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Bert Menco, Detail of *And?*, à la poupée etching/aquatinted background, 2019

A Life's Journey Through Images

by Bert Menco

This narrative needs to begin with some of my family background. However, the topic was covered earlier in the journal of the American Print Alliance, [Contemporary Impressions](#), a [comprehensive article](#), and in an [essay](#) by my peer [Diane Thodos](#). So, here I do so only briefly. I am Dutch. My grandfather on my mother's side owned a prominent Rotterdam enterprise selling musical instruments and arranging concerts. Being Jewish, in 1942 he was forced to transfer his business to a so-called Stellvertreter

(German deputy). Subsequently, my grandfather spent some time writing his war account as well as making drawings of his beloved city as it looked before the [May 14, 1940 bombardment](#). Naturally, the circumstances under which these drawings were made are heartbreaking. My composite mezzotint, that includes a linotype page of my grandfather's journal, depicts the burning of the St. Laurens Church, the same church featured in my grandfather's watercolor (which was rebuilt and is again a major Rotterdam landmark). In my image, people are fleeing the city, hence they are all facing outward.



Max Hakkert (grandfather Bert) *Rotterdam before 1940 Bombardment*, watercolor, 1942, 7 x 11



Rotterdam May 14, 1940, composite mezzotint-linotype (text printed with the help of [Audrey Niffenegger](#)),

16 plates (images: copper, text: zinc), 2000, 34 x 12. Right: detail of mezzotint - [CLICK TO ENLARGE](#)

Shortly after the bombing, he and his family tried to flee, but this went terribly wrong, as described in the articles mentioned above. Additionally, my grandfather's brother, my great uncle was also murdered. He was a string instrument maker; one of his violins is included in Amnon Weinstein's amazing "[Violins of Hope](#)" collection. I had the good fortune to attend a [concert](#) that included a Weinstein restored violin and also a cello built by my great uncle. In an echo of printmaking materials, small embossed copper plaques commemorating those who were deported are inserted in the sidewalks in front of houses, including where some of our family had lived freely before deportations. This is part of a huge ongoing project, "Stolpersteine" (literally "stumbling stones") by the German artist [Günter Demnig](#). One of those commemorated in that manner is [Erna](#), one of our father's sisters last living in Deventer, The Netherlands. We lost four aunts and uncles from our father's side.

Later, I studied plant pathology at the [University of Wageningen](#), a direction inspired by Rachel Carson's

[“Silent Spring”](#). She frequently worked at the Woods Hole Marine Biological Laboratory, where I too had the good fortune of attending a summer course in 1981. That was nearly 40 years ago now, and before my relocation to the U.S. in 1982. Eventually, I ended up as a research scientist studying the cell biology of chemical senses – [smell and taste](#) – and worked for much of my career at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL, and before that at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands.

The Netherlands has a [many centuries-old printmaking tradition](#) with [Grafein](#) as the current umbrella organization, i.e., the Dutch equivalent of The Boston Printmakers. Curiosity led me to the process. I started printmaking in Wageningen, and I haven’t stopped since. Perhaps it sounds presumptuous, but it was Rembrandt who inspired me. I thought his prints were so mysterious. He and Hercules Seghers are still among my all-time favorite printmakers, Rembrandt because of the spontaneity and precision of his lines. Seghers appealed to me because his works and techniques were, and still are, totally unique. But of course, I like the works of [many others](#), such as the Dutch Peter Vos, the Czech Jiri Anderle and the German Horst Janssen.

I was able to develop and maintain a semi-professional career in fine arts along with my science career. Now, being no longer active in science research, this art career is “all” I have. I not only attended residencies in science, as mentioned above, but also in art, printmaking especially [Ragdale](#) in Lake Forest near Chicago, and the [Guanlan Printmaking](#) village, Shenzhen, China, truly inspiring experiences both (a Chinese art magazine even published a beautifully-produced [article](#) on my work, written by [Zhao Jiachun](#)). I never had my own print studio. In the U.S., I first worked for many years at the [Evanston Art Center](#) and since 2002 at the Winnetka [North Shore Art League](#), a very encouraging and nurturing place. Though I never actually worked there, I had the privilege to be included in many exhibitions organized by Chicago’s prime printmaking facility, the Chicago Printmakers Collaborative, including their [30-year anniversary show](#). I met unusually [talented printmaking peers](#) in nearly all places where I lived and worked, starting in Wageningen, where [Maaike Alma](#) was my first etching teacher, in Utrecht, and also Coventry UK, where I lived for several years. Now planning to return to The Netherlands, I am contemplating establishing my own printmaking studio.

