

PROGRAM

(1) We have agreed that the most direct approach to our objective is the exhibition of our work. We shall show together at least once a year, making it constantly our effort to have our annual, or more frequent, exhibitions present in a dignified and competent way all the significant "abstract" work done in America. There is no limitation upon our members showing with other groups. On the contrary, we wish to encourage our members to form separate discussion and exhibition groups which may each have a more unified character than our general organization.

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(2) American Abstract Artists will provide opportunities for group discussion and experimentation among its members.

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(3) In addition to such publicity as attends our exhibitions, we shall undertake when possible a broader and more general type of educational publicity, such as a magazine, a year-book, pamphlets or public lectures.

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American Abstract Artists invite into an Associate Membership those individuals who do not wish, or who are not entitled, to exhibit with us, but who otherwise are in sympathy with our general purpose.

**AMERICAN
ABSTRACT ARTISTS**

**GENERAL
PROSPECTUS**

GENERAL PURPOSE

Our purpose is to unite American "abstract" artists, (1) to bring before the public their individual works, (2) to foster public appreciation of this direction in painting and sculpture, (3) to afford each artist the opportunity of developing his own work by becoming familiar with the efforts of others, by recognizing differences as well as those elements he may have in common with them.

CHARACTER OF THE GROUP

We believe that a new art form has been established which is definite enough in character to demand this unified effort. We recognize, however, the need for individuals to experiment and deviate at times from what may seem established directions. For this reason we place a liberal interpretation upon the word "abstract", a word which we moreover recognize as neither adequate nor accurate.

What we desire is a broad inclusive organization of all artists in this country who have produced work which is sufficiently in character with this liberal conception of the word "abstract". We invite into our membership the best known "abstract" artists in America, as well as those who are totally unknown. We invite also the members of any other similar groups, assuring them that to join with us does not conflict with their own group relationships.

MEMBERSHIP

Full members of American Abstract Artists bind themselves to contribute a certain sum each month (at present this amounts to 50 cents a month) to defray current organization expenses. The sum of \$5 from each member is expected to cover the costs of hiring a gallery for the forthcoming exhibition, and a further sum of about \$5 each should cover the necessary outlay for publicity. (These amounts may vary as the group membership varies. All members are expected to contribute exactly the same amounts.)

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Associate Members of American Abstract Artists bind themselves to contribute only the same regular monthly dues (see above) as do the full members, and are entitled to take part in all cultural, intellectual, literary or educational activities of the group on the same basis as full members. They may not exhibit unless they become full members. They will also have no vote in business meetings of the organization for deciding policies, programs, activities, finances, etc., of the group.

NEW MEMBERS

It is the express desire of American Abstract Artists to include within its membership as broad and representative a number of painters and sculptors, working in the "abstract" direction, as possible.

Since the so-called "abstract" movement has, however, grown to far greater proportions, and enlisted a far greater number of American artists and students than most of us are aware of, it was felt that, to ensure a certain standard of clarity of statement, achievement, unity, etc., in the public exhibitions, some sort of control must be exercised. It was therefore decided that artists whose work was not well

known to a majority of the present group, but who would like to join, be asked to submit examples of their best work, (preferably finished paintings, or photographs in the case of sculptors or out-of-town painters) and these works would be passed upon by secret ballot by a majority of those present at a meeting consisting of at least two thirds of the entire membership.

PRESENT MEMBERSHIP

The present membership (January, 1937) of American Abstract Artists consists of the following names: George McNeil, Jeanne Carles, A. N. Christie, C. R. Holty, Harry Holtzman, Marie Kennedy, Ray Kaiser, W. M. Zogbaum, Ibram Lassaw, Gertrude Peter Greene, Byron Browne, Rosalind Bengelsdorf, George L. K. Morris, Vaclav Vytlačil, Paul Kelp, Balcomb Greene, R. D. Turnbull, Frederick J. Whitman, John Oppen, Albert Swinden, Ilya Bolotowsky, George Cavallon, Leo Lances, Alice Mason, Esphyr Slobodkina, Werner Drewes, Richard Taylor, Josef Albers.

The membership is steadily increasing, so that this list is far from definitive.

ADDRESS

All communications or inquiries should be addressed to

R. D. Turnbull, Secretary
51 West 10th Street,
New York City.

JEROME KLEIN

ABSTRACT ARTISTS MAKE NEW STAND

Thirty-nine Painters and
Sculptors Mustered in Group
Showing at Squibb Building

Put down under "prosperity notes" the revival of abstract art. Well might put to rout by the rush toward social realism in depression years, abstractionists now rally for a new stand. A band of thirty-nine has been mustered for the first exhibition on view in the Squibb Building by the recently organized American Abstract Artists.

Youth predominates and some of the most interesting things are by artists as yet hardly known to the public. I would cite among these the paintings of George McNeil, who designs with spontaneity and a real painter's sense of tonal modulation; Hananiah Marari's work, particularly Hannaniah Harari's work, sculpture of the "spare-rib" variety by Ibrim Lassaw; Esphyr Slobodkina's canvases, with their involved stage-wing spaces and the work of Harry Bowden and Anne Cohen.

Out of the more seasoned ranks come Louis Schanker's brilliant big figure piece, a handsome bronze by Warren Wheelock, novel constructions of sliced toy ten pins by Vaclav Vytlacil and paintings by Josef Albers, which I count the most mature and original in the show.

Schanker Show on View.

Louis Schanker, having an exhibition of his recent work now at the Artists' Gallery, is an American. Though he has had one-man shows before this, he is perhaps best known to the public through his large and widely reproduced mural decoration executed last summer for municipal radio station WNYC.

Schanker is one of the more personal and original of our younger crop of abstract painters. He has a light and witty touch, building his pictures not of rigid geometrical masses but of spontaneous-appearing though carefully conceived calligraphic patterns laid onto fresh and sparkling color. Sometimes the patterns cling closely enough to reality for one to distinguish recognizable forms. At others they're completely abstract, and if they suggest reality at all it's in the movement of things, rather than in their shape. (The picture Schanker calls Football 1, is a good example of this.)

But all of his pictures—whether they're primarily linear patterns on color, like Musicians; or Composition III, which has, in its arrangement of its jagged motifs, something of the character of primitive embroidery; or the more solid than usual (for Schanker) Composition I—reveal his genuine talent.

SCHANKER, MURAL ARTIST EXHIBIT AT THE ARTISTS' GALLERY

Sugar Loaf and Warwick friends of Louis Schanker will learn with interest that he has an exhibit at The Artists' Gallery, 33 West 8th Street, New York city of recent paintings, woodcuts, sculpture. Exhibit is from Nov. 14th to Dec. 5th and hours are from 10 - 9 daily and Sunday 3-9. Mr. and Mrs. Schanker have leased a cottage on the Charles Wisner Barrell farm at Sugar Loaf for several years. His murals at the World's Fair received great praise.

Warwick Valley, N.Y. 10/15/37



Louis Schanker's wood sculpture, *Abstracted Man* (center) and oil, *Three Men on a Bench* (right) at the American Abstract Artists' Squibb Building Exhibition, 1937

AMERICAN
ABSTRACT
ARTISTS

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INTRODUCTION

It is encouraging, as it is gratifying, to learn that the group known as the American Abstract Artists has been successful in arranging an exhibition of work by its members for display in a group of museums throughout the West. Upon the conclusion of this tour it is hoped that it may be possible to show their paintings, sculptures and constructions in certain of the Eastern museums as well.

