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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Abstract Impressions: Women Printmakers and the New York Atelier 17, 1940-1955

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This dissertation is the first to consider the innovative prints of the ninety-one women artists who worked at Atelier 17, the avant-garde printmaking workshop in New York between 1940 and 1955, alongside the emergence of the New York School. Situating the prints of a core group of eight artists—Louise Bourgeois, Minna Citron, Worden Day, Dorothy Dehner, Sue Fuller, Alice Trumbull Mason, Louise Nevelson, and Anne Ryan—within the context of midcentury gender norms, my dissertation discusses how women artists used groundbreaking techniques to achieve novel forms of abstraction. I argue that women printmakers stood at the center of artistic and societal debates about acceptable feminine roles and women in the workforce. These artists both followed and challenged notions of femininity through their material and physical experimentations with abstract printmaking.

Chapter One's critical historiography of American women printmakers from 1800 through the 1930s illuminates why Atelier 17 was so significant to the development of women's professional identities. By scrutinizing midcentury gender norms that prescribed acceptable spaces of work and types of feminine labor, Chapter Two uses

signaling theory to explain how women artists relied on printmaking's physicality to demonstrate their serious professional intentions. The rigorous process of carving plates and woodblocks, for example, simulated sculpting, spurring many women to enter this male-dominated field. Chapter Three examines the potential of gender and socio-cultural norms to affect the meanings of printmaking's tools. Chapter Four considers the formal strategies that Atelier 17 artists employed to make their prints relevant to Abstract Expressionism. Although women artists could be leading practitioners of avant-garde printmaking, critics initially deemed their small prints unambitious and placed them on the periphery of Abstract Expressionism. Chapter Five examines the networks that women artists developed to promote their reputations as abstractionists and send prints widely to print annuals, group exhibitions and solo shows.

The dissertation's case studies expand conceptions of Abstract Expressionism and identify isolated instances of women working towards gender equality before the Women's Art Movement. The great creative strides women artists took while experimenting with avant-garde printmaking at Atelier 17 had lasting impacts on later generations of women artists.

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There once was a room with a press,
and a man who was hard to impress.
Then some women came in
and created a din,
and now they have ink on their dress!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAM/GC	Allentown Art Museum, The Grippe Collection
AFA	American Federation of Arts, or American Federation of Arts records, 1895-1993, bulk 1909-1969
ARP	Anne Ryan papers, 1922-1968, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution
ATM	Alice Trumbull Mason papers, 1921-1977, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution
BKM	Brooklyn Museum
BKM-DPDP	Records of the Department of Prints, Drawings and Photographs (1878-2001), Brooklyn Museum
CSE	Chicago Society of Etchers
DDP	Dorothy Dehner papers, 1920-1987 (bulk 1951-1987), Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution
HPP	Helen Phillips papers, Paris, France
JB/BM	Jan Gelb and Boris Margo papers, 1922-1977, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution
LLRM	Laurie Lisle research material on Louise Nevelson, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution
LOC	Library of Congress
MCP	Minna Wright Citron papers, 1930-1980, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution
MMA	Metropolitan Museum of Art
MoMA	Museum of Modern Art

New School	New School for Social Research
NYPL	New York Public Library
PCS	Print Club scrapbooks, 1916-1982, reel 4232, grid 284, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution
PMA	Philadelphia Museum of Art
PPC	Philadelphia Print Club
SAGA	Society of American Graphic Artists (1952 to present) Society of American Etchers, Gravers, Lithographers and Woodcutters (1947-1952) Society of American Etchers (1931-1947) Brooklyn Society of Etchers (1915-1931)
SEF	Special Exhibition File, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History
WDP	Worden Day papers, 1940-1982, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution
WPA-FAP	Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project

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INTRODUCTION

Ninety-one women artists explored abstraction and modernist self-expression by creating experimental and technically innovative prints at Atelier 17, the avant-garde printmaking workshop, when it was located in New York City between 1940 and 1955.¹ This number represents a major portion—approximately two-fifths—of the overall participating artists, a figure that totaled almost two hundred. Women artists' paths to discovering deeply personal and abstract imagery through printmaking mark an underexplored aspect of the postwar New York School. Their ability to carve out progressive artistic identities and professional reputations as printmakers is unprecedented within the heavily male-dominated period of American art and conservative midcentury gender norms. As many art historians have noted in their critical reassessments of the New York School, women artists—as well as other minorities—actively produced modernist paintings and sculptures, but struggled to achieve equal recognition alongside the now-canonical, white male Abstract Expressionists. Printmaking, with its lower place on the hierarchy of artistic mediums, offered women artists of the postwar generation many more opportunities to explore uncharted aesthetic territory and build up professional visibility while on the periphery of the New York School. Producing avant-garde prints at Atelier 17 empowered many women artists and

¹ This count of women artists at Atelier 17 is approximate, based on current research at the time of this dissertation's completion. See Appendix A for a complete listing and explanation of the method for compiling the list.

propelled them toward later career successes. A vibrant nexus of postwar modernism takes shape through this dissertation's analysis, which expands conceptions of Abstract Expressionism and identifies isolated instances of women working towards gender equality before the Women's Art Movement.

To investigate the ways that women artists established their place within postwar abstraction through printmaking at Atelier 17, this dissertation focuses on a core group of eight women artists: Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010), Minna Citron (1896-1991), Worden Day (1912-1986), Dorothy Dehner (1901-1994), Sue Fuller (1914-2006), Alice Trumbull Mason (1904-1971), Louise Nevelson (1899-1988) and Anne Ryan (1889-1954).

Although scholars have independently reviewed these eight artists' graphic oeuvres, my project deploys the first comparative analysis of these individuals as a group via the connecting force of Atelier 17. Through five thematic chapters, the dissertation develops several avenues for understanding the role of Atelier 17 and its novel printmaking techniques in shaping women artists' creative development, defining their identities, and navigating their place within the midcentury art world and American society. The key indicators of women's efforts to find a place in the postwar New York School include: the professionalizing influence of Atelier 17 as a space of work; the physicality of preparing print matrices and pulling them on a press; the gendered significance of printmaking's tools; the quest to show formal similarities between printmaking and mainstream postwar abstraction; the portability of prints and the economic ramifications thereof; and the function of networking and interpersonal relationships among female participants of Atelier 17. Making avant-garde prints at Atelier 17 was a formative experience for many women artists of this generation. This dissertation highlights the

workshop's significance to catalyzing women's stylistic development towards modernist expression, accelerating their career development, and raising collective awareness of their struggle for recognition in the art world.

Writing a History of Women Artists at Atelier 17 in New York City

A female-centric history of Atelier 17's years in New York City has never been written before. With the exception of Louise Bourgeois, the pioneering efforts of women artists who worked in Atelier 17's New York studio have been little studied—overshadowed by Stanley William Hayter (1901-1988), Atelier 17's charismatic founder, and the coterie of expatriate (male) Surrealists and young (male) American artists, who became the canonical Abstract Expressionists. Hayter himself downplayed this latter group's importance to the workshop's New York years, once stating, “most of the big names, like de Kooning, Motherwell, Rothko, Pollock...didn't do anything outstanding when working with us. And their work doesn't represent the Atelier's best efforts.”² Beyond this small subset of notable participants, hundreds of artists passed through the doors of Atelier 17's three successive locations in New York City, all of which were in the West Village (fig. 0-1). The collaborative environment at the studio, where artists shared discoveries and worked together, created a fertile nexus for the exchange of avant-garde ideas. Atelier 17 assumed a central place in the aesthetic developments within the postwar New York School and encouraged several generations of American artists to explore abstraction through experimentation with advanced printmaking techniques. In the section that follows, I introduce basic facts about Atelier 17's time in New York City

² Carolyn Paul, “Printmaking Pioneer: Stanley William Hayter,” *Art News* 77, no. 6 (September 1978): 74.

and provide biographical information on the women artists who form the nucleus of this dissertation.

Although there are many ways to approach this rich history, I divide the fifteen-year period chronologically into three sections that encapsulate different opportunities available for women to participate in Atelier 17's activities: first, from the studio's establishment in 1940 at the New School for Social Research on West Twelfth Street through the 1944 exhibition featuring Atelier 17 at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA); second, Atelier 17's move in 1945 to East Eighth Street until Hayter's return to Paris in 1950; and third, the studio's existence without Hayter's direct leadership until its closure in 1955. These phases are not meant to be rigid or segment women's work at Atelier 17. In fact, artists like Worden Day transcended them by working at the studio from the early-1940s until its closing in the mid-1950s. In the dissertation's chapters, I discuss thematic issues by citing artists and supporting examples across these chronological periods.

Stanley William Hayter, a British expatriate and accomplished engraver, opened Atelier 17 on Paris's Left Bank in the latter half of 1927.³ The workshop, which took its name from the studio's final location in Paris before World War II—17 rue Campagne Première—operated for over a decade in the heady milieu of interwar Paris. It became an important meeting place for the city's avant-garde, especially the Surrealist community,

³ For scholarship about Hayter's career as a painter and printmaker, see the following texts and their bibliographies: Peter Black and Désirée Moorhead, *The Prints of Stanley William Hayter: A Complete Catalogue* (Mount Kisco, NY: Moyer Bell, 1992); Pierre-François Albert and François Albert, *Hayter: Le Peintre, the Paintings* (Montreuil: Pierre et François Fine Arts; Gourcuff Gradenigo, 2011). Carla Esposito Hayter, the artist's daughter-in-law, is currently planning a major paintings show.

as well as a significant group of American visitors.⁴ Hayter was personally quite progressive with an interest in several varieties of interwar modernism practiced in Paris.⁵ Nevertheless, Hayter's imagery and his exploration of intaglio technique during this period show the heavy influence of Surrealism, seen clearly in prints like *La Villette* (1930) where the ethereal outline of a horse wanders the streets of Paris (fig. 0-2).⁶ As Chapter Two touches on briefly, a group of women urged Hayter to open a printmaking workshop, and women artists remained very active throughout Atelier 17's years in Paris.⁷ Hayter set the tone for Atelier 17 during these early years in France. He structured Atelier 17 by offering classes twice per week—on Mondays and Thursdays—to artists willing to pay the monthly tuition of 125 francs.⁸ Hayter's primary goal was to teach advanced engraving and etching techniques to mature artists who had already developed strong, personal creative tendencies.⁹ Inspired by the Surrealist theory of automatism, he

⁴ The first address of the studio was 51 rue du Mouloin Vert. After a number of artists joined, Hayter quickly moved the workshop to Villa Chauvelot in the 15th *arrondissement*. See Joann Moser, *Atelier 17: A 50th Anniversary Retrospective Exhibition* (Madison, WI: Elvehjem Art Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1977), 2.

⁵ These strains included surrealism, geometric abstraction which was strictly enforced by the group Cercle et Carré, and looser interpretations of abstraction promoted by artists in the collective Abstraction-Création.

⁶ Ann Shafer discusses Hayter's surrealist influence and provides an interesting analysis of the content and technique of *La Villette* in "Hayter: Content and Technique," *Art in Print* 2, no. 3 (October 2012): 10–16.

⁷ Helen Phillips, Hayter's second wife (1940 to the early-1970s) kept a history of Atelier 17, in which she wrote that the women were Alice Carr de Creeft, Edith Fletcher (Hayter's first wife), Dalla Husband, and a fourth, unknown female student. Helen Phillips papers, Paris, France [henceforth cited as HPP]. A listing of the women artists who participated at Atelier 17 in Paris can be found in Moser, *Atelier 17*, 83. Additional names not mentioned in Moser are Barbara Olmstead, Elvire Jan Kouyoumdjian, and Julie Van der Veen. Studying this group of women artists within the dynamic of interwar Paris is a topic ripe for study.

⁸ See "Atelier 17: Cours Technique de Gravure Moderne," ca. 1930s in HPP. Hayter structured Atelier 17 in this way to leave time to work on his own paintings. This account differs somewhat from Joann Moser's description of the Paris years as a more informal workshop, which Helen Phillips objected to in a letter to Peter Hacker dated March 10, 1989, 3 in HPP. See Moser, *Atelier 17*, 4.

⁹ Hayter reiterated throughout his career his belief that art cannot be taught directly. See for example "Hayter Brings Surrealist Art," *New York Sun*, October 3, 1940.

intended for the technical instruction of intaglio to open up new aesthetic ideas for Atelier 17's members.¹⁰

Hayter closed the Paris workshop at the end of 1939, because of the declaration of war following Germany's invasion of Poland and the impending threat that conflict would spread to France. Arriving in America in late-May 1940, Hayter initially taught a six-week course about etching and engraving at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco, where his wife Helen Phillips (1913-1995) had been a student before receiving a scholarship to travel to Europe.¹¹ Realizing that San Francisco was peripheral to the major transformations taking shape in the midcentury art world—once saying, “I hadn’t the impression that it was the best place to go in the Americas”—Hayter moved with Phillips and the couple’s newborn son Augy to New York City in September 1940.¹² Through connections, Hayter opened Atelier 17 at the New School, a progressive university located at 66 West Twelfth Street that embraced European scholars and other intellectuals in exile (fig. 0-3).¹³ Though harried to find equipment for his new classroom,

¹⁰ For more about Hayter’s involvement with Surrealism and his theories of automatism, see Graham Reynolds, “Hayter: the Years of Surrealism” in P. M. S. Hacker, ed., *The Renaissance of Gravure: The Art of S. W. Hayter* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); David S Cohen, “S. W. Hayter and the Theory of Automatism: Atelier 17 and Experimental Printmaking” (PhD diss., Courtauld Institute of Art, 1987).

¹¹ See course announcement, “Announcing a Special Course: Etching and Engraving Techniques. Conducted by S.W. Hayter, distinguished European Artist,” in HPP. The course ran from June 24-August 3, 1940. Hayter arrived in New York on May 28, 1940 aboard the *Scythia*. Phillips and Hayter met in 1937 in Paris, where she was working after winning the Phelan Fellowship from the California School of the Fine Arts in 1936.

¹² Augy Hayter was born August 29, 1940. See Hayter’s print *Augy’s Foot* from 1940-41 (Black/Moorhead 135a), a joint birth announcement and holiday card commemorating his son’s birth.

¹³ The chronology in Hacker, “The Renaissance of Gravure” indicates Hayter knew Clara Meyer, dean at the New School (see p. 107). In 1933, Alvin Johnson, director of the New School, founded the University in Exile, which later became known as the Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science. The university sponsored more than 180 scholars and their families. For more, see History of the New School: <http://www.newschool.edu/nssr/history/>

Hayter managed to begin teaching two class sections in the fall semester of 1940, as he would throughout the duration of Atelier 17's affiliation with the New School.¹⁴

Several women artists intrepidly pursued instruction with Hayter during Atelier 17's early years at the New School. Three, in particular, are central to this dissertation: Anne Ryan, Sue Fuller, and Worden Day.¹⁵ These women, who knew and respected one another, represent a significant proportion of the overall participants during Atelier 17's first phase in New York. Because the classroom space at the New School was small, only big enough to accommodate twelve students at one time, the total number of Atelier 17 members in the early-1940s was quite limited.¹⁶ Additional restrictions on the use of classroom space made the studio's affiliation with the New School imperfect. Hayter and the university's administrators differed over policies regarding use of the studio. Hayter believed the workshop's equipment should be available to all artists regardless of their enrollment status at the New School and at times outside scheduled classroom hours, positions that vexed the school's administration. Despite these limitations, Atelier 17's time at the New School was quite productive and inspired many new technical innovations. Hayter's experiments with simultaneous color printing—where several

¹⁴ According to the 1940 course catalogue for the New School, Atelier 17's start date was September 30, 1940. See *Curriculum: The New School for Social Research 1940-1941*, 77, New School Archives and Special Collections Digital Archive. There was quite a bit of press coverage in early October 1940 about Atelier 17 at the New School. See "An Atelier Comes to America: Engravers' Workshop Set Up Here by Hayter," *New York Post*, October 2, 1940; "Hayter Brings Surrealist Art"; "Atelier 17," *Art Digest* 15 (October 15, 1940): 28.

¹⁵ Other women artists who worked at Atelier 17's New School location are known through correspondence, their inclusion in Atelier 17's group exhibitions (see Appendix D), and the dates on extant prints. Besides the three mentioned above, they include: Isabelle Bishop (1902-1988), Perle Fine (1908-1988), "Joan" (dates unknown), Hope Manchester (1907-1976), Alda Ortley (dates unknown), Helen Phillips, and Catherine Yarrow (1904-1990).

¹⁶ Stanley William Hayter, oral history interview with Paul Cummings, March 11, 1971, 3, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

colors were applied to the plate and printed in one pass through the press—began at the New School and culminated in prints like *Cinq Personnages* from 1946 (fig. 0-4).

Anne Ryan was the first of the three to arrive at Atelier 17, studying at the New School during the 1942-43 academic year (fig. 0-5). Although Ryan always had creative tendencies, she only became a visual artist in her fifties.¹⁷ She met Hayter initially in October 1941, and he arranged for her to receive a “half scholarship.”¹⁸ Working at Atelier 17 represented a breakthrough for Ryan’s artistic career. She flourished under Hayter’s tutelage, learning not only the foundations of engraving and etching, but also strategies for successfully marketing her prints, a topic covered in Chapter Five. Ryan, Hayter and their families became close friends, and the student-teacher relationship seemed to flow mutually. Upon Ryan’s sudden death from a stroke in 1954, Hayter recalled his admiration for Ryan in a condolence letter to her daughter Elizabeth McFadden: “She had remarkable insight, almost instinctive sense of image, and all I ever tried to do with her was to encourage her to trust it.”¹⁹ Like so many other women artists

¹⁷ Prior to working as an artist, Ryan raised three children in New Jersey with her husband William McFadden. After separating in 1923 due to her husband’s mental illness, Ryan pursued a career as a writer publishing several articles and a book of poetry. For the adventure and cheap living, Ryan lived on the island of Mallorca from 1931 to 1933, when she continued to write many stories about the local ways of life. Ryan’s poetry, novels, and newspaper columns are preserved in the Anne Ryan Papers at the Newark Public Library, Newark, NJ. After Mallorca, Ryan moved to Greenwich Village so that she could be part of the bohemian community of artists and writers. She began painting in 1938, proudly recording her efforts in a diary—mostly portraits and landscapes—and her interactions with Village notables such as Hans Hoffman. These paintings, however, did not earn Ryan much attention. At one point, Ryan noted that she got a painting into her first show at Contemporary Arts, a gallery on 57th Street, but that at the reception, “no one spoke to me.” See Anne Ryan, “Diary,” n.d., Anne Ryan Papers, 1922–1968, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [henceforth cited as ARP].

¹⁸ Ryan, “Diary;” Stanley William Hayter to Anne Ryan, October 2 (undated, probably 1942), ARP. Hayter explains that with a half scholarship, students pay \$25 for two terms plus \$3 for materials excluding copper plates.

¹⁹ Stanley William Hayter to Elizabeth McFadden, April 24, 1954, ARP. Helen Phillips wrote a condolence letter, also in ARP.

who participated at Atelier 17, printmaking opened doors for Ryan.²⁰ Soon after beginning at Atelier 17, Ryan received a solo exhibition for her etchings and engravings at the Marquié Gallery in 1943, and subsequent opportunities poured in through her affiliation with Atelier 17.²¹ The methods Ryan learned for layering textured fabrics onto soft ground etching plates fostered her experimentation with abstraction, which emerged in her woodblock prints, and catalyzed the development of her fabric and torn-paper collages.²²

Sue Fuller arrived at Atelier 17's New School location in the fall of 1943 with an already strong background in printmaking (fig. 0-6).²³ She previously had brief exposure to printmaking through a six-week lithography course as an undergraduate.²⁴ Her master's degree coursework with Arthur Young at Teacher's College, Columbia University provided the bulk of Fuller's exposure to printmaking.²⁵ Knowing his students would eventually become teachers themselves, Young rigorously instilled the methods of woodcutting, lithography, etching, and silkscreen. Fuller sought out Hayter for instruction on how to engrave on jewelry, and she soon became an integral member of Atelier 17. Hayter quickly realized Fuller's competency in printmaking and, through the 1944 or 1945 academic year, she worked as a class monitor. She also executed contract printing for Hayter—producing his Christmas cards—and two editions for Marc Chagall. While at

²⁰ McFadden believed that her mother regretted the fact that prints—and not painting—earned her a solid reputation in the New York art world. See Elizabeth McFadden, "Anne Ryan," circa 1980, 183, Artist File, Department of Prints & Drawings, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

²¹ Her first solo show featured paintings at the Pinacotheca Gallery in March 1941.

²² For more on Ryan's woodcuts, see *Anne Ryan* (New York: Kraushaar Galleries, 1957). Ryan's daughter felt strongly that Atelier 17 inspired abstraction in these woodcuts. See McFadden, "Anne Ryan," 184.

²³ Information about Sue Fuller's background comes in large part from her oral history with Paul Cummings, April 24 and May 8, 1975, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

²⁴ Fuller earned her BA in 1936 from the Carnegie Institute of Technology's School of Fine and Applied Art, Pittsburgh, PA (now the College of Fine Arts at Carnegie Mellon University).

²⁵ Fuller earned her MA in 1939.

Atelier 17, Fuller perfected several technical methods that became standard practice among workshop members. These included reviving the calligraphic process of lift ground etching using Karo corn syrup as the base ingredient and abstractly impressing textiles in soft ground etching, exclusive of etched or engraved lines.²⁶

Worden Day's first experience at Atelier 17 occurred in 1943 and launched a multipart engagement with the studio (fig. 0-7). Like Fuller, Day had a strong background in printmaking before finding her way to Atelier 17.²⁷ But, for Day, Atelier 17 represented such a beacon of creative inspiration that she returned to repeatedly. During her first exposure to the studio, Day implemented more progressive application of techniques with which she was already quite familiar. Figural prints inspired by American Regionalism, which Day made during a two-year fellowship from the Julius Rosenwald Foundation between 1941 and 1943, gave way to surrealist-inspired intaglio prints at Atelier 17. As the daughter of an itinerant minister, Day was similarly peripatetic; even though her travels would take her in and out of New York City during the second half of the 1940s and early-1950s, Atelier 17 was never far from her mind.²⁸

Chapter Five documents just how integral Day was to marketing and distributing postwar

²⁶ More about Fuller's prints can be found in Emerson Crocker, *Sue Fuller, Prints, Drawings, Watercolors, Collages, String Compositions* (San Antonio, TX: Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute, 1967); *Sue Fuller Works on Paper: A Memorial Exhibition* (New York: Susan Teller Gallery, 2006).

²⁷ Day studied with Jean Charlot and Emilio Amero at the Florence Cane School of Art, New York, NY (1935-37) and Will Barnet and Harry Sternberg at the Art Students League, New York, NY (1937-40). See "Private Studio Study," un-microfilmed materials, Worden Day Papers, 1940-1982, reel 981, grid 386, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

²⁸ Day had several engagements outside New York City during these years, which included: a studio in New Orleans, LA (1944-46); artist-in-residence at University of Louisville, Louisville, KY (1946-7); a studio in Rockport, MA (1947-48); visiting artist at Stephens College, Columbia, MO (1948-9); and teaching at University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY (1949-52). See Day's CV in Una Johnson, *Worden Day 40 Year Retrospective, 1946-1986: Drawings, Paintings, Prints and Sculpture* (Trenton, NJ: New Jersey State Museum, 1986). See also chronology in Una E. Johnson, *Worden Day: Paintings, Collages, Drawings, and Prints* (Montclair, NJ: Montclair Art Museum, 1959). According to her record of "Private Studio Study," she returned to Atelier 17 in the summer of 1949, but there is no major spike of printmaking activity then.

prints, acting not only for herself but also on behalf of colleagues like Anne Ryan.

Returning to New York City in 1952, she worked at Atelier 17's second and third locations in Greenwich Village. During her time away, Day had become fascinated with the sculptural possibilities of carving deep relief into wood—a topic covered in Chapter Two—and she taught a course about woodblock printmaking at Atelier 17 in November 1954.²⁹ As Chapter Four will analyze, the large size and bold colors of postwar woodblocks like Day's were integral to artists' efforts to reestablish printmaking as a mode of original expression and make it relevant to Abstract Expressionism.

After five years at the New School, Hayter relocated Atelier 17 in 1945 a few blocks south to the first floor of an aging brownstone at 41 East Eighth Street, above Rosenthal's art supply store (fig. 0-8).³⁰ Atelier 17's international scope and reputation as the premiere place to learn modernist printmaking had simply exceeded the small space and usage limitations of the classroom at the New School. Demand for access to Atelier 17 grew sharply after MoMA opened *New Directions in Gravure: Hayter and Studio 17* in June 1944 to widespread acclaim. The show traveled for two years to locations throughout the United States and South America, spreading the gospel of avant-garde printmaking (app. D). During this second phase of Atelier 17's time in New York City, an increasingly greater number of members came from around the globe. Unlike the small number of women who worked at the New School, naming every female

²⁹ "Woodcut Course at Atelier 17," *Arts Digest* 29 (November 15, 1954): 15.

³⁰ The studio's affiliation with the New School ended gradually. During the 1945-1946 academic year, Atelier 17 was still listed in the course catalogue even though classes took place on Eighth Street. See *New School Bulletin*, v. 3 (no. 1), September 1945, 103, New School Archives and Special Collections Digital Archive.

printmaker who worked at the studio in the late-1940s is too extensive to list within this introduction.

Though the major thrust of the studio was always innovative research about and the perfection of novel printmaking techniques, the Eighth Street workshop placed Atelier 17 at the epicenter of the postwar New York School.³¹ Located nearby the main social hangouts for artists of the postwar New York School—including being directly across the street from the loft where The Club met after 1949—Atelier 17 became an important hub for the dissemination of avant-garde ideas. As Hayter once stated, “it wasn’t so much the prints that were made as the talk,” citing the informal evening gatherings at the Jumble Shop—just a few blocks down on Eighth Street—that were forerunners to Artists Club meetings at the Cedar Bar and White Horse Tavern.³²

Alice Trumbull Mason encountered Atelier 17 once it had moved down to its Eighth Street location in 1945, probably after meeting Hayter and other workshop members at one of the popular social hangouts in the Village (fig. 0-9).³³ She had been working professionally as an artist since the 1920s and recommitted herself to painting after her two children’s births in the early 1930s. She had some exposure to printmaking before Atelier 17, since she contributed a lithograph to the American Abstract Artists’

³¹ Hayter structured the Eighth Street workshop as he had wanted—but could not quite realize at the New School—with twice a week instruction for newcomers and open hours and equipment access for advanced members.

³² As quoted in Martica Sawin, “A Transfer of Energy: Hayter’s Painting During the New York Years,” in Albert and Albert, *Hayter*, 63.

³³ There is some discrepancy in scholarship about when Mason began working at Atelier 17. Marilyn Brown says that she began working there in 1944. But, Mason’s first prints were executed in 1945. Mason’s daughter confirmed that her mother did not work at Atelier 17 when it was at the New School. See Marilyn Brown, *Alice Trumbull Mason, Emily Mason: Two Generations of Abstract Painting* (New York: Eaton House, 1982), 15; Emily Mason Kahn, interview by Christina Weyl, February 6, 2013.

inaugural print portfolio (1937).³⁴ Mason was a founding member of the American Abstract Artists, started in 1936 by a small group of artists working non-objectively, and her interest in abstraction that dated back many years.³⁵ Yet, the process of making prints allowed Mason to develop further her style of “architectural” abstraction by exploring techniques like pressing fabric and other textures into soft ground etching. Working at Atelier 17 also opened up many opportunities for Mason to expand her professional network and distribute non-objective prints more widely than she could her paintings, which will be analyzed in Chapter Five.

Affiliation with Atelier 17 transformed Louise Bourgeois’s career (fig. 0-10). Similar to Mason, Bourgeois found printmaking to be an important pathway for career building in the late-1940s. Bourgeois immigrated to New York City in 1938 with her art historian husband Robert Goldwater (1907-1973), but she discovered it was difficult for a female artist to break into the American gallery world. Immediately after arriving in the United States, she learned lithography from Will Barnet (1911-2012) at the Art Students League.³⁶ She began working at Atelier 17 in 1946, finding the studio simultaneously welcoming with its large contingent of French-speaking artists and anxiety-provoking given the presence of dangerous acid chemicals used for biting plates. Soon after

³⁴ There were thirty-one contributors to the portfolio, full sets of which can be found at several museums: the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1978.558.1-32), the Smithsonian American Art Museum (1986.92.114.1-32), the de Young of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (2001.86.1-32). More about Mason’s printmaking career can be found in Una Johnson, *Alice Trumbull Mason: Etchings and Woodcuts* (New York: Taplinger, 1985).

³⁵ For more information about the early history of this group, see Susan C. Larsen, “The American Abstract Artists: A Documentary History 1936-1941,” *Archives of American Art Journal* 14, no. 1 (January 1, 1974): 2–7.

³⁶ For more about Bourgeois’s printmaking activities, see Deborah Wye and Carol Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois* (New York: Museum of Modern Art; distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1994). MoMA recently launched an online catalogue raisonné for Bourgeois’s prints, found the following website address: <http://www.moma.org/explore/collection/lb/index>

becoming a member, Bourgeois completed her major portfolio of nine engravings titled *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* (1947). The public release of this portfolio, along with several other opportunities to exhibit her prints at newly established print annuals, helped Bourgeois build momentum toward her major solo shows of sculptures at the Peridot Gallery in 1949, 1950, and 1951. Additionally, the process of carving engravings suited Bourgeois's personal need to convert antagonistic impulses into something positive and ignited her creative inclinations toward three-dimensional sculpture.

For Minna Citron, working at Atelier 17 provided similarly strong professional benefits and aesthetic inspiration (fig. 0-11).³⁷ Citron, a member of the Fourteenth Street School during the 1930s and critically acclaimed for her social realist paintings, joined Atelier 17 around 1946 soon after shifting her style towards abstraction.³⁸ In addition to working at the New York studio, she followed Hayter to Paris when he reopened Atelier 17 there in the early-1950s. Experimenting with printmaking techniques played a key role in solidifying this artistic transition to abstraction, which I examine in Chapter Four. Like Bourgeois, Citron was strongly invested in uncovering her inner psyche, a process she worked on with a psychoanalyst beginning in the 1920s. Making abstractions through printmaking's processes, particularly engraving, soft ground etching, and deep scorper relief, allowed Citron to express deep-seated emotions that were unconventional for a woman of her generation; Citron was a bit atypical, having divorced her husband 1934

³⁷ For an overview of Citron's prints from this period, see Karl Kup, *The Graphic Work of Minna Citron, 1945-1950* (New York: New School for Social Research, 1950).

³⁸ Citron's exhibition at ACA Gallery (December 1945 to January 1946) was the first public debut of her abstractions. This exhibition received widespread notice in the press. For more about Citron's satirical paintings of the 1930s and her transition to abstraction, see two works by Jennifer L. Streb: "Minna Citron: A Socio-historical Study of an Artist's Feminist Social Realism in the 1930s" (PhD diss., The Pennsylvania State University, 2004); *Minna Citron: The Uncharted Course from Realism to Abstraction* (Huntington, PA: Juniata College Museum of Art, 2012).

and decided not to remarry. Citron's intense focus on promoting her abstract prints in the late-1940s and 1950s brought her great career success within the burgeoning postwar network of opportunities for exhibiting avant-garde prints.

Hayter's permanent return to Paris in 1950 precipitated the third and final stage of Atelier 17 in New York City.³⁹ Hayter never fully embraced living in America, and traveled back to Paris as early as 1946 to explore reopening Atelier 17.⁴⁰ After his departure, several artists took over directorship of the studio, with varied levels of charisma, success, and management styles.⁴¹ Karl Schrag (1912-1995), who had handled the shop during the three-month gap in 1946 when Hayter was in Europe, served as the first director in the fall of 1950.⁴² Terry Haass (b. 1923) and Harry Hoehn (1918-1974) co-directed the shop, with limited success, in the spring and summer of 1951.⁴³ James Kleege (1921-1996) took over in the fall of 1951, doing a "magnificent job," in Hayter's words, of resuscitating Atelier 17 and putting it into financial solvency.⁴⁴ Hayter returned

³⁹ As of this dissertation's publication, there are no available transportation records documenting Hayter's or Helen Phillips's return to Paris in 1950. There are indications that they moved in either July or Fall 1950.

⁴⁰ The postwar situation in France and the condition of the workshop's old premises at 17 rue Campagne-Première were not conducive to re-opening the studio in 1946. See Moser, *Atelier 17*, 10. Hayter arrived on June 6, 1946 into the port of Southampton, England via the *Queen Mary*. He departed on September 14, 1946 from Southampton on the *Queen Mary*.

⁴¹ Specifics about Atelier 17's directors are listed in Moser, *Atelier 17*, 10. The detailed chronology above is most accurate description based on new archival research.

⁴² Schrag gave up the directorship because the demands of running Atelier 17 interfered with his own work.

⁴³ Hayter credited Haass and Hoehn for having, "run [Atelier 17] into the ground completely." Furthermore, he stated that, "I never expected [Haass and Hoehn] to be able to teach, neither having qualifications." Stanley Hayter to Peter Grippe, October 3, 1952, Allentown Art Museum, The Grippe Collection [henceforth cited as AAM/GC]. Haass departed for Europe in 1951, having won the Harriet Hale Wooley Scholarship and a Fulbright grant. See Biography in Ole Henrik Moe et al., *Terry Haass: Graphisches Werk = L'œuvre Graphique = The Graphic Work* (Bochum: Peter Spielmann, 1997), 35. Robert Blackburn had fond memories of learning etching from Haass during a summer session, presumably in the summer of 1951. See Deborah T. Cullen, "Robert Blackburn: American Printmaker" (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2002), 109.

⁴⁴ Hayter to Grippe, October 3, 1952.

to New York in December 1951 to recharge and reboot the workshop.⁴⁵ During a brief two-month window over the holidays, he incorporated Atelier 17 as a non-profit, starred in a film about Atelier 17 titled *A New Way of Gravure*, and selected sculptor Peter Grippe (1912-2002) to lead as the new director.⁴⁶ Grippe successfully handled the workshop's creative and business side for two years with the assistance of his wife, Florence (1912-2010). When the eviction notice came that the Eighth Street brownstone was slated for demolition, the Grippees managed all aspects of Atelier 17's move in May 1953 to its third location at 523 Sixth Avenue, with limited guidance and zero financial support from Hayter (fig. 0-12).⁴⁷ Leo Katz (1887-1982) took over from Grippe in April 1954, with help from fellow printmaker Christine Engler (1919-2004). Unable to sustain the momentum, the workshop was closed in September 1955.⁴⁸

Grippe's two-year tenure as director was probably the most active and exciting time for women artists after Hayter left for Paris. He was instrumental in inviting many more women artists to the studio than had worked there under Hayter, who had a

⁴⁵ Hayter arrived in New York City aboard the vessel *Liberté* on December 14, 1951 and departed on February 21, 1952 via *Île de France* heading to the port of Plymouth, England.

⁴⁶ Filming began at 7 pm on Friday, January 13 and finished on Sunday, January 15, after four impressions of *Angels Wrestling* were made. See catalogue raisonné entry for *Angels Wrestling* (193) in Black and Moorhead, *The Prints of Stanley William Hayter*. Notice of Atelier 17's non-profit status can be found in, "Atelier Incorporated," *Art Digest* 26 (February 1, 1952): 9.

⁴⁷ According to documents in the AAM/GC, the Grippees moved Atelier 17 to its new home—a "herculean" effort—in mid-May 1953 with help from Larry Winston.

⁴⁸ The press release about the closure was dated September 7, 1955. See Leo Katz, "Atelier 17," *Print* 14, no. 1 (February 1960): 57; Moser, *Atelier 17*, 11. There were a lot of bruised egos over the end of Atelier 17 and the portrayal of the New York directors in later scholarship. Florence and Peter Grippe were the chief instigators. See Peter Grippe to Joann Moser, February 4, 1978, along with other argumentative letters in the AAM/GC. In 1993, the Grippees—particularly Florence—disrupted a panel discussion featuring artists talking about Atelier 17's New York years. She and Peter got into a spirited debate with ex-director, James Kleege. Thank you to Helen Harrison, Director of the Pollock-Krasner House, for digitizing the symposium and panel proceedings, which took place in conjunction with the exhibition *Atelier 17 and the New York Avant-Garde, 1940-1955* (East Hampton, NY: Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, 1993).

reputation for being a chauvinist.⁴⁹ He and Florence maintained a student ledger book, which has detailed notes about the artists, their addresses, the number of semesters they were enrolled, and the types of materials they purchased.⁵⁰ Women accounted for half of the artists at Atelier 17 between 1952 and 1954, significantly higher than the ratio across all fifteen years the studio was in New York. Grippe focused on attracting professional sculptors and painters, who previously had limited exposure to printmaking. He also innovated such projects as *21 Etchings and Poems*, the first collaboration between avant-garde artists and poets living in New York City, which paved the way for several print-poetry projects in the second half of the twentieth century.⁵¹

Louise Nevelson worked at Atelier 17 on two separate occasions, briefly in the late-1940s and then again between 1952 and 1954 during Grippe's directorship (fig. 0-13).⁵² When she first visited the workshop in 1948, she worked with Hayter and made only one print titled *Magic Garden*, which served as her "experimental plate," an exercise Hayter devised to introduce newcomers to intaglio techniques.⁵³ As Chapter Three covers, Nevelson disliked Hayter's emphasis on using traditional etching and engraving

⁴⁹ Una Johnson attributed the influx of women artists under Grippe's tenure to his welcoming attitude, calling him a "ladies man." Una Johnson, interview by Laurie Wilson, June 23, 1977.

⁵⁰ The Grippe maintained extremely good records during their time managing Atelier 17, including this student ledger book. See Allentown Art Museum, the Grippe Collection [henceforth cited as AAM/GC].

⁵¹ Tatiana Grossman, who founded Universal Limited Art Editions in 1957, was keenly interested in collaborations between artists and writers. Larry Rivers and poet Frank O'Hara teamed up for ULAE's first project of this type, titled *Stones* (1957-60). For more about artists books in this era, see Philip Hofer and Eleanor M. Garvey, *The Artist & the Book, 1860-1960, in Western Europe and the United States* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1961); Lanier Graham, "The Rise of the Livre d'Artiste in America: Reflections on 21 Etchings and Poems and the Early 1960s," *The Tamarind Papers* 13 (1990): 35-40.

⁵² Nevelson likely worked at Atelier 17 after a hysterectomy in the spring of 1948 forced her to find less physically demanding ways to practice art making, paralleling a similar decision to work at the Clay Club (renamed Sculpture Center in 1944). See Laurie Lisle, *Louise Nevelson: A Passionate Life* (New York: Summit Books, 1990), 164.

⁵³ The most comprehensive discussion of the "experimental plate" can be found in Joann Moser, "The Significance of Atelier 17 in the Development of Twentieth Century American Printmaking" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976), 181-191. See also Stanley William Hayter, *About Prints* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 92-93.

tools, and she only returned to the studio when Grippe invited her back to experiment with unconventional approaches. In the early-1950s, Nevelson challenged the workshop's avant-garde standards with her unorthodox methods of marking copper plates with a can opener and fabrics and her idiosyncratic application of ink.⁵⁴ Her techniques for making thirty plates at Atelier 17 gave Nevelson insight into layering depths that became pivotal to the construction of her monochromatic, black painted wall sculptures of the mid- to late-1950s.

Dorothy Dehner's experience of printmaking at Atelier 17 follows many of the same patterns as Nevelson (fig. 0-14).⁵⁵ The two women, in fact, met at Atelier 17 and struck up a lifelong friendship—one of the documented instances of direct overlap between female artists at the studio that I cover in Chapter Five. Dehner first encountered Hayter when she and her husband, the sculptor David Smith (1906-1965), were in Paris in 1935. Smith made prints at Atelier 17, but Dehner, like Nevelson, was intimidated by Hayter and unsure of her strength as an artist. Dehner and Smith divorced in 1952, and shortly thereafter she bumped into Florence and Peter Grippe on Eighth Street, who both encouraged her to stop by Atelier 17.⁵⁶ Dehner became known as a meticulous technician of engraving and roulette, but more importantly she gained confidence at Atelier 17 to return to her interest in sculpture, which Smith's stifling influence quashed during their

⁵⁴ There are two catalogues raisonné for Nevelson's prints: Una Johnson, *Louise Nevelson; Prints and Drawings, 1953-1966* (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Museum of Art, distributed by Shorewood Publishers, 1967); Gene Baro, *Nevelson: The Prints* (New York: Pace Editions, 1974). The impressions she pulled at Atelier 17 between ca. 1948 and 1954 are all unique monoprints. Nevelson re-edited her Atelier 17 plates as uniform editions of thirty at Hollander Graphic Workshop in 1965-66, and both Johnson and Baro do not identify the earlier proofs. My forthcoming essay in *American Women Artists, 1935-1970—Gender, Culture, and Politics*, ed. Helen Langa and Paula Wisotzki (Burlington, VT: Ashgate) delves into Nevelson's early experimental impressions.

⁵⁵ For an overview of Dehner's printmaking career, see Susan Teller, *Dorothy Dehner: A Retrospective of Prints* (New York: Associated American Artists, 1987).

⁵⁶ Dorothy Dehner, interview by Laurie Wilson, June 17, 1977.

marriage. The experience of engraving copper plates catalyzed Dehner's major career shift toward sculpture, a trend affecting several other female artists as shown in Chapter Two.

After its closure in New York, Atelier 17 continued to have a profound impact on the international printmaking scene. Many artists who first encountered Hayter in America in the 1940s and 1950s kept in touch with him. Some later voyaged to Paris to make more prints at Atelier 17, as was the case for Minna Citron. Hayter operated the studio until his death in 1988, and it continues today under the name Atelier Contrepoint with master printers Hector Saunier and Juan Valladares as directors.

Methodology and Contribution: A Fresh Look at Atelier 17

My dissertation advances several distinct subfields within the study of twentieth-century art history, including scholarship about prints, Atelier 17, women printmakers, and women artists' participation within Abstract Expressionism. As the history above already demonstrates, this project is the first to focus exclusively on and draw critical connections between women artists at Atelier 17 during its New York years. While monographic studies exist about each of the eight artists in my dissertation, the current trend within the study of female printmakers is to unite these disparate sources and demonstrate the relationships among artists.⁵⁷ Central to this project is the consideration of midcentury gender norms and the impact they made on women printmakers' practice. Before and during Atelier 17's operation in New York City, debates raged within feminist circles and American society about women's proper roles, questioning whether

⁵⁷ See for example Elizabeth G. Seaton, ed., *Paths to the Press: Printmaking and American Women Artists, 1910-1960* (Manhattan, KS: Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, Kansas State University, 2006).

women should combine domestic responsibilities with work outside the home and what type of work was appropriate. Atelier 17 was established at the end of a very restrictive era for women during the Depression's harsh economy. World War II brought about major shifts in employment opportunities, and many of these jobs were stripped away from women after 1945 to reestablish postwar stability. Using a socio-cultural approach, I argue that women printmakers stood at the center of artistic and societal debates about acceptable feminine roles and women in the workforce. These artists both followed and challenged notions of femininity through their material and physical experimentations with abstract printmaking.

Focusing on the female members of Atelier 17 in New York also establishes the vital importance of the workshop to their development of abstraction. Given that women artists of Atelier 17 practiced during the emergence of and at the peak of Abstract Expressionism, they were very aware of the major postwar trends towards introspective focus and seemingly uncontrolled gesture. Yet, these women artists have been relegated to the periphery of New York School history for two primary reasons. First, this stylistic movement overwhelmingly favored white male artists and their seemingly virile self-expression. These women artists' abstractions were considered secondary to the core activities of the movement's canonical male artists.⁵⁸ Second, scholars and critics of

⁵⁸ Since the 1990s, scholarship has increasingly reevaluated women's and other minorities' positions within Abstract Expressionism. See for examples: Anna Chave, "Pollock and Krasner: Script and Postscript," *Res* 24 (Autumn 1993): 95–111; Ann Gibson, *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997); Joan Marter, *Women and Abstract Expressionism: Painting and Sculpture, 1945–1959* (New York: Baruch College, 1997); Lisa Saltzman, "Reconsidering the Stain: On Gender, Identity, and New York School Painting," in *Reading Abstract Expressionism: Context and Critique*, ed. Ellen G. Landau (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 560–80; Aliza Rachel Edelman, "The Modern Woman and Abstract Expressionism: Ethel Schwabacher, Elaine De Kooning, and Grace Hartigan in the 1950s" (PhD diss., Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2006); Norman L. Kleeblatt, Lisa Saltzman, and

Abstract Expressionism from the 1940s through the 1960s consolidated painting as the medium to define this movement, and they characterized these works on canvas by the expressive paint application and enormous format. Small prints and other works on paper, including drawing and collage, were squeezed out of the canonical writing about the New York School painting, regardless of their expressivity. As art historians opened up interpretations of postwar abstraction, a few scholars have worked to reconcile the place of prints within Abstract Expressionism.⁵⁹ When treated within print scholarship, the subspecialty's reputation for focus on technical issues overwhelms discussion of Atelier 17. Innovative technique was certainly central to the workshop's practitioners—both male and female—but exploration of printmaking at Atelier 17 was about much more than the discovery of new methods. It was about finding outlets for personal expression through the graphic arts, which often led artists to take new directions in their paintings or sculptures. Scholarship about the New York School is incomplete without considering the innovative prints and working methods of the studio's ninety-one women artists.

The foundation of research for this dissertation emphasizes primary resources, as much as possible. Hayter was not a methodical record-keeper and, much to the dismay of art historians, there are no consolidated archival papers about Atelier 17.⁶⁰ He wrote

Mia L. Bagneris, *From the Margins: Lee Krasner, Norman Lewis, 1945-1952* (New York: Jewish Museum, under the auspices of the Jewish Theological Seminary, 2014).

⁵⁹ A few scholars have endeavored to show printmaking's relationship to Abstract Expressionism. See F. Lanier Graham, *The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era* (Canberra: Australian National Gallery, 1987); Jeffrey Wechsler, *Abstract Expressionism, Other Dimensions: An Introduction to Small Scale Painterly Abstraction in America, 1940-1965* (New Brunswick, NJ: Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1989); David Acton, David Amram, and David Lehman, *The Stamp of Impulse: Abstract Expressionist Prints* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 2001).

⁶⁰ The closest thing to an "archive" about Atelier 17 are some minor papers at the Tate Archive, the HPP, or AAM/GC. Even when you find letters from Hayter, they are hard to date precisely because he often wrote without indicating month or year, and he sometimes wrote over the course of several days to consolidate airmail postage.

prolifically throughout his career, and his books, *New Ways of Gravure* (1949) and *About Prints* (1962) are key texts for this project. In order to get to the heart of what transpired at Atelier 17, scholars have to open their search to survey all artists who worked at the studio, trolling their personal papers for correspondence, exhibition catalogues, and press clippings. Looking at artists' prints—hopefully dated, but often not—is another way to ascertain the progression of technical developments and influences affecting the studio's artists. Artists often exchanged prints with one another, a practice that provides a fascinating set of data points for understanding artists' relationships.⁶¹ Considering the number of artists who passed through Atelier 17's doors in New York City—let alone its several-decades-long and two-city history—it becomes a herculean task to write an all-encompassing, definitive resource about the studio. While this project provides significant new information about Atelier 17, it should not be considered comprehensive of the workshop's New York years. My goal throughout the dissertation is to present a focused study of women artist using newly available primary sources or those previously underutilized in Atelier 17 scholarship.

I selected this particular subset of eight artists based on several factors: the availability of archival papers, the frequency with which artists' names appear in period exhibitions, the strength of secondary resources, the ability to study prints in public collections, and potential to interface with artists' descendants. Many other women artists are key to this dissertation and make periodic appearances, including Harriet Berger

⁶¹ I am aware of several groupings of this type: many prints from Anne Ryan's collection are now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and likewise for Alice Trumbull Mason at the Springfield Museums, Springfield, MA. Some of the prints in Hayter's collection are now housed at the British Museum (2012,7025.1-73; and 2013,7023.1-3) or being offered for sale by Dolan/Maxwell, Philadelphia, PA. Swann Auction Galleries also sold a consolidated grouping of prints from Leo Katz's collection in 2004. See lots 228-251 in *19th & 20th Century Prints & Drawings, Including the Leo Katz Collection of Atelier 17 Prints* (Sale 1999) (New York: Swann Galleries, 2004).

Nurkse, Margaret Balzer Cantieni, Christine Engler, Jan Gelb, Terry Haass, Fannie Hillsmith, Ruth Leaf, Helen Phillips, Doris Seidler, Pennerton West Marjean Kettunen Zegart.⁶² With more time to research and reflect, these women would certainly figure strongly into an expanded version of this dissertation. All women artists factor into my overall analysis of trends at Atelier 17, particularly in Chapter Five's survey of the networking potential of postwar printmaking for women artists.

In addition to managing an enormous roster of artists, juggling all of their personalities and agendas is a huge factor impacting study of Atelier 17. Participating in the workshop's experimental and innovative program was, for many artists, a career-defining experience. In interviews or autobiographical accounts dating from after 1955, artists tended to be self-aggrandizing, particularly regarding personal contact with Hayter. With the hindsight of knowing Hayter's monumental influence to printmaking in the second-half of the twentieth century, everyone told anecdotes—good or bad—about their contact with Hayter. He was a very polarizing figure. In addition, the artists who managed the New York workshop after Hayter returned to Paris often squabbled about the accuracy of facts. Who performed the most admirably as director versus who left the workshop in the lurch? Which director taught artists who went on to become the most successful?⁶³ Pinning down what happened at Atelier 17 has been made more difficult by artists' self-conscious posturing, personal vendettas, or their fuzzy memories in middle or old age.

⁶² I had opportunity to interview or correspond with a handful of others who were still alive during my dissertation research. These include: Marjean Kettunen Zegart, Ruth Leaf, George Ortman, and Anne Wienholt.

⁶³ This was the case with Louise Nevelson. Peter Grippe insisted she never studied with Hayter. See Peter and Grippe Grippe, interview by Laurie Lisle, August 5, 1983, Laurie Lisle research material on Louise Nevelson, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Nearly forty years have elapsed since Joann Moser's seminal dissertation and exhibition catalog appeared to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Atelier 17, and so much new archival material has come to light since then.⁶⁴ Hayter and most artists of the New York Atelier 17 were still alive and practicing during Moser's research. While this situation was advantageous for conducting interviews and gathering primary insights, Moser did not have access to the enormous body of archival material that has since become available from artists and their estates. A return to primary documents reveals new evidence that not only supports Moser's foundational scholarship, but also conveys nuanced stories about artists' experiences at Atelier 17. I relied heavily on artists' and galleries' papers at the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Art, as well as a host of other collections held at museums and other institutions. Several artists' estates also made material available to me privately—all of whom are listed in the acknowledgements, and these archives contain many unpublished letters, exhibition catalogues, press clippings, and artwork. I have only scratched the surface of these resources; there are many collections left to explore and many new ways to reconsider the legacy of Atelier 17 in New York.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the pioneering scholarship of Moser and others.⁶⁵ In the early-1980s, Atelier 17 became an important touchstone in surveys about twentieth-century printmaking. Atelier 17 and its artists are prominently featured in former Brooklyn Museum print curator Una Johnson's *American Prints and*

⁶⁴ Joann Moser wrote her dissertation in 1976 about Atelier 17, which became the fiftieth anniversary retrospective exhibition and catalogue in 1977 for the Elvehjem Art Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison (now the Chazen Museum of Art). Wherever possible, I cite the published catalogue versus the unpublished dissertation.

⁶⁵ Atelier 17's full bibliography is too extensive to be listed in one footnote. A complete list of works I consulted about Atelier 17 appears at the end of the dissertation.

Printmakers (1980) and James Watrous's major study *A Century of American Printmaking, 1880-1980* (1984). Around the time of Hayter's death in 1988 and over the five years following, there was a burst of activity in the form of exhibitions, articles, and interviews, some of it highlighting Hayter's individual efforts as a printmaker and others collectively summarizing the impact of Atelier 17 to twentieth-century printmaking. Peter Black, David Cohen, Peter Hacker, Carla Esposito Hayter, Graham Reynolds, and Duncan Scott are among the most important contributors to this period of Atelier 17 scholarship, which notably includes a major exhibition *The Renaissance of Gravure* (1988) at the Ashmolean Museum, Esposito Hayter's retrospective of Atelier 17 at the Accademia di San Luca in Rome (1990), and a catalogue raisonné of Hayter's prints (1992) published by Peter Black and Desirée Moorhead, Hayter's third wife. Additionally, Helen Harrison staged a small exhibition and symposium in 1993 at the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center focusing specifically on Atelier 17's impact on the New York School.

Since the early-2000s, there has been a resurgence of scholarship about Hayter and Atelier 17.⁶⁶ *Art in Print* recently dedicated an entire issue to Hayter's continued impact on pedagogy and technique.⁶⁷ I believe that much of this newfound interest stems from several decades of acquisitions—facilitated by the dedicated efforts of several galleries and auction houses—which have culminated in a critical mass of prints now in

⁶⁶ Jennifer Field, a PhD candidate at the Institute of Fine Arts, is also working on a dissertation about printmaking's interactions with New York School artists. Our projects were both approved in the spring of 2011. Her focus and chronological dates are more expansive than my project. Only one chapter examines Jackson Pollock's experimentation at Atelier 17, and the remaining chapters look at other centers of postwar printmaking, such as Margaret Lowengrund's The Contemporaries Gallery. The title of Field's project is: "The New York School and the Evolution of Avant-Garde Printmaking in America."

⁶⁷ See *Art in Print* 2, no. 3 (September-October 2012).

public and private collections.⁶⁸ David Acton organized *The Stamp of Impulse: Abstract Expressionist Prints* (2001), featuring the collection of James N. Heald II, which has major holdings of prints made at Atelier 17.⁶⁹ In a 2004 exhibition, the Davis Museum and Cultural Center at Wellesley College commemorated alumna Nancy Gray Sherrill's gift of nearly fourteen hundred prints, and the accompanying catalogue has two essays that look at Atelier 17 artists.⁷⁰ The Indianapolis Museum of Art, similarly, coordinated a show in 2007 fueled primarily by donations of prints by Dr. Steven Conant. Besides these collections-based shows, the Fundação Arpad Szenes–Vieira da Silva in Lisbon, Portugal organized a large loan exhibition in 2006 focusing on Atelier 17's Paris years.⁷¹ Ann Shafer, associate curator at The Baltimore Museum of Art, is currently organizing a significant show about Atelier 17 slated for 2017-2018.⁷² Given the number of artists involved with Atelier 17, its huge chronological span, and its pervasive impact on subsequent generations of printmakers, there is definitely room for a major study or exhibition celebrating the workshop's centennial.

⁶⁸ The primary sellers of prints by Atelier 17 artists include in New York, NY: Susan Teller Gallery, Mary Ryan Gallery, Sragow Gallery, Swann Auction Galleries; in Philadelphia, PA: Dolan/Maxwell; in Santa Rosa, CA: The Annex Galleries; and in London, England: Austin/Desmond Fine Art. Catalogs published by these galleries and auction houses are listed in the bibliography.

⁶⁹ Acton's exhibition took place at the Worcester Art Museum, where he was curator of Prints, Drawings and Photography until 2013. The bulk of the Heald collection subsequently went to Yale University, Heald's alma mater, where Katherine Alcauskas, the Florence B. Selden Fellow in the Department of Prints, Drawings and Photographs, organized an exhibition at the Yale University Art Gallery. See Acton, Amram, and Lehman, *The Stamp of Impulse*; Katherine Alcauskas, *The Pull of Experimentation: Postwar American Printmaking* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery, 2009).

⁷⁰ See particularly David Mickenberg and Phyllis McGibbon's essay contributions to David Mickenberg and Elaine Mehalakes, eds., *American Identities: Twentieth-Century Prints from the Nancy Gray Sherrill, Class of 1954, Collection* (Wellesley, MA: Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College, 2004).

⁷¹ Scarlett Reliquet Bounduelle and Carla Esposito, *A Poética Do Traço: Gravuras Do Atelier 17, 1927-1940* (Lisbon: Fundação Arpad Szenes-Vieira da Silva, 2005).

⁷² The show's working title is "Stanley William Hayter and the Atelier 17." It should travel to three venues in 2017 before ending at The Baltimore Museum of Art in 2018. I will contribute an essay for the exhibition's catalogue.

Chapter Outline

My first chapter provides a critical historiography of women's printmaking activity from the colonial period through the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s. I establish the central importance of printmaking to understanding femininity in America with sections that mirror themes developed in subsequent chapters. First, I frame women negotiating their work between home and non-domestic settings, their level of physical participation, and their working relationship with male collaborators. Before Atelier 17, women artists were less involved with forms of printmaking that required time away from domestic duties, great physical strain, exposure to harsh chemicals, or competition with men. My research shows that women printmakers historically never commanded control over the entire printmaking process—from conceptualizing the design to printing the matrix—and relied instead on men to handle various stages. Second, I discuss the ways that gender impacted the meanings of the printmaking tools that women employed. I consider why certain tools and techniques were deemed more or less appropriate for women printmakers, based on broad socio-cultural analysis. Finally, I examine the ways that women printmakers historically expanded their professional networks through exhibitions, critical notice, and membership to printmaking groups. Making and marketing prints proved to be a very important professionalizing device for women artists in America, providing far greater experience and commercial success than was possible with painting or sculpture. Setting Atelier 17 within this historical context illuminates the revolutionary significance of the workshop for women printmakers' careers.

In Chapter Two, I argue that women signaled serious, professional artistic intentions through the decision to work at Atelier 17 and the physically demanding activities required by printmaking. Women artists of this era struggled to balance postwar gender norms that prescribed acceptable spaces of work and levels of feminine exertion. Atelier 17's three locations had a magnetic draw on avant-garde artists living in New York City, despite the fact that the workshops were quite crude and often very messy. Avoiding direct contact with the studios' ink-smeared tables—for fear of staining nice clothing—or persevering through the noxious smells of the Eighth Street studio's gas radiators, women artists claimed status as professional artists, rather than amateurs, with their presence at Atelier 17. The activities that artists performed at Atelier 17 defined aspects of femininity and masculinity at midcentury, particularly at the level of artists' physical engagement in plate preparation and marking, pulling the press, and clean up. Women artists' corporal commitment to printmaking established their professional intentions and sometimes opened up aesthetic pathways that would have been otherwise closed to them. For example, one section focuses on the transition that many women artists made from executing the challenging task of carving an engraving or woodcut to carving large, three-dimensional sculpture. Atelier 17's permissive workshop structure, where artists marked, inked, and printed their own work, turned the workshop into a unique location where women artists could physically contravene American society's expectations of femininity.

