

ATELIER 17

New Etchings and Engravings by
Members of the Group

*With an introduction by Herbert Read and
a technical note by S. W. Hayter*

THE LEICESTER GALLERIES
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MARCH 1947

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CATALOGUE OF AN EXHIBITION OF
NEW ETCHINGS AND ENGRAVINGS
BY MEMBERS OF ATELIER 17 GROUP

With an introduction by Herbert Read and a technical
note by S. W. Hayter

ERNEST BROWN & PHILLIPS, Ltd.

Directors:

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THE LEICESTER GALLERIES
LEICESTER SQUARE, LONDON

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INTRODUCTION

Engraving for most people is inevitably associated with academicism; in the course of the last century it became a thin intellectual medium, timid and inexpressive. But in the past it had conveyed the power of Mantegna, the subtlety of Rembrandt, the passion of Goya. It was obviously a medium of wide range and flexibility, and with the realization of this fact an English artist, Stanley William Hayter, founded a school of engraving in Paris about twenty years ago. His object was to explore the technical possibilities of the medium and to show how they could be applied to the particular problems of modern art. Many of the leading artists in the modern movement joined in the experiment, and the result was a number of discoveries which have considerably extended the expressive effects of the medium.

The medium has proved particularly congenial to the surrealist artist, whose images gain in effectiveness when rendered with the precision which the technique demands.

Artists of several nationalities have participated in the development of Atelier 17, brought together by their enthusiasm for a teacher and his technique. Their unity is in their craft rather than in any particular theory of art. They do not conform to a type nor to a discipline. They ask to be judged individually in relation to their technique.

HERBERT READ.

NOTE ON THE TECHNIQUES USED BY ATELIER 17

Many methods have been devised since very early times to produce a surface from which a number of identical impressions could be taken. Printing of a sort could be said to exist as soon as the Sumerian made a triangular pointed tool to impress cuneiform symbols on clay, or used a hollowed out seal, sometimes cylindrical in form, to mould a figure in relief on the same material.

Currently printing may be divided into three general categories.

1. INTAGLIO. Indentations or irregularities are introduced into the plate. A heavy ink or other pigment is applied and is removed from the surface before printing but pigment remains in the indentations. Under pressure these lines, dots, etc., of ink may be transferred to a plastic material such as damp paper, clay, melted sulphur or wet plaster (all of which have been used). On the print the pigment will appear to some extent in relief above the background. Etching and engraving are generally printed by this method; also rotogravure and collotype.

2. RELIEF PRINTING, is done from a surface on which the indentations or hollowed-out areas are intended to remain free from pigment. The plain surface of the plate is carefully coated with ink, and this film of pigment is transferred by pressure to paper or other material on which the print is to be made. In this case the pigment lies flat on the surface of the print, or may even be slightly impressed into it.

3. In another method, the pigment is retained in some way on the actual printing surface without any perceptible difference of level. Lithography (not included in this

Exhibition) is typical reproduction of this type; mezzotint and dry-point, where ink is retained by slight flanges or projections of metal raised above the surface of the plate, belonging more to this category than to "intaglio." In this method the pigment will be flat on the printed surface without perceptible relief or indentation.

The prints shown in this Exhibition are made by a number of techniques, often by a combination of several techniques on the same plate. As we see no point in virtuosity for its own sake we apply the appropriate method to each effect or quality needed in a plate. As far as possible, of course, they are knitted together, though in some cases a deliberate counter-point is used.

The different methods that have been used are as follows :

LINE ENGRAVING. A copper plate and a cutting tool called a graver or burin are all that is required. The cutting is made direct in the copper with a square or lozenge graver. In these prints the classical manner of holding the graver has been adopted: Against the palm, the blade between the second finger, and thumb driven in the line of the forearm. (This hold was used by engravers up to the 17th Century. The cross hold, with the blade sliding across the thumb, was invented for lettering and banknotes.) The tool is sharpened with under surfaces true, parallel and without small turned-up facets used by lettering engravers. As far as possible the line is originated with the tool and not copied from a trace or previously scratched or etched line. A clean groove is cut into the plate, direction being controlled by rotating the plate rather than by movement of the hand. By increasing the angle of attack of the tool to the plate surface—and, of course, applying

proportionally more pressure—a deeper and wider groove may be cut. Very little burr is raised above the plate surface when straight lines are cut, and the slight burr thrown up on the outside of a curve is generally removed with a scraper used parallel with the surface.

