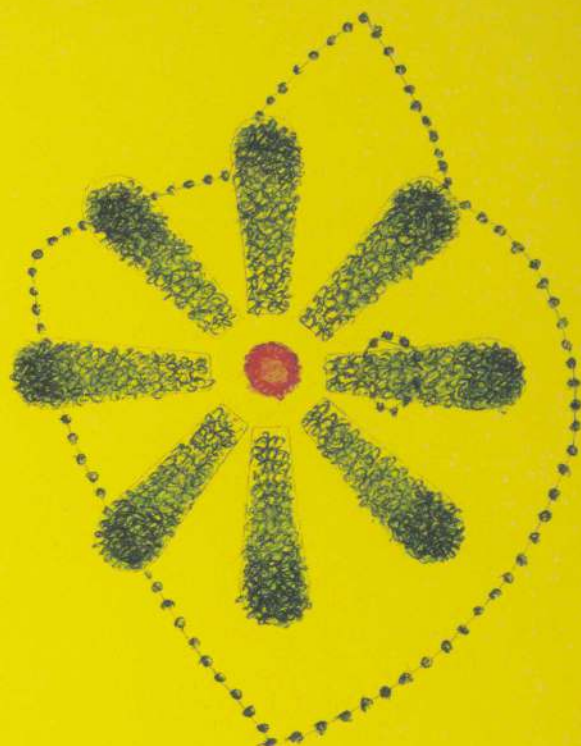
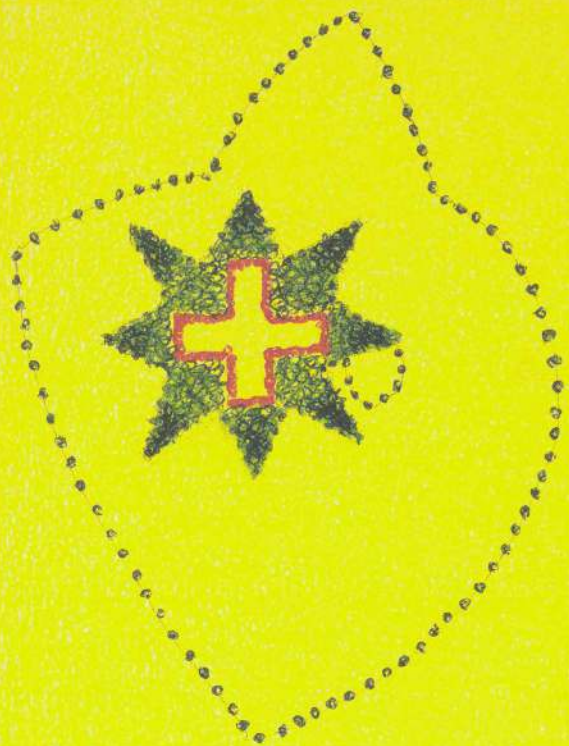
Exhibition URL

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A Singular Vision **Prints from Landfall Press**





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Museum-goers are not generally aware that prints often come into existence through the efforts of adventurous and innovative publishers. One such publisher is Landfall Press of Chicago. In celebration of Landfall's twenty-fifth anniversary, the Museum is presenting *A Singular Vision: Prints from Landfall Press*. Producing a print edition involves three interactive creative forces: the artist, the publisher, and the master printer. Landfall Press, founded and operated by Jack Lemon, is a publisher that also manages its own workshop staffed by printers with a range of technical specialties. The current exhibition focuses on the important accomplishments of this contemporary publisher and its fundamental role in the creation of works of art. This is the sixth exhibition in a series exploring the importance of various publishers in the enterprise of printmaking.

