

AAA 2019 MONOPRINTS

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AAA 2019 MONOPRINTS

TRANSMITTER GALLERY, BROOKLYN, NY

January 3 - February 6, 2020

**THE GALLERY AT THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY, DANBURY, CT**

October 15 - December 6, 2020

HERRON SCHOOL OF ART + DESIGN

January 13 - February 25, 2021

AMERICAN ABSTRACT ARTISTS 2019 MONOPRINT PORTFOLIO

The poet W.H. Auden was once asked if there was a “major strength” in his work. Auden said there were two things: “The language looks for the subject, and the subject finds the language.” When I considered these words in relation to the making of visual art I rethought them like this—“ideas need form”.

I've often used exactly this approach when making sculpture, and I started recently to consider how other artists develop ideas or vision in their work. When I was young, I had a lot of ideas I wanted to explore. I'm sure this is true for most young artists. As I worked in a particular direction, it developed and changed (and admittedly it vanished many a time) but I worked, and I realize now that during that period of hard and persistent effort, my “voice” as an artist started to emerge in the process. So at first it was “vision” driving the bus but in time my voice developed and as Auden said, language (or voice) informed the work on an equal footing as the idea. The idea of “voice” usually applies to writers but I think it is perfect in describing what makes a visual artist's work uniquely his or her own.

In this new collection of 25 unique digital prints, the work is diverse in look, sensibility and motif. Not merely a supplement to the 2012 Print Portfolio, this 2019 portfolio stands on its own. It includes artists who have been invited to join AAA since 2012, and also members who did not contribute to the 2012 Portfolio. This new work has inspired me to continue thinking about motif and how it pulls an artist in and simultaneously pushes the work forward.

Now Albers had his square and Bourgeois her spiders and both worked for years with their respective motifs that allowed them to dig in and pursue with great energy their ideas. This is what a motif does—it gives, as Cézanne said, a “sensation” that motivates one to work.

But what about technique? How does that motivate an artist? This new group of digital prints is a great example of artists being asked to make new work in a different or atypical media, and all do so with wonderful success. I know from my own experience (both with this digital print and other times when I worked outside my love of wood) that changing materials, thus method, requires artists to challenge themselves to get uncomfortable and still express an idea, in a voice all their own.

In viewing the 2019 print portfolio, I see each artist tuning into his or her motif with a new tool of image making. Whether it's pattern, shape, visual effect or color harmony that intrigues an artist, they work through the technique. Often in the process the artist has that infuriating feeling that what they are trying to express is avoiding them, which can add tension to the final work. But it's that struggle to achieve a statement in a new “form” that makes these works vital and clearly unique.

JIM OSMAN

President, American Abstract Artists



Liz AINSLIE
Very Much

Steven ALEXANDER
Four Winds



Jeffrey BISHOP
Quiver xx

Jacob CARTWRIGHT
Harmonic Canon No. 1

All captions are listed left to right,
top to bottom.