Prints from plates engraved in this way show a precise, definite line in strong relief above the print surface and, owing to the resistance of the metal and to the fact that the engraver pushes the line instead of drawing it, these lines show great tension compared with those made by methods which do not involve direct cutting. In work done by this method the depth of the cut into the plate, and thus, the relief of the printed line above the surface of the background, is more important in expression than the colour of pigment.

ETCHING offers a more indirect method than engraving of producing the indentations necessary for impression. In principle the surface of the plate to be etched is sealed with a coating which resists acids; with a steel point, other tool, or by applying pressure, openings in the form of lines, dots, textures are made in this coating. By permitting acid of different strengths to attack these openings (or the same acid to attack for various lengths of time) the metal is eaten away to a greater or lesser extent. The coatings used (grounds) may be applied by dabbing or rolling on heated plates or by dipping in solutions which dry rapidly—but essentially they should resist acid perfectly, adhere to the plate, and support indefinitely needling or scratching without cracking off. They consist usually of bitumen, beeswax and resin. The Atelier has experimented with a number of methods of opening grounds, other than the traditional needle point and "echoppe" (a needle ground off at an angle to give an oval cutting face).

Sandpaper, coarse stone, toothed metal tools have been used to give greater freedom and breadth to etching.

SOFT-GROUND ETCHING, in which the coating on the plate remains adhesive and sensitive to pressure, is a variation of the etching process. In the conventional use of the method, a plate is coated with a ground containing grease to prevent its hardening and covered with a sheet of paper. Drawing on this paper with a pencil causes particles of the sensitive ground to adhere to the underside of the paper wherever the pencil touches. When the paper is lifted the plate will be exposed in a design which reproduces the lines drawn through the texture of the paper used, the trace being stronger or weaker in proportion to the pressure exerted on the pencil point. Then every trace can be etched into the plate to the required degree, generally with Dutch mordant, unless intentional blurring or bubble spotting is required, when strong nitric acid is used.

As a further development of this method, The Atelier has used a variety of other textures—silk, gauze, net, flesh, wood, etc.—reproducing their characteristic textures in the sensitive coating. When a plate has been prepared in some such textural pattern, those parts in which no texture is desired, may be “stopped” with varnish and the pattern etched with acid only, in certain desired shapes. Since many of these textures will expose only a small percentage of the plate surface to the action of the acid, the resulting tone will print with some degree of transparency. Thus it is possible, by repeating the process, to overlap the same or fresh textures so that all are visible. The limit is reached when no more of the original surface remains. Should previous work exist in the plate, it will be filled and sealed by the ground, and thus will not be affected.

Another advantage of this type of ground springs from the fact that it can be drawn through freely with a wooden stylus of any desired breadth without even the slightest resistance being offered by the hard ground to the point. Striated bands like those made with a stick dipped in ink can be etched into the plate, and the trace will have complete spontaneity. It can then be varied in intensity by the treatment with acid.

AQUATINT also uses acid to eat away the plate but it is again applied in areas rather than in lines or dots. In one method, resin dust is deposited on the plate, the plate heated to make the grains melt and adhere to it, and areas of different darkness are etched by successive stoppings during the progress of the biting. Gradations of strength are also made by manipulation of the acid, by rocking the plate, or by applying acid in spots. Normally this method gives characteristically opaque tones in prints in contrast to the transparent tones in the soft-ground technique—although a heavier coverage of resin will reduce this, and any previous work on the plate will, of course, be exposed to attack by acid. Another method of aquatint is the use of a hard etching ground opened by pressing fine sandpaper into it. In effect this is similar to the soft-ground method described, although it permits less variation of texture.