Along with photography, printmaking has one major advantage beyond most other forms of visual art, which is that that one produces multiples which can conveniently be submitted to exhibitions all over the globe. I took advantage of this aspect. Of course, when submitting to a juried show, sometimes one gets in, often not – a work that receives a prize in one show may be rejected at another....”part of the game”. Some of the “ins” in my case: I mentioned Guanlan, and consequently some of my works were exhibited in China as well as in Taiwan. Earlier I received an award for one of my prints in Japan and this led to

participating in several shows in South Korea. Probably one of the more important shows in which I participated the last decennium is the [Douro Biennial](#) in Portugal. For 2020 [Nuno Canelas](#), its main organizer, asked me to curate a sub-show on World War II which had ended 75 years ago that year. First I thought 'Oh my', knowing that this would not be a trivial task, but on reflection I thought this a fitting testimony to those affected, including my family. I accepted the challenge, only including works by printmakers who had experienced the war themselves or whose close relatives had. Because of that restriction, many of the artists were older or are no longer with us. Intentionally, I included works that covered the war from various perspectives: battles, concentration camps but also U.S. internment camps, comfort women, nuclear bombs, etc. Though, unfortunately, the show took place during the COVID pandemic, only very few non-Portuguese artists were able to attend; nevertheless, its [staging](#) was impressive.

Unable to safely return to the U.S. and to print, I spent 6 months of 2020 in Amsterdam. Once back in the U.S. it was high season for the U.S. elections, and I lacked the patience to make complex prints, but rather made many small monotypes for which I primarily used pages of a late 19th century German encyclopedia. I asked the director of the North Shore Art League, Linda Nelson, if I could exhibit these, along with some earlier made monotypes on end pages of old books, all being a response to the unsettling period 2016-2020 and she graciously consented, despite the short notice. The show, which I called my *Swansong Show*, as it may well be my last one while still in the U.S., was a tapestry-like installation pinned on a display board. Alas, but understandably so, only few saw the display but, rather immodestly, I thought that it looked rather impressive.



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Swansong at the League, January-February 2021, partial overview, 130 x 50

pinboard exhibition at the North Shore Art League, Winnetka, IL; arrow points to *Catharsis 9*



Catharsis 9 or Švejk. monotype, 2020, 9.5 x 6

My more regular work usually starts out as doodles, along the line of the above-mentioned monotypes. I often feel that images generate themselves with my brain and hand(s) as a guide. Nevertheless, there is some consistency; many of my works deal with somewhat “transformed” figures.



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Left, *Petrushka*, composite à la poupée etching/aquatint/aquatinted background,

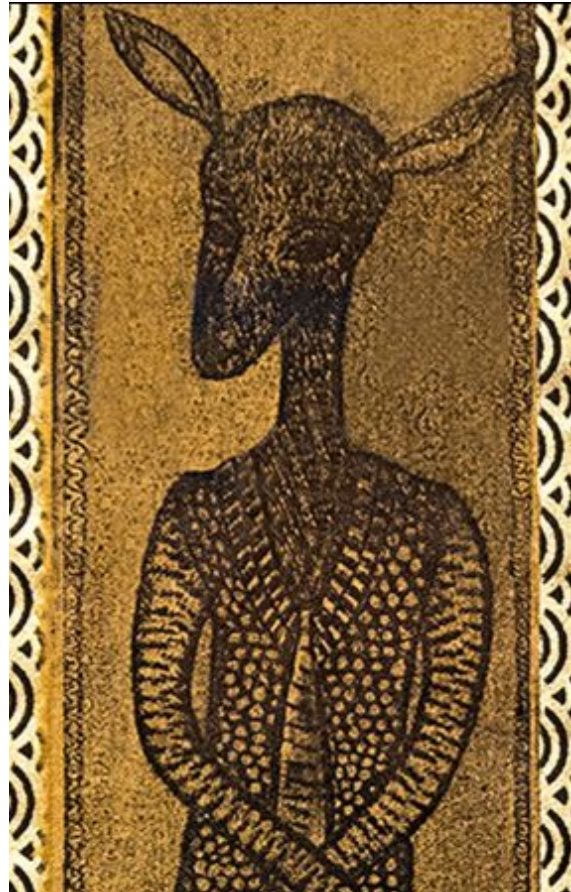
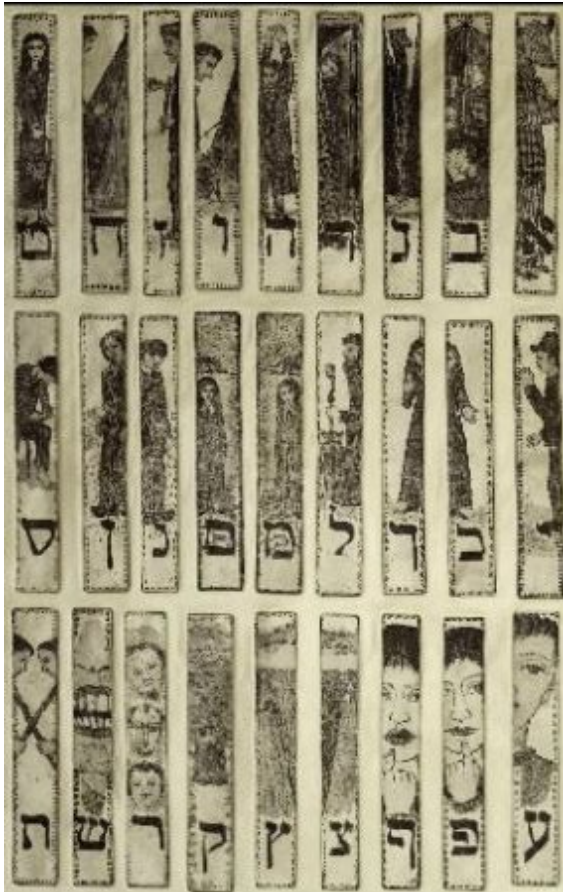
23 plates (image: zinc and copper, background: zinc), 2013, 24 x 21

