

CONCENTRATION PAPER

MONOTYPES

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The monotype has been acclaimed the "painterly-print." It rides a fine line between printmaking, painting, and drawing; it employs the spontaneity of making a mark and the process of pulling a print. The image received from the monotype has a fresh, invigorating quality that leads the viewer to the surface of the paper. The pigment literally becomes one with the fibers to integrate the mark and the overall composition into a complete work of art. The monotype is an empty field asking the artist to be aggressive and bold, to bring challenging ideas and unexplored techniques to unearched territory. To appreciate more fully the monotype, it must first be explained as a process.

#### PROCESS OF THE MONOTYPE

The monotype begins as an image being painted or drawn directly on a hard, relatively non-absorbent surface. Paper is placed upon the surface and pressure is applied to the back of the paper either by hand or through a printing press. The paper is then pulled from the surface and the image has been transferred in reverse to the paper. Only one full-strength impression has been made from this plate. Several artists use the remaining film of pigment on the plate to print a cognate or ghost-image producing a lighter, less defined facsimile. This print may be worked into with pastels, ink, paint, pencil, or water-color using the cognate as the base drawing. The ghost-image left on the plate can also be used as a record to alter the first impression or show a progressive change in idea. This gives the artist great freedom

to experiment with an expression, changing and reworking the concept through successive printings.

There are two general avenues to developing a monotype. One is the dark-field or subtractive method (Figure 1). The plate surface is covered entirely with a consistent layer of ink and the image is constructed by the removal and manipulation of that ink. The light-field or additive method begins with a clean, empty plate (Figure 2). The artist works directly on the surface as he would a canvas or paper concurrently adding and developing the picture through line and brush-stroke. After experimenting with both methods, most artists combine the additive and subtractive to best suit their idea and way of working.

The most common surface used with monotype is the zinc plate, but there are endless materials to choose from such as: copper plates, lithographic stones, aluminum plates, glass, plexiglass, formica, tile, textured wallpaper, acetate, hardboard, or wood. Any transparent surface such as glass can be used with a drawing underneath as the guide. The most common pigments for developing the image are oil-based because they protract drying time and leave the surface flexible and manipulative longer. Any printmaking inks, oil paint, or oil pastels have good results for the monotype. Turpentine or mineral spirits dilute the paint to a wash or watercolor consistency on the print. Plate oil, varnish, vaseline, or linseed oil may be added to change the viscosity of the pigments. When working with the printmaking inks a #1 or #3 varnish will thin the ink without changing the strength or color of the pigment.<sup>1</sup> Vaseline will soften the material while

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<sup>1</sup>Clinton Adams and Garo Z. Antreasian, The Tamarind Book of Lithography: Art and Technique (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1970), p. 311.

## THE MONOTYPE PROCESS Additive or Light-Field Methods



FIG. 39.  
Oil pigment was applied to a clean metal plate, much like a drawing on paper.  
Castiglione, *David with the Head of Goliath* (detail), cat. no. 13.



FIG. 40.  
Brushstrokes of different consistencies of oil paint created a complex surface.  
Rouault, *Clown and Monkey* (detail), cat. no. 79.



FIG. 41.  
Ink applied over a turpentine-washed plate produced a mottled surface. Ribbing of laid paper created a grid pattern.  
Avery, *Pink Nude* (detail), cat. no. 90.



FIG. 42.  
Brushstrokes of fresh dark ink contrast with the lighter residues of an earlier printing.  
Diebenkorn, *IX 4/23/75* (detail), cat. no. 97.



FIG. 43.  
Oil paints were applied by spattering. The edges of metal plates stacked one on top of the other were colored and, under pressure of the press, embossed the paper with their outlines.  
Francis, *Untitled, 1977* (detail), cat. no. 99.

Figure 1. Additive or Light-Field Methods, *The Painterly Print* (New York: Bradford D. Kelleher, 1980)

## Subtractive or Dark-Field Methods



FIG. 44.  
Wooden tools of varying thicknesses (perhaps brush handles) were used to remove ink, leaving lines and patches of white.

Castiglione, *The Annunciation to the Shepherds* (detail), cat. no. 9.



FIG. 45.  
Rags, brush handles, and the artist's fingers removed ink from the darkened plate to introduce light.

Degas, *The Fireside* (detail), cat. no. 23.



FIG. 46.  
A sharp tool incised white lines in a dense layer of ink.

Matisse, *Seated Nude with Arms Crossed* (detail), cat. no. 80.



FIG. 47.  
Ink was wiped away to leave figures silhouetted and enlivened with scribbles.

Luks, *Case Walk* (detail), cat. no. 67.



FIG. 48.  
Oil color thinned with solvent was removed with brush bristles and handle.

Avery, *Birds and Ruffled Sea* (detail), cat. no. 91.

magnesium carbonate or a #7 varnish will stiffen it.<sup>2</sup> The lithographic inks have a heavier body and are more viscid than the intaglio or relief-printing inks.<sup>3</sup> Water-based coloring matter such as tempera, gouache, acrylic, or watercolor may be used, but the drying period is quick and limits time to work on the plate.

Tools utilized for applying ink or drawing into pigment are inexhaustible, but items such as: brushes, rags, fingers, bamboo sticks, Q-Tips, rubber or leather rollers, twigs, feathers, sponges, or palette knives have been used. Any type of paper is sufficient for printing along with canvas or other fabrics. For a stable image with a long life span, the 100% rag printmaking paper is the best to use. Letting these papers soak in water for their specified amount of time makes the rag fibers more receptive to the ink. Oils and varnishes have a tendency to deteriorate the paper, but a pure rag or wood fiber lying in the neutral pH 6.5 to 8.5 range has an excellent chance at survival.<sup>4</sup> All handmade papers are more permanent because they do not carry active chemicals used in machine-made paper.<sup>5</sup> The monotype can be hand-printed employing a roller or spon on the back of the paper as pressure to transfer the ink. Another serviceable item is the screwpress used in relief printing. The most prevailing form of printing is done with the intaglio (etching) or lithographic press which exerts enough force to pull much more ink off the surface plate to the paper.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Clinton Adams, p. 328.

<sup>4</sup>Ralph Mayer, The Painter's Craft (New York: Penguin Books, 1979), p. 104.

<sup>5</sup>Clinton Adams, p. 330.

There is always the element of surprise in printing a monotype. The application of too much ink on the surface can cause a spreading or emanation of the ink beyond the plate. Too little ink will print much lighter than anticipated and some areas will not print at all. Clean lines made by drawing in the ink can be lost while printing. The time it takes to execute a monotype print is considered short compared to print processes. It has a certain appeal to those artists who are impulsive and enjoy putting an image down quickly and spontaneously.<sup>6</sup>

There is a distinction to be made between a monotype and monoprint. The monoprint has a fixed matrix or element on the printing surface which is incorporated into the final state and a monotype is a totally unique icon developed from a clean surface.<sup>7</sup> Most prints are referred to as monotypes.

#### HISTORY OF MONOTYPES

It is most probable that monotypes originated with the wiping of intaglio plates. In the mid-1640's, Rembrandt Van Rijn in Amsterdam experimented with leaving a film of ink on the plate to create areas of tone. It was through this selective wiping that Rembrandt found he could change the light quality and character of the etching. "The Entombment" (Figures 3 and 4) reflects four different states of sensitive wiping in order to illuminate different personalities in the print.

Hercules Segers was working in Amsterdam until 1631 and had an impact on Rembrandt. Records show that Rembrandt purchased no less than

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<sup>6</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Painterly Print: Monotypes from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century (New York: Bradford D. Kellehar, 1980), p. 60.

<sup>7</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 61.



Figure 3. Rembrandt van Rijn. "The Entombment." 1654. Etching, drypoint, and burin-first state, clean wiped, 8 1/4" x 6 3/8". The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 4. Rembrandt van Rijn. "The Entombment." 1654. Etching, drypoint, and burin-third state, with surface tone, 8 1/4" x 6 3/8". The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

twenty-one paintings and twelve etchings from Segers.<sup>8</sup> The prints done during this time are quite innovative and appear to be done purely for personal satisfaction. Segers often covered the surface of his paper with watercolor before printing and often retouched the image with paint afterwards. Another act of deviation was printing counter-proofs from the damp original impressions. These were all breaks from the cleanly wiped plates of the 1600's.

Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione was also working in the mid-1640's and is considered the earliest known artist to do a true monotype. He started in a dark-field manner with a film of ink on the plate and scratched into it with a blunt object which gave a sparkling, expressive line quality to his prints (Figure 5). Broad areas of white were produced by wiping the ink away and platemarks suggest he did run the plate through a press. Castiglione also printed a second, paler impression from the prints.

The preference towards a clean, linear style was established from the mid-1600's to the 1800's. There was a growing interest in printmaking and the lure of large editions to a sellable audience. William Blake was printing book illustrations during the 1700's and through experimentation evolved into monotypes. Tonal techniques in printmaking such as aquatint and mezzotint had been established but Blake bypassed these and instead painted a thick covering of pigment on recessed areas of the etchings. Eventually he discarded the metal plate and began making monotypes on millboard using tempera paint. There

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<sup>8</sup>John Rowlands, Hercules Segers (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1979), p. 12.

Figure 5. Giovanni Benedetti Castiglione. "God Creating Adam."  
1640-45. Monotype in black ink, 11 7/8" x 8 1/8".  
Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth.



are no platemarks on his prints so it is assumed he printed with a screwpress.<sup>9</sup> He also took the liberty to work back into his images with black ink and watercolor (Figure 6).

Photography became the new process to produce tone and with it a revival of the richly inked etchings of Rembrandt. There was a rebirth from 1840 to 1860, hastening sensitivity along with interpretation in the inking and wiping procedure. It was a discovery of "the unique variant."<sup>10</sup> P. G. Hammerton, an art critic and one who supported the variant, wrote of the rebirth:

It is, however, certainly true that nobody can print a plate except the artist who made it, or a clever workman labouring under his direct personal superintendence, and that all printing not done under these conditions is little more than an approximation.<sup>11</sup>

Auguste Delatre became that personal workman for many of the artists. He developed the term *retroussage* or "coaxing" which made ink rise out of the lines of an etching spreading to produce plate tone.<sup>12</sup> This was done with a gentle action of the rag passing over the plate. Seymour Haden commented that if Delatre had lived during Rembrandt's time, Rembrandt himself would not have printed his own impressions.<sup>13</sup> Eventually, Seymour Haden helped to sway the pendulum once again to clean-line printing, but there would still be those who were drawn to the "unique variant."

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<sup>9</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

Figure 6. William Blake. "Pity." 1795. Color monotype in tempera,  
16 3/4" x 21 1/4". Tate Gallery, London.



Artists began using wiping techniques to change an impression from a day scene to night or perhaps stage different types of weather. Vicomte Ludovic Napoléon Lepic pushed this even further by not only altering day and season but also focus of attention and points of perspective (Figures 7 and 8). In 1876, Lepic made a chronicle and illustrations of his experiments and just as Delatre had labeled his wiping "retroussage," Lepic proclaimed his "eau-forte mobile" or variable etching.<sup>14</sup> Lepic felt ". . . the artist who used etching should be a painter or draughtsman who uses the needle and rag as another uses paintbrush and pencil . . . with a stroke of the finger or a dirty rag full of ink."<sup>15</sup>

Lepic may have promoted this attitude but he must give credit for his first monotype to Degas. Degas made this first impression under the supervision of Lepic and both signed the print (Figure 9). It was this beginning that led to over three hundred monotypes by Degas, who would not call them by that name but instead "drawings made with greasy ink and put through a press."<sup>16</sup> These "drawings" were much more flexible and multifarious than the preparatory sketches he had done up to this point. The monotype was always at a stage of potential change for Degas because the ink could be worked and reworked. Ideas could be created; compositions recomposed or the image literally wiped off the plate. Degas worked with fairly small plates ranging from 3 3/16 x 2 3/4 inches

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<sup>14</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 19.

<sup>16</sup>Eugenia Parry Janis, Degas Monotypes: Essay, Catalogue, and Checklist (Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society, Ltd., 1968), p. xvii.



Figure 7. Vicomte Ludovic Lepic. "Vue des Bords del l'Escaut-L'Orage." 1860. Etching and plate tone. The Baltimore Museum of Art.



Figure 8. Vicomte Ludovic Lepic. "Vue des Bords del l'Escaut-Les Saules." 1860. Etching and plate tone. The Baltimore Museum of Art.



Figure 9. Edgar Degas and Vicomte Ludovic Lepic. "The Ballet Master." 1874-75. Monotype in black ink, 22" x 27". National Gallery, Washington, D.C.

(Figure 10) to 16 5/16 x 23 1/8 inches (Figure 11), and because of this he was forced to work with general shapes, basic structure, and design. Lighting effects and their distortions played a major role in the monotypes, and he used fingers much of the time to control texture and half-tone with dark and light areas.

It was during 1879 to 1880 that Degas used the image of brothel settings exclusively in the monotype (Figures 12, 13, and 14). "It is the only subject of Degas' work which is limited to one medium."<sup>17</sup> The light-field method was executed in most of these scenes. During 1880 to 1883, he began a series of nudes reading, preparing for bed, or performing their toilette. These are very revealing images in which the viewer has some secret window into the most personal actions of these women (Figures 15, 16, and 17). Degas captures the epiphany of a gesture and mood. The contrasts are harsh with only one light source usually conveyed.

About one-fourth of all the monotypes done by Degas have an addition of pastel as the final base. He was using both the monotype and pastels at a time when no one else revered them, and this combination seemed to appeal to his creative needs.<sup>18</sup>

Degas and a friend, Bartholomé, made a twenty day excursion through the countryside of Burgundy. It was there in the autumn of 1890 that Degas did a series of landscape monotypes at the studio of Georges Jeannot (Figures 18 and 19). This was his first effort at landscape since 1869 and the first time to use colored inks. He found an exciting

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<sup>17</sup>Eugenia Parry Janis, p. xix.

<sup>18</sup>Eugenia Parry Janis, p. xxviii.



Figure 10. Edgar Degas. "The Jet Earring." 1877-80. Monotype in black ink, 3 3/16" x 2 3/4". The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 11. Edgar Degas. "Le Foyer (La Cheminee)." 1880. Monotype in black ink, 16 5/16" x 23 1/8". Private Collection, France.

Figure 12. Edgar Degas. "Trois Filles Assises." 1879. Pastel over monotype, 6 1/4" x 8 7/16". Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



Figure 13. Edgar Degas. "Sieste Au Salon." Monotype in black ink, 6 1/4" x 8 1/4".  
Private Collection.





Figure 14. Edgar Degas. "Deux Jeunes Filles." 1879. Monotype in black ink, 6 1/4" x 4 3/4". Private collection.



Figure 15. Edgar Degas. "After the Bath." 1880-85. Monotype in black ink, 11" x 14 3/4". Mrs. Elsa Essberger, Hamburg.