Rob DE OUDE
System Glitch/05



Laurie FENDRICH
Homer

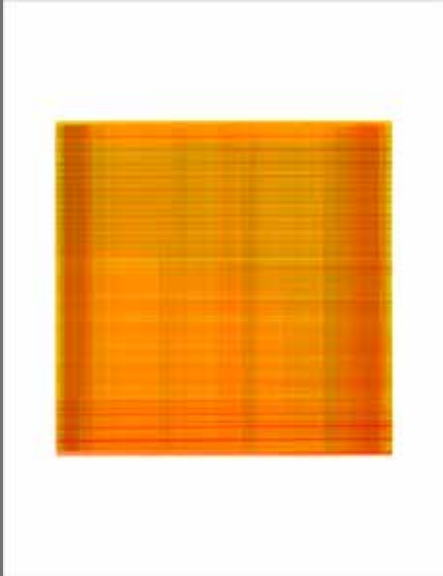


Joanne FREEMAN
Untitled, 2019



Rhia HURT
Night Sea





Joanne MATTERA
Weave

Don PORCARO
Inventory



Corey POSTIGLIONE
Tango Interlude #37-A

Irene ROUSSEAU
Above and Below

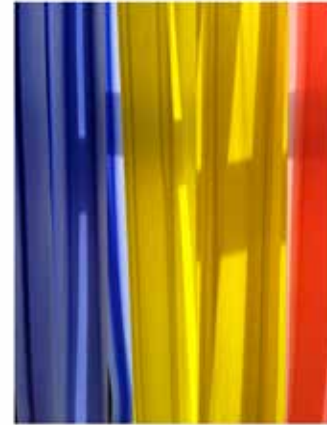
Lorenza SANNAI

Evening Sun



Mary SCHILIRO

*Warm in the Sun,
Cool in the Shade*



Kim UCHIYAMA

Concordia

Melissa STAIGER

In the Fountain #4 with dots





Pinkney HERBERT

Nuggets

Judith MURRAY

What If

Gary GOLKIN

Study for Met Curves Quatro





Lisa E. NANNI

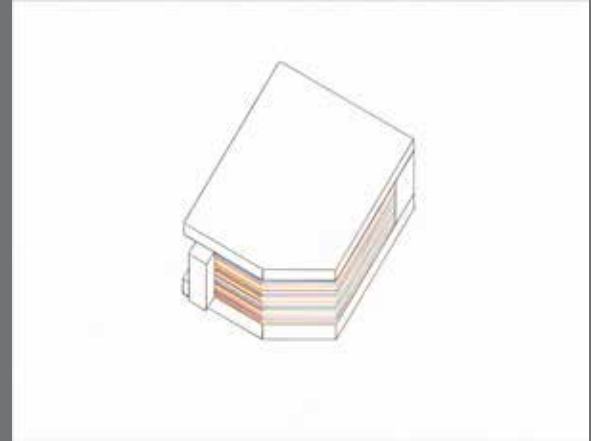
*Opposing Argon Blue and
Neon Red Waves*

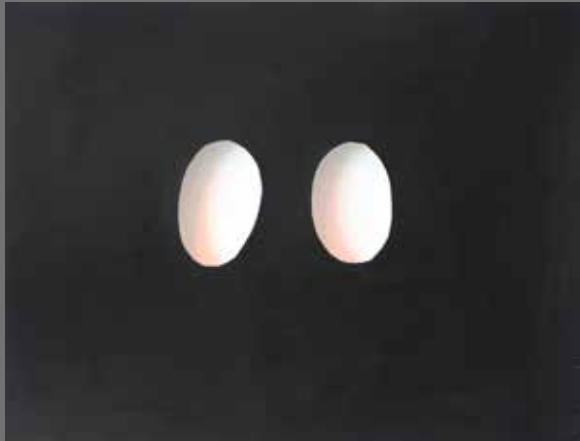
Jim OSMAN

Corner

Raquel RABINOVICH

The Endless River





Anne RUSSINOF
Night Trip

Karen SCHIFANO
Defensive

Claire SEIDL
Imprint



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Since its first exhibition in 1937, American Abstract Artists has used printmaking as a platform to both introduce and document the work of its members and to expand the vocabulary of abstraction to an ever-increasing audience. This print portfolio tradition began with the celebration of the organization's first anniversary and was followed decades later by marking AAA's fiftieth, sixtieth, and seventy-fifth anniversaries.

With the advent of digital technology, AAA decided to break with tradition and print new portfolios digitally, a meaningful shift as the three previous portfolio editions were printed by lithography, a classic printmaking process. Designing and printing digital prints mirrors changes in the visual world, one result of perpetual technological achievements. In 2019, partly as an addendum to the 2012 portfolio exhibition, for exhibition purposes, and as an opportunity to showcase the work of recent AAA members (as well as earlier members who did not participate in the 2012 portfolio), American Abstract Artists published the 2019 Monoprint Portfolio. It is made up of twenty-five prints, one per artist, sized at 9 5/8 x 12 5/8 inches, horizontally, or 12 5/8 x 9 5/8, vertically.

Printed by Mark Savoia at Still River Editions in Danbury Connecticut, this portfolio is in the collection of The Ewing Gallery of Art + Architecture at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

CREIGHTON MICHAEL

AAA Archives Committee member

CLAIRE SEIDL

AAA Exhibitions Committee Chair

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

*Randy Boyd, Interim President
Donde Plowman, Chancellor*

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

*Dr. Theresa M. Lee, Dean
David Wilson, Director, School of Art*

**THE EWING GALLERY OF ART
+ ARCHITECTURE**

*Sam Yates, Director, Curator
Sarah McFalls, Collections Manager
Eric Cagley, Preparator, Exhibitions Coordinator*

**FROM THE EWING GALLERY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE**

In 2013, the Ewing Gallery coordinated the traveling exhibition of the American Abstract Artists 75th Print Portfolio. The portfolio consisted of archival digital prints by 48 active members and published in 2012. We are again pleased to present a new portfolio of digital monoprints by twenty five recently-elected members of the organization

In 1937, AAA held its first exhibition of abstract paintings and sculpture at the Squibb Gallery in New York City. In lieu of an exhibition catalogue, the group published a portfolio of 30 original zinc plate lithographs. In addition to this group of 25 prints and that first portfolio, only three others have been published by AAA—one commemorating the organization's 50th anniversary, one for the 60th, and one for the 75th anniversary.

The School of Art at the University of Tennessee takes great pride in the excellence of its printmaking program. The Ewing Gallery is pleased to host this portfolio, which continues to break new ground with its technical production. Printed digitally instead of using a more time-honored method of printmaking, this portfolio seeks to move printmaking and contemporary art forward into this era of rapid technological change.

I would like to thank UT alumnus and AAA member Creighton Michael for bringing this portfolio to my attention. I am grateful to him and to Jim Osman, president of the AAA, for their assistance in organizing the portfolio for national tour. I would also like to acknowledge the Ewing Gallery staff, Sarah McFalls and Eric Cagley for their work on this catalogue and preparing this exhibition for travel.

SAM YATES

Director, Curator