The execution of this further programme would also be highly desirable, although possibly more difficult of attainment, for most of the Eastern museums are scarcely more than dusty repositories of the art of past ages. Such institutions when they do open their doors to contemporary efforts are usually so cautious and opposed to experimentation and exploration, upon which, Henry James reminds us, art lives, that all genuine creative work is excluded. But it is to be hoped that some museums on the Eastern seaboard, less timorous, will be glad to hang this demonstration of living art, as they have on certain occasions welcomed exhibitions of this character in the past.

There is no doubt that the efforts being made by most of the painters and sculptors constituting the American Abstract Artists are definitely pointed in the right direction. No other group concerned with the fine arts in this country is as likely to produce an authentic American cultural expression. Their approach to the problems of painting is the correct one: they seek plastic qualities in their work and regard all subject-matter as extraneous. Their concern is with the fundamental principles of form, design, construction and the functioning of color, as understood by the great masters. Giotto, Uccello and El Greco are among their spiritual ancestors, and, more recently, Cézanne and Seurat. All belonged to the great main current which flowed down through the ages, became a mere stream in the Nineteenth Century, with the weakening of the aristocratic tradition, and then received great impetus from the innovations of Picasso, Braque, Gris and Léger, who cleared away the debris and gave to the world new and imaginative art forms. The stark bones of the great traditions may also be discerned in Mondrian's tense lines and rectangles of fundamental color: high points of Twentieth Century painting.

By completely eliminating all subject-matter, which was a necessity for the Old Masters, historical and documentary recorders as they were for the most part, and propagandists for the Church, such artists as Mondrian have purified painting, have given us painting for its own sake in the same sense that music exists for itself alone, as is it also possible for architecture.

Vastly encouraging I find it for the cause of American painting and sculpture to see how this group has developed, not only numerically, but in the quality of the work, and in such a short space of time. The

initial exhibition of the American Abstract Artists, held last year at the Squibb Building in New York, on the whole was a bracing and fresh display showing that some excellent work was being done and holding promise for the future. Discernible influences for the most part came from the right quarters. Not many of the exhibits were too derivative. The second exhibition was held in February of this year, forty-four members exposing their work. One perceived in this show that a healthy development was taking place and considerably more maturity. With their talents ripening, it is not unreasonable to expect that certain of the group will continue to make progress and later reveal even greater accomplishment and invention.

The soil here is fertile, not over-cultivated, as in many European countries, and from it we may reasonably expect vigorous art forms eventually to emerge. André Gide, writing of the U. S. S. R., and Thomas Mann writing of conditions in Germany, have told us of the plight of the artist in countries where intellectual liberty does not exist. Americans therefore should be on their guard against the importation of political beliefs and subversive activities which run counter to the doctrines for which America fought the Revolution. The U. S. A., where all races are mingled, where citizens of other countries have brought their national cultures, especially memories of highly significant peasant arts, is favorably situated: Remy de Gourmont states that the "United States if closed to immigration would fall into complete languor," going on to remind us that "There is not a century since the Eleventh during which French thought has not been revived by some foreign ferment" and that "The national spirit is no more thwarted by these absorptions than the blood of man is vitiated by healthy food." In recent times we know what stimulant French painting received from Negro sculpture and the Russian ballet.

II

Yet another word may perhaps be permitted with regard to the aims of non-representative painting, not in defense, but in explanation. One recalls the desire of Hokusai to live long enough to be able to reduce life to a single tone, a single line. Oriental nations have rarely attached any special importance to subject. For the initiated, and the spectator must be able to meet the artist half way, the pure enjoyment of painting is often marred by the intrusion of subject-matter, just as scenery and costumes distract certain people at the opera. In China scenery at theatrical productions has never been employed except symbolically; the most convincing play given in New York this past season was equally bereft of scenery and costumes. The upward plunge of New York's skyscraping buildings, so stark and majestic, is in most instances impaired by superimposed and irrelevant Gothic or Romanesque ornaments. Let not the artist be afraid to divest his work of all non-essentials.

AMERICAN ABSTRACT ARTISTS

cordially invites

to attend the opening of its

Third Annual Exhibition

to be held at the

RIVERSIDE MUSEUM

310 Riverside Drive at 103rd Street, New York City

Monday, March 6th, 1939, at 8 P.M.

Mr. [unclear]
Mr. [unclear]
Mr. [unclear]

BUNE, TUESDAY,

MARCH 7, 1939

Abstract Artists Open Annual Exhibition Today

Group's Largest Show Held in Riverside Museum

The American Abstract Artists, a group devoted to advanced forms of non-representational painting, sculpture and graphic art, opened their third annual exhibition last night at the Riverside Museum, 310 Riverside Drive. The show, which opens to the public today, is the largest in the history of the organization. About 250 exhibits—all typical of the cubist and post-cubist trend in painting—have been assembled, filling seven galleries and two corridors.

In addition to paintings which occupy most of the galleries, two rooms at the display are devoted to watercolors, pastels and collages, designs composed of colored paper and other materials pasted and superimposed upon one another. Another display is of wood block prints, etchings and lithographs in abstract designs, and another of sculpture in wood and metal. Among the more unusual exhibits are abstractions

constructed in relief and painted, including a shadow-box creation with a design of metal and wire construction.

Fifty-three artists are represented by from one to ten exhibits each in the show, though the average is about three exhibits to a person. Louis Schanker, one of the most versatile, has two oils, two sculptures in wood and several colored wood block prints. Four new members represented for the first time in the annual are John Ferren, of Paris; Durnel Grant, of Springfield, Ohio, and I. Rice Pereira and A. D. F. Reinhardt, of New York City.

Others prominent are Susie Frelinghuysen, Joseph Albers, Burgoyne Dillef, Werner Drewes, Balcom Greene, Carl R. Holty, George L. K. Morris, Charles G. Shaw, Albert Gallatin, Esphyr Slobodkina, Vaclav Vytlacil, Warren Wheelock, R. D. Turnbull, Albert Swinden, Paul Kelpo and Ibram Lassaw.

A souvenir book on "American Abstract Art," with illustrations of the work of all members, biographical notes and credo, is available at the exhibition. The show is open from 1 to 5 p. m. daily through March 26 and is free.

Art Instructors Hold Exhibition

By EMILY GENAUER.

The American Artists School opens its season with an exhibition of work by members of its faculty, numbering among them such well-known figures as Moses Soyer, Philip Evergood, Francis Criss, Maurice Glickman, Abraham Harriton, Walter Quirt, Philip Reisman, Harry Glassgold and Louis Schanker.

Criss is so well collected that no original canvases by him were available for the exhibition; so photographs of works in the Whitney, Brooklyn and other museums, as well as in distinguished private collections, are shown instead. Glickman, because the majority of his sculptured figures are so large, must also be seen in photographic reproduction. But Walter Quirt is there in originals, and these are enough to make any show. Quirt is the daring fellow who attempted to harness that medium of the arch-aesthetes, surrealism, to something as vivid and real as the class struggle. And succeeded in turning out canvases that, however potent they may be in hastening the revolution, are excellent works of art.

