

As a long-time resident of Brooklyn, I can say with conviction that it is not easy to see new prints in New York, a city that prides itself on being the center of the art world. There are major print collections in museums and other cultural institutions (along with a number of printmaking workshops and schools that foster printmaking), but, except for shows at the International Print Center New York, new prints barely register on the local exhibition seismograph. Although there are several hundred commercial galleries within the five boroughs, prints don't command the prices necessary for dealers to pay their rent, so only a handful offer prints and generally only those editions they have published.

In a quiet, ongoing response to this situation, The Boston Printmakers for more than sixty years have championed printmakers and have educated the public about prints, particularly through the North American Print Biennial, a competition and exhibition that provides a significant overview of contemporary work. As the juror of this year's Biennial I was introduced to a remarkable selection of new prints. Admittedly it was a challenge to choose from 1,791 images no more than 125 works of art, a charge made more daunting given the high quality of the submissions. I juried the show from digital files, which reduce marks, textures, ink and paper to pixels that can be frustrating to interpret. I was grateful that the Executive Board of The Boston Printmakers allowed me two weeks to study the digital surrogates.

As I reviewed the images, several themes gradually emerged: figures and faces; the landscape and still life; architecture; abstraction; political and social commentary; and finally, words as images. These leitmotifs served as useful, but flexible guidelines during the selection process and helped shape the show. Once I made my choices and learned the names of the contributing artists, I continued my research and, in many cases, uncovered concerns more subtle and complex than those categories initially suggested.

For some artists the human figure in and of itself was cause for celebration. For **Wendy Willis**, her reduction linocut, *Aquanauts*, reflects, as she has written, her delight “in diversions found in and around the water.” **Blair Boudreau** appears intrigued by the knowing naiveté of fashionably dressed young Japanese women in *On a Corner in Tokyo*,

the ambivalent edginess of her subject heightened by the expressively bitten and stressed surface of the etching plate. In *Southern Man* and *Southern Woman*, **Valori Fussell** captures the quiet humanity of her sitters with an expressive combination of intaglio processes.

The figure can reflect a wider, overriding theme. For **Dennis Applebee** in *Under the Bridge*, figure and semicircle serve his ongoing exploration of harmonic proportions. **Joseph Hart** alludes to the economics and politics underlying the ways museums and galleries display art in his diptych, *Today's Gaze* and *Pretty Posture*, four-plate, six-color mixed intaglios with inkjet collage, gold leaf and graphite. An animated portrait bust and a bouquet of spinning limbs are presented for our delectation, each formally framed in a black border and tenuously poised on a pole. **Butt Johnson**, whose intricate ball-point pen drawings were inspired by Victorian security engravings, translates his obsessive line into a shimmering mosaic of color in his screenprint, *Slam Dunk*. Appropriating an image from a Nintendo game, each tessera echoing a pixel, Johnson simulates the flash of countless cameras recording the moment when the ball goes through the hoop.

Several artists used the portrait to contemplate human nature. **Benjamin Moreau** has portrayed himself as a superhero, as he has stated, both as “a form of escapism” and as a metaphor for artistic aspiration. In his *Self-portrait as St. Jude* (the patron saint of lost causes), he carries his saintly attributes, a lithography roller and a portrait of Senefelder, wryly suggesting himself a martyr to lithography. **Eric Goldberg** includes only his hands in *Footbridge Still Life*: here is the artist at work, capturing, as he has written, “objects, people, places and memories that I rearrange and reconfigure into one coherent image... The images themselves are representative of intellectual statements on themes that have been a wellspring for me throughout my life.” In a suite of compelling reduction woodcuts, *It Happened in a Dream*, **Nathan Catlin** conjures up a self-portrait based on a real dream in which he struggles to understand, in his words, “why dreams can make the knowingly unreal and fantastical seem comprehensible.” **June August** associates Takashi Murakami with his signature decorative motifs that serve as a