Figure 16. Edgar Degas. "Le Bain (La Corvette)." 1880-85.  
Monotype in black ink, 12 5/16" x 10 3/4". The Sterling  
and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown,  
Massachusetts



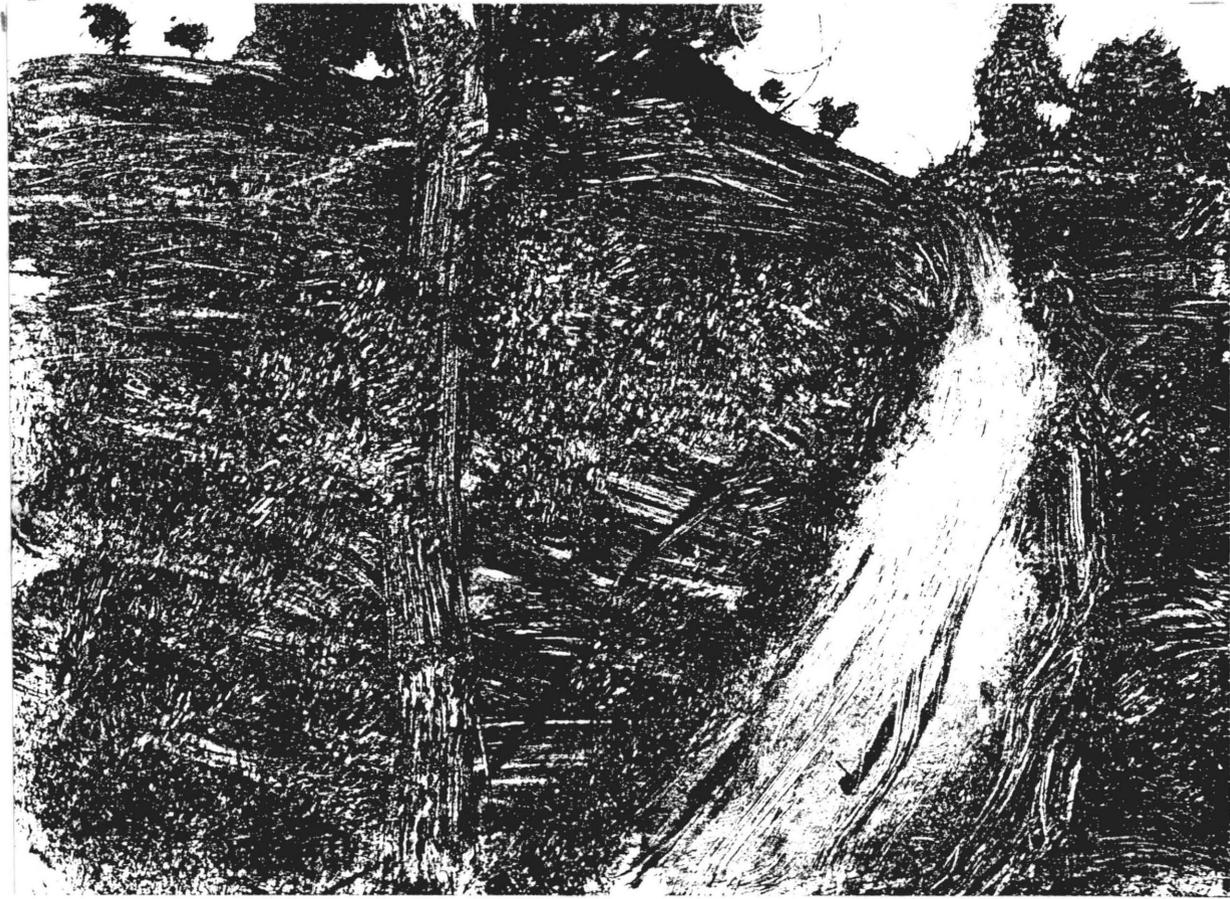


Figure 17. Edgar Degas. "Femme Nue Se Coiffant."  
1877-79. Pastel over monotype, 8 7/16" x  
6 5/16". Ittleson Collection, New York.

Figure 18. Edgar Degas. "La Route (Chemin Et Arbres)." 1878-80. Monotype in black ink,  
4 5/8" x 6 5/16". National Gallery of Art.



Figure 19. Edgar Degas. "Le Chemin Montant." 1878-80. Monotype in black ink, 4 5/8" x 6 5/16". Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



optical effect between the color hue of the pastels and monotype pigments, and a type of vibration was set up by these two vehicles layered on the paper.<sup>19</sup> Large, abstract forms were brushed or dripped directly on the foreground of the image; they were like stage props seen in many of the paintings depicting dancers (Figure 20). Around 1893, Degas abandoned the monotype medium altogether.

Degas owned three monotypes by Paul Gauguin, but it is not known if Degas introduced him to the medium. In 1894, Gauguin fractured an ankle in a fight and it was during this inactive period that he produced woodcuts and monotypes. The approach to these prints was very novel, one in which the pigment was watercolor and the image transferred from one sheet of paper to another. In his own words he describes the process:

First you roll out printer's ink on a sheet of paper of any sort; then lay a second sheet on top of it and draw whatever pleases you. The harder and thinner your pencil (as well as your paper), the finer will be the resulting line.<sup>20</sup>

There were seven prints made in 1902 that have a cracked surface and it is believed that a gum or varnish was applied to the paper before printing.<sup>21</sup> Most of the motifs are from Tahiti and are painted with diluted primary colors executed in delicate brushstrokes (Figure 21).

Many artists embarked on monotypes during a time of physical limitations. Another such artist was Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. In 1899,

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<sup>19</sup>Eugenia Parry Janis, p. xxvi.

<sup>20</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 34.

<sup>21</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 134.

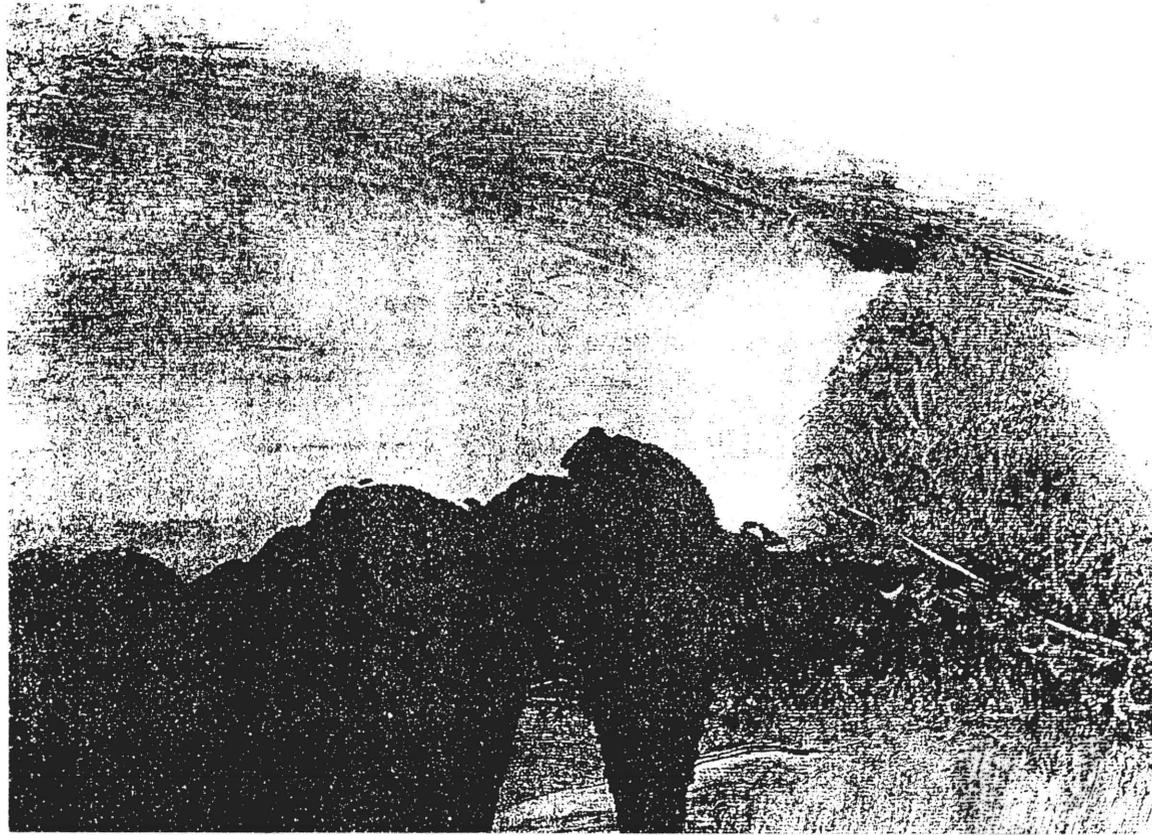


Figure 20. Edgar Degas. "Foret Dans La Montagne." 1890-93. Color monotype, 11 3/4" x 15 7/8". Mrs. Bertram Smith, New York.

Figure 21. Paul Gauguin. "Nave Nave Fenua." 1894. Watercolor monotype, 15 3/4" x 9 1/2". Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



he was confined to a sanatorium due to fatigue and alcohol addiction.<sup>22</sup> He wanted to prove his integrity as an artist and began an album of circus drawings from memory. A monotype, "Au Cirque" (Figure 22) was done in sketchy contour lines of a horse and trainer. Since there are no platemarks, he probably transferred the image by hand. A stamped monogram on the print indicated it was a finished piece of art.