There is also a first rate canvas by the younger Soyer, a portrait of a dignified, meditating girl in a yellow blouse. Louis Schanker, whose rich abstractions we have not seen in some time, is also commendably represented. Schanker seems to have evolved for himself a definite and individual personality and point of view. And that, in a school as circumscribed as abstraction, is no mean achievement. We also liked the finely textured prints by Eugene Morley and the clean sweep of Harriton's "Tri-Boro Bridge."

* * *

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM,

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1938.

Numerous Artists Show Their Work

Sparks fly at the exhibition of the American Abstract Artists, at the Fine Art Gallery. But they are kindled by visitors' violent reactions to these painted combinations of lines, triangles, cubes and the like, organized into what might be called plastic representations of geometrical formulae, rather than by the intrinsic attributes of the paintings themselves. Because there's not a stray emotion in a carload of them.

None of the works, by their very nature, even attempt to convey the essence of personal, or human, emotions. Nor do they need to, to retain their status as legitimate works of art. What is more important, few of them provoke (or they didn't, that is, to this observer) any emotional, or sensuous, reaction to their purely plastic harmonies, the rhythms of their masses, colors, or lines.

Two large rooms are filled with work by members of the group, although if you didn't know that, you might easily imagine, after a cursory glance about the walls, that they were tossed off in weak moments by Picasso, Miro, Klee, Kandinsky and others of the European school of abstractionists.

Work Too Derivative.

That seems to be the trouble with American exponents of the principles of non-objective art. Their work is too palpably derivative and, as imitation, lacks the fire of the original artists who were their inspiration.

Rosalind Bengelsdorf's abstraction is like a late Picasso, with none of the monumental, frenzied force of the Picasso and only its exterior, weakened form. Ilya Bolotowsky's things are so close to Miro the Catalan that he could very easily sue the American for plagiarism and win his suit, though Bolotowsky's effort has none of the humor or the extraordinary liveness of Miro's work. Susie Frelinghuysen's "papier colle" paintings would be charming if their source, Picasso, didn't keep getting between picture and spectator.

Some Original Talent.

There are some original talents to be seen in this show, though they are not in every case effective. Paul Klee, for instance, appears to be charting his own way, preceding from the point where Gleizes left off. But his separated forms, like segments of pipes and blocks, beautifully drawn and sensitively colored, lack movement. It is as though a juggler were tossing them and a camera caught them in mid-air.

Janet Young, working in colored marbles, secures interesting, original and pleasing results.

Louis Schanker's pictures have the freshness and charm characteristic of his things. And Werner Drewes retains his status as one of few American abstractionists whose

works really have a vigorous, creative individuality.

EXHIBITION

American Abstract Artists

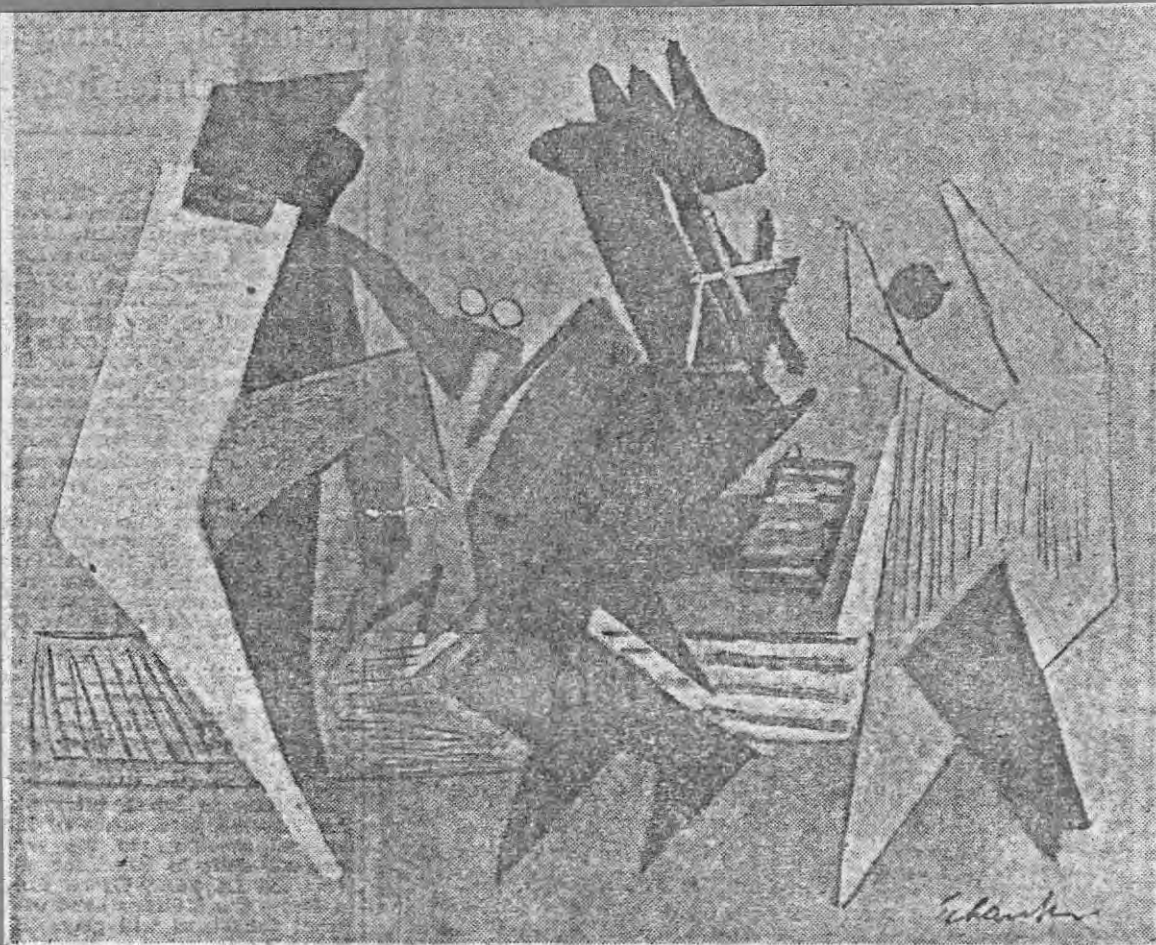


RIVERSIDE MUSEUM, NEW YORK

March 7-26, 1939

The numbers on each exhibit correspond to the numbers below

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Joseph Albers | 27. Paul Kelpé |
| 2. Rosalind Bengelsdorf | 28. Leo Lances |
| 3. Ilya Bolotowsky | 29. Ibram Lassaw |
| 4. Harry Bowden | 30. Agnes Lyall |
| 5. Byron Browne | 31. Alice Mason |
| 6. Jeanne Carles | 32. George McNeil |
| 7. Giorgio Cavallon | 33. George L. K. Morris |
| 8. A. N. Christie | 34. I. Rice Pereira |
| 9. Anna Cohen | 35. Margaret Peterson |
| 10. Burgoyne Diller | 36. A. D. F. Reinhardt |
| 11. Werner Drewes | 37. Ralph M. Rosenberg |
| 12. Herzl Emanuel | 38. Louis Schanker |
| 13. John Ferren | 39. Charles G. Shaw |
| 14. Susie Frelinghuysen | 40. Esphyr Slobodkina |
| 15. A. E. Gallatin | 41. David Smith |
| 16. Fritz Glarner | 42. Florence Swift |
| 17. Durnel Grant | 43. Albert Swinden |
| 18. Balcomb Greene | 44. R. D. Turnbull |
| 19. Gertrude Greene | 45. Vaclav Vytlacil |
| 20. Hananiah Harari | 46. Rudolph Weisenborn |
| 21. Carl R. Holty | 47. Warren Wheelock |
| 22. Harry Holtzman | 48. Frederick Whiteman |
| 23. Dorothy Joralemon | 49. Harry I. Wildenberg |
| 24. Ray Kaiser | 50. Robert J. Wolff |
| 25. Gerome Kamrowski | 51. Beckford Young |
| 26. Frederick Kann | 52. Janet Young |
| | 53. Wilfrid Zogbaum |



"Composition," by Louis Schanker, in the exhibition by the American Abstract Artists at Riverside Museum.