Right, *Petrushka, version 2*, composite etching/aquatint/chine collé,

23 plates (zinc and copper), 2013, 24 x 21

Technically, my print works are often E.V., Edition Variable, as I like to play with papers as well as inks. Often, I print the same image using two plates, a background aquatint, usually yellow, with the image printed over it à la poupée, whereas at other times I use the same image printed chine collé, two or more papers, using a rather decorative paper as background paper as shown here for *Petrushka*. For both backgrounds, and sometimes also for the images, I quite frequently use gold- or silver-metallic coated papers (alas, a bit hard to reproduce, but trust me, it looks really good!), e.g. *Dear* below, with a pattern here. Also, my images consist quite regularly of more than one plate, resulting in composite prints, e.g., here my Rotterdam print and *Petrushka* as examples, and also my last such print, a Hebrew alphabet depicting the origin of the letters, 27 small plates.

The last 10 years or so, I also often use elongated formats, leftover pieces of zinc or copper leftover from the projects of studio mates. Similarly, I use some artist-discarded plates, i.e., plates that already had some marks made by fellow artists; I very much like the challenge that these plates offer. *Dear* combines both.



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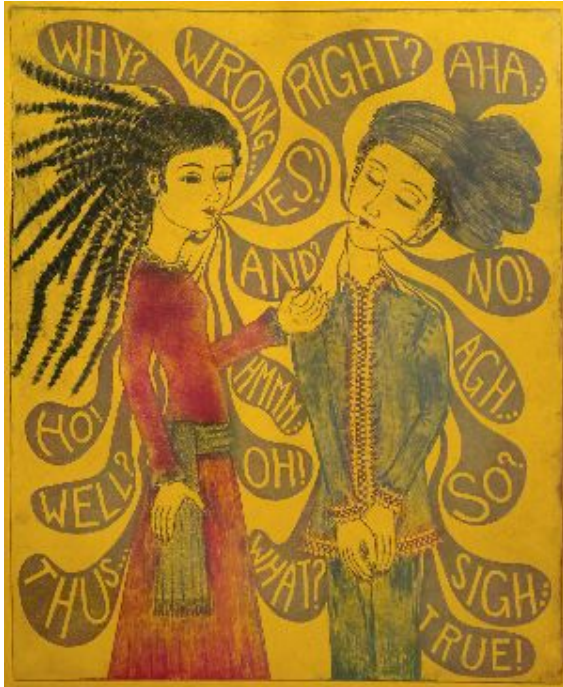
Left, *Aleph-Beth*, composite etching/aquatint, 27 plates, 2018

17 x 11 (largely made during a 2018 Ragdale residency)

Right, *Dear*, etching/aquatint/chine collé, 2013, 12.5 x 2

I have several good friends who are proficient and expert graphic novel artists. Hence, as a challenge for a recent large print, I took two people expressing monosyllables, a “graphic novel” in one image. (I made one accidental goof, can you find it?) I named the image *And?*, this being the one word shared by both partners. Here, as in quite a few of my other images, I deal with partner inter-relations, the attraction and the struggle.

Unlike for etchings, where I often apply chine collé, drypoint and mezzotint imagery, the print often does not survive the glue process used for this, so I usually print these more conventionally, but there are exceptions, such as 2 x *Guan Shi Yin*.