Between 1880 and the early 1900's, artists began exhibiting monotypes in America because of their innovative and painterly qualities. Frank Duveneck and a group of artists from America were studying in Venice and often experimented with monotypes at social gatherings. They would get together for evening parties and collaborate on prints, often raffling the monotype to the host or one of the guests.

Duveneck and William Merritt Chase were good friends and that is possibly how Chase was introduced to the monotype. He was a fashionable painter and art teacher at the time and when he exhibited monotypes in 1881 and 1882, it gave credit and popularity to the medium (Figure 23). It is assumed that he used the monotype as an important tool for teaching composition skills to his students. He felt that hesitation killed spontaneity and that this technique was a practice in brevity.

Another artist, Charles Alvah Walker, also exhibited monotypes in the year 1881 featuring a form of landscapes. He had previously worked with watercolor and the invention of scratching the surface of the paint to enhance the blanchness of the paper. Walker applied this

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<sup>22</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 138.



Figure 22. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. "Au Cirque: le clown."  
1899. Color monotype, 19 3/4" x 14". Aldis Browne  
Fine Arts, Ltd., New York.



Figure 23. William Merritt Chase. "Reverie: A Portrait of A Woman." 1890-95. Monotype, 19 1/2" x 15 3/4". Metropolitan Museum of Art.

idea to his monotypes using the edge of a knife to lighten heavy inked areas. This merged well with the landscape theme and intensified the dappled effect of the leaves and texture in the tree trunks.

Maurice Brazil Prendergast used the monotype process for fifteen years and printed close to 200 monotypes. Women strolling the sidewalk, on the beach, or in the park were his most explored images. Japanese sense of receding space expressed as pattern intrigued Prendergast and he incorporated this into his prints (Figure 24). Areas of color were used in abstraction to show representational objects, yet they still held their recognized texture and framework.<sup>23</sup> Prendergast would send monotypes along with watercolors and oil paintings to exhibitions but would refuse to identify them by medium. Many of the prints have a fuzzy, soft look contributing to the fact they were second pulls printed by hand using a utensil for pressure.

It was in the early 1900's that Robert Henri and John Sloan would get together for an evening to make monotypes. Sloan enjoyed the spontaneity and "quick-wipes" made by a gesture of the hand. He abhorred using details to develop an image and insisted the artist should go after the theme, the big rhythms, and not the embellishments, ". . . just as Isadora Duncan, when she danced, followed the big movements and paid little attention to the lesser ornamentation of the music (Figure 25)."<sup>24</sup>

There was a lot of attention centered around New York City during this time because of the travelling exhibitions and shows. A New York

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<sup>23</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 156.

<sup>24</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 174.

Figure 24. Maurice Brazil Prendergast. "Orange Market." 1898-99.  
Color monotype, 12 7/16" x 9 1/8". Museum of Modern  
Art, New York.



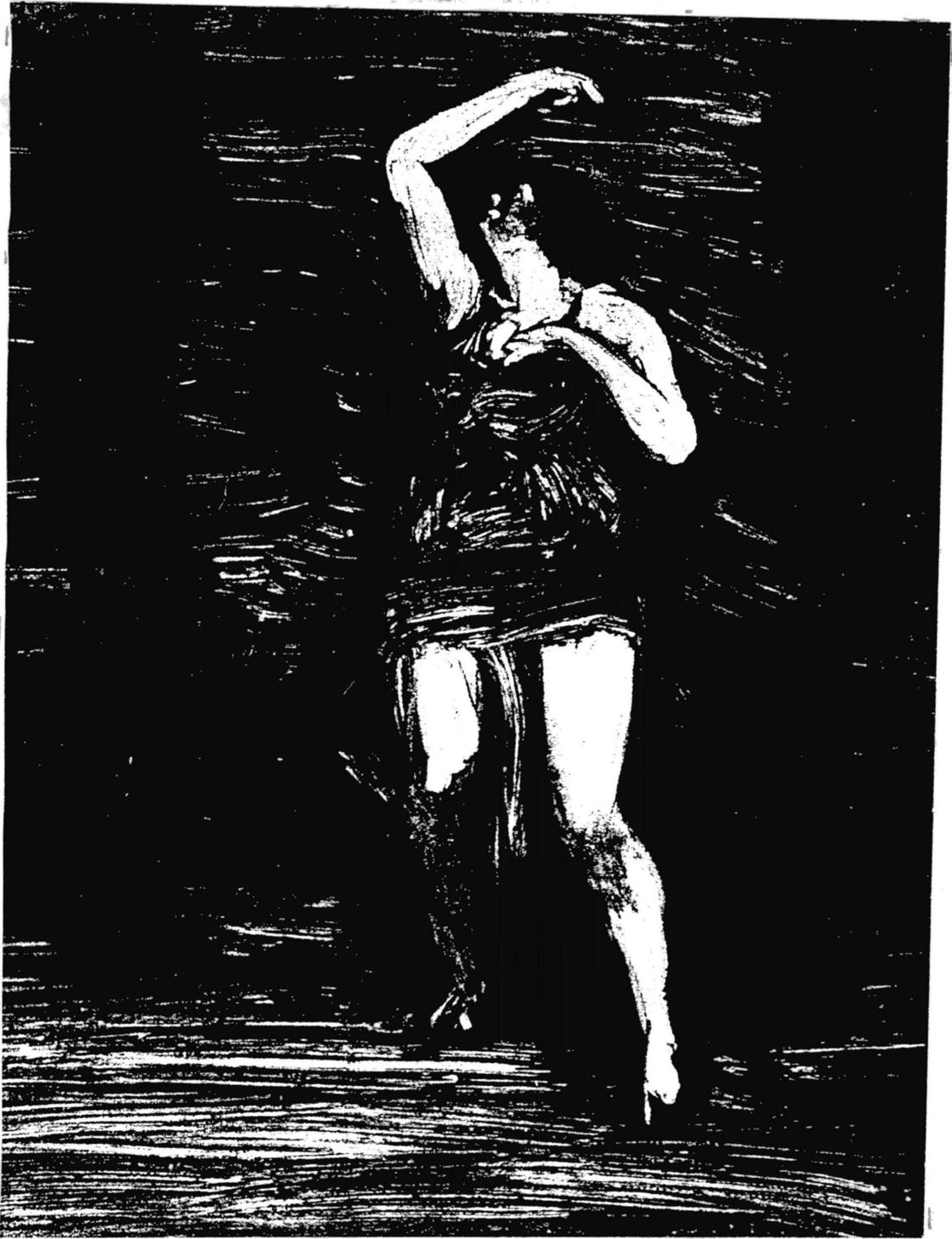


Figure 25. John Sloan. "Isadora In Revolt." 1915. Color monotype, 9" x 7 1/2". Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew King Grugan, Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

Monotype Club was constituted by former students of the Academie Julian, but no further information on this club can be found. Artists in Oakland, California were also involved in making monotypes in the first quarter of the 20th century.

#### MONOTYPES OF THE MODERN AGE

Henri Matisse had a small handpress installed in his Paris apartment where he made some thirty monotypes. His daughter, Marguerite, assisted him and she described the scene like this:

The monotypes were realized in three stages: the delicate application of ink onto copper; the spontaneous drawing which could not be altered; the risks of destroying the work during printing. At the end of these steps, a great moment of emotion when one discovered the imprint on the sheet of paper.<sup>25</sup>

Matisse would take a metal plate evenly covered with ink and draw directly onto it with the end of a brush handle as if it were a sketch pad. The images are delicate, expressive lines of white illuminated against the opaque black background (Figure 26).

Pablo Picasso used monotypes to design compositions on metal, redraw the image with minor changes, and then print it. This recorded the creative evolution and preserved the transformation. In capturing this he thought "...one might then discover the path followed by the brain in materializing a dream."<sup>26</sup>

The Minotaur stood as a symbol for Picasso of the basic energies and underlying violent nature of mankind. This powerful figure stood as a surrogate for Picasso's personality and was a recurring theme in all media. The monotype "Minotaur Embracing a Woman" (Figure 27) has

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<sup>25</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 206.