AMERICAN ARTISTS SCHOOL

SEPTEMBER 21, 1936 - JUNE 12, 1937

131 WEST 14th STREET - NEW YORK

Mural Painting and Composition (Fresco-Tempera-Oil)

Instructor: LOUIS SCHANKER

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

6 to 10 p. m.

For advanced students. Applicants for registration in this class must submit work for approval of instructor.

Tuition: \$7.50 per month

american arts

art . music . dance . theatre . literature . radio . film



monthly

JUNE 1937 • 25 cts.



W i t h this issue a new, larger and finer AMERICAN ARTS MONTHLY makes its bow. Its program will continue to be the furtherance of all the American arts, bringing to the American people the most advanced efforts of present-day painters, poets, musicians and all other creative and interpretative artists. Disclaiming any lofty, "highbrow" attitude, it will endeavor to bring the benefits derived from the arts and letters within the reach of as large a section of the people as possible. It will avoid a narrow chauvinistic obsession with "indigenous" art, but will bend every effort to encourage all young and vital talent. As a part of this objective it will continue to advocate and seek to promote the type of permanent government-sponsored program which is already well established in most of the progressive nations of the world. And above all it will seek to present impartial and constructive criticism based on the highest professional standards, withholding neither praise nor blame.



WHAT IS AMERICA?

WHAT IS AMERICAN ART?

HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE IT?

America today is not the America of 150 years ago. It is not the America of last week, or yesterday. It is changing every hour, every minute, and what we call "the American scene" is inevitably affected by what happens in all parts of the world.

Any art, to be vital, must be a valid expression of its times. American art then, must reflect the fundamental changes in the American scene. The artist who wishes to make an important contribution to contemporary art must understand the forces and phenomena which affect the life or setting he attempts to portray. In addition to technical skill, he must have a knowledge of the social and psychological background of the times in which he lives.

How can an artist paint a significant portrait, a family, or a convincing picture of farmers or industrial workers without understanding the true position of each in America today?

In the past, art training has neglected these important problems and concentrated on technical efficiency. This trend dominates today in schools which seek to perpetuate old and tried methods of painting. In most schools which make claims to modern, progressive methods, the "progressive" applies to technique only.

The American Artists School eschews this sterile approach and establishes as its fundamental premise that the student must be developed as an independent thinker at the same time he is trained to be a competent artist. We believe America contains infinite painting material, and that the student who learns to understand and appreciate it cannot help but evolve into a socially constructive artist.

As a practical expression of this viewpoint, we have solicited the collaboration of psychologists, social commentators and outstandingly progressive artists, to give students a living background for the æsthetic interpretation of America. No other art school has ever presented so advanced an attitude in the realm of æsthetic research.

In addition to a complete schedule of student courses in life, painting, sculpture, and graphic arts, the School offers special opportunities to professional artists to do advanced and experimental work in mural and fresco painting, graphic art, or other phases of æsthetics in which they are interested.

The American Artists School is a cooperative organization, started by a group of well-known progressive artists to provide the new and vital type of art training which they found was not to be had elsewhere. It is administered by a Board of Control, which consists of members of the faculty, elected representatives of the student body, and prominent artists who are interested in developing this new analytical approach to art.

FACULTY AND BOARD OF CONTROL: Francis Criss • John Cunningham • Gregor Duncan • Beatrice Edelman • Philip Evergood • Jacob Friedland • Eugenie Gershoy • Harry Glassgold • Maurice Glickman • Aaron Goodelman • Harry Gottlieb • Abraham Harriton • Ned Hilton • Joseph Kaplan • Frank Kirk • Louis Lozowick • Eugene Morley • Elizabeth Olds • Walter Quirt • Anton Refregier • Philip Reisman • Louis Schanker • Concetta Scaravaglione • Moses Soyer • Raphael Soyer • Sol Wilson.

STATEMENT: With rare exception art has hitherto been too subservient to countless irrelevant factors and seldom played a part wholly its own. It has been used as decoration, calligraphy, base illustration, to the extent of almost completely vitiating it.

This era calls for a new aggressive and independent art which should serve as a dominant educational and social force. We must have an art that will cope and interlock with the rapidly changing philosophy of life, an art that will express the new vision, reality and hope, an art that will extricate itself slowly from squander, abuse and academic servility.

The American Artists School realizing this, is instituting an investigative method of training in the plastic arts. The artists conducting this school are motivated solely by these aspirations, and are seriously bent upon supplying this long felt need in art education.

In its effort to realize these ideals, the American Artists School solicits and merits the generous support of all progressive art students, artists, and educators, among whom I earnestly desire to count, in a genuine spirit of unstinting cooperation and helpfulness.

MAX WEBER

ADVISORY BOARD: Henry Billings • Peter Blume • Margaret Bourke-White • Nicolai Cikovsky • Stuart Davis • Adolph Dehn • William Gropper • Joe Jones • Rockwell Kent • Jerome Klein • Paulanship • Lewis Mumford • J. B. Neuman • Walter Pach • Eugene Schoen Meyer Schapiro • Niles Spencer • Max Weber • Art Young • Carl Zigrosser

SCHANKER

RECENT
PAINTINGS
WOODCUTS
SCULPTURE
NOV. 14-DEC. 5

THE ARTISTS' GALLERY

33 WEST 8th STREET • NEW YORK CITY

DAILY: 10-9

SUNDAY: 3-9

SCHANKER'S ABSTRACTIONS OF VARIED ACTIVITIES

LOUIS SCHANKER'S witty animated abstractions are receiving a full length show at the Artists Gallery, his first solo in four years. Jai-lai, polo, football, men on horseback, and performing musicians furnish him with his themes, and as activities, apparently they fall into the same classification. For it is the characteristic move-

ment of each seen in thrusting line and flat areas of color which intrigue his imagination, and call forth the bright patchwork. *Men on Horseback* is his most successful of these semi-abstractions, for coloristically the pattern, though complex, holds together and has meaning.

A number of woodblocks of some of the paintings are more successful in color than are the originals, for Schanker has a definite flair for prints. There are also two or three pieces of wood carvings, decorative and gay, but one returns to such paintings as *Musicians*, beautifully integrated in lower key and to *Abstraction, No. 13* in which the nervous little hieroglyphics and high color express the artist's exhilaration which communicates itself directly to the spectator.

