

Working with Prints

Selections from Eight Corporate Collections



September 8 - October 20, 2007

INTERNATIONAL PRINT CENTER NEW YORK



Roy Lichtenstein, *Peace Through Chemistry IV*, 1970, lithograph, edition of 56, 30 x 50 inches. Collection of the Hess Corporation. Image © Estate of Roy Lichtenstein/Gemini G.E.L.

The fine art print is a staple of corporate art collections in the United States. The richness and variety of artistic expression in contemporary prints enliven the office environment for millions of Americans who work in corporate settings. The multiplicity and mobility of prints have allowed the corporation to become an important venue for exhibiting the art of our time. Prints provide an opportunity for a corporation to acquire works by artists it could perhaps not afford in other mediums.

Working with Prints: Selections from Eight Corporate Collections shows the quality of fine art prints in corporate collections today and demonstrates diverse approaches that companies take when collecting fine art. The collections included in this exhibition represent a cross-section of businesses from banking and insurance, to law, energy and health care. *Working with Prints* features art from companies across the country whose collections are recognized milestones in the history of U.S. corporate collecting or have a unique focus and/or purpose. It is the first in a series of IPCNY exhibitions of prints drawn from corporate collections.



As an example of an early acquisition of a fine art print by a corporation, the exhibition begins with Thomas Moran's lithograph *Grand Canyon of Arizona - from Hermit Rim Road* published in

1913 by the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad

Company. Having acquired Moran's 1892 painting of the same subject, the directors of the railway commissioned this lithograph for advertising purposes; the prints were distributed in stations, hotels, and offices across the country in order to lure customers to what the public then considered violent territory.

Through the second quarter of the twentieth century, the printed image continued to be used extensively in advertising campaigns by firms such as Steinway and Sons, Dole Pineapple Company, Citibank, Upjohn Pharmaceuticals and DeBeers Diamonds with artists creating images related to each company's product. The Container Corporation took this a step further with their innovative advertising campaign, commissioning artists to create images that conveyed good design aesthetics; this campaign became the *Great Ideas of Western Man Series*. It wasn't until 1937, however, that art was collected for art's sake with IBM's purchase of paintings from the 79 countries where it did business, and later from all 48 U.S. states and territories; presentations of this collection were organized for the 1939 World's Fair and other venues.

In the 1940's, in the spirit of the WPA, a number of companies, including Encyclopedia Britannica, Abbott Laboratories and Standard Oil of New Jersey, acquired American art for patriotic reasons. Postwar, companies such as Pepsi Cola and Hallmark raised public awareness of U.S. artists through national juried competitions. By the late twentieth century, many American corporations had assembled extensive art collections to the great benefit of their employees, clients and communities.

In 1959, David Rockefeller founded the Chase Manhattan Bank Collection, now called the **JPMorgan Chase Art Program**, for the bank's new Park Avenue headquarters designed by Skidmore Owings and Merrill. The goal of the collection was to purchase fine art from contemporary artists to enhance the modern corporate space. Chase was the first company to use the museum model of an acquisition committee — made up of museum professionals and bank executives — a model followed by many corporate art programs to this day. The collection was later expanded to buy works for One Chase Plaza in the Wall Street area. Over the years, many prints and works on paper have entered the collection which now numbers over 30,000 artworks in all mediums in 450 locations. Surviving the bank's various mergers and acquisitions, the collection continues to support emerging artists in mid-career. The examples selected for *Working with Prints* reflect the range of imagery the bank has acquired through five decades of collecting - from the 1974 striped silkscreen from the *Black Watch* series by Gene Davis, to Kerry James Marshall's 1997 lithograph *Memento*, to Mariko Mori's 2001 tondo lithograph *Wave Capsule*.



The collection of **Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP** consists of artwork by both established and emerging artists. Begun in 1970, the collection numbers almost 1,000 pieces, and includes abstract and representational paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, sculpture and textiles from major art movements since 1950. The firm's commitment to diversity and eclecticism is reflected in the variety of artists, styles and mediums included in the collection. Acquisitions have been determined by a committee of lawyers, assisted by a professional art curator. The collection includes Ed Ruscha's lithograph *America Whistles*, originally published in celebration of the Bicentennial in 1976 by Mobil Corporation as part of a portfolio of thirteen artists' prints titled *America: The Third Century*. Cleary Gottlieb supports the development of emerging artists not only through its acquisitions but also through an ongoing program of changing exhibitions at its headquarters building in Lower Manhattan.