Lemon established Landfall Press in 1970 after working first as a painter and then as a master printer for various publishers. He began his early training as a printer in the mid-1960s at the historic Tamarind Lithography Workshop, an establishment that contributed to the revival of lithography printing in America. He went on to the Kansas City Art Institute, where he established a university-associated print workshop. Lemon was then approached by the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design to develop a printmaking program and to invite professional artists to work at the facilities in conjunction with teaching. The college published and sold

prints by these visiting artists, and the proceeds were channeled back into the program. The Nova Scotia workshop became a model for university workshops and the source of many important and innovative prints. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Lemon's persuasive powers helped attract such artists as Vito Acconci and Dennis Oppenheim to the workshop, often to explore techniques that were unfamiliar to them. These experiences solidified Lemon's involvement in the field of printing and publishing.



Luis Jiménez. *Lowrider*. 1981. Lithograph, sheet: 39 x 28" (99.1 x 71.2 cm)

In Chicago in 1970, with the support of local gallery owner Allan Frumkin, who was interested in many of the same artists, Lemon opened his own print workshop. From the beginning, the workshop had a gallery space that showed Landfall Press publications,

as well as paintings and sculpture in curated exhibitions. A Landfall Press gallery was established in New York in 1983. In 1992, a consortium of four publishers—Landfall Press, Chicago; Riverhouse Editions,



Vito Acconci. *Approved—But Don't Be Fooled, This Is a Message from the American Lover* from the series *Stones for a Wall*. 1977. Lithograph, printed in color, sheet: 30 1/2 x 24 3/4" (77.5 x 61.5 cm)

Clark, Colorado; Shark's, Boulder, Colorado; and Diane Villani Editions, New York—opened Quartet Editions, a gallery space in Manhattan that exhibits prints by these publishers.

Although Landfall Press was initially dedicated solely to lithography, Lemon eventually introduced etching, photo-based mediums, woodcut, and screen-printing in order to allow artists to experiment with a variety of technical possibilities. He has invited both established and emerging artists to work at Landfall, many of whom he has continued to collaborate with on a long-term basis; this practice has provided artists

with the opportunity to make printmaking integral to their creative process.

The versatility and scope of works Landfall Press would produce is evident in early projects that Jack Lemon initiated. He chose artists who worked with the figure, like Philip Pearlstein and Robert Arneson, and who had a conceptual focus, such as Vito Acconci and Sol LeWitt. Lemon has paid particular attention to artists outside the mainstream, New York-based art world. He has chosen to work with some of the artists who have given Chicago's art its reputation for fantastic imagination, irony, folk art associations, and a combination of playful form and potent content. This idiosyncratic vision is reflected in the art of Ed Paschke, who began making prints with Landfall soon after its inception. His works, often executed in acidic colors in a style that reflects the look of electronic media, confront cultural and social issues and values through unsettling images of American life. Roger Brown, another Chicago artist, has executed prints at Landfall Press that present cartoonlike imagery in a stylized, almost decorative structure. Exploring the ironies and anxieties inherent in American life, he often focuses on controversial topics such as censorship, the Persian Gulf War, and the erosion of civil liberties.

Lemon seems to find artists with decidedly personal visions no matter where he looks. He has worked, for example, with west-coast artist William T. Wiley, whose diverse output—from oil painting, watercolor, and sculpture to theater, film, and music—falls outside conventional boundaries. Wiley's first printed works were made at Landfall Press. They typify his representation of aspects of his own life within a unique formal structure, tinged with humor. Robert Arneson is another west-coast artist whose works effectively combine playful humor and dry wit. Known for his satirical ceramic portraiture, he confronted his own complex personality in his first prints made at Landfall. Later prints employed his raucous style to

explore threats that loom over society, such as nuclear war and the arms race.

Lemon also sought out Luis Jiménez, an artist born in El Paso, Texas, who celebrates the cultural and geographic realities of life on the U.S.-Mexico border. Proud of his Mexican-American heritage, Jiménez sets robust, larger-than-life figures in scenes that tell stories of that region. Allen Ruppersberg, another Landfall Press artist who incorporates "real-world" elements, borrows the format of the street poster for *Preview*, his series of ten lithographs. In this series, he uses random familiar and silly phrases that in combination are also disquieting. The confrontation of horrific political issues is at the heart of the works of Texas artist Peter Saul. Brutally cynical, his prints are grotesque and biting portrayals of political leaders, war, and racial injustices.

