Robert Cottingham and the American Landscape

When Robert Cottingham was twelve years old, he had an epiphany. He calls it a "seminal moment," a major experience that set the course for what he has been doing ever since. The moment took place at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York when, wandering through the galleries, he encountered Edward Hopper's painting, *Early Sunday Morning*.

Cottingham recalled the experience during a lecture he gave in conjunction with his visit to Tandem Press in March 1997. "It was the first time I realized that a painting could talk to you. Here was something that was feeding back to me. I had discovered another language—a silent language. It not only determined how I would paint—that I would be a realist painter—but it determined what I would paint." He later found further influence and inspiration in the graphic styles represented in works by Piet Mondrian, Charles Demuth, Marsden Hartley and Stuart Davis, and the urban atmosphere of George Tooker.

It took a while for the childhood experience to transform itself into a full-time art career. Cottingham initially went into commercial art after graduating from the Pratt Institute. He began as an artist and then served for several years as an art director for an advertising agency in New York, Los Angeles, and finally London.

In the early years, Cottingham painted in the evenings and on weekends as an adjunct to his day job. When he moved to Los Angeles, he said he had to quit painting for a year because of what he describes as a profound case of culture shock. The buildings, the landscape, and the light were so markedly different from what he had experienced in his native Brooklyn and the New York area. Gradually he returned to his part-time painting schedule.

In the process, he arrived at a conclusion about the direction his art would take. It harkened back to his encounter with Hopper as.


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well as his professional experience, "I had decided by now that I was interested in the urban subject matter. I would stay in the city because that was where I was from. Basically, I’m an American landscape painter and this is my landscape."

He began doing what typifies his artistic explorations, concentrating on subject matter that interests him and doing a series of works to explore the possibilities of the subject. The series idea is related to the fact that "When I find something that interests me in terms of visual exploration, I tend to do a series of paintings because one doesn’t seem to be enough."

Initially, it was a series of trucks, primarily the large commercial vehicles used to haul products or objects. Then, having come to terms with the Southern California landscape and ambiance, he made pictures of Los Angeles homes—modest neighborhood houses rather than elaborate Hollywood mansions.

While in Los Angeles, he had a second epiphany, one of what he describes as periodic "ahs" between revelation and experience that characterize his creative evolution. This particular moment occurred when he began looking at the logo for the 20th Century Fox motion picture studio and realized that its design captured what he was trying to do as an artist. "There is a joy," he notes, "to seeing the three-dimensional world depicted on a two-dimensional surface. And it can work both ways."

It also was at this time that Cottingham, recalling his childhood visits to Times Square, began to sense that there was something going on above eye level on the streets of Los Angeles. It manifested itself in the signs above the storefronts and building entrances. It was a whole world of communication, messages being fired back and forth above the store windows. It reflected what he characterizes as "a golden age of outdoor signage," something that is an integral part of the American experience. It led to the series he calls the "American Alphabet."

He gathered material for the series after he was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in 1974. In London at the time, he returned briefly to the United States and took a Greyhound bus excursion through the Northeast, photographing in 27 cities and gathering thousands of slides in the process. Later he moved his family back to Connecticut and became a full-time artist.

The slides provided the visual text for the alphabet series. Cottingham initially did two sets of the series, paintings in oil and then gouache. At Tandem Press, he is approaching the series in a gradual way, saying he anticipates working on the prints over a period of years and seeing where it leads.

Cottingham notes that he is no stranger to printmaking. Since 1972 he has done nearly 80 prints. He enjoys the collaboration that comes with doing prints and the fact that it allows him to get out of his studio.

During visits to Tandem Press in 1991 and 1993, he created two prints from his Rolling Stock Series, a suite which features images of railroad cars. In this series he explored what he has described as "another world," the back of the yards industrial landscape. Here he wanted to capture the grime and wear-induced patina of the rolling stock as well as working with light and shadow and breaking up areas of color, "to see how far I could get to abstraction through cropping an image." The Rolling Stock Series is a complement to another railroad motif he captured in 27 Heros, a series of paintings that depict the corporate logos of American railroads.

For Cottingham, the American Alphabet is a cultural and historical document, something that captures a part of the man-made environment. "I’m not interested in the age of things," he says. "I’m interested in the fact that they’re disappearing." He also sees an esthetic dimension in what he is doing with the letters in the series. "I think of them as formal arrangements. They’re almost an excuse to make an image and play with form, color, and line."