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Left, *And?*, à la poupée etching/aquatinted background, 2019, 27 x 21

Right, 2 x *Guan Shi Yin*, drypoint/chine collé, 2011, 5 x 4 (made during a 2011 Guanlan, China, residency)

Lately, I have also been experimenting combining small woodcuts with etching, chine collé. An example shown below, *Little Red and the 13 Wolves*. I cut out a well in the woodblock that fits the etching plate.

Finally, a mezzotint that I am particularly fond of, also made during a Guanlan residency. Despite the complexity of the technique this one succeeded particularly well, I think.



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Left, *Little Red and the 13 Wolves*, woodcut, etching/aquatint, 2021, 11.5 x 8

Right, *Drops*, mezzotint, 2015, 11 x 8

With few exceptions, my edition sizes do not exceed 20. Often I even do not complete an edition. If you would like to view more of my work, which includes drawings and paintings, please visit my [website](#).



TARLOW



SCHWARTZ

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Letter from the President

[Lois Tarlow: August 30, 1928 – January 4, 2021](#)

For the BP print exhibition and cookbook *Palate to Plate*, Lois Tarlow made *Ancient, Gourmet*, 2007, a 9 x 7 solar plate etching along with her Etruscan Recipe for Ox Stew. Lois was a strong presence in Boston where she began exhibiting in the 1950s through to 2019, when she had a major retrospective at the Danforth Museum called [Material Vocabulary](#). For many decades, she was a prominent writer for Art New England and an avid traveler; Lois also made paintings along with her prints. As a BP board member, Lois's vision, acumen with words, and sharp wit were always present. She was the expert who named most of our member shows, and the text below, that accompanied the print above, will forever remind me of what has been lost, now that she has passed.

Etruscan Ox Stew:

Ox marrow, XXV year old wine, IV whole cloves of elephant garlic, a fist of bay leaves, VI owl eyes, several pairs of moth wings, one small, bitter berry bush

Spear an ox and drain it. Marinate it in a large, clay cauldron with

the above ingredients. Simmer until reduced by half.

Add sauteed agaricus arvensis fungus, river lizard, and beaten quail eggs.

Brown several ears of maize with blanched, Mongolian crickets seasoned with pepper,

eucalyptus and fig leaves. Fold these into the pot along with III chopped leeks and a half gourd of sliced tubers.

Simmer covered for eleven days and one night.

Bonum appetitionem!

[Peri Schwartz: October 4, 1951–May 7, 2021](#)

Peri Schwartz, a BP member since 1984, passed away last month at age 69. *Bottles & Jars III*, pictured above is a 15 x 24.5 spit bite aquatint with drypoint and sugar lift. This etching from one of her [extended series](#) was selected for the 2017 *North American Print Biennial* by Judith Brody of the National Gallery of Art. Her monotypes and etchings were selected for nine biennials from 1981–2017. Peri was also a prolific painter and created beautiful conté crayon drawings on mylar. Her paintings and prints of simple objects, space and light are perfectly composed and balanced. Peri studied at Boston University for her BFA and is represented in Boston by [Gallery NAGA](#).



ADATO



HURWITZ

CLICK IMAGE TO ENLARGE

[Linda Adato: October 24, 1942 – May 7, 2021](#)

Linda Adato, a BP member since 1992, passed away suddenly last month at age 78. Linda exhibited in six biennials and numerous BP member shows. She was a reliably active member whose prints are always masterful. Linda was invited by the Art Complex Museum for a special members exhibition titled [Look Again](#), where members created works in response to the museum's vast print collection. Linda responded to a museum print by Sidney Hurwitz (right) and created *One Way, or the Other*, 2014, a 6 ¾ x 13 ¾ two-

plate color etching using aquatint and soft ground that was inked using her signature *a la poupeeé*. Here's Linda's statement:

"My work often depicts architectural structures and city imagery; so I was attracted to Sidney Hurwitz's etching Central Artery for the geometry of the city infrastructure contrasting with the simplicity of the sky. I especially liked the curvature of the highway above. My etching One Way, or the Other depicts the sweep of the Manhattan Bridge from Brooklyn. Beneath the bridge there are buildings and foliage offset by a one-way sign. I used two plates, one plate for the sky which I printed first and the other key plate I inked a la poupeeé."

Linda served as president of The Society of American Graphic Artists (SAGA) from 2007-2010 and is also a lifetime member of the Silvermine Guild of Artists in CT.

Here are some notes on the 2021 Annual Meeting that took place on May 2nd:

The annual meeting requires the re-election of board members. We express our appreciation and thanks for Susan Denniston, Alex Gerashev, Sharon Hayes, Ky Ober, and Malgorzata Zurakowska for renewing their 3-year terms. We also honored Christiane Corcelle, who is now board member emeritus as she completes 15 years of service to BP, many of them as our web designer-keeper.