The works of Vito Acconci and Alexis Smith are conceptually based and encompass an oblique storytelling component. After introducing Acconci to printmaking in Nova Scotia, Lemon invited him to execute several projects at Landfall Press. *Stones for a Wall*, his series of lithographs, depicts ten parts of the same stone wall that Acconci covered with the graffiti of a failed revolution. A segment of the wall reads, "HELP CAN'T STOP KILL" in a vandal's scrawl. These printed images with handwritten texts convey the plight of urban America. Smith utilizes her signature collage format in the lithograph *Montage of Disaster*. Images including an execution, the burning Hindenberg, and an airplane crash are surrounded by the sarcastic phrase "That's why they call it LIFE, They don't call it Heaven..." By juxtaposing these unsettling photographic images with an ironic text, she challenges the viewer to confront life's harsh realities.

Lemon's openness in encouraging artists to make innovative use of the print medium can also be seen in his support of Lesley Dill, who not only combines the traditional print techniques of lithography, etching, and woodcut, but also merges them with sewing. She incor-

porates the poems of Emily Dickinson into printed sculptures that sometimes take the form of clothing, presenting these objects as both simple bodily coverings and shields against the outside world.

Recently Lemon introduced printmaking to Kara Walker, a young artist from Providence, Rhode Island, whose installations incorporate cutout silhouettes. At first glance, her imagery appears simply graceful and elegant, but on closer examination the underlying narrative reveals stories of historic racial injustices and their relationship to present-day race, gender, and power issues.

It was Lemon who recognized that Walker's mode of art making could find a creative outlet in print format.

Lemon has said that when selecting artists, he is attracted to strong draftsmanship and narrative content, as well as a sense of irony and humor. Ultimately, a publisher makes his mark through the artists with whom

he chooses to work and the projects he initiates. The process also benefits from the publisher's consistent involvement and support. Like a film director, a print publisher brings together talent and material, finding the ideal way to combine the two. Jack Lemon's singular vision has led Landfall Press to publish a remarkable body of work.

Andrea Feldman
Assistant Curator



Lesley Dill. *Poem Dress*, "The Soul Selects Her Own Society." 1993. Lithograph on Indian newspaper with thread additions, 11 x 10" (28 x 25.5 cm)



For twenty-five years, Landfall Press has been collaborating and publishing works with the following artists. Among them, thirty-two executed their first prints at Landfall Press.

Vito Acconci	Lesley Dill	James Juszczyk	Phyllis Plattner
John Alexander	Jim Dine	Robert Kelly	Martin Puryear
William G. Allan	James Drake	Maurie Kerrigan	Milo Reice
Terry Allen	Nancy Dwyer	Lance Kiland	Barbara Rossi
Suzanne Anker	Martha Erlebacher	Leonard Koscianski	Allen Ruppersberg
Robert Arneson	Vernon Fisher	Ellen Lanyon	Peter Saul
Chuck Arnoldi	Tony Fitzpatrick	Ed Larson	Kenneth Showell
John Baeder	Ed Flood	June Leaf	Sylvia Sleigh
Don Baum	Richard Florsheim	Alfred Leslie	Jeanette Pasin Sloan
William Beckman	Charles Gaines	Sol LeWitt	Alexis Smith
Lynda Benglis	Ron Gorchov	David Ligare	Lee Smith
Phyllis Bramson	Nancy Graves	Robert Lostutter	T.L. Solien
Roger Brown	Denise Green	Jim Lutes	Robert Stackhouse
Grisha Bruskin	Richard Haas	James McGarrell	Pat Steir
John Buck	Freya Hansell	Marilyn Minter	Fred Stonehouse
Eric Bulatov	James Havard	Greg Murdock	Randy Twaddle
Dale Chihuly	Stewart Hitch	Tony Naponic	Jack Workov
Dan Christensen	Richard Hull	Don Nice	Tom Uttech
Christo	Richard Hunt	Richard Nonas	Bernar Venet
Chuck Close	Robert Indiana	Jim Nutt	Kara Walker
Robert Cottingham	Keith Jacobshagen	Claes Oldenburg	H.C. Westermann
Jack Cowin	Luis Jiménez	Dennis Oppenheim	William T. Wiley
Peter Dean	Allen Jones	Ed Paschke	Karl Wirsum
Roy DeForest	Ronald Jones	Philip Pearlstein	Robert Yarber
Jessica Diamond	Roberto Juarez	A.R. Penck	Duane Zaloudek
Laddie John Dill	Peter Julian	Joseph Piccillo	