During his visit in March 1997 he did two lithographs of the letters F and K. He returned on several occasions and added D, J, R, M, V and T to the portfolio. The most recent addition is An American Alphabet: I.

An American Alphabet: P will be released this summer.

This article by Art Howe was first published in the 1998 Tandem Press Newsletter.
Tandem Press Releases Oceans, by Jim Dine

The creation of Tandem Press's first artist book in collaboration with Jim Dine was both exciting and intimidating. Dine proposed the idea in September 2003. At the outset, he described a poem entitled Oceans that he had written, and was interested in publishing. The poem consists of 18 pages of handwritten text. The printing collaborators with Jim Dine were Tandem Press's associate curator Amy Newell and master printer Joe Freye.

The research began with the selection of two pages from the poem and having polymer plates made to test on our Vandercook letterpress. Dine was happy with the results, and so Amy Newell and Joe Freye explored appropriate papers and book structures for the project.

Dine wanted to use a structure called a French-fold, which calls for each page to be double in thickness. This structure allows the artist to hide any evidence of printing on the verso, because the back of any given page is not visible. This is a complicated structure, but they were able to find a binder, Priscilla Spiteri at Hands On Bookbinding, who was willing to accept the challenge.

Many other factors then had to be considered beyond the structure and the text. They discussed the inclusion of images and hand-printed end-sheet papers. They also discussed the design of the cover and the drop-spine box that would house the book.

Dine determined that there would be one photogravure image, which would be hand-colored and bound into the book. He also decided that the book would include an unbound version of the same image, housed in its own folio, and placed in the back of the drop-spine box underneath the book.

The next step was to choose the end-sheet papers. Dine selected a zebra striped fabric for the design. The material was scanned, and a lithographic plate was created. Lithographs were then hand printed to create the end sheets.

Finally, the front page, the spine of the book, and the cover of the drop-spine box were designed. It was determined to use a combination of Dine's own handwriting, along with typeset text in Palatino. The front page was hand printed, and plates were made to hot-foil stamp the spine of the book and the front and back of the drop-spine box. With all of these factors in place, Tandem Press's first artist book was complete.

For over thirty years, the artwork of Jim Dine has represented the cutting-edge of contemporary artistic thought. As Dine's popularity endures, so does much of his personal imagery. His images vary as much as the media with which he renders them: in general, however, they evoke a fascination with the body. Some of the artist's corporeal references are obvious, such as the series of self-portrait, assemblage pieces of 1959 that substitute articles of clothing for actual body parts. Other references are more obscure. For example, his tool images, symbols that reappear throughout his works, recall memories and emotions buried within the body (in this case, memories from his childhood).

Born in Ohio in 1935, Dine grew up working at a family-owned hardware store. Upon moving to New York in 1959, he immediately became part of the avant-garde art scene. At the time, many other artists responded to the broader culture with deadpan popular imagery; meanwhile, Dine created a unique style, electing to combine elements from popular culture with personal content. Using this as a guiding principle, he then selected images to represent both his inner self and his artistic persona. Eventually these images, including hearts, skulls, clothing and tools, reached iconic status in his art, for they became blatantly self-referential.

(P.P. & K.O.)
New Prints by Judy Pfaff

Since the 1950s we have seen many contemporary artists break away from traditional art forms. This has made the 21st century one of the most exciting times to experience the creativity of the artists of our time. We can enjoy the artwork of the traditional landscape artist or the still life painter, but also appreciate those who break out of the traditional ways of creating art.

The internationally acclaimed artist Judy Pfaff, who recently received a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Award, has been at the forefront of experimentation with her sculptures, installations, drawings, and prints.

When Judy Pfaff studied at Yale University, her teacher and mentor, the renowned artist Al Held, recognizing her creativity stated “Let go, start moving around the walls.” This advice led her “to move beyond the picture plane, into the third dimension, capturing the gallery space.” As a result, Judy Pfaff has broken down the barriers of what we consider to be a sculpture, a painting, or a print. Her work, as a result, is similar to a three-dimensional painting that moves out into the space. Since the beginning of her career, Judy Pfaff has been concerned with how to make space work, and during this time, she has been primarily interested in creating exterior and interior landscape sculptures, and installations.

Judy Pfaff adds to the tradition of many of the history of art’s most distinguished artists. Some compositions lead the viewers into the myriad of abstract shapes, which are a series of circles within circles, also moving again from opaque to transparent. These shapes also echo and re-echo throughout her work, creating an energy and dynamism.