The dissertation's third chapter considers the ways that midcentury gender norms influenced the use of printmaking tools and techniques at Atelier 17. Chapter One's preamble to this topic demonstrates the large extent to which critics and artists employed

highly gender-encoded language when discussing the etching needle or burin. Strongly influenced by the American socio-cultural context of the 1940s and 1950s, this practice continued as women artists explored printmaking at Atelier 17 in New York. The sharp, wedge-shaped tool of engraving, called a burin, became an instrument of war under Hayter's hand and pedagogy. This aggressive approach to mark-making was unattractive to many women artists, who sought out alternatives for realizing their abstract and avant-garde plate designs. Critics continually located women's prints within a domestic or feminine context, no matter how groundbreaking or innovative these artists' technical efforts were. Minna Citron, for one, found her application of color relief stencils compared to her "natural" feminine prowess as baker. The bulk of the chapter analyzes the popularity among women artists of impressing lace, fabric, and string into soft ground etching. While period commenters were quick to dismiss the textiles as evidence of women's inclinations towards traditional feminine crafts, I argue that these women instead subverted these common associations. They imbued their abstract, textural compositions with expressive purpose and personal meaning, which connect to the introspective focus of the New York School. In many ways, these soft ground etchings also prefigure the radical use of textiles in feminist, fiber, and postminimal art.

Chapter Four takes a formal turn by looking at several strategies Atelier 17 artists employed to relate their prints to mainstream trends in the New York School. Hayter and the members of Atelier 17 fought against the period's prevailing assumptions that engraving, etching, and woodblock printmaking were only useful for copying preexisting designs or generating an image in large quantities. They strove to show that printmaking techniques could be just as spontaneous and expressive as the painter's brush and their

approach as uncontrolled as Jackson Pollock (1912-1956). Yet postwar gender norms also inhibited many women printmaker's inclination to relinquish control over their process. Since printmaking was well known as a black-and-white art, experimenting in color printmaking was an approach women artists of Atelier 17 took to align their graphic art with the often brightly hued canvases of the New York School. The physical dimensions and scale of women's Atelier 17 prints was another major component in their formal efforts. The canvases of New York School painters were mural-sized, and postwar printmakers attempted to increase both the paper size of their prints and the "largeness" of the subjects they depicted. The innovative techniques developed at Atelier 17 should not be remembered simply as major technical accomplishments within the history of printmaking; they are also vital indicators of Atelier 17 artists' desire to become integral to postwar abstraction.

Finally, Chapter Five examines the strong professional and personal relationships women artists built while at Atelier 17. Avant-garde printmaking experienced major growth after World War II ended, and women artists of Atelier 17 worked diligently to gain professional distinction as modernist printmakers, largely because the bar to achieving success as a painter or sculptor was much too high. I created a dataset of exhibitions containing more than nineteen hundred entries that demonstrate women artists exhibited their work often and across a wide geographic area. They achieved this major public presence in a number of ways. Women printmakers of Atelier 17 networked among themselves for opportunities to advance their careers. They took advantage of the growing number of print annuals and galleries sympathetic to avant-garde prints. These women artists also spearheaded the founding of several printmaking groups and joined

others, which increased the frequency with which they exhibited their work and shaped a more positive reception in the art press. Visualizing the hubs of the postwar printmaking in the chapter's charts and graphs suggests that Atelier 17 activated some of the earliest recorded incidences of feminist solidarity.

Atelier 17 was not only seminal to the careers of these women artists, it also set off a chain of reactions that impacted the New York School and the course of modern art in the second half of the twentieth century. The connections that the studio generated are fascinating and more should be done to document them. Building out the biographies and printmaking activities of these women artists, often little known, is one step towards understanding Atelier 17's full effect. My hope is that future scholars will continue to embrace this rich topic and explore Atelier 17's legacy upon modernism.

CHAPTER ONE

Before Atelier 17: A Critical Historiography of Women Printmakers in America

Making prints at Atelier 17 represented a revolutionary experience for women artists. Stanley William Hayter's workshop unlocked professional pathways that had been denied to women printmakers prior to its establishment in America in 1940. Visiting the studio provided artists with access to the most avant-garde training available in America. The workshop's progressive working procedures afforded women the chance to mark and print their own plates and experiment with novel techniques, as never before. Association with Atelier 17 also allowed women to participate in professional networks and exhibit their work, based not on their gender but the style and merit of their prints. Setting Atelier 17 within the context of American women's printmaking activity from the colonial period to the 1930s illuminates why the workshop was so significant to the professional advancement of its female members during the 1940s and 1950s.

This chapter provides a critical historiography of American women's activity in printmaking, focusing on themes that inform subsequent chapters of this dissertation. It examines the evolution of women printmakers from the country's founding through the 1930s, encompassing the pivotal role of the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration in growing a generation of women printmakers. The chapter is divided into three major sections. The first provides a sociological view of American women printmakers with an emphasis on women's training opportunities, their spaces of work,

their physical engagement with producing prints, and their interactions with male printmakers. The lengthiest of the three, it also includes a great deal of historical and cultural context that will be relevant to the subsequent sections. The second identifies the reasons that the tools of printmaking acquired gender-specific associations. The third section analyzes women printmakers' exhibition and networking opportunities with emphasis on how they opened possibilities of professionalization.

Throughout this chapter, the term "printmaking" will encompass a highly varied set of activities. Especially in the nineteenth century, "printmaking" was an extremely mutable category that described a wide array of activities ranging from the creation of fine art prints (e.g., etching, wood engraving, lithography) to the reproduction of images on the pages of illustrated newspapers and magazines. How printmaking was defined along the fine art-commercial continuum ebbed and flowed over the large time period.¹ This chapter examines the full array of women in the graphic arts within both the commercial and fine art realms. Women had quite varied access to commercial and fine art fields, and this broader picture better situates this project's larger analysis of women artists' labor, technique, and networks while at Atelier 17.

Printmaking is a particularly understudied subset of American art history, and the role of lesser-known female practitioners of the graphic arts is even less well

¹ Michael Leja notes the intersection of late-nineteenth century commercial and fine art printmaking and the term's different meaning depending on social and cultural demands. By the turn of the century, Richard Field argues for the influence of commercial illustration on fine art prints, using examples of Charles Dana Gibson's sketches from *The Century Magazine* of New Yorkers riding the El and Edward Hopper's prints of the same subject. By the early twentieth century, printmaker Margaret Lowengrund (1902-1957), whose career straddled fine and commercial art, lamented the polarization within printmaking and hoped for a time when any art job was seen as equally creative. See Michael Leja, "The Illustrated Magazine and Print Connoisseurship in the Late 19th Century," *BlockPoints I* (1993): 58; Richard S. Field et al., *American Prints, 1900-1950: An Exhibition in Honor of the Donation of John P. Axelrod, B.A., 1968* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery, 1983), 14; Margaret Lowengrund, "Fine and Commercial Art," in *The Art of the Artist: Theories and Techniques of Art by the Artists Themselves*, ed. Arthur Zaidenberg (New York: Crown Publishers, 1951), 150-51.

investigated. While printmaking was often something that women artists pursued as a secondary activity after their primary painting or sculptural production, for some, the graphic arts were the major emphasis of their careers. Printmaking can be a solitary endeavor, or it can involve collaboration with other artists and trained craftspeople, forming networks of printmaking rich with interaction and overlap. Although the literature on women printmakers is growing steadily and promises to continue, there are still many unknown artists and unexplored connections among them.² In the spirit of expanding the field, this chapter establishes critical links between American women printmakers before Atelier 17 came to New York City, many of which have never been made before.³

Throughout the discussion of these themes, this chapter demonstrates that women at all historic moments alternately wrestled with, challenged, and conformed to what

² For more resources on American women printmakers, see Frank Weitenkamp, "Some Women Etchers," *Scribner's Magazine* 46 (December 1909): 731–39; Phyllis Peet, "The Emergence of American Women Printmakers in the Late Nineteenth Century" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1987); Phyllis Peet, *American Women of the Etching Revival* (Atlanta, GA: High Museum of Art, 1988); Helen A. Harrison, *Women Artists of the New Deal Era: A Selection of Prints and Drawings* (Washington, D.C.: National Museum of Women in the Arts, 1988); Gladys Engel Lang and Kurt Lang, *Etched in Memory: The Building and Survival of Artistic Reputation* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Mary F. Francey, *American Women at Work: Prints by Women Artists of the Nineteen Thirties* (Salt Lake City: Utah Museum of Fine Arts, 1991); Helen Langa, "Egalitarian Vision, Gendered Experience: Women Printmakers and the WPA/FAP Graphic Arts Project," in *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: IconEditions, 1992); Gladys Engel Lang and Kurt Lang, *Etched in Memory: Women Printmakers from the Gladys Engel Lang and Kurt Lang Collection* (Seattle, WA: Frye Art Museum, 2001); Elizabeth G. Seaton, ed., *Paths to the Press: Printmaking and American Women Artists, 1910-1960* (Manhattan, KS: Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, Kansas State University, 2006); *Inked Impressions: Ellen Day Hale and the Painter-Etcher Movement* (Carlisle, PA: The Trout Gallery, Dickinson College, 2007).

³ It is important to mention that women acted as printers, printmakers, and publishers for centuries before this chapter's focus on the American context. By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe, many women could be found working in family engraving businesses alongside their brothers and fathers executing reproductive prints. For more history of early European women printmakers, see Judith K. Brodsky, "Some Notes on Women Printmakers," *Art Journal* 35, no. 4 (Summer 1976): 374. Over one thousand impressions by these female pioneers entered the collection of the New York Public Library in 1900, through the generosity of Samuel P. Avery (1822-1904). Many women artists from Atelier 17 looked to this permanent resource throughout the 1940s and 1950s as an inspiration for their own prints. For more on the gift and collection see, Frank Weitenkamp, *Catalogue of a Collection of Engravings, Etchings and Lithographs by Women* (New York: The Grolier Club, 1901); Weitenkamp, "Some Women Etchers"; Brodsky, "Women Printmakers."

feminists and art historians like Ellen Wiley Todd have termed the “changing ideologies of gender.”⁴ The ideals of femininity—how society believed women should act and present themselves at any given moment—have not always matched up against women’s lived reality and experiences. These fluctuating gender norms significantly inform women printmakers’ technical development, the tools they used, and the professional organizations they joined. Because every artist approached the creative process differently and came from diverse economic, social, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, to name a few factors, is difficult to define universally what the “woman printmaker’s experience” was at any given time period. In some ways, this chapter charts women printmakers’ consciousness of their collective effort and unified struggle to gain a place in the print community. Understanding the dynamic of group awareness among women printmakers at Atelier 17 is a key part of this dissertation’s larger argument that will unfold in later chapters.

Spaces of Work and Training: The Shift from Domestic Artisan to Professional Printmaker

Throughout the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, women printmakers in America practiced their craft in a variety of settings, ranging from domestic studios to commercial printing factories. The history of women printmakers’ spaces of work does not follow a teleological progression across time; instead, the norms varied greatly by historical moment, impacted by factors like sociological views on women’s paid labor and the relative level of feminist activity. Because women—especially married women—

⁴ Ellen Wiley Todd, *The “New Woman” Revised: Painting and Gender Politics on Fourteenth Street* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), xxvi–xxviii.

faced resistance to wage earning throughout American history, they often couched their professional development in traditionally “domestic” spaces or feminized occupations once deemed “male.”⁵ For female printmakers, leaving the home to work in a professional workshop conferred a sense of artistic identity, public visibility, and independence. Socio-cultural norms about work outside the home still gated women by the time Hayter arrived in New York City. In the years of World War II and the postwar period, women artists struggled with the decision to stay at home as mother-wives or pursue careers outside the home. Coming to Atelier 17 for training marked women’s resolute determination to establish a professional reputation and identity.

Linked to the shifts in women’s spaces of work, women’s engagement with physically producing their prints evolved over time and sets the context for Atelier 17’s workshop procedures. Since the colonial period, women gained more control over the spectrum of printmaking roles. Women shifted from being artisans—responsible for limited functions, such as creating a design but not engraving the plate—towards being professional artists who engaged in all aspects of print production: the conception of the design, executing it onto a matrix, inking, proofing, and printing the edition. Women’s involvement in the print process was highly dependent on prescribed standards of femininity and the history of press technology. Between the colonial period and the 1930s, debates over the division of labor in printmaking—within the commercial and fine arts realms—compared and contrasted male and female physical capacities. The industrial revolution is key to unlocking women’s level of activity in preparing and printing their woodblocks, etchings, and lithographs. When presses and production

⁵ Feminization of a job skill occurs when women outnumber men, generally causing a mass exodus of men. Men may become managers or leaders within this professional field. See Lois W. Banner, *Women in Modern America: A Brief History* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), 13.

industrialized, women largely lost the chance to prepare and print their own matrices. Before Atelier 17 came to New York, women seldom had complete control over the entire printmaking process. Working at Atelier 17 enabled women to follow the production of their prints from their initial creative idea to the completion of printed proofs. Never before in the history of women printmakers in America had women been permitted to experiment with new processes and take risks in the plate preparation and printing stages.

The Colonial Period and Early-1800s: Women Printmakers in Family Engraving Workshops

During the colonial period and roughly the first half of the nineteenth century, American women printmakers—encompassing lithographers and engravers on woodblock and metal plate—primarily worked domestically within family businesses. In these situations, they rarely achieved full oversight of a print from initial design through final execution. In general, American women artists of this era did not have access to formal instruction at the nation's newly formed art academies. Instead, training was limited to home-based study with male relatives who were artists.⁶ Accordingly, most women printmakers active in this period came from families already established in the printing business. Phyllis Peet, an art historian who extensively researched American women in printmaking during the nineteenth century, notes only a single female engraver active before 1800.⁷ After 1800, a handful of women from well-known printing families

⁶ Charlotte Streifer Rubinstein, *American Women Artists: From Early Indian Times to the Present* (New York: Avon, 1982), 40.

⁷ Eliza Colles engraved maps for her father's engineering practice. It is not known, however, where Colles had her plates professionally printed. Peet, "Emergence of American Women Printmakers," 11.

were active as printmakers.⁸ The four daughters of famed American engraver Peter Maverick (1780-1831), for example, learned engraving and lithography within the family shop. Yet, they always had incomplete roles in the production of the workshop's publications. Generally speaking, a Maverick daughter would either conceive of a design but not engrave it on metal plate or draw on a lithographic stone, or execute the design of another artist on a block, plate, or stone.⁹ There is no indication they participated in physically printing any images on the family's presses. Due to gender norms of this preindustrial society, women like the Maverick sisters did not seek commissions outside the family's cottage industry.

There are some examples from the early-nineteenth century of women serving in limited artisanal capacities at commercial workshops outside the structure of family businesses. With the increasing demand for printed materials in the early 1800s, women found employment in lithographic shops as delineators, press-feeders, hand-colorers, typesetters, and assemblers of book illustrations. These jobs did not compete hugely with roles that men usually performed at lithographic shops, which required apprenticeships that were closed to women. The tasks assigned to women were seen as less skilled and paid lower wages. They also conformed to societal norms concerning women's physical labor and feminine propriety.¹⁰ In addition to serving on the workshop floor, several notable women held managerial positions as publishers from America's colonial history

⁸ Though not listing them, Peet counts approximately fifteen women engravers active before the establishment of design schools at mid-century. She also enumerates some early lithographers. See Peet, "Emergence of American Women Printmakers," 13, 245. In an appendix to her exhibition catalogue, Helena Wright notes the biographies of several women active in the graphic arts before the mid-1800s. See Helena Wright, *With Pen & Graver: Women Graphic Artists Before 1900* (Washington, DC: National Museum of American History, 1995), 14–19.

⁹ Stephen DeWitt Stephens, *The Mavericks, American Engravers* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1950), 58, 176–78.

¹⁰ Peet, "Emergence of American Women Printmakers," 244.

onward, usually after inheriting a family printing business from a male relative or spouse.¹¹

The “delineators” job was defined by drawing designs on lithographic stone or transfer paper. Drawing was deemed a proper and appropriate skill for women, if not a natural feminine ability, and women of the middle and upper classes received drawing instruction as part of their education.¹² The delineator’s job, however, offered limited entrée into the workings of an early-nineteenth century lithographic studio. Rather than drawing on the actual stone in the studio, women mostly sketched on transfer paper, a task that could be done at home. Male employees later rubbed these drawings onto a stone at the workshop. Women would certainly never engage in the physical actions of pulling impressions from the stone.

Another job contained within women’s drawing skillset was that of hand-coloring maps and lithographic illustrations. Commercial workshops often had rooms set off from the machinery on the main printing floor for women to hand-color lithographs.¹³ This career was not intended, however, for women of higher social and economic classes. A short feature about female map-colorers from an 1846 issue of *Yankee Doodle* magazine notes that these women were paid poorly and hailed from “classes far less favored.”¹⁴ The author describes hand-coloring as drudgery and the hours so arduous that women, “often fall asleep as the hours grow big with midnight.” Furthermore, the hand-coloring profession also marked women with an outward physical blemish: fingers that “look as if

¹¹ For more on the subject of women publishers, see Leona M. Hudak, *Early American Women Printers and Publishers, 1639-1820* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1978).

¹² Wright, *With Pen & Graver*, 3–4. The belief in the “properness” of women learning drawing has historical precedent. For more, see the second section of this chapter about the gender of etching and engraving tools.

¹³ Peet, “Emergence of American Women Printmakers,” 242.

¹⁴ “Live Portraits--No 3: The Map-Colorer,” *Yankee Doodle* 1, no. 11 (December 19, 1846): 124. I am indebted to Helena’s Wright’s scholarship for bringing this article to light.

stained with the blood of ripe berries.” Drawing and hand-coloring were ways for women of both lower and middle economic classes to enter into the printmaking trade, albeit limited by period beliefs in women’s physical limitations.

Besides acting as delineators and hand-colorers, women served as press feeders where they manually fed sheets of paper into lithographic presses. In the era before the industrial revolution, lithographic presses were still relatively small and ran slowly enough that the job was rather monotonous and not seen to be overly taxing for women. There were no concerns about the presses moving too quickly for women’s physical capabilities, as will be seen with later industrialized presses. A congressional report cited figures showing that the press feeding occupation was almost entirely filled with women between 1842 and 1872.¹⁵ Illustrations confirm women’s place beside the hand press in the pre-industrial era (fig. 1-1). Even in this era of the hand-operated press, women’s placement as press feeders was not immune to criticism, mainly because of male competition.¹⁶ Women’s dominance within this role waned as the century progressed because presses became mechanized and required specialized training that was obtainable through apprenticeships open only to men.

Women also found gainful employment in commercial printing studios as compositors, a job that entailed typesetting text for books, magazines, and newspapers (fig. 1-2). Women’s small and dexterous fingers were seen to be a physical advantage for the compositor’s job of manually setting moveable type.¹⁷ Although men also served as compositors, the fact that women could be paid very low wages reduced production costs

¹⁵ The Aldrich Report to the Senate came out in 1893. A copy of this report could not be located, but the following secondary source quoted from it: Elizabeth Faulkner Baker, *Technology and Woman’s Work* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 46.

¹⁶ Baker, *Technology and Woman’s Work*, 38.

¹⁷ Hudak, *Early American Women Printers*, ix.

for book publishers and major American newspapers. Widespread agreement among the trade and several state laws, however, stipulated that women could not work the overnight hours needed to ready the morning edition of newspapers.¹⁸ Women had large exposure as compositors until the introduction of linotype machines in the late-nineteenth century, which were deemed unsuitable for women's use.

Midcentury Shifts: Design Schools Open Opportunities for Women

Women's professional participation in the graphic arts changed drastically after about 1850, affected by economic, cultural, social, and technological developments. American society by mid-century was greatly concerned about the status of a growing class of "respectable women"—orphans, widows, and those whose husbands could not support their families—and providing them with work suitable to their perceived feminine delicacy.¹⁹ The employment options for these "respectable women"—to contrast with urban immigrant women who filled domestic and garment industry jobs—could be found in such "lighter manufacture" as toy painter, hoop skirt maker, milliner, umbrella maker, typesetter, envelope maker, and photograph mounter. These professions were frequently discussed and modeled visually in the period's illustrated journals (fig. 1-3).²⁰ Certain aspects of the graphic arts were seen as perfect for women's employment, leading to the growth of professional training programs at women's design schools. Whereas this expanded training significantly increased female involvement with wood engraving and

¹⁸ Mary Biggs, "Neither Printer's Wife nor Widow: American Women in Typesetting, 1830-1950," *The Library Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (October 1980): 434; Baker, *Technology and Woman's Work*, 39.

¹⁹ Barbara Balliet, "Reproducing Gender in Nineteenth Century Illustrations," *The Journal of the Rutgers University Libraries* LX (2003): 69. For discussion of the PSDW's socio-economic breakdown, see Nina de Angeli Walls, *Art, Industry, and Women's Education in Philadelphia* (Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 2001).

²⁰ "Women and Their Work," *Harper's Bazar* 1, no. 25 (April 18, 1868): 392.

etching, women were more forcefully blocked from the trade of lithography because of its industrialized technology.

The site of training for women printmakers after mid-century moved them out of the home with family instructors into female-only design schools founded in major cities along the East Coast and eventually the Midwest. The establishment of these design schools parallels a larger cultural trend in America of women obtaining formal training at the nation's leading art academies.²¹ These design schools taught women the basics of drawing and painting before proceeding to train them in trades suitable for future employment. The schools' "professional classes" included instruction in the graphic arts—primarily wood engraving, with some lithography and etching—china decoration, and pattern design for wallpaper, carpet, and fabric.

While training at design schools seemed to remove women from the safety of the domestic realm, the schools' administrators allayed these fears by stipulating that the trades learned by women would be practiced at home.²² Clear evidence of the home-based reasoning can be found in the writings of Sarah Worthington King Peter (1800-1877), founder of the Philadelphia School of Design for Women (PSDW).²³ Peter was a wealthy Philadelphia philanthropist who, in November 1848, opened a school in her home for twenty young girls to learn drawing.²⁴ Peter wanted to rectify "the deprivation and

²¹ For more, see Rubinstein, *American Women Artists*, 92–93; Kirsten Swinth, *Painting Professionals: Women Artists & the Development of Modern American Art, 1870-1930* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

²² Recent scholarship about women in nineteenth-century America has worked to complicate the polarities of public/private and inside/outside of the home. See particularly Jay Kleinberg's contribution to Janet Floyd et al., eds., *Becoming Visible: Women's Presence in Late Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Rodopi, 2010).

²³ The PSDW was renamed the Moore College of Art & Design in 1932. Moore continues to educate young women and is still located in Philadelphia's city center.

²⁴ Sarah Peter, "Letter to Samuel V. Merrick, ESQ., President of the Franklin Institute," in *Proceedings of the Franklin Institute of the State of Pennsylvania, for the Promotion of the Mechanic Arts, Relative to the*

suffering to which a large and increasing number of women are exposed in this city” by providing them with skills in the decorative arts that they could use for a means of support.²⁵ Having physically outgrown her house and requiring more monetary support than she as one individual could give, Peter transferred the school to the Franklin Institute where it resided from 1850 until it privately incorporated in November 1853.

Peter’s 1850 petition to the Franklin Institute emphasizes that the overriding intent behind the school meshed with the broader impetus to provide domestically based outlets of work for respectable women. Peter states that she selected the design arts “because these arts can be practised [*sic*] *at home*, without materially interfering with the routine of domestic duty, which is the peculiar province of women.”²⁶ In keeping with social and gender standards of the period, PSDW board members voiced their concerns about protecting female students from unspeakable dangers outside the home. In his reply to Peter, John Frazer wrote that it would be preferable for PSDW students to practice their crafts “at their homes, or at least without crowding them together in workshops; and especially without forcing them into contact with the opposite sex—practices which are too frequently destructive to female delicacy.”²⁷ To enforce propriety, design schools like the PSDW set up a system of monitoring student commissions both while women were enrolled at the school and often after they graduated.²⁸ While many graduates worked on

Establishment of a School of Design for Women, with the Rules and Regulations of the School (Philadelphia: King & Baird, Printers, 1851), 4.

²⁵ Peter, “Letter to Samuel V. Merrick,” 3.

²⁶ Peter, “Letter to Samuel V. Merrick,” 4 (emphasis original).

²⁷ John F. Frazer, “Letter to Board of Managers of the Franklin Institute,” in *Proceedings of the Franklin Institute of the State of Pennsylvania, for the Promotion of the Mechanic Arts, Relative to the Establishment of a School of Design for Women, with the Rules and Regulations of the School* (Philadelphia: King & Baird, Printers, 1851), 8.

²⁸ In the early years of its existence, the PSDW allowed students to retain three-quarters of their total earnings and required them to give the remaining one-quarter to the school. See Peet, “Emergence of

commissions at home, they frequently relied on their alma mater to arrange future commissions and often took advantage of in-school workspace provided to alumnae.

A second factor motivated the development of printmaking curricula at nineteenth-century design schools, namely that the graphic arts would serve underrepresented or emerging markets, rather than compete with established male professions. Peter carefully packaged the PSDW's mission in 1850 to the Franklin Institute's board of managers as an institution that would not encroach on men's work. Within the first paragraph of her petition, she stated: "I selected this department of industry...because it presents a wide field, as yet unoccupied by our countrymen."²⁹ Later in the letter, Peter again assured the Franklin Institute managers that the design skills learned at the PSDW would not hurt male career prospects: "for our men, there are now, and there must long continue to exist, so many more direct and more easily to be attained avenues to fortune, that high excellence in the industrial arts of design can rarely be expected of them."³⁰ In agreeing to take on the PSDW, the Franklin Institute board consented that women would be able to "sustain themselves by their own labor" in "a heretofore unoccupied branch of industry."³¹

Though men had firmly established themselves as wood engravers by the 1840s, the design schools' oversight of student and alumnae commissions ensured little crossover.³² By the second half of the nineteenth century, images flooded the American

American Women Printmakers," 15; *First Annual Report of the Philadelphia School of Design for Women* (Philadelphia: Crissy & Markley, 1854), 17.

²⁹ Peter, "Letter to Samuel V. Merrick," 4.

³⁰ Peter, "Letter to Samuel V. Merrick," 6.

³¹ Frazer, "Letter to Board of Managers," 9.

³² Ann Anderson Maverick (ca. 1810-1863) who was the daughter of the most prominent nineteenth-century wood engraver, Alexander Anderson (1775-1870), is the only family-trained female wood engraver known before the establishment of design schools at mid-century. Peet, "Emergence of American Women Printmakers," 13. For more on men's establishment in the field of wood engraving, see Ann Prentice

marketplace—whether in illustrated journals, newspapers, books, advertisements and posters—and publishers needed a steady stream of image-producers. Because female wood engravers often worked on commissions within school workshops, the subject matter of their wood engravings had to comply with the design schools’ standards. Most students completed what Phyllis Peet has characterized as “routine illustrations and advertisements” that could be worked on at school or equally brought into the home without affront. A wood engraving from around 1851 advertising the PSDW to potential Philadelphia patrons visually conveys the schools’ efforts to keep commissions within the domestic sphere (fig. 1-4). Behind a large female figure in the foreground holding a scroll with the school’s name and address, four female students sit together at a communal worktable. The four visible designs that they work on should be read as paradigms of appropriate subject matter for PSDW students: from left to right, the designs show a geometric pattern (possibly architectural), a portrait, a landscape, and drinking pitcher. Women wood engravers also worked on images of sentimental, passive women for the illustrated journals of the period.³³ Almost certainly, women were not working on illustrations for medical and scientific texts, fitting with the period’s reticence to grant women access to the nude or anatomical body.³⁴ Nevertheless, the burgeoning publishing industry was large enough for women to excel in this narrow band of wood engraving without encroaching on male professional space or socially questionable subject matter.

Wagner, “The Graver, the Brush, and the Ruling Machine: The Training of Late-Nineteenth-Century Wood Engravers,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 105, no. Part 1 (April 1995): 167–91.

³³ Barbara Balliet has remarked on the discrepancy between women illustrators’ perpetuating the image of the housebound, sentimental, passive woman and illustrators’ lived reality as professionals within American commerce. Balliet, “Reproducing Gender,” 86.

³⁴ Biggs, “Neither Printer’s Wife,” 433. My research for a seminar paper indicated that nineteenth-century women wood engravers had little or no access to the anatomical body. See Christina Weyl, “Gendering Medical Illustration in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia” (December 2010), written for Dr. Tanya Sheehan’s seminar on American Art and Science, Rutgers University.

During the era of female design schools, the production of wood engraving from initial concept to the finished printed product was carefully segmented based on gender to prevent overlap between the sexes and to tailor to women's "feminine" strengths. Nineteenth-century commentaries propose that women were physically better suited to carving wood engravings than men. Sarah E. Fuller's (ca. 1829-1901) manual on wood engraving (1867)—targeted towards teaching female practitioners—qualifies some boundaries for women wood engravers and recommends they not overexert themselves by engraving more than five or six hours per day, as compared to the acceptable eight or nine hour for men.³⁵ The diagrams of proper tool handling in Fuller's manual, in fact, illustrate women's hands with decorative cuffed sleeves, visually reinforcing the designation of engraving to the female sex (fig. 1-5).

Women's involvement in commercial wood engraving did not extend to printing blocks, because the printer's job was reserved for more physically "robust" men. Women likely handed their completed blocks over to publishers and printers, mostly men who acquired specialized skills through trade apprenticeship. Although Sarah Fuller's 1867 manual includes basic instructions for how to pull a proof by hand from a wood engraving, she does not discuss how to operate the woodblock press needed for printing large quantities of commercial illustrations.³⁶ Additionally, Phyllis Peet's dissertation research into design schools' curricula showed that women did not receive training to print their own woodblocks.³⁷ The socially prescribed division of labor barred female

³⁵ Sarah E. Fuller, *A Manual of Instruction in the Art of Wood Engraving* (Boston: Joseph Watson, 1867), iv.

³⁶ Fuller, *A Manual of Instruction*, 25–27.

³⁷ Peet, "Emergence of American Women Printmakers," 117.

wood engravers from achieving full creative control over their wood engraving process, from carving through printing.

Lithography flagged behind wood engraving as a viable female career option in the second half of the nineteenth century, because new, industrial printing presses might injure their feminine “delicacy.” As innovations in press technology and steam power enabled presses to run faster and more efficiently, women were displaced from commercial lithography shops.³⁸ Shops looked to fill jobs with men who could handle the larger, mechanized presses like the Hoe Company’s enormous rotary press (fig. 1-6). The increasing male population at these lithography factories made them less “modest” than shops of the early nineteenth century. In particular, the press feeder job was realigned into a male role, since press feeders were increasingly called upon to assist pressmen with operating the new mechanized machinery.³⁹ Press feeder jobs needed more technical expertise—acquired through on-the-job training and apprenticeships that were closed to women—and physical stamina to move lithography stones, stacks of paper, and press parts.

Women who somehow managed to pursue a career as a printer in commercial lithography shops—through personal or family connections to industry professionals—were regarded with suspicion and their femininity called into question. One contemporary observer commented on the “toughened expression” of a female itinerant printer and suggested her profession adversely affected her gender: “No tender, trusting female was

³⁸ For more information on developments in nineteenth-century press technology, see Clinton Adams, *American Lithographers, 1900-1960: The Artists and Their Printers* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), 7; Jay T. Last, *The Color Explosion: Nineteenth-Century American Lithography* (Santa Ana, CA: Hillcrest Press, 2005), 24, 280–2.

³⁹ Baker, *Technology and Woman’s Work*, 46.

she, but a hardened, suspicious, masculine woman.”⁴⁰ Realizing the limited career options for women in commercial lithography and the lack of market for non-commercial lithographs, design schools taught only the basics of drawing on stones and had small hand presses available to students. Schools stopped offering lithography courses, however, in the 1880s when presses grew larger.⁴¹

Competition with men was also cited as a rationale for curtailing women’s involvement in commercial lithography shops, particularly with the role of compositor. Large, nationally based unions began consolidating local trade unions in the printing industry in the late-1800s. These national organizing bodies struggled with whether to admit female members—and therefore advocate for the equalization of women’s lower wages—or block women from union membership.⁴² While some print shop owners spoke publically about the benefits of female workers—lower wages, more obedient employees—the union’s trade journals were very negative toward women. They accused women of being selfish by working in the printing fields, because they were taking jobs away from men.⁴³ As non-unionized workers, women were hired as scabs during labor strikes as early as the 1850s, a decision that leading suffragette Susan B. Anthony supported.⁴⁴ Union opposition severely limited women’s access to jobs in the lithography industry in the late-nineteenth century and produced a ripple effect on women printmakers’ activity in the medium into the early-1900s.

⁴⁰ As quoted from an October 1883 issue of *Inland Printer* in Ellen Mazur Thomson, “Alms for Oblivion: The History of Women in Early American Graphic Design,” *Design Issues* 10, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 36.

⁴¹ Peet, “Emergence of American Women Printmakers,” 117, 133, 252.

⁴² The United Typographical Union (formed in 1852) struggled with this problem. See Thomson, “Alms for Oblivion,” 33.

⁴³ Thomson, “Alms for Oblivion,” 34, n. 36.

⁴⁴ Biggs, “Neither Printer’s Wife,” 440–42; Thomson, “Alms for Oblivion,” 35.

Etching during the second half of the nineteenth century exists as the only example where women had full artistic supervision rather than partial artisanal control over the creative process. Women's more comprehensive activity with the etching process is attributable to several factors: etching could be practiced from home; there was less concern about women using hand-presses; and the etching market was relatively small until the late-nineteenth century etching revival.⁴⁵ The American etching revival began in the 1870s and 1880s, largely modeled on similar movements in England and France. Female design schools offered courses in etching by the late 1800s, but etching was problematic since it did not have a built-in commercial market as wood engraving did. Most women who pursued an etching career hailed from middle and upper class families and did not have to support themselves financially.⁴⁶

Etching was deemed suitable for women because all aspects of the technique could be practiced at home, from plate preparation to printing. Design schools like the PSDW taught its students how to etch their plates in acid and operate small hand presses.⁴⁷ After completing their training, women etchers could procure a hand press for their home-studios.⁴⁸ Helen Hyde (1868-1919), who worked for years in Japan, creating etchings and woodcuts of *japonisme*-influenced mother-child subjects, had a small custom-made press that fit seamlessly into the intimate setting of even her bedroom (fig.

⁴⁵ Etching only accounted for 2% of prints sold in the United States in 1875, but went up to 73% by 1883. Reed Anderson, *American Etchers Abroad, 1880-1939* (Lawrence, KS: Spencer Museum of Art, 2004), 16.

⁴⁶ Peet, "Emergence of American Women Printmakers," 96.

⁴⁷ Peet, "Emergence of American Women Printmakers," 133. James Smillie's etching class at the National Academy of Design, initiated in 1894, however, took their plates to a professional printer Kimmel & Voight.

⁴⁸ At this time, artists often could not find printing presses, due to shortages. Rona Schneider discusses the difficulty artists faced during the American etching revival in procuring press equipment to print their own plates. Henry Farrer, for example, built his own press, and Sam Colman waited almost ten years after first trying etching in 1867 for reliable access to a press through membership to the New York Etching Club. See Rona Schneider, "The American Etching Revival: Its French Sources and Early Years," *American Art Journal* 14, no. 4 (October 1, 1982): 44, 60.

1-7).⁴⁹ Its decorative stand on castors was impractical for pulling anything but the smallest of prints. Hyde's posture in turning the gear wheel—her hands lightly grasping the handles, pinkies uplifted—is more ladylike and restrained than the potent physical posture historically associated with the printer, represented best in Abraham Bosse's seventeenth-century image of the etching shop (fig. 1-8). In Bosse's print, the press operator at far right strains to turn the press wheel. His arms are outstretched above his head, reaching to pull an arm of the press wheel, and his right foot pushes down on another arm. Further stressing the domestic focus of women's etching activity, Bertha Jaques (1863-1941), who started etching in the early 1890s, repurposed a clothes wringer into a makeshift printing press.⁵⁰

The late nineteenth-century etching revival stressed the importance of artists inking and printing their own plates, to distinguish fine art etching from commercial reproductions. An etcher's complete supervision over the process was key to establishing his or her qualifications and marketability as a painter-engraver. Whether or not women etched and printed their own plates varied on an individual basis, depending on factors like a print's edition size and market distribution. Small editions could be easily executed at home, and artists like Mary Nimmo Moran (1842-1889) had a press in her home-studio.⁵¹ Moran and others, however, also worked closely with professional printers to

⁴⁹ Julia Meech and Gabriel P. Weisberg, *Japonisme Comes to America: The Japanese Impact on the Graphic Arts, 1876-1925* (New York: H.N. Abrams in association with the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, 1990), 103–104.

⁵⁰ This effort was ultimately unsuccessful. Joby Patterson, *Bertha E. Jaques and the Chicago Society of Etchers* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002), 115. For later adaptations of clothes wringers into printing presses, see Chapter 2.

⁵¹ Shannon Vittoria, PhD Candidate at the CUNY Graduate Center, is currently writing a dissertation about Mary Nimmo Moran entitled "Nature and Nostalgia in the Etchings of Mary Nimmo Moran, 1842-1899." According to Vittoria, Nimmo Moran was involved in many stages of the etching process. She marked her plates (often *en plein air*) and etched them in her home-studio. Her artist-husband, Thomas Moran, was an excellent printmaker, and it is difficult to untangle the extent to which Nimmo Moran was reliant on him

proof and print larger editions. John Chapman, who wrote the first American manual on etching in 1847, considered working with professional printers a major “relief” and a necessity for women etchers and amateurs.⁵² The potential for women to exert total control over etching made the medium especially important for future generations of American women printmakers.

The Early-Twentieth Century: Leaving the Home and Gaining Creative Control

Between the turn of the century through the mid-1930s, women commanded control over a greater range of steps to create etchings and woodblocks, even as their involvement with lithography still lagged behind.⁵³ Mirroring broader social and economic developments, women printmakers worked more frequently outside the home and vied for professional opportunities alongside male colleagues without as much backlash. With the mounting influence of the women’s rights movement and feminism—a term first introduced in 1910—American women achieved more social freedom, economic capital, and legal rights as so-called “New Women.” Despite this forward progress, American society still maintained fairly conservative views about women in the work force: the proportion of women in the workforce in the 1920s did not change; women worked in predominately feminized fields such as clerical jobs; and most left

versus printing for herself. The Morans installed an etching press in their studios, first in Newark (late-1870s) and later in East Hampton (early-1880s).

⁵² J. G Chapman, *The American Drawing-Book: a Manual for the Amateur, and Basis of Study for the Professional Artist*, New edition (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1870), 267.

⁵³ The roughly twenty years from about the mid-1890s to the mid-1910s were particularly dormant for printmaking in America. The etching market became oversaturated because artists and entrepreneurs flooded it with large quantities of electrotyped images. These popular prints could be found for sale as commodities in dry-good and department stores. Field et al., *American Prints, 1900-1950*, 17; Patterson, *Bertha E. Jaques*, 19–20; Anderson, *American Etchers Abroad*, 16. Wood engraving and lithography also fell into disuse commercially, having been replaced by photomechanical illustrations.

their jobs after marriage.⁵⁴ These trends were especially acute in the post-suffrage period. After gaining the vote in 1920, the women's rights movement splintered into many factions, some of which believed marriage and career were mutually incompatible and unsustainable.⁵⁵ This social context is important to keep in mind when considering the steps women printmakers took to acquire training and establish their professional reputations, sometimes while also juggling marriage and motherhood.

Training options for women printmakers in the early-twentieth century reveal the broader societal approval of unmarried women working alongside men and outside the home. By the mid-1910s, a greater number of options existed for women to learn printmaking skills, whether in formal school environments or informal peer-to-peer settings. The major boost to women's more equitable access to printmaking training in the early-twentieth century occurred at The Art Students League, founded in 1875. During the 1921-22 academic year, Joseph Pennell (1857-1926) established etching and lithography courses and built the school's infrastructure from one press to seven by the end of 1922.⁵⁶ Pennell's class was not first the New York school to offer coed printmaking courses; James Smillie (1833-1909) admitted women to his etching course at the National Academy of Design beginning in 1894, albeit begrudgingly.⁵⁷ Pennell

⁵⁴ Banner, *Women in Modern America*, 162.

⁵⁵ For more background on the heterogeneity of the feminist causes after suffrage, see Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987).

⁵⁶ The school had offered graphic arts courses in some capacity as early as 1907. For more on the history of printmaking courses at the Art Students League, see Judith Goldman, *One Hundred Prints by 100 Artists of the Art Students League of New York, 1875-1975* (New York: Associated American Artists, 1975); Reba White Williams, "The Weyhe Gallery Between the Wars, 1919-1940" (City University of New York, 1996), 24-25; Pam Koob, *A Century of Paper: Prints by Art Students League Artists 1901-2001* (New York: Art Students League, 2002).

⁵⁷ Peet, "Emergence of American Women Printmakers," 202.

mentored several women artists throughout his tenure at the League.⁵⁸ The League was already particularly egalitarian, evidenced in the school's administrative structure where women served in equal numbers on the Board of Control.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the League's enrollment policy granted students flexibility to take classes on a month-to-month basis rather than by semester, which facilitated experimentation with new graphic techniques and also accommodated women juggling marriage and professional aspirations.⁶⁰

Several other New York City-based schools also offered coed training in printmaking, including the Grand Central School of Art, the Pratt Institute with Arthur Wesley Dow, and the Cooper Union.⁶¹ The New School for Social Research, where Atelier 17 relocated in 1940, periodically offered printmaking courses in lithography, etching, and woodcut from about the mid-1930s onward.⁶² These early course offerings at the New School were important precursors to the accessibility of avant-garde printmaking training that Atelier 17 offered to women artists.

Despite the more egalitarian training opportunities, homosocial networks among women artists and printmakers were particularly strong at this time.⁶³ Women offered each other support through peer-to-peer instruction, the exchange of technical know-how,

⁵⁸ Helen Langa has documented Pennell's positive impact on the careers of Helen Loggie (1895-1976) and Mary Huntoon (1896-1970). See Helen Langa, "American Women Printmakers: Adventurous Choices, Modernist Innovations," in *American Women Modernists: The Legacy of Robert Henri, 1910-1945* (New Brunswick, NJ: Brigham Young University Museum of Art; In association with Rutgers University Press, 2005), 77-83.

⁵⁹ Lang and Lang, *Etched in Memory* (1990), 141.

⁶⁰ Importantly, several women artists from Atelier 17 received preliminary training in the graphic arts at the League. These artists include Jan Gelb, Worden Day, Louise Bourgeois, Minna Citron, and Dorothy Dehner.

⁶¹ Langa, "American Women Printmakers," 60; Seaton, *Paths to the Press*, 14.

⁶² Helen Langa, *Radical Art: Printmaking and the Left in 1930s New York* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 31.

⁶³ Seaton, *Paths to the Press*, 13; Todd, *The "New Woman" Revised*, 2. For discussion of the female-female friendship type and its antecedent in nineteenth-century social and familial contexts, see "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America" in Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1985), 53-76.

and access to printing presses. Indeed, there are countless examples of women corresponding with each other by letter and working together in person on graphic art endeavors. Among them are: Bertha Jaques and Helen Hyde who had a mutually supportive long-distance and long-term friendship; the companions Gabrielle Clements (1858-1948) and Ellen Day Hale (1855-1940) who shared an etching studio; and the Provincetown Printmakers—Blanche Lazzell, Edna Boies Hopkins, Ethel Mars, and Ada Gilmore—who in 1915 colonized the Cape Cod town and innovated a process for single-block color woodblocks. Bertha Jaques was a central hub for disseminating information about printmaking. As a founder of the Chicago Society of Etchers (CSE), she tirelessly lectured and gave demonstrations about etching—about one hundred and forty public engagements in her lifetime—and taught newcomers how to print and process their plates.⁶⁴

Yet, women still struggled at this juncture to print their own work. Several challenges limited women's printing, including lack of access to equipment and technical knowledge, the extent to which the labor removed women from the domestic setting, and the persistent gender bias against women performing physically taxing work. As was the norm in the nineteenth-century situation, women's oversight of the printing process varied by medium during the early-twentieth century. Wood engraving and woodcut had the lowest barriers to entry: artists could complete small editions at home without a press, much specialized knowledge, or investment in expensive tools. With the revival of artistic woodcuts and wood engraving in the 1910s, a generation of female woodblock

⁶⁴ For more on Jaques's activities, see Lang and Lang, *Etched in Memory* (2001), 7; Patterson, *Bertha E. Jaques*, 52–53.

printmakers flourished, all executing their blocks from start to finish. Etching and lithography, however, necessitated access to printing presses.

The fact that etching production could be confined within the domestic sphere on small presses made women's activities less problematic in an era still suspicious about women working outside the home and after marriage. Peggy Bacon (1895-1987), famed for her witty drypoint caricatures of New York street scenes and the art world, recreated the domestic intimacy of marking an intaglio plate in her self-portrait, *Lady Artist* (fig. 1-9).⁶⁵ Bacon sits on a counter stool; her shoe heels tucked into the chair's stretcher which props up her knees to become her work surface. In the urban environment, Bacon is not completely alone—her cat keeps her company, as do the faces peering out from windows in the building seen out her window. Bertha Jaques also emphasized the suitability of etching to women's domestic life in her practical manual about etching (1913), writing that: “etching is the intimate art...the art of the home.”⁶⁶ Furthermore, the exertion of pulling an etching from a home-press was not seen as overly taxing for female printmakers. Jaques insisted that etching was not physically challenging: “labor is the one thing that should not be apparent in the etching.”⁶⁷

Some women printmakers were more active in the printing process in the early-twentieth century, countering the physical reservations of Bacon and Jaques. Wanda Gág (1893-1936), known best for her style of undulating landscapes and objects that seems to pulsate with movement, had a table-top etching press in her studio. In a photograph

⁶⁵ Bacon learned printmaking informally while a student at the Art Students League. Before Pennell established the formal printmaking program in 1919, Bacon and colleague Anne Rector discovered and began using an old etching class in the corner of Kenneth Hayes Miller's classroom. Roberta K. Tarbell, *Peggy Bacon, Personalities and Places* (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1975), 9–15.

⁶⁶ Bertha E. Jaques, *Concerning Etchings*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, IL: T. Rubovits, 1913), 32.

⁶⁷ Jaques, *Concerning Etchings*, 31.

snapped of her in process, Gág's entire body is tensed (fig. 1-10). In a similar pose to the printer in Abraham Bosse's etching (fig. 1-8), she bends at the waist, her arms and feet stretched in front of her to counter the force of her arms pulling the press spoke.

Women printmakers of the early-twentieth century had little involvement in printing lithographs due to several factors. As a result of late nineteenth-century trends, apprenticeships in commercial lithography workshops were off-limits to women. By the early-twentieth century, the Club of Printing Women of New York, founded in 1930, noted the seeming unsuitability of commercial printing for women's careers because of the era's sex-defined workforce roles: "[printing is] not one of the typically feminine fields, like teaching, or fashion, or interior decorating, or nursing."⁶⁸ Due to the technical complexities of processing and printing stones, lithography was inaccessible to novices who lacked apprenticeship experience. Additionally, presses were impractically large, expensive, and not easily brought into a home-studio.⁶⁹

In general, all artists of the early-twentieth century had to persuade these commercially trained male lithographers to collaborate with them artistically. Most commercial printers were unsuited or unwilling to work with artists in an aesthetic capacity. The illustrious printmaker, John Sloan (1871-1951), struggled to prove his own lithographs on a small press, even with the assistance of a professional lithographer, as memorialized in his print *Amateur Lithographers* (fig. 1-11).⁷⁰ Both Sloan and his friend Carl Moellmann appear comically exhausted, both of their bodies straining to operate the

⁶⁸ Club of Printing Women of New York, *Antique, Modern & Swash; A Brief History of Women in Printing* (New York: Club of Printing Women of New York, 1955), 6.

⁶⁹ See Russell Limbach essay in *Art for Millions*, where he complains about there being no "portable proving presses." Francis V. O'Connor, *Art for the Millions: Essays from the 1930s by Artists and Administrators of the WPA Federal Art Project* (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1973).

⁷⁰ For more about Sloan's early experiments with lithography, see Adams, *American Lithographers, 1900-1960*, 24.

press. With stress lines encircling his head, Moellmann turns the crank with one hand and pushes the scraper bar with the other, while Sloan tugs at the press bed. Until George Miller (1894-1965) and Bolton Brown (1864-1936) established contract lithography services for artists in 1917 and 1919 respectively, American artists interested in lithography often traveled to Europe to work with master printers like Edmund Desjober, Auguste Clot, and others.⁷¹ The inaccessibility of the lithography process to women would grow increasingly worse after the Depression and continue to hinder women in government-sponsored printmaking workshops.

Seeming Equality in the Works Progress Administration's Graphics Arts Divisions

The Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Program (WPA-FAP), one of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's work relief programs started to combat the Depression, initiated a major shift for women in printmaking. The WPA-FAP's Graphic Arts Divisions were formed in 1935 in thirty-six centers across the United States, both in major cities and less populous locales. Over its four years in existence, the graphic arts workshops employed about eight hundred artists who are estimated to have made 12,500 images in editions of twenty-five to fifty, translating into approximately 239,000 prints!⁷² Gender gated women's qualification to work within the Graphic Arts Division of the WPA-FAP. Women often had trouble substantiating their artistic credentials to qualify for FAP-specific jobs, because the conservatism and male-dominance of the art world in

⁷¹ Langa, *Radical Art*, 14.

⁷² Elizabeth Gaede Seaton, "Federal Prints and Democratic Culture: The Graphic Arts Division of the Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project, 1935-1943" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2000), 6. For more information on the WPA-FAP Graphic Arts Division, see Jacob Kainen, "The Graphic Arts Division of the WPA Federal Art Project," in *The New Deal Art Projects: An Anthology of Memoirs* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1972), 155-76; Langa, "Egalitarian Vision"; O'Connor, *Art for the Millions*; Kimn Carlton-Smith, "A New Deal for Women: Women Artists and the Federal Art Project, 1935-1939" (PhD diss., Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1990).

the 1920s and 1930s had prevented their professional endeavors.⁷³ Women represented about one-quarter of the total artists employed by the Graphic Arts Division.⁷⁴ New York City's WPA-FAP graphic unit, one of the best-documented workshops with lithography, etching, woodblock and screen-printing capabilities, employed at least thirty women, representing one-third of the eighty-eight total artists, a slightly higher ratio than the national average.⁷⁵

Once women gained entry into the WPA-FAP's Graphic Arts Division, the workshop procedures seemed superficially egalitarian.⁷⁶ Women artists received equal pay for equal work and, years after the program ended, recounted memories of parity with their male peers.⁷⁷ Elizabeth Olds (1897-1991), for one, affirmed, "we were all just artists."⁷⁸ Several protocols benefited working mothers and wives, whom Depression-era social mores and the period's economic turmoil encouraged to stay home. Although the workshop facilities were completely open to all artists, most chose to work from home.

⁷³ All artists seeking a relief position within the FAP had to substantiate their artistic qualifications, which could consist of press clippings, portfolios of work, and exhibition brochures. Outside of their qualifications for the FAP, women had trouble qualifying for WPA relief. Local and state officials first evaluated whether artists met eligibility guidelines for federal relief. For any person, regardless of gender, qualifying for WPA relief was a maddening process of proving financial need and divesting oneself of everyday comforts. Women faced additional obstacles since the WPA would only approve a female applicant if she were deemed the head of household; if married, her husband had first priority for relief work. As in the nineteenth century, American public opinion believed women should not take jobs away from men and overwhelmingly (82% by a 1936 Gallup poll) disapproved of married women entering the workforce. Research shows that most female artists within the New York graphic arts unit were single, probably to meet WPA eligibility. See Chapter 1 of Carlton-Smith, "A New Deal for Women."

⁷⁴ Seaton, *Paths to the Press*, 15.

⁷⁵ Carlton-Smith, "A New Deal for Women," 241.

⁷⁶ In general, WPA program administrators held rather patriarchal views about what constituted suitable work for male and female relief workers. In 1936, over half of the women employed by the WPA worked in "sewing rooms," where they repurposed old garments and sewed new items from surplus materials. Additional jobs for women on the WPA included such typically "feminine" positions as librarians, clerks, researchers, and other domestic roles in canning and nutrition. Women's work options would, of course, expand with America's entry into World War II and the demand for female support of war industrial production. Susan Ware, *Holding Their Own: American Women in the 1930s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 40.

⁷⁷ See Helen Langa's research on equality and women artists within the graphic arts division of the WPA-FAP, in Langa, "Egalitarian Vision"; Langa, *Radical Art*, 213–19.

⁷⁸ As quoted in Langa, *Radical Art*, 213.

Program administrators coordinated the delivery and pickup of heavy lithographic stones to artists' homes, and artists scheduled appointments to come into the WPA-FAP workshops to pull proofs with professional printers. The program also encouraged artists to work on etchings at home, because they could place the acid bath near an open window and better disburse the toxic fumes.⁷⁹

Despite these egalitarian benefits and tolerance for home-based work, women had almost no access to printing their own work.⁸⁰ In order to establish the Graphic Arts Division workshops quickly and streamline the production of thousands of prints, WPA-FAP administrators hired out-of-work printers from the commercial printing industry.⁸¹ Since women had previously vacated these trade jobs during the industrial revolution, all of the printers employed in WPA-FAP workshops were men. The WPA visualized the printer's role in promotional material and photography of the graphic workshops as definitively masculine. An illustrated chart from 1936, showing the range of WPA-FAP jobs, presents a muscled male printer with rolled shirtsleeves assuming quintessential printer's pose (fig. 1-12). Like Abraham Bosse's depiction of the printer centuries earlier (fig. 1-8), the WPA printmaker's outstretched arms strain to pull down on the press wheel. Developments in modern press technology and gear mechanisms had removed the need for such brute force. Yet, the visual conflation of physical strength and turning the

⁷⁹ For more on the procedures of the New York WPA-FAP workshop, see Kainen, "The Graphic Arts Division," 162.

⁸⁰ More experienced artists could work independently on experimental techniques, such as color lithography, color woodblock, carborundum printing and silkscreen, but the number of artists who actually had this opportunity was quite small. Kainen, "The Graphic Arts Division," 167–170. For more on the invention of the carborundum print, see Lowery Stokes Sims, *Alone in a Crowd: Prints of the 1930s-40s by African-American Artists, from the Collection of Reba and Dave Williams* ([New York]: American Federation of Arts, 1993); Lisa Gail Collins, Lisa Mintz Messinger, and Rachel Mustalish, *African-American Artists, 1929-1945: Prints, Drawings, and Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 10.

⁸¹ For a longer discussion of the role of commercial printers in WPA-FAP shops, see Seaton, "Federal Prints and Democratic Culture," 83–113.

press wheel continued to dominate depictions of press workers.⁸² Some liberal reformers and WPA-FAP administrators hoped that such representations of the strong male printer would help equate the artists' profession with blue-collar, industrial laborers and dispel notions of artists as unkempt, cerebral bohemians.⁸³

Countless other representations of WPA printers establish the stereotype of the male printer. Jacob Kainen's *Wood Block Printer* (1940) associates the robust upper body of the male printer with the wood block press he is seated behind (fig. 1-13). The printer's outstretched arm echoes the press's lever. Showing three printers at work proofing etchings, Gyula Zilzer's *The Etching Printer* (1938) depicts the New York WPA-FAP workshop as an overwhelmingly masculine environment (fig. 1-14). The two etching presses that fill up the workshop space, because of the print's awkward perspective, fortify the male influence with their cast-iron frames. By the time that Margaret Lowengrund (1902-1957) advertised the color lithography course she taught at the New School in 1938, the printer's arm on the promotional poster was muscular and male, despite the fact she was a female teacher (fig. 1-15).⁸⁴ Clearly, not much had changed in the gender-assignment of printers' role since the nineteenth century.

When dealing with professional printers, the WPA-FAP administrators hoped to rectify the separation between artists and printers that occurred as a result of the industrial revolution.⁸⁵ But, their concern over the fate of printmaking did not include women as active participants. The breakdown of roles along gender lines represents a step

⁸² Ad Stijnman, *Engraving and Etching, 1400-2000: A History of the Development of Manual Intaglio Printmaking Processes* (London; Houton, Netherlands: Archetype; Hes & De Graaf, 2012), 97 and 125, n. 255.

⁸³ Seaton, "Federal Prints and Democratic Culture," 115–118.

⁸⁴ Seaton, *Paths to the Press*, 38.

⁸⁵ Lynd Ward, the wood engraver and author of several "novels in woodcut," was the director of the New York WPA-FAP graphic workshop and felt strongly that artist and printer must be reunited.

backwards for women printmakers' progress towards achieving full artistic control.⁸⁶ Many women artists were disappointed to lose the practical support of professional printers in executing the complicated steps of lithography when the WPA-FAP Graphic Arts Division workshops closed in 1943. By the time Hayter established Atelier 17 in New York, women were clamoring for economically viable opportunities to reengage with the graphic arts. The end of government-sponsored professional printing assistance in lithography, combined with Hayter's insistence that artists conceive, execute, and print their own work, pushed many women artists to shift their focus to intaglio and woodblock media. Atelier 17's setup where artists were required to perform every step of the etching, engraving, or woodblock process themselves became a key component of establishing women's professional identity in the postwar New York School. Ultimately, mastering the full complement of these printmaking tasks enabled women to compete with men in the critical and commercial marketplaces.

The Gender of Printmaking's Tools and Equipment

Throughout the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, gender impacted the understanding of printmaking tools. This fact will become very apparent within the context of Atelier 17, as discussed in Chapter Three, because Hayter's teaching pedagogy emphasized using engraving and etching tools in a war-like manner as instruments of violence. The following discussion analyzes Atelier 17's historical precedents and seeks to pinpoint why certain tools were deemed suitable for women. A common argument rationalizing printmaking's appropriateness for women was that its tools fit within the

⁸⁶ Some women reminisced in later interviews that working with male printers did not bother them and, in many cases, let them achieve more complex prints. Seaton, *Paths to the Press*, 38.

domestic environment. Instructional manuals and critical commentary noted especially comparisons of etching needles with women's needlework. Encouraging women to work with other tools of printmaking—like etching acid—was met with trepidation. Etching and engraving tools' strong links to the medical and dental fields also impacted women's ability to work as printmakers. The shifts in gender norms across time may account for why some women hesitated to work with certain tools, and others embraced them as a way to break through professional barriers.

In keeping with the domestic emphasis on women's labor and spaces of work, tools that had domestic associations or could be easily brought into the home were deemed most suitable for women printmakers. One of the fundamental hurdles women printmakers faced was which type of matrix they could work on and manipulate at home. As previously mentioned, woodblocks had the advantage of being lightweight, portable, and small enough to maneuver simply by one person. Women could even manage etching's slightly heavier copper plates with ease, since plate sizes rarely exceeded twelve inches until the mid-twentieth-century print revival increased the average dimensions. In fact, Bertha Jaques initially sourced her plates from kitchen equipment—finding suitable material in the copper sheets intended for the underside of a teakettle—offering evidence that the etching plate fit seamlessly into the home.⁸⁷ Lithography stones, however, were too heavy for women to transport to and from lithography studios. Depending on its thickness, a twelve-inch square stone could weigh approximately thirty pounds. The WPA-FAP graphic workshops temporarily facilitated women's ability to use lithography stones because it coordinated pick up and delivery of stones to home-studios, freeing women from the need to lift or carry with them.