backdrop to that artist's silhouette appropriately represented in his hallmark Superflat style. In a series of crayon-resist screenprints, **Jonathan Cartledge** assigns human attributes and idiosyncrasies to what only can be called rabbit portraits, inspired, according to the artist, by "personal photos, film stills or other photo-based portraiture." No adorable bunny, *Mr. T* is a distinct personality. **Victor Romao** does not intend his *Self Portrait as Brown Bat* to be an actual self-portrait. Instead, as part of his exploration of male sexuality and violence, he uses his series of bat-masked characters to suggest imposed or expected traditional male behavior. **Leah DePrizio** overlays onto papier maché, molded around a glass vase, a woodcut of repeated faces in *Gaze Vase*. The faces here turn the tables and look back at the viewer.

Other artists use the figure to construct complex imaginary worlds. **Chadwick Tolley** writes, "My work begins as a process of collection...photos, textures, magazine clippings and notes from personal observation. Most of these materials are assembled ...in my sketchbook where I process ideas and create drawing assemblages from which I develop prints," such as the mysterious fallen warrior in his intricate etching, *Spilt Milk*. **Thomas Wood** in *Mermaid Hunter*, a three-color etching and aquatint, creates a surreal Eden where fish and sea creatures fill the sky and a fragile mermaid, unaware of approaching hunters, reclines in a flower-filled landscape. Jellyfish are similarly airborne in **David Williams's** imaginative, delicate, intaglio print, a mixture of softground, etching, engraving and aquatint.

Mark Hosford has said that he creates adult fairy tales. His enigmatic, memorable screenprint, *The Waiting Game*, invites the viewer to emotionally respond to the image, and then to write his or her own story. As does **K.K. Kozik** in her haunting, dreamlike tableau, *Force Majeure*, from her etching and aquatint series, *Gotham Haiku*, a collaborative project with the American poet and art critic, Barry Schwabsky. James Dickey's poem, *The Sheep Child*, inspired **John Jacobsmeyer's** disturbing intense, surreal creatures, wood engravings seemingly lit by an unearthly light. **Ann Chernow** turns to 1930s and 1940s movies as a source for her imagery. A chorus line of beauties graces a piano in her lithograph *To Wild Rose* and captures the free-spirited gaiety of a

Hollywood musical, escapist entertainment willingly accepted as “real” by audiences past and present. **Michelle Martin** concocts a darker *film noir* mood in *Where There’s Smoke*, one of a series of unsettling reduction linocuts, where masked and unmasked figures mingle. **Shawn Dickey** sees himself, in his own words, as a “director and producer of moral, social, and spiritual plays,” who creates “tableau[x]...graced with a myriad of players, text, and ‘props’...lit by black lighting.” In his screenprint *The Best Man Wins* those actors include a “flying Japanese robot,” Frankenstein and Punch, images drawn “from obscure motion pictures, pre-1970s ‘how-to’ books, model airplane kits, and old encyclopedias.” **Fredric Holle**’s digital print *Deus Ex Machina* at first appears to be intricately woven layers of color and line, but lurking on the edge is a strange threatening presence. This mysterious figure corroborates Holle’s perception of himself as a figurative artist of “‘Romantic’ persuasion.”

Objects, whether found in nature or made by man, can also tap into a reservoir of emotions. **Jane Goldman** considers herself a “‘lyrical realist’ working from a combination of free association and direct observation.” Her screenprint *Audubon July* reflects, as she has commented, “my abiding interest in the world of objects bathed in light, inviting meditation on their metaphysical properties.” **Michael David**’s monotype *China Cabinet* also creates a contemplative mood. David, who “works from memory and imagination,” compares his art to Corot’s “‘souvenirs’ – poetic memories.” Mystery and a touch of melancholy also permeate the objects in **Brad Widness**’s still life, *Night Company*, a freely executed mixture of various intaglio processes, including drypoint and engraving.