From its beginning in 1978 when **Deutsche Bank** opened a new headquarters in New York City, the collection emphasized works on paper by artists from the U.S. and German-speaking countries. As the bank became more international, the collection expanded to include art from across the globe; it now numbers 50,000 works, including many prints, in over 750 branches. The New York collection began with about 300 works and today has grown to over 3,000. The goal is to represent the most important genres in post-war American art in order to give employees, customers and visitors exposure to contemporary art. Hallways, reception areas and conference rooms feature works by different generations of American artists juxtaposed with examples of contemporary German art. Connections and contradictions can be explored, for example in the contrast between Al Held's hard-edge etching *Almost There* from 1989, and Günther Förg's abstract lithograph *Untitled* from 1999. The bank contributes to cultural activities internationally through its support of artists, museums and traveling exhibitions of the collection; Deutsche Guggenheim, located on the ground floor of the bank's Berlin office, represents a joint venture with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.



The Hallmark Fine Art Collection

It numbers some 4,000 works from 1923 to the present, with a particular focus on contemporary prints and small-scale dimensional works. Begun in 1949 with the first of five Hallmark International Art Award competitions, these biennial purchases continued through 1960 and represent the foundation of Hallmark's collection. Works acquired during this period include important paintings by Charles Sheeler, Fairfield Porter, Elaine deKooning, David Park, and Pierre Alechinsky. Periodic museum exhibitions have been presented of collection highlights, but its primary purpose is to reflect and encourage a high level of quality and creativity among employees and visitors to Hallmark's headquarters in Kansas City, MO. Since the firm deals in visual expression through image and text, and many of its employees are art school graduates, the collection emphasizes sensitivity to narrative, line and technique – attributes well represented in fine art prints. Hallmark collects many works of art in series which are displayed along the corridors and reveal an artist's vision



in greater depth. It is a rare company that acquires a book such as *A Bestiary* by Bradford Morrow, selections of which are included in *Working With Prints*. Hallmark purchased it unbound so that the images could be exhibited framed. Another vital part of Hallmark's collecting history is its photograph collection, 6,500 items strong, donated to the nearby Nelson-Atkins Museum in late 2005.



The art at **Hess Corporation** forms a remarkable collection primarily of works on paper, including many home-run prints interspersed throughout its various offices in New York and other cities. Started in 1976, the selections have been made over this entire period by one advisor. Chosen with a singular vision, the collection includes a diverse array of images and artists and reflects the best in printmaking from the last four decades. One early acquisition was Roy Lichtenstein's lithograph *Peace Through Chemistry IV* from 1970, particularly appropriate for an energy company. Another is Susan Rothenberg's seminal lithograph *Untitled* from 1977. Hess lends generously to gallery and museum exhibitions, and continues to acquire emerging artists, as shown in the recent acquisition of Benjamin Edwards' 2003 lithograph *Ramble*.

At **Johnson & Johnson**, the art program resides within the Office of Corporate Contributions and Community Relations, thus its activities and collections reflect a mission of social responsibility and of giving back to the communities where Johnson & Johnson does business. Most works are acquired directly from New Jersey or tri-state artists, many of whom first participated in exhibitions at Johnson & Johnson's headquarters in New Brunswick, NJ. With a declared preference for "art that occurs at the crossroads of the arts and healthcare", the company supports non-profit arts organizations through purchases of works of art; prints by Diana Gonzalez Gandolfi and Roberta Harley, both from the Brodsky Center at Rutgers University, are included in *Working with Prints*. Additionally Johnson & Johnson supports the Artist Proof Studio (APS) in Newtown, South Africa, which provides training and studio space for artists who lack access to facilities for

making art. The tapestries presented in *Working with Prints* are one component of a multi-stage project organized by the artist and director of APS, Kim Berman. One hundred student artists associated with



APS each created a portrait etching of a friend or family member who had died of HIV/AIDS, and were encouraged to be tested for their own HIV-status. Formed into a patchwork composition, the etchings were printed on a black cloth, then covered with beading and embroidery by 150 crafters from women's groups associated with the studio's outreach activities. Johnson & Johnson owns four of these tapestries and a selection of traditional prints from APS.

The **Progressive Art Collection** was started in 1974 as a works on paper collection but evolved to include works in a wide range of mediums by emerging artists "whose creativity and innovation reflected the... same qualities as the company's business vision," according to its art acquisition philosophy. It is one of the most innovative corporate collections in the world, and focuses on artists who work in a variety of mediums and who are known nationally and internationally. Progressive's collection includes paintings, prints, sculpture and photographs by a wide range of contemporary artists, and the company has commissioned three-dimensional site-specific works by artists such as Petah Coyne, James Hyde, Beverly Semmes and Vik Muniz. Each year an artist or number of artists is



chosen to follow a theme and create art for reproduction in the company's annual report, and the original work of art then becomes part of the collection. Progressive's holdings now number over 6,500 works and are displayed in its headquarters in Mayfield, OH, and in its offices across the country. As revealed in the prints selected for *Working with Prints*, for example, Kara Walker's linocut *Boo-Hoo* and Damien Hirst's screenprint *The Last Supper—Chicken/ Morphine Sulphate*, this company has no fear of challenging imagery.