Andrew Stearns reported on the recent Member Survey. The goal of the survey: to profile and restate our mission as well as to survey members to help prioritize our initiatives as a volunteer organization gave insight on programming requests, professional development, and residency opportunities. The survey yielded not only a list of topics of interest, but also a generous number of member-writers for The Quarterly.

Susan Denniston gave the Treasurer's report which, in short, stated BP finances are in good shape. Income has been primarily based on membership fees, and membership has been stable and even noticeably increased. Thank you, members!

Zoom enabled us to host 14 virtual member portfolio presentations! In order of appearance, participants included Julia Talcott (emcee), Elisa Lanzi, Amir Tabatabaei, Yumei Zhang, Monique Martin, Jo Ann Rothschild, Sammia Atoui, Adrian Rodriguez, Barbara Rizza Mellin, Elise Mills, William Evertson, Phyllis and Victor Merriam, Debra Olin, and Judy Haberl. Many are new members; all were very enjoyable.

These are the two new board officers being added in 2021: Andrew Stearns is vice president of new initiatives, and Sandra Cardillo is administrative secretary. Renee Covalucci, Sharon Hayes, Susan Denniston and Peter Scott still remain in their posts.

Please enjoy two articles written by members Bert Menco and Ann Chernow, along with an expanded memorial of Lois Tarlow written by members of the board with whom she served. All articles are in depth, dense with content and have been wonderfully guided by Susan Schmidt.

Lastly, later this month, we will be sending information and instructions for how to bring [CONNECT: Small Prints by members of The Boston Printmakers](#) to your communities! The *CONNECT* webpage will be updated for members to share with schools, and galleries with one click. We hope to hear from many of you with your ideas and contacts to travel this powerful, meaningful, extraordinary show of prints made during the pandemic.

Enjoy your summer, stay safe and have fun,



[Renee Covalucci](#)

Collaboration 2020: Ann Chernow and James Reed

By Ann Chernow

This collaboration began a decade ago when Master Printer James Reed and I needed a break from creating work for a portfolio concerning my iconic female images based on women in scenes from Noir films of the 1930s and 1940s. Over lunch, we were looking through a book of Picasso prints and admired a lithograph titled, *White Bust on Black*. I owned this print and brought it to Jim's studio. It appeared to be an 'ordinary' lithograph, but with 'beady' areas, no problem to emulate, which I wanted to do using my own image of a Noir head. Jim warned that it might not be as simple as it seemed. It wasn't! We had to make three lithographs before we could replicate the surface of Picasso's print.

Click here > [Picasso, *White Bust on Black* \(Art.net\)](#)



Ann Chernow, *Paper Doll*, lithograph 17.25 x 22.25
drawn with white gouache directly on the stone

We were hooked and decided to try recreating other Picasso lithographs.

I wanted my own prints to attain the unique surfaces and dramatic qualities of certain Picasso prints. I had worked with Jim Reed for years in his Milestone Graphics print studio in Bridgeport, CT, and we approached this new project as a collaboration between artist and printer. We agreed that Fernand Mourlot's catalogue raisonnee, [Picasso Lithographs](#) (Boston, 1970) was a definitive source for information about the materials he used. Although Mourlot gave a general description of the processes, specific materials and techniques were not included. We turned to other sources for information, but found very little available.

Through an art dealer, Greg Hubert, we were introduced to Eric Mourlot, Fernand's grandson who

owns a New York gallery. He confirmed that many of Picasso's materials and methods were improvised and that Picasso experimented with many states of the same print, often turning to unorthodox materials until he reached his desired conclusion for the particular image.

Instead of being frustrated, we were excited by the challenge and Jim Reed had to discover, through trial and error how Picasso achieved the images we were trying to emulate. Trained at Tamarind Institute, Jim had a command of lithography and no fear of experimenting. For instance, studying one Picasso image, *Bulls, Rams and Birds*, the information given was: "Page of Lithographic crayon drawings on transfer paper placed on corrugated paper." The question for us was – what kind of transfer paper, and what kind of corrugated paper? Picasso's print was created in 1945; Jim had to find a different kind of transfer paper and he had no idea what Mourlot's 'corrugated paper' was, but he eventually found materials that worked. My corresponding lithograph was titled *Girls, Games and Beds*.