⁸⁷ Lang and Lang, *Etched in Memory* (1990), 175–6; Patterson, *Bertha E. Jaques*, 115.

Domesticity also featured prominently in period discourse, which compared and contrasted the tools of etching and engraving with language veiling overriding concerns about femininity and masculinity. Since at least the medieval period—and perhaps even longer—women have been urged to partake in the solitary and largely domestic hobbies of sewing and handcrafts. Just as American society accepted the passivity of women’s craft and needlework, it similarly embraced this feature of intaglio. An article in *The Crayon* from 1861 specifies the benefits of engraving to feminine abilities, saying that: “man is not made for sedentary life; woman, on the contrary, conforms to it without inconveniences. She better maintains that close unceasing attention, that motionless activity which the engraver’s pursuit demands.”⁸⁸ In fact, the article’s author goes on to say that a man would have to “womanize” himself to build the traits best suited for engraving. Rationales for women’s suitability to using wood engraving tools even carry explicit references to needlecrafts. *The Crayon* article states that women’s “nimble fingers, accustomed to wield the needle, lend themselves more easily to minute operations, to the use of small instruments, to the almost imperceptible shades of manipulation that wood-engraving exacts.”⁸⁹ Interestingly, when Hayter rescued engraving from languishing as a reproductive device, he imbued the burin with very different connotations as virile, strong, and aggressive.

Whereas engraving was perceived as being sedentary, tedious and rote, nineteenth-century observers believed the etching process allowed for far greater freedom and spontaneity. In *Etchings and Etchers* (1868), the most influential late-nineteenth-century publication about etching, Philip Hamerton (1834-1894) lambasted the burin,

⁸⁸ “Woman’s Position in Art,” *The Crayon* 8, no. 2 (February 1861): 28.

⁸⁹ “Woman’s Position in Art,” 28.

engraving's primary tool, as purely mechanical and an encumbrance to artistic creativity: "No tool used in the fine arts has less freedom. It is difficult to handle, requires the application of an appreciable amount of force, and is always slow, even in the most skillful hands."⁹⁰ Mariana Van Rensselaer echoed this thought when she articulated, "an engraved line, cut slowly and painfully into the metal, will not only be stiffer, more mechanical, less autographic...[it] will always look cold and hard."⁹¹ When describing the etching process, in contrast, van Rensselaer, Hamerton and other critics all noted the quickness, freedom, spontaneity, and ease with which an artist drew with the etching needle.

These observations about the relative merits of engraving and etching tools point to a broader cultural debate about artistic creativity and gender. By the late-nineteenth century, etching became strongly linked with original drawing: etching no longer served as a method to reproduce drawings in multiple but as a way to create unique compositions and generate new artistic ideas. As such, the affinity elevated the importance of etching and distanced it from the copyism routinely practiced with engraving.⁹² Van Rensselaer confirmed this distinction in the context of the American etching revival when she wrote: "Why...is etching held to be a much more 'artistic' process than any other manner of engraving?...[etching] is the only graphic process by which the artist can *improvise*."⁹³ She also believed that etchers must possess "a clear idea of the things he wants to say" and "the powers of analysis, condensation, and

⁹⁰ Philip Gilbert Hamerton, *Etching & Etchers* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1876), 18.

⁹¹ Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer, *American Etchers*, Reprinted from the Century Magazine for February 1883 (New York: Frederick Keppel & Co., 1886), 8.

⁹² Madeleine Viljoen, "Etching and Drawing in Early Modern Europe," in *The Early Modern Painter-Etcher*, ed. Michael Cole (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), 55–56.

⁹³ van Rensselaer, *American Etchers*, 8 (emphasis original).

interpretation.”⁹⁴ Women were thought to lack critical interpretive skills and the ability to produce improvisation in any creative field. The artistic instruction for women, particularly female amateurs, centered on imitation and copying from drawing books.⁹⁵ Philip Hamerton’s theory of etching from 1868 suggested that the male temperament was better suited for etching, which required passion, speed, frankness, rather than implicitly female qualities of slowness and timidity.⁹⁶ Because of these cultural and pedagogical beliefs, female practitioners of printmaking were funneled into working with the mechanical, reproductive engraver’s burin rather than the autographic etching needle. The etching needle was reserved for expressions of male creativity. As this chapter’s first section demonstrated, American women flourished in roles requiring transferring another artist’s original designs, ranging from assisting within a family workshop, carving wood engraving commissions, and transferring designs into lithography.

Given this context, critical appraisals of female etchers inevitably compared their etching techniques against normative masculine qualities. These commentaries reveal anxieties about women’s place within the “male” etching field and attempts to diminish their skill level by characterizing their work with “feminine” traits such as delicacy and softness. The British poet, Thomas Hood (1799-1845) humorously noted at a slightly earlier historic moment that etching’s tools seemed contrary to ladylike behavior. In his poem titled “Etching Moralized; To a Noble Lady,” he wrote: “Though it scarce seems a lady-like work that begins / in the *scratching* and ends in a *biting*.”⁹⁷ Nineteenth-century

⁹⁴ van Rensselaer, *American Etchers*, 9.

⁹⁵ See especially chapters 4 and 5 of Ann Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

⁹⁶ Hamerton, *Etching & Etchers*. Hamerton never explicitly mentions women artists, but his chapters develop several the temperaments needed to excel as an etcher.

⁹⁷ As quoted in Lang and Lang, *Etched in Memory* (1990), 271 (emphasis original).

discourse in the art world also lessened the accomplishments of female etchers by associating the etching needle with women's traditional needlecraft.⁹⁸ In her introduction to the Union League Club's exhibition of women etchers (1888), Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer (1851-1934) commented that the catalog makes "a practically complete exposition of what the women of this country have accomplished with the needle."⁹⁹ Though the comment clearly references the sharp-tipped tool used to scratch lines through the hard resist and expose copper to acid bite, van Rensselaer's observation could just as easily have praised a grouping of women's quilts, lacework, or embroidery.

These issues came to a head when large numbers of women artists became etchers as a result of the late-nineteenth-century etching revival. Eliza Greator (1819-1897), the first female associate elected to the National Academy of Design for her work in the graphic arts, received reviews consistent with her gender, stating that her etchings were delicate and sensitive. Sylvester Rosa Koehler (1837-1900), the pioneering print curator at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, suggested in *American Etchings* (1886) that Greator had not availed herself to the full potentials of etching tools because of her feminine timidity: "The work of Mrs. Greator is delicate rather than strong, in its inception as well as in its execution. She has not yet made use of all the resources which the needle and the printing-press place at the command of the etcher, and possibly she does not care to do so."¹⁰⁰ In contrast, many commentators described Mary Nimmo Moran's handling of etching tools as virile, bold, emphatic, direct, and strong. These

⁹⁸ In fact, John Chapman's printmaking manual cited real crossover between tools for needlecraft and etching by stating that, "a common *darning-needle*, set into a wooden handle" could be used in lieu of proper etching tools. Chapman, *The American Drawing-Book*, 267 (emphasis original).

⁹⁹ Mariana Griswold van Rensselaer and The Union League Club, *Exhibition Catalogue of the Work of the Women Etchers of America* (New York: The De Vinne Press, 1888), 4.

¹⁰⁰ Sylvester Rosa Koehler, *American Etchings: A Collection of Twenty Original Etchings* (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1886), 4.

characteristics, they believed, displayed more masculinity than even some of her male peers and showed Moran disregarding her femininity.¹⁰¹ Though her more “masculine” line-work was tolerated—perhaps because of her artist-husband Thomas’s influence—her expressive experimentation with other intaglio techniques such as aquatint, roulette, and mezzotint, exceeded the finesse that contemporary critics were willing to accept from female etchers.¹⁰² The use of etching and engraving tools continued to conform to gender-driven standards through the early-twentieth century.

Additional associations of etching and engraving tools with dentistry and surgery trigger further gendered meanings. Dentistry and its pain-inducing instruments were often compared to etching and engraving tools and strongly coded the printmaking equipment as masculine. The relationship between dentistry and intaglio actually is actually quite fitting since both practices involved dexterity and manual skill. In the nineteenth century, dentistry was considered a separate profession from physicians, mainly because the former required manual skills and brute physical strength rather than the mental acuity of the latter.¹⁰³ In fact, until the late-nineteenth century, dentistry and surgery—also treated distinctly within the medical field—shared more commonality because both prioritized manual agility over scientific knowledge.¹⁰⁴ Although American women began entering the dental profession slowly in the mid-nineteenth century, their presence was often met

¹⁰¹ For a summary of Moran’s critical reviews, see Peet, “Emergence of American Women Printmakers,” 476–483. For masculine commentary, see specifically van Rensselaer, *American Etchers*, 18; Morris T. Everett, “The Etchings of Mrs. Mary Nimmo Moran,” *Brush and Pencil* 8, no. 1 (April 1901): 4.

¹⁰² Sylvester Koehler notes the mitigating influence of Moran’s husband on her more vigorous, manly technique: “The influence of her husband’s example is plainly visible in all she does, even in the restlessness that pervades most of her plates.” Koehler, *American Etchings*, 1–2.

¹⁰³ Tanya Sheehan, *Doctored: The Medicine of Photography in Nineteenth-Century America* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 53.

¹⁰⁴ Henry Sigerist, “Developments and Trends in Dentistry,” *The Washington University Dental Journal* VII, no. 3 (February 1941): 138.

with great resistance.¹⁰⁵ In 1865, George T. Barker wrote a scathing criticism of the election of Lucy Hobbs to membership of the Iowa State Dental Society, citing women's physical—but not mental—incompatibility with dentistry: "The practice of dentistry is calculated to undermine the very best balanced constitutions...The very form and structure of women is unfit for its duties...Who would encourage a female to performing a trying and difficult operation at such a time [as pregnancy]." ¹⁰⁶ Confirming Barker's beliefs, Atelier 17 artist, Sue Fuller, recalled that her maternal aunt, who trained to be a dental technician in the late-nineteenth century, was "way out for a woman of that day." ¹⁰⁷

Artists often repurposed dental and surgical instruments as etching tools during the late-nineteenth-century etching revival. Francis Seymour Haden (1818-1910), a key figure and proselytizer for the etching revival in England, actually learned the rudiments of etching in the 1840s while he trained as a surgeon by scratching anatomical drawings onto copper.¹⁰⁸ And, Leroy Milton Yale (1841-1906), president of the New York Etching Club at its founding in 1877, was likewise a physician by trade. In homage to Haden's dual status a "surgeon-etcher," a group of dentists and physicians formed the Haden Etching Club in 1931 to showcase their amateur activities.¹⁰⁹ Though the Constitution and By-Laws do not specify gender as a qualification for membership, the club was only open

¹⁰⁵ "Women in Dentistry," *Journal of the American Dental Association* 15 (September 1928): 1735–56. Emmeline Roberts Jones (1836-1916) is widely credited as the first American woman dentist, learning from her husband.

¹⁰⁶ As quoted in "Women in Dentistry," 1745.

¹⁰⁷ Sue Fuller, oral history interview with Paul Cummings, April 24, 1975, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

¹⁰⁸ Anderson, *American Etchers Abroad*, 8.

¹⁰⁹ *Catalogue of the Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Haden Etching Club* (New York: Leonard Clayton Gallery, 1935). See also Lang and Lang, *Etched in Memory* (1990), 72. One of the group's members, Hermann Fischer had an exhibition of his work at the Weyhe Gallery as early as 1920. The show was titled "A Surgeon-Etchers Holiday, Etchings Made by Dr. Herman Fischer," January 14-24, 1920. See "Appendix 2: Chronological List of Weyhe Gallery Exhibitions, 1919-1940" in Williams, "The Weyhe Gallery," 382.

to “legally qualified members of the medical and dental professions,” which predominantly comprised men at this time.¹¹⁰ Their seal prominently features a medical or etching tool in the foreground and the hands of a male surgeon-etcher at work (fig. 1-16). Their aspirations to combine Haden’s dual achievements in medicine and etching—what they called “the rigid discipline demanded by science and the freedom of expression demanded by art”—largely precluded female involvement in the Club because both fields were male-dominated.¹¹¹ The medical-science metaphor remained a strong influence on printmaking tools and equipment throughout the twentieth century, inhibiting women’s involvement in the WPA-FAP workshops and Atelier 17. In their effort to distance the WPA-FAP graphic arts workshops from bohemian art studios, project administrators presented them instead as laboratories and printer-artist participants as technicians, who sometimes even wore white lab coats.¹¹² Chapter Three will demonstrate that the ties between printmaking tools and dental or medical equipment continued to impact women’s experimentation at Atelier 17. And, Chapter Four will show that printmaking’s scientific and technical aspects reduced the perception of expressivity in postwar printmakers’ work.

The acid for biting etching plates represents another element of printmaking equipment that constrained opportunities open to women artists. John Chapman worried in his 1847 manual about the “delicacy of a lady’s fingers...handling corrosive and

¹¹⁰ “Constitution and By-Laws of the Haden Etching Club,” 1931, Leigh Hunt Papers, 1870-1937, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

¹¹¹ Despite their overwhelmingly masculine associations, Bertha Jaques interestingly got her start in etching using medical tools that her doctor-husband repurposed for her. Much of the literature incorrectly records that Dr. Willem Jaques was a dentist or surgeon. Joby Patterson’s recent research suggests he was a bacteriologist and advocate for public health. Patterson, *Bertha E. Jaques*, 115.

¹¹² Seaton, “Federal Prints and Democratic Culture,” 114. Ad Stijnman notes a British manual from 1930 that suggests a dentist’s jacket is advisable to protect against stains. Stijnman, *Engraving and Etching*, 125, n. 257.

staining acids.”¹¹³ Ernest Stephen Lumsden (1883-1948), who wrote a well-regarded etching manual in the early-twentieth century, warned against the side effects of etchers touching acid with their bare hands since nitric acid could stain the skin yellow and roughen it. He recommended etchers protect their hands by wearing rubber gloves.¹¹⁴ Given nineteenth-century concerns that women’s professional occupations in “light manufacture” not be physically degrading—remembering the precautionary story of the map colorer’s berry-stained fingers—it is not surprising that acid use by women was subject to such precautionary warnings. Even by the 1920s, Joseph Pennell at the Art Students League noted his students’ interest in donning protective gloves.¹¹⁵ There were also concerns about acid’s noxious fumes, a product of chemical reactions as acid removed exposed metal on plates. The PSDW taught female etching students proper safety procedures in its well-ventilated third floor-etching studio, which could be sealed off from the rest of the school.¹¹⁶ For some women, setting up a complete etching studio with acid baths at home became a way of asserting professional independence and merit. The niece of Ellen Day Hale remembered the intensity and purpose with which her aunt and her companion Gabrielle Clements executed etchings in their Rockport, MA studio “permeated by the smell of the nitric acid bath.”¹¹⁷ At Atelier 17, some women artists experienced trepidation about acid baths, while others readily dipped their hands into the baths without gloves as a negation of postwar feminine norms and an expression of their desire to be considered serious professionals.

¹¹³ Chapman, *The American Drawing-Book*, 267. He was also concerned about their “polishing copper plates” and “handling “tenacious varnishes.”

¹¹⁴ Ernest Stephen Lumsden, *The Art of Etching* (London: Seeley, Service & Co., Limited, 1925), 57.

¹¹⁵ Goldman, *One Hundred Prints*, 16.

¹¹⁶ The facilities were new after the PSDW moved in 1880. Peet, “Emergence of American Women Printmakers,” 133.

¹¹⁷ As quoted in Peet, *American Women of the Etching Revival*, 29.

The unmitigated experimentation with various tools made possible at Atelier 17 allowed many women to shift towards abstraction and the exploration of their inner emotions. They could apply tools expressively, often not following prescribed rules, and innovate their own methods of working. They were also free to combine multiple techniques—etching, engraving, aquatint, soft ground etching—as they had never before. Chapter Three will demonstrate that this free experimentation with materials and tools impacted the emergence to important twentieth-century movements like Feminist, Fiber and Junk art.

Fighting for Recognition: Women Printmakers' Professional Visibility

The range of opportunities open to women printmakers was limited from country's founding, but evolved slowly and sporadically over time to become broader and more robust. Women printmakers endeavored to expand their professional visibility through exhibitions, press coverage, critical notice, and joining artists groups. This section investigates the positive impact of these opportunities on women's careers and their professional achievements. Still, women did not have fully equal access to all avenues of professional advancement even by 1940 when Hayter moved Atelier 17 to New York. Groups like the American Abstract Artists and even the WPA-FAP graphic arts workshops offered women a group association outside their status as "women" artists and public visibility that they would not have received otherwise as individual producers. Though women increasingly made inroads, they still lacked equal representation at galleries, in professional organizations, and within press coverage.

Artists' associations facilitated showing work in regular annual or semi-annual exhibitions. With these shows came greater attention and more advantageous evaluations from critics, curators, and potential patrons. For printmakers, associations provided additional practical advantages, such as the ability to discuss technical problems and access scarce and expensive printing presses.¹¹⁸ Women artists recognized the benefits of collective action, particularly as their numbers rose as a result of expanded training in the late-nineteenth century.¹¹⁹ Yet, women often were forced to fight for admission into coed artists' groups because of their gender. Male membership was normal and female the exception. Initially, women pursued alternative strategies by forming female-only associations to support less popular artistic mediums such as watercolor or pastel. Over time, however, women artists established greater—but still not equal—presences in coed organizations.

The very earliest women involved with printmaking in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe had virtually no opportunities to show their own work or join professional organizations. Women printmakers who worked in family businesses rarely took proprietary credit for a plate by signing their name to it. Frank Weitenkampf (1866-1962), the longtime curator of prints at the New York Public Library, commented in his introduction to a Grolier Club exhibition of etchings, engravings, and lithographs by women artists (1901) on these artists' anonymity: "whatever talent there was became subordinate to that of the chief supporter of the family, and was expended in patient toil

¹¹⁸ Marilyn S. Kushner, "The Genesis of the Twentieth-Century Print Club," in *American Identities: Twentieth-Century Prints from the Nancy Gray Sherrill, Class of 1954, Collection* (Wellesley, MA: Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College, 2004), 83.

¹¹⁹ For more on the rise of women's art associations during the nineteenth century, see Swinth, *Painting Professionals*, chap. 3.

on the less important details of his work.”¹²⁰ As such, art historians were very slow to identify these largely anonymous female printmakers. Near the turn of the twentieth century, Weitenkampf voiced his surprise about the diverse and sizable representation of women printmakers, conceding that many names were still largely unknown after checking in published biographical compendiums. In addition to the anonymous circumstances surrounding a plate’s production, Weitenkampf hypothesized another reason for women printmakers’ obscurity. He suggested that nineteenth-century scholarship held a bias against the graphic arts; they did not appeal “so strongly to the imagination, perhaps, as the ‘higher’ walks of art” such as painting and sculpture.¹²¹

American women had similarly few opportunities to exhibit their graphic work or join professional organizations during the colonial period and early-nineteenth century. Their stature grew, however, as they signed their work. Sarah Wood (b. 1788) made an unusual decision for a woman of the period to copyright her 1818 engraving depicting an imagined memorial to George Washington.¹²² Others entered their names into public circulation when they published original designs, which were usually lithographed or engraved by others. The Maverick sisters are known today primarily because they identified their role in the creation of workshop images through inscriptions on prints or noted their participation in the family’s business records.¹²³ Emily (1803-1850) and Maria (1805-1832), the two older Maverick sisters, worked together on animal designs for a book on natural history and illustrations for a publication of Shakespeare’s writings. The Maverick sisters’ relative through marriage, Ann Anderson Maverick (ca. 1810-1863),

¹²⁰ Weitenkampf, *Engravings, Etchings and Lithographs by Women*, vi.

¹²¹ Weitenkampf, *Engravings, Etchings and Lithographs by Women*, iii.

¹²² Wright, *With Pen & Graver*, 19.

¹²³ For more information about the Maverick family, see Stephens, *The Mavericks*.

also achieved a high level of public visibility for a woman of this era through numerous illustrations she completed for children's books.¹²⁴

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the level of awareness for women printmakers' activity depended heavily upon their chosen medium and their ability to form professional alliances. Female wood engravers and lithographers lacked access to many of these avenues for professional development. Countless articles covered the phenomenon of the female wood engraver in relation to design schools and the perceived suitability of the occupation to women's "natural" abilities. For the most part, however, these wood engravers remained anonymous to the American public.¹²⁵ When wood engraving began to break out of its commercial mode, especially in the 1890s, women enjoyed a very small degree of public attention for their "artistic" blocks.¹²⁶ An 1883 article for *The Continent* illustrated fourteen wood engravings made by female students at the PSDW.¹²⁷ The captions carefully note that the genre scenes and landscapes were copied *after* preexisting artwork, diminishing the creative capabilities of women

¹²⁴ Anne Anderson Maverick was principal illustrator for *The Children's Magazine*, published from 1829 through 1852. Wright, *With Pen & Graver*, 17.

¹²⁵ Names identifying the artists were thought to detract from the commercial message. Peet discusses this and other problems contributing to anonymity in the second half of the nineteenth century. See Peet, "Emergence of American Women Printmakers," 236–39.

¹²⁶ There was a movement toward the end of the century to extricate wood engraving from purely reproductive service and illustrative magazines, but wood block printmaking did not become fully expressive until several decades later. The Society of American Wood-Engravers, founded in 1882, advocated not only a "New School" of wood engraving—which gave printmakers liberty to reproduce paintings and photographs in addition to drawings and use greater variety of effects—but also stressed the importance of original designs. For more, see William H. Brandt, *Interpretive Wood-Engraving: The Story of the Society of American Wood-Engravers* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2009). Only three of approximately twenty-eight members in Society of American Wood-Engravers were women, showing the limited possibilities for women to crossover from the commercial world. In 1890 exhibition at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the female members listed are: Miss Caroline Powell of NY (1852-1935) and Miss Edith Cooper of NY (active 1877-1898). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Exhibition of the Society of American Wood-Engravers* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1890).

¹²⁷ John Sartain, "Wood-Engraving as an Occupation for Women," *The Continent* 4, no. 73 (July 4, 1883): 1–12.

artists featured within the article. Thus, the article confirmed the limited role of women in the “original” wood engraving movement.

Of all the graphic arts practiced during the late-nineteenth century, lithography offered the fewest institutional structures for women to build public recognition and expand their professional outlooks. Despite the best efforts of American advocates to create a new class of “painter-lithographers,” the revival in Europe for artistic lithography at the turn of the century did not translate into an American context until well after 1915.¹²⁸ The names of a few notable women are known who executed lithographic designs for firms like Pendleton’s Lithography in Boston or Currier & Ives in New York, but the predominance of these firms’ delineators are men.¹²⁹ Frances Flora Bond Palmer (1812-1876), who worked for Currier & Ives, is perhaps the best-known female lithographers of the nineteenth century.¹³⁰ The creation of Palmer’s and other women’s lithographs depended heavily on consumer tastes, rather than these women’s own creative ideas. Since there were no professional organizations for creative lithography in the nineteenth century and limited venues to exhibit it, very few women created original lithography until after the turn of the century.¹³¹

Etching provided the arena where women could be most active in promoting their professional reputations as graphic artists during the late-nineteenth century etching revival. The husband-and-wife sociologists Gladys Engel Lang and Kurt Lang set out to understand women’s involvement in the etching revival, looking at what factors

¹²⁸ Adams, *American Lithographers, 1900-1960*, 12–13. In 1896, the Grolier Club exhibited artistic lithographs, but mainly by Old Masters and some living American and European artists. Montague Marks, editor of *Art Amateur*, unsuccessfully lobbied to form a “Society of Painter-Lithographers.” See Frank Weitenkampf, “Painter-Lithography in the United States,” *Scribner’s Magazine* 33, no. 5 (May 1903): 547.

¹²⁹ Peet, “Emergence of American Women Printmakers,” 245.

¹³⁰ For more on Palmer’s life and career, see Rubinstein, *American Women Artists*, 68–70.

¹³¹ Peet, “Emergence of American Women Printmakers,” 252.

contributed to an artist's reputation and its ability to endure over time. Among other considerations, the Langs found that the socio-cultural climate, an artist's joining a professional network, and her ability get her prints into circulation were critical to maintaining a lasting reputation.¹³²

With the etching revival, the outlets that existed for exhibiting and critically discussing etching were more numerous and framed only within a "fine art" context. Unlike woodblocks or engravings that served commercial functions, etching was rarely used in reproductive techniques because its plates were not strong enough to withstand repeated passes through a commercial press. Shows of women etchers' work and the ensuing publicity validated their professional accomplishments and fortified their future endeavors. Sylvester Koehler's 1887 exhibition of women printmakers at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the expanded 1888 catalogue for the Union League Club in New York were watershed moments toward acknowledging the critical mass of American women etchers and their serious and widespread activities.¹³³ Prior to these exhibitions, there was little public recognition of female etchers.¹³⁴

Female-only etching shows were part of the larger cultural phenomenon in the nineteenth century of isolating women artists from male artists. In an effort to expand their professional networks and circulate their work more widely, women sought exhibition opportunities, camaraderie, and channels to market their work within the growing numbers of women-only artists' clubs. These groups often held black-and-white

¹³² See chapters 8 and 9 in Lang and Lang, *Etched in Memory* (1990).

¹³³ Sylvester Rosa Koehler, *Exhibition of the Work of the Women Etchers of America* (Boston: Alfred Mudge & Son, 1887); van Rensselaer and The Union League Club, *Women Etchers of America*.

¹³⁴ Women had been practicing and submitting for exhibitions since the mid-1860s when the etching revival began in America. Despite this activity, Mariana Van Rensselaer's article about American etchers, published in the *Century Magazine* (1883), cited Mary Nimmo Moran as a solitary female practitioner. Moran generally enjoyed a higher public profile as the wife of artist Thomas Moran. See van Rensselaer, *American Etchers*.

shows, perfect for the display of graphic art. Some women objected to exhibiting based on their gender and hesitated to participate within the shows.¹³⁵ By 1909, Frank Weitenkampf progressively argued, “the best work by women may stand on its own merits without being classified separately from the etchings by men, without being treated as a curiosity instead of an achievement.”¹³⁶

Outside of these gender-limited exhibitions and clubs, women did not participate proportionally in the mainstream professional associations, populated mostly by men. The New York Etching Club, one of the preeminent groups for the nineteenth-century etching revival, had no female members among its twenty-one founders in 1877. Over its approximately fifteen-year history, the Club only added three women to its roster: Mary Nimmo Moran (1881), Edith Loring Pierce Getchell (1887), and Ellen Oakford (1890). Although these women had prints included in the Club’s annual exhibitions and portfolios, none ever attended the group’s regular business meetings, the small social gathering being perhaps an inappropriate venue for women’s presence.¹³⁷ Etching societies formed shortly thereafter in other major American cities such as Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Boston, and Brooklyn likely had similarly small female membership.¹³⁸

Printmaking experienced a lull around the turn of the twentieth century, and women found other ways to stay active in the Gilded Age art scene, particularly in painting, sculpture, and the arts and crafts movement. The American etching market reached its saturation point by the 1890s, and the use of artistic lithography and woodcuts

¹³⁵ See Mary Cassatt’s comments in Peet, “Emergence of American Women Printmakers,” 348.

¹³⁶ Weitenkampf, “Some Women Etchers,” 739.

¹³⁷ Even Mary Nimmo Moran, whose husband was also a member, did not appear at any Club meetings. Stephen A. Fredericks, *The New York Etching Club Minutes* (Houston, TX: Rice University Press, 2009).

¹³⁸ For a list, see James Watrous, *American Printmaking: A Century of American Printmaking, 1880-1980* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 7.

was not popular until after the Armory Show in 1913.¹³⁹ Along with this seminal international art show, the founding of the CSE in 1910 reinvigorated the American etching market and artists' interest in printmaking.¹⁴⁰ During this revival, which lasted from the 1910s until the stock market crash in 1929, women artists benefited from expanded networking opportunities and took a greater leadership role in many organizations. Bertha Jaques, for example, was one of the four artists who founded the CSE.

Although the number of New York galleries committed to selling prints was quite small as the revival began around 1910, women printmakers made some progress towards building greater gallery presences. Many galleries at this time catered to the prevailing American taste for work by the Old Masters and conservative turn-of-the-century etchers, making it difficult for artists working in modernist styles to secure gallery representation.¹⁴¹ Before the Armory Show revolutionized American consumer taste for avant-garde printmaking, only Alfred Stieglitz's Little Galleries of the Photo Secession and the Berlin Photographic Company, managed by Martin Birnbaum (1878-1970), showed modern graphics. Though Stieglitz never featured work by a female printmaker, Birnbaum gave solo shows to Edna Boies Hopkins (1872-1937) in 1914 and Anne Goldthwaite (1869-1944) in 1915, and also hung women's prints on the walls during at

¹³⁹ Marilyn Satin Kushner, "Revisiting Editions: Prints in the Armory Show," in *The Armory Show at 100: Modernism and Revolution*, ed. Marilyn Satin Kushner and Kimberly Orcutt (London: Giles, 2013), 313–23; Reba White Williams, "Prints in the United States, 1900-1918," *Print Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (1997): 151–73.

¹⁴⁰ Some contemporaries like Joseph Pennell lamented the fact that the resurgent print market lured young American artists through monetary reward—"a sure way to make money," he said—rather than through printmaking's creative potential. Pennell as quoted in Lang and Lang, *Etched in Memory* (1990), 164.

¹⁴¹ For research into which galleries showed prints around the time of the Armory Show, see Kushner, "Revisiting Editions," 314–16. It includes the Berlin Photographic Company, Arthur H. Hahlo & Co., Kennedy Gallery, Frederick Keppel & Company, Knoedler & Co, Kraushaar, Montross Galleries, Moulton & Rickets and the Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession.

least two large group shows.¹⁴² Carl Zigrosser (1891-1975), who expanded the Weyhe Gallery's book business into prints beginning in 1919, supported the careers of several female printmakers such as Wanda Gág and Mabel Dwight (1876-1955). Edith Halpert (1900-1970), whose Downtown Gallery mounted the Print Maker's Annual between 1927 and 1935, included women, though they were a minority of the exhibitors.¹⁴³ The potential to show prints at these galleries built and supported an increasing population of women printmakers.

During this early-twentieth century revival, print clubs became a vital pathway for women's professional growth. The founding of the CSE in 1910 sparked the creation of print clubs in several other cities, such as the Print Club of Philadelphia (1915), Brooklyn Society of Etchers (1916, later renamed the Society of American Etchers), and the Print Club of Cleveland (1919). These clubs held major annual exhibitions, in which members could exhibit work and compete for juried prizes. Sometimes print clubs had close affiliations with museums, which accepted members' artwork into their collections through purchase prizes awarded at the annual exhibitions. According to art historian Elizabeth Seaton's review of the annual exhibitions for a handful of these print clubs, women had a small but significant presence within several organizations, generally

¹⁴² Stieglitz showed drawings and watercolors by Pamela Coleman Smith and Georgia O'Keeffe, but not prints by either woman. The group shows at the Berlin Photographic Company were as follows: First, an exhibition organized in conjunction with the New York Society of Etchers (Jan. 6-30, 1914, with nine female exhibitors); and second, the gallery's own exhibition titled *Original Block Prints and Wood Engravings* (May 1-31, 1916, featuring ten female artists). For a partial list of Berlin Photographic Company's other exhibitions, see Appendix B from Williams, "Prints in the United States, 1900-1918," 172.

¹⁴³ Women comprised about 15-20% of all exhibitors in the Downtown Gallery shows. They included a fairly consistent stable of artists: Peggy Bacon, Lucile Blanch, Isabel Bishop, Mabel Dwight, Wanda Gág, Ada Gabriel, Anne Goldthwaite, Rosella Hartman, Eloise Howard, Victoria Hutson, Margaret Lowengrund, Caroline Rohland, and Marguerite Zorach.

representing from 10% to 30% of total membership.¹⁴⁴ Print club affiliations, annual exhibitions, and purchase prizes continued to be very important networking tools and professionalizing agents for women artists of Atelier 17 during the 1940s and 1950s, as seen clearly in Chapter Five.

Despite the stock market crash and ensuing Depression, the 1930s were still a vital time for the circulation of prints in America. The federal government's support of printmaking through the WPA-FAP program became a flashpoint for liberal reform, with prints becoming instruments capable of spreading "democratic" culture.¹⁴⁵ Liberals believed that broadening prints' appeal to the general public would remove the graphic arts's stigma as rarified and elitist—a reputation acquired through the nineteenth-century etching revival—and spread culture to a new segment of the American population. Furthermore, they thought the handmade qualities of prints could unify the gap between artists and American workers by emphasizing printmaking's craftsmanship and physical labor. Other efforts in the 1930s to expand the reach of prints into the middle class included Reeves Lewenthal's Associated American Artists, which sold signed and numbered prints for \$5 at large department stores, and Samuel Golden's American Artists Group, which sold unlimited, unsigned editions for \$2.75.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ Seaton also pointed out women printmaker's presence at venues not requiring print-club affiliation, such as the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (1913) or Malcolm Salaman's *Fine Prints of the Year* (published 1924-39). Seaton, *Paths to the Press*, 20, n. 4.

¹⁴⁵ Elizabeth Seaton's dissertation documents the range of political arguments surrounding government-sponsored patronage of printmaking and the perspectives about the print's political power and democratic potentials. See particularly her discussion of liberal ideology in chapter 1 and the democratic circulation of prints in chapter 4. Seaton, "Federal Prints and Democratic Culture."

¹⁴⁶ For more on both enterprises, see Erika Doss, "Catering to Consumerism: Associated American Artists and the Marketing of Modern Art, 1934-1958," *Winterthur Portfolio* 26, no. 2/3 (Summer-Autumn 1991): 143-67.

Because of their democratizing potential, government administrators advocated that WPA-FAP prints find wide distribution across the country.¹⁴⁷ This broad circulation was very beneficial to the careers of women printmakers in the Graphic Arts Division. Initially, prints only went to tax-supported institutions such as government courthouses, hospitals, and prisons, causing some to complain the prints were inaccessible to the middle and working classes.¹⁴⁸ By the conclusion of the WPA-FAP programs, museums became eligible recipients of government prints, a policy that enabled many women to have their work enter a major American museum collection for the first time.¹⁴⁹ WPA-FAP prints were also exhibited at venues like WPA-FAP galleries, WPA theaters, and community centers.¹⁵⁰

Even with printmaking's more democratic ideals and the increased visibility of artist's work throughout the 1930s, women still did not attain total equality with their male peers when comparing exhibition participation and membership in liberal artists' organizations. Art historian Helen Langa and other scholars have qualified and quantified women artist's assertions about equality in this era. Langa found women were underrepresented at shows ranging from small local events to large-scale WPA-FAP or American Artists' Congress exhibitions. Additionally, while women were active members of progressive artists' groups like the Artists' Union or American Artists' Congress, they rarely advanced to upper-level leadership roles.¹⁵¹ Many women relied on the annual shows of women's art organizations to maintain broad public circulation of

¹⁴⁷ Some artists complained that the distribution of WPA-FAP prints was not wide enough because edition sizes were limited to 25-50 instead of thousands. See Elizabeth Olds's essay, "Prints for Mass Production" in O'Connor, *Art for the Millions*.

¹⁴⁸ Seaton, "Federal Prints and Democratic Culture," 176-77.

¹⁴⁹ Seaton, "Federal Prints and Democratic Culture," 214-215.

¹⁵⁰ The WPA-FAP's New York gallery was at 225 West Fifty-Seventh Street.

¹⁵¹ Langa, *Radical Art*, 216-217.

their artwork. But, the groups' female-only focus was becoming counterproductive to women's achieving equal critical reception.¹⁵²

As Atelier 17 entered the American art scene in 1940, women printmakers certainly had access to a greater field of professional opportunities than ever before. As Chapter Five will show, women printmakers from Atelier 17 still relied heavily on the power of female-to-female networking. The fact that three-fifths of the artists at Atelier 17 were women—a much higher level than at WPA-FAP graphic arts workshops—demonstrates the importance women artists ascribed to their affiliation with the avant-garde workshop. Atelier 17's regular group exhibitions shaped the critical reception these female artists received and opened the doors for future opportunities.

This critical historiography frames the following chapters as they pick up the thematic threads at Atelier 17. The many questions that these chapters seek to answer include: Why did women seek training at Atelier 17 versus other venues for printmaking education in New York? What did leaving the home signify for their artistic ambitions? How involved were they in marking and printing their own work? What relations did women have with male printmakers at the workshop? How did the understanding of printmaking's tools change based on gender norms, socio-cultural trends, and historical events of the 1940s and 1950s? How did the association with Atelier 17 provide women with more visibility and the ability to amplify their professional network?

¹⁵² Female-only art organizations still existed in the 1930s, even though critics questioned their relevance, and artists chafed against classification as “women” artists.

CHAPTER TWO

The Place to Be: Printmaking at Atelier 17 Shapes Artists' Identity

Doris Seidler (1912-2010), a British expatriate who frequented Atelier 17 shortly after settling in the United States, described in rich visual and olfactory detail the workshop's second New York location on East Eighth Street:

Half way down the block from University Place on Eighth Street there was an art supply store named Rosenthal, over which Hayter had his workshop. There was no sign on the door. One could follow the pungent aroma of Frankfurt black and plate oil up the wooden staircase and turn into the left-hand door on the first landing. The room was not large by workshop standards. The front windows were richly patinated with New York City grime. About two-thirds of the room was taken up by a wide work table that enabled the artists to sit on either side and work on their plates. The table was always covered with heavy brown paper over which we placed newspaper to protect it, or as time went on, to protect our work from the mess of the brown paper... The place was heated by evil smelling gas radiators and the smell of heated dust and grime, scorched resin, and melting grounds together with the acids was heady. Equipment was strictly do-it-yourself and the workshop had a held-together-by-sheer-love look.¹

This account exposes the down-and-dirty conditions artists encountered when they walked through Atelier 17's door on Eighth Street. A facility encrusted with soot, harsh-smelling chemicals, and filthy tabletops. Around the same time in the early 1950s, news photographer Martin Harris (1908-1971) captured a view of the Eighth Street workshop's main room (fig. 2-1). In the photograph, the room's grime-coated windows, which Seidler referenced, are covered with drapes, rumpled and, in places, falling off the

¹ Doris Seidler, as quoted in Lisa Weinberg Rabinowitz, "The Web of Experiences: Printmaking in the United States" (Ed.D., Columbia University Teachers College, 1977), 31. Seidler worked at Atelier 17 from 1950 to 1953. See her résumé at the Allentown Art Museum, The Grippe Collection [henceforth cited as AAM/GC].

makeshift curtain rod. The tabletops are quite dirty, littered with sheets of paper, tools, and jars of ink and other chemicals, sometimes with lids on but often not. From Harris's photo, it is evident that even the workshop's electrical "system" was crude, jerry-rigged with light bulbs hanging from ceiling wires secured in place by strings attached to the wall. The decision to work in Atelier 17's rough environment was clearly not one artists made casually. They had to possess a self-directed disposition to experiment independently with printmaking techniques, a willingness to roll up their sleeves and get dirty, and a commitment to engage physically in all stages of the printmaking process—marking, inking, and printing the plate.

This chapter investigates the importance of place and physical activity to forming a sense of artistic identity. Given American society's intense insistence on the domestic ideal for women during and after World War II, it is hard to reconcile period standards of femininity with women artists' decision to engage in such rugged activities within an environment unlike from the home. At its heart, this chapter is about signaling theory, an economic model that explains the process by which individuals communicate information via a signal to another party, who then adjusts their behavior or outlook.² A classic example is the job applicant who demonstrates a key skill by citing their educational achievement with the hope of distinguishing herself to a potential employer. This chapter's discussion considers the ways that women artists projected their professional persona through the places they worked, the people they associated with, their sartorial choices, and the degree to which they became physically involved in their printmaking process. Signaling theory will also be important to Chapter Five's discussion of how

² The Nobel-prize winning economist Michael Spence pioneered this subfield of economics with his seminal article "Job Market Signaling," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 87, no. 3 (August 1973): 355–74. Signaling theory continues to be a major influence in the economics discipline.

women artists used their membership at Atelier 17 to signal they were serious avant-garde artists, rather than amateurs. This signal enabled them to get their prints into print annuals, solo exhibitions, and group shows across the globe. Women artists of this era were growing increasingly cognizant that their gender was a social construction, evident in isolated examples of feminist consciousness and awareness of important texts like Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*.³ Divergent conceptions of midcentury femininity took shape through printmaking at Atelier 17. Some women artists consciously bristled against traditional gender roles and endeavored to build creative identities through the rigorous and often messy activities involved in the printmaking process, while others continued to model notions of conventional femininity as prescribed by American society.

The sections of this chapter unpack the importance of place and the body, two conduits women artists used to communicate pertinent information about their professional identities. First, as a workspace, Atelier 17 had enormous signaling power for projecting professionalism and enabling women to distance themselves from the home. Second, the physical implications on women's bodies of creating prints—from marking the matrix to operating the press—had a similar impact on the formation of their gender and professional artistic identity. Breaking down several aspects of place and the body shows women attempting to balance their personal and artistic identities within the mandates of midcentury gender norms. This chapter ultimately argues that the very informal workshop environment and lax rules about procedures identifies Atelier 17 as a

³ Daniel Belasco's dissertation identifies moments in the 1940s and 1950s where women artists recognized their common struggle. His last chapter documents known instances of women artists reading and digesting Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. See Daniel Belasco, "Between the Waves: Feminist Positions in American Art, 1949-1962" (PhD diss., New York University, 2008).

crucial laboratory of gender equality. There, women had space to establish professional identities independent of socially prescribed gender norms in the years before the women's art movement.

Finding a “Home” at Atelier 17

Perhaps the clearest way to enter a discussion of signaling theory and artistic identity at Atelier 17 is to start at the macro level with a careful examination of the workshop as a place of work. Doris Seidler's reminiscences and Martin Harris's photograph already provide an exceptional glimpse into the bohemian climate of the Eighth Street workshop. But, it is also important to evaluate Atelier 17's other New York locations at the New School and on Sixth Avenue. Contrasting these studio environments against the midcentury American home—advocated for various reasons as the ideal place for women—this section explores what it meant for women of 1940s and 1950s to find themselves “at home” at Atelier 17. Working through the grittiness, the studios presented women artists with opportunities to project certain professional attributes to the postwar art world. To uncover the impact of the workshops on artistic identity, this section weighs several polarities, such as male vs. female, amateur vs. professional, avant-garde vs. academic, and domestic vs. bohemian. This analysis is not meant to affirm binary relationships, but instead present a spectrum of fluid identities that women weighed as they decided where to seek artistic instruction in the postwar New York School.⁴

Women artists' presence at Atelier's three New York locations engages with debates within midcentury American society over feminine and masculine identities. The enormous societal upheaval, instigated by the Great Depression, World War II, and

⁴ Anna Chave's work on Eva Hesse presents a critical model of a woman artist exploring an “alternate role” that was not necessarily “masculine” or “feminine.” See Anna Chave, “Eva Hesse: A ‘Girl Being a Sculpture’,” in *Eva Hesse: A Retrospective* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 99.

ensuing postwar stability, contributed to the large-scale reconfiguring of the American workforce and traditional gender roles. The hotly debated topic of the “Modern Woman”—the phenomenon of women working increasingly outside the home and mixing multiple professional and personal roles—confounded and threatened American masculinity.⁵ Cultural historians have long noted the prevalence during these postwar decades of panic about the flagging vigor of American masculinity and women’s encroachment into traditionally male spaces and jobs, characterized by the powerless and anxiety of Philip Wylie’s *Generation of Vipers* (1942).⁶ Several art historians have demonstrated that attempts to restore balance between the newly ascendant Modern Woman and the postwar Modern Man directly impacted artists of the New York School.⁷

This contentiousness about the professional visibility of men and women in the workforce informs understandings of Atelier 17 as a place of artistic training. As the previous chapter’s critical historiography already indicated, the printing trade imposed strict rules governing women’s access to print studios. Women with inclinations toward printmaking had to fight to gain entry to these spaces from men, who dominated graphic workshops. Martin Harris’s photograph shows that there were plenty of women artists working at Atelier 17’s Eighth Street studio by the late 1940s. Of the twelve individuals pictured, five are women and seven are men. Previously, American women experienced

⁵ For more background about the Modern Woman, see the introduction and Chapter 1 in Aliza Rachel Edelman, “The Modern Woman and Abstract Expressionism: Ethel Schwabacher, Elaine De Kooning, and Grace Hartigan in the 1950s” (PhD diss., Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2006).

⁶ For examples, see: Lois W. Banner, *Women in Modern America: A Brief History* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), chap. 6; Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1988), chap. 3; James Burkhart Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

⁷ This topic is the central focus of Edelman’s dissertation. See also Chapter 4 in Michael Leja, *Reframing Abstract Expressionism: Subjectivity and Painting in the 1940s* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); Stephen Polcari, *Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

only conditional or heavily monitored access to print studios and industrial printing facilities.⁸ This near parity of gender representation in a printmaking studio was very progressive.

Women's presence within Atelier 17's New York workshops was not always as equitable as pictured in Harris's photo. As Atelier 17 moved from location to location through its early history in Paris and New York City, women combatted gender bias in the printmaking world and the conflation of their personal and professional roles. Their struggle began in Atelier 17's first home in Paris. According to the story of Atelier 17's founding in 1927, Stanley William Hayter initially declined the request of Alice Carr de Creeft (1899-1986), married to the sculptor José de Creeft (1884-1982), to teach printmaking to her and another female friend. Though Hayter attributes his rationale to the fact he did not want to teach printmaking to amateurs, it is likely he associated de Creeft as an "amateur" simply because she was a woman.⁹ Dorothy Dehner, who accompanied her then-husband David Smith to Paris in 1935, recalled not feeling welcome to work at the Paris studio when Smith made prints there. She once said: "I was very unsure of myself as an artist. And, I felt it was rather presumptuous of me to go to Atelier 17, because I knew Picasso was making prints there, and Braque and Miró and so

⁸ Women's exclusion from or moderated presence within the printing trade dates back even further, though there are indications—yet to be fully studied in scholarship—that women may have participated more actively. William Blake's wife, for instance, helped print her husband's plates and earned a journeyman's salary. See Gerald Eades Bentley, "Blake's Heavy Metal: The History, Weight, Uses, Cost, and Makers of His Copper Plates," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 720, 722. Ad Stijnman is particularly interested in women's roles in printing history and included several references to them in his important study of etching and engraving. See "woman" under the subject index in Ad Stijnman, *Engraving and Etching, 1400-2000: A History of the Development of Manual Intaglio Printmaking Processes* (London; Houton, Netherlands: Archetype; Hes & De Graaf, 2012), 657.

⁹ Joann Moser, *Atelier 17: A 50th Anniversary Retrospective Exhibition* (Madison, WI: Elvehjem Art Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1977), 2.

on. And, I was a very, well I was in the *corps de ballet* then.”¹⁰ Indeed, there were approximately seventeen women among roughly fifty-five total artists who counted themselves on Atelier 17’s Paris roster.

While Atelier 17 was based from 1940 to 1945 in a classroom at the New School, women comprised a distinct but somewhat marginalized contingent of the overall participants.¹¹ Although American women experienced greater freedom to work outside the home during World War II, female laborers were always under careful surveillance. Women’s wartime work was never glorified, but framed strategically as a patriotic duty and something that would not diminish women’s feminine charm.¹² According to Worden Day’s memories, Atelier 17’s classroom at the New School was quite small, messy, and noisy, was not a place where women could patriotically contribute to the war effort.¹³ Their participation in the workshop’s printmaking experiments was mitigated on several fronts. During this period, news of the major male modernists who had fled the war in Europe—such as Marc Chagall, Werner Drewes, Ian Hugo, André Masson, and Joan Miró—dominated press information about Atelier 17. Among these big names, female artists were singled out as add-ons or oddities, usually signaled in the art press through mention of both their first *and* last names, while the illustrious male artists were recognizable only by last name.¹⁴

¹⁰ Dorothy Dehner, interview by Laurie Wilson, June 17, 1977. Dehner repeated similar sentiments in other interviews. See Joan Marter, “Dorothy Dehner,” *Woman’s Art Journal* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1981): 49.

¹¹ No official student roster exists for Atelier 17 until Peter Grippe took over Atelier 17 between 1952 and 1954. The only way to recreate women’s involvement before then is to look at public exhibitions noted in Appendices A-E and the dates of women artists’ prints (where noted).

¹² For an example of primary source material, see Katherine Glover, *Women at Work in Wartime*, 77 (New York: Public Affairs Committee, Incorporated, 1943).

¹³ Worden Day to “Mr. Lyman,” July 26, 1972, p. 1, unmicrofilmed correspondence, Worden Day papers, 1940-1982, Smithsonian Institution, Archives of American Art [henceforth cited as WDP]

¹⁴ Sue Fuller is mentioned by first and last name in the press information for Atelier 17’s 1944 show at the Museum of Modern Art. See “New Directions in Gravure—Hayter and Studio 17,” *Circulating Exhibitions*

Women's carefully controlled participation in Atelier 17's New School workshop found visual representation in a staged photograph, where women are conspicuously absent (fig. 2-2). Only men model the activities of printmaking in this photo, adhering to traditional visual depictions of printmaking workshops that date back to the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Hayter was quite familiar with paradigmatic images like Hans Collaert's *Engraving in Copper* (ca. 1591, after Jan van der Straet) and Abraham Bosse's depiction of an intaglio workshop (1642), since he dedicated a section of his 1962 book *About Prints* to describing several centuries of intaglio workshops in France (figs. 1-8 and 2-3).¹⁵ The photograph clearly reveals a desire to align Atelier 17 with the traditions of printmaking workshops. The standing man at far left is laying ground on the plate, the seated figure in the foreground is drawing a design, the man seated at the head of the table is engraving a plate, and the man at the press—Hayter, himself—is in the process of turning the star wheel to pull a print.¹⁶ Despite underrepresentation in photographs or marginalization in news of the studio's activities, women artists from Atelier 17's New School years marked their trail-blazing place within this print studio simply with their presence. They actively made prints and earned leadership positions at the shop. As the workshop monitor—an appointment that Hayter assigned to accomplished studio members—Sue Fuller recalled in a 1944 Christmas card sent to Anne Ryan the challenge of wrangling the large number of members: “the Atelier is like Grand Central this

from the *Museum of Modern Art for Schools, Colleges, Museums: 1944-45* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1944): in Department of Circulating Exhibitions Records, [I.4.2.10], The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

¹⁵ See mention of Bosse in Stanley William Hayter, *About Prints* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 82. The Pratt Graphic Art Center's serial journal excerpted part of Hayter's chapter and included a plate of Bosse's workshop. See Stanley William Hayter, “Intaglio Workshops in France,” *Artist's Proof* II, no. I (Spring 1962): 33–36.

¹⁶ Thank you to Helena Wright, Curator of Graphic Arts at the National Museum of American History, for suggesting the comparison between this Atelier 17 photograph and Abraham Bosse's seventeenth-century image.

season—people by the millions.”¹⁷ In no other printmaking studio before Atelier 17 had women achieved such a consistently strong level of involvement and supervisory capacity.

By the time Atelier 17 moved to East Eighth Street in 1945 and later Sixth Avenue in 1953, conversations about women’s identity and gendered spaces of work shifted in American society. Aliza Edelman’s scholarship establishes that a wide spectrum of contemporary writers engaged in the polarizing debates about the Modern Woman, ranging from newspaper and magazine journalists, social scientists, and cultural historians.¹⁸ These authors publically debated the relative merits of women’s domestic existence versus the potentially masculinizing effects of careers outside the home. Underlying discussions of the “Modern Woman’s dilemma” was a real concern that women, who rejected domesticity—either outright or partially—and pursued professional work, existed in a nebulous, indeterminate space. As postwar American society strongly urged women to dedicate themselves to home life, it perceived Modern Women, who sought multiple “unfeminine” identities, to be aggressively damaging American masculinity.

The Modern Women who came to Atelier 17’s second and third studio locations—almost all white women from middle or upper-middle class backgrounds—directly contradicted prevailing postwar gender norms that demanded dedication to the home. Not only were these women artists leaving domestic settings, but they were also placing themselves in a space that seemed its polar opposite. Both studios were in the heart of New York City’s bohemian culture and close to the locales where artists of the

¹⁷ Sue Fuller, holiday card to Anne Ryan, December 1944, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Elizabeth McFadden, 1983.1156.10.

¹⁸ See Chapter 1 in Edelman, “The Modern Woman.”

New York School socialized—the Cedar Bar, White Horse Tavern and Jumble Shop (fig. 0-1). Ink-covered tabletops at Atelier 17 contrast with the neat, clean countertops pictured in feature stories of countless postwar magazines or household product advertisements (fig. 2-4). The studio’s air was filled with the odor of dust and the noxious gas radiators, instead of the tasty aroma of mother’s home cooking. And, the workshop’s “décor” of rumpled drapes, hodgepodge bookshelves, and makeshift lighting was far from the period’s ideal of the orderly home, paid for with new postwar prosperity.

Given this climate, married women artists, especially those with children, were extremely transgressive in their choice to work at Atelier 17.¹⁹ The pressure to be at home made it seemingly impossible for married women to divide their physical presence between two places. Sue Fuller was critical of Hayter and, implicitly, his wife Helen Phillips for spending so much time at Atelier 17 that their household—which included two young sons—was in disorder.²⁰ Some women managed to balance their physical presence in both domestic and professional spheres without raising eyebrows. Atelier 17 participant Ruth Leaf (b. 1923), for example, left her infant daughter at home with her mother while she went to Atelier 17 during the daytime.²¹ Louise Bourgeois, too, visited Atelier 17 as a way to escape her maternal duties and combat her loneliness as a newly arrived French artist.²² But, she brought her prints back home, so that she could

¹⁹ For differences between the pre-marriage and married career woman, see Edelman, “The Modern Woman,” 45.

²⁰ Joann Moser, “The Significance of Atelier 17 in the Development of Twentieth Century American Printmaking” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976), n. 73, p. 63. On the contrary, Phillips recounted to Fred Becker that she was often home caring for her two sons: “I knew much of what was happening in the workshop, although I hadn’t the time and baby-sitters necessary to work there regularly.” Helen Phillips to Fred Becker, undated letter in Helen Phillips papers, Paris, France.

²¹ Ruth Leaf, interview by Christina Weyl, September 7, 2011.

²² Robert Storr, “She Disappeared into Complete Silence,” in *He Disappeared into Complete Silence: Rereading a Single Artwork by Louise Bourgeois*, ed. Laurie Cluitmans and Arnisa Zeqo (Haarlem, The Netherlands: De Hallen Haarlem and Onomatopee, 2011), 20.

simultaneously make art and watch her three young sons. Anne Ryan also conjoined the spaces of printmaking activity and domestic work. As a member of an older generation, she was familiar with the role of stay-at-home mother and wife. She set up an etching press in her living room and produced her woodcuts at home, in the manner of her predecessors Bertha Lum and Bertha Jaques.

Beyond the issue of domestic roles versus outside employment, these women artists' nonconformist drive to leave the home was a topic of debate in the art world over amateur and professional artistic ambitions. Because the dividing line between amateur and professional had become quite slippery during the postwar years, the choice to work at Atelier 17 had particularly strong signaling capacity. As Chapter Three will also discuss, the postwar period gave rise to increased time for leisure, which many Americans utilized to explore new hobbies and amateur pursuits. More than ever before, it became very important for artists to signal serious professional objectives by leaving the domain of the amateur—the home or school—to work in an exciting place like Atelier 17. In the 1940s and 1950s, aspiring artists had many choices of places to learn printmaking in New York City. These included Atelier 17, the Art Students League, Robert Blackburn's Printmaking Workshop, or Margaret Lowengrund's Contemporaries Graphic Art Centre (later Pratt Graphics Center). Some artists focused their energy on one place exclusively, while others explored several simultaneously. Among all of them, Atelier 17's bohemian studios represented the most powerful platform for women to announce their professionalism. The League, especially, had a reputation for projecting a "rather provincial student atmosphere," to quote the words of Worden Day.²³ Taking classes at the League would teach the basics of printmaking, but not confer more than

²³ Worden Day to "Mr. Lyman," July 26, 1972.

amateur, academic intent.²⁴ Hayter himself was very careful to frame Atelier 17 as something other than an educational establishment. In *About Prints*, he argued that printmaking institutions existed in two distinct types: “educational establishments” and “small groups of artist working cooperatively or isolated in individual studios.”²⁵ Atelier 17 was unique within the history of printmaking because, Hayter believed, it existed between these two poles. Day argued, “there was no comparison...between the intellectual and creative atmosphere of Atelier #17.”²⁶

Given the postwar expansion of amateurism, mere physical presence at Atelier 17 was not a strong enough guarantee of professional status. Hayter worried about the rise of amateur art training through do-it-yourself manuals.²⁷ There was a common belief that women far outnumbered men in the ranks of these postwar amateur artists. Hayter tried to prevent amateurs, who did not have basic artistic education, from joining Atelier 17 by establishing an interview process. Artists were required to show him their portfolios before he would grant them admission to the workshop.²⁸ Despite his standards, it seems Hayter actually allowed several “dilettante” women artists—often identified in period discourse as wearing “mink coats”—into Atelier 17 as a way to meet the studio’s monthly rent bill.²⁹ These amateur women ranged from socialites such as Pauline Astor

²⁴ At the League, students turned over their prints to the school’s master printer. Will Barnet, appointed master printer at the League in 1936, printed for many students in the 1930s and 1940s. Only the most experienced students were allowed to print their own work at the League. See Deborah Wye and Carol Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois* (New York: Museum of Modern Art; distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1994), 25; Jan Gelb, interview by Laurie Wilson, June 27, 1976.

²⁵ Hayter, *About Prints*, 91.

²⁶ Worden Day to “Mr. Lyman,” July 26, 1972.

²⁷ Stijnman, *Engraving and Etching*, 222.

²⁸ Moser, *Atelier 17*, 6; Mar Jean Kettunen Zegart, interview by Christina Weyl, September 6, 2011. Peter Grippe also aspired to invite more established, professional artists—who had had exhibitions and some critical success—once he took over running Atelier 17 in 1952.