Pryor Cashman LLP, a Manhattan law firm, chose to focus its resources on a particular medium: contemporary woodblock printing. All of the prints in this collection are based on the block-printing technique, sometimes combined with other mediums. Acquisitions are made by a professionally-advised committee of the firm's partners, with a goal of mixing

established artists with those less known, and also with a balance of representational and abstract works. The collection was started in 1990 and is installed throughout the firm in public halls and conference rooms. Diverse artistic styles are represented within the woodblock context, from Elizabeth Murray's organic forms in *Dotty* of 1999, to Robert Mangold's minimal, grainy abstract shape in *Untitled*, 1991. Robert Kushner delights with *Hangzou Tulip*, a woodblock print on silk *chine collé* printed in China in 1989.

Today, companies continue to collect art for a variety of reasons ranging from stimulating the environment for their employees and visitors, to enhancing their corporate images, to targeting specific audiences by circulating exhibitions from their collections. The outpouring of artistic expression in fine art prints from the second half of the twentieth century through today continues to find a ready audience in the corporations of America. Easily accessible by virtue of imagery, price, size and mobility, prints in corporate collections have helped disseminate artists' ideas to a broader segment of society. Certainly art in the workplace fosters a democratic corporate culture where all levels of employees enjoy visual access.

The eight corporate collections represented in *Working with Prints* are a small percentage of the over 1,000 corporate collections that exist in the United States. Each of them reveals a unique way that a corporation can approach collecting art. The variety of corporate art collections and the ways in which they are assembled reflect the range and style not only of art that has been produced over the last century, but also of the history and diversity of American business.

Sandra Lang, Curator, September, 2007

© International Print Center New York and Sandra Lang, 2007

Elizabeth Murray, *Dotty*, 2000, woodcut and linoleum cut, edition of 42, 20 1/4 x 16 1/2 inches. Collection of Pryor Cashman LLP, Image courtesy of Grenfell Press; Louisa Chase, *Cloudburst*, 1982, woodcut, edition of 25, 28 x 28 inches. Collection of Pryor Cashman, LLP, Image courtesy of Diane Villani Editions, © Louisa Chase.

Bibliography:

Adamson, Jeremy. "Art at the Office: Corporate Collecting in America, 1898-1998," from the catalogue for *KPMG Peat Marwick Collection of American Craft: A Gift to the Renwick Gallery*, Renwick Gallery of the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1994.

D'Emilio, Sandra and Suzan Campbell. *The Art and Artists of the Santa Fe Railway*, Peregrine Smith Books, 1991.

Jacobson, Margery. *Art for Work, The New Renaissance in Corporate Collecting*, Harvard Business School Press, 1993.

Kahan, Mitchell Douglass. "Corporate Collecting and American Art," from the catalogue for *Art, Inc.: American Paintings from Corporate Collections*, Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Montgomery, Ala., 1979.



Acknowledgements:

IPCNY sincerely thanks the lenders and curators for their support of the Exhibition; without their generous participation *Working with Prints* would not have been possible.

Grateful acknowledgement to the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development, New York University, for awarding a 2007 Faculty Challenge Art and Culture Award to Sandra Lang.

Special thanks to Robert K. Newman, The Old Print Shop, Inc.; Judith Jedlicka, Business Committee for the Arts; Nancy Barton, Chair, Department of Art and Art Professions, NYU; Sally King, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company; Stacey Gershon, Carlo Lamagna, Suzanne Lemakis, Kim Maier, Jeanette Rossoff and Diane Villani.

Brochure made possible with funding from **IAPAA**, the **International Association of Professional Art Advisors**, a not-for-profit association of art advisors, curators and art-service professionals who promote the value of the visual arts in the private and public sectors and provide the highest possible guidelines and standards for acquiring, maintaining and presenting art in corporate and non-museum settings.



Anish Kapoor, *Untitled B*, 1991, aquatint with hand applied pigment, edition of 5, 53 x 40 1/2 inches. Published by Crown Point Press. Collection of the Progressive Corporation. Image courtesy of Crown Point Press, © Anish Kapoor and Crown Point Press.

International Print Center New York is a non-profit institution dedicated to the appreciation and understanding of the fine art print. Through innovative programming, IPCNY fosters a climate for the enjoyment, examination and serious study of artists' prints—from the old master to the contemporary.

Opening IPCNY's eighth season, *Working with Prints: Selections from Eight Corporate Collections* is the twelfth in a series of exhibitions in our Chelsea space interspersing juried presentations of contemporary work. IPCNY nurtures the growth of new audiences for the visual arts, while serving the print community through exhibitions, publications, educational programs, and information services both for its members and the public at large. IPCNY depends upon public and private donations to support its programs.

For further information, visit www.ipcny.org
or call (212) 989-5090.

Cover: **Ed Ruscha**, *America Whistles*, 1975, lithograph, edition of 200, 30 x 22 inches, from *America: The Third Century* portfolio, published by Mobil Corporation, 1976. Collection of Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton, LLP. Image courtesy of Ruscha Studio. © Ed Ruscha