Mezzotint seems especially successful at capturing the beauty of everyday objects. **Peter Jogo**’s *Muse* includes a still life with a golden piggy bank and printmaking equipment that appear to be bathed in the warm glow of memory. **Carol Wax** playfully and wittily transforms a lacemaking machine into an elegant kaleidoscope of circular patterns, a virtual three-ring circus of light and shade in *Cirque du Sew Lace*. **Julie Niskanen** turns to mezzotint, as she writes, to “bring forth the rhythms and beauties of nature that are often unnoticed in our lives.” She succeeds in *Sanctuary*, her exquisite study of a wasp’s

nest. **Judith Rothchild** similarly allows the viewer to find beauty in the lacy leaves of an ordinary cabbage in *Le grand chou*. The dramatic blacks realized in mezzotint **Jenny Freestone** achieves in direct gravure, heightened with roulette. In her *Vessel 2, Third State* a bird's nest becomes an object of contemplation; man's presence, in the form of a scrap of paper, woven into the nest of twigs and grasses, is part of the natural order of things. **Elizabeth Uryase** has created a kind of textile in *Algae Mix* with a weave of etching and woodcut. **David Curcio** also "stitches together" etching and woodcut, combined with actual embroidery and stitching in *History* to evoke the naïveté of a colonial quilt. He decorates his virtual sampler with the portraits of his artist-heroes, Charlotte Bronte and Edvard Munch, along with Cotton Mather and local Watertown landmarks.

A number of artists turned to the wood block to respond to the natural world. **Bill Brody** spends each summer in the Alaskan wilderness, painting, drawing, and photographing the landscape, and those records become the visual reservoir for paintings and woodcuts, like *Slot Canyon*, executed during the winter. Brody has observed "the insights and technical experiences gained each winter are reflected in turn the next summer." **Cathie Crawford** realized in her color reduction woodcut of a goldfish pool, *Maasselehema mes cheries*, a "magical moment," that momentary visual revelation that she seeks to capture and celebrate in all her work. In *Treeline Autumn II* **Deborah Weiss** shows that she is fascinated, as she has commented, "by repetition, pattern and organic structure." She reuses, crops, variously orients, and layers her wood blocks multiple times in a single, unique print. For **Catherine Kernan** reusing wood blocks, varying their order, arrangement and color gives, in her words, "every mark...a precedent, a past and a potential future." In *Undercurrents*, like other prints in a series of water images, the artist has observed that "water surfaces are permeable, flowing around and through, concealing and revealing, above and below.... "[D]eciphering the layers so they come together as both rich and transcendent is the visual equivalent of remembering through layers of time...."

While many of these artists who draw inspiration from nature appear to be aware of Japanese art (for example, **June August**'s screenprint with acrylic monoprint, is even titled *Manga Numbers Pink I*), others pay a very direct homage to *ukiyo-e* prints. **Mary Brodbeck** who teaches the traditional methods of Japanese woodblock printing, capitalizes on the wood grain textures in her spare seascape, *Repose*. **Kristina Hagman** looking to Hokusai's *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* as a model, is inspired by Seattle's Mount Rainer, visible, as she has written, "within my daily view as I do my business around town making what might otherwise seem like mundane life an integrated part of my work life."

Inspired by Japanese and Chinese landscapes, **Anne Silber** in *On the Yangtze River* demonstrates that with inks mixed with a large amount of transparent base she can realize effects with screenprinting similar to a carefully controlled watercolor. **Susan Ker-Seymer** found in monotype a medium that could capture the rippling motion of water as it frames a floating flower in a shimmer of reflected light. **Elizabeth Peak** in her monotype, *Cloud Shadow 2*, is also concerned with light and shade. Her sure, gestural marks respect the formal constraints of a carefully conceived composition, the scalloped shadow interlocked with orderly planted fields and a distant landscape.