<sup>26</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 196.

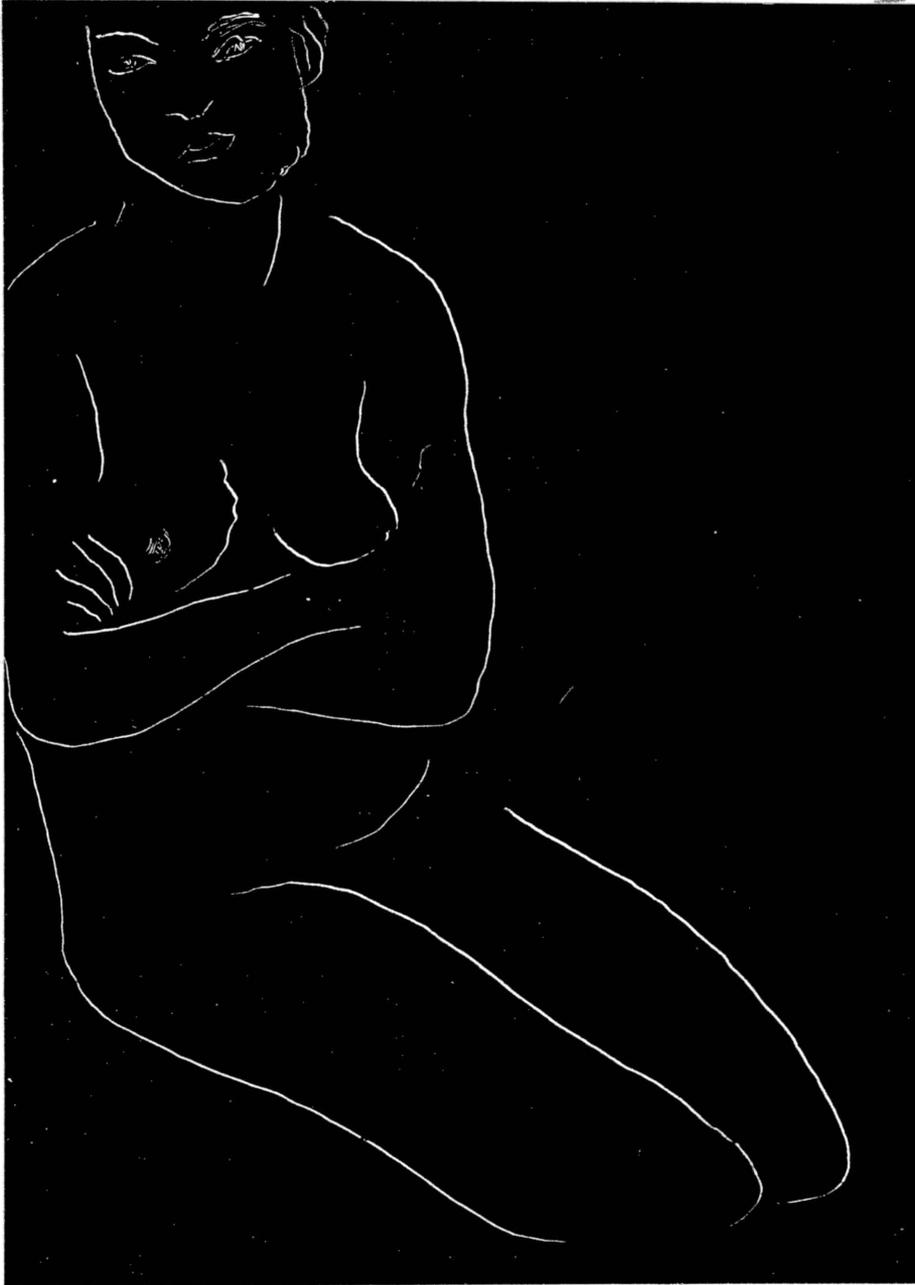
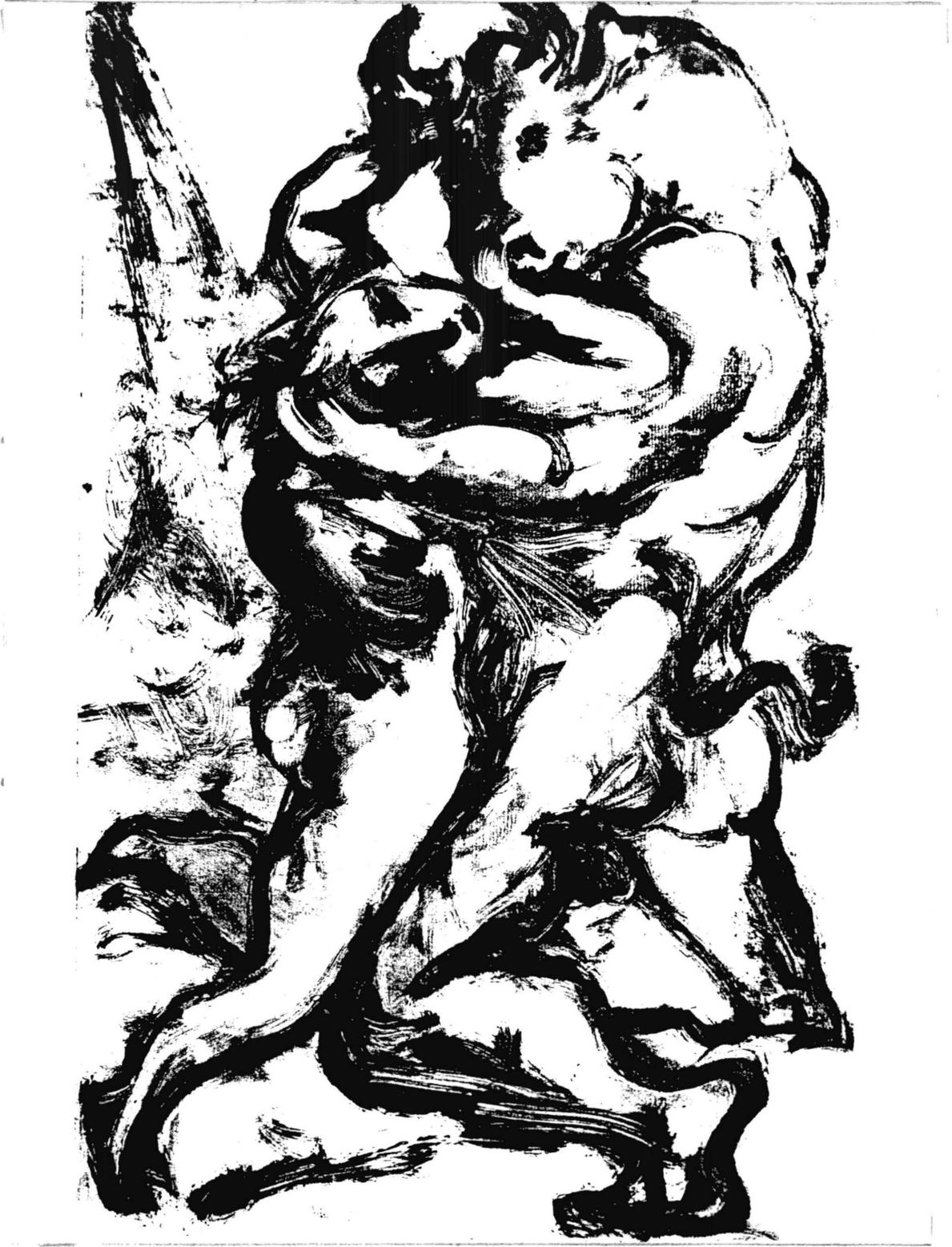


Figure 26. Henri Matisse. "Seated Nude With Arms Crossed." 1914-17. Monotype in black ink, 6 3/4" x 4 3/4". Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 27. Pablo Picasso. "Minotaur Embracing a Woman." 1934.  
Monotype in black ink, 15 5/8" x 9 5/8". Musée  
Picasso, Paris.



this strength and tension of two bodies struggling, clarified by broad lines and aggressive brushstrokes. He used the traces of ink after printing the monotype as an outline to engrave this image on the plate (Figure 28). It lacks the vitality of motion and the turbulence of a fight which the monotype elicited.