²⁹ Florence Grippe recalled there were several female amateurs who came to Atelier 17 on Eighth Street wearing their mink coats. She believed they were holdovers from when Hayter ran the workshop. Peter and Florence Grippe, interview by Laurie Lisle, August 5, 1983, Laurie Lisle research material on Georgia

(1880-1972) of the famed American family, to Victoria Lucía Quintero (dates unknown), a school teacher who won a bronze medal commendation in the first amateur competition sponsored by *Art News*.³⁰ As these women's disparate incomes suggest, wealth and mink coats were no longer the definitive markers of women's amateur status, just as gaining entry to Atelier 17's avant-garde workshop was not an automatic indication of an artist's professionalism. Worden Day characterized the difficulty of pinpointing artistic ambitions, when she said: "the status symbol of what a mink or sable represented in affluent suburbia has been replaced by a prize in a local art show."³¹ The next section's focus on the body's interaction with printmaking clarifies that, in addition to being present at Atelier 17, there were many other ways women artists signaled professionalism through their physical actions.

The Physicality of Printmaking

This section encompasses a close study of the artist's body and argues that the sheer physicality of printmaking's major activities delineated boundaries of masculinity and femininity at midcentury. In some instances, women artists of Atelier 17 upheld conventional definitions of gender through their hesitance to engage unreservedly in preparing and printing their prints. Some downplayed the hard physical labor of printmaking by conflating their activities with household chores. Other examples illustrate how women artists transgressed lines of gender by embracing the taxing process

O'Keeffe and Louise Nevelson, 1903-1989, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [henceforth cited as LLRM].

³⁰ Pauline Astor's name appears in the student ledger book that Peter and Florence Grippe maintained. She paid tuition for several months ca. 1952-53. See p. 5 of ledger in AAM/GC. For more about Quintero's amateur distinction, see "The Winners in the First National Amateur Competition," *Art News* 48 (January 1950): 22.

³¹ Worden Day to John Canaday, August 26, 1966, WDP, reel 981, grid 8.

of carving into a print matrix, cranking the gears of the printing press, or dirtying their hands and clothing with ink.

The several case studies that follow demonstrate that midcentury artists were increasingly aware that they could perform identity and construct gender through their physical actions. The idea that identity gained meaning through the artist's body had been gaining momentum since the advent of Dada and Surrealism, two movements that exaggerated differences between men and women.³² Because large numbers of Surrealists escaped war in Europe by immigrating to New York City, it is not surprising that this performative focus influenced the postwar New York School and specifically Atelier 17.³³ Worden Day, for example, noted that male artists at the studio stressed their masculinity, feeling that "they had to be toughies...use filthy language to show that they were men. Really men."³⁴ The examples that follow demonstrate the centrality of printmaking's physical actions to the understanding of identity and gender in the postwar New York School.

Combining Domestic Chores with Printmaking

Printmaking's physical processes were historically thought to be too strenuous for women and incompatible with their core domestic duties. But, many overlaps exist between the labor of printmaking and housework. Given midcentury culture's concerns about the propriety of women working in places like Atelier 17, it is not surprising that

³² See for example Amelia Jones, "Equivocal Masculinity: New York Dada in the Context of World War I," *Art History* 25, no. 2 (April 2002): 162–205.

³³ Leja and Edelman have shown that behaviors of New York School artists manifested highly polarized gender difference. For info on Surrealism's impact on the New York School, see Martica Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile and the Beginning of the New York School* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

³⁴ Worden Day, interview by Laurie Lisle, October 10, 1982, LLRM.

women exaggerated the similarities between traditionally feminine labor and tasks required for printmaking. As a communal workshop, artists of both genders were expected to clean up their work areas. The assignment of these typically feminine household tasks—such as sweeping the floor or wiping down table surfaces—was actually egalitarian. Many artists—both male and female—performed these chores in exchange for subsidized or free tuition and materials. Not all women artists, however, acquiesced to performing chores that were normally associated with domesticity. Reuben Kadish (1913-1992), who swept the workshop floor for tuition remission, complained that Louise Nevelson created a huge mess after a day's work and, in a very unladylike way, failed to tidy up after herself.³⁵

Besides sweeping and general clean up, Atelier 17 member Ruth Leaf described two activities that overlapped quite specifically with rote household chores. In her printmaking manual of 1976, she explained how to prepare balls of tarlatan, a heavily starched cheesecloth-like fabric, most associated with millinery, that printmakers use to wipe excess ink from plates. In order to soften the tarlatan into palm-sized balls, she suggested rubbing off excess starch. Leaf related the process to doing laundry, “just as if...scrubbing an article of clothing to remove dirt.”³⁶ Additionally, she described the method of properly washing the printing press's blankets, used to evenly distribute the pressure from the press rollers, when they became dirty or stiff. Leaf explained that they must be washed by hand, not machine, and dried flat.

³⁵ Anne MacDougall, interview by Christina Weyl, February 21, 2011. Jacob Kainen, printmaker and longtime curator of the Division of Graphic Arts at the U.S. National Museum (now the National Museum of American History), stated that, “everyone did the whole thing...everyone did his job and the cleaning up afterward.” See Jacob Kainen, “Stanley William Hayter: An Introduction,” in *The Prints of Stanley William Hayter: A Complete Catalogue*, ed. Désirée Moorhead and Peter Black (Mount Kisco, NY: Moyer Bell, 1992), 65.

³⁶ Ruth Leaf, *Intaglio Printmaking Techniques* (New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 1976), 138.

Some women printmakers amplified these connections between printmaking and domestic labor. Though she learned the essentials of intaglio and woodcut printmaking at Atelier 17, Anne Ryan produced many of her etchings and woodblocks in the front parlor of her Greenwich Village apartment, where she had an etching press and a large “naval architect’s” table.³⁷ From her notebooks, it is clear that Atelier 17’s stimulating studio environment inspired Ryan’s creativity and steered her towards working abstractly. Yet, as a former housewife and mother of three, Ryan combined printmaking and domestic labor, despite her noted dislike for domestic drudgery.³⁸ Several years older than most of her colleagues at Atelier 17, Ryan felt the need to behave in a motherly way and exaggerate her Victorian sartorial attire.³⁹ Her daughter Elizabeth McFadden recalled her mother would hang her printed sheets—often reminiscent of quilt blocks and colorful scraps of fabric (fig. 2-5)—to dry from a clothesline like laundry and report to her family of having had “a good wash today.”⁴⁰ Alice Trumbull Mason also took advantage of Ryan’s home studio, frequently coming over to use Ryan’s etching press. In a condolence letter upon Ryan’s sudden passing in 1954, Mason reminded herself to McFadden by saying, “you may remember my colored etchings hanging on a clothesline.”⁴¹ Neither Ryan nor Mason spoke specifically about the reason they allowed domestic metaphors to influence the production of their prints. It is almost certain that more women printmakers

³⁷ Elizabeth McFadden to Robert Koenig, February 10, 1979, 1, Anne Ryan Papers, Art and Music Department, Newark Public Library.

³⁸ Anne Ryan wrote in a journal entry from November 6, 1941, “housework = endless mechanical stupidities. At least one-fourth of one’s life is spent keeping dirt at a distance.” As quoted in Daniel Louis Haxall, “Cut and Paste Abstraction: Politics, Form, and Identity in Abstract Expressionist Collage” (PhD diss., The Pennsylvania State University, 2009), 267.

³⁹ Donald Windham, “A Note on Anne Ryan,” *Botteghe Oscure* 22 (1958): 267; Haxall, “Cut and Paste Abstraction,” 302.

⁴⁰ McFadden to Koenig, February 10, 1979, 4.

⁴¹ Alice Trumbull Mason to Elizabeth McFadden, April 26, 1954, reel 87, series 1, Anne Ryan papers, 1922-1968, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [henceforth cited as ARP].

who worked at Atelier 17 found the combination of home and professional labor quite convenient. This strategy calmed fears about women's encroachment into the very physically demanding work of printmaking. Introducing domestic labor also somehow reduced the vigor of printmaking for female practitioners.

The Physical Challenges of Operating the Printing Press

Operating the printing press, the central piece of equipment for intaglio printmaking challenged social constructs of gender at midcentury. Because it was a flexible workspace without fulltime staff of professional printers, artists at Atelier 17 largely maneuvered the presses themselves. Hayter, a student monitor, or one of the directors from 1950 to 1955 provided initial instruction to incoming artists, after which members had to rely on their own physical abilities and knowledge of printing. The fact that artists at Atelier 17 printed their own plates differentiated it from other printmaking studios in New York City and further strengthened the signaling power of Atelier 17 to confer professionalism versus amateur ambitions.

As the historiography of Chapter One demonstrated, Atelier 17's standards of participation were revolutionary for women artists, who seldom enjoyed such liberal creative control over their printmaking and usually turned over their matrices to male printers. Throughout the history of printmaking, using a press has been depicted as a dramatically physical and male-dominated process.⁴² The male press operator is normally posed in mid-action, with both arms gripping an upper arm of the cross, while his foot pushes a lower spoke, seen in Abraham Bosse's representation of the etching studio (fig. 1-8). Direct-drive presses—like the small Hoe & Company press at Atelier 17—were

⁴² Stijnman, *Engraving and Etching*, 97 and 125, n. 255.

incredibly difficult to turn, requiring great force to generate the 1:1 ratio of wheel turns to roller turns.⁴³ Atelier 17's larger press had gears, which reduced the force needed to turn the press wheel one complete revolution. Certainly a less challenging task, but still not an easy one. The open invitation for all artists to pull prints at Atelier 17 undercut once firmly entrenched gender roles within the printmaking field.

Period understandings of women's labor during the war years and postwar decades illuminate the revolutionary significance of women gaining access to the printing press at Atelier 17. The wartime Rosie the Riveter type had been carefully crafted to show that American women could balance patriotic, industrial work by day and domestic duties by night. The Rosies pictured in period photographs or posters simultaneously demonstrate their ability to perform factory work and their beauty with well-manicured nails and made-up faces. This popular, cultural symbol broke longstanding myths about women's physical inferiority.⁴⁴ Postwar women were not supposed to exhibit such strength and certainly not strain themselves to pull the printing press. After the war, such demonstrations of female prowess were viewed as a novelty or negative character trait and exposed women who would not concede their wartime careers.⁴⁵ Given this climate, it is no coincidence that several period articles featured the process of transforming old clothes wringers into etching presses.⁴⁶ Some women artists certainly acquiesced to postwar gender norms and shied away from the physical labor of operating the large press

⁴³ For more information the presses at Atelier 17, see Chapter Four of this dissertation..

⁴⁴ For more about Rosie the Riveter, see Leila Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War: German and American Propaganda, 1939-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 137–157; Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender, and Propaganda During World War II* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984).

⁴⁵ Belasco, "Between the Waves," 166.

⁴⁶ Arthur Paul Snader, "Etching Press Built from an Old Clothes Wringer," *Popular Science*, April 1939, 186–87; "A Wringer Press," *The Spokesman-Review*, April 3, 1938; "Constructs Printing Press from Old Clothes Wringer," *Mechanix Illustrated*, June 1938.

machinery. Louise Nevelson's memories of printing at Atelier 17 are inconsistent, but she definitely had help maneuvering the press from her own studio assistant and several other Atelier 17 members.⁴⁷ Although a recent hysterectomy had legitimately sapped her physical strength, Nevelson was generally uninterested in performing such drudgery, preferring instead to build a highly feminized self-image of herself as a queen.⁴⁸

In defiance of the passive model of postwar femininity, several women artists subtly demonstrated physical strength by writing their own manuals of printmaking. Some of these manuals were published, but most exist in draft form, lacking funding or support from publishers. Jan Gelb (1906-1978), a committed printmaker who got her start at Atelier 17 and will be central to Chapter Five's discussion of artists' networks, participated in a photo shoot where she illustrated various steps in the printmaking process (fig. 2-6). In these images, she is shown in action, lifting the press felts into place, turning the press wheel, and pulling the paper off the plate. Worden Day also wrote a manuscript around 1960 entitled, "New Expressions of Woodcut." In the text she indicates where she would insert photographs of her executing aspects of a woodcut.⁴⁹ Though Day printed her woodblocks by hand, the photographs still suggest a significant physical component to her process: carving, standing, kneeling, and lifting (fig. 2-7).

Ruth Leaf, who succeeded in publishing *Intaglio Printmaking Techniques* (1976),

⁴⁷ In a 1970 interview with Arne Glimcher, Nevelson recounted, "I did all printing all myself. It was rather hard physical labor but I liked it and it was fascinating." Yet, several individuals claimed they helped Nevelson. Worden Day said she worked with Nevelson on proofing her prints (see Day interview with Lisle, LLRM), as did Peter Grippe (see Grippe interview with Lisle, LLRM). Dorothy Dehner remembered Ted Haseltine, Nevelson's studio assistant, operated the press at Atelier 17 for Nevelson. Dehner knew Haseltine from teaching him at Bolton Landing: "I know that she had Ted come there to turn the wheel for her, because she had some difficulty doing that, her back hurt her or something." See Dehner, interview.

⁴⁸ Several authors have written extensively on Nevelson's outsized personality and her identification as royalty. See for examples: Michael Stanislawski and Brooke Kamin Rapaport, "Louise Nevelson's Self-Fashioning: 'The Autor of Her Own Life'," in *The Sculpture of Louise Nevelson* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 27-37.

⁴⁹ "New Expressions of Woodcut," WDP, reel 981, grids 80-148. The photos can be found in WDP, reel 1010, grids 201-202.

demonstrates her mastery of printmaking through the book's text. Leaf is never photographed in full-body profiles as Gelb and Day were, but her descriptions indicate her active role. Of the challenges of using a direct-drive printing press, Leaf wrote: "to pull a print, you put your hands on one spoke, and one foot on another. Then you press down on your foot with your body weight, change spokes, and keep repeating the process until your plate moves through the press."⁵⁰ These three women's reliance on their own body's strength subverted images of women printmakers as physically weak amateurs.⁵¹

The context of the machine age further nuances women's physical involvement with printing their plates at Atelier 17. Although art historian Barbara Zabel's scholarship has demonstrated that many machines of modernism had female characterizations, the printing press seemed to carry a male identity, probably since it resided in the highly masculinized environment of the printmaking studio.⁵² Anxieties about gender identity and women's relationship to the printing press percolated to the surface in a very concrete way in Man Ray's (1890-1976) *Érotique Voilée*, a series of photographs taken in 1933 of a nude Meret Oppenheim (1913-1985) posing next to a printing press, sometimes with artist Louis Marcoussis (1878-1941). Man Ray and his two subjects knew they were play-acting in highly staged arrangements. Having lived in Paris since 1921, Man Ray partook in Surrealism's exaggeration of gender differences and the belief that women could serve

⁵⁰ Leaf, *Intaglio Printmaking Techniques*, 41.

⁵¹ So entrenched was the idea that the "true" printmaker must maintain complete physical understanding of all printmaking stages that some artists of the immediate postwar generation found it disconcerting to see Pop artists turn over creative control to professional printers at newly founded collaborative workshops. Worden Day wrote to Una Johnson, curator of prints at the Brooklyn Museum: "I chanced to see a group of Rauschenberg's lithographs at the print gallery of Marlborough-Gerson. Since these were originally collages of photographs and type—all not his, and then photographed on a litho stone and printed by someone else, I decided these were reproductions of reproductions." Worden Day to Una Johnson, July 7, 1966, 4 (emphasis original), Records of the Department of Prints, Drawings and Photographs (1878-2001), Brooklyn Museum [henceforth cited as BKM-DPDP].

⁵² Barbara Beth Zabel, *Assembling Art: The Machine and the American Avant-Garde* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004), xvi.

as conduits to the unconscious, exemplified by the Surrealist *femme-enfant*.⁵³ In these images, Oppenheim's female form is juxtaposed erotically next to the hard metal curves of the machine. In the most iconic image from this group, she stands with her back slightly arched so that her hips and torso echo the curve of the press wheel, which she stands behind and touches sensuously with her right hand (fig. 2-8). The contrast of Oppenheim's organic femininity and the press's cold, metallic masculinity does not stop there. In another image, Oppenheim's character is being encouraged—or possibly forced—to turn the press wheel at the urging of Marcoussis's character, reinforcing the conception that women were ill-equipped to handle the press mechanism on their own (fig. 2-9). In a third image, Man Ray staged Oppenheim with her inked forearm resting on the press bed, as if her femininity is at risk of being squashed by the domineering power of the press (fig. 2-10).⁵⁴

A pair of late-career etchings by John Sloan (1871-1951), a member of the Ashcan School, made almost concurrently with Man Ray's *Érotique Voilée*, further evince the clear gender divide between women and the printing press. In the last decades of his career, Sloan turned away from images of city life to create portraits and nudes, which include *Crouching Nude and Press* (1931) and *Nude and Etching Press* (1931). For both, Sloan created tension by pairing a female nude next to the etching press in his studio, which he considered an extension of his own, masculine body.⁵⁵ In the former etching, the nude is formally distanced from the male press, as she appears in the

⁵³ For an overview of the *femme-enfant*, see Chapters 1 and 2 in Whitney Chadwick, *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1985).

⁵⁴ Zabel presents the best description of *Érotique Voilée* in Barbara Zabel, "Man Ray and the Machine," *Smithsonian Studies in American Art* 3, no. 4 (Autumn 1989): 78.

⁵⁵ Janice M. Coco, *John Sloan's Women: a Psychoanalysis of Vision* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004), 106–107.

immediate foreground while the press lurks behind her (fig. 2-11). Furthermore, Sloan limited the nude's mobility to explore the studio and its printing press by placing her rather awkwardly on a shallow pedestal. In the second etching, the nude has moved off the pedestal and stands directly next to the press, but her body's contact with the machine is still limited (fig. 2-12). A towel hangs over one arm of the press's star wheel, which the nude leans against with her right hand stretching behind her torso. Her body never makes direct contact with the cast-iron frame, despite her immediate proximity to it.

There are indications that Man Ray and Sloan picked up on a theme that had existed since the nineteenth century. Decades before Man Ray and Sloan visualized their highly gendered scenes next to the printing press, Marcellin Desboutin (1823-1902) described the intensity of his friend Edgar Degas's (1834-1917) printmaking activities. Desboutin wrote: "he isn't a man either, nor an artist. He has become a zinc or copperplate which has been blackened by the printing-press and that plate and that man have been laminated together by the printing-press within whose grasp he has completely disappeared."⁵⁶ In Desboutin's account, Degas has transformed into a non-human automata—the matrix for his prints—through his dedication to printmaking. His physical involvement in the printing process is not erotic, like Man Ray's visualization of Oppenheim. Degas instead irritated a friend through his single-minded focus on his art making. There is no threat that the press will harm Degas, as was the implication for Oppenheim or Sloan's nudes.

All of these examples offer direct visual parallels to the depiction of artists operating Atelier 17's printing presses. In *A New Way of Gravure* (1951), which captures

⁵⁶ As quoted in R. Stanley Johnson, *Mary Cassatt: Early Graphic Works 1878-1891* (Chicago: R.S. Johnson Fine Art, 2011), 17.

Hayter producing the plate for *Angels Wrestling*, the film's director Jess Paley included several seconds of intriguing footage, where the camera has been pointed up from the press bed to face Ed Countey (1921-1984) cranking the press wheel (fig. 2-13). In one film still, Countey's head, torso, and arms are fully enclosed in a semi-circular band, framed by the thick press wheel and gears. Unlike Oppenheim's staged pose that contrasted her femininity against the machine, Countey's vigorous effort echoes the press's strength. His short-sleeved, white T-shirt exposes Countey's muscular biceps, mirroring the power of the press's gear wheels. Women artists from Atelier 17 were never valorized at the press like Countey was in *A New Way of Gravure*. Another photograph taken by Martin Harris represents the visual lessening of women's printing efforts (fig. 2-14). Framed by the printing press's star wheel, Harriet Berger Nurkse (1916-1978) takes a more passive role alongside a male colleague. His position directly behind the press bed and posture grasping the sheet they admire suggests that Berger Nurkse, slightly sidelined beside the press, was not the primary press operator and probably received assistance. Though obscured by the paper's edge, he indicates serious, artistic focus while she smiles playfully. Unless women commissioned photographs such as those for Day, Gelb, and Leaf, their efforts were often diminished in visual records like Harris's.

Inky Hands and Dirty Clothes: The Signaling Effect of Women's Personal Appearance

Man Ray's photographs of Meret Oppenheim also open a fascinating topic about artists maintaining their personal appearance when executing the often dirty and messy tasks of printmaking. Man Ray's decision to ink Oppenheim's hand and forearm was not

accidental, but carries an erotic charge. Viewers are tempted to touch her blackened arm, transferring ink to their own bodies, and thus implicate themselves in this sexual scenario. The photo introduces other tensions surrounding gender and the inked body, especially important to considering the ubiquity of ink at Atelier 17's studio. The state of being marked or stained by ink, either directly on the skin or indirectly on clothing, confers social identities that vary widely based on whether the "inked" is male or female. Examining ink's direct contact with the artist's body and its effects on social identity is another important factor in understanding gender and printmaking.

In the handful of known photographs of artists at work inside Atelier 17, concrete visual evidence signals the impact of ink covering artists' hands and bodies.⁵⁷ Throughout his career, Hayter produced several instructional books and a video, in which he demonstrates the activities of printmaking. One section of *A New Way of Gravure* films Hayter inking the plate for *Angels Wrestling*. He rolls ink on with a brayer and progresses through several tarlatan balls to press ink into the plate's grooves and remove it from the plate's surface. Finally, he demonstrates the hand-wiping process, where the last remnants of ink left on the plate's surface are brushed off with the palm of the hand. In a brief moment, Hayter flashes his blackened right palm outward to the camera (fig. 2-15). Within the tradition of printmaking and professional printers, knowing the proper techniques for inking a plate—no matter how messy the process—was a sign of a skilled craftsperson. Hayter's inky hands mark his expertise. Chapter One already documented that, up to and including the WPA-FAP's graphic workshops, women were mostly

⁵⁷ There are very few extant photographs taken inside the New York locations of Atelier 17. Most are in the collection of Hayter's daughter-in-law, Carla Esposito Hayter. The Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco also has an excellent collection of fifteen photographs. All were taken by Martin Harris for PIX Incorporated, a picture agency, once located at 250 Park Avenue in New York City.

excluded from apprenticeships to learn trade-printing secrets, like the best methods for hand-wiping.⁵⁸ Atelier 17 provided women artists with one the first chances to roll up their sleeves, get dirty, and assert this badge of professional accomplishment.

Another photograph Martin Harris took of the Eighth Street workshop captures just this phenomenon. As Fannie Hillsmith (1911-2007) engraves a plate, Harriet Berger Nurkse looks on, her hands covered in black ink (fig. 2-16). If wartime propaganda and postwar advertisements are any indication, women were expected to maintain much cleaner hands than Berger Nurkse. During World War II, government ads quelled fears about the Rosie the Riveter type by insisting women could easily wash off grease from their hands and transition to domestic duty.⁵⁹ Hands, in fact, signified important aspects of feminine identity and gender norms at this moment. The May 1945 cover of *Charm* featured six women's hands formed into a circular arrangement, disembodied by the magazine's edges and the darkened background (fig. 2-17). "Young women's hands at work for their country at war," the cover's tagline, indicates that each hand exemplified professions women executed during World War II. The four bare hands on the left—radio operator, clerical worker, military personnel, and nurse—are delicate and manicured. They contrast with the two, gloved hands of the factory employee and gardener. The implication is that, women should protect their manicured hands. This emphasis on hands continued after the war. In an advertisement from 1953, a hand lotion called "On Hand" promised to protect hands like a "magic glove" and specifically mentions the product's

⁵⁸ There are a few notable exceptions, like the late-nineteenth century etching revival and some early-twentieth century etchers like Gabriel Clements and Ellen Day Hale. See Chapter 1 for more information.

⁵⁹ Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War*, 150–1; Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter*, 128; Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 23; Kathy Lee Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998), 240–1.

usefulness to women working in clerical jobs like typing, mimeography, and “industrial chores,” where their hands were likely to get dirty (fig. 2-18). On Hand would prevent, for example, “deep stains from ribbons and carbons” handled by the secretary. By showing her rough, dirty hands, Berger Nurdse signaled her willingness to distance herself—at least partially—from postwar norms governing proper feminine comportment.

In the absence of additional photographs capturing action within Atelier 17, analysis of artists’ extant prints suggests the ways they handled inks and maintained their personal appearance. Atelier 17 prints often have inky thumbprints at the paper’s margins, permanent records of artists’ involvement in the printing process. Barbara Zabel has argued for a gendered interpretation of hand or thumbprints in machine age art of the early-twentieth century, and midcentury social etiquette suggests that these marks carried similar connotations at Atelier 17. Looking at examples of self-portraits by Man Ray and American expatriate artist Gerald Murphy (1888-1964), Zabel asserts the male artist’s imprint onto his artwork conveys power, authority, and dominance.⁶⁰ Within the context of Atelier 17, inky thumbprints at the paper’s margins were lauded as evidence of an artist’s personal expression and technical virtuosity, hallmarks of the New York School. These traits, however, were distinctly masculine.

Rather than authorial confidence of a male Abstract Expressionist, the fingerprints that stain the margins of women’s Atelier 17 prints suggest a messy and unkempt woman. Louise Nevelson’s prints are liberally covered with inky fingerprints, the result of her hands becoming covered in ink after applying such excessive amounts of ink that it often squirted out from plate’s edges during the printing process, a feature discussed further in

⁶⁰ Zabel, *Assembling Art*, 94–96.

Chapter Four. *Royalty No. 2* (1952-54), a haunting image of a king and queen whose faces barely emerge from the darkness of Nevelson's over-inked plate surface, shows many fingerprints in the lower half of the left and right paper margins (fig. 2-19). Even though Atelier 17 artists routinely tested new and experimental ways to ink their plates, Nevelson was not praised for her inking strategies and certainly not for the thumbprints on her prints' margins. Instead, her colleagues spoke circumspectly about how thoroughly dirty she would get after a session at Atelier 17. Peter Grippe remarked that she would come in "all dressed up and then end up in all ink."⁶¹ Printing ink was notoriously difficult to remove from clothing, and Nevelson's indifference about becoming stained—directly on her body and dress or indirectly by transmitting stains to her prints—suggested, by midcentury social norms, personal deficiency, carelessness, or unprofessionalism because she was a woman.⁶² Though this double standard was challenging for women's artistic ambitions, it offered an arena where they knew they could combat gender norms and push boundaries.

In order to deflect concerns that they would sully their feminine clothing, some women artists strategically wore men's dress shirts or dungarees. Instead of getting ink all over the latest fashions—like Christian Dior's "New Look" of cinched-waist, full-skirt dresses introduced in 1947—women assumed the guise of men with these old shirts. Martin Harris's photograph of Fannie Hillsmith and Harriet Berger Nurkse shows the two women bending appropriate norms of attire (fig. 2-16). Hillsmith wears a light-colored, thoroughly wrinkled men's dress shirt with the sleeves rolled up to her forearm. Berger Nurkse has wrapped a striped men's shirt around her waist as a smock, which has caught

⁶¹ Grippe interview with Lisle, LLRM.

⁶² Jenni Sorkin, "Stain: On Cloth, Stigma and Shame," in *The Textile Reader*, ed. Jessica Hemmings (London: Berg Publishers, 2012), 59–61.

some ink stains from her messy hands. By brazenly wearing male clothing in the daytime and embracing the dirty work of printmaking, these two artists subverted the expectation that, at the conclusion of World War II, women would surrender their factory overalls and don aprons for domestic work. Berger Nurkse and Hillsmith relied on ink and sartorial choice to assert their professionalism and to demonstrate commitment to the full spectrum of printmaking activities.

Sculpting Gender from Printmaking

Throughout her career, Louise Bourgeois spoke about the physical challenge of creating an engraving by carving into a copper plate with the burin tool. She realized that the tremendous energy to make engraved lines differentiated it from freehand drawing on paper. As a “very deliberate, very muscular...push line,” to quote the words of Bourgeois, the exertion of producing an engraved line was more comparable to the act of carving a sculpture.⁶³ For Bourgeois, the discovery that engraving paralleled three-dimensional effects was “a revelation” and “terribly exciting.”⁶⁴ But, Bourgeois almost always qualified the physicality of the engraved line in relation to her gender, once saying, “if you use a burin...you need a lot of strength, it’s very difficult...It’s not woman’s work, though, you have to be really strong.”⁶⁵ In other statements, she emphasized that engraving required the forcefulness of “biceps,” which she lacked as a

⁶³ As quoted in Wye and Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois*, 23. Rob Storr argued that, for Bourgeois, engraving was a midpoint between drawing and sculpture. Storr, “She Disappeared,” 20.

⁶⁴ As quoted in Wye and Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois*, 23.

⁶⁵ As quoted in Marie-Laure Bernadac and Hans Ulrich Obrist, eds., *Destruction of the Father Reconstruction of the Mother: Writings and Interviews, 1923-1997* (Cambridge: MIT Press in association with Violette Editions, London, 1998), 302.

petite woman. Gender gated Bourgeois's full investigation of printmaking's three-dimensionality and her embrace of the sculptor-printmaker role.

Among her female colleagues at Atelier 17, Bourgeois was not alone in recognizing printmaking's connections with sculpture and transferring the technical skills she learned to later sculptural endeavors. Many women artists participated in Atelier 17's drive to materialize printmaking's connections to sculpture, but combatted misconceptions about gender and sculptural investigation. These women artists underwent a profound process of self-discovery through the exercise of carving plates and creating other three-dimensional effects in printmaking. Confronting the longstanding bias against women in sculpture and the dominance of male perspectives within the New York School, these women artists sculpted their artistic identities within postwar modernism. They solidified and invigorated their creative ambitions through physically exhausting, three-dimensional investigations of printmaking matrices and became emboldened to pursue fulltime careers as sculptors.

This last subsection looks at four female artists and the catalyzing impact of the sculptural techniques they practiced at Atelier 17 to the development of their ambitions to create sculpture. Bourgeois channeled what she perceived to be the aggressive and masculine physicality of engraving into architectonic figures in her prints that she soon realized as tall, wooden floor sculptures. Carving into copper plates reactivated Dorothy Dehner's longstanding interest in three-dimensions, a passion that she set aside for nearly twenty-five years to avoid competing with her husband, the sculptor David Smith. Worden Day believed the exploration of depth was crucial to the discovery of true artistic identity. She saw direct parallels between the markings she cut in her woodblocks and her

relief wall-sculptures, since blocks often became standalone sculptures after service for her prints. And finally, Louise Nevelson's introduction to the layering potential of intaglio processes provided the creative impetus for her shift from blocky clay figures to the innovative monochromatic wall reliefs that earned her fame in the mid- and late-1950s. Together, these four examples highlight the power of printmaking's sculptural techniques on women's career trajectories.

Hayter believed in printmaking's transformative aesthetic power on several levels. Expressed verbally in his writing and visually in prints, he showed that printmaking could turn a sheet of paper into a very three-dimensional object. He rejected the belief that printmakers focused on technique for sheer novelty. Instead, he explained that there was something deeper to be found in printmaking methods: "Technique is something which should produce some new material. If it doesn't, it's a trick. Here [at Atelier 17] we find things in the plate itself, and by means of the plate."⁶⁶ For Hayter, the physical changes produced through technique were not the only consequence of exploring three-dimensional in printmaking. Preparing a matrix—whether a metal plate or woodblock—made an equally strong impression on the identity of the artist executing the work. Hayter once recalled in an oral history: "there was a concentration...on the exchange between the work and the person doing it. What the plate is doing to you and not what you are doing to the plate only."⁶⁷ In this section, several examples will show how the very physical processes involved in preparing printmaking plates and blocks affected identity.

Hayter's and other Atelier 17 artists' enthusiasm for investigating printmaking's sculptural qualities meshes with the midcentury quest to uncover unexplored dimensions

⁶⁶ "Atelier Incorporated," *Art Digest* 26 (February 1, 1952): 9.

⁶⁷ Stanley William Hayter, oral history interview with Paul Cummings, March 11, 1971, transcript, p. 5, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

of the world and the collective unconscious. Paul McPharlin, writing for *Magazine of Art*, encapsulated the belief that artists at Atelier 17 seized upon the depth of engraved lines and “complicated interpenetration of volumes” in order “to present fantasies; to arrange automatic drawing; to show the relationship of the inner to the outer; to reveal arteries and organs; in short, to explore the precincts of that life it knows.”⁶⁸ The exploration of printmaking’s materials and processes—especially those connecting with sculpture—was central to an artist’s personal journey.

Worden Day’s incisive commentary for *Art Voices* in 1965 entitled “Why Painters Turn Sculptors” hones in on the pivotal importance of printmaking’s sculptural dimensions to locating one’s “true” artistic identity. Day argued that, while many artists may begin their careers as painters, they find what she calls the “holy grail”—or the “discovery and expression of the true self”—through the exploration of sculptural materials and the conceptualization of their artistic practice in three dimensions.⁶⁹ For Day, it did not matter when artists made the leap from painting or drawing to sculpture “as long as the true dimension is found.”⁷⁰ Though inspiring to see the equal billing Day confers to both male and female sculptors, in text and image, her commentary does not mention the challenges she and her female colleagues faced in gaining recognition for their sculpture.

In contrast, Louise Bourgeois’s opening remarks allude to the fact that the labor of producing engraved lines—the building block of Hayter’s printmaking pedagogy—prevented her from uncovering her identity as a sculptor. Historically, women were thought to lack the physical strength to manipulate sculptural tools or handle sculpture’s

⁶⁸ Paul McPharlin, “Dimensions of Printed Line,” *Magazine of Art* 37 (November 1944): 257.

⁶⁹ Worden Day, “Why Painters Turn Sculptors,” *Art Voices* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1965): 52.

⁷⁰ Day, “Why Painters Turn Sculptors,” 57.

traditional materials of hard stones. “Penetrating space was a male prerogative,” articulated Ann Sutherland Harris in her first-wave feminist perspective.⁷¹ In Hayter’s printmaking manual *New Ways of Gravure* from 1949, he illustrated the magnification of an engraved line to show just how tangible and transformative the plate’s lines were to the printed sheet (fig. 2-20). He considered removing strips of metal from a copper plate not a negative, subtractive action, but instead “the positive element of an engraving.”⁷² Hayter equated the artist’s physical engagement of carving lines into the plate to that of the sculptor:

The sensation of the engraver...of cutting into the substance of the copper, breaking through the surface...is not illusory, for, as the line, when printed, is definitely above the surface of the paper, the depth of the penetration into the metal actually involves a corresponding displacement of the line in relief above the sheet.⁷³

In the film *A New Way of Gravure*, Hayter demonstrates just how rigorous and taxing it is to engrave lines into a copper plate. Hayter must channel his body’s weight into the burin, tensing his shoulders to push the tool forward and remove the shred of metal. The historical barriers erected to prevent women from entering the field of sculpture were still pervasive at midcentury and impacted women artists beyond Atelier 17.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Ann Sutherland Harris, “Entering the Mainstream: Women Sculptors of the 20th Century,” *Galerie 2* (Fall 1989): 8–9.

⁷² McPharlin, “Dimensions of Printed Line,” 256.

⁷³ Stanley William Hayter, *New Ways of Gravure* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1949), 58.

⁷⁴ Around the time of Atelier 17’s founding in Paris, for example, British critic Adrian Stokes (1902–1972) elaborated a psychoanalytically charged theory of sculpture in which he genders the labor of carving versus modeling—the difference between chiseling into a block and building from malleable materials. He wrote: “In the two activities there lies a vast difference that symbolizes not only the two main aspects of labor, but even the respective roles of the male and female. Man, in his male aspect, is the cultivator or carver of woman who, in her female aspect, molds her products as does the earth.” See excerpted passage from Adrian Stokes, “Stones of Rimini” (1934) in Jon Wood, David Hulks, and Alex Potts, eds., *Modern Sculpture Reader* (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 2007), 114. Stokes’s commentary colored reviews of Barbara Hepworth’s (1903–1975) direct carving in the 1930s, where he focused not on “male” assertiveness but her maternal shapes. See Adrian Stokes, “Miss Hepworth’s Carving,” in *The Critical Writings of Adrian Stokes* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 309–10. Anna Chave has also pointed out the bias in

Bourgeois knew that engraving lines into a copper plate was a physical test of an artist's virility. Anthropomorphizing the metal shard that comes out of the copper plate, she believed carving was a test, saying, "you were *worth* the length of that hair."⁷⁵ In spite of the physical difficulty and the weight of the historical bias against female sculptors, Bourgeois's sculptural imagination flourished at Atelier 17 through the experience of making deep cuts into copper sheets. Forms that she imagined in her engravings, particularly from her portfolio *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* (1947), materialized as freestanding sculptures shortly after its publication.⁷⁶ Vertical, human-like forms stand in the prints either singly or as part of "figural" groupings (see Plates 1, 2, 3, 6, and 9) and anticipate the totemic, wooden personages Bourgeois introduced to the New York art world in three exhibitions at the Peridot Gallery beginning in 1949 (figs. 2-21 and 2-22).⁷⁷ For these shows, Bourgeois treated the installations as holistic arrangements, where the sculptures' grouping in the gallery space and visitors' encounters with them constantly generated novel relationships.

Nowhere is the tremendous force required to generate three-dimensional effects in printmaking more evident than in the deep areas artists carved into plates with the scorper tool (fig. 2-23).⁷⁸ These wide troughs—much thicker and wider than the burin's incisions—could not hold ink as engraved lines did because of their depth, and artists typically left them uninked. The force of the press pushed the dampened paper into these deep depressions, molding it into high relief. Like the burin's "push line," Bourgeois

the careers of Eva Hesse and Jackie Windsor. See Chave, "Eva Hesse"; Anna Chave, "Sculpture, Gender, and the Value of Labor," *American Art* 24, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 26–30.

⁷⁵ Wye and Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois*, 27.

⁷⁶ Deborah Wye, *Louise Bourgeois* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1982), 18–23.

⁷⁷ See Wye, *Louise Bourgeois*, 18–19; Storr, "She Disappeared," 20–21.

⁷⁸ Hayter described the scorper tool was good, "for removing hollows to print as raised whites on the proof, or to produce certain textures and qualities on the plate." Hayter, *New Ways of Gravure*, 32.

viewed scorper relief as an index of masculine strength and included these sculptural embossments as “a tribute to the boss [Hayter], because it was his specialty.”⁷⁹ In *Ascension Lente* (1949), she gouged several deep markings with the scorper, seen in the crescent shape and round dot at lower left (fig. 2-24). Further isolating these masculine markings from the rest of the composition, Bourgeois painted the scorper relief in white after pulling a few impressions.

Other women artists working at Atelier 17 found printmaking’s sculptural and physically intense techniques compelling and used them to question gender norms. Dorothy Dehner’s exposure to engraving and etching at Atelier 17 stimulated her to make sculpture, which became her primary focus from 1955 until her death in 1994. Dehner came to Atelier 17 in 1952, shortly after finalizing her divorce from David Smith. Working with engraving tools stimulated Dehner to revisit sculpture, which had been virtually taboo during her nearly twenty-five-year marriage.⁸⁰ She recalled in an interview that “digging into the plate with a burin was a marvelous experience for me and it brought back all my feelings of working three-dimensionally.”⁸¹ When Dehner first showed her etchings at Wittenborn Gallery in 1956, Franklin Porter, writing for *Art News*, concentrated on the prints’ connections to sculpture.⁸² Some, like *Things on Strings* (1955) and *Aerial to Infinity* (1954), Porter noted, resembled “wiry abstractions,” which Dehner would realize shortly after the Wittenborn show (figs. 2-25 and 2-26). Other engravings like *Ancestors* (1954) evoked “ancient clay seals,” like those the Sumerians

⁷⁹ Wye and Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois*, 27.

⁸⁰ Joan Marter, *Dorothy Dehner: Sixty Years of Art* (Katonah, NY: Katonah Museum of Art, 1993), 9.

⁸¹ Dehner interview in 1973, as quoted in Joan Marter, Judith McCandless, and Michael Zakian, *Dorothy Dehner and David Smith: Their Decades of Search and Fulfillment* (New Brunswick, NJ: The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, 1983), 25.

⁸² Franklin Porter, “Dorothy Dehner,” *Art News* 54 (January 1956): 67.

made.⁸³ Following a trend at Atelier 17 where artists rarely pulled complete editions but instead pursued new effects in successive proofs, Dehner relished in printing many variations of *Ancestors* (1954), which stressed the impressions' three-dimensional appearance. In two variants of red ink on pink and white paper, Dehner inked the surface of the copper plate and some of the engraved background, leaving the linear grooves within the figures to print white (figs. 2-27 and 2-28). For a two-tone red and black variant, she inked the engraved grooves and background with black and the surface with red, which increased the three-dimensionality of the composition (fig. 2-29). Dehner even exhibited the copper plate for *Ancestors* as a sculptural object in itself, following a common practice among Atelier 17 artists of conflating plates' technical and aesthetic value (fig. 2-30).⁸⁴ Although Dehner's prints, like her drawings, were never direct studies for sculpture, they helped her to visualize the relationship of forms in three-dimensions.

Like Dehner, Worden Day found sculptural inspiration and her "true self" through the exertion of carving her printmaking matrices. During her first encounter with Atelier 17 in the mid-1940s, she made a few introspective engravings employing the full range of intaglio techniques practiced at the studio. *The Glass Cabinet* from 1944 primarily showcases rich textures achieved with the etching needle, aquatint, and stop-out varnish (fig. 2-31). Day explored scorper relief in a very personal way to define the volume of

⁸³ Hayter also noted Sumerians cylindrical seals as a precursor to intaglio. See Hayter, *New Ways of Gravure*, 165.

⁸⁴ Although practices have changed in contemporary printmaking, Atelier 17 artists usually never cancelled their plates; instead, they held onto them, sometimes reprinting them later in their careers. Plates were valued as sculptural objects and frequently exhibited next to their corresponding prints in exhibitions of the period. Hayter, Ian Hugo, and Philip D. Platt showed plates in MoMA's *New Directions in Gravure: Hayter and Studio 17* (1944). See exhibition checklists, Department of Circulating Exhibitions Records, [CEII.1.86.2.1], The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. Louise Nevelson donated all thirty of the copper and zinc plates for her Atelier 17 etchings to MoMA (SC2150.1967 through SC2179.1967). Hayter's plates have recently come up for sale in the print market. See Dolan/Maxwell's booth at the International Fine Print Dealers Association's Print Fair in 2012-2014.

hair and the shirt collar of the female figure, a self-portrait of Day that resembles a dramatically cropped photograph taken a few years later in front of one of her abstract prints (fig. 2-32).

Switching from intaglio to woodcut in the early-1950s initiated a creative breakthrough in Day's career, transforming her primary identification from a painter-printmaker to sculptor-printmaker. Day believed that woodcutting surpassed engraving and scoring in the experience of working in three-dimensions. Woodcutting, she stated in her 1965 article, "forms a bridge to high-relief and sculpture in the round."⁸⁵ After making several regular, square-shaped woodcuts, Day evolved her methods to carve from *objects trouvés*.⁸⁶ Her series of "mandala" prints, all carved from cross-sections of tree logs, was particularly transformative.⁸⁷ The circular-shaped imagery consciously evokes the spiritual symbol from Buddhism and Hinduism used as an aid to meditation. The rich layering of color and texture for each mandala required Day to find and carve several logs, seen most vividly in state proofs for *Mandala II* from the mid-1960s (figs. 2-33 to 2-36). The first layer shows Day's cross-hatchings into a bean-shaped log section, which exaggerate the wood grain. The wood for the second state was rigorously removed, leaving several wide, "gestural" markings that Day inked in *ombré* hues. In the final state, Day again removed the majority of the wood's planar surface, but instead she created thin, calligraphic lines that evoke formally the branches of a tree. Many of the *Mandala* logs were quite heavy and difficult, or impossible, to transport from the

⁸⁵ Day, "Why Painters Turn Sculptors," 52.

⁸⁶ For more about Day's process using found objects, see Worden Day, "Experiments in Woodcut," *Artists Proof* 1, no. 2 (1961): 26–27.

⁸⁷ Day planned to make twelve mandalas in the series, but only four appear to have been finished (II, V, VI, VII). Worden Day to Una Johnson, August 2, 1959, BKM-DPDP.

locations where she discovered them, and photographs indicate just how thick these logs were (fig. 2-37).

Working on hefty, stationary blocks, Day approached them as a sculptor would marble or stone, walking around the logs to consider the surfaces and decide the best angle of approach for carving. Holding a similar viewpoint to Jackson Pollock, Day preferred to ink and cut the logs on the floor of her studio (fig. 2-38). She indicated that, like Pollock, she had more control over her composition when hovering over it, saying: “you can more readily view the whole area and have greater ease of mobility for inking and registration.”⁸⁸ By the very physical demands of producing them, the mandala blocks served as conduits between Day’s printmaking and sculpture. Some actually became her first major sculptures after their service as woodblocks, just as Dehner found aesthetic meaning in her plates beyond their functional purpose.⁸⁹

Louise Nevelson, too, made great creative strides in her sculptural progress in part because of her experimentation with printmaking at Atelier 17. Unlike Day and Dehner, her great insight came not from the exhausting experience of carving the intaglio plate or block, but from the eye-opening possibilities of layering textures and forms to create spatial depth in intaglio. Before coming to Atelier 17 in 1948, she had already practiced incising facial features onto blocky terra-cotta sculptures like *Moving-Static-Moving Figures* from the mid-1940s (fig. 2-39), and the parallel process is readily noticeable in linear figures in her Atelier 17 prints.⁹⁰ *Ancient Garden* demonstrates Nevelson’s mastery in harnessing several additional techniques besides engraving with a burin, a tool she

⁸⁸ “New Expressions of Woodcut,” WDP, reel 981, grid 129.

⁸⁹ “New Expressions of Woodcut,” WDP, reel 981, grids 125-6.

⁹⁰ Dido Smith, Nevelson’s friend and critic, speculated that the etching figures were based on the incised clay figures. Dido Smith, interview by Laurie Wilson, June 21, 1977.

vocally disliked in favor of the very domestic kitchen can opener (fig. 2-40). A variety of fabrics create the dark background layer of the print, which represents elements of the Maya ruins and Pre-Columbian artifacts that captivated Nevelson's imagination during this period.⁹¹ The fabric impressions she made using the soft ground etching technique include cheesecloth throughout, a broad-gauge grid fabric between the tall sculpture at left and cat at right, a flower pattern next to the head at lower right, and lace doily at upper left. Varnish, both painted with a brush and dripped freely in drops, defines the lighter areas of the figures and angular border.

Layering of textures was key to Nevelson's formulation of her sculpture in the mid-1950s, which launched her prominence in the art world. The textiles she had impressed into soft ground for plates like *Ancient Garden* found their way into her three-dimensional sculpture, most notably *Bride of the Black Moon* from 1955, the major sculpture in Nevelson's exhibition, *Ancient Games and Ancient Places*, held at Grand Central Moderns in 1955 (fig. 2-41). The bride, who stands to the right of her attendants—four decorative finials capped with egg-shaped wood pieces—wears a veil of lace, affixed to her head by a circular stopper of wood. Nevelson's lace-filled Atelier 17 etchings lined the gallery walls of this exhibition, concretely linking the significance of print textures to her sculptural progression.

Nevelson's investigation at Atelier 17 of unorthodox mark-making techniques and layered surfaces revolutionized her outlook about working in three-dimensions.

Recognizing her growing reluctance to carve sculpture, just as she had disliked burin engraving at Atelier 17, Nevelson employed a constructivist junk aesthetic by the mid-

⁹¹ For more on Nevelson's connection to Pre-Columbian culture, see Laurie Wilson, *Louise Nevelson, Iconography and Sources* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1981), 64–68, 78–9.

1950s to glue or nail scraps of wood into spatial arrangements. *Sky Cathedral* (1958), one of her most important works from this period, is composed of many stacked boxes, each filled with small wooden pieces placed at varying depths within the square spaces (fig. 2-42). Throughout *Sky Cathedral*, Nevelson placed flat, squared-off wooden pieces into box corners that partially obscure elements attached to the background. This additive method was very different from her process of incising blocky clay figures in the 1940s.⁹² Printmaking set Nevelson on a path toward becoming one of the most significant sculptors of the twentieth century.

As artists continued their exploration of three-dimensionality after Atelier 17's New York workshop closed in 1955, the boundaries between sculpture and printmaking increasingly blurred. Within the general quest among printmakers to realize depth and dimensionality that reached a pinnacle in the 1970s, techniques shifted back and forth fluidly between those originating from sculptural practice or printmaking. Nevelson made a series of six lead relief prints in 1973, in which her Italian collaborators employed traditional printmaking methods. Thin sheets of lead, cut to the outline of Nevelson's high-relief intaglio plates, were simultaneously shaped and bonded onto a heavy rag paper through the force of the printing press (fig. 2-43). Working in the reverse order from sculpture back to printmaking, Dehner took one of her bronze plaques, which she created with the lost wax process, and used it to create a three-dimensional cast paper print. Dehner poured wet pulp paper into a mold made from the plaque—which was its negative—and the resulting paper cast mirrors the bronze's high relief. (figs. 2-44 and 2-

⁹² Several biographers have discussed Nevelson's sculpture progression. See primarily Arnold B. Glimcher, *Louise Nevelson* (New York: Praeger, 1972); Wilson, *Louise Nevelson*; Laurie Lisle, *Louise Nevelson: A Passionate Life* (New York: Summit Books, 1990); Brooke Kamin Rapaport, *The Sculpture of Louise Nevelson: Constructing a Legend* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

45). Nevelson, a close friend of Dehner, also made cast paper prints, shown here in a photograph of a master printer removing the dry paper from the mold (fig. 2-46).

Printmaking clearly unlocked aesthetic pathways between three dimensions and a medium traditionally defined by its flatness and encouraged women artists to challenge entrenched gender biases and realize their full identities as artists.

Through examination of place and body this chapter has suggested that artistic identity was highly contested in the New York School and that Atelier 17 was central to shaping it. Since women artists often jumpstarted their careers at Atelier 17, it is very important to examine its foundational significance to their later career decisions and success. Returning to signaling theory's centrality, an artist's ability to communicate her serious intentions—through the decision to study at Atelier 17 or physical engagement with printmaking—actually had monetary rewards. Professional artists were given far more consideration in the art press, art market, and various institutions in the United States and abroad, as shown later in Chapter Five. Before reaching that broader discussion, the next chapter continues the focus on midcentury America's contextual factors by tracing their effects down to the micro level with the interpretation of printmaking's tools.

CHAPTER THREE

Material Matters: Decoding Meaning from Atelier 17's Tools and Techniques

Atelier 17 distinguished itself as a technical powerhouse, where artists routinely discovered novel ways of working with traditional printmaking processes and pioneered new approaches to marking plates with unconventional tools. This chapter will investigate the potential of gender to affect printmaking tools and techniques by drawing on the American socio-cultural milieu during World War II and the postwar era. Attitudes towards femininity changed rapidly between 1940 and 1955, providing clues for why contemporary critics discussed gender when looking at the process behind women's prints. Despite easy labeling within feminine contexts, the tools and processes that women used do not indicate that they regressed into feminine stereotypes, but instead these methods can be seen as empowering forces. By examining Atelier 17's tools, this chapter demonstrates that women artists challenged associations of their tools with traditional women's craft and found aesthetic empowerment to create abstractions through their printmaking processes. By decoding the materials and techniques behind women artists' Atelier 17 prints, the chapter ultimately proves that printmaking practices enabled them to challenge entrenched artistic hierarchies and anticipate key twentieth-century developments such as the women's art movement, fiber art, and post-minimalism.

The following discussion will explore three elements surrounding the use of printmaking tools. First, the way that the burin, the sharp tool of engraving, and etching

needles assumed very masculine identities through Hayter's teaching method, which stressed force, power, and the urge to destroy the plate. Louise Bourgeois's comments about the burin from the previous chapter already alluded to these issues, but the masculine influence in printmaking is far more complex. Traditional printmaking tools meshed with the continued male dominance within the dentistry profession and the rise of do-it-yourself hobbies in the postwar period. Many women chose to set aside the burin and etching needle in favor of alternative tools. The second section considers domestic metaphors that controlled the reception of several methods women printmakers pioneered with in their prints. These techniques ranged from watered-down acid bath solutions to drawing with Karo corn syrup. Even if the techniques produced novel forms of abstraction, they were seen as feminine because they originated in the home. Finally, the last and longest section of this chapter examines the multiple ways that women printmakers worked with soft ground etching, a technique for recreating textures like fabric on a plate. They drew on soft ground etchings to contradict pejorative associations of fabric and textiles with femininity. Instead, they assembled printed collages, expressed their inner psyche, and built geometric abstractions.

Traditional scholarship about printmaking often veers toward straightforward accounts of artists' working methods, asking questions like, what tools artists used and how they achieved certain effects? These queries often do not factor in artists' motivations behind the choice of particular tools or the impact of this selection on interpretations of their prints. This chapter's aim is to take technical considerations of *Atelier 17* beyond the descriptive. It interprets printmaking tools within the context of midcentury American culture and mainstream gender norms, proving that women

struggled to assert their identity through their technical process. Women artists innovated with unconventional tools, but period observers often reduced their results because of women's gender.

This chapter draws on theories of materiality to decode the meanings of the techniques and tools used in women's Atelier 17 prints. Art historians writing about materiality base their interpretations on the "stuff" art is made from, finding meaning within objects' intrinsic physical properties and resulting effects as art.¹ Scholars from diverse fields provide examples of ways to feature materials as protagonists. Anna Chave and Lisa Saltzman offer primary models through their investigations into the materials and techniques of contemporaneous twentieth-century women artists.² This chapter's analysis also builds from scholars outside of the American and modern art fields to expand further the theoretical underpinnings of materials and their wide-reaching cultural, social, and spiritual importance.³ There is much to learn from a multi-layered analysis of the equipment and methods behind printmaking.

Examining printmaking's tools and materiality is fundamentally contrary to the prevailing style of critical analysis at mid-century that controlled interpretations of Atelier 17 artists' prints. A leading critic of the period, Clement Greenberg (1909-1994), maintained the status of "high art" over "craft." Greenberg's complex understanding of "superior" and "mass" culture began with his 1939 essay "Avant-Garde and Kitsch,"

¹ For a methodological overview, see Jules Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 1-19.

² Anna Chave, "Eva Hesse: A 'Girl Being a Sculpture'," in *Eva Hesse: A Retrospective* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Lisa Saltzman, "Reconsidering the Stain: On Gender, Identity, and New York School Painting," in *Reading Abstract Expressionism: Context and Critique*, ed. Ellen G. Landau (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 560-80.

³ See for example Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980); Herbert Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art* (Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 2004); Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011).

published in the *Partisan Review*, and evolved throughout subsequent decades of critical writing.⁴ He asserted that “art,” best exemplified by abstract painters of the postwar New York School, possessed superior qualities of flatness, rigorous intellectual content, inspiration, and purity. Crafts, such as printmaking, carried the stigma of being superficially decorative, requiring skilled labor and mechanical precision, and a focus on real objects.

In his recent scholarship, Glenn Adamson has teased out the paradoxes in Greenberg’s critical model and modern art’s aversion to encounters with materials. Adamson writes that, while craft as a lower cousin to art, always, “entails an encounter with the properties of a specific material,” the “normative idea of modern art...involves the transcendence...of just this encounter.”⁵ Though Adamson’s theory does not mention printmaking specifically, his theory helps to explain why printmaking, with its high barriers to entry, specialized tools, and technical know-how, was ostracized in the New York School as a craft rather than a creative art for the brooding artist. Traditional engraving, as Hayter taught it, demanded skilled competency with the burin and physical awareness of the printmaker’s body in relation to their plate. At a time when critics preferred art that featured the unplanned improvisation and spontaneity of Abstract Expressionist painters, printmaking’s dependence on sharp tools and careful planning was out-of-step with the highest achievements in postwar art. Because of the negative connotations of craft women faced as artists in the New York School, their prints

⁴ Clement Greenberg, “Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” in *Perceptions and Judgments, 1939-1944*, ed. John O’Brian, vol. 1, 4 vols., *The Collected Essays and Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 5–22. For an overview of Greenberg’s understanding of artistic hierarchies in relation to craft, see Elissa Auther, “Hierarchy of Art and Craft in the Art Criticism of Clement Greenberg,” *Oxford Art Journal* 27, no. 3 (2004): 339–64.

⁵ Glenn Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 39.

remained mired in technical details and rarely rose into the period's highest realm of aesthetic achievement.

The Manliness of Engraving

The instruction and execution of engraving with its sharp cutting tools carried overtly masculine and sometimes violent overtones by the time Atelier 17 moved to New York. Leading up to 1940, many feared that the art of engraving was in crisis. Period observers were concerned that engraving had fallen to reproductive service. But, these underlying anxieties about engraving's weak state parallel the crisis of masculinity surrounding the Great Depression and onset of World War II. Ruthven Todd (1914-1978), poet and collaborator with Hayter, expressed fear that "the engraver's burin had degenerated."⁶ Other intaglio processes were maligned as less robust than engraving in order to elevate its virility. Rosamund Frost of *Art News* stated that the burin was "infinitely more difficult to handle than the etcher's needle" and left a "masculine signature in the clean tension of its line."⁷

Recognizing engraving's enervated condition, Hayter devoted himself to revitalizing the medium through whatever means necessary. With battles erupting all over Europe and the Pacific, Hayter took on the role of a military general waging war against engraving's weaknesses. This bellicose metaphor of avant-garde modernism was not lost on artists who worked at Atelier 17. Fuller recalled that Atelier 17 was "no ordinary

⁶ Ruthven Todd, "Hayter Paints a Picture," *Art News* 49 (October 1959): 28-30.

⁷ Rosamund Frost, "Graphic Revolution: Studio 17," *Art News* 43 (August 1944): 11. Sue Fuller remembered Hayter converted the Argentinian Mauricio Lasansky to engraving from drypoint, since the needle had a lowly reputation around Atelier 17 as "a ladylike instrument." See Sue Fuller, "Atelier 17 and the New York Avant Garde 1940-55," 1993, 2, Priscilla Cunningham papers regarding Sue Fuller, 1982-2006, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

classroom, it was the cell of a revolution...you can imagine the chaos.”⁸ Hayter’s teaching methods specifically echoed the battle to reinvigorate engraving. In his 1951 film *A New Way of Gravure*, Hayter clarified his aggressive pedagogical approach. Hayter’s narration articulated the strong forces spurring the production of a print: “If a print is to be good, there has to be a violent impulse to make something.”⁹ Hayter repeatedly said in interviews and his writing that the burin in the hands of an artist became a weapon to attack a copper plate. This film developed a metaphor of aerial assault. As Hayter strained to push the burin through the plate, he elaborated, “the plate turns under the tool as the landscape appears to turn below as a plane is banking.”¹⁰ Like a fighter pilot, the burin controls the “angle of attack” and the amount of damage to the plate, resulting in thicker or thinner lines.¹¹ Explaining that the line “comes out [from the plate] as a shred of metal,” this byproduct becomes like shrapnel after a bombing. Many artists who trained with Hayter at Atelier 17 recalled his strong directive to attack and destroy the printing plate as if in battle. Jacob Kainen (1909-2001), printmaker and longtime curator of the Division of Graphic Arts at the U.S. National Museum (now the National Museum of American History), described Hayter’s pedagogy as similar to basic training, meant to weed out those soldiers not strong enough to carry on work at Atelier 17. Kainen said, “the idea was to break down any fear of acids, tools, or experimentation, and to release unforeseen images.”¹²

⁸ Fuller, “Atelier 17,” 1, 4.