J. L.

THE WORLD OF TODAY

is a world of crisis and change. War hangs over it. At home ten million unemployed cast a black shadow. In an insecure and tense world men and women live, work, hope and suffer their uncertain destiny. In the real world of today art has survived perilously. Now progressive artists find new meanings for their work, take new roots in life, no longer escape to an academic past or a hypothetical tomorrow, rather face the present. They see causes of tragedy, misery and degradation. But also they see reasons for hope, find convictions which hearten them for conflict and change.

The reality of existence NOW engrosses the vanguard of our time, as experimentation in form did a previous generation. All significant human experience becomes material for artists of the new vanguard. To show how art has broadened beyond museum, academy and studio into the factory, the farm, the city street, the sharecropper's shack, is the purpose of this exhibition. Yet life, even in crisis, is rich with conscious beauty; and the pictures displayed show joy as well as suffering. The vitality of their new objective vitalizes artists so that their work covers a wide range of subjects, employs many modes of expression, utilizes technics newly discovered or revived.

Social strife is a frequent theme; but so is the positive aspect of our industrial civilization, mass production technology's triumphs, illustrated in the pure formalism of flour mills. Slums, tenement house fires, flood disasters, lynching, underpaid and overworked toilers recur. But vanguard artists record the abundance of life, as well as its starvation: the brilliant sun that lies warmly on Western wheatfields. Loving eyes observe the historic beauty of America's land, prized and pictured through three centuries of American life. This land is our land, the artists say with passion; its beauty shall be reclaimed and made whole. This world, threatened by war and aggression, yet so wide, so beautiful, so potential, is our world; it shall be saved for peace and human happiness.

In such aspiration, artists of all esthetic schools unite. Classical draughtsmen and surrealists share the common hope. Abstractionism, romanticism, realism cease to be issues to divide artists and become methods of statement, each pooling its own tradition in shared experience. Art becomes human once more.

The cross-section represents, one believes, the most dynamic direction in contemporary art. Other artists could have been included if space permitted. Other works might have been selected. But the very wealth of choice is reason for optimism. True, too, in the world of tomorrow art will march to wider frontiers, more nobly express the dignity of life, free from travail and grief. But tomorrow is built on today. Understanding the continuity of history, artists of our time do well to picture the world they live in—world of war, unemployment, needless poverty, intolerable housing, brutal terror and injustice, yet world which begins to right its wrongs and use its potentialities.

Because she has the creative vision to perceive art's function and the courage to act on her vision, this exhibition is dedicated to Laura M. Bragg — a fearless, progressive and humane museum director.

ELIZABETH McCAUSLAND

THE BERKSHIRE MUSEUM, PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

FOUNDED BY ZENAS CRANE 1903

TRUSTEES

Henry A. Francis, President; George S. Reynolds, M.D., Vice-President; Charles J. Kittredge, Treasurer; John Barker, Secretary; Mrs. Samuel G. Colt; Mrs. W. Murray Crane; Richard H. Gamwell; Mrs. Charles W. Powers; Mrs. Loring G. Robbins.

HOURS

Weekdays, 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. Closed Mondays, Sundays and holidays, 2 to 5 P.M. Closed New Year's Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day and Christmas.

STAFF

Laura M. Bragg, Director; Mrs. Allen E. Dorris, Secretary to the Director; Stuart C. Henry, Curator of Art Department; Bartlett Hendricks, Curator of Science Department; Frances E. Palmer, Assistant, Children's Work.

MEMBERSHIP

Patrons, \$1000; associate patrons, \$500; fellows, \$250; associate fellows, \$100; sustaining members, \$50; active members, \$25; associate members, \$10; annual members, \$5.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The exhibition has been assembled by Elizabeth McCausland, who has also planned its installation and prepared catalogue and wall label material. All loans to the exhibition have been made through the courtesy of the artist, unless otherwise acknowledged.

Thanks are due the WPA Federal Art Project for the loan of four technical displays. These illustrate the progressive states in the printing of color lithographs, color wood cuts, silk screen stencil color prints and black-and-white etchings. The material included is:

RUSSELL LIMBACH Color Lithograph

Five proofs and finished print.

HYMAN WARSAGER Color Wood Cut

Four proofs and finished print

EUGENE MORLEY Silk Screen Stencil

Twelve proofs and finished print

JOE LEBOIT Aquatint

Plate and finished print

FRED BECKER Line Engraving

Plate and finished print

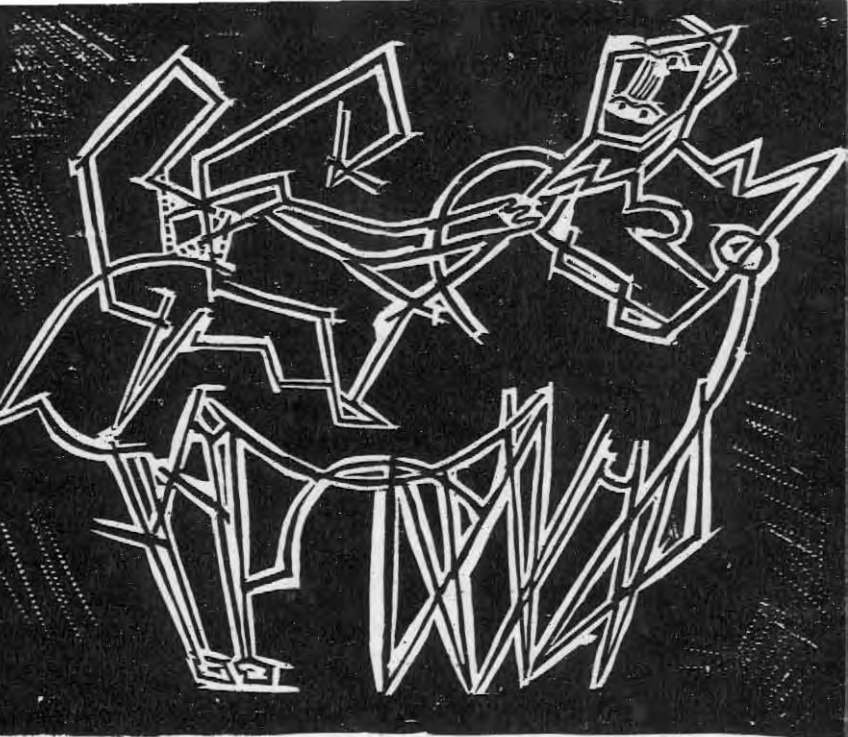
FLYNN'S BARN

FISHERMAN'S DREAM

EXECUTION

BEDTIME

GUITAR PLAYER, NO. 2



You are invited to meet

LOUIS SCHANKER

on the opening day of his

RETROSPECTIVE OF ETCHINGS AND WOODCUTS

Saturday, March 4, 1 to 5PM

On exhibition through April 1, 1978



Associated American Artists

663 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022

(Between 52nd and 53rd Streets) (212) 755-4211

LOUIS SCHANKER:
Retrospective of Woodcuts and
Etchings, A.A.A., 663 Fifth Ave.