The French Surrealists made pictures by pressing ink between sheets of paper and Oskar Schlemmer, influenced by this, began a series of about twenty-five monotypes in "Klecksographien" or ink-blot printing. He wanted to eliminate any trace of the human hand in creating art. The Nazis' dismissed him from a job as professor and prohibited his painting, forcing him to use materials that were not identified as a medium used for art. He printed monotypes on backs of calendar pages and postcards and these polished surfaces enhanced the marbling and transparency of blotting (Figure 29).

In the 1940's, the artist doing monotypes explored all types of materials such as thread, leaves, and crumpled pages for transferred icons. It was a time in which natural textures anticipated and controlled the facsimile.

This attitude made Jean Dukuffet search in crumbling walls, graffiti, and art made by insane people for an answer to his rebellion of academia (Figure 30). He sought an unpremeditated approach to art and the creative act as

...not a dance to be danced along, but by two; chance is one of us...the artist steers as well as he can, but with flexibility applies himself to making the best of every accident as it occurs, forcing it to serve his ends..."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 217.



Figure 28. Pablo Picasso. "Minotaur Embracing a Woman." 1934. Engraving, 15 5/8" x 9 5/8". Musée Picasso, Paris.



Figure 29. Oskar Schlemmer. "Slanting Head I." Schlemmer Estate, Stuttgart.



Figure 30. Jean Dubuffet. "Globulous Formations." 1959. Monotype, 17 3/4" x 21 1/4". Collection of Jean Dubuffet, Paris.

An artist who continues to explore texture and materials is Sam Francis. He has printed a majority of his monotypes at the Experimental Workshop in San Francisco. He drips and splashes layers of acrylic, Le Franc oils, ink, and dry pigment on a wood surface. He has successfully combined the oil-base and water-base materials on hand-made paper to produce a print full of depth through the overlapping of these rich colors. An added tactile quality comes from the grooves and grain pattern created by the wood.

Milton Avery printed his first monotype while in Florida recovering from a heart attack. That was in the Winter of 1950 and he developed 250 prints over the next seven years. It is an artist like Avery who lifts the monotype to a level of serious appreciation. His themes are based on the same nudes, birds, and ocean conformable to the paintings, where the picture plane is divided into horizontal fields with a shared edge reading as the horizon (Figure 31). The monotypes "...express a commitment to representation fused with an abstractionist's sensibility, an off-beat colorism, and child-like charm and simplicity."<sup>28</sup> It seems Avery's resolution was simplification and the reduction of form to its essence.

Avery applied a film of turpentine on the glass or stone surface to keep the pigment from drying too quickly. A roller, spoon, or heel of the hand was pressed with even pressure on the back of a smooth, grainless drawing paper. He often came back into these prints with crayon, gouache, and pencil. The combination of oil and

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<sup>28</sup>Graphic Arts Collection, Milton Avery Monotypes (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Library, 1977), p. 5.

Figure 31. Milton Avery. "Birds and Ruffled Sea." 1951. Monotype, 18" x 24".  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



water-based paints gave a dappled look to the print, as the brush-stroke and wipe of a rag produced windswept rhythms of contour. There was a sublime texture induced from these effects and a flowing, powdery image resulted.

Adolph Gottlieb was also introduced to the monotype while recuperating from a stroke. It accommodated his confinement to a wheelchair without diminishing his creative performance. He used chips of cardboard, rags, and brushes to develop a print full of spirited color and bold mark-making (Figure 32).

It was in 1968 that Eugenia Parry Janis provided the public with a concentrated look at the monotypes of Edgar Degas. The exhibition was held at the Fogg Art Museum in Boston as a result of Mrs. Janis's Ph.D. dissertation. This sparked an awakening of the monotype and an outburst of exhibitions by past and present practitioners of the monotype. It was through this exhibition that Michael Mazur became enthralled with the medium.

One close look at Degas's 'Cafe-Concert Singer' (Figure 33) was all I really needed to get started. This tiny explosive image, a spontaneous gift of the artist's spirit, seemed to have been breathed directly on the paper in one magical gesture. A closer look reveals Degas's labor. His fingers pushed in ink like modeling clay. His painter's cloth wiped out the black ink for luminous whites. His brush added telling contours. At just the right moment he printed his constellation of tones, not much more than a cluster of smudges. But when the paper emerged from the press . . . those little marks became flesh, hair, fabric: a nose and mouth in one line; a gloved hand, corrected and redrawn. They became a spotlighted cafe singer, bawdy and as aggressive as the strokes that made her. The spontaneity and energy in that little print lifts the medium into art.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 55.

Figure 32. Adolph Gottlieb. "Untitled." 1974. Color monotype, 20 1/8" x 30 3/4".  
Private Collection, New York.

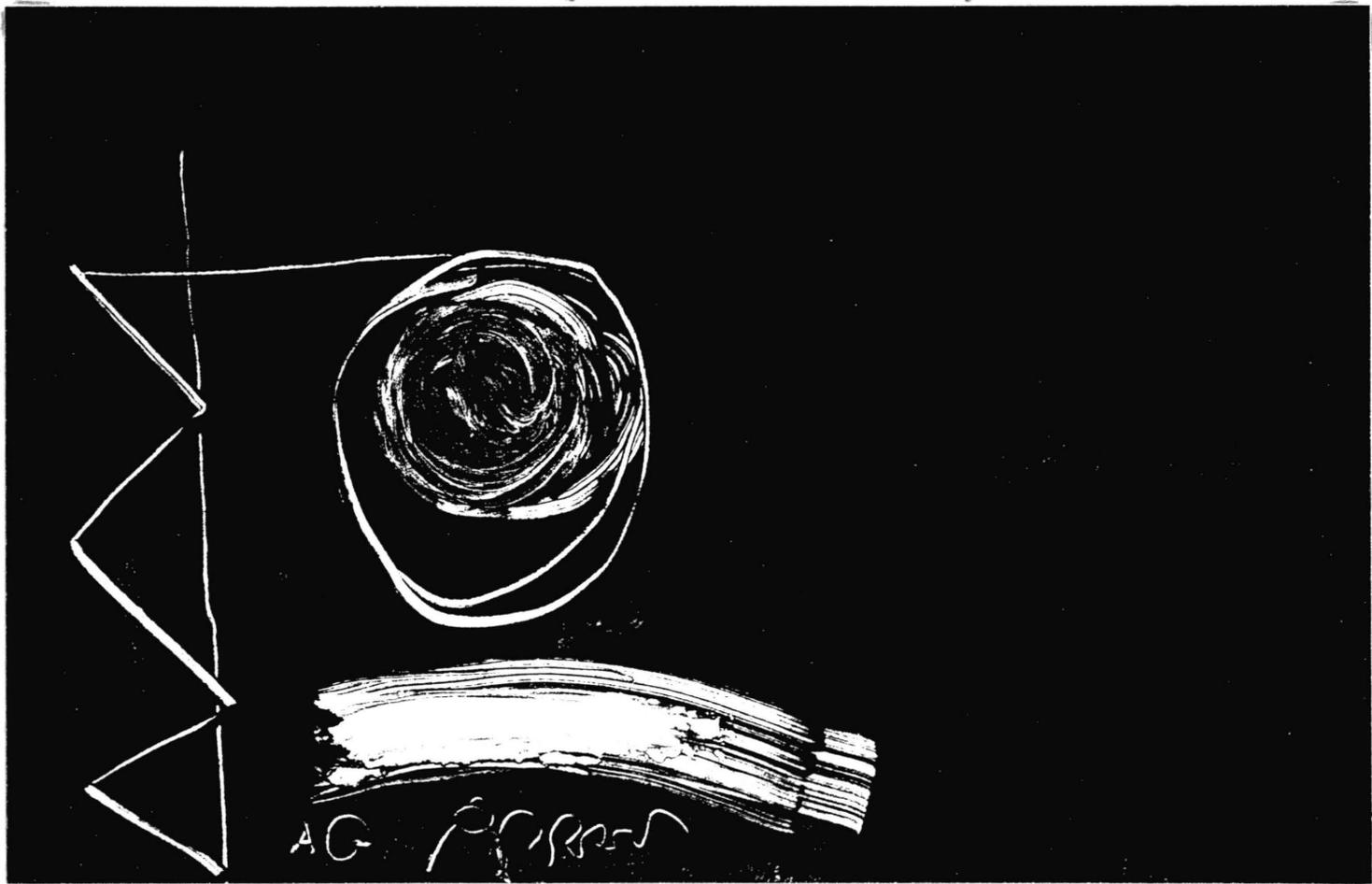




Figure 33. Edgar Degas. "Café-Concert Singer." 1877-78. Monotype in black ink, 7 1/4" x 5 1/16". Kornfeld and Klipstein, Berne.