⁹ Jess Paley, *A New Way of Gravure* (A. F. Films, 1951).

¹⁰ Paley, *A New Way of Gravure*.

¹¹ Stanley William Hayter, “Line Engraving: Part II Technique,” *Print* 1, no. 4 (March 1941): 53.

¹² Jacob Kainen, “Stanley William Hayter: An Introduction,” in *The Prints of Stanley William Hayter: A Complete Catalogue*, ed. Désirée Moorhead and Peter Black (Mount Kisco, NY: Moyer Bell, 1992), 13.

Though Hayter strongly encouraged engraving and carving with the burin, artists experimented with other tools that carried strongly masculine connotations. One such tool was the electric handheld drill, introduced to modern printmaking around the 1940s.¹³ The drill engaged with postwar masculinity through intersections with dentistry, the postwar do-it-yourself craze, and the aggression of Abstract Expressionism. Although dentistry remained a primary factor in associating engraving and etching tools with manliness into the 1940s, the profession's influence on printmaking further extended to the introduction of power drills as a method of marking printmaking plates. Many of the drills artists used were in fact repurposed dentist's drills.¹⁴ By the late 1930s—just around the time that Atelier 17 came to New York—the stigma of women in dentistry had only barely worn off. Social mores and masculine protectionism continued to limit women's participation in the dental profession. In 1938, a female dentist noted that only 1,287 women were practicing dentistry in the United States—a female to male ratio of about one to fifty-five, meaning there were approximately 70,000 practicing male dentists—and that four of the thirty-nine American dental schools still excluded women from admission.¹⁵

The use of handheld drills in printmaking also overlapped with the increase of men pursuing recreational hobbies in the postwar period. Leisure time expanded after World War II, and large numbers of Americans searched for activities to engage themselves after work and on weekends. This phenomenon gave rise to a multi-billion

¹³ Ad Stijnman, *Engraving and Etching, 1400-2000: A History of the Development of Manual Intaglio Printmaking Processes* (London; Houton, Netherlands: Archetype; Hes & De Graaf, 2012), 194.

¹⁴ Stijnman, *Engraving and Etching*, 246, n. 533.

¹⁵ The schools were the leading dental programs of the day: Georgetown, Harvard, St. Louis University, and Kansas City-Western. Rosalie Carter, "Dentistry Is a Woman's Job," *Independent Woman*, October 1938, 320.

dollar, do-it-yourself industry selling home repair tools, craft projects, and paint-by-number kits.¹⁶ Male and female hobbies, however, were largely segregated by gender, visually demonstrated in a photograph of a postwar kitchen partitioned into “his” and “her” workspaces (fig. 3-1). As soldiers returned home and settled into domestic routines as fathers and husbands, there was an urgent need to reclaim ways for men to prove their masculinity.¹⁷ The do-it-yourself industry cashed in on these concerns and targeted men in advertisements for power tools and other home repair equipment. The text from a 1945 advertisement for a handheld Dremel drill (fig. 3-2) in *Popular Science* anthropomorphizes the product with returning servicemen and associates its robustness with military service: “Put this ‘war veteran’ to work...Long before Pearl Harbor, Dremel Moto-Tools had won their spurs in tool rooms, machine shops, home workshops. Now they have the respect of every branch of the armed forces.”¹⁸ Women certainly were not the target audience for Dremel drills, except when purchasing them as gifts for the men in their lives. Postwar advertisements for any gadgetry or tools geared toward women, in contrast, emphasized the ease and simplicity of use.¹⁹ Hiding sharp or other potentially hazardous components and emphasizing the ease of pushing buttons, this advertising strategy was intended to instill confidence in female consumers.

Bernard Childs (1910-1985) is perhaps best known for his pioneering work applying power tools to printmaking. While living in Paris in 1954, Childs worked briefly at Atelier 17. Soon after, he independently turned to drills to create “power drypoint and

¹⁶ See “Hyphenated Culture: Painting by Numbers in the New Age of Leisure,” chapter 2 in Karal Ann Marling, *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

¹⁷ Marling, *As Seen on TV*, 58.

¹⁸ Dremel Electric Power Tools, “Put This ‘War Veteran’ To Work,” *Popular Science*, November 1945, 291.

¹⁹ Thomas Hine, *Populuxe* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 63.

engraving” because he felt traditional engraving and etching tools could not provide the “hot, fast lines, the freedom of movement, directness and instantaneousness of contact.”²⁰ In discussing prints like *Persephone* from 1958 (fig. 3-3), art historian Jeffrey Wechsler argues that Childs’s power-tool approach embodies Abstract Expressionism’s aggressive action techniques: “What could better epitomize an artist’s violent attack on a surface than the ultra-high-speed revolution of a toothed metal disc gouging into metal, ripping out shards along its path?”²¹ While his prints were smaller than large Abstract Expressionists canvases, Childs’s power engravings confer the same level of confrontational assault that Harold Rosenberg described in his article “American Action Painters” (1952).²² A photograph of Childs’s studio reveals the sheer quantity of machine drill bits he owned at his death and the extent to which his printmaking had become tied to this aggressive mark-making tool (fig. 3-4).

Male artists employed other home repair equipment in addition to the handheld drill to achieve similarly violent effects on their plates. Louis Schanker (1903-1981), who produced woodcuts throughout his career and taught woodcutting at Atelier 17 among other locales, spoke about the strong aesthetic possibilities contained within a hardware store: “Anything which can be used to ‘mar’ the surface of the wood is a legitimate tool...Any resistant material can be pressed into the wood’s surface in order to give variety and texture...nails, wire-mesh, screws, bolts, etc.”²³ Sue Fuller remembered that fellow artist and Atelier 17 member Abraham Rattner (1893-1978) forcefully hammered

²⁰ Janet A. Flint, *The Prints of Bernard Childs* (New York: Hirschl & Adler Galleries, Inc., 1988), n.p.

²¹ Jeffrey Wechsler, *Abstract Expressionism, Other Dimensions: An Introduction to Small Scale Painterly Abstraction in America, 1940-1965* (New Brunswick, NJ: Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1989), 113.

²² Rosenberg speaks about painting as an encounter between the artist and his materials. Sketching was a type of “skirmish.” See Harold Rosenberg, “The American Action Painters,” *Art News* 51, no. 8 (December 1952): 22–23, 48–50.

²³ Louis Schanker, “The Ides of Art: 11 Graphic Artists Write,” *Tiger’s Eye*, no. 8 (June 1949): 46.

a nail into his plate *à la manière criblé*, a medieval printmaking technique of punching dots into plates to produce raised white areas on paper. The gender-segregated context of postwar handiness crossed over to printmaking, mandating that women artists not exert proficiency in these “masculine” techniques.

Many women struggled with Hayter’s aggressive methods, traditional tools of intaglio, and other male-coded instruments. Louise Bourgeois spoke most perceptively about her experiences at Atelier 17 and learning intaglio from Hayter. She saw her art making process as a battle and clearly recognized that printmaking tools could express violent emotions.²⁴ Despite her reservations, she preferred the engraver’s burin, saying, “it was an effective way of directly converting antagonism.”²⁵ Yet, as the previous chapter explained, she never felt totally comfortable with Hayter’s instruction at Atelier 17. Bourgeois recalled the way that artists handled the burin seemed to be a test of their masculine prowess. Hayter praised artists for their ability to execute parallel lines or carve out a long, continuous strip of copper from the plate with the burin.²⁶

Louise Nevelson also struggled with traditional engraving tools. On her first stint at Atelier 17 in 1948, she worked with Hayter, whose method for teaching she recalled being too technical and reliant on gravure tools: “Mr. Hayter...gave me a great deal of attention and every time I took a breath, he was there taking one too. And that defeated me because I didn’t want to be what you call an expert on all those tools.”²⁷ Peter Grippe later invited Nevelson to return to the workshop in 1952. She recalled in her memoirs

²⁴ Louise Bourgeois, “10 Artists in the Margin,” *Design Quarterly* 30 (1954): 18.

²⁵ Deborah Wye and Carol Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois* (New York: Museum of Modern Art; distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1994), 23.

²⁶ Wye and Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois*, 27.

²⁷ Transcript of interview by Colette Roberts with Louise Nevelson, New York 1968 p. 4, as quoted in Joann Moser, “The Significance of Atelier 17 in the Development of Twentieth Century American Printmaking” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976), 177.

saying, “I can’t stand those tools, and I don’t want to learn that thing [burin engraving]. I’m not a dentist.”²⁸ She actually purchased a burin at the start of her second period at Atelier 17, but continued male dominance within dentistry clarifies Nevelson’s skittishness to work with tools so historically aligned with the profession.²⁹

Instead of the male-coded burin or etching tools, Nevelson employed a kitchen can opener to make linear marks during her second session at Atelier 17 between 1952 and 1954. In fact, Grippe lured Nevelson with the promise of a less traditionally tool-based approach and gave her a can opener to create linear marks on her plates.³⁰ As an indispensable utensil of the kitchen, the can opener invokes obvious parallels to domesticity and the new convenience of canned food in the postwar era.³¹ But, Nevelson’s reliance on this everyday kitchen tool does not simply suggest her conformity to gender stereotypes. Dorothy Dehner, one of Nevelson’s intimate friends, commented upon her untraditional stance toward domesticity, once reflecting, “Louise was not interested in the cookery portion of living in a house.” Instead of finding kitchen tools in utensil drawers, Dehner remembered that Nevelson “had stuck the eggbeater in the ground [in the backyard]...she had stuck these in rows of tulips.”³² The can opener empowered Nevelson to express bold emotions and brute force that were uncharacteristic of the conventional postwar housewife. Examining Nevelson’s Atelier 17 plates

²⁸ Louise Nevelson, *Dawns + Dusks: Taped Conversations with Diana MacKown* (New York: Scribner, 1976), 107. Nevelson’s sculptor colleagues, Seymour Lipton (1903-1986) and Herbert Ferber (1906-1991), were both trained dentists.

²⁹ On September 11, 1952, Nevelson bought a no. 10 burin. See page 35 of Student Ledger book, Allentown Art Museum, the Grippe Collection.

³⁰ Nevelson, *Dawns + Dusks*, 107.

³¹ For more about how the next generation of artists appropriated consumer culture, see Cécile Whiting, *A Taste for Pop: Pop Art, Gender, and Consumer Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

³² Dorothy Dehner, interview by Laurie Lisle, November 30, 1982, Laurie Lisle research material on Louise Nevelson, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [henceforth cited as LLRM]. This practice may have some roots in kashering utensils. Ne’itzah is a process where knives are thrust into the ground repeatedly to make them kosher again.

demonstrates the depth to which she gouged the plates with the can opener to produce raw, unrefined lines that were vastly different from the burin's exacting and precise ones. In a twist of gender expectations, the can opener emboldened Nevelson to generate more "virility" than the strongly male-coded engraving burin.³³

Innovation in the Kitchen

In 1951, *New York Times* critic Stuart Preston proclaimed that Minna Citron had succeeded "in giving such depth to her enigmatic etching," *Way Thru the Woods* from 1947-48 (fig. 3-5), "that it might be carved from gingerbread."³⁴ Preston's comments assume Citron's creation of depth emanated from her womanliness and knowledge of holiday baking. Yet Citron was executing one of the signature techniques practiced at Atelier 17: inking and printing the same plate twice to achieve the illusion of depth.³⁵ As was customary at Atelier 17, she reversed the plate inking. The lighter portion shows her inking the calligraphic markings etched into the plate, and the darker section reflects ink on the planar, un-etched surface. But, Citron's implementation of the inking reversal was quite innovative, since she purposely staggered the plates when printing them to heighten the effect of depth.³⁶

This anecdote pinpoints one of the traps facing women printmakers of Atelier 17. Even if they achieved abstraction through novel techniques as Citron did, critics often

³³ Nevelson donated the thirty uncanceled plates—a mix of copper and zinc—to MoMA in 1967 shortly after reprinting them with Irwin Hollander in 1965-66 (see accession nos. SC2150.1967 through SC2179.1967). The artist makes reference to the gift in *Dawns + Dusks*, 107.

³⁴ Stuart Preston, "American Graphic Art," *New York Times*, July 8, 1951, 66.

³⁵ For more on Atelier 17 artists' experiments with surface printing and stenciling, see Joann Moser, *Atelier 17: A 50th Anniversary Retrospective Exhibition* (Madison, WI: Elvehjem Art Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1977), 35.

³⁶ The impression of *Way Thru the Woods* at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC (1951.16.17) is annotated in Citron's hand, "printed off register purposely."

dismissed their working methods and finished prints by aligning them with women's roles in the kitchen. Midcentury American society expected women to provide for the nutritional needs of the family. This daily cooking and baking represented one of the acceptable outlets for feminine creativity, though cookbooks carefully circumscribed too much inventiveness by suggesting women follow recipes.³⁷ By connecting women's printmaking technique with the kitchen, Preston and other critics belittled these artists' pioneering efforts in abstraction as little more than the housewife's striving for creative fulfillment. Nevelson encountered a similar slight, since the literature about her *Atelier 17* etchings has stressed the novelty of her being a woman artist who found commonality with a can opener rather than the strong inspiration she gained from this tool. The double standard of criticism applied to women's *Atelier 17* prints recalls Lucy Lippard's observation of women artists' conspicuous absence from the narrative of Pop Art only a decade later: "If the first major Pop artists had been women, the movement might never have gotten out of the kitchen."³⁸ And indeed, the literature about *Atelier 17* lopsidedly praises male printmakers' technique with "masculine" tools over their female colleagues' domestically based equipment or achievements.

Despite these critical dismissals and the overwhelming societal pressure pushing them toward conventional domesticity, several women printmakers enterprisingly combined mundane kitchen tools and cooking techniques with innovative results. They harnessed power from the kitchen and used it as a laboratory for experimentation.

³⁷ Erika Endrijonas, "Processed Foods from Scratch: Cooking for a Family in the 1950s," in *Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender, and Race*, ed. Sherrie A. Inness (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

³⁸ Lucy R. Lippard, "Household Images in Art," in *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art* (New York: Dutton, 1976), 56. Lippard's essay originally appeared in the March 1973 issue of *Ms.* For more on women pop artists, see Sid Sachs and Kalliopi Minioudaki, eds., *Seductive Subversion: Women Pop Artists, 1958-1968* (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 2010).

Women printmakers of Atelier 17 proved that there was a dual face to the kitchen of the 1940s and 1950s. They pushed the envelope with their experimental techniques and with their modern aesthetics, but all cleverly within the prevailing strictures of American society's gender norms and prescribed domestic creativity.

Louise Bourgeois, for example, conceived of a way to etch her plates safely in her home kitchen without exposing herself or her three sons to the dangers of corrosive acids. Bourgeois faced two problems in working on etchings: first, a personal fear of acid; and second, her concerns about working safely on her etchings with three small boys at home. Etching acids of the 1940s and 1950s were potentially quite dangerous and sometimes fatal.³⁹ James Goetz (1915-1946), Bourgeois's Atelier 17 colleague, died tragically at the age of thirty from exposure to the poisonous fumes of carbon tetrachloride.⁴⁰ Given this context, Bourgeois's aversion to handling acid is quite understandable. Bourgeois spoke about her reticence to work in the "anxious environment" of Atelier 17's acid room. As a solution, she often outsourced etching her plates to fellow artist Kenneth Kilstrom (1922-1995).

Preferring the "friendly environment" of her home, to use her own words, Bourgeois could not safely etch her plates around her three children without significantly altering the etching process. In his printmaking manual of 1959, another Atelier 17 alumnus Gabor Peterdi (1915-2001) warned of the hazards of etching acid to small children: "I should like to emphasize that acids, especially in their undiluted form, are

³⁹ Safety standards have evolved since the 1940s, and many printmaking manuals carry better instructions about safe use of etching acids. See for example Zea Mays Printmaking, a studio dedicated to sustainable printmaking practices.

⁴⁰ Alice Trumbull Mason, announcement for the posthumous publication of James Goetz's portfolio *The Primordials*, in the archives of Emily Mason Kahn.

dangerous....Pure acid should be kept in cabinets on shelves inaccessible to children.”⁴¹

Bourgeois devised a method of immersing her plates for several hours overnight in an extremely diluted acid solution. Little more potent than wine or vinegar, the strength of Bourgeois’s home acid solution was safe enough to calm her fears and any risks to her children.⁴² Through her own ingenuity and a home recipe, Bourgeois remained simultaneously a pioneering artist and a nurturing mother within the confines of the kitchen.

Sue Fuller also made a significant contribution to advancing abstract printmaking through experiments in the kitchen. She discovered a new way to obtain bold gestural marks on an etching plate with “direct blacks aquatint,” also known as lift ground etching, using Karo corn syrup. Unlike sharp etching and engraving tools capable only of producing linear markings, lift ground allows artists to translate calligraphic brushstrokes directly to the plate surface. This very expressive technique became hugely important during the 1940s and 1950s as artists of the Abstract Expressionist generation sought to convey unfettered emotions and autographic gesture. Despite the wide-reaching influence of Karo syrup on artists at Atelier 17, histories of the workshop gloss over Fuller’s role in reviving lift ground etching because of the material’s ties with domesticity and the kitchen.

Fuller’s dogmatic quest for empirical discovery challenged the alignment of her Karo syrup method with the era’s ideals of femininity. She became frustrated while at Atelier 17 with the lack of know-how to obtain a heavy brushstroke by marking a plate directly with a paintbrush. A process existed to simulate brushstroke by etching dark

⁴¹ Gabor Peterdi, *Printmaking: Methods Old and New* (New York: Macmillan, 1959), 122.

⁴² Wye and Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois*, 26.

areas of aquatint to make a “stroke,” but it bothered Fuller that she could not mark the plate with actual brushstrokes. Though lift ground was not a new process, Fuller invented a novel method by which to achieve the effect. Interestingly, Fuller did not find suitable chemicals at Atelier 17, and she instead turned to ingredients in her kitchen pantry. She referred to carrying out her “research” at home as if it were a systematic science experiment. Fuller discovered that the thick, sugary consistency of Karo syrup would be a perfect tool. She did not simply use Karo syrup straight out of the jar but figured out that slightly hardened Karo, exposed to air for some time, improved her results. She painted the lines she wanted with this stiffened corn syrup over a plate prepared with aquatint particles. Once she applied a layer of protective ground over the entire surface, the brushstroke painted with Karo syrup would loosen when submerged in alcohol and expose the aquatint grain underneath to etch in an acid bath. *Cock* (1944), Fuller’s first successful print with lift ground, contains bold calligraphic lines appearing etched line and textures to emphasize the head, neck, beak, legs, and tail of the rooster (fig. 3-6).

Since Fuller’s process involved a common pantry item, it would be easy to categorize her discovery within the context of women’s domesticity. After all, just as a dutiful housewife might follow the recipe from her favorite cookbook, Fuller consulted her “bible,” *The Art of Etching* by E.S. Lumsden, for clues about the best ingredients or artists who achieved brush marks in the past.⁴³ She scoured Lumsden’s pages and finally found helpful information in his write-up about William Gainsborough’s eighteenth-century etchings.⁴⁴ Furthermore, Karo as a sugar product had several cultural associations

⁴³ Sue Fuller, oral history interview by Paul Cummings, April 24 and May 8, 1975, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

⁴⁴ Sue Fuller to Hyatt Mayor, December 17, 1946, MMA 46.158. It is not known which edition of Lumsden that Fuller owned. For reference to Gainsborough, see Ernest Stephen Lumsden, *The Art of Etching*

connecting it with socially prescribed feminine roles. After beginning as a food of the lower classes, candy and other sugary sweets became signifiers of upper-class Victorian women's feminine leisure, indulgence, sweetness, and delicacy.⁴⁵ Additionally, Karo advertisements targeted mothers in the 1940s by offering essential nutrition for infants and, by the postwar period, it was marketed as a healthy necessity for the whole family.⁴⁶

But, Fuller's use of Karo for scientific research in printmaking shows initiative that surpassed these gender norms of housewife and mother-as-nurturer. Fuller grew up around parents who strongly exemplified the ideals for their respective genders.⁴⁷ Her mother, she said, was a "great home person" who knitted and sewed cloths for her children, canned, and baked her own bread. She characterized her father as "the man" like Teddy Roosevelt, the highest exemplar of masculine virility in the early-twentieth century. It is significant, then, that Fuller—a single woman without a child or family to feed—experimented with Karo during World War II. Supply of corn syrup was quite limited as the manufacturer struggled to meet military needs. Advertisements in women's magazines contained messages to mothers and doctors about obtaining bottles of Karo for their babies, if their local grocer had none (fig. 3-7).

Her dogmatic determination to find a solution, even if it involved "such homey stuff" as Karo, indicated her desire to challenge gender stereotypes and undermine

(London: Seeley, Service & Co., Limited, 1925), 197. Fuller knew that other artists, such as Georges Rouault, employed this lift ground technique, but that their printers kept the precise process a studio secret. See Sue Fuller to Jacob Kainen, October 12, 1947, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History, Special Exhibition File [henceforth cited as SEF].

⁴⁵ Jane Dusselier, "Bonbons, Lemon Drops and Oh Henry! Bars: Candy, Consumer Culture, and the Construction of Gender, 1895-1920," in *Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender, and Race*, ed. Sherrie A. Inness (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

⁴⁶ See for example: "Babies Begin Life on Dextrose Sugar: The Ad That Caught a Mother's Eye," *Life*, March 10, 1941, 53; Karo Syrup, "Satisfies the Modern Taste for Full Rich Flavor," *Life*, October 25, 1954, 14.

⁴⁷ Fuller, oral history.

feminine norms propagated by Karo advertisements.⁴⁸ Fuller had an insatiable curiosity that never diminished through every stage of her career. She strove tirelessly to understand the mechanics of a certain process or the chemical properties of a substance, ultimately registering a patent for plastic in 1969.⁴⁹ She likely inherited this inquisitiveness from her father, a construction engineer, and from her proximity to the engineering and science programs at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, where she received her BA in 1936. At a time when women might have been discouraged from pursuing scientific or technical research, Fuller never relented because of her gender. She once stated, “I never accepted the fact I was a woman and therefore I could not do anything. I never accepted that fact. I was an artist and I was interested. So dammit, I was finding out. And, I didn’t care what anybody had to say about it.”⁵⁰ At the very outset of her artistic career, she was already conscious of the fact that her art making would “demand technical research.”⁵¹ Jacob Kainen perfectly characterized Fuller in this early stage of her career as one of Atelier 17’s “brilliant experimenters” who brought vitality to printmaking.⁵²

Her Karo method achieved quite a buzz around Atelier 17. Hayter praised Fuller upon hearing her explain the technique to Perle Fine for use in one of her plates, perhaps *Calm after Storm* from 1944 (fig. 3-8). She remembered he said, “you have made a distinct contribution.”⁵³ Fuller recalled that bottles of Karo syrup soon became common to find on Atelier 17’s shelves, as many artists, including surrealist André Masson (1896-

⁴⁸ Fuller to Mayor, December 17, 1946.

⁴⁹ Stacey V. Jones, “Artist Devises a Three-Dimensional Effect,” *New York Times*, June 21, 1969, 33.

⁵⁰ Fuller, oral history.

⁵¹ Sue Fuller to Jacob Kainen, October 12, 1947, SEF.

⁵² Jacob Kainen, “Press Release for Sue Fuller Exhibition, October 27-November 23, 1947,” 1947, SEF.

⁵³ Sue Fuller to Jacob Kainen, October 16, 1947, SEF.

1987), widely adopted her method.⁵⁴ Yet, within a few years, Hayter omitted Fuller's contribution from his 1949 manual *New Ways of Gravure*. Despite the fact that lift ground had fallen into disuse at Atelier 17 by the 1940s, Hayter claimed that members had been practicing the method since 1929.⁵⁵ Fuller believed that gender hierarchies fueled Hayter's oversight, saying, "no Englishman can be beholden to an American woman."⁵⁶ The domestic source of Fuller's lift-ground solution and its connection to motherhood likely accounted for the quickness of her losing ownership over her discovery and Hayter's apparent "forgetfulness."

Kitchen metaphors overwhelmed women's exploration of certain printmaking techniques, which bordered or overlapped with the domestic context. Looking back on these techniques with a critical eye towards midcentury gender norms reveals the novelty of women's efforts. The next section will also show permeability of tools and technique to the influence of feminine craft.

Soft Ground Etching's Challenge to Fabric's Femininity

Soft ground etching, a method for impressing texture onto an intaglio plate, represents another arena where the tools of printmaking indicate gender difference. In soft ground etching, the protective resist rolled over the plate does not harden, like the ground used for traditional line etching, but remains sticky due to added wax or grease being mixed in.⁵⁷ Artists place a textured design on top of a soft-grounded plate and then

⁵⁴ Sue Fuller to Jacob Kainen, October 16, 1947, SEF; Moser, "The Significance of Atelier 17," 120. The influence of Fuller's Karo technique on André Masson can be seen in his print *Improvisation* (1943).

⁵⁵ Stanley William Hayter, *New Ways of Gravure* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1949), 93.

⁵⁶ Fuller, oral history

⁵⁷ For discussion of soft ground at Atelier 17, see Chapter 4 of Stanley William Hayter, *New Ways of Gravure* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966). See also Moser, *Atelier 17*, 27.

run both through the press. Anything that touches the soft ground—for example, handprints, botanical materials, or fabric—pulls away resist and exposes the plate underneath to acid bite. Soft ground etching became a signature mark of Atelier 17 as artists in New York, even though the studio’s artists used the technique in Paris.⁵⁸

The use of fabrics, rich with details, triggered highly gendered reviews aligning women’s prints with traditional women’s crafts such as weaving, sewing, embroidery and knitting. Soft ground etching is, in many ways, the polar opposite of traditional engraving and etching: in the semantics of “soft” versus “hard” ground coating the plate, the physical difference between fabric’s flexibility and rigidity of engraving and etching tools, and a host of additional double-entendres. Despite the outward “softness” of the technique implying femininity, women printmakers from Atelier 17 exploited its great creative potential. This section will examine four aspects of women printmakers’ soft ground etchings: the technique as a vehicle for collage, expectations for women during World War II vis-à-vis the rationing of fabric, the potential of textiles to express the inner psyche, and the use of fabrics to build geometric abstraction. Women printmakers from Atelier 17 employed soft ground etching as an empowering device, furthering the assertion that they were trailblazers and innovative modernists.

The analysis of women’s application of texture in soft ground etching relies upon feminist art historian Roszika Parker’s (1945-2010) groundbreaking work on embroidery.

In *The Subversive Stitch* (1984), Parker explored the complex process through which

⁵⁸ Soft ground etching has roots dating back to the eighteenth century. Benjamin Green first devised the soft ground method around 1771 in order to execute a freehand drawing more quickly. See Stijnman, *Engraving and Etching*, 219. Hayter’s prints show many textures from the mid-1930s onward. See particularly the following Hayter prints: the imprint of tissue paper in *Combat* (1936, B&M 102), the handprint in *Oedipus* (1934, B&M 84), the hexagonal fishnet stocking pattern in *La Glace* (1938, B&M 114), the gauzy weave in *Limbs* (1941, B&M 143), and the wide grid fabric in *Amazon* (1945, B&M 165). B&M number references the catalogue raisonné for Hayter’s prints: Peter Black and Désirée Moorhead, *The Prints of Stanley William Hayter: A Complete Catalogue* (Mount Kisco, NY: Moyer Bell, 1992).

embroidery simultaneously created concepts of femininity and allowed women to resist gender norms. In the introduction to the second edition (2010), Parker encapsulated this “dual face of embroidery,” writing: “[embroidery] has provided both a weapon of resistance for women and functioned as a source of constraint. It has promoted submission to the norms of feminine obedience and offered both psychological and practical means to independence.”⁵⁹ Parker demonstrates that the construction of femininity is intimately enmeshed with the history of embroidery and societal currents. She argues that women found subtle ways to push societal boundaries and stereotypes of femininity through embroidery.

What Parker’s study reacted to are overly simplistic interpretations of women’s crafts as expressions of femininity. Important to the ensuing discussion of soft ground etching, Parker argued that embroidery was seen as “mindless, decorative, and delicate...devoid of significant content,” despite the fact that stitchery transformed its component materials.⁶⁰ This prejudice against women’s crafts continued into the twentieth century and infiltrated the discussion of midcentury abstract art like the prints made at Atelier 17. Clement Greenberg, maintained the status of art above craft by reaffirming artificial oppositions between perceived characteristics of the two. In her study of fiber art, Elissa Auther notes that craft at mid-century carried the stigma of denoting “superficial surface embellishment, skilled labor, derivativeness, and precision in a mechanical rather than a ‘felt out’ manner of working.”⁶¹ Any object that Greenberg categorized as craft lacked, according to Auther, “the heroic struggle between the artist

⁵⁹ Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), xix.

⁶⁰ Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 6.

⁶¹ Elissa Auther, *String, Felt, Thread: The Hierarchy of Art and Craft in American Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xvi.

and the blank canvas.” As the ensuing discussions of soft ground etching will prove, soft ground etching was far from a vacuous craft and had the capacity to express intense emotions and multi-layered aesthetic goals.

Soft Ground Etching as Collage

Several women artists worked with textiles in soft ground etching as a means of achieving collage in printmaking. This section focuses on the soft ground etchings of Sue Fuller and Anne Ryan. It examines their goals to create modernist collages through printmaking and the permeability of their prints to criticism based on their gender. Both Fuller and Ryan defied expectations of women printmakers using soft ground etching as a decorative feminine technique and gave fiber new, innovative meaning.

Sue Fuller, who broadly extended soft ground etching’s possibilities through experimentation with many textures, was acutely aware that the stakes were not just about simple patterns but the extension of collage to printmaking. Fuller expressed her views in a 1950 article for *Magazine of Art* where she analyzed examples of soft ground etching in Mary Cassatt’s prints. Among other examples, Fuller pointed to several textures within two impressions of *The Visitor* (1881) from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA), a collection she visited often to understand printmaking’s historical techniques (figs. 3-9, 3-10). An early state shows Cassatt impressing what Fuller called “nubbly material” for the dress of the central figure. She also vigorously shaped the seated figure on the right with scribbles from the end of a paintbrush and strokes of stopping-out varnish. In other prints, Fuller believed Cassatt executed a drawing over scraps of netting, “the kind of fabric any Victorian lady whose dressmaker made her

clothes and left cuttings of materials around would have in abundance.”⁶² Praising this process as “so direct, so complete, so simple,” Fuller believed that Cassatt’s soft ground etching anticipated the development of collage in the first decades of the twentieth century: “In this way, Mary Cassatt used the impression of the texture of materials in a print—a ‘collage’ technique in the metal-plate medium—as early as 1881.”⁶³

Fuller worked later in her career to settle a longstanding academic debate over whether tonal areas in Cassatt’s famous color etchings from 1890-91 were made with aquatint grain or soft ground etching.⁶⁴ Working to replicate Cassatt’s *La Coiffure* and *In the Omnibus*, Fuller impressed newspaper stock onto soft ground to obtain a delicate grain for the color areas. Despite having Fuller’s findings challenged by later scholarship, Cassatt’s soft ground etching clearly served as inspiration for Fuller’s experiments collaging pattern and lace onto her Atelier 17 prints.

Fuller’s exploration of collage in soft ground etching has connections to other modernist movements. She met Josef Albers (1888-1976) in the late-1940s through her

⁶² Sue Fuller, “Mary Cassatt’s Use of Soft-Ground Etching,” *Magazine of Art*, February 1950, 56.

⁶³ Fuller, “Mary Cassatt,” 55. Ruth Leaf, another Atelier 17 artist, fully digested Fuller’s lesson in her 1976 manual: “Gather the various materials listed above and cut out pieces of thin metal, fabrics, and other items. Place them gently on the plate as if you were making a collage.” Ruth Leaf, *Intaglio Printmaking Techniques* (New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 1976), 82.

⁶⁴ Fuller worked on this project with artist and friend Janet Ruttenberg and master printer Donn Seward. The MMA’s collection has the state proofs for their attempt to recreate *La Coiffure* (1976.599, 1986.1127.9-12) and *In the Omnibus* (1986.1127.2-8). Adelyn Breeskin, author of the catalogue raisonné on Cassatt’s prints, and Fuller corresponded around the publication of the first edition in 1948. Breeskin said she would incorporate Fuller’s discoveries in a future edition of the catalogue. See Adelyn Breeskyn to Sue Fuller, September 12, 1949 and February 6, 1950, in Sue Fuller’s artist file, Department of Drawings and Prints, MMA. Breeskin met with Fuller, Ruttenberg and Seward on February 19, 1976. See Donn Seward, letter accompanying the gift of *La Coiffure* to the MMA 1890-91 color etchings (#143-152) as soft ground etching and drypoint with some aquatint. Later scholarship summarily dislodged Fuller’s and Breeskin’s revisions. See Nancy Mowll Matthews, “The Color Prints in the Context of Mary Cassatt’s Art,” 44, n. 54 and Barbara Stern Schapiro, “Mary Cassatt’s Color Prints and Contemporary French Printmaking” 68, n. 34 in *Mary Cassatt: The Color Prints* (New York: H.N. Abrams in association with Williams College Museum of Art, 1989). As a predoctoral fellow at the MMA, I visited the museum’s paper conservation lab in February 2013 and looked at the Cassatt prints under the microscope with conservator Rachel Mustalish. We concluded that both theories are equally valid; a fine-grained aquatint and newsprint could both produce the grain. Ultimately, the possibility of Cassatt using soft ground etching is what energized Fuller to explore the technique so enthusiastically in her own prints.

job as a teacher of children's courses at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), when her supervisor Victor d'Amico arranged an informal group session with the eminent artist.⁶⁵ Hearing Albers speak about the Bauhaus approach to texture and design stimulated Fuller's ideas about her soft ground etchings and later exploration of sculptures in string. His wife Anni Albers (1899-1994) also inspired Fuller through her innovative weavings. Around 1955, Fuller recalled writing to Anni Albers saying, "I [want] a friend in strings."⁶⁶ Though she never acknowledged the influence, several twentieth-century collage techniques probably impacted Fuller's experiments with collage in soft ground etching. Some scholars have connected Fuller with Dada and particularly Hannah Höch's (1889-1978) collages and photomontages.⁶⁷ Fuller's soft ground etchings also bear resemblance to Man Ray's surrealist collages, called rayographs and aerographs, since they both display indexical traces of tangible objects which open the artwork to readings within larger socio-cultural contexts.⁶⁸

Soon after arriving at Atelier 17, Fuller began researching soft ground etching, "seeking more understanding use of [textures] than had yet been tried" at Atelier 17.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Probably 1949, when Albers had resigned from Black Mountain College and was teaching at Pratt. According to Fuller, you could not study with Albers unless you were enrolled in a degree program.

⁶⁶ Fuller, oral history.

⁶⁷ Graham Reynolds speaks about gender with Fuller's soft ground etchings by saying that she "incorporated the entire contents of a sewing kit in a way that recalls the collages of Hannah Höch." See Graham Reynolds, "Hayter: The Years of Surrealism," in *The Renaissance of Gravure: The Art of S. W. Hayter*, ed. P. M. S. Hacker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 32. It is interesting that Reynolds selected Höch out of all her Dada colleagues who completed photomontages, like John Heartfield and Raoul Hausmann. Höch completed only a few non-photomontages, such as *Bewacht* (1925), which incorporates a Chinese embroidery next to collaged male figure. Rozsika Parker argues that Höch drew attention to the gendered nature of embroidery through juxtapositions like this. See Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 192.

⁶⁸ Fuller was definitely aware of photograms by the late 1930s. An article she wrote for Columbia University's Teacher's College about teaching high school art students appeared next to one by Ivan Rigby about introducing students to photograms. See Sue Fuller, "Bringing Up Teacher," *Art Education Today: An Annual Devoted to the Problems of Art Education*, 1939, 31–35. Barbara Zabel, for example, has looked at Man Ray's photo and air-brushed collages in the context of consumer culture, advertising, and machine technology. See chapter 2 in Barbara Beth Zabel, *Assembling Art: The Machine and the American Avant-Garde* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004).

⁶⁹ Sue Fuller to Jacob Kainen, October 12, 1947, SEF.

Fuller's experiments fall into two rough categories: first, images created with premade lace and fabrics that she stretched into positions; and second, textiles that she created herself using string and other found fiber objects. Fuller took inspiration for her first foray into soft ground in the trove of lace "odds and ends" that she inherited after her mother died in 1943.⁷⁰ Among her mother's things, Fuller found a partially worked Arabian lace collar, which had been a popular needlework project for American women around the turn of the century, with craft magazines selling the patterns (fig. 3-11).⁷¹ As seen in the collage, which she kept as a teaching aid, Fuller cut her mother's collar into the shape of a chicken and impressed the form into a soft ground plate (fig. 3-12). She engraved lines to emphasize the bird's beak, feet, tail, and feathers and created *Hen* (1945), a quintessential example of Fuller's first type of soft ground etching (fig. 3-13).

Although Fuller's experiments with lace clearly have a basis in her mother's Victorian femininity, her method of working with textiles broke with these traditions. Cloth and fabric normally serve as unifying social structures, especially at transitional moments like birth or death when they are passed through generations.⁷² By cutting the lace rather radically into fragmented pieces, Fuller undid the hours her mother spent creating the material, essentially destroying her matrilineal inheritance. Fuller's fabrics also accumulated a brown, sticky soft ground residue as they were pressed into the plate. This stain further separated Fuller's fabrics from their original decorative purpose as feminine ornamentation.

⁷⁰ Fuller also brought from her family's home several sets of sheets, which members at Atelier 17 used for rags. Due to wartime shortages of fabric, Fuller said the sheets were a real "bonanza." Fuller, oral history.

⁷¹ See for example Florence Publishing Company, *Home Needlework Magazine* (October 1900), MMA, 44.39.11(2).

⁷² Jane Schneider and Annette Weiner, eds., *Cloth and Human Experience* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 3.

Frustrated with the limits of stretching prefabricated materials to her desired specifications, Fuller moved toward a second type of print, which she called “string compositions.” She explained that she just “couldn’t get the manufactured textures to look like what I wanted to.”⁷³ Ultimately, she reasoned, “if someone else could make a material... then what was stopping me from reducing materials to its least common denominator—a *string* and making my own *material*.”⁷⁴ *Sailor’s Dream* (1944) perfectly conveys Fuller’s mission to use component threads to weave her own fabrics (fig. 3-14). The collage for the print (fig. 3-15) contains a variety of different thread types, ranging from cotton cording to thin sewing thread and even a red giftwrap ribbon that Fuller noted produced a “marvelous...tread-look” in the resulting print.⁷⁵ Fuller believed that she could use threads to achieve shading instead of cross-hatching with the burin or needle tools.⁷⁶ Collaging together a string composition took Fuller away from marking her plates with aggressively “male” printmaking tools. Pointing specifically to *Sailor’s Dream*, Hayter noted in his book *New Ways of Gravure*, “all the lines that appear are the impressions of threads...there are no *drawn* lines in this plate.”⁷⁷

Fuller’s shift away from traditional etching and engraving tools to weaving textiles for collages in soft ground etching might be seen as a retreat to her femininity. She actually consulted an instructor of lacemaking—perhaps the most stereotypical of female crafts—at The Cooper Union for advice on her string knotting techniques.⁷⁸ Some artists viewed the reliance on soft ground etching as “easier” compared to the hard labor

⁷³ Fuller, oral history.

⁷⁴ Fuller to Kainen, October 12, 1947, SEF (emphasis original).

⁷⁵ Fuller, oral history.

⁷⁶ Fuller, oral history.

⁷⁷ Hayter, *New Ways of Gravure*, 1949, 262 (emphasis original).

⁷⁸ Sue Fuller, “Twentieth Century Cat’s Cradle,” *Craft Horizons* 14 (April 1954): 22.

of marking copper with etching and engraving tools.⁷⁹ But by the 1940s, manuals of women's needlecraft stressed the importance of projects expressing individuality and creativity, rather than the Victorian feminine ideals of selflessness and dedication to others.⁸⁰ Indeed, Fuller's "string doodles" gave her a creative boost and signal a major shift in her aesthetic. Unlike the prints made from manufactured fabrics, which represented animals and human figures, the "scribbles in thread" for *Sailor's Dream* and others like *Concerto* (1944), *Lancelot and Guinevere* (1944), and *Tension* (1946) propelled Fuller toward abstraction (figs. 3-16 to 3-18).

Fuller's soft ground etchings suffered from poor reception likely because the feminine associations of her materials and the complex technical process overshadowed her aesthetic achievements. Fuller struggled to find gallery representation, and finally won a competition to hold a solo exhibition at the Village Art Center in 1947.⁸¹ The major art magazines covered the show, but with serious caveats about her technique. *Art Digest* found two faults in Fuller's etchings: first, that she was derivative of Hayter; and second, that "she does tricky things with string, netting, etc."⁸² Karl Kup, longtime curator of prints at the New York Public Library (NYPL), wrote in his review for *Print*, a quarterly journal about the graphic arts, that Fuller's "independence of spirit" emboldened her to employ "techniques to her own liking" and "the most unacademic

⁷⁹ Moser, *Atelier 17*, 27. Moser writes: "Some artists found soft-ground etching particularly appealing because it required less skill and dedicated craftsmanship than engraving, and offered greater flexibility and opportunity for inventive effects than traditional hard ground etching."

⁸⁰ Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, 203. Fellow Atelier 17 printmaker, Fannie Hillsmith, even wrote a book on embroidery in 1976, where she said one of the two goals of the book was to "show how to make your own designs and thereby experience a most satisfying feeling—that is, the triumph of your own composition coming to life in a fresh, new image." Fannie Hillsmith, *The Ups and Downs of Needlepoint* (South Brunswick and New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1976), under "Preface."

⁸¹ Fuller, oral history; "Sue Fuller Prints" (Village Art Center, March 23, 1947), SEF. The Village Art Center was located at 224 Waverly Place.

⁸² A. L., "Sue Fuller in the Village," *Art Digest* 21 (March 1, 1947): 19.

application of techniques.”⁸³ And, *Art News* praised her “feeling for texture and pattern,” alluding of course to her “natural” feminine gifts for craft. Taken together, these comments suggest unease with Fuller’s unusual experimentation with collaging prints from strings and fabric. Her aesthetic expression was outside the parameters for “good” printmaking because she was a woman and used feminine materials to achieve unorthodox processes.

Fuller’s independent spirit to experiment and give shape to abstractions in threads made her a pioneer for women artists of the fiber art movement. Her “doodles in thread” for soft ground etching eventually led her to explore the possibilities of fiber beyond printmaking. By the mid-1940s Fuller began wrapping threads like silk, hemp, cotton sewing threads, upholsterer’s cord, fisherman’s seine, twine, and metallic threads around open frames with pegs placed at regular intervals. The compositions varied in color from monochromatic white or muted tan tones to those with an array of bright colors. The process evolved continually over the thirty-plus years that Fuller made three-dimensional string compositions. Initially, she started by making her own wooden frames as pictured in a *Life Magazine* spread from 1949, then she commissioned metal frames from a machinist as seen in the MMA’s collection, and finally she developed a patent in the 1960s for encasing the string compositions within large plastic blocks (figs. 3-19 to 3-21).⁸⁴

Just as reception for Fuller’s revolutionary soft ground etchings had been lukewarm, Fuller struggled to find a place in the art world for her three-dimensional string compositions. First, their fibrous content labeled them as a feminine pastime.

⁸³ Karl Kup, “Sue Fuller,” *Print* 5, no. 1 (1947): 70.

⁸⁴ “String Patterns: Artist Works with Colorful Twine,” *Life*, October 31, 1949, 77.

Consider the way the *Life* magazine feature staged Fuller passively admiring one of her string compositions and featured spools of thread in the foreground, rather than having her actively producing the piece. Second, these experimental pieces were hard to categorize as either painting or sculpture. Fuller often talked about the difficulty of getting museums or galleries to show her work, and she sometimes put a colored backing or wood slats behind many to make them fit better as a painting.⁸⁵ Finally, news sources regularly labeled Fuller's string compositions as decorative. "Decorative" was one of the worst digs a postwar artist could receive about their aesthetic efforts. One critic noted that ultimately Fuller's string compositions "remain in the category of tasteful and inventive decoration."⁸⁶ And, the blurb from the feature in *Life* said Fuller's work could be utilitarian room decoration, standing "on the floor for partitions." Even though she produced hundreds of string compositions, Fuller's work achieved only modest circulation in the postwar art world.⁸⁷

Despite being cast aside as decorative and feminine because of their materials, Fuller's printed and three-dimensional string compositions conveyed the advancements of twentieth-century engineering. In a 1954 article for *Craft Horizons*, Fuller stated that she was "inspired by the engineering genius of our times and civilization... airplanes, bridges, skyscrapers."⁸⁸ Ultimately though, Fuller chose not to represent these modern influences literally as symbols but to evoke them abstractly through her string

⁸⁵ Fuller, oral history.

⁸⁶ Dorothy Seckler, "Sue Fuller," *Art News* 49 (September 1950): 46.

⁸⁷ Fuller ultimately showed her string compositions with Bertha Schaeffer's gallery (1949, 1950, 1953, 1956); the Museum of Modern Art illustrated *String Construction in Yellow and Grey* (1946) in its exhibition catalogue for *Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America* (1951); the MMA owns *String Composition #50* (1955, 55.105); the Whitney Museum owns two, *String Composition #51* (1953, 54.23) and *String Composition #530* (1965, 66.101a-b), which has an interior light source; and the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio, TX owns several including a special commission above the stairwell in its galleries.

⁸⁸ Fuller, "Twentieth Century Cat's Cradle," 24.

compositions' patterns. In Fuller's etching *Fabulous City* (1949), the woven textures of fabric in the background support the dynamic force lines of modern engineering and the New York City skyline (fig. 3-22). Clearly expressing her desire to remove entrenched connotations of string with femininity, Fuller wrote, "by laying aside a good many misconceptions of what constituted art" she realized that traditional women's crafts of lace making, knotting and weaving "became arts worthy of study."⁸⁹ Decades before the emergence of fiber art in the 1960s and notable practitioners like Eva Hesse, Fuller provides an example of an artist championing unconventional fiber materials and promoting alternative interpretations of their meaning. The message behind Fuller's string compositions is an intriguing mix of traditionally feminine craft and heavy industry.

Anne Ryan's experiments with fabric textures in soft ground etching have a similar basis in collage. Ryan's best-known work, the collages that she produced between 1948 and her death in 1954, owe a great debt to her training in soft ground etching at Atelier 17. As with Fuller's prints and string compositions, critics negated the creativity of Ryan's soft ground etchings and her collages as nothing more than the delicate productions of a woman artist and her feminine fascination with fabric. Ryan's attraction to working with recognizable objects in her soft ground etchings and collage—hosiery of various types, fabric remnants, yarn, paper scraps and handmade paper—stands in contrast to the period's call for artwork that was pure and devoid of such quotidian

⁸⁹ Fuller, "Twentieth Century Cat's Cradle," 24.

associations.⁹⁰ Yet, Ryan's process of collaging multiple overlapping fabrics in her etchings was strong, assertive, and primal.

Though viewing an exhibition of Kurt Schwitters's collages at the Pinacotheca Gallery in 1948 is almost uniformly cited as the inspiration for Ryan's collages, Ryan's work at Atelier 17 was foundational to the collages.⁹¹ The relation of the soft ground process to collage, as Sue Fuller advocated, primed Ryan's later work. Ryan and Fuller overlapped at Atelier 17's New School location in 1943 and were friendly, as correspondence demonstrates.⁹² Through their interactions, Ryan would have been aware of the Fuller's view about soft ground etching's connection to collage. Ryan even admired Fuller's work in soft ground etching so much that she owned an impression of *Emperor's Jewels* (1944).⁹³

During her first years as a printmaker, Ryan focused on mastering basic techniques and perfecting the implementation of her desired effects. Two journals record her exploration of printmaking, one with notes from Hayter's lessons in 1942-43 and the second from the summer of 1944 filled with comments about techniques she tried on plates. Ryan seemed to be particularly fascinated by the tonal possibilities of soft ground etching. In the earlier journal, Ryan captured Hayter's general advice about textures:

⁹⁰ For more on how Ryan and three of her contemporaries—Lee Krasner, Robert Motherwell, and Esteban Vicente—defied the conventions of collage, see Daniel Louis Haxall, "Cut and Paste Abstraction: Politics, Form, and Identity in Abstract Expressionist Collage" (PhD diss., The Pennsylvania State University, 2009).

⁹¹ Rose Fried Gallery is normally cited as the location for the Schwitters show in 1948, but the Schwitters catalogue raisonné indicates it was held at the Pinacotheca Gallery. Rose Fried took over management of the Pinacotheca Gallery from its founder Dan Harris and later changed the gallery's name to her own. See *Anne Ryan: A Retrospective, 1939-1953* (New York: Susan Teller Gallery, 2007), 3, n. 3.

⁹² In her 1944 Christmas card to Anne Ryan, given by Ryan's daughter to the MMA (1983.1156.10), Fuller writes: "What's cooking? Why don't you come around sometime so we can see you...The Atelier is like Grand Central this season—people by the millions. I'm doing part-time teaching now so don't have much free time – Come over some Mon. or Thurs. + have a look. Love, Sue."

⁹³ The impression of *Emperor's Jewels* at the MMA (1983.1156.4) comes from Ryan's collection and bears the inscription: "To Ann Ryan" [*sic*].

“Textures are used for shadows. Never made with burin for shadows have no steel in them.”⁹⁴ Her notes describe the materials that Hayter suggested, such as net, silk stocking, or crushed paper. By summer 1944, Ryan confidently recorded her personal trials with the soft ground process. The first entry for a print titled *The Spiders* (1944) explains that she “pressed in black net with fingers (not press)” to produce the small patches of open netting—similar to fishnet stockings or veiling—surrounding the reed-like botanicals at left and the lower right corner (fig. 3-23).⁹⁵ Her notes do not clarify how she created the dramatic diagonal across the center that mirrors the striding female figure. The darker, shaded section at upper left could possibly reproduce the imprint of paper with the perfect right angle or women’s hosiery—note several light horizontal lines which might be “runs” in the stocking. Ryan’s entry for a second plate, *Virgin Tames the Unicorn* (collection unknown), records a less successful practice. She attempted to press a cork into soft ground, but found the line from the cork to be too hard. Ryan peppered the rest of the journal with other practical tips from her hands-on experiments.

Soon after Hayter’s initial instruction, Ryan began to see the creative benefits of collaging overlapping or adjacent textures into soft ground. For example, in prints like *Beside the Sea*, a fine layer of silk stocking sits underneath a larger hexagonal pattern (fig. 3-24). Ryan’s journal describes another print, *In a Meadow*, as a very “well worked plate” (fig. 3-25).⁹⁶ She noted using nylon stocking for sky, several types of net for the area behind the figures and on the ground line, and even scraps of paper at center. Even though the resulting print bears an indexical trace of these textures, Ryan used the same

⁹⁴ Anne Ryan, “Hayter’s Class, 1942-43,” Anne Ryan papers, 1922-1968, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [henceforth cited as ARP].

⁹⁵ Anne Ryan, “Notes on Plates Made in Summer 1944 and 35 Colored Wood Block Plates Made in Summer of 1945,” ARP.

⁹⁶ See the comments for *In the Night Meadow* (Plate IV) in “Notes on Plates Made.”

materials to create the etchings as she did when gluing together her collages. It is important, therefore, to envision the component layers in Ryan's etchings as full collages on metal plate. An exaggerated color separation shows the variety of textures within *In a Meadow* (fig. 3-26). With its numerous textures and highly worked surface, the print bears a similarity to the collaged aspects of Mary Cassatt's *The Visitor*.

Pairing the process behind Ryan's print with an early collage from 1948 at MoMA, *Collage #27 (The Flower)* shows the transition from prints to collage (fig. 3-27). Before beginning the collage, Ryan drew an abstract flower in crayon, comparable to the figures that Ryan etched with a needle tool. Framing the flower, Ryan laid down scraps of fabric and papers of assorted colors. As Ryan's collages progressed over six years, she eliminated figural elements in favor of a panoply of textures such as fabric, ribbon, yarn, leather, wood, found paper, and handmade paper. Yet, her collages contain many elements relating back to her prints. Examine, for instance, the juxtaposition of paper and netting in *Number 319* (ca. 1949), where Ryan collaged almost identical weaves of nude and black fishnet stockings as appear in *In the Meadow* and *Beside the Sea* (fig. 3-28). Obviously, the color and texture of the fabrics adds important aesthetic value to Ryan's collages, but it is important to remember that she collaged the same kind of fabric scraps onto her soft ground plates.

Reviews of Ryan's soft ground etchings were tinged by her gender and negative reactions to the presence of fabric textures. An *Art News* reviewer evaluated the "delicate etchings" in Ryan's second one-woman show at Marquié Gallery in April 1943 as "sensitive and essentially feminine" and noted that "she has a good sense of color and

texture.”⁹⁷ Just as critics faulted the “tricky things” Fuller had accomplished with lace and netting, this connection of Ryan’s texture with delicacy, femininity, and sensitivity affirms the midcentury art world’s inability to entertain seriously women’s exploration of collage in soft ground etching. Ryan’s etchings did not get much additional public exhibition time or critical notice—her woodcuts and collages overshadowed the etchings—but posthumous evaluations of Ryan’s early printmaking endeavors in etching carry similarly gendered tone. Writing for *Art in America*, Holland Cotter linked Ryan’s printmaking journals to her natural feminine abilities as a cook: “Entries made in the little blue spiral notebook she kept throughout Hayter’s classes have the same tone of passion and precision as the recipes in a good cookbook.”⁹⁸ As seen in the previous section about women artists getting mired in printmaking’s domestic context, Cotter’s association of Ryan’s process with cooking belittles the experimental ambitions of her notebooks and the creativity behind the collaged fabrics in her soft ground etchings.

The critical reception of Ryan’s textural collages, which she exhibited far more often and to greater public notice, clarify the reasons that Ryan’s soft ground etchings languished. Art historian Ann Gibson’s scholarship has contributed greatly toward understanding the ways that women and other minorities danced around the outskirts of Abstract Expressionism because they failed to embody the “universal” individualism of the heterosexual, white, male painter.⁹⁹ The richly tactile quality of Ryan’s collages and their composition of threads and fabric scraps removed them from consideration as

⁹⁷ “Anne Ryan,” *Art News* 43 (April 15, 1943): 27. See announcement card for “Anne Ryan: Oils and Engravings,” Marquié Gallery, April 15, 1943, ARP, Reel 88, Series 6 exhibition catalogs.

⁹⁸ Holland Cotter, “Material Witness,” *Art in America* 77 (November 1989): 178.

⁹⁹ See particularly Ann Gibson, *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997). Gibson also develops these ideas in “Universality and Difference in Women’s Abstract Painting: Krasner, Ryan, Sekula, Piper and Streat,” *Yale Journal of Criticism* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 103–32.

“serious” abstraction and aligned them with femininity. As Gibson notes of Ryan’s collages, “connotations of the sewing basket...prevented them from being applauded as acts of existential heroism.”¹⁰⁰ Before her unexpected death in 1954, Ryan expressed her dismay to her gallerist Betty Parsons (1900-1982) about the negative reaction of Barnett Newman (1905-1970), a fellow Parsons artist and noted critic, to one of her collage shows: “I found out last evening that the painting standards of Mr. Newman are only intellectual which make them intolerant of mine. The pleasure of texture in color, plus simplicity and delicacy, are in my...collage and I was foolish to expect a different reaction than I got.”¹⁰¹ Art critic Martica Sawin voiced similar concerns as Newman in her write-up of the memorial show of Ryan’s collages held at Betty Parsons Gallery in 1955: “One marvels anew at...the delicacy with which the scraps are placed and the wonderfully feminine understanding of materials and their use.”¹⁰² Douglass Howell (1906-1994), a prominent papermaker who supplied Ryan with the handmade papers she used for her collages, further solidified the association of Ryan’s materials—and by extension her personal identity—with feminine craft and weakness. He wrote in a condolence letter to Ryan’s daughter, “her work was frail. As frail as a piece of Brussels lace.”¹⁰³

In Ryan’s and Fuller’s exploration of collage with soft ground etching, it is important to see both as intrepid creators, not fragile women. They drew on fabric, lace and string not as retreats to their docile feminine nature, but as materials for making powerful aesthetic statements. Their collaged etchings can be seen as precursors to the

¹⁰⁰ Gibson, *Abstract Expressionism*, 34.

¹⁰¹ Ryan had two collage shows with Parsons during her lifetime, in 1950 or 1954. Anne Ryan to Betty Parsons, September 25 (year unknown), undated correspondence, ARP, reel 87, grid 316.

¹⁰² Martica Sawin, “Anne Ryan Memorial,” *Art Digest* 29 (April 15, 1955): 21.

¹⁰³ Douglass Howell to Elizabeth McFadden, April 18, 1954, ARP.

“femmagés” of Miriam Schapiro (b. 1923). Schapiro’s *Anonymous Was a Woman* (1977 and 1999), a series of soft ground etchings for which she impressed lace doilies, handkerchiefs, and baby bonnets into plates, bears a striking resemblance to Fuller’s *Hen* while also calling attention to the inequality of recognition for women crafters (fig. 3-29). Though not as politically strident as their feminist sisters of a generation later, Ryan and Fuller seized the power of fabric and lace as a way to demonstrate their fearlessness to confront the gender prejudice against these materials.¹⁰⁴

Thriftiness and War Shortages Impact Soft Ground Etching

The shortage of materials during World War II also informs women artists’ use of textiles in their prints in the early 1940s. Many of the fabrics and materials that they pressed into soft ground would have been rationed or extremely hard to come by because of the American war effort. For Ryan and Fuller, in particular, soft ground etchings shows their effort to follow feminine ideals for patriotism, frugality, and ingenuity during this challenging time.

Hosiery, consistently featured in both Fuller’s and Ryan’s soft ground etchings, was one of the first textile goods to be withdrawn from the American marketplace. In 1941, one hundred and fifty million pairs of women’s stockings were sold in the United States. The government embargoed importation of raw silk as early as July 1941, before America entered the war, causing silk stockings to become a luxury good.¹⁰⁵ DuPont ceased production of nylon stockings in 1942, after only just beginning to offer them to

¹⁰⁴ Daniel Haxall has made the connection between Ryan’s collages and Schapiro’s femmagés. Haxall, “Cut and Paste Abstraction,” 290.

¹⁰⁵ M. Earl Heard, “Wartime Developments in Textiles and Clothing,” *Journal of Home Economics* 34, no. 7 (September 1942): 429.