Kara Walker. *The Means to an End... A Shadow Drama in Five Acts*. 1995. Etching and aquatint on five sheets: each 35 1/4 x 23 1/4" (89.6 x 59 cm)

Insert designed by Ed Paschke, printing provided by Wicklander Printing Corporation, Chicago, Illinois.

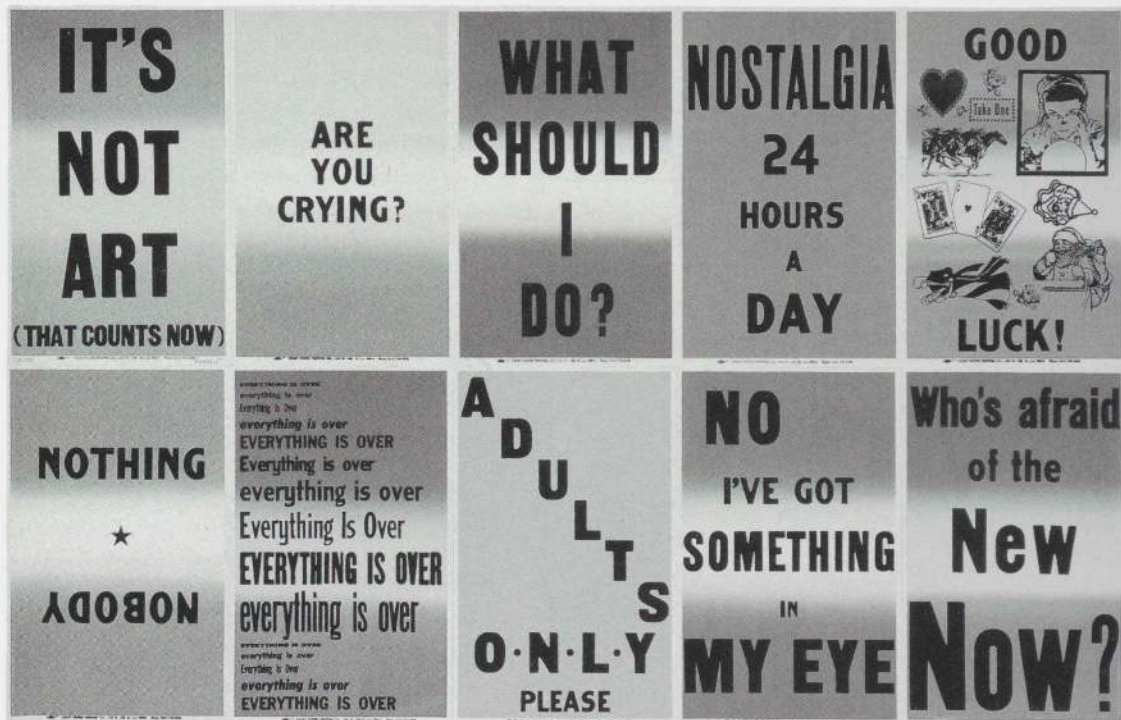
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Photos: Acconci, Dill, Jiménez, and Wiley courtesy Milwaukee Art Museum, Landfall Press Archive; Ruppersberg and Walker, courtesy Landfall Press, Chicago.

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Allen Ruppersberg. *Preview*. 1988. Series of ten lithographs, printed in color, sheets: each 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (56.1 x 35.1 cm)

Cover: William T. Wiley. *Ecnud*. 1975. Lithograph, printed in color, sheet: 23 x 29" (58.5 x 73.7 cm)