Schanker, one of the Ten
Whitney Dissenters and a
supervisor of the graphics
division of the WPA, is a primary
innovator in the graphic medium
of woodcuts. By overprinting
many colors in a single block,
Schanker makes planes of semi-
transparent, harmonious color on
which he places his semi-abstract
and abstract forms.

Subjects such as hockey and
football scenes, cops and
pickets, as well as the coarsely
outlined shapes and swirling lines
make vigorous prints. The title of
an etching, "Action", sums up
the rigorous movement. J.E.N.



My Love

LOUIS SCHANKER



47. ACROBATS, 1941

PARTIAL LISTING OF COLLECTIONS

The Metropolitan Museum of Art
 The Museum of Modern Art
 Whitney Museum of American Art
 The Brooklyn Museum
 Philadelphia Museum of Art
 Cincinnati Art Museum
 Cleveland Museum of Art
 Art Institute of Chicago
 The Detroit Institute of Arts
 National Collection of Fine Arts

** The Ten Whitney Dissenters were:

Ben-Zion	Earl Kerkam
Ilya Bolotowsky	Ralph M. Rosenborg
Adolph Gottlieb	Marcus Rothkowitz (Mark Rothko)
John Graham	Louis Schanker
Louis Harris	Joseph Solman

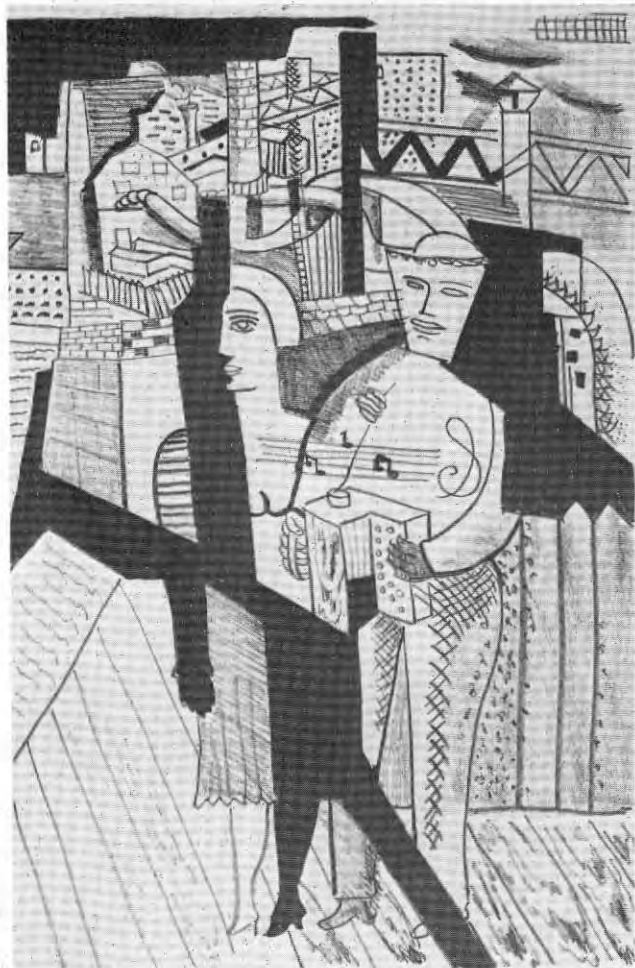
BIOGRAPHY

1903	Born in New York City
1920-27	Studied at Cooper Union, the Art Students League and the Educational Alliance School of Art
1931-33	Travelled and studied in France and Spain
1933	First one-man show
1939	Executed murals for the Science and Health Building at the World's Fair
1935	Made first woodcut
1935-36	Exhibited with The Ten Whitney Dissenters **
1940-41	Made woodcuts with WPA Arts Project, later became supervisor.
1943	Woodcuts shown at The Brooklyn Museum
1943-60	Taught woodcut and later painting at the New School for Social Research, shared studio with Stanley William Hayter for one season.
1945	Prints shown at the Print Club of Philadelphia
1947	Participated in The Graphic Circle, a group involved in the development of new printmaking techniques
1949-64	Taught at Bard College, now Professor Emeritus
1954-55	Prints shown at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London
1974	Prints shown at The Brooklyn Museum
1978	Retrospective of etchings, woodcuts and lithographs at Associated American Artists. Schanker lives and works in New York City and Connecticut.

March 4 through April 1, 1978

Associated American Artists

663 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022 (212) 755-4211



4. BLIND MUSICAL PLAYERS, 1928

COVER: 25. THREE MEN ON HORSES, 1938

LOUIS SCHANKER: Printmaking Retrospective 1924-1971

"Printmaking is a natural and appropriate vehicle for Schanker, for it combines his talents as a sculptor with his keen sense of color. The resistance of the block itself to the pressure of chisel, knife, and rasp exacts his most inventive and ingenious talents. His creative purpose is effectively implemented by the use of color as the integral function of his abstract designs. The works which make up Louis Schanker's graphic oeuvre lucidly document the strength and imaginative approach which characterize American prints produced during the middle decades of the twentieth century."

Una E. Johnson, Curator Emeritus
Department of Prints and Drawings
The Brooklyn Museum



28. COPS AND PICKETS, 1939

CATALOGUE

This listing follows the order of The Brooklyn Museum catalogue, *LOUIS SCHANKER, PRINTS, 1924-1971*, published in 1974. Dimensions are for image size, in inches, height precedes width. All works are pencil signed.

LOUIS SCHANKER, PRINTS, 1924-1971, with an essay by Una E. Johnson, Curator Emeritus, published by The Brooklyn Museum in 1974, is available through Associated American Artists at \$4.95