In her own words Judy Pfaff has stated, “An installation is not exactly a painting, and it’s not exactly a sculpture. It’s a kind of editing and splicing of the complex freneticism I see around me. We live in an unsettled, unstable world. It is rauous and staccato. The nerve centers are constantly changing. And an installation, with its total openness, allows me to plunge into that spacey void and edit the chaos into a dramatic and sensual environment.”

In her new series of prints, Pfaff has explored a whole new body of work that goes beyond traditional printmaking. Judy Pfaff is particularly intrigued by explorations into abstraction and “things that don’t really exist, but at the same time do exist.” She is fascinated by “the ambiguity, the layering, and the inventions that take place,” which is what she has explored in these new creations.

Judy Pfaff was born in London in 1946 and later settled in America at the age of thirteen. She received her B.F.A. from Washington University and her M.F.A. from Yale University. Her innovative work has brought her wide acclaim from galleries and museums throughout the United States, Europe, and the Far East. Her work can be found in such prestigious collections as the Detroit Institute of Art; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In 1998 she represented the United States at the San Paolo Biennial in Brazil (P.P.)
Judy Pfaff, 2005
Mooney Tree, Edition 20
Intaglio
85 x 37 inches

Judy Pfaff, 2005
Origami, Edition 20
Collograph, intaglio, wax
96 x 34 ½ inches
Judy Pfaff, 2004
*Let Me Call You Sweetheart*, Edition 30
Intaglio, surface roll, acrylic
15 7/8 x 52 7/8 inches

Judy Pfaff, 2005
*Magnoliaceae*, Edition 30
Letterpress, encaustic, wax
12 x 22 3/4 inches

Judy Pfaff, 2005
*White Light*, Edition 30
Letterpress, lithograph, wax, encaustic, acrylic
12 1/8 x 23 1/8 inches
Judy Pfaff, 2005
The Cold Half of the Month, Edition 15
Intaglio, relief
36 x 64 inches

Judy Pfaff, 2005
Imperial Hotel, Edition 10
Intaglio, relief, encaustic
37 x 65 inches
Rain City Badgers and Bay City Badgers

In January, we exhibited at the Seattle Print Fair. This fair showed the work of twenty dealers from all over the United States. This was immediately followed by our participation at the San Francisco International Art Exposition. At both fairs we met lots of alumni, including Jeff Condit, ’97; Sarah Mueller, ’98; Philip Weinberg, ’29; Richard Lang, ’75; Gary Denmark, ’81; Dana Yanger, ’70; Daniel Schwoerer, ’68; and Marjorie Rojan van Andre, ’52. We were also honored to give talks on Tandem Press to members of Achenbach Graphic Arts Council, who are supporters of the prints and drawings department of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

In April, we exhibited our works at the annual Print Fair at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. This was immediately followed by our annual exhibition at Art Chicago in the Park. In July, we will exhibit for the first time at the Santa Fe International Art Exposition.

We also sent prints to many exhibitions, including the Grayslake Gallery in San Francisco, Greenberg Van Doren in St. Louis, Timothy Yang in Los Angeles. Under the auspices of our board member Gabriele Haberland, we are very happy to be cooperating with the Ammann Gallery in Locarno, Switzerland, which will exhibit the work of David Lynch next August, in conjunction with the Locarno International Film Festival.

Look for the distinctive new prints we will release by Benjamin Edwards and Dennis Nechvatal later this year. They have been busy in our studio this spring and have produced wonderful new prints.

Paola Panczenko, Director
April 2005
Tandem Press Publishes Brochure on its Educational Mission and Programs

Tandem Press will publish a handsome new brochure this spring describing its educational activities. The brochure will highlight the history and formation of Tandem Press; the role of students and educational programming; research, public service and outreach.

Tandem Press, based at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison), offers an extraordinary educational experience for students, faculty, and the community, which is unparalleled at any other university in the United States. Tandem Press is an artistic laboratory where creative experimentation is undertaken by internationally recognized artists.

UW-Madison students, art department faculty, staff, and volunteers. This brochure describes the importance of the Tandem Press educational mission at UW-Madison, and the essential role the students play at all levels of the organization.

UW-Madison’s stated mission is threefold: teaching, research, and public service. Tandem Press shares this mission by teaching, undertaking research into new and old printmaking techniques, and by conducting outreach programs to help educate the public about art in general, and printmaking in particular. Tandem Press is affiliated to the Department of Art in the School of Education.