Nature and organic forms have been an underlying starting point for a number of artists whose work, at first, appears abstract. In *Drawn by Doppelganger* one of a series of monoprints with chine collé, gouache, and pen-and-ink, **Kirsten Furlong** folds into a network of line and pattern, subtle references to nature. For the artist, birds particularly have served, in her words, "as metaphors for human desires that ultimately separate us from the natural world." **Anita Hunt**'s luminous *Dissolution I* a rich combination of drypoint and spit-bite, conjures up associations with natural phenomena as ordinary as sunlight on water and as cosmic as celestial events. **Chris Papa** explores, as he has phrased it, "the intersection of and tension between abstract and representational imagery." The woodcut –again in the artist's words— "with its intrinsic pull toward abstraction" and "its graphic strength" serves him well. His *Revelator in Two Parts* is both derived from nature and suggests a force of nature. **Karen Kunc** whose

intuitive and inventive approach to the wood block involves cutting, stenciling and masking, has observed that her seemingly abstract color woodcuts, such as *Orb Weaving*, “suggest extremes of weather and natural forces at work, a sense of the micro/macrocasm, set against landscape or space.” **Paula Stokes** in her *Untitled #13* monotype alludes to a more watery universe; the transparent, floating forms may reflect the artist’s training and skill as a glassblower. In **Kristina Paabus**’s screenprint with gouache, *Plural Coordination – Verisimilar Surge*, an elegant, abstract organism seems to be erupting or dissolving. Capturing that dramatic moment may hold a special fascination for this artist, who also makes theater sets and installations, puppets and costumes. **Laurie Sloan**’s untitled inkjet print was the result of a complex series of steps that can include drawing, cutting, and scanning. The artist through this process of creation, fragmentation and recombination wants, in her words “to express the futility of trying to pin down in any finite way the identity of relationships between natural forms.”

Artists can turn to abstraction to explore other illusory ideas. **Pattra Chiravara** wishes to express through her art (paraphrasing the artist) her feelings about the two cultures—Bangkok and Boston—that have shaped her life. Eastern and Western sensibilities seem happily and energetically to jostle each other in her untitled color woodcut. **James Dormer**’s untitled lithograph, an intricate web of lines and irregular dots, held in charged stasis, is based, according to the artist, “on memory and automatism.” In *Rosewood 1* and *Rosewood 3* **Ann Conner** explores the concept of abstraction through a series of woodcuts in which she varies geometric shapes, colors, and wood grain textures. **Jennifer Caine** in her etching, *Into the Woods*, is inspired by a series of delicate 15th-century engravings made after Botticelli’s designs for Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, a major monument in the history of book illustration. The expressive, but seemingly abstract, thicket of lines in her etching are further dematerialized in her artist’s book, *Errare*, a series of monotypes on cut paper.

Architecture has been in recent years a fertile subject for artists, and a number of prints selected for the Biennial reflect this interest. Although **Heather Huston** has often developed her imagery from miniatures and dollhouses, the structures in her combination

lithograph-screenprint *The Porosity of Certain Borders* seem more like unrealized futuristic projections or, possibly, ruins. Equally ethereal and vaporous is **Sarah Pike**'s VAPA #4, a subtle color lithograph composed of perfectly placed rectangles and squares that could pay homage to De Stijl or Russian avant-garde architecture. **Hope Dector** imagines fantastic structures that are etched and printed on actual tourist postcards in *One of the many views from the foot trails and Sea Colony*. Her geometric confections seem not far removed from the reality of today's Abu Dhabi or Dubai. **Sean Morrissey**'s floating architectural forms in his lithograph, *Crumple, Crumple, Crumple*, have been inspired by more pedestrian sources. The artist has commented, "My current work deals with continuous geographic transformation of today's landscape, utilizing reoccurring architectural elements and construction imagery....I used the clean slick colors of advertising and the barren façades of modern buildings to remove any attachment [to] or memory [of] the original."

Other artists looked to architecture to strike a romantic chord. **Butt Johnson** in his lush, intricately-worked lithograph *Veduta del Castello di Greyskull* pays homage both to Piranesi and to the fictional fortress in the *Masters of the Universe* comics and animated film. **Zoltan Janvary** concocts a colossal monument in *Travel Notes I*; the structure, his elegant draughtsmanship and annotations, as well as his choice of medium—engraving—allude to his art school training in Budapest. He writes, "The political leaders were in fear of new art movements, so that there was nothing available but the teaching and studying of classical art." In this print, the artist can demonstrate his erudition and his drawing skills, while he plays off those academic traditions.