- | | | | | |
|------|--|--|--|--|
| 1924 | 1. SPEAK-EASY
BM1, etching
Edition about 10, 5¼ x 4¾.
\$100 | 10. THE TEN WHITNEY
DISSENTERS **
Color woodcut
Exhibition poster, 17x12.NFS | 19. CONVERSATION
BM17, color woodcut
Edition 30, 5½ x 4½. \$90 | 32. MUSICAL CLOWNS
BM31, color woodcut
Edition 21, 11½ x 15. \$150 |
| | 2. SPEAK-EASY II
BM2, etching
Edition 10, 8½, x 14½. \$200 | 1936 11. MAN AT PIANO
BM8, color woodcut
Edition 20, 8¾ x 6. \$100 | 20. CONVERSATION
B17, woodcut in black and
green
Edition 30, 5½ x 4½. \$75 | 33. NON-OBJECTIVE
BM32, color woodcut
Edition 30, 9 x 14½. \$150 |
| 1925 | 3. BATHERS
BM4, linoleum cut
Edition 10, 6½ x 4½. \$75 | 1937 12. DICTATOR'S DREAM
BM9, color woodcut
Edition 10, 9½ x 13¼. \$150 | 21. CONVERSATION
BM17, woodcut in black and red
20 trial proofs, 5½ x 4½. \$75 | 34. THREE FIGURES
BM34, linoleum cut
Proofs only, on Chinese rice
paper, 4½ x 5. \$60 |
| 1928 | 4. BLIND MUSICAL PLAYERS
BM5, lithograph
Edition 10, 14¾ x 10. \$150 | 13. DUET
BM10, color woodcut
Edition 15, 6 x 4½. \$100 | 22. GIRL WITH LUTE
BM18, linoleum cut
6 trial proofs, 5½ x 4½. \$50 | 35. THREE FIGURES
BM34, color linoleum cut
Edition 35, 4½ x 5. \$120 |
| | 5. HANDBALL PLAYERS
BM6, lithograph
Edition 10, 10¾ x 12¼. \$150 | 14. FAMILY
BM11, color woodcut
Edition 10, 3½ x 2½. \$50 | 23. GIRL WITH LUTE
BM18, color linoleum cut
Edition 10, 5½ x 4½. \$75 | 1940 36. FOOTBALL
BM39, two-color woodcut
20 trial proofs, 9¾ x 13¾. \$120 |
| 1935 | 6. TRIO
BM7, woodcut
10 trial proofs, 6½ x 9½. \$100 | 15. POLO
BM12, color linoleum cut
Edition 20, 17½ x 22½. \$350 | 24. MUSICAL COMPOSITION
BM19, color woodcut
Edition 10, 4½ x 15¼. \$150 | 37. FOOTBALL
BM39, color woodcut
Edition 55, 9¾ x 13¾. \$150 |
| | 7. TRIO
BM7, color woodcut
Edition 20, 6½ x 9½. \$200 | 1938 16. ABSTRACTION WITH
HEART
BM13, color woodcut
Edition 15, 8½ x 11½. \$150 | 25. THREE MEN ON HORSES
BM20, woodcut
12 trial proofs, 10½ x 12½. \$120 | 38. HOCKEY PLAYERS
BM40, color woodcut
Edition 55, 14 x 11½. \$250 |
| | 8. TRIO
Oil
Preparatory study for BM7
6½ x 9. \$500 | 17. CAFE NO. 1
BM14, color woodcut
Edition 35, 9 x 5½. \$125 | 26. THREE MEN ON HORSES
BM20, color woodcut
Edition 28, 10½ x 12½. \$250 | 39. POLO PLAYERS
BM42, color woodcut
Edition 55, 11¾ x 14. \$250 |
| | 9. TRIO
Pen and ink
Preparatory study for BM7
3½ x 5. \$200 | 18. CONVERSATION
BM17, woodcut
20 trial proofs, 5½ x 4½. \$75 | 1939 27. ACROBATS
BM21, color woodcut
Edition 40, 9½ x 7½. \$120 | 1941 40. ARRANGEMENT OF FORM
NO. 1
Woodcut
Edition 5, 22½ x 14½. \$150 |
| | | | 28. COPS AND PICKETS
BM26, woodcut
Edition 35, 9½ x 11¾. \$90 | 41. ARRANGEMENT OF FORM,
NO. 2
Woodcut
Edition 6, 22½ x 14½. \$150 |
| | | | 29. JAI-ALAI
BM30, woodcut
Edition 10, 10 x 13¾. \$90 | 42. ARRANGEMENT OF FORM
NOS. 1 and 2
BM46, color woodcut
Edition 12, 22½ x 14½. \$275 |
| | | | 30. JAI-ALAI
BM30, color woodcut
Edition 34, 10 x 13¾. \$150 | 43. ARRANGEMENT OF FORM,
NOS. 1 and 2, (REVOLVING |
| | | | 31. MUSICAL CLOWNS
BM31, woodcut
Edition 10, 11½ x 15. \$90 | |



37. FOOTBALL, 1940

FIGURES)

Color woodcut
Edition 10, 22½ x 14½. \$275

- 44. FOOTBALL
BM47, woodcut
Edition 30, 7½ x 7¼. \$60*
- 45. FAMILY
Woodcut
Edition 30, 7½ x 7¼. \$60*
- 46. POLO
Woodcut
Edition 30, 7½ x 7¼. \$60*
- 47. ACROBATS
Woodcut
Edition 25, 7½ x 7¼. \$60*
- 48. INDIAN DANCE, NO. 2
BM49, color woodcut
Edition 30, 12½ x 16. \$250

- 49. ST. GEORGE AND THE
DRAGON
BM52, woodcut
20 trial proofs, 9 x 12. \$90
- 50. ST. GEORGE AND THE
DRAGON
BM52, woodcut in black and
red
20 trial proofs, 9 x 12. \$120
- 51. ST. GEORGE AND THE
DRAGON
BM52, woodcut in black and
blue
Edition 10, 9 x 12. \$120
- 52. ST. GEORGE AND THE
DRAGON
BM52, color woodcut
Edition 11, 9 x 12. \$150

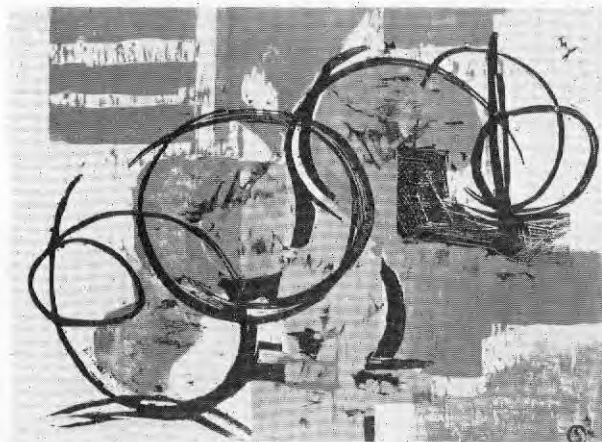
- 53. STUDY IN GREEN AND
BLACK
BM53, woodcut
20 trial proofs, 10½ x 14. \$75
- 54. STUDY IN GREEN AND
BLACK
BM53, color woodcut
Edition 55, 10½ x 14. \$150
- 1942 55. COMPOSITION WITH
FIGURES
BM56, woodcut
Edition 10, 8 x 14. \$75
- 56. COMPOSITION WITH
FIGURES
BM56, color woodcut
Edition 55, 8 x 14. \$150
- 57. MOVEMENT
BM57, color woodcut
Edition 10, 8½ x 16. \$120

- 58. WALL HANDBALL
BM59, color woodcut
Edition 55, 12 x 14. \$250
- 59. WALL HANDBALL
Pastel
Preparatory study for BM59
12 x 14. \$500
- 60. WALL HANDBALL
Pen and ink
Preparatory study for BM59
8 x 10½. \$300
- 1943 61. DON QUIXOTE AND
SANCHE PANZA
BM60, color woodcut
Edition 15, 13½ x 28¾. \$300
- 1944 62. BIRDS IN FLIGHT
BM61, color woodcut
Edition 25, 14 x 30. \$300