Click here > [Picasso, *Bulls, Rams and Birds* \(Art.net\)](#)



Ann Chernow, *Girls, Games and Beds*, lithograph 11.5 X 15
drawn with litho crayon, overlaid with corrugated cardboard

Picasso created several lithographs on zinc. The only information noted for Picasso's *The Italian Woman* read: 'zinc re-engraved in the background', and this lack of detail presented multiple problems. I had never worked on a zinc lithograph, and the phrase, 're-engraved in the background' had to be recreated by erasing some areas that had already become an essential part of the work. The usual liquid Jim 'erased' with, was no longer available in the U.S.A. A mutual friend in Paris searched all the art material stores there and learned that the substance was no longer produced, probably because its content is now considered hazardous. When we were 'stuck' on how to proceed, Jim said, "give me three weeks." Within a month, he had purchased many chemicals at Home Depot, and had experimented until he finally, literally had cooked up a gummy and horrible smelling substance which he instructed me not to dare breathe in. I tried it on the plate and it worked perfectly. My corresponding work was *The American*.

Click here > [Picasso, *The Italian Woman* \(MoMA.org\)](#)



Ann Chernow, *The American*, lithograph, 14.5 x 11

Main figure drawn on stone, surrounding figures transferred from a copper plate
to litho paper, reworked with a brush, then transferred to stone

Each of the fifty-three prints we finally realized had equally complex adventures. In between the years we produced the prints in this Picasso project, Jim and I completed four portfolios of prints concerning my work with female images in Film Noir. Printmaking has always been my passion, and my life is more exciting for having this collaboration with James Reed.

"I had thought that Picasso had taken his many printmaking secrets to the grave and that it would have been impossible for anyone to unearth them. Now come Ann Chernow and James Reed."

Kobi Ledor, M.D, Picasso expert



Ann Chernow, *Summertime*, lithograph, 18 x 12

"These prints are the result of an incredibly unique investigation undertaken by an artist and a printer in close collaboration, requiring the skills of both to dig into history, chemistry and technique, driven by their curiosity and determination to find answers as to how Picasso used various media."

Kim Henrikson, Director of the Center for Contemporary Printmaking



Ann Chernow, *Stars and Stripes*, lithograph 17 x 13.25



Ann Chernow, *Bathshebas*, lithograph, 9.5 x 8.625

Artist and master printer James Reed has received a Ford Foundation Fellowship and Rockefeller Research Grant, among other honors. He recently donated his entire personal collection of prints to the Fairfield University Art Museum, for students to study. In her prints, Ann Chernow creates moments of suspended reality based on images from Noir movies of the 1940s. Her work has been exhibited at many galleries internationally and The Gabor Peterdi International Print Collection recently acquired 388 of her prints. A documentary, *A Moment in Time*, about her life and work is being completed by filmmaker Leah Price.



Ann Chernow and Jim Reed at Milestone Graphics, Bridgeport, CT



Lois Tarlow with her painting: *Self-Portrait in a Persian Jacket*, 1954

Remembrances of Lois Tarlow

by Sid Hurwitz

A few thoughts about Lois Tarlow. I first met Lois during my early days in Boston in the mid 50's. I frequently attended openings at the Boris Mirski Gallery on Newbury St. Mirski showed many established

as well as emerging artists from the Boston area including Lois and her then husband the late Arthur Polonsky. As an impressionable young artist I saw them as an ideal artist couple whose work was very engaging and impressive--lyrical, dramatic and beautifully painted. Although I followed Lois' career over the ensuing years I came more closely in contact when she became involved on the Board of the Boston Printmakers. I would occasionally drive her to meetings since we both lived in Newton. Lois was a valued member of the Board who never failed to contribute valuable ideas and worked in many capacities to keep the organization moving. She had a sharp wit and wouldn't hesitate to offer criticism when she felt it was important. I so much admired that in the work of her later years she was willing to explore what were for her new directions and new mediums. I always enjoyed working with her and miss her presence during the time I served on the Board.