American women two years earlier.¹⁰⁶ Silk and nylon stockings soon became prized commodities that women devoted great care to in order to increase their longevity. Impressing tattered silk or nylon hosiery into soft ground plates allowed women to repurpose their stockings in a creative way. The prevalence of texture from stockings signals artists' resourcefulness during the war years.

The production of fabric for civilian consumption also tightened once war was declared and had an effect on Atelier 17 prints. Beginning in 1942, the War Production Board issued a series of regulations aimed to conserve fabric stocks by prescribing maximum yardage for and styles of men's, women's, and children's clothing.¹⁰⁷ During the war, and even earlier in the Depression, American women were encouraged as part of their patriotic duty to conserve and lengthen the lifespan of clothing by patching holes and sewing garments from surplus fabrics.¹⁰⁸ A 1942 article from *Life*, with step-by-step instructions about repairing clothing, commented that patching "personalizes a garment" and allows the wearer to express their individuality.¹⁰⁹ The intricately patterned fabrics found in war-era prints from Atelier 17, therefore, take on a special significance. Artists were looking to recycle garments that might have lost their original function and make the most out of old, beautiful fabrics that could not be purchased new during the war. Fabric-filled soft ground etchings spotlight not only artists' personality and creativity, but also their patriotic duty and consciousness of economic realities.

¹⁰⁶ Jacqueline M. Atkins, ed., *Wearing Propaganda: Textiles on the Home Front in Japan, Britain, and the United States, 1931-1945* (New Haven: Published for the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture by Yale University Press, 2005), 240.

¹⁰⁷ Regulations specified design details such as eliminating balloon sleeves and pockets in women's or girls' clothing. See Atkins, *Wearing Propaganda*, 69, 240.

¹⁰⁸ Susan Ware, *Holding Their Own: American Women in the 1930s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 40. By 1936, over half of women employed by the WPA worked in "sewing rooms" where they repaired and sewed new garments.

¹⁰⁹ "Patches Are Popular: War Conservation Bring Them into the Open," *Life*, April 13, 1942, 107.

In keeping with the social pressures on women to conserve, female artists were much more likely than men to bring in special fabric scraps from home. Atelier 17 had large supplies of cheesecloth and tarlatan, textiles that printmakers balled up into the palms of their hands and used to wipe excess ink from the plate surface. Male artists seem to have used these utilitarian printing fabrics to create shading in their prints. Sue Fuller obviously relied on her vast maternal inheritance of visually interesting lace and textiles. But, she also repurposed quotidian textiles that she bought at her neighborhood grocer, following the Depression-era and wartime practice of recycling cotton feed bags into dresses.¹¹⁰ In *Cacophony* (1944), Fuller separated the strings of a burlap garlic bag—preserved in Fuller’s preparatory collage—to look like two female figures (figs. 3-30 and 3-31).¹¹¹

Anne Ryan felt a heightened urgency to conserve during World War II, having experienced the material shortages of World War I and the Great Depression as a mother. She knew the reality of not having access to certain raw materials for several years. Her diaries record visits to second-hand shops in Brooklyn where she bought Victorian dresses, and she sewed her own clothes and shoes for indoor wear.¹¹² In the summer of 1944, two and a half years into World War II, Ryan noted in her print journal that she “got some French paper from Elie Marquié (The last French paper in NY).”¹¹³ This purchase, like her stockpiling of fabric scraps and ribbons for use in her collages and prints, highlights how ingrained reuse and recycling were to her life. Even as America

¹¹⁰ Loris Connolly, “Recycling Feed Sacks and Flour Bags: Thrifty Housewives or Marketing Success Story?,” *Dress* 19 (1992): 17–36.

¹¹¹ Fuller to Kainen, October 12, 1947, SEF. Burlap, which America imported from India, was in short supply due to shipping disruptions in the Pacific. See “Burlap Is Banned for Some Fields,” *New York Times*, December 23, 1941.

¹¹² Anne Ryan, “Diary,” November 14, 1938, ARP.

¹¹³ Anne Ryan, “Notes on Plates Made.”

transitioned to a prosperous postwar period and a robust consumer culture, Ryan continued to scavenge in thrift stores for fabrics for her collages and doggedly recycle other materials. Ryan was incredibly thrifty with her woodcuts, which she began making in 1945. She carved her woodcut designs into household detritus such as floorboards, shingles, and cabinet doors that she likely found discarded on the street.¹¹⁴ A photographer friend supplied Ryan with the black paper that she used to print most of her woodcuts. The paper's original function was as wrapping around packages of light-sensitive photo paper and otherwise would have been garbage. Ryan carefully ironed out the sheets' creases before printing her woodcuts.¹¹⁵ Ryan's frugal aesthetics mark her unwillingness to change her mentality from the shortages of the Depression or war era. She rejected the gender stereotypes of the postwar housewife and also did not conform to mainstream currents of postwar art with her small works' tactility.¹¹⁶ Following her own path with her prints and collages, Ryan anticipated the appearance of Junk art and sculpture in the 1950s and feminist collage in the 1960s.

Self-Expression and Psychological Depth through Veiled Metaphors

Women printmakers from Atelier 17 also drew on the soft ground etching technique and its rich textural possibilities as a way to express their individuality and personal emotions. Their efforts should have meshed well with the postwar New York School. Its canonical artists expressed deep-seated and complex feelings through their

¹¹⁴ In 1971, Ryan's daughter Elizabeth McFadden donated fifty-four wood blocks to the Smithsonian Museum's National Museum of American History (see accession nos. 23280.1-23280.54).

¹¹⁵ Elizabeth McFadden, "Anne Ryan," ca. 1980, 184, Anne Ryan's Artist File, Department of Prints & Drawings, MMA.

¹¹⁶ Daniel Haxall explores in depth how Ryan bucked postwar consumerism and feminine ideals. See especially chapter 5 in Haxall, "Cut and Paste Abstraction." Though Ryan lived through the immediate postwar consumer boom, she missed the "golden age" of American consumerism, which began in the mid-1950s. For more background about the nation's economic growth, see Hine, *Populuxe*, 10–11.

artwork and sought to discover the basic tenets of human nature. Women's texture-filled soft ground etchings were not seen within the heroic context of Abstract Expressionism, despite conveying writhing personal conflict, strong feelings, and a curiosity for understanding the origins of the universe and ancient civilizations. The way that critics and contemporaries responded to women's audacious approaches with soft ground reveals unease about the intensity of women's emotions and underlying needs to maintain gender divisions in the postwar period.

Louise Nevelson's unbridled experiments in soft ground etching at Atelier 17, made during her second visit to Atelier 17 between 1952 and 1954, expose biased attitudes toward a female artist expressing her individuality. Although the etchings she created generally follow many experimental trends seen during Atelier 17's years in New York, she pushed the boundaries of acceptability even by Atelier 17's avant-garde standards. The seemingly sloppy and often dangerous techniques that Nevelson employed to mark the plate with fabrics and lace highlight her unwillingness to concede to postwar expectations for female artists. Revealing a larger social angst over gender relations, many artists objected to Nevelson's resulting etchings, indicating that the messy, fabric-filled, and inky impressions broke with implicit rules governing intaglio and transgressed norms for female artists.

Nevelson suffered bouts of depression and manic highs throughout her life, and these feelings had significant impact on the iconography of her mature work.¹¹⁷ Many events, experiences, and relationships contributed to Nevelson's fight with depression

¹¹⁷ Laurie Wilson has written extensively on Nevelson's iconography. See Laurie Wilson, *Louise Nevelson, Iconography and Sources* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1981); Laurie Wilson, "Bride of the Black Moon: An Iconographic Study of the Work of Louise Nevelson," *Arts Magazine* LIV, no. 9 (May 1980): 140–48. She is also preparing a major new biography about Nevelson, due out in 2016 with Thames & Hudson.

and her fixation with three principle ceremonial themes—royalty, death, and marriage—that developed from the 1930s through the 1950s. She had a particularly traumatic childhood. Before her fifth birthday, Nevelson’s family immigrated to the United States from the Ukraine because of religious persecution against Jews. She experienced temporary muteness in her third year, perhaps the result of her witnessing or hearing about nearby pogroms and her father’s departure to America in advance of the entire family. Her parents never adjusted to life in Rockland, Maine, and Nevelson recalled her mother was chronically depressed. In adulthood, the ups and downs of her critical success as a professional artist and her romantic and professional relationships contributed to her emotional state.

Nevelson’s second visit to Atelier 17 coincided with one of her manic periods of frenzied production.¹¹⁸ Working steadily from September 1952 through May 1953, Nevelson produced hundreds of prints from twenty-nine plates. Unreserved with her unorthodox execution of printmaking techniques—a topic Chapter Four will discuss into more detail—she particularly exploited the expressive possibilities of soft ground etching. Although she credited Peter Grippe with providing her with lace, it is likely he only suggested the concept of impressing fabric through the soft ground technique.¹¹⁹ Nevelson brought in fabrics from her personal collection of vintage lace and embroidery. Like her mother before her, Nevelson loved collecting lace and other intricate fabrics throughout her lifetime.¹²⁰ In addition to using these special textiles, Doris Seidler

¹¹⁸ The trigger for her prolific output at Atelier 17 might have been her son Mike Nevelson’s departure in late-October 1952 for what was supposed to be a multi-year trip to Brazil. Thank you to Laurie Wilson for this insight.

¹¹⁹ See Nevelson’s recollections in her memoirs *Dawns + Dusks*, 107.

¹²⁰ Laurie Wilson, email to Christina Weyl, November 5, 2012. Nevelson also famously collected scraps of wood which she used for her sculptures.

excitedly remembered Nevelson would “[pull] feathers off hats, lace off petticoat hems, anything to get into the soft ground to make a texture.”¹²¹

The predominance of lace in Nevelson’s Atelier 17 etchings overlaps strongly with their iconography of royal couples and lonely female figures. Based on her recent trips to Mexico and Guatemala to see Mayan ruins, Nevelson was quite interested in ancient kingdoms at this time. Yet, the kings and queens that permeate the etchings had more personal resonance for the artist. With forlorn and mournful expressions—the male figure in *Royalty No. 2* (fig. 2-19), for example, sheds a tear from his right eye—the royal figures can be read as projections of Nevelson’s often depressed and recently deceased parents.¹²² Given her mother’s fanatical preservation of her finest clothing in layers of tissue paper, it is no coincidence that lace permeates the plates with queens and goddesses. In *Majesty* (1952-54), Nevelson punctuated the almost uniform layer of cheesecloth with more intricate types of lace, such as the decorative trim along the lower left margin, the square netting at the upper left, and the flower-like pattern at lower right (fig. 3-32). This imposing queen, who stares vacantly at the viewer while surrounded by beautiful lace trimmings, evokes the sadness Nevelson’s mother experienced as a Jewish outsider amid the puritanical community of Rockland, Maine.

In contrast to her Atelier 17 colleagues, Nevelson’s emotionally laden fabrics look as if they were more freely placed on the plate. Judging by first-hand accounts and Nevelson’s reminiscences, she probably combined traditional methods of soft ground etching with a more direct way of marking the plate with fabric. Instead of composing a

¹²¹ Doris Seidler, as quoted in Lisa Weinberg Rabinowitz, “The Web of Experiences: Printmaking in the United States” (Ed.D., Columbia University Teachers College, 1977), 39.

¹²² Her mother died in 1943, and her father in 1946. Wilson reads Nevelson’s experience of looking up to large Mayan stelae as similar to the childhood experience of looking up to parents, who are commonly associated in psychology with royal figures of kings and queens. Wilson, *Louise Nevelson*, 168 and 172.

static matrix to impress onto a soft-grounded plate using the pressure of the printing press, Nevelson dipped lace and fabrics directly into mordant and spilled them dramatically across her plates. Nevelson hints at this alternative process in her autobiography: “I put it [lace and material] in acid.”¹²³ This somewhat dangerous process could, if done carelessly as Louise Bourgeois feared, lead to acid burns on unprotected skin. To complete her compositions after line and fabric markings, Nevelson applied stopping-out varnish in broad gestures across her plates to leave areas white or protected from further etch.

Many artists working contemporaneously at Atelier 17 reacted negatively to Nevelson’s process of applying fabric. Peter Grippe criticized, “you can’t just pour textures through the press like Louise did.”¹²⁴ Minna Citron, who similarly startled many in the late-1940s by completely changing her style from figuration to abstraction, recalled her shock at Nevelson’s radical approach: “She would put a coating on a plate and put it on the etching press and throw these things on, you know—and we all being taught to be very careful, very academic in our approach in printmaking. She would come out with something that looked like a hodge-podge.”¹²⁵ Though Citron ultimately admired Nevelson’s resulting prints, she, Grippe and others perceived Nevelson’s methods as slapdash. Nevelson’s Atelier 17 etchings were at odds with the boundaries of social convention for women artists and precise methods of intaglio instilled by Hayter’s teachings. Although Nevelson’s expressive application of allover textures seems to

¹²³ Nevelson, *Dawns + Dusks*, 107. James Reid, Master Printer at Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles, CA, suggests that several types of mordant can be used for etching fabric directly onto the plate surface. James Reid email to Christina Weyl, October 16, 2011.

¹²⁴ Peter and Florence Grippe, interview by Laurie Lisle, August 5, 1983, LLRM.

¹²⁵ Minna Citron, interview by Laurie Wilson, June 26, 1976.

convey Abstract Expressionist attributes of rugged individualism and vigorous originality, her expressive soft ground etchings disquieted many observers.

Despite her gripes about Nevelson's careless manner, Minna Citron also relied on soft ground etching as an expressive tool to convey her inner psyche and feminist agenda. Atelier 17 provided Citron with a productive outlet to develop further her abstraction and transfer intensely personal and psychological emotions into her etching plates. Citron's aesthetic goals for her etchings place her squarely within the Abstract Expressionist movement, of which she felt she was a part, even if her gender and focus on the "craft" of printmaking excluded her from official membership.¹²⁶

Citron's evolution from realism to abstraction is rooted in her fiercely independent spirit, support for women's rights, and interest in psychoanalysis. Citron's early life largely conformed to feminine ideals for a young woman from a well-to-do family: she married in 1916 at the age of twenty and became a fulltime housewife and mother to two sons. Yet, Citron bristled against this lifestyle of being a "kept woman" and began seeking opportunities outside the home "to be independent, to get a profession."¹²⁷ During the late 1920s, she enrolled at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, then commercial art courses at the New York School of Applied Design for Women, and finally the Art Students League. Eventually, art became a fulltime job for Citron as she became an instructor at the Brooklyn Museum Art School, completed murals for the WPA-FAP, and had several successful gallery exhibitions during the 1930s. Even in this post-suffrage period, it was unusual for a married woman to work

¹²⁶ Minna Citron, "Ten Crucial Years: The Development of the United States Government Sponsored Artists Programs 1933-43; A Panel Discussion by Six WPA Artists," *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 1 (Spring 1986): 52.

¹²⁷ James M. Saslow, "Still Hitting on All Cylinders at 80," *The Advocate*, no. 203 (November 17, 1976): 34.

outside the home.¹²⁸ During this decade, too, Citron entered psychoanalysis to deal with unhappiness in her marriage and dysfunctional relationships with her mother and mother-in-law. By 1934, she divorced her husband and began living independently.

Her satirical paintings from the 1930s parody the domesticity and ignorance that she was trying to escape. In her scholarship examining Citron's social realism from the 1930s, Jennifer Streb argues that the artist employed biting wit, humor, and stereotypes to draw attention to the lapsed state of feminism in the 1930s and push towards feminist empowerment.¹²⁹ Citron's images for her *Feminanities* exhibition of 1935, for example, outwardly mock the narcissism of women doing stereotypically feminine activities like visiting a beauty parlor, or buying new cosmetic products. Citron did not intend these images to be simply realistic representations of women's culture, but a public cry for women to wake up and take advantage of their civic rights. Moving from social satire to abstraction in the mid-1940s demonstrated Citron's further evolution towards personal liberation and feminism. She no longer had to veil her beliefs behind a conservative realist style, but instead she could now convey her emotions and beliefs through her process, technique, and the form of her abstractions. Printmaking became a powerful medium of self-expression.

In *Squid Under Pier* (1948), Citron visualizes her personal struggles with her ex-husband and overbearing mother and mother-in-law (fig. 3-33). Citron juxtaposed the masculine tools of engraving with the more feminine soft ground etching to picture her

¹²⁸ Lois W. Banner, *Women in Modern America: A Brief History* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), 160.

¹²⁹ See the following scholarship by Jennifer L. Streb: "Minna Citron: A Socio-Historical Study of an Artist's Feminist Social Realism in the 1930s" (PhD diss., The Pennsylvania State University, 2004); "Minna Citron's 'Feminanities': Her Commentary on the Culture of Vanity," *Woman's Art Journal* 33 (Spring/Summer 2012): 17–24; *Minna Citron: The Uncharted Course from Realism to Abstraction* (Huntington, PA: Juniata College Museum of Art, 2012).

subconscious struggles. The swirling black lines in the foreground and raised white lines, made by forcefully gouging the copper printing plate with the scorper and burin tools, suggest male aggression and Citron's failed marriage.¹³⁰ For her 1950 print exhibition at the New School, Citron described the aggressiveness of these engraved lines, saying that they are "a threatening entanglement of tortuous, menacing lines: black lines, white lines, bitten lines and incised lines...forming a linear pattern of dynamic tensions and of great plastic depth."¹³¹ The twisted piece of veiling at left, probably taken from a birdcage hairpiece, embodies her domineering mother and mother-in-law. Citron stated that she found refuge from these two threatening forces in the "quiet interpenetrating, transparent planes of the neutral-colored 'pier' and the fluid open areas of light-blue 'sea' and 'sky.'" She continued, "it is as though one might escape from these encircling tentacles to a temporary shelter and security under the 'pier' and finally to peace and tranquility in the timeless and limited space of the fair skies and open sea." Like underlying messages of her social realist paintings of the 1930s, Citron's soft ground etchings are only superficially about fabric and femininity. Citron's emotional concerns are found beyond her humor and behind the veil of soft ground.

Aligning technique with the unconscious and her emotions did not always earn Citron the critical response that she desired. NYPL curator Karl Kup insightfully captured the significance of Citron's aesthetic efforts in his introduction to the catalogue for her New School show, stating, "work is the outcome of artistic integrity blended with

¹³⁰ Mirroring the physical challenges Louise Bourgeois described, Citron once reminisced that hollowing out the copper plate with a scorper caused her terrible shoulder pain. Citron, "Ten Crucial Years," 53.

¹³¹ Karl Kup, *The Graphic Work of Minna Citron, 1945-1950* (New York: New School for Social Research, 1950), n.p. All Citron's quotes in this paragraph come from the New School catalog.

the knowledge of the tools of her craft.”¹³² Yet, Kup factors Citron’s gender into his final assessment of her prints and her process. He attributes Citron’s successful combination of tools and message with matrimony, as if he had to contain Citron’s status as a divorcée: “It is apparent that Minna Citron’s integrity and her craft are happily married.”

Reviewing the New School show for the *New York Times*, Stuart Preston undercut the psychological depth of prints like *Squid Under Pier*. He commented that, though Citron had the technical know-how from studying with Hayter, “if the results are uneven it is because of her jarring introduction of breezy subject into rigorous process.”¹³³ Citron’s personal struggle through divorce and bending her generation’s gender norms as a working mother-artist was certainly not “breezy.” Preston negated Citron’s abstract imagery seemingly because some of her titles referenced the wit and whimsy for which she was so well known in the art world. Despite being abstract, titles that referenced tangible things, such as *Way Thru the Woods* and *Squid Under Pier*, undercut Citron’s message. Citron also showed prints called *Monolithic Imagery*, *Incised Steatite*, and *Disillusion* where the analogies to the primordial and psychological angst are more apparent.¹³⁴

Clearly, Citron fell victim to the double standard facing artists who were “others” within the New York School. Her personal musings on human nature and personal expression through printmaking’s tools did not match up to the universal standards of the New York School’s principal male artists. Citron was aware that concepts of universality could limit the appeal of her artwork. In a lecture for the Art Students League from 1949

¹³² Kup, *Minna Citron*, n.p. All Kup’s quotes in this paragraph come from this New School catalogue.

¹³³ Stuart Preston, “Current Diversity: Graphics,” *New York Times*, October 22, 1950.

¹³⁴ Stephen Polcari has discussed the importance of titles to understanding the New York School. Stephen Polcari, *Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 51.

titled “Changing Attitudes Toward Art,” Citron described the recent turn to psychological content in modern art. Her argument clearly attested to understanding audiences’ reception to expressive content: “But when the portrayal of unconscious material is too personal, nothing is communicated to anyone else, or at best communication is limited to those few people whose unconscious has some congeniality to that of the artist. In great art...the unconscious of the artist, while still personal, has something to say to everyone’s unconscious.”¹³⁵ Citron’s experiments with abstraction in soft ground etching relay the subjective experience of a female artist dealing with the challenges of her time. Although scholarship has treated Citron as an outsider of the New York School, her Atelier 17 prints must be considered alongside the highly subjective and personal work of this postwar movement’s canonical artists.

Soft Ground Fabrics for Geometric Construction

Alice Trumbull Mason contained her fabric-filled soft ground abstractions with geometric forms or biomorphic shapes. These abstract modes kept well within acceptable expressions of non-objective styles for women artists in the 1940s and 1950s. Michael Leja has argued that women artists turned to alternate abstraction styles such as surrealism, biomorphic shapes, or geometric compositions. They rarely attempted to align themselves outwardly with Abstract Expressionism—its masculinity too exclusionary to “other” artists.¹³⁶ Instead, Yet as Sidney Tillim explained in 1959, the dominant influence

¹³⁵ Minna Citron, “Changing Attitudes Toward Art,” 1949, reel 268, grid 885, reel 268, grid 885, Minna Wright Citron Papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

¹³⁶ Michael Leja, *Reframing Abstract Expressionism: Subjectivity and Painting in the 1940s* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 256.

of Abstract Expressionism largely cast artists practicing geometric painting to the periphery of postwar art.¹³⁷

Mason, one of Tillim's "geometers," consciously positioned herself outside of Abstract Expressionism, both as a founding member of the American Abstract Artists and as an Atelier 17-trained printmaker. In a 1952 artist statement, Mason explained her viewpoint that abstract art was split between poles of "Expressionist" and "Architectural" abstraction. In exemplifying the latter, Mason viewed her artwork in a positive light as "building and not destroying."¹³⁸ She believed expressionist abstraction lacked formal structure to hold up "a tragic, expressionist mirror to our own time." Mason further separated herself in this 1952 statement through a belief in the importance of abstract art's "plastic significance" and the artist's "pleasure of actual materials."

Mason spelled out her lifelong fascination with artistic materials in her contribution to the first American Abstract Artists yearbook in 1938. Bubbling with excitement, she explained that twentieth-century technology and discoveries had inaugurated a shift from the previous two centuries of art history: "Today a sense of wonder is alive again. The abstract painter finds it, essentially, in his materials, and deals in the magic of textures, colors juxtaposed to force intensities which thus show movement."¹³⁹ She believed that, like Greek sculptures, Byzantine mosaics or Russian icons, contemporary artists needed to be aware of their tools, process, and the physical properties of their medium for success: "Abstract art demands an awareness of the

¹³⁷ Sidney Tillim, "What Happened to Geometry? An Inquiry into Geometrical Painting in America," *Arts Magazine* 33 (June 1959): 38.

¹³⁸ Alice Trumbull Mason, "Architectural Abstract Art," February 20, 1952, reel 630, grid 169, Alice Trumbull Mason papers, 1921-1977, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [henceforth cited as ATM]

¹³⁹ Alice Trumbull Mason, "Concerning Plastic Significance," in *American Abstract Artists 1938* (New York, 1938), VI. All Mason's quotes in this paragraph come from the American Abstract Artists text.

intrinsic use of materials and a fuller employment of these means which build a new imaginative world by using them for their own potential worth.” Mason argued that the twentieth century’s technical innovations presented unprecedented opportunities for artists, writing, “today...we also have many new materials to work with; it is a period of vigorous experimentation.” Mason’s material focus firmly contradicted the mainstream ideology of artists’ shunning physical encounters, paralleling Ryan who received criticism from Barnett Newman for prioritizing real objects in her etchings and collages.

The ability to work with textures in soft ground etching perfectly suited Mason’s artistic goals. Mason abandoned the traditional tools of etching and engraving in favor of what she saw to be the limitless possibilities of soft ground.¹⁴⁰ In a portion of a typeset manuscript, which seems to be notes for a public presentation, she describes her printmaking process, explaining that her “greatest interest [in printmaking] is in playing one texture against another as I do with colors in painting.”¹⁴¹ The two prints she used to explain her printmaking techniques, *Indicative Displacement* and *Meanderthal Roturns* (both from 1947), display Mason’s extensive efforts to block numerous fabrics and lace patterns (figs. 3-34 and 3-35). They also satisfy her 1938 credo about exploring art’s material significance. Mason was clearly fascinated by the novelty of soft ground’s ability to capture a mirror trace of the fabrics that she impressed into the soft ground plate. After applying “textures, veils, clothes of different weave” to areas of soft ground plate “required by the structure of the composition in mind,” Mason writes, “each thread will have left its impression in the soft ground.” She was so enthralled with the textural

¹⁴⁰ Mason’s daughter felt that etching and engraving tools were “masculine” and a potential reason her mother preferred soft ground etching. Emily Mason Kahn, interview by Christina Weyl, February 6, 2013.

¹⁴¹ Alice Trumbull Mason, “Untitled Speech,” ca. 1950, reel 630, grids 171-174, ATM. All Mason’s quotes in this paragraph come from this untitled speech.

possibilities of soft ground etching that she feared her prints could become overburdened with texture: “The temptation to drown in a sea of textures is almost irresistible.”

Mason’s exploration of textures in etching was not simply about creating interesting but mindless geometric patterns. The etchings, though widely respected by print curators and exhibited frequently within group exhibitions, failed to garner positive reviews from critics. When they were mentioned, the comments included negative language about pattern and design. For instance, the 1948 review of the Brooklyn Museum’s second Print Annual commented that *Indicative Displacement* was simply a “suave composition of geometric forms.”¹⁴² Mason, in contrast, saw textured etchings like *Indicative Displacement* within her overall artistic program of architectural abstraction writing, “a controlling structure of the space is absolutely necessary.”¹⁴³ She intended *Indicative Displacement*’s intricate surface—with several overlapping rectangles of different sizes that she filled with many different fabric textures, crushed tissue paper, and aquatint—to exhibit visual movement. It is sometimes unclear how the textural planes exist spatially in relation to one another. Of *Indicative Displacement*, she wrote, “if at moments one thing appears behind the other, you will soon find it corrected nearby. This is the rhythmic shift... The origin of the spatial organization in this etching is a variation of playing the ends against the center.”¹⁴⁴ Similarly, Mason stated that the many fabric textures in *Meanderthal Roturns*—a lace doily at lower left, a textured striped fabric at center left and right, cheesecloth throughout—paired with dark aquatint and gestural plate marks “give the black variations, it is not static.”¹⁴⁵ Like examples in the

¹⁴² S. H., “Display of Prints Opens Tomorrow,” *New York Times*, March 23, 1948.

¹⁴³ Alice Trumbull Mason, “Untitled Speech,” ca. 1950, reel 630, grid 174, ATM.

¹⁴⁴ Alice Trumbull Mason, “Untitled Speech,” ca. 1950, reel 630, grid 173, ATM.

¹⁴⁵ Alice Trumbull Mason, “Untitled Speech,” ca. 1950, reel 630, grid 174, ATM.

sections above, fabric for Mason was not a feminine conceit, decorative, or vacant. Mason imbued the materials for her geometric abstractions with power, fortitude, and movement, even if she delivered these qualities in a different formal mode than the slashing brushwork of Abstract Expressionism

Artists' chosen printmaking tools and their method of working with them were clearly in dialogue with the broader uncertainty about American gender norms during the 1940s and 1950s. Fuller, Ryan, Citron, Bourgeois, Nevelson and Mason navigated the boundaries of their femininity and the art versus craft divide with the tools and materials they employed in their printmaking practice. They recognized the masculine emphasis of etching and engraving tools and often pitted these traditional approaches against unorthodox tools and novel processes, even if their can openers, Karo corn syrup and textiles had domestic and feminine connotations. Challenging associations of their methods and equipment with the home and womanly delicacy, these artists asserted their prints' ability to convey serious artistic content and opened the possibility of these techniques and materials to support multiple and diverse artistic voices. Decades after the intervention of women at Atelier 17, for instance, fabric and textiles appeared frequently during the 1960s and 1970s in the movements of fiber art, post-minimalist art, and feminist art. Examples can be seen in the tapestry of fiber artist Sheila Hicks, postminimalist Eva Hesse's wall hanging of latex-coated rope, and the feminist collage of Miriam Schapiro. By exploring abstraction without consideration of artistic hierarchies, material associations, and gender norms, women printmakers at Atelier 17 blazed a path for the expressive potential of fiber and domestically based tools and practices.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Epic Print: Women Printmakers and the New York School

In 1943, Worden Day created *Kinfolk from Chinquapin Hollow*, a small black-and-white line etching measuring 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches that depicts a double portrait of a young woman and her gaunt mother (fig. 4-1). By 1954, Day dramatically exploded the dimensions, palette, subject matter, and formal composition of her prints with multi-colored, abstract woodcuts like *The Burning Bush*, which stands at almost four and a half feet tall (fig. 4-2). Day was not alone among American printmakers at midcentury in showing such a radical shift over a very short period of time. At stake for Day and her avant-garde colleagues was more than a movement away from the representational styles of Regionalism and Social Viewpoint, which dominated American printmaking during the first half of the twentieth century. The major formal changes within midcentury printmaking aspired to collapse the centuries-old distance between printmaking and painting in the hierarchy of artistic mediums. This chapter proves that both male and female members of Atelier 17 carefully implemented formal strategies to relate their printed compositions to mainstream currents of postwar modernism, specifically the large, colorful, expressive canvases of the New York School. Looking at a wide time span and a range of artists, it shows that, despite their best efforts and results, artists from Atelier 17 struggled to make their prints relevant within Abstract Expressionism.

Placing women's Atelier 17 prints within this formal context is significant for two reasons. First, the myth of Abstract Expressionism, with its inspired white, male geniuses and subjective definitions of what constituted "universality," "quality," and "originality," marginalized the creative practices and voices of women artists, regardless of whether they were painters, sculptors or printmakers. Second, printmaking of the 1940s and 1950s is often seen to be a discrete period of technical experimentation, parallel to, but not integrated into the formal and conceptual developments of midcentury modernism.¹ In contrast, studies of Pop art prints clearly connect artists' attraction to reproducing multiple images through prints and their general fascination with commercial techniques and subject matter that dominated other artistic practices. As this chapter's sections will demonstrate, the formal changes in midcentury printmaking were driven by artists' creative milieu, not simply independent technical experimentation. Postwar printmakers' quest for personal expression and spontaneity directly overlaps with concerns that permeated the postwar New York School.

Women artists worked at Atelier 17 under the premise that printmaking was central to modernism and artistic self-realization. Stanley William Hayter bristled against traditional viewpoints about printmaking, which emphasized its utility in reproducing a series of identical images. He staunchly advocated that printmaking and engraving, in particular, were "a very valuable medium for original expression."² Atelier 17's mission was to equip artists with advanced technical knowledge so that they could go on to

¹ Several scholars have broached the subject of printmaking's place within Abstract Expressionism. See Lanier Graham, *The Spontaneous Gesture: Prints and Books of the Abstract Expressionist Era* (Canberra: Australian National Gallery, 1987); Jeffrey Wechsler, *Abstract Expressionism, Other Dimensions: An Introduction to Small Scale Painterly Abstraction in America, 1940-1965* (New Brunswick, NJ: Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 1989); David Acton, David Amram, and David Lehman, *The Stamp of Impulse: Abstract Expressionist Prints* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 2001).

² Stanley William Hayter, *New Ways of Gravure* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1949), 18–19.

experiment and produce prints showcasing inventiveness and personal reflection. The workshop atmosphere was not amenable to artists wanting to churn out neat editions. Countering prevailing beliefs that printmaking's technical rigor impeded creativity, Hayter argued that "the very complexity of means can be applied to provoke it [expression]."³

Women artists—both novices and those with prior experience in printmaking—gravitated to Atelier 17 because of its geographic and ideological importance to the postwar American art scene. Eager to have prints considered alongside other postwar stylistic developments, Hayter ensured Atelier 17 was physically located close to modernist movements. Just as the workshop's initial spaces on the Left Bank were at the heart of interwar Paris's creative activity, its New York studios were similarly placed in the middle of the bohemian subculture in Greenwich Village (fig. 0-1). Atelier 17, in fact, helped shape the emerging postwar New York School by providing a key locale for young American artists to congregate and interact with European Surrealists.⁴ Before Atelier 17's establishment in New York, Hayter believed that "people didn't know one another. They were in different sections of the town, or even outside of town. There wasn't anyplace where they could get together."⁵ The canonical Abstract Expressionists did not stay at Atelier 17 for long, many finding printmaking too tedious or burdened with the political undertones of the 1930s.⁶ But, for the hundreds of other artists who

³ "Hayter's Atelier 17," *Art Digest* 26 (October 1, 1951): 16.

⁴ For more on Surrealism's impact on the emergence of Abstract Expressionism, see Martica Sawin, *Surrealism in Exile and the Beginning of the New York School* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

⁵ As quoted in Joseph Kainen, "An Interview With Stanley William Hayter," *Arts Magazine* 60, no. 5 (January 1986): 64.

⁶ Martica Sawin, "Stanley William Hayter at 84," *Arts Magazine* 60, no. 5 (January 1986): 61; Thomas Hess, "Prints: Where History, Style and Money Meet," *Art News* 70, no. 9 (January 1972): 29. See also Jennifer Field's forthcoming dissertation from the Institute of Fine Arts titled "The New York School and the Evolution of Avant-Garde Printmaking in America."

walked through Atelier 17's doors, exposure to Hayter's method of unearthing subconscious ideas through the disorienting process of working with unfamiliar printmaking processes impacted their expressive practices and deeply personal imagery.

From Technique to Expression

Artists working at Atelier 17 faced a steep challenge of proving that printmaking technique could be as spontaneous as the painting processes of Abstract Expressionists. Shortly after Atelier 17's move to New York City, modernist printmaking activity exploded and culminated in the postwar renaissance for printmaking. As Chapter Five will treat in more detail, a noticeable shift occurred across the 1940s in the character and emphasis of avant-garde printmaking. Initially in the early-1940s, artists stressed their discoveries of novel techniques, but by the end of the decade and through the early-1950s, critics praised personal expression as the highest achievement in printmaking.⁷ Avant-garde printmakers' determination to turn printmaking away from technique toward freer expression overlaps very clearly with the rise of Abstract Expressionism's unfettered paint application in the late-1940s and early-1950s. Atelier 17 printmakers did not consider their aesthetic efforts apart from the larger New York School, but saw themselves as active participants in what was taking place in the postwar art world. Yet, gender-coded expectations for women artists often checked their full embrace of the changeover from printmaking's precise execution to unconventional practices.

Reviewing the Brooklyn Museum's (BKM) ninth annual exhibition of prints from 1955, Howard Devree of the *New York Times* commented on the shift away from

⁷ For further discussion of the critical weariness toward technique, see James Watrous, *American Printmaking: A Century of American Printmaking, 1880-1980* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 191–92.

exacting technique toward freer artistic expression: “One of the strongest impressions...was that the vitality of the work in so many cases, despite the complicated mechanism of some of the processes, had achieved so much of a spontaneous quality which we used to think of as being particularly true of water colors. The print renaissance which is upon us is a very real thing.”⁸ Printmakers in the 1950s emphasized their ability to convey personal expression through abstractions with bold gesture, all-over texture, and expressive colors. In an artist’s statement from the late 1950s, Gabor Peterdi, a member of Atelier 17 who would go on to teach printmaking at Yale University, encapsulated the changing attitudes within the avant-garde printmaking community:

I would like to emphasize...that I am not interested anymore in technical experimentation. Truly, *tecnic* [*sic*] never interested me for it’s [*sic*] own sake. Most of the time when I used something new in technique, I did it instinctively, dictated by the necessity of expression...

The experimental excitement is largely over, the novelty of strange technical effects are [*sic*] not new anymore, the mystery [*sic*] of the technique is wearing thin. Now comes the time when the public will be really able to tell apart those artists who have something significant to say, from those who are serving empty fire work.⁹

Though the postwar printmaking renaissance was definitely important for its discovery of many innovative techniques that remain standard practice to this day, it should also be remembered as an important moment when artists broke away from printmaking’s rigorous methods.

Printmaking’s reputation for requiring painstaking labor did not die quietly and remained a persistent burden to the field. The perceived focus on technique overpowered the appearance of uninhibited color and expressive line in Atelier 17 prints. It was

⁸ Howard Devree, “Print Harvest,” *New York Times*, May 1, 1955.

⁹ Gabor Peterdi artist’s statement, pp. 3-4 (unnumbered), Departmental administration series: Correspondence with Artists: P, Records of the Department of Prints, Drawings and Photographs (1878-2001), Brooklyn Museum [henceforth cited as BKM-DPDP].

problematic that, for example, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's (MMA) 1952 survey of American works on paper, excellence in technique was the benchmark for awarding printmaking prizes.¹⁰ Even though their content and aesthetic styles diverged tremendously, Hayter's modern "craft and design" were equated to the "technical triumphs" of conservative, representational artists, Grace Albee (1990-1985) and Stow Wengenroth (1906-1978).¹¹

Hayter and other modern printmakers countered these comparisons by making their technique into more than just a skilled craft. Hayter linked the act of engraving back to primal human activities—perhaps before verbal communication developed—and, in doing so, joined printmaking with Abstract Expressionism's major quest to rediscover fundamental truths and patterns about human existence.¹² He wrote in *New Ways of Gravure* (1949) that "the action of making a groove or a line of pits (as footprints) in a more resistant surface might be one of the earliest methods of recording experience, or obtaining the power to re-live an event."¹³

Artists also distanced themselves from printmaking's precision by claiming they worked spontaneously on their chosen matrix without preconceived ideas or drawings. Eliminating the preparatory sketch for their abstract prints engaged with the idea of

¹⁰ The MMA's works on paper show was the third installment of a rather notorious series, which began with a painting survey in 1950 that sparked the "Irascibles"—several young painters and sculptors—to protest the museum's jury and selection process as being stacked against painting. Attempting to respond to the Irascibles' complaints, the MMA established separate conservative and modern juries of selection for the graphic arts show. Nevertheless, a handful of the original Irascibles—Barnett Newman, Clyfford Still, Ad Reinhardt, Mark Rothko, Adolph Gottlieb, Herbert Ferber and Robert Motherwell—sent a letter of protest to the MMA. See Open Letter to Roland L. Redmond (MMA President), June 30, 1952, Loan Exhibition, American Watercolors, Drawings, and Prints, Archives, the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

¹¹ Howard Devree, "American Survey," *New York Times*, December 7, 1952.

¹² For background on the themes, subjects and metaphors of Abstract Expressionism, see particularly chapter 2 in Stephen Polcari, *Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

¹³ Hayter, *New Ways of Gravure*, 18. Thank you to James Wechsler for identifying this passage in "Fred Becker and Experimental Printmaking," *Print Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (December 1993): 18.

Abstract Expressionist painting as a unique encounter between artist and matrix, which Harold Rosenberg championed in his 1952 essay, “American Action Painters.”¹⁴ Worden Day explicated her belief in composing directly on her woodblock in an unpublished manuscript, saying, “none of the steps [in modern woodcut] are routine mechanical practice...we are never engaged in reproducing or copying a picture for reproduction.”¹⁵ Louis Schanker, Day’s colleague in woodcut, reiterated a similar conviction: “[I] now work only from the briefest of sketches, developing my designs directly on wood. The dictates of the medium are thus brought into closer harmony with the original idea.”¹⁶ Artists of Atelier 17 clearly felt their encounters with wood or metal plate were primal events, unscripted yet revealing deep-seated truths about human nature.

Balancing Control in Printmaking with Expression and Innovation

Midcentury gender norms complicated women’s full embrace of expressive printmaking. Contrasting an array of activities and methods of working, this section shows that women balanced feminine control and restraint—expected of women by midcentury American society—with the powerful creative impulses believed to drive postwar abstraction. Many improvised with unorthodox and untested printmaking methods in order to achieve novel and expressive results. Women at Atelier 17 had the opportunity to locate their practice along a spectrum—ranging from the methodical experiments of the scientist to the impulsiveness of the bohemian—that often breaks

¹⁴ Harold Rosenberg, “The American Action Painters,” *Art News* 51, no. 8 (December 1952): 22. He writes most clearly: “the painter no longer approached his easel with an image in his mind; he went up to it with material in his hand to do something to that other piece of material in front of him. The image would be the result of this encounter.”

¹⁵ A manuscript alternately titled “New Expressions of Woodcut” or “Woodcut Today” can be found on reel 981, grids 81-146 in the Worden Day Papers, 1940-1982, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [henceforth cited as WDP]. This quotation comes from manuscript page 35 on grid 115.

¹⁶ Louis Schanker, “The Ides of Art: 11 Graphic Artists Write,” *Tiger’s Eye*, no. 8 (June 1949): 45.

down along an axis of masculine and feminine. Whether an artist intended for an effect or happened upon it accidentally is crucial to unpacking women's formal results at Atelier 17. This section tracks the poles of these gendered identities through several formal features, including women's plate preparation and their inking strategies.

Central to this discussion of women artists' execution of printmaking techniques is a vast literature within postwar art history and gender studies that examines issues of personal and bodily control along the dimensions of gender.¹⁷ Jackson Pollock's drip painting technique, for example, represents a rich point of entry. Pollock rigorously denounced detractors who attacked his method of flinging paint at the canvas as out-of-control by labeling it chaotic or lacking organization.¹⁸ He instead asserted his creative authority, saying, "I can control the flow of the paint. There is no accident."¹⁹ Several art historians have argued for the importance of gender to understanding the formal features of Pollock's drip paintings, as well as his statements and period criticism. Lisa Saltzman, for one, has teased out the disparate and gender-driven critical reception of the fluidity in Pollock's drip paintings compared with Helen Frankenthaler's (1928-2011) stained canvases. Importantly, Saltzman notes that many of the principal interpreters of New York School derided Frankenthaler's stain paintings by implying she, as a woman, lacked authorial agency and simply accepted the accidental movement of pigment.²⁰ Pollock's insistence that he fully controlled his paint's splattering, therefore, has roots in his desire

¹⁷ For an overview of feminist theory, see Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick, eds., *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

¹⁸ For analysis of period criticism, see Michael Leja, *Reframing Abstract Expressionism: Subjectivity and Painting in the 1940s* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), chap. 5.

¹⁹ As quoted Hans Namuth's film, *Jackson Pollock 51*, shot at Pollock's studio in Springs, NY in summer 1950.

²⁰ Lisa Saltzman, "Reconsidering the Stain: On Gender, Identity, and New York School Painting," in *Reading Abstract Expressionism: Context and Critique*, ed. Ellen G. Landau (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 564–5.

to assert masculine authority and the tremendous instability surrounding gender at midcentury.²¹ Though the painting and printmaking processes are quite different, these themes are crucial to understanding the work that artists completed at Atelier 17.

Hayter epitomized the creative control required of male artists with his background in chemistry and geology.²² Critics especially noted Hayter's scientific background throughout Atelier 17's time in New York City and praised his seamless merging of artistic impulses with the rationality of science. Rosamund Frost, writing for *Art News* in 1941 on the occasion of Hayter's first one-man show in New York, relayed that he "has always contended that science, like higher mathematics, is a purely poetic activity which is come by through the same type of intuition that goes to make the artist."²³ As a scientist, Hayter transformed Atelier 17 into a laboratory of controlled creativity: artists were meant to form hypotheses before executing their technical experiments and consider the results carefully before attempting subsequent tests.²⁴ Some women aspired to establish this level of control in their Atelier 17 prints, often in emulation Hayter's commanding, male position as expert. Sue Fuller consciously imitated Hayter's characteristically meticulous style of engraving and layered shading in one of her early prints titled *The Heights* from 1945 (fig. 4-3). The elaboration of the figure's musculature is reminiscent of Hayter's print *Runner* (1939), which also features an abstracted, internal view of the human body (fig. 4-4). Fuller found the process of

²¹ Anna Chave, "Pollock and Krasner: Script and Postscript," *Res* 24 (Autumn 1993): 95–111.

²² Hayter studied chemistry and geology on scholarship at King's College, London. See Peter Black and Désirée Moorhead, *The Prints of Stanley William Hayter: A Complete Catalogue* (Mount Kisco, NY: Moyer Bell, 1992), 18.

²³ Rosamund Frost, "The Chemically Pure in Art: W. Hayter, B. Sc., Surrealist," *Art News* 40 (May 15, 1941): 13.

²⁴ The scientific overtones of the Atelier 17 shop mirrored efforts of WPA administrators to present the Graphic Arts Division as a structured environment. See Elizabeth Gaede Seaton, "Federal Prints and Democratic Culture: The Graphic Arts Division of the Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project, 1935-1943" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2000), 114–120.

making a “neo-Hayter” print to be cathartic for her creative process, freeing her eventually to make her signature “string compositions” in soft ground etching.²⁵

Besides adapting Hayter’s style, striving to exhibit control in their prints was also indicative of women conforming to postwar societal pressure to show feminine restraint. Women were encouraged to contain their creative activities in the domestic arena, such as precisely following recipes so as not to make unexpected mistakes in the kitchen.²⁶ But, this carefully managed outlet of domestic expression was not sufficient for Dorothy Dehner, who once clarified cooking’s relationship to her overwhelming need to make art: “I can get excited about baking a cake, but it’s on a different level...baking cakes is not enough or I wouldn’t be a sculptor.”²⁷ Although Dehner’s decision to work at Atelier 17 represented a revolutionary step for her personally and for her artistic career—after just divorcing David Smith and renewing her sculptural investigations—her method of carving and preparing plates was quite conservative. She created her abstract compositions by closely following traditions of intaglio. Seen in prints like, *Bird Machine I* and *Mountebanks with Charms*, her engraved lines are crisp and steady (fig. 4-5). She very carefully inlaid tone and shading within fan- and triangular-shaped areas by using the roulette, a wheeled tool with very fine teeth that rolled small perforations onto the plate. The inking for her prints is similarly clean, showing that Dehner carefully wiped

²⁵ Joann Moser, *Atelier 17: A 50th Anniversary Retrospective Exhibition* (Madison, WI: Elvehjem Art Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1977), 45.

²⁶ Erika Endrijonas, “Processed Foods from Scratch: Cooking for a Family in the 1950s,” in *Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender, and Race*, ed. Sherrie A. Inness (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 159–60.

²⁷ Dorothy Dehner, interview by Karl Osis, for book on creativity, May 1 and 16, 1963, reel D298, grids 250-1, Dorothy Dehner papers, 1920-1987 (bulk 1951-1987), Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

away all excess ink from the plates' surfaces.²⁸ When she showed her etchings and engravings for the first time at the Wittenborn Gallery in 1956, critics treated their neatness with a language that implicated Dehner's gender. One critic commented on the prints' delicacy and noted their "balance and repose," while another stated they were "notable for their control."²⁹

Unlike Dehner's skilled handling, prints by other women artist from Atelier 17 suggest their struggle to balance social conformity with their creative urges. Minna Citron documented a particularly rich example in her article, "The Uncharted Course" (1958), where she experienced the conflicting forces of control and spontaneity through an extended engagement with one intaglio plate. Citron began working in 1950 on a zinc plate, which evolved into six distinct states that show her investigation of accidental versus intentional effects. Throughout her description of the plate's development, Citron is careful to downplay her involvement in guiding the seemingly reckless progression of the plate by putting quotation marks around her actions. She exerted her creative control by saying, "at each stage, of course, I did not let the 'accident' speak for itself."³⁰ She realized that there was a huge tension in postwar modernism between the "spontaneous, sensuous impulses which spring so largely from the artist's unconscious intuitions" and the "eternal essentials of organization and disciplined control."³¹ Citron struggled mightily to reconcile the limits of her feminine obligation to nurture and protect and the push to exhibit instinctual spontaneity, specifically in regard to her plate preparation:

²⁸ Dehner kept her plates and had many reprinted by Stewart Nachmias beginning in 1986. These later editions are generally much more cleanly wiped than the plates Dehner printed herself at Atelier 17 in the 1950s. Dehner did not inscribe the second editions with any special notation, and therefore the clean wiping and better paper stock are sometimes the only way to identify the early and late printings.

²⁹ The quotes come respectively from Dore Ashton, "About Art and Artists: Dorothy Dehner," *New York Times*, January 19, 1956; "Dorothy Dehner," *Arts* 30, no. 4 (January 1956): 58.

³⁰ Minna Citron, "The Uncharted Course," *Impression*, no. 4 (Fall 1958): 23.

³¹ Citron, "The Uncharted Course," 24.

“The objects created, these metal mosaics and constructions, are often so satisfying in and of themselves that the decision to print from them—and in so doing destroy them—is an agonizing one.”³²

Fascinated with the protective plastic wrapping around the zinc plate, Citron “‘helped out’ this pattern by further ‘intentional’ tearing and cutting while the plate was in the acid bath.”³³ Through the action of acid biting and additional engraving with a burin, the plate achieved very deep markings, especially in two diagonally intersecting lines. She initially printed the plate in black for *Descendo* and then experimented with color stencils in *Arrival* (figs. 4-6 and 4-7). Midway through printing the latter, the plate cracked along the diagonal lines under the stress of the press’s roller. Instead of mending the plate herself, Citron exhibited aversion to tools obtained at hardware stores—a taboo for postwar women—and asked her friend, the sculptor Ibram Lassaw (1913-2003), to solder the parts back together.³⁴ After repairs, Citron printed from the plate’s backside for *Jet* utilizing the soldering material for embossed texture (fig. 4-8). *Prehistoric Imagery* came next in the sequence, after the plate had been cut down to focus on the T-shaped intersection of the solder marks (fig. 4-9). With the beleaguered plate no longer usable, Citron transferred the essence of the accidental forms to a new plate for two additional editions, *Slip Stream I* and *Slip Stream II* (fig. 4-10). For these two prints, her plate-marking method was more controlled as she tried to copy the effects of the soldered line.

This case study demonstrates that Citron carefully managed the appearance of control in

³² Minna Citron, “In Deep Relief,” *Artist’s Proof* 6, no. 9–10 (1966): 34. Male printmakers embraced accident. For example, the litho stone for Robert Rauschenberg’s *Accident* (1963) broke in half during printing. Instead of abandoning the project, he printed a small edition that features the dramatic, diagonal seam.

³³ Citron, “The Uncharted Course,” 23.

³⁴ Anna Chave has noted that female sculptures like Eva Hesse turned, albeit begrudgingly, to male colleagues for technical assistance. Anna Chave, “Sculpture, Gender, and the Value of Labor,” *American Art* 24, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 27.

her print process as she navigated her creative and personal identities and aspired to fit within the postwar New York School. Critics like Dore Ashton praised Citron's restraint, writing of her print show at Wittenborn in 1953: "After long experimentation with aquatint, engraving and etching in combination, Minna Citron has achieved remarkable control of color printing process."³⁵

Besides the preparation of a printing matrix, the application of ink to the plate surface is another place where women artists fought to reconcile prescribed notions of femininity with creative expression. Louise Nevelson's unorthodox and dramatic inking strategies at Atelier 17 unsettled many of her colleagues. She coated the surfaces of her plates with thick layers of ink, excessively more than the amount most artists at Atelier 17 used. Four known proofs of Nevelson's *Moon Goddess* (ca. 1952-54) highlight her experimental inking.³⁶ An impression inscribed with "first proof" at lower left was inked uniformly and wiped cleanly to show the underlying figural drawing (fig. 4-11). *Moon Goddess I* shows Nevelson taking command and inking the plate expressively (fig. 4-12). She first coated the plate with a thick layer of black ink and then pulled a dry paintbrush several times over the vertical axis of the plate to reveal the underlying "goddess" figure. Nevelson inked *Moon Goddess II* in a completely different manner (fig. 4-13). Instead of subtracting ink with a dry paintbrush, Nevelson marked the plate by adding ink with a loaded paintbrush. In both *Moon Goddess I* and *Moon Goddess II*, Nevelson applied such

³⁵ Dore Ashton, "Minna Citron," *Art Digest* 27 (July 1953): 13.

³⁶ Two catalogues raisonn  exist for Nevelson's prints: Una Johnson, *Louise Nevelson; Prints and Drawings, 1953-1966* (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Museum of Art, distributed by Shorewood Publishers, 1967); Gene Baro, *Nevelson: The Prints* (New York: Pace Editions, 1974). Both identify Nevelson's prints by the titles she assigned for the later Hollander editions printed in 1965-66. Baro, the go-to catalogue raisonn  of Nevelson prints, is problematic for identifying the variant inking and titles of the early Atelier 17 proofs made between ca. 1948 and 1953. Despite that fact, it is best to identify the early proofs by the Baro number that corresponds to the etching plate used in the later Hollander editions. *Moon Goddess* is Baro 9, known there as *Goddess One*.

an excess of black ink that it squirted out of the bottom and dribbled outside the plate marks. In the fourth known impression of *Moon Goddess* (fig. 4-14), Nevelson manipulated ink with a dry paintbrush circularly around the plate to reveal much of the “goddess” underneath.³⁷

Nevelson’s colleagues at Atelier 17 were taken aback by her unusual and idiosyncratic inking strategies in prints like *Moon Goddess*, exposing the widespread gender bias facing countless women artists of the Abstract Expressionist generation. Women printmakers, it seems, were expected to be impeccable technicians rather than experimental trailblazers. Jan Gelb, who worked concurrently at Atelier 17, grumbled that Nevelson’s prints were “so excessively full of ink that there were just certain areas of the plate that you could really understand.”³⁸ Gelb’s comment rings true especially when considering how the figure in *Moon Goddess I* is enshrouded in mystery by heavy black ink as compared with the more legibly inked “first proof” where the whole figure is clearly visible. Even Boris Margo (1902-1995), Gelb’s husband known for his expressive prints, found Nevelson’s methods unorthodox. Though not working at Atelier 17 himself, Margo encountered Nevelson’s thickly inked prints one day when picking up Gelb from the workshop. Gelb recalled: “Boris said, ‘Louise, you leave so much black on the plate; you can wipe that cleaner.’ And, Louise turned around and said, ‘I don’t want it clean.’ Boris was quite taken aback.”³⁹ Exhibition reviews of Nevelson’s prints during the 1950s

³⁷ This print is signed in blue pen at lower right: “Nevelson-51.” There has been considerable uncertainty about when Nevelson returned to Atelier 17 in the 1950s, after her initial visit in the late-1940s. Nevelson was notoriously imprecise about dating her work and often assigned inaccurate dates many years later. The second period, often dated to a range between 1953 and 1955—traceable to Johnson, *Louise Nevelson*, 10, 17—should instead be changed to 1952-54. See page 35 of the Atelier 17 student ledger book, Allentown Art Museum, The Grippe Collection [henceforth cited as AAM/GC].

³⁸ Jan Gelb, interview by Laurie Wilson, June 27, 1976.

³⁹ Gelb, interview.

did not mention the expressive techniques that differentiated impressions.⁴⁰ This critical silence, along with Gelb's and Margo's criticisms of Nevelson's inky plate preparation, reveal a consistent level of uneasiness with her process and printed results.

Taken together, these examples raise questions like, what motivated Dehner to be such a precise technician? Why did Citron carefully phrase descriptions of her method to downplay its expressive experimentation? Why did Nevelson's process of plate inking alarm colleagues and critics? While both Citron's and Nevelson's rough plate preparation and painterly gesture evoke Abstract Expressionism's tenets of bravura and self-expression, these two artists overstretched aesthetic and gender norms for women artists. Abstract Expressionism's aggressive mark making and thematic content of frenzy, disorder, and chaos were thought unsuited for women artists' more "delicate" sensibilities. It follows, therefore, that critics and contemporary observers saw the technique of artists like Nevelson and Citron as "messy" and hesitated to describe their etchings as "gestural" because this formal technique was reserved for "virile" male Abstract Expressionists. Dehner must have instinctively absorbed this message and filtered it into her very controlled process. Citron was more overtly conscious of it and attempted to tone down the wildness of her prints through her comments about the prints. The push and pull of restraint for these women artists demonstrates the conflict they faced in navigating their careers through the conservative gender values of postwar America. Dehner, Nevelson, and Citron, it should be remembered, were all divorcées. The latter two vocally expressed their decision not to remarry and probably were

⁴⁰ For more about Nevelson's experimental work at Atelier 17, see my forthcoming article: "Innovative Etchings: Louise Nevelson at Atelier 17," in *American Women Artists, 1935-1970: Gender, Culture, and Politics*, ed. Helen Langa and Paula Wisotzki. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate).

threatening to the more traditional models of postwar femininity.⁴¹ Stressing the unrestrained formal features these strong-minded women artists' prints would have further undercut traditional tenets of femininity.

The Twentieth-Century Painter-Printmaker

In another attempt to relate their abstract prints to postwar painting, printmakers at midcentury revived the concept of the painter-printmaker. Artists of this type had existed since the early modern period but reappeared more recently during the late-nineteenth century etching revival. The painter-printmaker was capable of working fluently between canvas and plate.⁴² Several groups formed in the late-1940s and early-1950s to promote the mid-twentieth-century painter-printmaker. Their mission statements and critical reviews about them clearly identified expression as a key component of their efforts. Printmaking groups initiated in the early-1940s have their foundations in technique rather than expression, which would be the focus of later groups. Vanguard, started in 1945 by modernist architect Robert Vale Faro (1902-1988), focused primarily on the technical discovery. A one-page summary of Vanguard stated, "the common bond among the creative members...is a conscious attempt to break new paths in aesthetic research."⁴³ The Graphic Circle, formed in 1947 and comprised of accomplished painters, exemplified the shift towards expression. The group's yearly exhibitions at Jacques Seligmann Gallery were based on the premise that printmaking "was another important

⁴¹ Nelverson separated from her husband in 1931 and lived independently thereafter, though with significant financial support from her family. Citron divorced in 1934 and never remarried. Dehner finalized her divorce from David Smith in 1952 and remarried in 1955 to Ferdinand Mann.