Normally the conventional method is employed by the Atelier, but in order to vary the textures use is sometimes made of thin grounds, such as liquid ground Aquatint or impermanent cracking grounds, oil-water mixtures, sugar or other lift grounds.

DRYPOINT, which involves the use of a point (steel, sapphire, or diamond) directly on the plate, appears to be one of the simpler methods of working a plate.

However, owing to the fragility of the result in printing (no two prints being absolutely identical), and the extreme variety of line obtained by different angles of attack, it is found to involve greater manual dexterity than the more mechanically elaborate etching process. When a line is drawn with a point on a plate surface a slight indentation is produced, but it is almost exclusively the burr or flange raised by the tool which retains ink in the plate surface and consequently determines the line on the print. This flange may be double, fine and sharp like a knife edge; single and strong; or single and saw-edged (when it will print a dense matted black like velvet). These variations are caused by changes of angle between point and the direction of line. The resistance of the lines to pressure in printing is also variable, even when they have been reinforced by steel or chromium plating. Drypoint can only be printed by similar methods to intaglio, that is, with a heavy ink wiped clean in open areas of the plate, but all of the other techniques give plates which can be printed in relief if necessary. The methods applied by the Atelier to the production of such plates are a development of the relief etching process of William Blake.

RAISED WHITES ("Gaufrages") on an intaglio print, used by the Atelier are obtained by hollowing parts of the plate which then refuse inking—thus print in relief. As the damp paper is moulded by pressure of the rollers through the blankets into these forms, they appear as projections, and because unworked plate surface in intaglio printing retains a slight film of ink, they will be whiter than such surface. The trace of ink which is driven into the edges of the hollows by the wiping of the plate exaggerates this effect, and gives points or areas apparently detached from the plane

of the print. Similar whites are removed with acid if extensive or irregular in form (cf. Fourpome).

Further variations of the techniques mentioned are used by the Atelier. They are:—

Biting Out. The use of acid to remove or wash out a line or texture in which the plate is exposed unprotected in places to the action of strong acid. (Exploited particularly by West, the Martinellis and Zanartu.) The whole plate surface is lowered by this means, throwing the stopped parts of the plate into relief. A granulation depending on the bubbling of gas and/or crystallisation of the metal is established in the eaten surface—slight traces of all previous work remain “Delavé” like cracks in an old wall. The method has been applied to develop unconscious “automatic” image. (cf. Hercule Seghers, 1590.)

“*Crible Points*” hammered into the metal combined with aquatint and burin with raised whites. (See Rattner.)

METHODS OF COLOUR PRINTING

Colour printing from etched or engraved plates requires no different technique in the creation of the plates than printing in black. Where a number of colours are to be used it is usual to make a plate for each colour unless colours are widely separated in composition. Colour may be printed from surface (as relief impression) or from intaglio (within the plate). The former gives characteristically opaque colour, the latter gives line or transparent colour.

In many cases the methods of printing we have used are orthodox. Inks are made in all cases by the Atelier.

Prints in colour are made by:—

- (A) Successive impressions of different plates in register.

- (B) Two successive off-register impressions from the same plate in two different colours. (See Schragg's "Night Wind" and also cf. Seghers.)
- (C) By laying colour on the surface of a plate already inked and prepared for intaglio printing, using stencils, thus giving a single impression simultaneously in intaglio and relief.
- (D) A similar method in which silk screens are used to lay surface colours in transparent films, overlapping if necessary, and offset as in (B) above. (See Hayter's "Cinq Personnages" which is the first example of this method.)

There are also some relief prints made by rolling up the surface of the plate with typographic ink from gelatine rollers, similar to woodcut printing, though the metal-cut which may be etched in textures, gives results that could not be imitated in wood.

Certain prints are printed in a method somewhat between intaglio and relief (cf. 15th Century Crible).