Paul Mitchell seems to predict the immanent collapse of a city in his photopolymer intaglio print, *Things Falls Apart*. A vast metropolis teeters on inadequate foundations (perhaps a particular concern of this San Francisco-based artist). **Michael Arike**'s *Midtown Manhattan*, a three-plate color aquatint and etching, appears on sturdier footing. Viewed from the top of Rockefeller Center, looking toward the Hudson River and distant New Jersey, New York, comprised of interlocking buildings, Art Deco ornament, streets and river, seems firmly anchored. **Walter Buttrick** records a building in SoHo in his

seven color reduction linocut, *New York, New York*. His focus is as much on the patterns of light and shade and reflections on glass as on the architecture and the parked cars. Light—that is neon light—and reflections are the subjects of **Nancy McIntyre**'s luminous screenprint, *Chopsticks & Bowl*, printed in 91 colors.

Navigating the city also intrigued a number of artists. **Frederick Mershimer** sticks close to home in his magical mezzotint, *Manhattan Bound*, a night view of the F train leaving Brooklyn's Smith – 9th Street station. **Whitney Calvert** combines an evocatively etched plate with a network of tracks, cables and wires to define the 30th Street Station in Philadelphia. Cars speed on the highway at night, their headlights glowing, in **Jessica Dunne**'s painterly spit-bite aquatint and etching *On Ramp*. The artist explains that she wanted to capture the mystery of a dark road “as I had experienced it as a child, before we replaced stars with sodium-vapor bulbs. The dark highway was a visual prompt into a memory of my past.” Equally poignant is **Dennis Johnson**'s etching with airbrush, *Heaven on Earth*, with the sign for Trailer Haven set high against the sky, a beacon that once had offered the promise of an instant home.

The suburbs inspired different reactions among the artists selected for the Biennial. Using Adobe Photoshop and an inkjet printer **Ross Racine** has drawn freehand on a computer a series of fictional models for planned communities, including *Days and Hours of Brookdale Gardens, #10*. With the computer as a tool, just as it is being used in urban planning, the artist explains that he is engaged in “investigating the relation between design and actual lived experience....These digital drawings are a comment on the fears as well as the dreams expressed in suburban culture.” The sense of claustrophobia evoked by the suburban spider web that is Brookdale Gardens is reinforced in **Art Werger**'s *McMansions* a bird's eye view of a maze of monster houses, skillfully realized in etching and aquatint.

Older, established suburbs seem more welcoming. **Linda Adato** records in etching, aquatint and soft ground a *View from the Back Porch* where wooden houses, built on a human scale, are shaded by trees. In *Passing Clouds* **Wilfred Loring** captures in another

backyard freshly washed laundry, snapping in the breeze, shirts and sheets rendered skillfully in aquatint. **Walter Buttrick** realizes a remarkably subtle range of colors to suggest in his reduction linocut the aftereffects of a *Blizzard*. For **Kevin Cummins** in his etching and aquatint *Virginia Avenue* and **Peter Jogo** in his mezzotint *English Heights* suburban tree-lined streets seem to offer quiet refuge at night.

A number of the artists in the Biennial have tapped into one of printmaking's traditional roles: to confront political and social issues. California artist **Neil Shigley** in his relief print, *Edie 51*, works big. He has written about this and other prints in his series on San Diego's homeless: "By presenting these faces on a large scale it forces us to confront them and the situation that so many like them find themselves in." He hand-prints his sheets of Plexiglas to physically reaffirm his connection with his subjects, whom he describes as possessing: "nobility, beauty, strength, vulnerability. They are all there if we take the time to look." The issue of invisibility seems to underlie **Ellen Price's** paper plate lithographs, *Saint John's* and *Slightly* poignant, partially-revealed portraits of African-Americans. Like Neil Shigley, **Nicholas Naughton** in his "Worker" series uses large scale for emphasis, in this case, in his words, to raise the "issue of immigration in the western world" and to consider how the public is informed about this subject while living in a world of "edited information." In her woodcut *Borders #1 – U.S./Mexico* **Annie Bissett** also tackles the topic of immigration. She layered satellite views of Nogales, Texas, and Nogales, Mexico, images of Spanish conquistadores, references to land once occupied by Native Americans, and overlaid all with figures climbing a wall under the gaze of a border guard. The transparent waterbased inks used in moku-hanga serve well the artist's complex story of disinheritance, displacement, desperation, walls and fences. **Katie Baldwin** writes "my work is about my confusion between the personal and the political. About trying to distinguish the point where policy-making and power at the national level collides with the everyday lives of ordinary people." This concern about repression, regimentation and authority figures seems to underlie her expressively-cut color woodcut *Parade IV*, part of her *Liberty Series*.