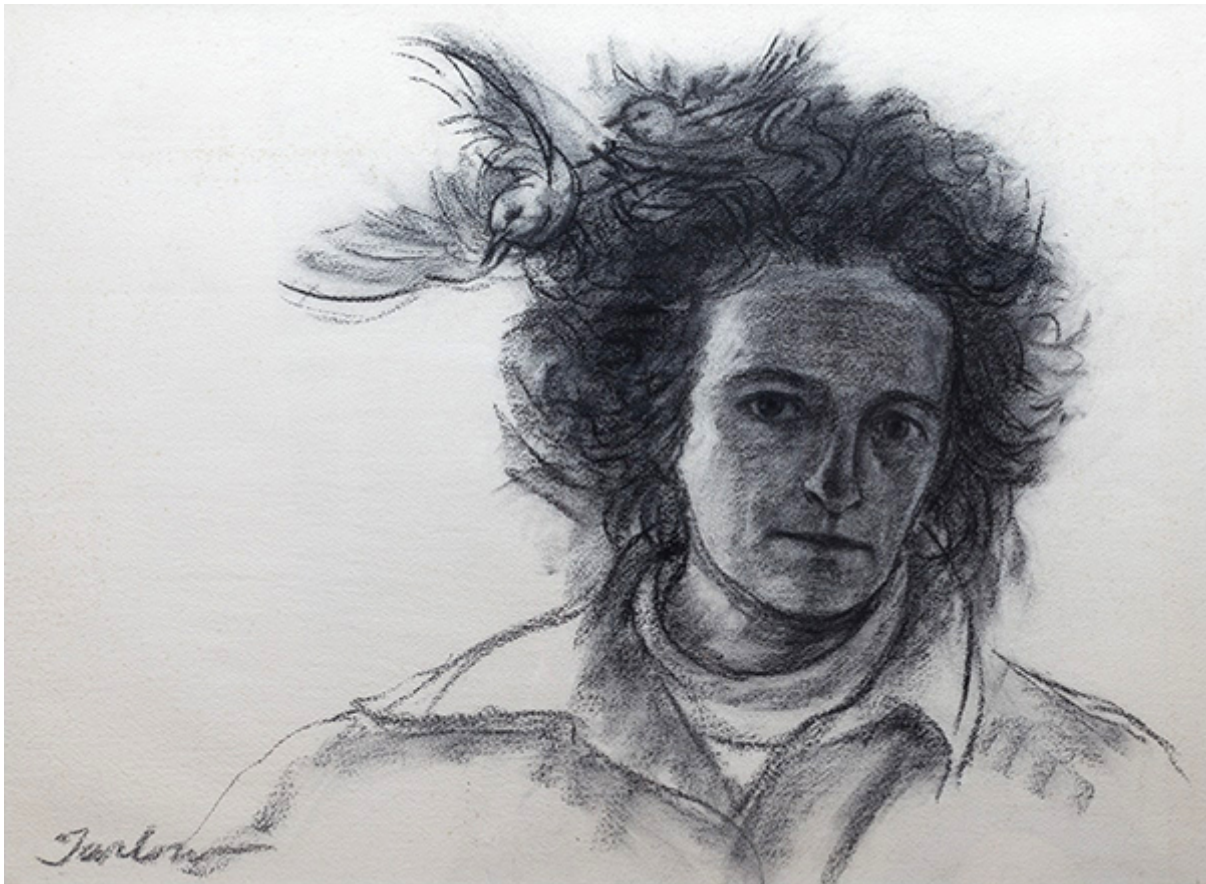
Lois Tarlow, *Early Morning, Hanoi*. pastel on paper, 26 x 40, 1994

by David Thomas

In 1989, Lois made the first of what was to become numerous trips to Vietnam. She was invited by fellow Boston artist C. David Thomas to interview twenty artists for an exhibition titled *As Seen by Both Sides: American and Vietnamese Artists Look at the War*. She spent three weeks traveling from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City and fell in love with the Vietnamese culture. She returned to Boston and spent the next year

traveling from Boston to Los Angeles interviewing the twenty American artists for the exhibition. The exhibition opened at the Boston University Art Gallery in January 1991. The exhibition then traveled to fourteen museums across the United States over the next three years and then to Vietnam for an additional year of travel to three museums there.

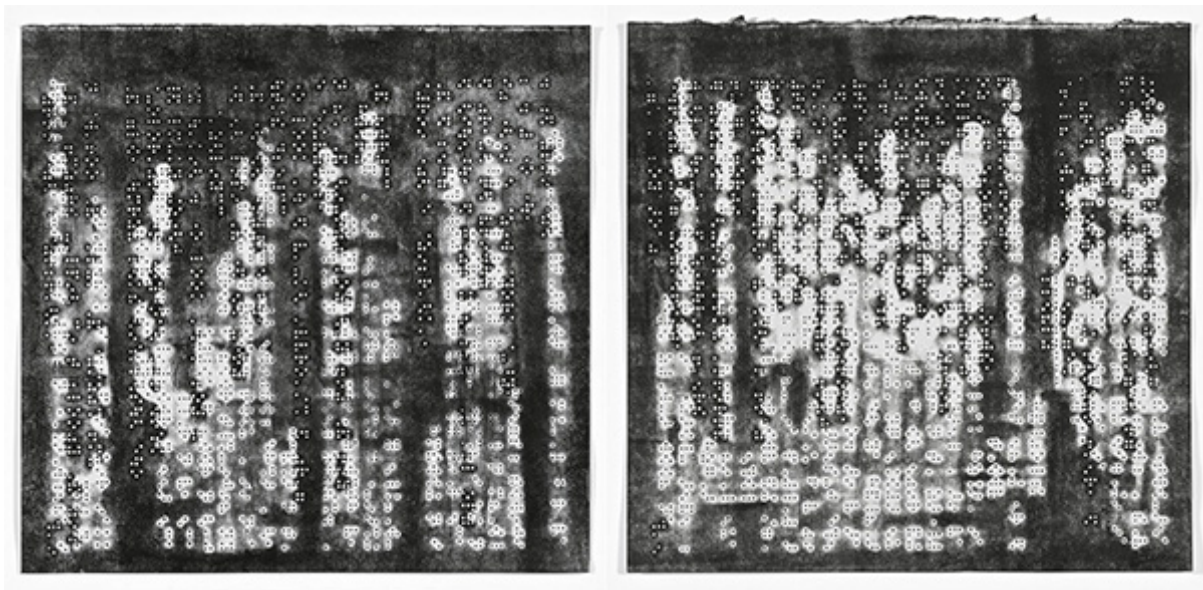
Lois made several additional trips to Vietnam working on projects. For one trip she raised money and donations of art materials for school children in rural villages in neighboring Laos. She worked with David Thomas to bring dozens of Vietnamese artists to Boston to teach and conduct research. She frequently opened her home in Newton for artists to stay and hosted many dinners in their honor. She introduced Vietnamese artists to other artists in Boston and took them to visit museums and galleries in the Boston area. She truly loved Vietnam and many of the artists she worked with, and this feeling was mutual.