Mazur has gone on to teach a course in monotypes at Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University. He works with series and a shifting of ideas from one progression to another. Monotypes make it practicable for him to document each state and use the cognate on the plate to add or subtract from the previous impression. The "His Running, My Running" series (Figure 34) is a good example of this approach. Most of his work deals with shadow and form rather than line, and his ". . . most valued tools are not the ones that make the mark but those that erase and or soften it: the scraper, the eraser, and the rag."<sup>30</sup> Michael Mazur opened the doors of monotype to many students as well as sharing his press with artists like Mary Frank and Jim Dine. In 1967, Mary Frank made a painting on glass and with a suggestion from someone to print it, she made her first monotype (Figure 35). Jim Dine used the process as a direct, sufficient way to draw the figure and self-portraits (Figure 36). Dine experimented with a combination of drypoint and monoprint technique on one plate. He wiped the drypoint traditionally with black ink and then applied color directly to the surface before printing. Ten unique prints resulted from this.

Matt Phillips began making monotypes in 1959 (Figure 37) and

. . . no other artist is known to have illustrated original manuscripts with monotypes, to have constructed folding screens from them, or to have printed monotypes, as he has, on canvas and frame them to hang on the wall like paintings.<sup>31</sup>

Phillips also organized exhibitions of monotypes made by Prendergast,

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<sup>30</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 232.

<sup>31</sup>Metropolitan Museum of Art, p. 246.

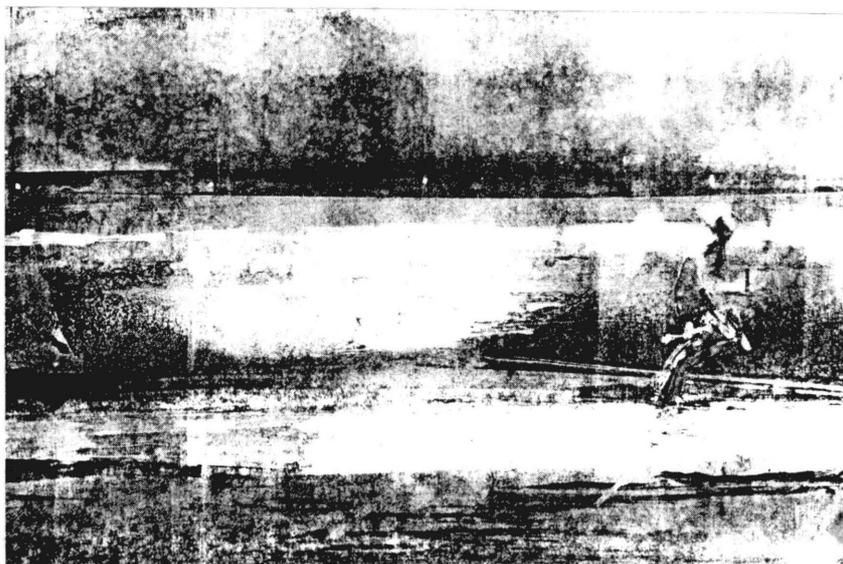
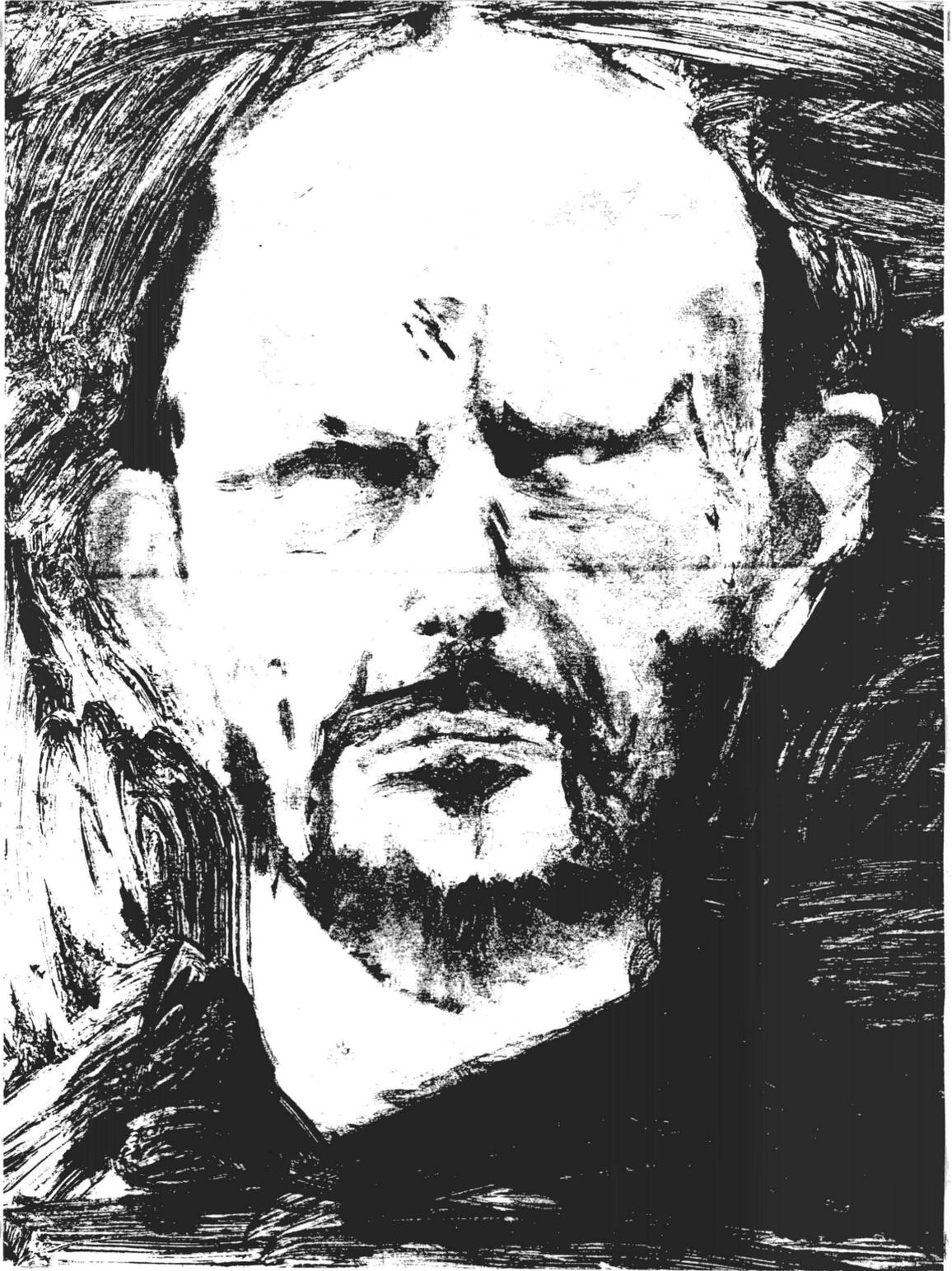


Figure 34. Michael B. Mazur. "His Running, My Running--a/d, d/d." 1977. Monotype, 405 x 603 millimeters. Cambridge, Massachusetts.



Figure 35. Mary Frank. "Amaryllis." 1977. Color monotype, 17 3/4" x 23 3/4". Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Figure 36. Jim Dine. "Self-Portrait (with green). "Color monotype, 28" x 21 3/4". The Pace Gallery, New York.