⁴² Michael Cole, ed., *The Early Modern Painter-Etcher* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

⁴³ "Vanguard," Exhibition series: Vanguard (oversize), BKM-PDPD.

outlet for members' expression."⁴⁴ Karl Kup, curator of prints at the New York Public Library (NYPL), noted in a review of the Graphic Circle's first exhibition that a member's unfettered technique as a printmaker, like his painting practice, moved him "toward a freer expression of his personal goals."⁴⁵

14 Painter-Printmakers, a group initiated in 1953 by several Atelier 17 artists, carried on the Graphic Circle's legacy after it disbanded in 1949 by advocating for the expressive power of prints.⁴⁶ As a founding member, Worden Day explained the 14 Painter-Printmakers' core goal of dislocating painting's primacy in the postwar art scene:

The idea here was to show the work of well known painters who were equally active and known as printmakers. It was a period of such stress on painting to the exclusion of other mediums, as well as a narrow kind of specialization. In other words, painters had to be exclusively painters, sculptors exclusively sculptors and so on. Our group was a wedge to break such a stronghold on creativity.⁴⁷

Una Johnson (1905-1997), curator of prints at the BKM from 1940 to 1969, emphasized the 14 Painter-Printmakers' capacity to convey their personal voice equally through printmaking. In her introduction to the 1955 exhibition of the group at the BKM, she wrote: "As painters who find through the discipline of prints another avenue of artistic expression, they do not consider prints as precise technical exercises but as another means for expressing what they also attempt to say in painting."⁴⁸ Referencing the bold

⁴⁴ Alonzo Lansford, "Color Dominates Graphic Circle Exhibition," *Art Digest* 22 (February 15, 1948): 24. Graphic Circle's initial membership included Josef Albers, Julio de Diego, Werner Drewes, Adolph Gottlieb, Jordan, Knaths, Boris Margo, Louis Schanker, and Kurt Seligmann. Membership increased around 1948 to include Enrico Donati, Max Ernst, Stanley William Hayter, Raymond Jordan, Roberto Matta. See Theresa Parker to Mr. Reese, January 9, 1947 and Theresa Parker to Garth Howland (Lehigh University), February 10, 1949, both in Jacques Seligmann & Co. records, 1904-1978, bulk 1913-1974, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

⁴⁵ Karl Kup, "Notes Around the World: New York Commentary," *Print* 5, no. 1 (1947): 71.

⁴⁶ Una Johnson makes a case for a lineage of printmaking groups, culminating in the 14 Painter-Printmakers. See her introduction text and "Chronology of Important Exhibitions of Groups of Painters Who Are Also Printmakers," in Una Johnson and John Gordon, *14 Painter-Printmakers* (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Museum of Art, 1955).

⁴⁷ Worden Day to Peter Barnet, January 22, 1974, page 2, WDP, unmicrofilmed correspondence.

⁴⁸ Introduction to Johnson and Gordon, *14 Painter-Printmakers*.

styles and introverted subject matter of the New York School, she contended that the 14 Painter-Printmakers addressed these issues head-on with their prints *and* their paintings: “the artist, working in times that are not comfortable, peaceful, or even orderly, must communicate the moods, the disquietudes and the aspirations of his day...one cannot ignore the lessons, insights and distinction exemplified by the bold originality and the sustained dynamic integrity of purpose as such artists are represented by 14 Painter-Printmakers.”⁴⁹ As critic Howard Devree noted in a review of the group’s BKM show, painting and printmaking were not isolated tasks, but worked in tandem and “supplement each other in the reach toward expanded expression.”⁵⁰

The commercial demands of the postwar art market also stimulated artists to make their prints more painting-like. This inclination pushed printmakers away from making prints that reproduced already existing artwork toward prints that were unique works of art. Gabor Peterdi suggested, “the young collector cannot afford to buy an original oil painting but still likes to have something original now buys prints and not reproductions.”⁵¹ As the dire economic strains lessened after the war, cultural observers noted that families had more resources to begin modestly purchasing original artwork.⁵² Modern prints were perfect for these new postwar collectors; they were generally less expensive than painting but just as original.

Yet, unique prints from Atelier 17 struggled for equal market share behind paintings of the New York School. Hayter once said of the postwar art market, “you

⁴⁹ Introduction to Johnson and Gordon, *14 Painter-Printmakers*.

⁵⁰ Howard Devree, “From Many Times and Lands,” *New York Times*, June 2, 1957.

⁵¹ Gabor Peterdi artist’s statement, pp. 5 (unnumbered), BKM-DPDP.

⁵² Russell Lynes, *The Tastemakers* (New York: Harper, 1954), 257.

could not give away what we call a modern print.”⁵³ Jeffrey Wechsler, who has explored the range of material supports and physical scale of Abstract Expressionism, emphasizes that canvas superseded any stylistic novelty and innovation. Artists who completed only small-scale works on paper, whether prints or drawings, were “seen as less ambitious or serious” and had trouble showing their work in New York galleries.⁵⁴ Women printmakers worked hard to combat the medium prejudice against paper among postwar critics and galleries. Worden Day, for instance, experimented with strategies to give heft to prints on paper. Some impressions of her large woodcuts like *Western Peripheries* (fig. 4-15) are lined onto canvas in order to appear and hang like a painting. Anne Ryan’s dealer, Marquié Gallery, tested alternative ways to frame the artist’s woodcuts more substantially. In a 1946 letter, Vivian Marquié informed Ryan that the woodcuts “are being framed like paintings, hard backing and no mats. Your name and titles are obscured in one or two (by the frames).”⁵⁵ A review of one of Ryan’s woodcut exhibition at Marquié in *Art Digest* actually compared her woodcuts with painting: “the 22 prints comprising Miss Ryan’s show are consistently delightful in all those qualities that make a fine painting—subtle color, rich texture, ingenious [*sic*] composition and, above all, that intensity of personal statement... These fine block prints should be framed in the manner of oils.”⁵⁶ As seen in the raised, red markings of *Abstract XXXII*, Ryan truly aspired for the painterly gesture of the New York School with thickly applied ink that she let dry for

⁵³ As quoted in David Cohen, “S. W. Hayter and Atelier 17 in America, 1940-1955,” in *The Renaissance of Gravure: The Art of S. W. Hayter*, ed. P. M. S. Hacker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 33.

⁵⁴ Wechsler, *Abstract Expressionism, Other Dimensions*, 65.

⁵⁵ Vivian Marquié to Anne Ryan, February 14, 1946, reel 86, grid 813, Anne Ryan papers, 1922-1968, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [henceforth cited as ARP].

⁵⁶ Alonzo Lansford, “Printed Paintings,” *Art Digest* 21 (December 1, 1946): 29.

two weeks and then re-inked to enrich the colors and surface texture (fig. 4-16).⁵⁷ With these formal features, critics and potential buyers could possibly look past the fact these expressive woodcuts were printed on paper and regard them as more akin to painting on paper than “merely” a print. No matter how expressive, painterly, or unique, prints made at Atelier 17 suffered generally from their reputation as works on paper and lack of commercial interest.

Experiments in Color Printmaking

As modern printmaking blossomed in the mid-1940s, women artists also relied on color to differentiate themselves and make their prints vital to New York School painting. Color printmaking distanced them from what critics labeled “traditional” or “conservative” printmaking and marked them instead as “moderns.” During the first third of the twentieth century, artists overwhelmingly produced black-and-white prints. There are some notable exceptions from the early twentieth-century of American printmakers working in color, which include experimentation in color silkscreens and lithographs at the New York branch of the WPA-FAP Graphic Arts Division.⁵⁸ American collectors’ taste for old master prints and prints from the nineteenth-century etching revival may

⁵⁷ Anne Ryan journal, 1944-45, reel 88, series 4, no. 18. Ryan wrote: “To enrich prints = let prints dry 2 weeks and then reprint on light colors with very little ink. The tree in the print called ‘The Serpent’ was enriched in this way. The reprints over the texture marks on the tree comes out very well.” The author has not located an impression of *The Serpent*.

⁵⁸ Artists working for the WPA-FAP’s Graphic Arts Division realized there was a stronger commercial market for color prints. See Helen Langa, *Radical Art: Printmaking and the Left in 1930s New York* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 221–22. The Museum of Modern Art held two exhibition called *American Color Prints under \$10* in 1940, which both included woodcuts, silkscreens, and lithographs. Other examples of early-twentieth century color printmaking include Arthur Wesley Dow who experimented in the late-nineteenth century with Japanese style and the Provincetown Printmakers who innovated “white line” woodcuts around 1915. For more, see David Acton, *A Spectrum of Innovation: Color in American Printmaking, 1890-1960* (New York: Norton, 1990).

have shaped the predominance of black-and-white prints in the early-twentieth century.⁵⁹ Additionally, printmaking societies established in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century largely favored black-and-white compositions in their annual members' exhibitions, believing color strayed from printmaking's core conventions.⁶⁰ So allied was black-and-white with conservative, representational printmaking shows that critic Howard Devree noted of the Society of American Graphic Artist's (SAGA) 1956 annual: "Until about fifteen years ago tradition dominated and the whole show was in black-and-white."⁶¹

The high incidence of color in modern, abstract printmaking during the 1940s and 1950s easily identified artists as progressive.⁶² The increasing large number of print annuals and museum exhibitions for modern prints, a phenomenon talked about in Chapter Five, provides an excellent set of data points for analyzing the emergence of color prints. Modern color prints often appeared alongside traditional black-and-white ones, but critical reviews of museum and printmaking society shows singled out color prints by carrying statistics of what proportion of the show was in color.⁶³ Several reviewers commented about how much more dynamic and invigorating color prints made these midcentury exhibitions. Reviewing the BKM's second print annual in 1948 for *Art*

⁵⁹ Marilyn Satin Kushner, "Revisiting Editions: Prints in the Armory Show," in *The Armory Show at 100: Modernism and Revolution*, ed. Marilyn Satin Kushner and Kimberly Orcutt (London: Giles, 2013), 319.

⁶⁰ Stephen Coppel, *American Prints from Hopper to Pollock* (Burlington, VT: Lund Humphries, 2008), 10.

⁶¹ Howard Devree, "Progress in Prints: Big Annual Show Offers Variety and Color," *New York Times*, April 15, 1956, 125.

⁶² The development and commercial expansion of color photography in 1940s and 1950s may also factor into why printmakers working in color were considered more advanced than colleagues working only in black-and-white. Although Kodacolor film became available in 1942, color photography was quite expensive and did not dominate American snapshots until the 1960s. Sarah Greenough, *The Art of the American Snapshot, 1888-1978: From the Collection of Robert E. Jackson* (Washington D.C. and Princeton, NJ: National Gallery of Art; Princeton University Press, 2007), 31.

⁶³ For example, see the following critical reviews: Howard Devree, "Brooklyn Museum Opens Print Show," *New York Times*, March 19, 1952; Devree, "Progress in Prints"; Dore Ashton, "Plaudits for Brooklyn," *Art Digest* 26 (April 1, 1952): 13. Beginning with the third BKM annual in 1949, the exhibition catalogs specify which prints were in color.

Digest, Alonzo Lansford explained that modern prints grabbed viewers' attention: "At first look, the show seems to have considerably more modern than conservative works; actually, the moderns just make more noise...the conservative prints are liable to be passed over rather cursorily."⁶⁴ Looking back from 1956 on the previous fifteen years of printmaking activity, Howard Devree stated that color had invigorated the print annual: "Where traditional methods and subjects once held undisputed possession of shows and a certain monotony resulted in serried rows of black and whites...the print show of today is a lively and highly diversified affair, with color, mixed media, larger prints, and daring experiment helping to make the events stimulating."⁶⁵ Given the heightened critical attention for color, it was clearly strategically beneficial for women artists to print in color.

Color prints not only drew more attention from critics and viewers, but it also connected printmaking to the emotional and expressive intents of the New York School. Elizabeth Mongan (1910-2002), curator of the Rosenwald Collection—later gifted to National Gallery of Art—characterized the color of avant-garde printmaking in the 1940s as "muddy or violent," descriptive terms that could equally apply to the dramatic coloration of the Abstract Expressionist painters.⁶⁶ As interest in modernist prints continued to grow through the 1950s, experiments in color aligned Atelier 17 artists more closely with the postwar movement towards expressive abstraction.

When Minna Citron made a significant stylistic shift in the mid-1940s from social realism to abstraction, her prints notably went from black-and-white to color. But, the move to color printmaking was gradual and exposed gender bias against women working

⁶⁴ Alonzo Lansford, "Brooklyn Museum Stages Print National," *Art Digest* 22 (May 1, 1948): 16.

⁶⁵ Howard Devree, "Print Renaissance," *New York Times*, February 6, 1955, 10.

⁶⁶ Elizabeth Mongan, "Rebirth of the Graphic Arts," *College Art Journal* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1954): 212.

creatively at Atelier 17. In the 1920s and 1930s, Citron's graphic work consisted of black-and-white lithography and etchings that mirrored her paintings' witty social realism. During her first two years making abstract prints—such as *Whatever*, *Death of a Mirror*, *Amphityron*, and *Labyrinthe*—Citron maintained black-and-white tones, which went largely unnoticed in the art press (figs. 4-17 to 4-20). She later recalled overcoming opposition from colleagues—presumably men—in experimenting with color: “I started rather cautiously in black and white but soon found what was going on around me in color to be irresistible. Those in the midst of the fray tried to discourage me, saying, ‘Isn’t life tough enough?’ or ‘Why make trouble for yourself?’ But the fascination was too great for me to heed their warnings.”⁶⁷ It was only in 1948, once she combined color with abstraction, that critics began commenting on Citron's nonrepresentational prints. Prints like *Squid Under Pier* (1948) earned Citron quite a bit of press coverage and accolades where she exhibited impressions (fig. 3-33).⁶⁸ Color not only put Citron's graphic abstraction on the critical map, color printmaking also enabled her to convey the greater emotional intensity that was integral to the postwar New York School. Citron stressed the overarching importance of color to her new style, once stating, “something was lacking, and I decided to break away from representational drawing to seek more dynamic creative expression in line, form, texture and above all, color.”⁶⁹ For Citron, as with other women artists, the decision to print in color was more than just an attempt to

⁶⁷ Citron, “In Deep Relief,” 33.

⁶⁸ Citron's print won Honorable Mention at the Boston Printmakers' Second Annual (1949) and the Francesca Wood Prize at the American Color Print Society's Eleventh Annual (1950). On an impression of *Squid Under Pier* from the Worcester Art Museum (1988.92), Citron indicated that the print had won first Prize at the Society of the 4 Arts, Palm Beach (but no year indicated) and a prize at the Dallas Print Annual in 1953. She must have misremembered this last date, since there was no annual in Dallas that year.

⁶⁹ As quoted in Karl Kup, *The Graphic Work of Minna Citron, 1945-1950* (New York: New School for Social Research, 1950), n.p.

separate herself from printmaking's traditional past, but also a way to connect with the cutting-edge trends of the postwar American art scene.

Louise Nevelson, too, used color for expressive purposes, seemingly an anomaly for an artist known for monochromatic black wall sculptures. Nevelson bucked the conventions of color printing commonly used at Atelier 17 and tested out her own audacious methods. Nevelson's color prints do not rely on techniques requiring the press—as with simultaneous color printing, Hayter's innovative process seen in *Cinq Personnages* (fig. 0-4)—or a fixed matrix of relief stenciling as Citron used for *Squid Under Pier*, but instead color applied freehand after impressions were pulled in black ink.⁷⁰ Nevelson coated many state variations with thick layers of color ink either using printing tools like brayers or relying on paintbrushes and her own hands. After coating the background of two impressions of *Magic Garden* (ca. 1948) with thin layers of red and green, for example, Nevelson added highlights of opaque paint by squishing her inky thumbprint in bright red-orange and yellow at the upper edge (figs. 4-21 and 4-22). Clearly, Nevelson was not afraid of making a bold statement with these gestural colored markings. But critical reviews were not overwhelmingly positive. Dore Ashton noted in a *New York Times* review that “her color plates...are less adeptly handled and tend to give a murky, disorganized character to the prints.”⁷¹ Ultimately, Nevelson did not—or was not able to—sell the early experimental and color proofs and retained the vast majority inside two portfolio boxes in her studio until her death.⁷²

⁷⁰ For more on color printing at Atelier 17, see Chapters 7 and 10 in Hayter, *New Ways of Gravure*.

⁷¹ Dore Ashton, “Louise Nevelson,” *New York Times*, March 6, 1958.

⁷² Following Nevelson's death in 1988 and tax settlement of her estate, executors offered art dealers Gil Einstein and Anne MacDougall two portfolios with approximately two hundred original Atelier 17 etchings. Anne MacDougall, interview by Christina Weyl, February 21, 2011.

Increasing Scale: Abstract Expressionism and the Epic Print

Scale is the final formal metric where women printmakers strategically moved themselves away from traditional printmaking towards the New York School. Abstract Expressionist painting and sculpture reached proportions unseen before in American art, and women printmakers tried to keep up by altering the scale of their prints. This shift is apparent both in the physical size of the prints they produced and in the “largeness” of the imagery and ideas that they dealt with in their prints.

Institutional support for printmaking, before the arrival of Atelier 17 in the United States, held prints to manageable proportions. For years, artists determined the size of their prints not based on aesthetic choice, but on practical considerations dictated by museum collecting and dealers. An installation photograph of a 1935 annual at the Chicago Society of Etchers (CSE) reveals the type of small, matted black-and-white prints that were the status quo in the early-twentieth century (fig. 4-23). Atelier 17 artists were not impervious to the diminutive trends affecting midcentury printmaking, especially in its early years in New York City. Thus, when Atelier 17 had its feature exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1944, the studio’s print sizes still maintained the appearance of a traditional print society show (fig. 4-24). In a 1949 exhibition review for *Art Digest*, Margaret Lowengrund (1902-1957), a printmaker herself, alludes to museums and traditional printmaking societies not allowing artists to submit prints that exceeded the maximum mat size; there was no “oversize” option in their calls for participation.⁷³ Describing the work of the Graphic Circle, Lowengrund excitedly remarked on how the group’s prints exceeded sizes not generally supported: “Their size

⁷³ Even as late as 1956, the info sheet for SAGA’s fortieth annual specified mats could not exceed 22 x 26 inches. See section 3 in “Fortieth Annual Exhibition and Seventeenth Annual Exhibition of Miniatures,” SAGA clippings file at NYPL, MDAAZ.

very often gives them away, since most...have long since broken the average bounds of dealer's print racks and exhibition mat requirements (14 ½ x 19 ¼", 18" x 22" – or else!).” She continued that Graphic Circle artists “work unfettered on plates or woodblocks commensurate with their growing ideas.”⁷⁴

Hosted annually between 1947 and 1956, the BKM's National Print Annual Exhibitions, which will be a central focus of Chapter 5, blew size restrictions out the window. While the guidelines for the first annual provided for submitting prints in mat sizes up to 22 x 28 inches, the museum also anticipated free-form submissions, saying: “all prints requiring larger mat sizes than those indicated please send unmated.”⁷⁵ The museum's more liberal submission policy visibly changed the appearance of printmaking exhibitions. By the 1950s, exhibitions of modern printmaking shattered size restrictions and hanging conventions. A photograph looking down from the second floor into the BKM's tenth Print Annual in 1956 shows just how large and varied prints had become (fig. 4-25). The annual clearly had some smaller submissions—mostly hung on the interior, temporary standing exhibition partition—but the outside walls hold several larger prints. Though cut off by the photo's right edge, a life-size figural print by Leonard Baskin titled *Man of Peace* holds a commanding presence with its nearly five-foot height (fig. 4-26).

By increasing the physical dimensions of their prints, artists of the midcentury printmaking renaissance mimicked the scale and heroic intents of the New York School's huge paintings. The angst that many artists of this era felt—regardless of whether they were primarily painters, sculptors, or printmakers—was one of the major causes spurring

⁷⁴ Margaret Lowengrund, “The Circle Expands,” *Art Digest* 23 (March 1, 1949): 24.

⁷⁵ “A New National Print Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Prints,” Scrapbook, BKM-DPDP.

the expansion of postwar art's dimensions. Numerous theories account for Abstract Expressionism's enormous canvases, ranging from the movement's roots in government-sponsored murals of the 1930s, the artists' interest in the phenomenological experience of the sublime, and sheer competition among artists.⁷⁶ Speaking about his chosen medium of woodcut, Louis Schanker captured the midcentury printmakers' objective to uncover essential truths through unbounded scale in much the same terms that one of the canonical painters of the New York School would:

It may be difficult to think of the woodblock print as a heroic medium but there is no reason, except convention, for this to be so...Once the woodblock print is accepted as a plastic medium size limitation must certainly disappear. With the elimination of size as a consideration it is possible for the design to open up, to take on grandeur and freedom, to become epic rather than episodic.⁷⁷

Schanker's "woodblock murals"—which could reach five and six feet long—were about more than pushing past printmaking's traditional physical boundaries. His work endeavored to make printmaking relevant to the grand ambitions of Abstract Expressionist painting and sculpture.

Physical size seemed to make prints chameleons capable of passing as—or at least competing with—paintings. Reviewing developments in printmaking from 1947 to 1956, Una Johnson believed that "prints of such [large] proportion sometimes lose their identity as graphic art."⁷⁸ The blending between prints and paintings that Johnson imagined was apparent in the 14 Painter-Printmaker's exhibition at the BKM in 1955. Installation images show that prints, such as Day's *The Burning Bush* (fig. 4-2), vied for importance

⁷⁶ Michael Auping, "Beyond the Sublime," in *Abstract Expressionism: The Critical Developments*, ed. Michael Auping (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1987), 148; Erika Lee Doss, *Benton, Pollock, and the Politics of Modernism: From Regionalism to Abstract Expressionism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 348.

⁷⁷ Schanker, "The Ides of Art," 46.

⁷⁸ Una E. Johnson, *Ten Years of American Prints, 1947-1956* (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Museum of Art, 1956), 5.

with her paintings shown nearby (fig. 4-27). At nearly four and a half feet tall, *The Burning Bush* is almost as tall as one of Day's three-dimensional paintings hanging just to the right of the round support beam. The print's brightly colored calligraphic lines and bold color reflected what Day and others in the 14 Painter-Printmakers believed was their ultimate goal, namely to foster connections between painting and printmaking and dislocate the former's primacy in the postwar scene. Of this display of the 14 Painter-Printmakers, Howard Devree hypothesized that the development of large printmaking capabilities had facilitated the seamless interface between painting and printmaking and perhaps even recruited painters to become printmakers.⁷⁹ Increased size, along with expressive gesture and color, combined to give prints the formal and physical qualities to challenge the large, gestural paintings of the New York School.

Though Atelier 17 printmakers certainly aspired to Abstract Expressionist paintings' grand scale, several practicalities effectively curtailed their ability to engage exactly with its mural-sized canvases. Of chief concern was the existence of paper stock of comparable size to Abstract Expressionism's multi-foot long canvases. In the 1940s and 1950s, it was almost impossible to find commercially available fine art paper larger than approximately twenty-five by forty inches.⁸⁰ Fred Becker (1913-2004), Hayter's

⁷⁹ Howard Devree, "About Art and Artists," *New York Times*, November 17, 1955. Devree wrote that large prints "have led an increasing number of painters to work in both mediums."

⁸⁰ During World War II, handmade paper could not be imported from Europe or Japan, so printmakers had to work with domestic papers. After the war, the Stevens-Nelson Paper Corporation—formed in 1939 as the successor to the Japan Paper Company, founded 1901—had a virtual monopoly on importing European and Japanese fine art papers at the time Atelier 17 was located in New York City. Stevens-Nelson had a showroom at 109 East Thirty-First Street in New York City, which Anne Ryan listed as a paper supplier in one of her printmaking notebooks. See Journal, 1944-45, ARP, reel 88, series 4, no. 18. A Stevens-Nelson's paper catalogue published in July 1953 provides an excellent window into the types, sizes, and prices of papers that were available to Atelier 17 printmakers. See particularly accompanying Price List in *Specimens: A Stevens-Nelson Catalogue* (New York: Stevens-Nelson Paper Corporation, 1953). In the 1960s and 1970s, Stevens-Nelson was edged out of the paper importing business by printmaking studios like Gemini G.E.L. and U.L.A.E., which formed direct relationships with overseas paper mills, and newly started American papermaking ventures like Twinrocker. For an overview of the renaissance of handmade

close collaborator and longtime Atelier 17 participant, explained to Hyatt Mayor, curator of prints at the MMA, his frustration over finding large enough paper for his prints: “In a country which is so diverse and large scale one would think that a large piece of paper would be no problem, but it is a booklength [*sic*] narrative in describing my search.”⁸¹ Becker finally located a domestic source for machine-made paper on a roll—what he called industrial “filter paper”—but he ultimately complained about the large quantity he had to purchase. Worden Day solved the paper problem by seaming together two sheets of handmade paper in prints like *The Burning Bush*, borrowing a strategy from mapmakers and late-nineteenth century lithographers.⁸² For relief prints like the ones Becker, Day, and Schanker made, paper size was the only limitation on their creative drive. These artists could print multiple smaller blocks across the surface of several tiled sheets or one larger sheet.

Intaglio prints also grew in size at Atelier 17, but not to the same extent as relief prints. Unlike relief prints which artists could print by hand (or by foot), artists had to run intaglio plates through a press. Midcentury technology had not developed artists’ presses large enough for etchings and engravings to reach the heroic scale of Abstract Expressionism. The Atelier 17 workshops in New York had two presses. The first was a

papermaking in the 1960s and 1970s, see chapter 4 in Silvie Turner and Birgit Skiöld, *Handmade Paper Today: A Worldwide Survey of Mills, Papers, Techniques and Uses* (London: Lund Humphries, 1983). Thanks to Kathryn Clark of Twinrocker Handmade Papers for her insight into the paper business. Interview with the author, July 23, 2014.

⁸¹ Fred Becker to Hyatt Mayor, p. 2, Dec. 9, 1956, Ref.Becker.1, Metropolitan Museum of Art, American Standard.

⁸² See author’s email correspondence with Helena Wright (Curator of Graphic Arts, National Museum of American History), April 16, 2014 and with Cathleen C. Baker, July 23, 2014. For more on the historical precedent for large prints, see Horst Appuhn and Christian von Heusinger, *Riesenholschnitte Und Papiertapeten Der Renaissance* (Unterschneidheim: Uhl, 1976); David Landau and Peter W. Parshall, *The Renaissance Print, 1470-1550* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Larry Silver, *Grand Scale: Monumental Prints in the Age of Dürer and Titian* (Wellesley, MA: Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College, 2008); Ad Stijnman, *Engraving and Etching, 1400-2000: A History of the Development of Manual Intaglio Printmaking Processes* (London; Houton, Netherlands: Archetype; Hes & De Graaf, 2012).

small, nineteenth-century press from the Hoe Company capable of making prints at approximately twelve by twenty inches, seen in the photograph of Atelier 17 at the New School (fig. 2-2) and the diagram Hayter drew of it for his book *New Ways of Gravure* (fig. 4-28). The second, larger press could handle plates with a maximum dimension of about thirty inches.⁸³ This larger press was filmed for Hayter's 1951 demonstration of creating and printing *Angels Wrestling* (fig. 4-29). These two presses were tiny compared to the enormous presses developed for collaborative printmaking studios of the 1960s, which could handle prints up to several feet long and wide.

Another factor that limited sizes of intaglio prints was the price of copper and zinc plates, the expense of which could set back artists significantly. Despite these limitations, women artists still pushed the scale of intaglio prints. A couple of Louise Nevelson's Atelier 17 etchings were almost twenty-eight inches tall, which several colleagues and critics noted were "enormous plates" and significantly larger than most intaglio prints of that era.⁸⁴ The student ledger book that Peter and Florence Grippe maintained reveals that Nevelson spent over \$120 on etching plates in only a few months, which was equivalent to about two months worth of rent in 1950.⁸⁵

⁸³ After Atelier 17's New York shop closed in 1955, the two presses went to two former directors. Peter Grippe inherited the small Hoe Company press, which had served as illustration in Hayter, *New Ways of Gravure*, 117. It is currently on long-term loan from the Grippe Collection at the Allentown Art Museum to the Northampton Community College. Thank you to Sofia Bakis (Allentown Art Museum) and Douglas Zucco (Northampton Community College) for their assistance tracking down and identifying this press. The whereabouts of the large press are unknown. Garo Antresian (b. 1922), who worked at Atelier 17 in the late-1940s and early-1950s, first alerted me to the fact that there were two different-sized presses in the New York studio. Garo Antresian, interview with the author, July 28, 2014.

⁸⁴ See Nevelson's *Archaic Figure* (Baro 3) and *Solid Reflections* (Baro 24). Gelb said of Nevelson's prints' large size, "Louise came up and she was printing a proof, a rather large plate – well, large for those times anyhow." See Gelb, interview; Dorothy Dehner, interview by Laurie Wilson, June 17, 1977. See also Lawrence Campbell, "Louise Nevelson," *Art News* 52 (January 1954): 69–70.

⁸⁵ In interviews, Florence Grippe complained that Louise Nevelson did not pay for her plates. Grippe's memory was that plates were about \$5 each, which she contextualized by saying apartment rent was \$15 per month. According to historical data, Grippe's memories about New York City rents were a bit off. A census of housing costs from the Census Bureau indicates that average median rent in New York State was

On the other end of the scale, artists also began experimenting with abstract miniature prints. Even if a print's composition was stylistically and thematically compatible with Abstract Expressionist painting, scale seemed to have been the overriding determiner of whether prints fit with postwar abstraction.⁸⁶ It is interesting, then, to consider the growing popularity of abstract miniature prints within the postwar print renaissance.⁸⁷ According to SAGA's 1956 prospectus, the miniature print—defined as less than three inches in either dimension—was to be a complete idea rather than fragmentary: "A Miniature Plate is one in which the composition is as fully developed as that of a normal sized plate, but the execution conforms to...the miniature dimensions."⁸⁸ Despite such explanations, miniature print sections were never treated with the same seriousness as "regular" prints. In a review of the 1946 SAGA annual, NYPL print curator Karl Kup confirmed that the miniature provided insufficient proportions for the fiery aggression of postwar art: "miniature prints were of a more intimate, academic, and restrained variety than their larger and more radical brothers upstairs. Less violence on a small plate; less 'school'; less 'tendency.'"⁸⁹ Given the miniature's reputation for conservative style, it is interesting that some artists from Atelier 17 used it as a way to ease into working abstractly. Minna Citron, for example, couched her very first foray into

\$48 per month. This estimate would put Nevelson's \$120 bill at a little over two months of rent. See Nevelson's record in the student ledger book (p. 35) in AAM/GC; Peter Grippe and Florence Grippe, interview by Laurie Lisle, August 5, 1983, Laurie Lisle research material on Louise Nevelson, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; table of "Median Gross Rents: Unadjusted," accessed at <https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/housing/census/historic/grossrents.html>

⁸⁶ Wechsler, *Abstract Expressionism, Other Dimensions*, 65.

⁸⁷ Both the CSE and SAGA held miniature print exhibitions, either as stand alone shows or combined with their annuals. CSE had them as early as 1924, and SAGA began a miniature section in 1938. Joby Patterson, *Bertha E. Jaques and the Chicago Society of Etchers* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002), 100–2.

⁸⁸ See section 4, "Fortieth Annual Exhibition and Seventeenth Annual Exhibition of Miniatures," SAGA clippings file at NYPL, MDAAZ.

⁸⁹ Karl Kup, "Notes Around the World," *Print* IV, no. 4 (1946): 66.

abstraction in the tiny proportions of *Whatever* (fig. 4-17).⁹⁰ Citron was clearly reticent to “go big” with her first abstract print. But, artists quickly learned that size and bigness mattered and would garner attention in the postwar print world.

Women communicated epic scale not only by increasing the physical size of their prints, but also by evoking largeness through symbolism and subject matter. Whether through representational or non-representational styles, printmakers often referenced the primordial unknown, the cosmos, and the human continuum over millennia through their titles in much the same way that Abstract Expressionist painters did.⁹¹ Looking back to the universe’s origins helped these artists cope with the challenging and destructive times in which they lived. Worden Day, Dorothy Dehner, and Anne Ryan were particularly inclined to suggest these lofty themes in their abstract prints’ titles. Dehner looked back over millennia to humankind’s origins with prints like *In the Beginning* (1954), *Embryi* (1952), and *Ancestors* (1954, figs. 2-27 to 2-29). Day mused constantly about a great variety of ponderous subjects, ranging from the general mystery of the earth’s origin in *Primeval World* (1947) and *Arcana* (1952 and 1954) to ancient burial mounds in *Tumuli* (1951)—far cries from the concrete focus of *Kinfolk from Chinquapin Hollow* from 1945. Day also suggested vast scale by referencing the grandness of the American West in *Continental Divide* from 1962 and *Western Peripheries*, also from the early 1960s. (fig. 4-30).⁹² These prints are also correspondingly large, as seen in a newspaper clipping of Fred Becker and his wife Jean Morrison hanging an impression of *Continental Divide* at

⁹⁰ Karl Kup notes that *Whatever* was Citron’s first abstract print in Kup, *Minna Citron*. There is a small discrepancy about the print’s date: Kup says it is from 1946, but Citron had already shown it in SAGA’s thirtieth annual exhibition in 1945.

⁹¹ See Chapter 2 of Polcari, *Abstract Expressionism*.

⁹² Day’s attention to the American West is attributable to the time she spent teaching at the University of Wyoming (1949-1952). For more about the technical features of these two, large prints, see Introduction in Una E. Johnson, *Worden Day: Paintings, Collages, Drawings, and Prints* (Montclair, NJ: Montclair Art Museum, 1959).

Washington University in St. Louis (fig. 4-31). Anne Ryan employed a slightly different strategy with her constellation series of 1943-44. Though the small round plates qualify as “miniatures” at less than three inches in diameter, the twenty-three prints in this series compensates for their intimate size.⁹³ Like Day and Dehner, Ryan also reflected upon the age of these celestial bodies and human existence, writing once in an untitled poem from January 1943 of “old constallations [*sic*] with their ancient names.”⁹⁴

Louise Nevelson alluded to scale and ancient times in her Atelier 17 prints with images of Mayan stelae. Aware of Pre-Columbian objects as early as the 1930s through contact with Diego Rivera, Nevelson’s encounters with the Maya civilization’s tallest stelae from a settlement called Quirigua—first through casts at the American Museum of Natural History in New York and later in person on a trip to Guatemala—sparked her fascination with ancient kingdoms and the gigantic.⁹⁵ Three stelae from Quirigua are particularly enormous, standing between twenty and thirty-five feet tall.⁹⁶ Nevelson’s awe of the sculptures’ tallness comes across most clearly in *The Ancient Garden* where a monolith on the left edge towers above other architectural features (fig. 2-40). Even though Nevelson could not recreate foot-for-foot the height of the Quirigua stelae in her etchings, she evoked their tallness formally. Like most of Nevelson’s other prints that reference Quirigua’s massive stone stelae, *The Ancient Garden* is oriented vertically

⁹³ Ryan’s daughter Elizabeth McFadden speculated that Ryan made the series because she was “following the example of the experienced Frenchmen at the atelier in doing a group of plates related to a single subject.” Elizabeth McFadden, “Anne Ryan,” ca. 1980, 172, Artist File, Department of Prints & Drawings, MMA.

⁹⁴ Notebook, 1932-43, ARP, reel 87, grid 927.

⁹⁵ For more info on Nevelson’s encounters with Pre-Columbian imagery, see Laurie Wilson, “Louise Nevelson: Iconography and Sources” (PhD diss., City University of New York, 1978), 64–68, 78–79.

⁹⁶ The eight large monuments that made Quirigua famous were produced in the 8th century to commemorate the sixty-year reign of its fourteenth king, the charismatic K’ak’ Tiliw Chan Yo’at, between 725 and 785 AD. The largest stelae are Stela F (erected 761, 7.3 m), Stela D (766, 6 m), and Stela E (771, 10.6 m). For more about Quirigua’s monuments, see Matthew George Looper, *Lightning Warrior: Maya Art and Kingship at Quirigua* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003).

which exaggerates the height of the monoliths.⁹⁷ Nevelson even conceived of the prints on a grand scale when she hung them on the walls of her exhibition, *Ancient Games*, *Ancient Places*, at Grand Central Moderns in 1955. The prints were not mere wall decoration; Nevelson intended for them to interact with the wooden sculpture that she carefully staged within the gallery space. She mentioned the etchings in a poem that she affixed onto the pedestal of the major sculpture of this show, *Bride of the Black Moon* from 1955 (fig. 2-41). The poem indicated that “the images on the wall are images she [the bride/Nevelson] remembers” from a recent voyage.⁹⁸ Nevelson’s etchings, therefore, must be understood as component of a much larger, integrated, environmental installation.

Through a slightly different approach, Louise Bourgeois’s print portfolio, *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* (1947), reaches a scale much larger than its actual ten by seven inch format. It is clear that Bourgeois had big intentions for the suite of nine engravings, hoping it would single her out for attention in the postwar New York art world.⁹⁹ Recent scholarship about *He Disappeared* hypothesizes that the portfolio functions as a virtual exhibition.¹⁰⁰ Bourgeois’s representation of architectonic constructions often follows logical space that a viewer can enter. Yet, she frustrates her viewer with spreads like the one for Plate 8, where the incomprehensible spatial

⁹⁷ *The Ancient Garden* (BKM 58.44.1) or *Jungle Figures* (BKM 65.22.15) is known in Baro as *Solid Reflections* (Baro 24). Several prints make direct reference to the massive stone stelae she saw in Quirigua’s Great Plaza: *The Ancient Sculpture Garden* (Baro 2), *Archaic Figure* (Baro 3), *Dancing Figure* (Baro 5), *Jungle Figures* (Baro 10), *One Ancient Figures* (Baro 20), *Night Garden* (18), *The Search* (Baro 22), *Star Garden* (Baro 25), *Stone Figures that Walk at Night* (Baro 26), and *The West Queen* (Baro 30).

⁹⁸ In an interview with biographer Laurie Lisle, Nevelson admitted the bride in this sculpture was self-referential. See Laurie Lisle, *Louise Nevelson: A Passionate Life* (New York: Summit Books, 1990), 187.

⁹⁹ Deborah Wye and Carol Smith, *The Prints of Louise Bourgeois* (New York: Museum of Modern Art; distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1994), 27–28.

¹⁰⁰ Steven ten Thije, “The Silent Staging of the Page: On the Exhibitionary Logic of the Artist’s Book,” in *He Disappeared into Complete Silence: Rereading a Single Artwork by Louise Bourgeois*, ed. Laurie Cluitmans and Arnisa Zezo (Haarlem, The Netherlands: De Hallen Haarlem and Onomatopoe, 2011).

arrangement of ladders affixed to the ceiling is paired with text at left that tells a fictional tale of an army veteran with hearing problems (fig. 4-32). Consequently, viewers rock endlessly between meanings while contemplating Bourgeois's "exhibition." Bourgeois's strategy of publishing a portfolio or series of related prints with the intention of strengthening professional credentials was not uncommon at Atelier 17. Ryan's constellations series, for example, caught the eye of Una Johnson, who purchased an entire set for the BKM, marking Ryan's first accession into this prestigious museum.¹⁰¹

Women printmakers who gravitated toward making abstract prints at Atelier 17 were often looking for ways to get noticed critically by whatever formal means were at their disposal. The era's conservative gender norms pushed women to seek creative outlet in mediums other than painting or sculpture, the period's most esteemed artistic practices. Even though these women artists articulated many of the same sentiments as their male colleagues who came to be known as Abstract Expressionists, the fact that they produced prints discounted the seriousness of the dramatic inking, coloration, and proportions of their graphic compositions. As the next chapter will show, women artists took this challenging situation in stride and actively promoted their innovative prints within the very active sub-network of postwar printmaking.

¹⁰¹ See BKM accession numbers 45.35.1-25.

CHAPTER FIVE

Circulating Abstraction: The Professional Networks of Women Printmakers

Between the fall of 1951 and spring of 1952, Alice Trumbull Mason independently coordinated a traveling show of abstract etchings she produced in the mid-1940s at Atelier 17. Mason sent unsolicited letters to university galleries and regional art centers describing her show, comprised of nineteen etchings featuring biomorphic shapes, soft-ground textures, and embossed surfaces, such as *Interference of Closed Forms* (fig. 5-1).¹ To justify her credentials to these unknown correspondents, Mason cited awards from annuals at the Philadelphia Print Club (1946) and the Society of American Graphic Artists (1948) and listed major institutions which owned her prints such as the Brooklyn Museum (BKM), Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), Library of Congress (LOC), and New York Public Library (NYPL). Ultimately, Mason's plan worked. After confirming the first venue at the University of Wyoming, then a major hub for modernist art education, Mason booked five other locations for the show (fig. 5-2, app. B).

Although Mason painted throughout her career and was an early member of the American Abstract Artists founded in 1936, she never achieved the same level of critical

¹ See correspondence about the artist's traveling show on reel 629, grids 429-458 and reel 630, grid 517 in Alice Trumbull Mason papers, 1921-1977, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [henceforth cited as ATM].

praise or commercial success for her non-objective paintings as she did for her prints.² By the middle of the century, Mason's form of geometric abstraction had fallen out of favor, lagging behind the New York School's more dominant mode of large, expressionistic canvases.³ Mason, in fact, consciously positioned herself outside of Abstract Expressionism, a view enunciated most clearly in a 1952 artist's statement where she discussed her preference for "Architectural" versus "Expressionist" abstraction, mentioned in more detail in Chapter Three.⁴ Mason's achievements as a printmaker, however, transcended these stylistic concerns and introduced the career-changing importance of prints for mid-century women artists. Mason's efforts and accomplishments provide a glimpse into the robust network that supported the postwar flowering of abstract printmaking and enabled the women printmakers who worked in Atelier 17's New York studio to circulate their graphic work across the globe.⁵

Engaging with recent interest in how American art traveled internationally, this chapter considers the movement of women's Atelier 17 prints and the positive impact of these exhibitions on women's careers.⁶ Drawing on analysis of primary material visualized in charts and on interactive maps produced with [Viewshare](#), an online platform developed by the Library of Congress, this chapter establishes who and where the major

² See quote from Wolf Kahn, Mason's son in law in Grace Glueck, "Alice in Mondrianland," *New York Times*, June 3, 1973. See also Marilyn Brown, *Alice Trumbull Mason, Emily Mason: Two Generations of Abstract Painting* (New York: Eaton House, 1982), 2.

³ Sidney Tillim, "What Happened to Geometry? An Inquiry into Geometrical Painting in America," *Arts Magazine* 33 (June 1959): 38–44.

⁴ Alice Trumbull Mason, "Architectural Abstract Art," February 20, 1952, ATM, reel 630, grid 169.

⁵ After writing this chapter, I discovered twenty-four additional women artists participated at Atelier 17. Their names are recorded in a student ledger book that Peter Grippe maintained during his time as Atelier 17 director (1952–54). See Allentown Art Museum, The Grippe Collection. Unfortunately, time constraints did not permit me to incorporate these new names into a revised analysis for this chapter. Their names are recorded in Appendix A.

⁶ See Barbara S. Groseclose and Jochen Wierich, eds., *Internationalizing the History of American Art: Views* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009); Jennifer L. Roberts, *Transporting Visions: The Movement of Images in Early America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2014).

hubs of activity were within this network and what facilitated connections among these nodes.⁷ Following the travels of six artists—Minna Citron, Worden Day, Sue Fuller, Jan Gelb, Alice Trumbull Mason, and Anne Ryan—the discussion will center on several aspects of prints’ circulation: peer-to-peer relationships, printmaking annuals, traveling exhibitions, museum collecting, and artists’ groups that supported avant-garde printmaking.

This analysis will suggest that two factors primarily contribute to why making prints at Atelier 17 served as a breakthrough for women artists’ careers. First, prints are highly mobile—nothing more than lightweight, thin sheets of paper. Multiple impressions of the same edition could be sent to venues across America and the world, allowing women’s prints to be shown in several places simultaneously. Second, women were highly motivated to develop a dynamic artistic network through their activities as printmakers. Mason’s experiences as a painter were not isolated; there was little market or critical support for women artists’ paintings and sculptures. Yet, women artists also contended with a bias against printmaking in the hierarchy of artistic media. Citron encapsulated challenges posed by being an artist who enjoyed printmaking: “Crossing the line back and forth between printmaking and painting is hard. You are so easily labeled a printmaker.”⁸

In spite of these challenges, women artists boldly pursued connections within the postwar printmaking network, fighting for chances to secure public exposure for their

⁷ The author created a dataset of more than 1,800 entries for the Viewshare analysis and charts in this article. Sources included published exhibition catalogues and archival material from collections in the Archives of American Art, which are noted throughout this article’s footnotes. As possible, citations have been recorded in the Viewshare data (see the “List” tab). The author realizes the dataset is by no means comprehensive.

⁸ Donna Marxer, “Minna Citron: ‘Getting Old Is Just as Good’,” *Women Artists Newsletter*, December 1977, 2.

prints and to build relationships with key professional contacts. This chapter ultimately constructs a powerful narrative about this active but peripheral subgroup of the New York School.⁹ In doing so, it demonstrates the intrepidity and bravery of these women printmakers to share their graphic art with a global audience. It also reveals the significance of their prints in shaping postwar abstraction. These understudied women artists, whose prints traversed the globe evangelizing for unfettered modernist expression and American democracy, were at the vanguard of feminist activity within the art world that exploded two decades later.

The Explosion of Postwar Printmaking

Although printmaking had a strong history in America coming into the twentieth century, several events combined around the mid-1940s to initiate a groundswell of support for modern printmaking. 1947-48 mark watershed years, after which avant-garde printmakers found widespread acceptance for their graphic work in America and internationally. Stanley William Hayter's decision to relocate the studio to New York City in 1940 from its first home in Paris certainly paved the way for modern printmaking's growth in America. More importantly, MoMA's 1944 exhibition *New Directions in Gravure: Hayter and Studio 17* confirmed the workshop's status as a central hub of abstract printmaking. Atelier 17 became known as the foremost place worldwide to learn experimental printmaking, and the number of artists training there increased substantially.

⁹ For more on "others" within Abstract Expressionism, see Ann Gibson, *Abstract Expressionism: Other Politics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

Una Johnson, curator of prints at the BKM from 1940 to 1969 and a key figure within the network of female printmakers (fig. 5-3), recognized that this large influx of artists producing modern prints had scarce options to exhibit their work.¹⁰ So in 1947, she launched the BKM's National Print Annual Exhibition, which ran continuously for ten years.¹¹ Johnson said that starting the print annuals "was in response to a need for the showing of contemporary and experimental prints within the greater New York area, where much of the experimental printmaking was then being pursued."¹² Johnson knew that modern prints were anomalies within the era's well-established print exhibitions, which primarily showed small, realistic, black-and-white etchings popular in America since the late-nineteenth century.¹³ Under mounting pressure, some of these forums warmed to modern printmaking. For example, the Society of American Etchers conceded in 1947 to open membership to artists of all aesthetic persuasions who practiced printmaking techniques besides etching. Dorothy Noyes Arms (1887-1955), wife of John Taylor Arms (1887-1953) who served as the organization's longtime president, noted poetically that the renamed Society of American Etchers, Gravers, Lithographers and Woodcutters, "rose phoenixlike from the ashes of the old."¹⁴ The group changed its name

¹⁰ For more about Johnson's career, see Francine Tyler, "A Tribute to Una E. Johnson," *Print Review* 14 (1981): 74-77.

¹¹ Ten Brooklyn print exhibition occurred annually from 1947 to 1956, after which the frequency tapered off to approximately every two years. The twenty-sixth and last annual occurred in 2001, after a long gap between the twenty-fifth in 1989. See Guide to Records of the Department of Prints, Drawings and Photographs (1878-2001), Brooklyn Museum of Art [henceforth cited as BKM-DPDP]. See also Barry Walker, "The Brooklyn Museum's National Print Exhibitions," *The Tamarind Papers* 13 (1990): 41-44.

¹² Una Johnson, *American Prints and Printmakers: A Chronicle of Over 400 Artists and Their Prints from 1900 to the Present* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 119.

¹³ Several organizations held print annuals before the BKM: the National Academy of Design, The Library of Congress (established 1943), the Northwest Printmakers (1928), the Print Club of Philadelphia (1915), the Chicago Society of Etchers (1910), and Society of American Etchers (founded 1931 as Brooklyn Society of Etchers; see additional name permutations for this group within above paragraph).

¹⁴ Dorothy Noyes Arms, "Annual Prints from the Exhibition," *Print* 6, no. 2 (1949): 20.

again in 1952 to the Society of American Graphic Artists (SAGA), the acronym which this chapter will use to refer to the group.

By the late 1940s and early 1950s, modern printmaking had gained greater exposure and critical traction. Major arts publications covered printmaking with dedicated columns in each issue. *Art News* featured Irvin Haas's "The Print Collector" from roughly 1946 to 1957, and *Art Digest* had many columns appearing intermittently from the late-1940s into the 1950s.¹⁵ These various special sections covered trends and exhibitions in the printmaking world and reviewed new print publications. Even though these magazines sometimes covered print news within the Fifty-Seventh Street gallery reviews, the print sections effectively segregated avant-garde graphic arts from mainstream modernism.

Seizing on the opportunities that this explosion of postwar printmaking offered, women artists capitalized on prints' portability by sending their graphic work throughout the United States. Although the scale of prints definitely increased from standard sizes seen in the early-twentieth century, as detailed in the previous chapter, artists realized that prints were still far more transportable compared to the large paintings and sculptures of the New York School.¹⁶ Jan Gelb's husband Boris Margo confirmed the belief that printmaking was a better instrument for spreading postwar abstraction, writing, "costing less, framed less formidably, more easily transported by rootless moderns, the print can serve as a most persuasive introduction to modern art."¹⁷ In a 1945 journal recording her

¹⁵ *Art Digest* columns were: "Printmakers: Old and Modern" (1947, staff writers), "The Field of Graphic Arts" (1949, Margaret Lowengrund), "Prints" (1951, Dore Ashton).

¹⁶ Annuals, museums, and dealers largely dictated prints fit standard mats. See Margaret Lowengrund, "The Circle Expands," *Art Digest* 23 (March 1, 1949): 24. The BKM annuals exploded size restrictions; while the submission guidelines requested traditional mats up to 22x28 inches, they also allowed for submissions of any size.

¹⁷ Boris Margo, "The Ides of Art: 11 Graphic Artists Write," *Tiger's Eye*, no. 8 (June 1949): 53.

initial lessons with Hayter at Atelier 17, Anne Ryan noted how prints' mobility would afford her greater professional success than if she exclusively painted. She wrote, "it is easier to succeed in prints than painting for the simple reason that prints can be *mailed*."¹⁸ Further in her notes, Ryan wrote down Hayter's strategies for ensuring success as a printmaker. He prioritized publicizing instead of production, suggesting, "about *one third* of time is given to making of the prints and *two thirds* to marketing and mailing, seeing dealers, etc." Ryan noted a final word of advice about the importance of making a substantial body of prints in order to solidify a foundation for commercial success: "Reach the goal of 50 good prints then you will begin to sell." Clearly, printmaking served as a way for Ryan, formerly a housewife, mother and poet, to gain a toehold in the art world, earn a livelihood, and build a critical reputation that eventually led to her success as a collagist.¹⁹

There was precedent in American history for using printmaking as a vehicle for disseminating art to the general public. In the period immediately before Atelier 17's establishment in New York, two mail-order companies sold Regionalist-style prints directly to middle-class American consumers. Reeves Lewenthal (1910-1987) started Associated American Artists in 1934, which marketed signed and numbered prints for \$5 each. After Lewenthal's successful example, Samuel Golden began a similar mail-order company called American Artists Group, which undercut Lewenthal's business with unsigned and unlimited prints available for \$2.50. These two companies' example

¹⁸ Anne Ryan journal, 1944-45, reel 88, series 4, no. 18, (emphasis original), Anne Ryan papers, 1922-1968, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [henceforth cited as ARP]. All Ryan's quotes from this paragraph come from this journal.

¹⁹ For the most recent scholarship on Ryan's collages, see Claudine Armand, *Anne Ryan: Collages* (Giverny, France: Musée d'Art Américain, 2001).

showed Atelier 17 artists that prints, with directed marketing efforts, had the capacity to reach large swaths of the American public.²⁰

The Collegiality and Reciprocity of Peer-to-Peer Networking

Women artists actively facilitated geographical exchange of their prints in their effort to self-promote and form relationships with others. Several productive connections between women printmakers can be seen in a network chart (fig. 5-3). Radiating out from Atelier 17, artists connect with one another either directly through peer-to-peer exchange or indirectly via important nodes. Artists like Ryan, Day, Fuller, Mason, Citron, and Gelb are clearly hubs and facilitated the flow of creativity within this system. Hayter served as a chief exemplar for women artists of how to enlarge their sphere of influence. According to Helen Phillips, Hayter's second wife and an active printmaker at Atelier 17, Hayter made himself available for lectures and demonstrations—which often had accompanying exhibitions of his prints—and these activities, “spread his reputation throughout the U.S. as a teacher.”²¹

Day took Hayter's model to heart and became a marketing force for her own prints and those of fellow women artists from Atelier 17. In 1947, Day and Ryan shared an informal business relationship whereby Ryan sent her prints to the peripatetic Day. Without taking a sales commission for herself, Day entered Ryan's prints into regional exhibitions and showed them to interested curators and collectors. In an undated postcard

²⁰ Neither firm successfully entered the abstract print market. By the 1950s, Lewenthal's attempt to break into modern prints was lampooned as mass culture and not fine art. In 1958, Lewenthal's AAA split in two with a high and low art division. Erika Doss, “Catering to Consumerism: Associated American Artists and the Marketing of Modern Art, 1934-1958,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 26, no. 2/3 (Summer-Autumn 1991): 166–67.

²¹ Helen Phillips, “1940's in US; A.17,” Helen Phillips papers, Paris, France. According to Phillips, lecturing was quite important to Hayter's financial stability: “Bills [*sic*] income came from print sales, exhibitions, his lecture demonstrations, and visiting teaching jobs,” rather than from running Atelier 17.

to Ryan from an exhibition at Stephens College in Columbia, MO that Day coordinated, Day wrote of her persistent efforts: “I’m really propagandizing people to purchase prints.”²² Day described her magnanimous marketing philosophy in a letter to Ryan from July 1947: “I’m glad to have been able to sell some of your prints and don’t expect anything in return...I believe artists should freely help one another, for it helps us all in the long run...I heartily disapprove of the highly cut-throat, competitive attitudes that most of our American artists regard one another.”²³ In the same letter, Day evaluated the importance of her efforts establishing regional connections across the United States: “Funny how showing around these places seems more glamorous to the artists in New York, than those already in the region. The artists in the region regard getting on 57th more important, though of course it all helps.”²⁴ Through Day’s marketing, the Art Center Association in Louisville, KY bought Ryan’s woodcut *Tenements* and the Memphis Academy of Arts purchased *Jugglers* and *Fantasia* (fig. 5-4), the latter one of Ryan’s first experiments in abstraction.²⁵ Ryan also independently marketed her prints at several venues in the United States, Mexico, and France (app. C). Ryan’s and Day’s collective teamwork and independent efforts were paramount to getting their names known regionally.

Beyond these two women, several artists developed intimate relationships at Atelier 17 with other female printmakers that led to important professional achievements. Louise Nevelson and Dorothy Dehner began a lifelong friendship after Dehner admired proofs of Nevelson’s large and expressively inked etchings hanging on the walls of

²² Worden Day to Anne Ryan, undated (ca. 1947), ARP, reel 88, grid 643.

²³ Worden Day to Anne Ryan, July 26 (no year, ca. 1947), ARP, reel 87, grids 300-1.

²⁴ Worden Day to Anne Ryan, July 26 (ca. 1947).

²⁵ “Notebook on Colored Wood-Cuts, 1945,” ARP, reel 88, series 4, no. 20.

Atelier 17.²⁶ Though Nevelson became progressively busier with her successful sculpture career, she and Dehner never lost touch. While working as a fellow at the Los Angeles-based Tamarind Lithography Workshop in 1963, Nevelson wrote Dehner a postcard suggesting she also make prints there and likely suggested her name to Tamarind's founder, June Wayne.²⁷ Dehner also maintained a strong friendship with Doris Seidler, the British expatriate whose recollections of Atelier 17's Eighth Street workshop began Chapter Two. Many years after their time at Atelier 17, Seidler suggested that she and Dehner share a two-person exhibition at the Print Centre in London and said she would sponsor Dehner's membership to SAGA.²⁸

Through Berea College in Kentucky, Day and Ryan both connect with Margaret Balzer Cantieni (1914-2002), who taught art at the school from 1937 to 1945.²⁹ At some point during her travels, Day met Balzer Cantieni at Berea and likely influenced her to study at Atelier 17, which she did in 1946.³⁰ Ryan showed woodcuts at Berea in October-November 1947 because Balzer Cantieni brought Dorothy Tredennick, member of the school's Art Department, to see Ryan's work at her apartment on Greenwich Street.³¹

²⁶ Dorothy Dehner, interview with Laurie Wilson, June 17, 1977, tape 3a, side 1. Dehner recalled: "I saw some prints. Dark prints, rather large...I can hear my own voice saying this: 'whose prints are these? These are marvelous prints. I love this work! Whose is it?' And nobody said anything because they were scattered around, and a little head poked out at the end of the loft, and she said, 'Those are my prints. I'm Louise Nevelson. Who are you?' And, I said, 'I'm Dorothy Dehner.' And then she came to the front and I said, 'well I'm just crazy about these prints, they're so wonderful and original.'...So, that was how our friendship began."

²⁷ Nevelson to Dehner, April 24, 1963, reel D298, grid 112, Dorothy Dehner papers, 1920-1987 (bulk 1951-1987), Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [henceforth cited as DD]. Though Tamarind extended a fellowship to Dehner in September 1963 (Susan Jonas to Dehner, DD, reel 298, grid 149), illness prevented her from taking it. She finally worked at Tamarind in late-1970 and early-1971. Tamarind Institute is now at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, NM.

²⁸ Seidler to Dehner, November 6, 1963, DD, reel D298, grid 155.

²⁹ Janice Carter Larson, *Painting the Halls of Heaven: Life and Works of Margaret Balzer Cantieni* (Bethlehem, PA: Payne Gallery of Moravian College, 2004).

³⁰ In Day's July 26, 1947 letter to Ryan, she wrote: "I remember indirectly that there was a rather talented young artist who taught there awhile—Margaret Balzer by name—who is quite modern in her work."

³¹ Dorothy Tredennick to Ryan, September 25, 1947, ARP, reel 86, grid 871.

Balzer Cantieni also links to the all-male Graphic Circle, the group discussed previously in Chapter Four. In March 1949, Jacques Seligmann gallery lent an exhibition of the Graphic Circle to the art gallery of Lehigh University library. As a local artist—she and her husband had moved by this point to the Lehigh Valley to teach art at various institutions—Balzer Cantieni showed one of her abstract prints alongside members of this esteemed vanguard group.³² As these examples make clear, female artists relied on peer-to-peer connections to advance their individual printmaking endeavors.