Political and social issues inspired **James Groleau**'s mezzotint *Arbil Rubia Riyadb* from a suite of 15 mezzotint portraits. In his words Groleau views "the wrappings...as veils that separate one human being from another, that separate gender within the Islamic world, and more broadly, that separate cultures." Appropriating images from 1950s advertisements **Mike Elko** addresses those who during the recent presidential campaign required highly visible symbols of patriotism. In his digital print his all-American subjects wear elaborate headgear to accommodate American flags *For Those Times When a Lapel Pin Just Isn't Enough*.

Wars, past and present, have inspired many others. **Sang-Mi Yoo** who was born in Korea, cautions, "The past is not as separate from the present as we are told." In her inkjet print *Beyond the 38th Parallel*, she appropriates a color-blindness test to challenge the viewer's visual understanding as she refers to the Korean War that ended in a truce, but with neither political nor military victory. **Brian Johnson** perceives ours as a culture of violence, motivated by money and fueled by braggadocio. In his screenprint...*an illusory panorama*... Johnson layers a silhouette of an armed soldier, images of Spiderman and Thomas Nast's Boss Tweed, and text balloons that order "shoot again," while reassuring, "trust in us" and "mission accomplished." One of the victims of violence can be culture, and **Shaurya Kumar** in his series, *The Lost Museum*, addresses the disappearance and destruction of artistic and cultural treasures caused by forces, both human and technological. In *Kalpa Vriksha: The Wishing Tree* he was inspired by a digital image of an Indian manuscript, an ostensibly permanent record that turns out to have been corrupted over time, and seemingly has been lost.

Not surprisingly many artists commented specifically on the Iraq War. **David Avery** conjures up festival prints, Callot and Pinocchio in his etching *The Long Road to War*. Pinocchio's long nose, the consequence of telling lies, serves as a highway for warriors in a conflict based on deception. **Warrington Colescott** imagines daily life in Iraq in *Imperium: Down in the Green Zone*, a chaotic amalgam of officers and macho warriors, a strip poker game, and exotic dancers at the USO and Officer's Club, all etched with a gusto that Dix and Grosz would appreciate. **Brett Colley** in his multi-block relief print

Last Throes assembles a collage of symbols of American culture and references to our “war on terror,” while **Toni Damkoehler** creates in a series of inkjet prints, a modern-day *commedia dell’arte*, starring past lead players in the Iraq War, among them Dick Cheney as *The Captain*, who seems to seal the government’s deal with the oil conglomerates. A gas pump and oil rigs lurk in the background of **Michael Barnes**’s strange lithograph, *A Race to the End* (even more shadowy in the background, a series of windmills). In his stark, chiseled and stippled engraving, *On the Oil Rag*, **Theo Wujcik** incises an image of an oil-stained rag wrapped around a pole that looks every bit like a bloodied turbaned head on a pike.

After seeing a newspaper photograph of an infant dressed in a suicide bomber costume, **Leslie Golomb** was inspired to explore the implications of this image, appropriating in her series, *Safeguard*, pictures of children from “right wing religious group websites.” In *Pajamas* repeated images of a child at prayer, screenprinted on a pair of child’s cotton pajamas, seem to seek protection from planes on a bombing run. In *Baby Bomber* a wide-eyed, innocent infant, tenderly printed as a delicate photogravure by Lothar Osterburg, is also a lethal weapon; the baby’s tiny, but heavily-armed body is fragmented.