The account given here of the various techniques used is purely mechanical, but, as the access to a technique of projection inevitably opens new fields of imaginative experience to the artist it is consequently false to ignore this aspect of the work. However, it is doubtful whether a fuller treatment of the subject could go any further in replacing actual practice in these methods.

STANLEY WILLIAM HAYTER.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

THE ATELIER

The Group was founded in Paris in 1927 with premises at 17 Rue Campagne Iere, and thus became known as the "Atelier dix-sept." A succession of Exhibitions was held in Paris and the chief capitals of Europe. Since 1940 the Group has been working at the New School for Social Research in New York. In 1944 a comprehensive Exhibition of the Atelier under the title "Hayter and Studio 17" was held in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and toured subsequently throughout the cities of the U.S.A.

THE MEMBERS EXHIBITING

- ELLEN ABBEY. American. Born 1923, New York City.
FREDERICK BECKER. American. Born 1913, Oakland, California. Collections Encyclopædia Britannica (15th edn.), Metropolitan Museum, New York.
HARRIET BERGER. Born France, 1912. Studied Slade School, London, and Paris.
LETTERIO CALAPAI. American. Born in Boston. Work represented in the principal public Galleries of the U.S.A.
MARC CHAGALL. Russian. Born 1887 at Vitebsk. In 1914 held an important Exhibition in Berlin. Worked in Paris from 1922 and is now living in the U.S.A.
MINNA CITRON. American. Born 1896, Newark, N.J.
WERNER DREWES. Born 1899 at Canig, Germany. Studied Germany and France.
PERLE FINE. American. Born 1908, Boston.
TERESA FOURPOME. Brazilian, of French family. Sculptor. Studied Brazil, France and U.S.A.
SUE FULLER. American. Born Colorado. Work represented in most public Collections in the U.S.A.

- JAMES GOETZ. American Born 1915, Indianapolis, Indiana. Died June, 1946. Travelled China, India, South Africa.
- PETER GRIPPE. American. Born 1912 at Buffalo, New York.
- STANLEY WILLIAM HAYTER. English. Born London, 1901. Studied Whitgift, King's College, University of London. Oil chemist, Iran, 1922 to 1925. From 1918 to 1925 painting and drawing continued at the same time as scientific work. Exhibitor at Surrealist Group Shows, Paris, 1933, U.S.A., 1936, London, 1938. Has held one-man shows in London, Paris, Brussels, New York, San Francisco and Chicago. Work represented in the British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and in the principal Museums and public Collections of Europe and the U.S.A.
- FANNY HILLSMITH. American. Born Boston, 1911.
- IAN HUGO. American. Born 1900, Boston. Educated Scotland. Lived in France, 1925 to 1939. Represented in principal public Collections in the U.S.A. and many well-known private collections in France and Belgium.
- REUBEN KADISH. American. Born Chicago, 1912. Studied San Francisco. Shows, California, Boston. Works in U.S. Collections. Lives in New Jersey.
- PHILIP KAPLAN. Born 1903, Grodno, Russia. Went to the U.S.A. in 1911.
- LEO KATZ. Born 1887, at Roznau, Austria (now Czechoslovakia). Studied Fine Arts Academies Vienna and Munich. Went to U.S.A., 1921, and is now an American citizen. Teacher at New York University and Metropolitan Museum, New York. Author of three books on modern art.
- MAURICIO LAZANSKY. Born 1914, Argentina, of Polish, Jewish, Indian, Spanish extraction. Studied Buenos Aires. Represented in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and many public Galleries in the U.S.A. and Argentina.