The educational brochure was published with a grant from the Anonymous Fund. Please call Tandem Press at 608/263-3437 for a copy of the brochure or contact us by email at info@tandempress.wisc.edu.

Subscription Program

Tandem Press depends for its support on a variety of sources, both individual and corporate. To that end, Tandem offers an attractive subscription program. For a fee of $12,000, subscribers will have the opportunity to select a unique portfolio of prints with a retail value of $20,000 from editions published by the Press. Subscribers will also receive the following:

- complete descriptions and full documentation for all print selections and periodic listings (including price increases) for all editions;
- opportunities to participate in organized and informal activities at the Press, including meetings with guest artists and visiting dealers and attendance at special events and programs;
- priority notification of print publications;
- eligibility to choose selected monoprints at specially reduced prices; and
- an opportunity to renew at the end of the subscription.

If you want to discuss the program in greater detail or have questions regarding the program, please contact Paula McCarthy Panczcko, Executive Director, Tandem Press, who can be reached by email at info@tandempress.wisc.edu, by phone at 608/263-3437 or by mail at 201 South Dickinson Street, Madison, WI 53703.
DAVID SHAPIRO:  
Seeing and Knowing

Artist David Shapiro characterizes himself as both an abstract artist and someone who deals in metaphors. This latter focus, he explains, comes from the experience he had as a student at the Pratt Institute. The philosopher Joseph Campbell was a visiting professor there at the time and he encouraged students to “find a metaphor for your life.” Shapiro picked up on the challenge and found satisfaction in creating metaphors rather than giving specific, direct answers.

He believes that we all have an inner and an outer life and that these two deal in qualities that might be the opposite of each other. This feeling derives from his personal interest in Oriental culture as it appears in Buddhism, Zen, yoga, and Japanese culture in general. His study of eastern philosophy manifests itself in the fact that he wants to work on centering while simultaneously reaching out in all directions. It is the juxtaposition of the two that creates a discernible dynamic. It is the constricted versus the un-constricted, solid versus ephemeral. These concepts are reflected in the titles of the works he creates in series: *Aesedote and Parable. Seen, Actor, Knower, Doer, Origin and Return,* and the specific concepts implicit in *Sasazan and Mudra.*

For Shapiro, the process involved in the creative act is integral to the realization of the finished product. It has a metaphysical dimension manifest in the physical act of breathing and moving the arm. Painting or drawing consequently becomes an act of meditation. Shapiro says he is a numer and finds pleasure in the act of moving his body through space at the same time he sees the landscape passing by.

To enrich the experience, he finds himself continually looking for new ways of working and new materials to work with. Although he considers himself fundamentally a painter, Shapiro has willingly and productively worked in print media. In creating prints, he notes that “every time you make a mark, you have to deal with what’s around it.” An extension of the printmaking experience is reflected in his enthusiasm for working with colored handmade paper and deriving designs from the patterns inherent in the paper.

Most of Shapiro’s work involves a visual yin and yang. He has a phobia about odd numbers because an odd number defies a center. The design of what he creates is governed by the “work telling me what it’s going to do.” The range of shapes he employs is minimal. He favors circles (both solid and in outline). His penchant in this regard has been duly noted in a *Washington Post* review entitled “Lord of the Rings.”

Shapiro also uses winding or curving lines, checkered patterns, and blocks of subtly textured colors. And he uses squares which are divided in the middle with juxtaposed figures or blocks of color. Long horizontal rectangles composed of side by side squares constitute another commonly used figure. Throughout the patterns you can see the contrasts, what he calls “the qualities that must be the opposite of each other—two worlds existing in one.” Although there is a readily visible difference it is not a violent contrast, rather what critic Janet Koplos characterizes as “a calm consistency.”

“It takes time to find out what you want to do,” Shapiro explains. He consequently admires the Japanese insistence on continually striving for a certain kind of perfection. For David Shapiro, this continual search leads to a desired conclusion.

“Knowing comes after seeing,” he says. (A.H.)
David Shapiro, 2005
Clearing 4, Edition 24
Lithography, collograph
20 x 40 inches

David Shapiro, 2005
Clearing 5, Edition 24
Lithography, collograph
20 x 40 inches
Tandem Press to hold Annual Wine Auction on June 16 at the Residence of Chancellor John and Georgia Wiley

Tandem Press will hold its annual wine auction on Thursday, June 16, 2005 at six o'clock in the evening. Chancellor John and Georgia Wiley will host the auction. The event will include a live and silent auction during which a variety of wines, hors d'oeuvres, and a gourmet dinner catered by Chez Vous of Madison will be served.