Other artists addressed ecological and environmental issues. In her consideration of rivers as part of a social/biological system, **Lauren Rosenthal** using GIS [Geographic Information Systems] technology has redefined state boundaries based on water resources in *Massachusetts: Political/Hydrological*, one of a series of digital prints on mylar. In *Missing* **Christie Ginanni** substitutes the iconic images of missing children on milk cartons with those of endangered species. **Barbara Milman** in *Creatures of the Sea* a flag-book with linocuts and digital text, considers the extinction of sea creatures, while in her accordion-fold book, *Oil Spill* she reminds the reader of the events of November 9, 2007, when a container ship Cosco Busan ran into the Bay Bridge and spilled 58,000 gallons of fuel. **Dirk Hagner** floats a delicately etched Asian landscape, printed in relief, on a “sea” of letterpress words in *Bay of Pigs*. The landscape invites quiet contemplation, while the agitated waves of text, “sea water” repeated many times,

suggests the tranquility is deceptive. Other letterpress words that float across the print list pollutants and various ecological offenders: “mercury,” “fertilizer,” “syringe,” “DDT,” and “jet ski.” Rising water levels have submerged one city in **Christopher Ganz**’s color intaglio *Jonah’s Ark: The Leviathan Ascendant*, while another city perched on the whale’s back is afflicted by manmade and natural disasters.

Heather Freeman warns in her digital and mixed media print of a future with *No Birds, No Bees*. Freeman has explained that while she always has been interested in science, she has been disturbed by its unwillingness to accommodate myth. **Beauvais Lyons** on the other hand, has transformed myth into supposed science in his convincing persona as zoologist, anthropologist, archaeologist, and self-appointed Director of the Hokes Archives. In his lithograph, *Association for Creative Zoology: Trichopisadae* he documents species that might have existed if evolution had made a very different turn. **James Mundie** who collects sideshow and circus artifacts, has long been interested in so-called “monstrosities” and “freaks.” Recently he received a grant to visit anatomical collections in several European museums and subsequently created what he calls *A Cabinet of Curiosities*. He gives his woodcut *P1535 (Two-headed Boy of Bengal)* from that series a touching dignity and humanity. The daughter of an archaeologist who specialized in desert cultures of the American Southwest, **Barbara Cone** turned to that region for inspiration for her book, *Ancestors*. She explained that she combined her photographs of the “landscape and adobe churches with images of rock carving, and using the solarplate process, these photocollages were used to create etching plates,” her goal, “to erase the ... boundaries between the past and the present, the physical and metaphysical worlds, to bring the ancestors back to life.”

Several artists have considered and commented on a totally different universe, the world of economics, of particular interest at this moment in time. **Cooper Holoweski** suggests a certain “dog-eat-dog” philosophy in his *Portrait of Milton Friedman Eating John Maynard Keynes*. **Joseph Lupo** is intrigued by consumer buying habits. By meticulously recreating as a screenprint a Walgreen’s receipt he makes what he describes as a “consumer self-portrait,” while he also offers his own take on the Duchampian

“readymade.” **June August** considers the role that money has played in the art world. In *Money Bouquet 5* the artist arranges her version of a Van Gogh still life and a Pop Art painting before a backdrop of repeated dollar bills. **Mike Elko** imagines in his screenprint *Museum Director’s Nightmare* a museum closeout sale in which “Curators, Docents and Guards are authorized to Slash Prices!” The ad assures the bargain hunting art collector that “no Art Movement [is] Too Minor.” Given the recent events affecting the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis and having worked myself for an institution which auctioned some of its paintings, this seems to be a case where art imitates life.