Lois Tarlow, *Self-Portrait as a Bird's Nest*, charcoal, 1975

by Carolyn Muskat

How do you put memories of a friend into a paragraph? Lois was just so much – every time I talked with her, I learned something new about her – her life, her thoughts, her art, her humor. I have been fortunate to have traveled to Vietnam several times – and every time, Lois asked me to say hello to friends of hers. Not just ‘people’ or ‘friends’, but she had specific people I was to reach out to – Lois remembered and cared about the individuals. I remember sitting with her once listening to her talk about how she spent time tracking birds for a job. And how she learned all the different bird calls in order to track them and find them. I imagined her traipsing around fields and woods, looking and listening for the birds. I always thought of Lois as resilient, not unaware or fearless so much, but remarkably adaptable and resilient. Her fearlessness was reserved for her art. Her humor and support were for her friends.



Lois Tarlow, *City Lights* (#1 and #2), charcoal on braille paper, 2012 - 2015

By Julia Talcott

I met Lois in 2005, while I was looking for a studio. A friend suggested Lois’ basement with a press for rent in Newtonville. Lois lived upstairs and was gruff and terrifying. She required money upfront and was suspicious of me screwing up everything; the press, the room, leaving the door open, using noxious chemicals, maybe even stealing. Fair enough, she didn’t know me. A few years passed and we got to know each other better. I paid my rent on time and was productive in her cool basement. The space was small and dank and also a welcome retreat from my busy home-life nearby. My family could not find me there, but I knew Lois was looking at my work on her way to do the laundry. I took it as an unspoken

challenge. HER work took my breath away: I was intimidated and intrigued. When she asked me to join a critique group I accepted with excitement. Lois became a mentor to me and did me a huge service when she invited me to apply to the Boston Printmakers. I owe a lot to her in my work as well: she gave me permission to trust my intuition. Her intelligence, her fierceness, her sense of humor were extraordinary. I miss her, and I wish I could tell her all of this



BP members celebrate the opening of *Lois Tarlow, Material Vocabulary*, at the Danforth Museum, 2019

From left, Ky Ober, Rhoda Rosenberg, Carolyn Muskat, Lois Tarlow, Deborah Cornell, Julia Talcott

by Deborah Cornell

Lois Tarlow believed in art like no other, and her life showed it. Her work was consistent, deeply honest and insightful, as well as lyrical - and often humorous. Her heart and her brilliant perceptions were in all of it. Her work was moving to me because she communicated her own wonder and awe for everything around her.

I got to know Lois in 1982 when we were on the faculty of the Art New England Summer Workshops' inaugural year. We shared both a love of the environment and an abiding interest in watching birds. (She never went out drawing without binoculars.) Later we co-taught special workshops in Maine and New Mexico, surrounded by her chosen spectacular and inspiring settings. Extraordinary art was made – followed by gourmet dinners and evening crits! Besides being a great teacher, Lois loved good food and was a consummate chef. (Her pie crust will live in legend.) She worked all the time, producing complex watercolors and pastels that reflected her high expectations for herself. Good times!

Intrepid in her life and work, she never slowed down. We went to Western Australia and Majorca as scientific expedition artists. On our first trip, I met her at the airport, a little shaky from recovering from the flu, and Lois showed up with all her bags and a freshly broken wrist! (We went anyway.)

It was an honor, a pleasure, and a privilege to have known her – witty, dedicated, generous, resolute. The world is richer and saner now from having had her in it.



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