The wines for auction will include high-end selections from a variety of local donors, European and California vineyards, as well as a number of moderately priced but equally fine wines. Wines will be available for purchase during the silent and live auctions as well as for tasting at the event.

The June 16 wine auction promises to be an evening full of choice wines, tempting culinary delicacies, and exquisite artwork. All are invited and tickets will be available in May, however, attendance is limited to the first 250 persons.

Tickets will cost $125 each. The first 100 persons purchasing two tickets will receive a print by Gregory Conniff entitled Cowbernet.

If you would like additional information on the Auction, please contact Tandem Press at 608/263-3437.
From The Director of DEVELOPMENT

I am happy to have this opportunity to thank you, the numerous contributors to Tandem Press. Your investment in this important facet in the School of Education enables UW-Madison to provide the “margin of excellence” for which we are famous.

Your support allows Tandem to carry out projects that make a significant contribution to the University’s extraordinarily rich learning environment and promotes Tandem’s outreach and publication efforts.

The net result of your support is that Tandem and the University of Wisconsin will continue to be a valuable resource for future generations. You are encouraged to become actively involved with Tandem by directing gifts to specific areas of interest to you. If you have any questions about how your gift is being used or how to achieve your charitable giving goals, please contact me.

Cindy Kahn
Director of Development, Tandem Press

Investing in the Future: Private Support for Tandem Press
Private giving provides an effective and innovative way to enhance the educational and research mission of Tandem Press. The interest and motivation of the donor leaves a lasting impression on those who benefit from this generosity. To date, Tandem Press has three endowment funds that support and sustain our educational programming.

The William Weege Student Apprenticeship Endowment Fund
William Weege received his BA, MS, and MFA from UW-Madison. In 1971 he joined the faculty of the Art Department and in the same year he founded Off Jones Road Press. In 1987, he founded Tandem Press.

Purpose of the Fund
The students are at the center of everything we do at Tandem Press. Fifteen students apprentice at Tandem Press annually. The Press is an artistic laboratory where the students have the opportunity to observe and participate in artistic creation, in collaboration with the master printers and the visiting artists. This fund ensures that we can continue to support talented students who want to apprentice at Tandem Press.

The Tandem Press Fund
Tandem Press was set up as a self-supporting unit affiliated to the Department of Art in the School of Education. Tandem Press raises 80% of its operating budget through the sale of prints. All other funds are raised through grants and private support.

Purpose of the Fund
The Friends and supporters of Tandem Press established the Tandem Press Fund to ensure that the educational programming at Tandem Press would continue despite the vicissitudes of the market upon which Tandem is dependent. The funds are used to support the educational programming at the Press, including catalogues, lectures, and artist residencies.

Any questions regarding support can be directed to Cindy Kahn, who can be reached by e-mail at cindy.kahn@uwfoundation.wisc.edu, by phone at 608/263-5314, or by mail at the UW Foundation, 1848 University Avenue, Madison WI 53705.

The Joseph Wilfer Visiting Artist Endowment Fund
Joseph Wilfer graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with an MFA, and in 1981 he became director of publications at Pace Editions, New York. In 1990, he joined the Advisory Board of Tandem Press. Following his death in June 1995, the Tandem Press Advisory Board established the Joseph Wilfer Visiting Artist Endowment Fund.

Purpose of the Fund
The ability to host young artists at Tandem Press ensures our creative investment in the future, and our continuing vitality on a national and international level. Tandem Press strives to identify young artists from throughout the United States and abroad, and to invite them to create editions of prints. The funds will ensure that we can support the residencies of young artists at the Press and contribute to ongoing artistic research and development.
Spring Showcase

Santiago Moix, 1995, untitled (vase and floating head), edition 30, woodcut on Arches cover white, 26 1/2 x 26 inches

Santiago Moix, 1995, Cinco Dias en Madison #1 through #8, editions 20, woodblock prints on Rives BFK, 17 x 18 inches

Santiago Moix, 1995, untitled (blue bunny), edition 30, woodcut on Arches cover white, 26 1/2 x 26 inches

This newsletter is made possible with a grant from the Anonymous Fund