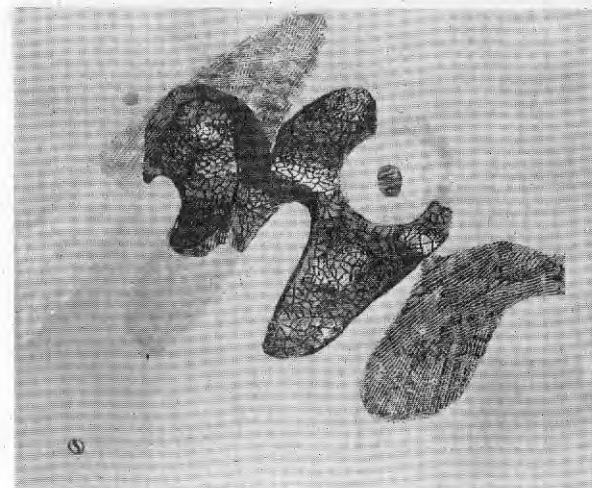
56. COMPOSITION WITH FIGURES, 1942

63. DANCE
BM62, color woodcut
Edition 25, 12 x 19%. \$250
- 1945 64. ABSTRACT LANDSCAPE
BM63, color woodcut
Edition 15, 14 x 31. \$200
65. ACTION
BM64, etching
Edition 4, 4% x 7. \$150
66. MOVEMENT
BM67, etching
Edition 8, 3¼ x 5. \$90
67. ABSTRACTION I
BM68, etching
Edition 10, 9 x 6. \$150
68. ABSTRACTION V
BM72, etching
Edition 3, 3½ x 4¾. \$90
69. ABSTRACTION XIV
BM81, etching
Edition 35, 3¼ x 9¼. \$150



74. CIRCLE IMAGE NO. 4, 1954-55

- 1946 70. ABSTRACT LANDSCAPE
NO. 1
BM92, color woodcut
Edition 25, 31% x 19%. \$500
- 1948 71. MYTHICAL COCK
BM96, woodcut
Edition about 10, 19½ x 21½.
\$250
72. STATIC AND REVOLVING
BM97, color woodcut
Edition 10, 14¼ x 20%. \$300
- 1949 73. ROTATING FIGURES, 1
(date uncertain)
BM156, color woodcut
Edition 5, 21 x 14%. \$150
- 1954-55 74. CIRCLE IMAGE NO. 4
BM119, color woodblock
relief print
Edition 25, 14% x 18%. \$200
75. CIRCLE IMAGE NO. 25
BM121, color woodblock
relief print
Edition 210, 14 x 18. \$200



79. ABSTRACTION NO. 5, 1971

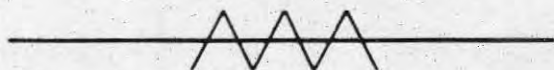
- 1969 76. DANCERS
BM130, woodcut
Edition 25, 10 x 13½. \$75
- 1971 77. ABSTRACTION NO. 1
BM136, color plexiglass relief
Edition 20, 12 x 23¾. \$150
78. ABSTRACTION NO. 4
BM131, color plexiglass relief
Edition 22, 14 x 16. \$150
79. ABSTRACTION NO. 5
BM135, color woodcut
Edition 20, 17¾ x 22. \$200
80. ABSTRACTION NO. 6
BM134, color plexiglass relief
Edition 10, 16 x 24. \$150
81. ABSTRACTION NO. 8
BM138, color plexiglass relief
Edition 10, 16 x 24. \$200
82. ABSTRACTION NO. 9
BM139, color plexiglass
relief
Edition 10, 8 x 30. \$175
83. FOOTBALL 1
BM142, color plexiglass
relief
Edition 6, 20 x 30. \$300
84. INTERMINGLING SHAPES
BM146, color plexiglass
relief
Edition 10, 16 x 24. \$175
85. LYRICAL ABSTRACTION
BM148, color plexiglass
relief
Edition 10, 16 x 24. \$150
86. SERPENTINE NO. 1.
BM149, color woodcut
Edition 20, 15¼ x 6. \$90

LOUIS SCHANKER

PRINTS AND DRAWINGS



September 4-27, 1986



ASSOCIATED AMERICAN ARTISTS
20 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019 (212) 399-5510

FOREWORD

American modernist prints of the first several decades of this century have not received the consistent critical and commercial attention that they deserve. It was a pleasure, therefore, to view David Kiehl's excellent survey "In Pursuit of Abstraction," which was exhibited in the print galleries of the Metropolitan Museum of Art this spring. That show brought together important prints by many artists long affiliated with AAA, including Louis Shanker (1903-1981), who pioneered the translation of a European-born aesthetic into uniquely American graphic images.

It was doubly a pleasure to see at the exhibition Una Johnson and to introduce her to David Kiehl, thereby bringing together two champions of this neglected period of American printmaking. During her distinguished career as Print Curator of the Brooklyn Museum, Una Johnson was often the only voice speaking encouragement to experimental printmakers like Louis Shanker. She is the author of the definitive reference to his graphic work, and we are grateful for her contributing an introduction to our current retrospective exhibition.

We are also grateful to the Estate of Louis Shanker, the artist's sister Mrs. Minette Siegel and nephew and niece Mr. and Mrs. Lou Siegel, for their cooperation and hospitality. Without their work, this exhibition would not be possible.

Robert P. Conway
Director

INTRODUCTION

Louis Schanker first became interested in the development of the woodcut and linoleum block print during his extended work in mural painting at the Science and Health Building at the 1939 New York World's Fair and in the lobby of radio station WNYC. After a careful study of Japanese woodblock color prints he embarked on his own exploration of new possibilities in the medium of the relief print, especially the woodcut and linoleum block print. He occasionally had worked in intaglio methods but it was the woodcut that most often held his attention during the next several decades. Applying the larger gestures of mural painting he soon removed his own printed images from the illustrative and narrative themes of the traditional relief print. His graphic oeuvre of more than one hundred fifty prints records many of his imaginative innovations and experimental ideas.

In 1937 Schanker completed a complex composition entitled *Polo*, (Catalogue No. 12), a linoleum cut that demonstrated his ability to initiate new methods and procedures in relief printing. For this work he carved a number of blocks each carrying one of the flat washes of color. A final or key block designated the basic thrust of his design and was printed as an intaglio plate. In many succeeding woodcuts the artist often caught the defining actions of a number of active sports. Conventional perspective was not allowed to trap the eye of the viewer. Instead Schanker relied on movement, pattern, sharp angles, clear colors and uncomplicated images to give his compositions a deceptive depth and engaging animation.

In his large scale woodcut entitled *Don Quixote and Sancho Panza* (Catalogue No. 52) the artist first printed in black an unmarked block to which impression he overprinted other blocks in color. This method of printing enhanced the luminosity of his colors and united the entire composition. He also changed the textures of the blocks by employing unconventional tools such as carpenter's rasps, nail points and grids of wire meshes in order to "mar" the surface of the block. An example of these procedures is noted in the fine woodcut *Carnival*, 1948 (Catalogue No. 65). Schanker always printed his own blocks because he enjoyed the surprises and the variations that were obtainable only by hand printing. However, this somewhat laborious method also limited the number of impressions the artist was willing to print. During the mid-1950's the artist developed his own particular variations of the plaster relief print. Using his earlier blocks as molds he was able to obtain not only the colors he desired but also the depths of the knife or gouge cuts within the block.

Schanker has remarked: "Much of my work (in painting, sculpture and prints) is generally classified as abstract although all of my work develops from natural forms. I have an inherent need to express myself in relation to those forms." (*The Tiger's Eye*, No. 8, June, 1948, p. 46). However, in the mid-1950's and throughout the 1960's abstract images consistently appear in his work. The circular image with its countless variations and elusive interpretations becomes the leit-motif in all of his later compositions. The present retrospective exhibition featuring his woodcuts well defines Louis Schanker as an imaginative artist and a skilled and innovative printmaker.

Una Johnson
Curator Emerita
Brooklyn Museum