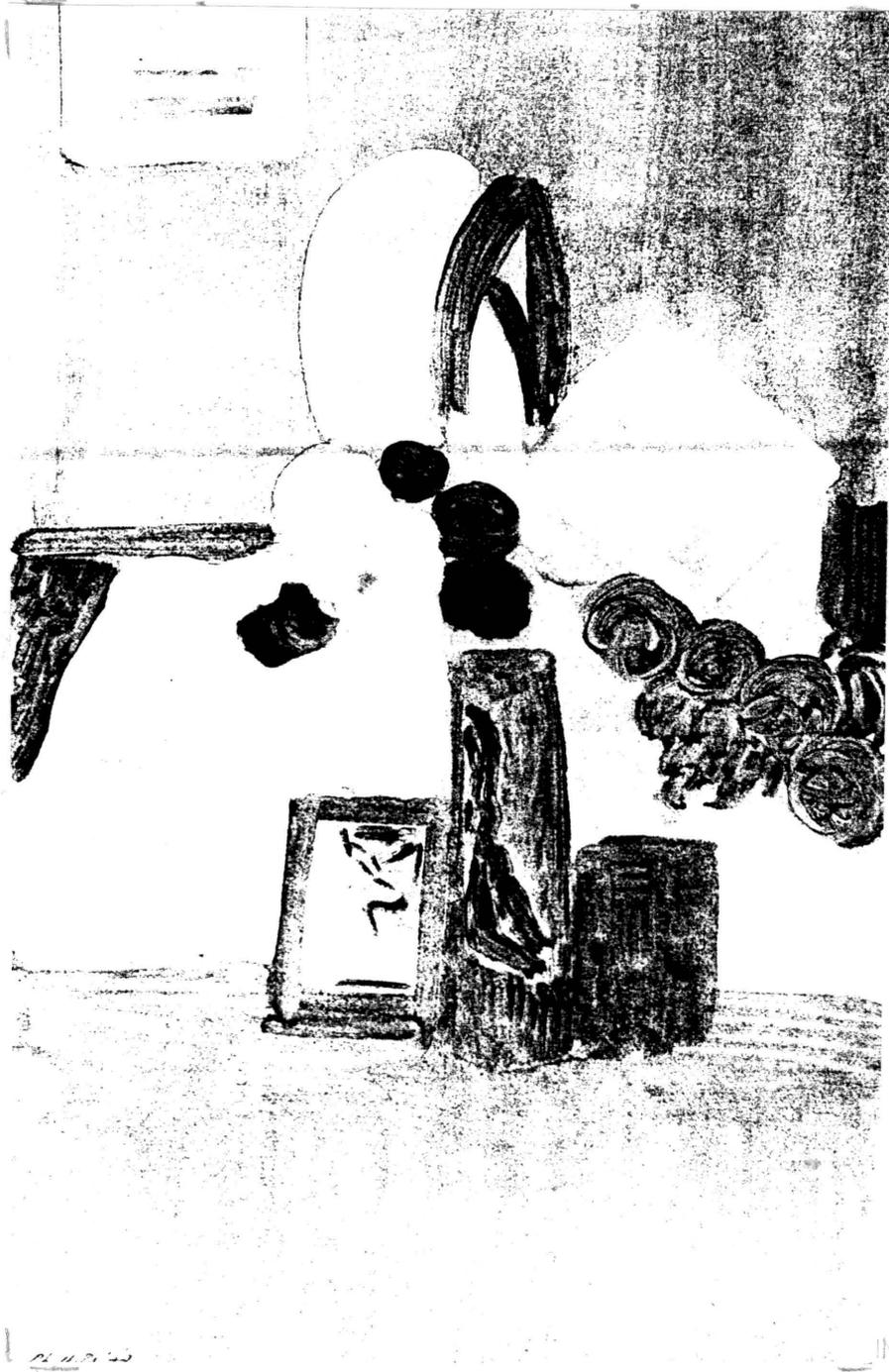


Figure 37. Matt Phillips. "Blue Phantom III." 1977. Color monotype, 26 3/4 x 15". Donald Morriss Gallery, Birmingham, Michigan.

Avery, and Walkowitz, plus he wrote many articles explaining the history and process of the monotype.

It was, again, the intrigue of the Degas prints published by Eugenia Parry Janis that inspired Nathan Oliveira to become a practitioner of monotypes. Earlier he had been interested in the images created when putting a sheet of newsprint over his wet paintings as a cover, but the Degas show promoted this process of transferring to an artform. Oliveira liked the idea of working in a series and transforming a subject. He began with the "La Tauromaquia 21" by Goya and he slowly dispersed the bull and body into one hundred variations on the plate. In 1974, Oliveira picked the subject of "Three Crosses" made by Rembrandt, and he used the chiaroscuro lighting effects as a base to modulate from. Eventually a personal imagery emanated based on ". . . paddle-shaped contraptions (Figure 38), elaborately lashed to slender poles; heavy scaffolds and tent-like shelters; bulky packages tied with string (Figure 39)."<sup>32</sup> Oliveira began exploring a process of repeated runs on one sheet of paper, thus developing successive layers of transparent ink. There seems to be a correlation between this and the glazing technique used in oil painting. Oliveira accentuated his contraptions by blocking the object during printing and returning to add color and detail with a brush.

Except for the use of the press, there is little difference between Oliveira's monotype method and the gradual development of a painting on canvas. He believes that the press, as he uses it, is in fact a painting instrument. He does not consider monotype as

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<sup>32</sup>Lorenz Eitner, Nathan Oliveira: A Survey of Monotypes, 1973-1978 (Pasadena, California: California Institute of Technology, 1979), p. 43.



Figure 38. Nathan Oliveira. "Site II." 1976. Monotype, 275 x 350 millimeters. Smith Andersen Gallery, Palo Alto, California.

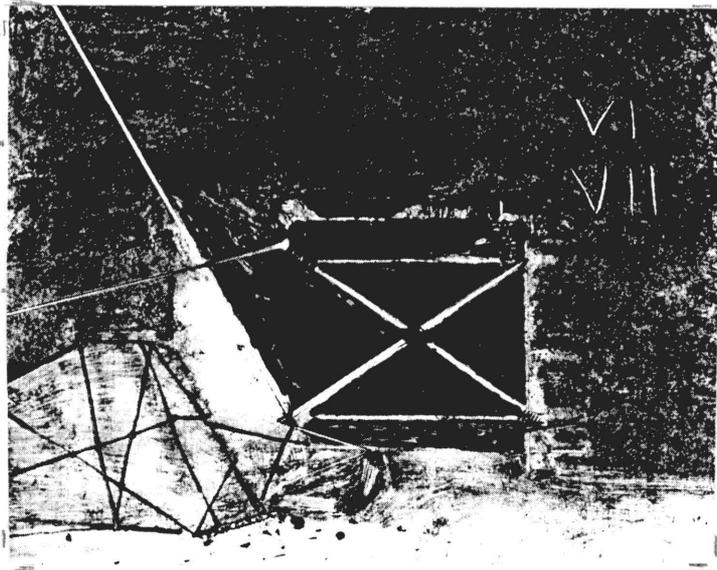


Figure 39. Nathan Oliveira. "Site VII." 1975. Monotype, 275 x 350 millimeters. Smith Andersen Gallery, Palo Alto, California.

a printmaking technique but as an extension of painting. . . . He takes the fullest possible advantage of the luminosity of paper and the transparency of colored inks."<sup>33</sup>

Each artist has participated in the monotype technique with his own individual prejudices and attitudes. The monotype embodies the processes of printmaking, the directness of painting, and the spontaneity of drawing. An artist may work with the immediacy and totality of the one full-strength impression pulled from a monotype print; or he may go further to alter and show a progression of states using the ghost-image. The artist has great freedom in experimenting with an impression via the changing and reworking of the concept through successive printings. He may, also, develop the image by employing pastel, ink, paint, or pencil on top of the printed piece. The image developed through a monotype has a fresh, invigorating quality. The pigment and paper unite to integrate the mark and composition into a complete work of art.

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