- RUTH LEAF. American. Educated New York. Represented in the Library of Congress.
- JACQUES LIPCHITZ. French. Born 1891, Lithuania. Lived and worked in Paris. Went to U.S.A., 1941. Works in principal Museums of France, Belgium, Holland and the U.S.A.
- HOPE MANCHESTER. American. Born 1910, Rhode Island. Studied in Paris in 1929, with Leger and Ozenfant. Worked with Atelier 17, Paris. Returned to New York, 1939.
- EZIO MARTINELLI. American. Born Hoboken, N.J., 1913. Studied New York and Italy.
- SHERRY MARTINELLI. American. Born 1919.
- ALICE TRUMBLE MASON. American. Born 1904, Litchfield, Con. Studied Italy and New York. Turned to abstract art in 1929. Held one-man show of paintings at Museum of Living Art, N.Y., in 1942.
- ANDRÉ MASSON. French. Born 1896. Went to U.S.A., 1941, where he lived and worked in Connecticut. Returned to France in 1945. Represented in the Tate Gallery, London, and the principal collections of France, Belgium and the U.S.A.
- RODERICK MEAD. American. Studied U.S.A. and France, 1928 to 1938, Member of Atelier 17 in Paris.
- FRANCES MITCHELL. American. Born 1914, New York. Studied with Jon Corbino and Zadkine.
- GABOR PETERDI. American. Born 1915, Budapest. Studied Rome and Paris. Exhibited Hungary, France, U.S.A.
- PHILIP PLATT. American. Commander in U.S. Navy until 1945. Lives in Mexico.
- LUCIA QUINTERO. Venezuelan. Born 1919. Puerto Rico. Educated U.S.A.
- ANDRE RACZ. Born 1916, Cluj, Rumania.
- ABRAHAM RATTNER. Born U.S.A., 1895. Studied architecture, Washington. Served in France in World War I. Studied

- Paris from 1920. Works in public collections, France and U.S.A.
- KURT ROESCH. American. Born 1905, Hamburg, Germany. Studied Berlin, 1924 to 1926, with Karl Hofer. Went to U.S.A., 1933.
- LOUIS ROSS. American. Member of Society of American Etchers. Exhibited Philadelphia, Library of Congress, Washington, etc.
- ALFRED RUSSELL. American. Born 1920, Chicago.
- ANNE RYAN. American. Born N.J. Studied France, Spain and New York. Has held one-man Shows in New York, Mexico and Paris.
- KARL SCHRAGG. American. Born 1912 in Karlsruhe-on-Rhine. Studied art, Geneva, Paris and New York.
- YVES TANGUY. French. Born Paris, 1900. Worked in Paris until 1939, then went to U.S.A. Now living in Connecticut. Exhibited London, Brussels (Palais des Beaux Arts), New York, Chicago and San Francisco. Works in Museums and private collections in England, France, Belgium and U.S.A.
- PENNERTON WEST (MISS). American. Born New York, 1913.
- ENRIQUE ZANARTU. Chilean. Born 1921. Self-taught. Exhibited U.S.A. and South America.

Catalogue

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- NO.
- 1 IAN HUGO. Le lynxe prisme (*line engraving on copper and wood-block colour print*)
 - 2 GABOR PETERDI. Rhinoceros (*engraving*)
 - 3 MARC CHAGALL. The artist (*etching*)
 - 4 FRANCES MITCHELL. End of the World (*aquatint*)
 - 5 STANLEY WILLIAM HAYTER. Laocoon (*engraving and soft-ground etching*)
 - 6 RYAH LUDENS. Bombing (*engraving and soft-ground etching*)
 - 7 KURT ROESCH. Salome (*etching and soft-ground etching*)
 - 8 JAMES GOETZ. The Gorgons (*engraving and soft-ground etching*)
 - 9 STANLEY WILLIAM HAYTER. Cinq personnages (*engraving, soft-ground etching and silk screen colour relief*)

- NO.
- 10 LEO KATZ. Pegasus, 1945 (*engraving and soft-ground etching*)
 - 11 REUBEN KADISH. Lilith (*etching*)
 - 12 GABOR PETERDI. Despair (*etching*)
 - 13 KARL SCHRAG. Nightwind (*soft-ground etching in colour and engraving*)
 - 14 PHILIP PLATT. Goat (*engraving and soft-ground etching*)
 - 15 RODERICK MEAD. Jungle (*engraving*)
 - 16 RODERICK MEAD. River (*engraving*)
 - 17 IAN HUGO. Water veiled (*engraving and soft-ground etching-relief*)
 - 18 ALFRED RUSSELL. Rocks, weeds and rags (*etching and soft-ground etching*)
 - 19 JACQUES LIPCHITZ. Minotaur (*etching and aquatint*)
 - 20 ALICE TRUMBULL MASON. Suspension, 1946 (*etching, soft-ground etching and colour relief*)
 - 21 ABRAHAM RATTNER. Crucifixion (*etching*)

NO.