Words and communication proved to be another topic of interest. Words are joined with images of hands in several artists’ books selected for the exhibition. **Jaime Knight’s** unique book *Always* expresses appreciation for a helping hand in intricately cut paper that confesses, “you always know when I need one.” In her *Don’t Book 1* **Susan Schmidt** uses a special format--pages shaped like fingers--and an image of hands to eloquently offer her “Lessons to Parents and Children.” *Hand* is one of several lithographs paired with poetry in **Roberta Delaney’s** book *Parallel Voices*, a title that can also serve as a definition for a *livre d’artiste*. Words and images in a *livre d’artiste* or *livre de peintre* not so much illustrate as parallel and illuminate each other.

In their collaborative project, *Tepetenwechsel/Change of Scenery* **Daniela Deeg** and **Cynthia Lollis** consider, as Deeg has written, “the surprising cultural differences of idiom use in the artists’ native languages.” For example, images explain that “cold coffee” in German is the same as “old hat” in English, and “a cat’s leap” in German means a “stone’s throw away.” **Stephanie Stigliano** uses images and her interest in type also to cross cultures in her book, *Eat Your (Chinese)*. What began as woodcut posters displayed at a local Pan-Asian Restaurant for Windows Art of Malden, the artist reworked into a book. Issued in two versions, in English and Chinese, the book advises eating five vegetables and fruits per day for good health. The artist’s neighbors were her collaborators, showing her how to cook and helping her with the Chinese translation and calligraphy.

Joseph Lupo has been intrigued by the way comic book artists tell a story, especially though the “thought/talk bubble.” Much of his recent work, according to the artist, “has centered around issues of communication and forms of reproduction.” In his screenprint, *Have you been drinking, Mr. Stark?*, though wordless, it seems clear that the jagged shape of the empty speech bubble suggests alarm. **Ben Beres** however, fills a speech bubble with illegible marks, giving an ironic twist to the title of his etching, *Conversation Piece*. **Endi Poskovic** combines the image of a desolate landscape with an enigmatic text in his 5-block, 12-color woodcut, *Night Watch in Gray and Red*. The artist, who emigrated from Sarajevo just before the break up of Yugoslavia, explores the role of memory and displacement through the relationship, sometimes accessible, sometimes ambiguous, between image and text. Similarly it seems difficult to pin down the meaning of **Dusty Herbig**’s muscular screenprint, *Chrome Switch*. According to the artist, fingers become the control for switches and outlets, and Herbig’s own hands and fingers were responsible for punching over 1,000 holes, which were then filled with chrome-covered paper discs, cut with the same punch, to define the word SWITCH.

As I wind up my overview of the Biennial, I’ll let **Glen Baldrige** have the final say about the disconnection between words and images. In his subtly-textured, sixty-four block color woodcut, *Here Come the Miracles*, the artist confronts the viewer with two abstracted fists that are inscribed, like tattoos, with letters that spell, “Okay Fine.” The Gothic font that assures their authenticity as “Goth” tattoos is further reinforced by a stray umlaut. But just as the umlaut is meaningless, for Baldrige the tattoo, reduced to a milquetoast comment, “okay fine,” has become an empty signifier of outlaw credentials. Posing and posturing are also on his mind in *Desert Sparkle*, his inkjet and UV screenprint with colorshift pigment. Inspired by 3-D car stickers he chose an ink, Desert Sparkle, used to paint hot rods, to comment on what he sees as the passing of hot rod culture, subverting the visual language of that culture. The letters, seemingly created by bullet hole punctures, spell out “The End.”

Based on the images submitted to the Boston Printmakers, I can safely say printmaking, however, is not only far from “the end,” but is thriving. And the posing and posturing

that has marked much of the art world for many years may also be undergoing changes, driven at least in part by the current economic climate. At the recent Miami/Basel fair, for example, several major dealers featured prints in their booths, tacitly acknowledging the importance of “original” art offered at affordable prices. Perhaps this is a sign of our changing times, but regardless, this exhibition makes it abundantly clear that the commitment to making prints is as strong as ever. With an ever increasing number of techniques and tools at their disposal along with the tried and true processes, artists continue to discover ways to express their ideas that can best be said using the eloquent and versatile languages of printmaking.