- 22 FREDERICK BECKER. The Courtship (*soft-ground etching and engraving*)
- 23 LOUIS ROSS. Robins (*engraving*)
- 24 LOUIS ROSS. Wisteria root (*engraving and dry-point*)
- 25 ENRIQUE ZANARTU. Four studies (*etching and aquatint*)
- 26 TERESA D. FOURPOME. Branco e preto (*etching in relief*)
- 27 PETER GRIPPE. The bird stalks man (*etching*)
- 28 WERNER DREWES. Dance of the mermaid (*soft-ground etching and engraving*)
- 29 FREDERICK BECKER. Kaleidoscopic organism (*etching and soft-ground etching*)
- 30 PERLE FINE. Calm after storm (*soft-ground etching and aquatint*)
- 31 STANLEY WILLIAM HAYTER. Amazon (*engraving, soft-ground etching and etching in relief*)
- 32 ANDRE RACZ. Mother and child (*etching and engraving in colour*)

- NO.
- 33 PENNERTON WEST. "On such a night"
(*etching and aquatint*)
- 34 PERLE FINE. With abandon (*engraving,
etching and aquatint*)
- 35 SUE FULLER. Tides of the city (*soft-ground
etching and colour relief*)
- 36 FREDERICK BECKER. Dancer (*etching*)
- 37 MAURICIO LAZANSKY. Sol y luna (*soft-
ground etching and engraving*)
- 38 ELLEN ABBEY. Scattered journey (*engraving
and soft-ground etching*)
- 39 ANNE RYAN. Dancer (*engraving*)
- 40 YVES TANGUY. Les étrangers (plate for book,
Edition Pierre Matisse) (*etching and soft-
ground etching*)
- 41 EZIO MARTINELLI. Gabbia III (*etching*)
- 42 IAN HUGO. Fire-bird (*engraving*)
- 43 EZIO MARTINELLI. Giocco (*etching and
etching in relief*)
- 44 HOPE MANCHESTER. Dream (*etching and
soft-ground etching*)

- NO.
45 PHILIP KAPLAN. Narcissus (*etching and soft-ground etching*)
- 46 SHERRY MARTINELLI. Butterfly in well (*aquatint and etching*)
- 47 LETTERIO CALAPAI. Underground (*engraving and aquatint*)
- 48 SUE FULLER. Lancelot and Guinivere (*etching, soft-ground etching and colour relief*)
- 49 LUCIA QUINTERO. Totems at night (*etching and soft-ground etching*)
- 50 MINNA CITRON. Shattered monocle (*etching and soft-ground etching*)
- 51 HARRIET BERGER. Mural (*engraving and soft-ground etching*)
- 52 FANNY HILLSMITH. Abstraction in stripes (*aquatint and etching*)
- 53 RUTH LEAF. Tears (*aquatint and etching*)
- 54 LEO KATZ. Space organization (*etching and soft-ground etching*)

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Matthew Smith. "Marguerites"
Sickert. "Canareggio," Painting

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Alfred Stevens. Drawings

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Stephen Bone. Landscape
McEvoy, Orpen, Le Brocquy. Water-colours.
Henry Moore. Drawing

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A Collection of Drawings by Alfred Stevens

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C. Wood and Ruskin Spear, A.R.A. Paintings
James Pryde. "The Deserted House" (Painting)
David Jones. "Self Portrait" (Painting)
Frances Hodgkins. Water-colour
Max Beerbohm. Drawings

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HUDDERSFIELD ART GALLERY

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