The Geographic Circulation of Print Annuals and Museum Shows

Print annuals are one of the clearest examples of how women artists energetically networked and harnessed prints' transportable properties. Showing at these venues—and many others when the annuals traveled—enabled them to gain exposure and a base of critical support at a time when women did not have equal access to exhibition opportunities for their painting or sculpture. Louise Bourgeois underscored the catalyzing importance of participating in these annual print shows: “I was able to enter the art field through the prints, because the Brooklyn Museum organized this show of prints every year. So it was an easy beginning, to have your name printed...I did it for exposure.”³³ The selection process could be quite competitive, and women had every reason to be quite proud of gaining entry.³⁴ Through participation in the print annuals, women not only had their names printed in the exhibition catalogues, as Bourgeois noted, but also their

³² See press clippings in Alphabetical Files: Graphic Circle 1943-1952, box 362, folder 4, Jacques Seligmann & Co. records, 1904-1978, bulk 1913-1974, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [henceforth cited as JS&Co].

³³ As quoted in Vincent Katz, “Louise Bourgeois: An Interview,” *The Print Collector's Newsletter* XXVI, no. 3 (August 1995): 88.

³⁴ At the 1947 BKM annual, over 600 artists submitted approximately 1,300 prints, from which the jury selected only 210. “Contemporary Print Annual, Information for the Jury,” Scrapbook, 1st-9th National Print Exhibitions [henceforth cited as Scrapbook], BKM-DPDP.

names and illustrations of their artwork often appeared in the art press, especially as winners of awards and purchase prizes.

The BKM's annual was by far the most important annual exhibition opportunity for women printmakers from Atelier 17. Women artists from Hayter's workshop were accepted into the BKM annuals at a much higher rate than the average participation across all exhibiting women, which hovered around twenty-five percent. Thirty-one women artists from Atelier 17 showed in Brooklyn's first ten annuals (fig. 5-5).³⁵ Women printmakers who are central to this dissertation exhibited with great frequency. Day, for instance, showed in eight of ten BKM annuals; Mason in seven; Ryan in six, and Citron in five. In total, Atelier 17 women artists showed eighty-four prints, of which thirteen were added to the BKM's permanent collection through purchase awards (app. C).³⁶ Ryan won recognition in the inaugural BKM annual for one of her first semi-abstract woodcuts, *Fantasia* (fig. 5-4). This print, in which three biomorphic figures stand on a curved green ground line, marked a significant change from Ryan's initial efforts in woodcut, which had encompassed mostly realistic religious and circus imagery. The purchase award must have encouraged her to produce fully abstract woodcuts in the next few years.³⁷

As the artist-run SAGA developed a more modern identity in the 1940s, women artists from Atelier 17 increasingly showed in its annual exhibitions. Few women exhibited in the early 1940s, since "modern" printmaking did not make inroads into this "academic" institution until about mid-decade.³⁸ Hayter first showed with SAGA in

³⁵ See note 5. This analysis of BKM annuals does not include the new names found in AAM/GC.

³⁶ Una Johnson accessioned about ninety additional prints outside of the annual exhibitions by women artists from Atelier 17.

³⁷ See woodblocks dated 1947-49 and undated woodblocks (roman numeral titles) in *Anne Ryan* (New York: Kraushaar Galleries, 1957).

³⁸ Citron showed representational prints at SAGA in 1940, February 1942, fall 1942, and 1943.

1942—“[overtipping] the aesthetic apple cart,” as Fuller recalled—which opened the door for modern printmakers.³⁹ Shortly thereafter, women artists from Atelier 17 began submitting their abstract and stylistically progressive prints to SAGA’s annual shows in greater numbers, with participation peaking in the years 1946, 1947, and 1948 (fig. 5-6). In Fuller’s first years showing in SAGA annuals, she entered more conservative, semi-representational prints of animals and human figures such as *Cock* (fig. 3-6). In this profile view of a rooster in motion, Fuller contrasts pieces of lace, inherited from her mother and impressed onto an etching plate prepared with soft ground, with bold calligraphic lines that emphasize the head, neck, beak, legs, and tail of the bird. By 1948, Fuller showed *The Sorceress* (fig. 5-7), one of her fully abstract “string compositions” that are discussed more in Chapter Three.

Even though SAGA had a more traditional reputation, Atelier 17 artists recognized the annual’s importance for increasing their professional visibility. Fuller urged Hayter to join SAGA because of the networking potential: “I felt that if he would establish a rapport with the opposition that he would enlarge his field of circulation.”⁴⁰ Like the BKM annuals, exhibiting with SAGA came with the possibility of recognition in the art press and interaction with curators and gallerists. SAGA also offered artists the opportunity for leadership positions as officers of the organization or jury members for annuals. The latter proved quite influential, as Hayter, Fuller, and Citron sat on the 1946 jury that initiated several years of strong showings by Atelier 17 members.⁴¹ NYPL curator Karl Kup recalled that at the 1946 SAGA annual “an astonishing array of

³⁹ Sue Fuller, oral history interview with Paul Cummings, April 24, 1975, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

⁴⁰ Fuller, oral history.

⁴¹ In addition to the 1946 panel, the following women were judges of SAGA annuals: Fuller (1948, 1954), Mason (1954), and Christine Engler (1950, 1952).

contemporary work adorned the wall, with almost every ‘school of thought’ represented. [Citron, Fuller and Hayter] had been on the jury of admission, with results that may have shocked some of the more academic members.”⁴²

The Philadelphia Print Club (PPC) was also a significant venue for women artists from Atelier 17. Founded in 1914, the PPC’s Board had conservative tastes in its early years but opened to modern printmaking when Bertha Von Moschzisker (1915-2002) became the Director in 1944 and decided “to show contemporary things.”⁴³ After Hayter won the club’s prestigious Charles M. Lea prize in 1944, Von Moschzisker invited him to have a solo show at the PPC and teach a once-a-month class for local artists nicknamed the “Hayter Workshop.”⁴⁴ The PPC hosted annual exhibitions—relief and intaglio techniques had separate annuals—where women printmakers from Atelier 17 showed quite frequently (fig. 5-6).⁴⁵ The etching annual’s highest honor, the Charles M. Lea prize, was a particularly valuable award not only because the art press featured the winners but also because the PPC donated the award prints to the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA).⁴⁶ In addition to annual prizes, the PPC began a member-supported fund in 1942 to purchase prints from PPC annuals for the PMA’s permanent collection.⁴⁷ When Mason’s *Interference of Closed Forms* (fig. 5-1) won the Charles M. Lea prize in 1946, the PMA’s curator Carl Zigrosser wanted to accession the other two prints in Mason’s

⁴² Karl Kup, “Notes Around the World: New York Commentary,” *Print* 5, no. 1 (1947): 65–66.

⁴³ Bertha Von Moschzisker, oral history interview with Ruth Fine, August 29, 1988, p. 30, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. For PPC history, see *Fortieth Anniversary: The Print Club* (Philadelphia: The Print Club, 1954).

⁴⁴ Inaugural announcement for Artist’s Workshop (term February-June 1945), Print Club scrapbooks, 1916-1982, reel 4232, grid 284, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [henceforth cited as PCS]. Hayter continued teaching at PPC until circa 1949.

⁴⁵ Participation numbers are based on review of news clippings in PCS and an Excel chart provided by The Print Center, the successor to the PPC. There are no known catalogs from annuals from this era.

⁴⁶ The PPC sporadically donated honorable mentions to the PMA.

⁴⁷ Letter to PPC membership, January 25, 1942, PCS, reel 4232, grid 163. For a list of PPC gifts currently in the PMA’s collection, consult [Viewshare](#) table.

series. Lacking museum acquisition funds, Zigrosser asked the PPC to sponsor the purchase of *Labyrinth of Closed Forms* and *Orientation of Closed Forms* (both 1945).⁴⁸ Mason greatly valued this award and the museum acquisitions, citing them as professional credentials in her effort to organize the traveling exhibition mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

Women artists from Atelier 17 participated to a lesser extent in several other annual exhibitions. They were well represented throughout the 1940s and 1950s at the LOC's National Exhibition of Prints, which began in 1943 (fig. 5-6). This annual, however, had a reputation for being more conservative, and women printmakers from Atelier 17 did not win purchase prizes, save one awarded in 1946 to Ruth Leaf for her representational etching and aquatint, *Tears* (1945).⁴⁹ Women also showed modestly with the Northwest Printmakers annuals, and only Fuller won a purchase prize for *Hen* in 1946, which is now part of the Seattle Art Museum's collection (fig. 3-13).⁵⁰ The Printmakers of Southern California began a short-lived annual in 1952 where a handful of women exhibited but never won prizes. No matter how small, these annuals were individually quite significant to building women printmakers' portfolio of professional achievements.

Citron actively participated in annuals with the Boston Printmakers, winning honorable mention for *Whatever* (1945), her first, very small foray into abstraction (fig. 4-17). The award had immediate ramifications for Citron's career and style, in that it gave her the confidence to move beyond the cautious, black-and-white miniature of

⁴⁸ Carl Zigrosser to Alice Trumbull Mason, April 22 and May 24, 1946, ATM, reel 629, grids 392 and 394.

⁴⁹ See Ruth Leaf, *Tears* (1945), aquatint and etching, Library of Congress, call no. FP - XX - Leaf (R.), no. 1 (A size) [P&P].

⁵⁰ See Sue Fuller, *Hen* (1945), engraving and soft ground etching, Seattle Art Museum, 69.262.

Whatever toward larger toward full-color abstractions.⁵¹ Citron's *Flight to Tomorrow* (fig. 5-8), which became the Boston Printmakers' Presentation Print for 1950, showcases an inventive abstract composition and her technical masterwork. Her superb handling of the engraver's burin, shown in the composition's curved and straight lines, is complemented by her printing virtuosity, seen in the three colors—purple, light and dark blue—she stenciled on the plate's planar surface.

While these annuals displayed women's prints in major cities across the United States, traveling exhibitions—often of these annuals—provided even greater geographical circulation. From the beginning, the BKM partnered with the American Federation of Arts (AFA) to distribute its print annuals to many locations across the United States. The first annual, for example, traveled to several venues between 1947 and 1948 (app. D).⁵² The relationship between the BKM and AFA was so productive that when Annemarie Pope, Assistant Director of the AFA, happily informed Una Johnson that all slots for the third annual's traveling show were completely booked, she inquired about the possibility of doubling the annual's exposure by gathering duplicate impressions from exhibiting artists.⁵³ For further visualization of the AFA's circulation of BKM print annuals, see fig. 5-9.

Several museums coordinated special exhibitions that traveled quite widely, allowing women to promote their reputations nationally and internationally as modern printmakers. After its run at MoMA, *Hayter and Studio 17*—which included prints by Sue Fuller, Anne Ryan, Perle Fine, Helen Phillips, and Catherine Yarrow (1904-1990)—

⁵¹ Minna Citron, "In Deep Relief," *Artist's Proof* 6, no. 9–10 (1966): 33.

⁵² Annemarie Henle to Una Johnson, December 1, 1947, Scrapbook, BKM-DPDP.

⁵³ Annemarie Henle to Una Johnson, January 27, 1950, Scrapbook, BKM-DPDP.

traveled for two years to venues throughout the United States (app. D).⁵⁴ Concurrently, MoMA shipped a version of the show to the Inter-American Office of the National Gallery of Art, which circulated to cities in Latin America between 1944 and 1946.⁵⁵ In 1953-54, Day, Fuller, and Ryan had prints sent to the Municipal Museum of the Hague (Gemeentemuseum Den Haag) and the Kunsthaus in Zurich as part of the BKM's exhibition, *New Expressions in Printmaking* (1952), a state of the field for midcentury American printmaking (app. E).⁵⁶ Several women artists from Atelier 17 participated in a traveling exhibition coordinated by the Boston Public Library that first went to the Petit Palais in Paris in 1949, then the American Embassy in Paris, and many cities in France, Germany, and Italy over several years (fig. 5-10, app. E).⁵⁷ The artists involved in this show later donated their prints to museums in Israel.⁵⁸ As a result of the Boston Public Library exhibition, the French Ministry of Education bought an impression of Ryan's woodcut *The Wine Glass* (1948), a fact she was extremely proud of and cited as a major accomplishment on resumes (fig. 5-11).⁵⁹ Exhibition possibilities clearly blossomed in the wake of World War II, greatly enhancing the network for global printmaking exchange and raising women's international profiles as avant-garde printmakers.

⁵⁴ "New Directions in Gravure – Hayter Studio 17 [US itinerary]," Department of Circulating Exhibitions Records, [II.1.86.2.1], The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York [henceforth cited as DCER]. Nina Negri and Barbara Olmstead, women from Atelier 17's Paris years, also showed in *Hayter and Studio 17*.

⁵⁵ An itinerary of the Latin American venues has not been located as of the completion of this dissertation. The State Department formed the Inter-American Office at the National Gallery of Art in 1944, and it closed in 1948 when government aid ended. See Margaret D. Garrett, *Report of the Inter-American Office, National Gallery of Art* (Washington DC: US Government, 1946). For MoMA's transfer of the show to the National Gallery of Art, see Huntington Cairns to Elodie Courter, 1945, DCER [II.1.86.2.2].

⁵⁶ *Moderne Amerikaanse Grafiek* (The Hague: Gemeentemuseum s'Gravenhage, 1953). No known catalog exists for the Kunsthaus show.

⁵⁷ See Arthur W. Heintzelman, *Contemporary American Prints; Organized for the Museums in Israel* (Boston: Boston Public Library, 1953); *Zeitgenössische Graphik Aus Den USA* (Stuttgart: Office of Land Commissioner for Württemberg-Baden, 1949); *Incisori Degli Stati Uniti* (Calografia Nazionale, Rome, 195?). Catalogs from several of the French traveling venues can be found in ATM, reel 630, grids 489-90, 520, 649, 675-6.

⁵⁸ Arthur Heintzelman to exhibitors, ATM, reel 629, grid 469.

⁵⁹ "Last Record," ARP, reel 88, series 10.

While promoting these women's reputations, the circulation of prints worldwide also carried a Cold War message of spreading democratic ideals. Several governmental agencies were involved in promoting networks of democratic exchange through printmaking. In addition to the Inter-American Office, the United States Information Agency, established in 1953 with the goal of fostering dialogue between the United States and the world, built a huge collection of more than sixteen hundred prints to circulate within American embassies, a precursor to the current Art in the Embassies program.⁶⁰ A message of spreading American democratic virtues was quite clear behind the agency's intentions. In the words of its director Leonard Marks, "through this program we are attempting to make known abroad the creative vigor and originality of contemporary American graphic art. In many locations where the prints are hung there is no other way by which the public could learn about this aspect of our culture."⁶¹ Through the United States Information Agency, women printmakers of Atelier 17 had prints on almost every continent (fig. 5-12).⁶² One of Mason's etchings, *Deep Sound* from 1947 (fig. 5-13), in which sinuously arranged lace contrasts with two strongly bitten horizontal lines, was on view at the American embassy in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The Transformative Effect of Printmaking Groups

Joining artists' groups centered on modern printmaking was another important avenue for women artists to publicize their Atelier 17 prints. First and foremost, these

⁶⁰ The USIA's efforts to amass a large collection of prints began as early as 1963. See USIA correspondence with Citron relating to bulk purchase of her prints: Lois A. Bingham to Citron, June 29, 1963, reel 268, Minna Wright Citron papers, 1930-1980 [henceforth cited as MCP].

⁶¹ Leonard H. Marks to Alice Trumbull Mason, April 9, 1968, ATM, reel 629, grid 795. See also, "The U.S.I.A. Print Program," *Art in America* 56, no. 1 (February 1968): 66-69.

⁶² "United States Information Agency: Graphic Arts Program, List no. 2," ATM, reel 629, grids 796-801.

printmaking groups provided women with the chance to exhibit their prints publicly in major galleries and museum spaces. Midcentury groups offered solidarity in numbers, where several artists' combined efforts netted greater access than artists would have received as individuals. The initial entrée through printmaking groups sometimes marked the beginning of long-term relations between women and prestigious galleries. As with print annuals and governmental organizations, exhibitions of these midcentury printmaking groups made the rounds of venues in the United States and abroad. Another major benefit of these artists' groups was their networking potential, creating vibrant forums for artists to socialize and exchange ideas about printmaking. Lastly, by either founding or helping with the management of these printmaking groups, women artists were able to express leadership skills outside of the domestic realm, which went against the period's conservative gender norms. Female printmakers realized that, if they did not take charge and organize their own groups, they would not have many options for exhibiting their avant-garde prints.

Atelier 17's Decisive Impact on Women's Careers

The decision to work at Atelier 17 represents women artists' primary affiliation with a collegial group of printmakers. Besides the obvious benefits of learning from Hayter and other artists in the informal workshop environment, Atelier 17 artists exhibited together annually at major galleries.⁶³ Forty-two women participated in these group shows to varying degrees (fig. 5-14). While the artists at the center of this chapter

⁶³ Despite Atelier 17's group shows being numbered as if they were annual events, there are several gaps with no known exhibition (e.g., 1946, 1948, 1950). See Appendix C for more details.

had some of the highest participation levels, just under half exhibited only once with Atelier 17, sometimes marking one of the only remaining records of the artist's careers.

The year after Atelier 17's MoMA exhibition, the workshop had its tenth group show at Willard Gallery (1945) where ten of the thirty-five exhibitors were women (app. D).⁶⁴ Reviews of the Willard show in *Art News* and *Art Digest* each spotlighted Fuller, and *Art Digest* also mentioned Lili Garafulic and Hope Manchester, though these two women were not as active in the New York studio.⁶⁵ Several long-term, productive relationships resulted from this group show between female artists and Marion Willard, the gallery's owner. Sue Fuller and Anne Ryan both contracted with Willard to handle their Atelier 17 prints. Ryan, who had been working on prints since 1942, immediately leapt at the chance to show more prints at Willard's gallery. Atelier 17's show was in late spring 1945, and Willard requested that Ryan send additional prints by the following October.⁶⁶ Willard Gallery included both Fuller and Ryan in its *Christmas Selections* show in December 1945.⁶⁷ Fuller, who was perpetually seeking to expand her network, remembered that Willard even employed an assistant to travel around the country selling Fuller's and other artists' prints.⁶⁸

Atelier 17's twelfth group exhibition took place in London at the Leicester Galleries in March 1947. Hayter wrote an extensive intro text, in which he singled out the efforts of Pennerton West (1913-1965) and Sheri Martinelli (1918-1996) for their biting

⁶⁴ *Tenth Exhibition: Prints by 35 Members of the Atelier 17 Group* (New York: Willard Gallery, 1945).

⁶⁵ Maude Riley, "Atelier 17," *Art Digest* 19 (June 1, 1945): 15; "Atelier 17 Group," *Art News* 44 (June 1945): 6.

⁶⁶ Betty Willis to Anne Ryan, ARP, reel 86, grid 804.

⁶⁷ *Christmas Selections* (New York: Willard Gallery, 1945), ARP, reel 88, series 6.

⁶⁸ Fuller, oral history.

out technique.⁶⁹ Seventeen of the exhibiting artists were women, including a couple unique exhibitors who do not appear in other Atelier 17 group shows (app. D). In addition to expanding Atelier 17's network to London, the show also circulated throughout England with the Arts Council.⁷⁰

Two years later in 1949, an exhibition at the Laurel Gallery in New York City was the most significant opportunity for women printmakers to show with Atelier 17. The show was the studio's biggest, both in terms of number of artists exhibiting and the quality of the published material. Twenty-eight artists from the show were women, representing the largest simultaneous showing of female printmakers from the studio and reflecting the crest of activity in postwar printmaking (app. D). The Laurel exhibition generated buzz in the art press for these women, with *Art News* and *Art Digest* mentioning a more diverse group of participating Atelier 17 members.⁷¹ Part of the increased press notice revolved around the show's major catalog published by Wittenborn Schultz.⁷² The catalog was generously illustrated, with some full-color illustration, and women's prints comprised eight of the twenty-seven illustrations.⁷³ The publisher's involvement secured greater distribution in the nation's art bookstores and institutional libraries and meant that, for the first time, Atelier 17's group exhibition reached a broader audience. Today, the catalogue is an important resource because it has detailed biographical information for participating artists. In short, the Laurel catalog

⁶⁹ Stanley William Hayter, *Atelier 17: New Etchings and Engravings by Members of the Group* (London: The Leicester Galleries, 1947), 9.

⁷⁰ "Atelier 17 in London," *Art News* 46 (May 1947): 10.

⁷¹ Women mentioned were Margaret Cilento, Fuller, West, Anne Wienholt, and Madeleine Wormser. See "Stanley William Hayter's Atelier 17 at Laurel," *Art News* 48 (March 1949): 45; "Prints by Members of Atelier 17 at the Laurel Gallery," *Art Digest* 23 (March 15, 1949): 20.

⁷² See review of the "impressive" catalogue: "Atelier 17," *Print Collector's Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (March 1950): 69.

⁷³ Herbert Read et al., *Fourteenth Exhibition of Prints by Members of the Atelier 17 Group* (New York: Wittenborn, Schultz, Inc., 1949), 9, 11, 13, 19, 24, 25, 32, 33.

made it a very important time for women artists to be members of Atelier 17. The studio had additional shows in New York City, but none ever reached the magnitude of the Laurel Gallery exhibition.⁷⁴

14 Painter-Printmakers and Other Printmaking Groups

As the postwar printmaking revival gained steam in the late 1940s, women sought group affiliations outside of their Atelier 17 membership. Groups dedicated exclusively to avant-garde printmakers existed as early as 1945, but women did not play as dominant roles in them as they would by the 1950s. Vanguard, founded in 1945 by modernist architect Robert Vale Faro, counted Atelier 17 artists Hayter, Fuller, and Ryan as New York members and Francine Felsenthal (1922-2000) in Chicago.⁷⁵ The BKM gave Vanguard a show in 1946, which subsequently toured to several other institutions in the United States (app. F).⁷⁶ Jacques Seligmann Gallery supported several artists' groups in the late 1940s which followed the "so called 'modern' idiom"—in the words of Theresa Parker, director of the gallery's Contemporary American Department—but scarcely any women were members.⁷⁷ The Graphic Circle's membership (founded 1947) was entirely male even though Hayter was a member and knew women working at Atelier 17; the Printmakers (also founded 1947) had one non-Atelier 17 female artist, Hildegard Haas;

⁷⁴ *Atelier 17* (New York: Grace Borgenicht Gallery, 1951). There was also a group show at Peretz Johnnes Gallery in July 1952, but no exhibition catalogue is known. For more info, see Appendix D and "Atelier 17 Group," *Art Digest* 26 (July 1952): 19.

⁷⁵ For a list of initial members, see Vale Faro to Una Johnson (no date, ca. 1946), Exhibition Series: Vanguard, BKM-DPDP.

⁷⁶ "Vanguard Schedule," May 14, 1946, Exhibition Series: Vanguard, BKM-DPDP.

⁷⁷ Theresa Parker to Earl Sims (Indiana University Bookstore), October 13, 1950, JS&Co.

and the Painter-Printmakers (first show in 1950) included Fuller and Margaret Lowengrund, a non-Atelier 17 artist.⁷⁸

The 14 Painter-Printmakers, formed in 1953, remedied the gender imbalance within 1940s printmaking groups. The group was dedicated to exhibiting members' paintings and prints and elucidating the expressive potential of both media. Three women—Minna Citron, Worden Day and Jan Gelb—spearheaded the group's founding along with Boris Margo and John von Wicht (1888-1970).⁷⁹ Gelb, in particular, had a strong leadership role as secretary of 14 Painter-Printmakers, keeping a small archive about the group in her artist's papers. That these three women were in leadership positions combined with their strong connections to Atelier 17 likely influenced the additional selection of Sue Fuller, Alice Trumbull Mason, and Anne Ryan for charter membership.⁸⁰ As the group matured in the late-1950s, additional women printmakers from Atelier 17 were asked to exhibit as guest artists, such as Dorothy Dehner, Pennerton West, and Sari Dienes (1898-1992).⁸¹ Mason recognized the intrepidity of 14 Painter-Printmakers compared to the era's more conservative printmaking organizations, nicknaming it the "SAGA Arch-League."⁸²

⁷⁸ Theresa Parker to Earl Sims, October 13, 1950, JS&Co. Una Johnson identified the Painter-Printmakers as the "7 Painter-Printmakers" and included Margaret Lowengrund as a seventh member to Parker's list. See "Chronology of Important Exhibitions" in Una Johnson and John Gordon, *14 Painter-Printmakers* (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn Museum of Art, 1955).

⁷⁹ Organizing artists (Minna Citron, Worden Day, Jan Gelb, Boris Margo, John von Wicht) to prospective member (Josef Albers, Will Barnet, Sue Fuller, Alice Trumbull Mason, Gabor Peterdi, Karl Schrag, Louis Schanker, Anne Ryan, Kurt Seligmann), April 20, 1953, reel 998, grid 809, Jan Gelb and Boris Margo papers, 1922-1977, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution [henceforth cited as JG/BKM].

⁸⁰ After Ryan's death in 1954, the group elected Perle Fine to fill her spot. See meeting agenda, September 19, 1954, JG/BKM, reel 998, grid 778.

⁸¹ Press release for *Unique Impressions* at The Deitsch Gallery, March 8-26, 1960, ATM, reel 630, grid 642.

⁸² See Mason's handwritten note on meeting agenda for 14 Painter-Printmakers, January 19, 1959, ATM, reel 630, grid 382.

The collective potential of this group for networking and circulating exhibitions became clear immediately. In the letter soliciting additional members, the initial five artists stated, “so far, we have had a rather breathtaking response to what was originally a merely congenial idea.”⁸³ 14 Painter-Printmakers got off to a strong start with two major gallery exhibitions in New York City, first with Stable Gallery in 1953 and second with Kraushaar Galleries in 1954 (app. F).⁸⁴ While both generated significant interest, the Kraushaar show produced two tangible results. First, the AFA circulated an exhibition of the 14 Painter-Printmakers within the United States (fig. 5-15).⁸⁵ Second, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA) accessioned a group of prints from the Kraushaar show.⁸⁶ This purchase included Gelb’s chromatic color print, *Hyaline Pavane*, one of her first abstractions after spending many years working in a surrealist and social realist style (fig. 5-16). Here, Gelb explored relief printing, seen in five spots of bright colored ink, which she probably achieved using cellocut, a technique her husband Boris Margo pioneered in the 1930s.

Because of both gallery shows, members of the 14 Painter-Printmakers became friendly with several important professional contacts. In late-November 1954, the group hosted a small party at Margo’s studio—a photograph documents the convivial soirée (fig. 5-17)—to socialize with this professional network: John B. Turner, art patron who funded the MMA purchase, Hyatt Mayor (MMA), Una Johnson (BKM), Karl Kup (NYPL), Bill Lieberman (MoMA), AFA staff members Tom Kesser and Virginia Fields,

⁸³ 14 Painter-Printmakers organizing letter, April 20, 1953.

⁸⁴ See invitation to *14 Painter-Printmakers* at Stable Gallery, ATM, reel 630, grid 534; *14 Painter-Printmakers* (New York: Kraushaar Galleries, 1954), ATM, reel 630, grids 546-47.

⁸⁵ “Fourteen Painter-Printmakers Itinerary,” exhibition #54-38, ATM, reel 630, grid 409.

⁸⁶ See MMA accession numbers 54.591.1-13. The museum did not buy a print by Kurt Seligmann.

and gallery directors Antoinette Kraushaar and Eleanor Ward of Stable Gallery.⁸⁷ Citron, for one, made an important connection with Mayor, who credited her with changing the course of the MMA's collection priorities: "I would like to have been able to tell you...how much the MMA is beholden to you for all that you have done for us. Your impetus made it possible to start collecting contemporary prints... You are, I think, the only outstanding print-maker who profoundly shaped museum collecting."⁸⁸ Citron must have been delighted to receive this glowing compliment from such an esteemed figure in the museum community.

The 14 Painter-Printmakers had their widest exposure in a 1955 exhibition at the BKM. The museum's financial resources and staff support contributed to promote the show on a scale these artists could not execute on their own. The museum provided each artist with fifty invitations to the show's opening reception for distribution as they chose, and the museum itself mailed an additional 2,500 invitations to its patrons and institutional contacts.⁸⁹ From this media blast, approximately 435 people attended the black-tie preview (fig. 5-18).⁹⁰ The museum also produced a substantial catalogue for the exhibition, which like Atelier 17's Laurel Gallery show, had larger circulation than the small gallery brochures printed for the Stable and Kruashaar shows.

This group continued to have great success in disseminating members' graphic work throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s (app. F). The AFA sponsored another exhibition of 14 Painter-Printmakers in 1957, which began its traveling circuit at

⁸⁷ Invitation, November 11, 1954, JG/BKM, reel 998 grid 778.

⁸⁸ Hyatt Mayor to Citron, February 5, 1976, MCP, unmicrofilmed correspondence.

⁸⁹ "Report from October 13-31, 1955," Departmental administrative series, Reports (1952-63), BKM-DPDP.

⁹⁰ "Report from November 1955," Departmental administrative series, Reports (1952-63), BKM-DPDP.

Kraushaar before making its way across the United States.⁹¹ Gelb reached out to the American Embassy in Paris regarding having an exhibition of the group's work at its cultural center in 1959, which would later travel to the French provinces.⁹² The group had two final exhibitions in New York City before dissolving: *Unique Impressions* held at Peter Deitsch Gallery in 1960 and *Unique Images* at Joseph Grippi Gallery in 1963.⁹³ Through its ten-year history, 14 Painter-Printmakers served as an important channel for championing the cause of avant-garde printmaking and making the names of its members better known within the broader postwar art world.

Drawing on the small sample of women artists from Atelier 17, this chapter has only briefly touched on how and why modern prints circulated in the postwar period. The analysis of these individuals' connections through personal relationships, shared exhibitions, and group memberships demonstrate printmaking's significance to women modernists in the immediate postwar decade. These networking opportunities shaped printmaking into a focal point of female empowerment and consciousness before the feminist art movement of the 1960s. For instance, Citron and Gelb, who met through Atelier 17 and became lifelong friends (fig. 5-19), worked together in the early-1950s on a proto-feminist manuscript titled *Venus Through the Ages*, which examines women's representation in art from ancient sculptures of fertility goddesses to modern art.⁹⁴

⁹¹ "14 Painter-Printmakers," (New York: Kraushaar Galleries, 1957), ATM, reel 630, grids 565-6. Itinerary found in box 29, folder 57-32, American Federation of Arts records, 1895-1993 (bulk 1909-1969), Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

⁹² Darthea Speyer to Gelb, July 8, 1958, JG/BKM, reel 998, grid 587.

⁹³ See note 75 for Deitsch Gallery. *Unique Images* (New York: Joseph Grippi Gallery, 1963), ATM, reel 630, grid 593.

⁹⁴ Drafts of "Venus through the Ages" can be found in JG/BKM, reel 998, grids 421-482, and the artists' notes and clippings for "Venus" in un-microfilmed material from JG/BKM. See also "Venus has Three Heads," article/lecture/press release summarizing the artists' research process in MCP, reel 268, series 5.

Unraveling the web of postwar abstract printmaking strengthens understanding of the instrumental role women printmakers played in forming the nascent feminist art movement.

For context of Gelb's and Citron's pioneering feminist effort, see Chapter 8 of Daniel Belasco, "Between the Waves: Feminist Positions in American Art, 1949-1962" (PhD diss., New York University, 2008).

CONCLUSION

In 1972, first-generation feminist artist Mary Beth Edelman (b. 1933) created a collage entitled *Some Living American Women Artists*, in which she superimposed the faces of women artists onto a reproduction of Leonardo Da Vinci's *Last Supper* (fig. 6-1). Several women artists whose careers were jumpstarted at Atelier 17 surround Georgia O'Keeffe, who Edelman made the Christ figure. Louise Nevelson and Louise Bourgeois are both disciple figures to O'Keeffe's left side. Minna Citron appears in the margin surrounding the collage, at upper left, along with dozens of other female artists. Though Edelman has played down the significance of her selection—saying she did not personally know many of these artists—it is still quite significant that these three entered into Edelman's consideration. By the early 1970s, Nevelson and Bourgeois were already quite well known in the art world, and their stars continued to rise from this point onward towards their deaths in 1988 and 2011, respectively. Citron was a more interesting choice. After Atelier 17, she experimented actively with collage and incorporating found objects into her paintings. But, it was likely her continued engagement as an outspoken proponent of women's rights and equality for women artists that caught Edelman's attention.¹

¹ Citron mentored several young artists like Donna Marxer (b. 1934), who wrote several articles about Citron. See for example, Donna Marxer, "Me and Minna -- Memories of a Mentor," *Artwords: The Past II*, no. 1 (Fall 1993). Thank you to Marxer for meeting with me in March 2013 and sharing her memories.

Citron's inclusion, in particular, in this now-iconic work of feminist art signifies just how influential she and other artists from this generation were both for Abstract Expressionism and the development of the women's art movement only a decade later. Many art historians have spoken at length about the implications of Edelman's collage poster, and instead of rehashing this territory, I want to use it as a platform for considering the legacy of the women artists from Atelier 17's New York years on feminist art. Throughout its thematic chapters, this dissertation has highlighted Atelier 17's major effect on several aspects of women artists' professional and aesthetic growth. But, the workshop's influence does not end with these ninety-one women's careers. The innovations they made while at Atelier 17 contributed to and shaped tendencies in the art world in the second half of the twentieth century.

The great creative strides women artists took while experimenting with avant-garde printmaking at Atelier 17 would have lasting impacts on later generations of women artists. Coming to the studio either as complete novices or more experienced printmakers, women artists worked with techniques and tools that were often unfamiliar. Exploring these processes pushed women towards discovering latent aesthetic potential in their prints. One of the strongest legacies of Atelier 17 for women artists was the productive relationship they developed with impressing fabric textures into soft ground plates. Previous centuries of printmakers had mainly employed the tacky surface to trace drawings onto plates. By turning the technique's focus to textures like lace and other fabrics, women printmakers reinvigorated soft ground etching. They demonstrated that piecing together lace and fabric on the soft ground plate could imply more than their feminine crafting ability. Chapter Three showed many ways that women artists exploited

soft ground etching to create collages, express their emotions, or build geometric abstractions. By battling the gender-specific connotations of fabric, women printmakers of Atelier 17 blazed the trail for textiles to become powerful materials for feminist and postminimal art. Artists like Miriam Schapiro employed fabric with feminist intentions in her “femmage,” crafted from pieces of different textiles. These works drew attention to the anonymous plight of centuries of female artists and artisans whose quilts and other craft products failed to garner serious consideration. Soft ground etching at Atelier 17 did not singlehandedly transform fabric into a powerful and political aesthetic tool, but it certainly broke the ice in the midcentury art world.

Another major breakthrough that influenced later generations of women artists was the realization of three-dimensional effects through printmaking. After being exposed to the basics of printmaking through Hayter’s teaching methods, women artists of Atelier 17 were keen to explore the depths of copper plates and woodblocks. By wholeheartedly embracing the process of carving into these matrices, they challenged longstanding divisions within the art world between acceptable forms of “male” and “female” labor. The experience transformed the careers of several women artists who worked at Atelier 17 while in New York City. From Louise Nevelson and Louise Bourgeois who went on to become major sculptors of the twentieth century, to lesser-known artists like Worden Day, printmaking’s connection to sculpture catalyzed major career changes. As the twentieth century moved forward after Atelier 17 closed in 1955, the steps that the women at Atelier 17 had made into sculpture emboldened younger women artists to become sculptors—not just as a side interest but as the major focus of their artistic efforts. Female sculptors as diverse as Eva Hesse, Marisol, Alice Aycock,

and Jackie Winsor, just to name a few, have made major contributions to the field of sculpture. They have expanded the scale and the subject matter of sculpture and developed new materials and techniques for constructing their work.

Significantly, Atelier 17 also allowed women artists to engage with major themes of the New York School, which would have enduring impact on the Women's Art Movement. Learning printmaking directly from Hayter or second-hand through his pedagogy, women artists were exposed to the Surrealist-influence methods of making an automatic drawing on metal plates. This process allowed women artists to create deeply introspective abstractions, which penetrated into areas of their subconscious and voiced emotions that they may not have expressed openly before. Women printmakers of Atelier 17 in New York took many creative risks in search of spontaneous results and opened up new pathways of avant-garde expression in the graphic arts. Their actions and mark-making as printmakers directly mirror the trends of expressive abstraction in the postwar New York School. Artists like Louise Nevelson and Minna Citron, for example, tested new methods of aggressively cutting into their plates and novel ways of expressively inking and wiping their plates. Learning the technique of collaging textiles through soft ground etching spurred Anne Ryan to produce innovative collages, made by gluing tattered scraps of fabric, remnants of string, and torn pieces of handmade paper. All of these materials had strong personal resonances for Ryan, and critics overwhelmingly linked them to her femininity. Despite these women artists' attempts to convey their inner emotions through gestural and unfettered printmaking techniques, they often had difficult times—as Ryan did—finding receptive audiences to consider their prints as seriously as male artists of the New York School. The male-centric character of postwar modernism

and traditional gender norms at midcentury excluded these women from entering the limelight of the Abstract Expressionist generation.

The experience of working at Atelier 17 initiated the process for women artists of exploring their subconscious and personal emotions in collaborative settings.

Consciousness-raising—an integral part of the larger women's rights movement that directly impacted the formation of feminist art—descended from activities like the introspective printmaking techniques women artists practiced at Atelier 17. The subtextual discussions of the 1940s and 1950s became more overt in the 1960s and 1970s.

Consciousness-raising brought women artists together to talk about and find commonality in their shared experiences as women. The solidarity that consciousness-raising offered compelled women artists to address major challenges that faced women in society and the art world. Through these early years, projects like *Womanhouse* (1972) came to fruition.

This collaborative effort by students enrolled in the Feminist Art Program at the California Institute of the Arts transformed the rooms of a derelict Los Angeles home with their installations and performance pieces. Some rooms, like *Nuturant Kitchen* (fig. 6-2), pointedly called attention to women's attempts to separate their personal and motherly roles from their professional aspirations. This type of openly feminist artwork, which interrogated the very private depths of women's quotidian experience, could not have been possible without standing on the shoulders of women artists of Atelier 17. In the 1940s and 1950s, women artists began to mine the potential of their sub-conscious, and their successors the 1960s and 1970s openly realized these early aspirations.

In addition to expressing their emotions formally, the way Atelier 17 enabled women to gather together in a central place became a model for consciousness-raising

and feminist activism. Joining the Atelier 17 workshop in New York City and making avant-garde prints brought women artists together in many significant ways. At the most basic level, an artist's presence at the workshop generated new friendship and initiated important professional relationships. It fostered unprecedented collegiality and solidarity among women artists, who wanted to pursue modernist forms of expression. Although many were not ready to discuss gender discrimination in the art world with activist intentions or articulate feminist ideas about their art, the seeds were planted during these midcentury decades. While not happening until the late-1950s after Atelier 17's closure, women artists who had become friends at Atelier 17 sometimes gathered to discuss gender issues in the art world. Worden Day, for example, described a group meeting in 1957 to plan a comprehensive exhibition of living women artists. She, Minna Citron, Louise Nevelson, Joan Mitchell, and Ilse Getz, were present, among others. Unfortunately, nothing came out of this planning meeting because the prevailing uneasiness to stick out their necks in a masculine dominated milieu.² Yet, the anecdote reveals that the network of sisterhood was gaining momentum. These women artists of Atelier 17 were role models to younger artists of the Women's Art Movement, as the presence of Minna Citron, Louise Bourgeois, and Louise Nevelson in Mary Beth Edelman's collage demonstrates.

Many artists and areas still remain unexplored in this topic. Only eight women artists from Atelier 17 in New York comprised the core focus of this dissertation, even though plenty of others could have been featured. The list of artists mentioned in the

² Worden Day to Rosalyn Drexler, January 29, 1973, unmicrofilmed material, Worden Day Papers, 1940-1982, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

introduction, who supported this dissertation's arguments throughout, deserve more attention than I could properly give them with the time and resources available as a graduate student. Again, they are: Harriet Berger Nurkse, Margaret Balzer Cantieni, Christine Engler, Jan Gelb, Terry Haass, Fannie Hillsmith, Ruth Leaf, Helen Phillips, Doris Seidler, Pennerton West Marjean Kettunen Zegart. Many artists' names regrettably did not appear at all, despite the fantastic prints they completed while at Atelier 17, including Margaret Cilento, Ruth Cyril, Sherri Martinelli, Sylvia Wald, Anne Wienholt, and Ana Rosa de Ycaza. Furthermore, looking afield to other "cells" of activity at midcentury yields an even larger network that must factor into the story of women's engagement with and empowerment through modernist printmaking. For example, there is still much to learn about female artists who worked with screenprints and artists like Juliette Steele who lived in the San Francisco area and produced abstract and surrealist prints.

My hope is that this project spurs future scholars to concentrate their efforts on these pioneering printmakers of postwar modernism. Their prints are now widely available in museums across the United States, just waiting for closer examination. The connections between these women artists and their prints are ripe for further investigation and could open up further understanding of the prehistory behind the Women's Art Movement.

APPENDIX A:

List of Women Artists Working at Atelier 17 Between 1940 and 1955

This list, totaling ninety-one names, was compiled using a variety of sources. Primary among them was the appendix in Joann Moser's 1977 exhibition catalog about Atelier 17 that incorporated the names of fifty-one women artists. Many more have been identified through archival research in exhibitions catalogues, newspaper clippings, letters, and miscellaneous lists. Museum collections and conversations with artists' descendants have also shed light on several women who were not listed in the 1977 appendix. Below is a key to understanding these new additions. Any names without a specific notation was included in Moser's list.

- * Listed in the student ledger book, Allentown Art Museum, The Grippe Collection
- ◆ Name appears in the exhibition catalogue for or press coverage about an Atelier 17 group show
- + Ex-collection of a fellow Atelier 17 member
- ∞ Archival sources indicate Atelier 17 participation
- # Extant prints suggestive of Atelier 17 involvement

Ellen Abbey
 Irene "Fif" Aronson
 Lilly Ascher
 Pauline Astor *
 Margaret Balzer Cantieni
 Harriet Berger Nurkse
 Angela Bing *
 Isabel Bishop
 Nell Blaine ∞¹
 Grace Borgenicht Brandt
 Louise Bourgeois
 Cynthia Brandts
 Sylvia Carewe
 Hazel Charlstrom *
 Margaret Cilento
 Minna Citron
 Ruth Cyril
 Worden Day
 Dorothy Dehner

Sari Dienes
 Geta Driscoll *
 Virginia Dudley
 Christine Engler
 Dorothy Farber *
 Francine Felsenthal
 Gwyn Ferris * ◆
 Perle Fine
 Lyn Fletcher *
 Ruth Fortel *
 Teresa Fourpome
 Jean Eda Francksen
 Sue Fuller
 Lili/y Garafulic Yancovic ◆
 Jan Gelb
 Dorothy Gillespie ∞²
 Beatrice Gozzolo *
 Lois Hall *
 Terry Haass

Anita Heiman
 Fannie Hillsmith
 Mary Heinz #
 Eugenia Huneeus *
 Lotte Jacobi
 “Joan” +
 Margaret Jean Kettunen Zegart
 Dina Kevles Gustin Baker
 Rose Krevit *
 Ruth Leaf
 Alicia Bell Legg +
 Lily Lochner ♦
 Ryah Ludins (also spelled Ludens)
 Hope Manchester ♦
 Sherri Martinelli ♦
 Maria Martins
 Alice Trumbull Mason
 Emily Mason #³
 Agnes Karlin Mills ∞⁴
 Frances Mitchell Warden
 Norma Gloria Morgan
 Jean Morrison Becker
 Henrietta Mueller *
 Louise Nevelson
 Lillian Orloff
 Alda Ortley +
 Vevean (Vivian) Oviette

Charlotte Howard Porter *
 Joellen Peet
 Irene Rice Pereira
 Dolly Peretz *
 Helen Phillips
 Maureen Prathro *
 (Victoria) Lucia Quintero
 Rachel (Rena?) Rosenthal *
 Anne Ryan
 Marilyn Schmitt *
 Bess Schuyler
 Doris Falkoff Seidler
 Muriel Sharon *
 Elaine Stevens ♦
 Mary Thomas #
 Molly (Mollie) Tureske
 Sylvia Wald *
 Amy Waters (Watros?) *
 Sybella Weber
 Pennerton West
 Anne Wienholt
 Sara Winston
 Madeleine Wormser
 Catherine Yarrow ♦
 Ana Rosa de Ycaza
 Doris Yukelson

¹ Carolyn Harris, Nell Blaine’s partner, explained Blaine’s participation at Atelier 17 in a letter to David Acton, then serving as Curator of Prints, Drawings and Photography at the Worcester Art Museum, December 28, 1997, Worcester Art Museum department archives.

² Denise Greene, “Dorothy Gillespie: The Wonderment of Seeing,” *LINES from the League* (Fall 2013): 10. In October 2013, I confirmed her Gillespie’s participation with her son, Gary Israel.

³ When she was about fourteen or fifteen years old, Emily Mason accompanied her mother Alice Trumbull Mason to Atelier 17. There, she made her first prints, which served as illustrations for a story she had penned. For an image of *Untitled (from Escape)*, ca. 1946-47, see Christina Weyl, “Emily Mason: A Painterly Printmaker” in a forthcoming monograph about Emily Mason, University of New England Press.

⁴ See Agnes Karlin Mills, “Reminiscences of the W.P.A. Artists Projects,” from an unpublished book manuscript, which was shared with me by the artist’s daughter, Margret Mills-Thysen, September 4, 2013.

APPENDIX B

Individual Exhibitions

Minna Citron

Minna Citron: Special Exhibition

U.S. National Museum, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC: February 28-March 27, 1949 [The U.S. National Museum is now the National Museum of American History]

Prints included:

*Squid Under
Pier
Disillusion
Death of Beliefs
Monolithic
Imagery
Death of a
Mirror
Labyrinth
Treph
Dress Circle,
Carnegie Hall
Men Seldom
Make Passes
Construction
(Black)*

*Construction
(Blue and Green)
Way Thru the
Woods
Fetish I
Fetish II
Fetish III
Pigs
Whatever
Laning at Work
Laying the Bets
Buffeted
Concert
Colloquy
The Dealer
Sherman*

*As Tom Goes
Marching to War
Tom Comes
Home Again
Flight to
Tomorrow
Steacite
Diac
Marine
Amphytryon
Shattered
Monocle
Dancer
TVA Folio
Mime*

Citation: SEC

Minna Citron solo show, prints (exact title unknown)
Wittenborn Gallery, New York, NY: June 22-July 11, 1950

Prints included (incomplete list):

*Flowering Wilderness
Variant, 10
Amphytryon*

Citation: Minna Citron," *Art News* 52 (Summer 1953): 51.

The Graphic Work of Minna Citron

New School for Social Research, New York, NY: October 16-29, 1950

Prints included:

Construction I
Construction II
Whatever
Mime
Men Seldom
Make Passes
Shattered
Monocle
Death of a
Mirror
As Tom Comes
Home Again

Amphitryon
Labyrinth
Trepth
Monolithic
Imagery
Way Thru the
Woods
Incised Steatite
Marine
Squid Under
Pier
Disillusion

End of Beliefs
Rallentando
Flight to
Tomorrow
Diac
Genesis Eternal
Resurgo
Descendo
Mythical Mu
Frozen
It is Written
Monoprint

Citron '44-'54

Witte Museum, San Antonio: March 27-April 10, 1955

Prints included:

Budding Sea
Pier Head Winch
Monster in my
Garden
Frozen
Celtic Legend
Desert Ghost
Trepth
Fractured Time
Treasures of the
Night

Marine
Squid Under
Pier
Disillusion
End of Belief
Barrier Reef
Flight to
Tomorrow
Diac
On Chair On

Depth Beneath
Depth
Figure
Stillness of the
Ore
Doleur
Liberatrice
Composition in
Blue and Mauve

Citation: "Citron '44-'55," San Antonio: Witte Museum, 1955, MCP, reel 98, grids 561-564.

Worden Day

Worden Day: Special Exhibition

U.S. National Museum, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC: April 23-May 20, 1951

Prints included:

Delta Folk

Drought Moon

*The Glass
Cabinet
Strats
Affirmations of
Self
Primeval World
Runic Traces*

*Boundless, Still
World
Terra Incognita
Prima Vera
Incunabula
Ode to the
Barbario*

*Tumuli
Strata Beneath
the Sea
Burnt Ordinary
The Lone Hunter
Medallion*

Citation: SEC

United States Information Agency, Graphic Arts Program, 1968

Mandala V at American Embassy, Prague, Czech Republic (formerly
Czechoslovakia)
Prismatic Presences at American Embassy, India (city unknown)

Citation: "United States Information Agency: Graphic Arts Program, List no. 2,"
ATM, reel 630, grids 796-901.

Dorothy Dehner

Dorothy Dehner solo show, prints (exact title unknown)
Wittenborn Gallery, New York, NY: January 9-21, 1956

Prints included:
Things on Strings
Aerial to Infinity

Citation: "Dorothy Dehner," *Art News* 54 (Jan. 1956): 67.

Sue Fuller

Prints: Sue Fuller
Village Art Center, New York, NY: February 23-March 8, 1947

Prints included:
Rumor
Cacophony
Ancient Parable
Mosaic I
Mosaic IV
Mosaic III
Trio
Sailors Dream

Cock
*Lancelot &
Guinevere*
*The Emperor's
Jewels*
Concerto
Garden
The Heights

Tides of the City
Hen
King
Clown
Bird
Fancy Fowl
Spirit of the Sea
Knights

Protozoa
Snake
Zebra

Bat
Iquana
Tension

Woman with
Bird

Citation: SEC

Sue Fuller: Special Exhibition

U.S. National Museum, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC: October 27-November 23, 1947 [The U.S. National Museum is now the National Museum of American History]

Prints included:

Rumor
Cacophony
Ancient Parable
Mosaic I
Mosaic IV
Mosaic III
Trio
Sailors Dream
Cock
Lancelot &
Guinevere

The Emperor's
Jewels
Concerto
The Knight
The Heights
Hen
King
Clown
Young Bird
Fancy Fowl
Spirit of the Sea

Knights
Protozoa
Snake
Zebra
Bat
Tension
Marsh Bird
Tides of the City

Citation: SEC

Alice Trumbull Mason

Alice Trumbull Mason: Abstract Etchings [traveling exhibition to six venues]

University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY: October 1-27, 1951

State University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA : November 1-30, 1951

Black Mountain College, Black Mountain, NC: February 1-15, 1952

Little Gallery of the Albright Art School, Buffalo, NY: February 16-29, 1952

[The Albright Art School merged with the University at Buffalo in 1954]

Private gallery (unknown), Rochester, NY: March 5-31, 1952

Bennington College, Bennington, VT: April 25-May 6, 1952

Prints included:

Trinity
Penetration
Congruent Red
Transitive
Indicative
Displacement
Countervariation
Lyric Collusion

Meanderthal
Roturns
Interference of
Closed Forms
Ghostmark
White
Scaffolding
Intransitive

Ellipsis
Inverse
Congo
Surface Tension
Suspension
White Burden

Citation: ATM reel 630, grids 429-458; 517.

Alice Trumbull Mason: Colored Woodcuts (exact title unknown)
Wittenborn Gallery, New York, NY: (exact dates unknown) 1952

Unknown prints exhibited

Citation: Resume, ATM, reel 629, grid 242.

United States Information Agency, Graphic Arts Program, 1968

Deep Sound at American Embassy, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Citation: "United States Information Agency: Graphic Arts Program, List no. 2,"
ATM, reel 630, grids 796-901.

Louise Nevelson

Louise Nevelson: Etchings
Lotte Jacobi Gallery, New York, NY: January 5-23, 1954

Unknown etchings

Series 6: Scrapbook, Loose Pages, 1936-1966 (Box 5, Folder 35), Louise
Nevelson papers, circa 1903-1979, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian
Institution

Graphics by Louise Nevelson
Esther Stuttmann Galerie, New York, NY: March 5-28, 1958

Unknown etchings

Series 7: Books and Printed Materials (Box 11, Folder 18), Louise Nevelson
papers, circa 1903-1979, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

Anne Ryan

Anne Ryan: Oils and Engravings
Marquié Gallery, New York, NY: April 15-30, 1943

Unknown engravings

Citation: *Anne Ryan: Oils and Engravings* (New York, NY: Marquié Gallery, 1943), ARP, reel 88, series 6.

Anne Ryan: Woodcuts

Marquié Gallery, New York, NY: December 2-28, 1946

Prints included:

Tenements in a

Sea Town

Frightened Bird

The Pullet

Crucifixion

The Flight

Circus III

The Argument

Dancer

Helios

Girl in a Green

Cap

Lazarus

Lady with a

Flower

Monkey and

Lamp

The Green

Pitcher

Woman

Watching a Bird

Abstract III

Circus I

The Serpent

The Storm

Hercules

Bringing

Cerberus from

Hades

The official title and brochure for this exhibition indicate only woodcuts were included. But, in one of her notebooks, Ryan records the number of prints sent to Marquié during the months leading up to the exhibition. At one point, she states the December 1946 show had “100 prints (Woodcuts –Engravings).”

Citation: *Anne Ryan: Woodcuts* (New York, NY: Marquié Gallery, 1946), ARP, reel 88, series 6. See also “Notebook on Colored Woodcuts, 1945-51,” ARP, reel 88, series 4, no. 20.

Unknown group exhibition

Louisville Art Center Association, Louisville, KY: ca. 1947

Unknown prints included

Citation: Worden Day, letter to Anne Ryan, July 26 (n.d.), ARP, reel 87, grid 300.

October Exhibitions, Art Center Gallery

Stephens College, Columbia, MO: ca. 1947

Exhibiting artists included:

Anne Ryan

Citation: Worden Day, postcard to Anne Ryan (n.d.), ARP, reel 88, grid 643.

Unknown group exhibition

Memphis Academy of Art, Memphis, TN: March 6-31, 1947

Prints included:

Fantasia
Personal World
Woman Watching a Bird
Tenements
Orpheus
Jugglers

Citation: "Notebook on Colored Woodcuts, 1945-51," ARP, reel 88, series 4, no. 20.

Anne Ryan: Prints (exact title unknown)

Museum of the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI: September 1-30, 1947

Prints included:

<i>Obelisque</i>	<i>Personal World</i>	<i>Woman in a</i>
<i>Pastoral</i>	<i>Argument</i>	<i>Green Hat</i>
<i>Pullet</i>	<i>Pink Star</i>	<i>King and Queen</i>
<i>Message</i>	<i>Hercules</i>	<i>Green Pitcher</i>
<i>New Bird</i>	<i>In a Street</i>	<i>Frightened Bird</i>
<i>XXII</i>	<i>Dancer</i>	<i>Fairy Tale</i>
<i>Arabesque</i>	<i>Helios</i>	<i>In a Room</i>
<i>Capriccioso</i>	<i>Tenaments</i>	<i>Amazon</i>
<i>Oracle</i>	<i>Captive</i>	<i>Abstract XXX</i>
<i>Fantasia</i>	<i>Watching a Bird</i>	<i>Abstract X</i>
<i>Quest</i>	<i>Sleep</i>	<i>Abstract VIII</i>
<i>Mobile</i>	<i>Two Women</i>	<i>Window I</i>
<i>Prima Vera</i>		

Citation: "Notebook on Colored Woodcuts, 1945-51," ARP, reel 88, series 4, no. 20.

Anne Ryan: Prints

Philadelphia Art Alliance, Philadelphia, PA: December 9, 1946-January 5, 1947

Prints included:

<i>Frightened Bird</i>	<i>Woman of the</i>	<i>Flight</i>
<i>Woman with a</i>	<i>Inn</i>	<i>Virgin in the</i>
<i>Flower</i>	<i>Young Clown</i>	<i>Wood</i>
<i>Monkey and</i>	<i>Weathervane</i>	<i>The Argument</i>
<i>Lamp</i>	<i>Abstract II</i>	<i>King and Queen</i>
<i>Three Clowns</i>	<i>Abstract XIII</i>	<i>Two Figures</i>
<i>Jugglers</i>	<i>Abstract IX</i>	<i>Young Clown</i>
<i>Captive</i>	<i>Amazon</i>	<i>Helios</i>
<i>Tenements</i>	<i>Abstract III</i>	<i>In a Room</i>
<i>King</i>	<i>Boy and Colt</i>	<i>The Pink Star</i>
	<i>Fruit in a Tree</i>	

The Green
Pitcher
They Cast Lots
Two Women

Sleep
Woman
Watching a Bird
Hercules

Dancer
Personal World
The Window

Citation: "Notebook on Colored Woodcuts, 1945-51," ARP, reel 88, series 4, no. 20.

Anne Ryan: Prints

Benjamin Franklin Library, Mexico City: September 1-December 1, 1946

Prints included:

Landscape with
Figure
Woman
Undressing
Dancers Resting
In the Meadow
Spiders
Tame Unicorn
XV
Woman in Tears
Woman Afraid of
a Dog
Face
XX
Figure
Head
Morning Walk
Seated Woman
Dancer
Soldier
Standing Nude
Fabulous Sea
On the Shore
Abstract
Woman with a
Flower
Helios

Captive
Hercules
Two Women
In a Room
Pentacost
Lazarus
The Cast of Lots
Woman of the
Inn
The Flight
Crucifixion
Virgin in the
Wood
Monkey and
Lamp
Three Clowns
Young Clown
Jugglers
Message
King and Queen
Magician
Girl in a Green
Cap
The Pullet
Weathervane
New Bird
Amazon

Fish
Visit
Head of Young
Woman
Fruit in a Tree
Woman in a
Grove
Boy and Colt
Head (Pink and
Blue)
Sails
Serpent
Embrace
Frightened Bird
Green Pitcher
Storm
Woman
Watching a Bird
Woman with a
Flower
Sleep
Dancer
Monkey and
Lamp
Three Clowns

Citation: Jennie Mai Johnson, letter to Anne Ryan, September 13 (1946), ARP, reel 87, grids 44-45); "Notebook on Colored Woodcuts, 1945-51," ARP, reel 88, series 4, no. 20.

Anne Ryan: Prints (exact title unknown)

Berea College, Berea, KY: October 10-November 15, 1947

Unknown prints

Citation: Notebook on Colored Woodcuts, 1945-51," ARP, reel 88, series 4, no. 20.

Anne Ryan: Prints (exact title unknown)

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI: October 27-November 8, 1947

Unknown prints

Citation: Notebook on Colored Woodcuts, 1945-51," ARP, reel 88, series 4, no. 20.

Anne Ryan: Prints (exact title unknown)

Wesleyan College, Athens, TN: November 24-December 6, 1947

Unknown prints

Citation: Notebook on Colored Woodcuts, 1945-51," ARP, reel 88, series 4, no. 20.

Anne Ryan: Prints (exact title unknown)

Galerie Denise, Paris: August 1-31, 1947

Unknown prints

Citation: Notebook on Colored Woodcuts, 1945-51," ARP, reel 88, series 4, no. 20.

APPENDIX C

Print Annuals

* denotes prints that won purchase prizes

American Color Print Society

9th Annual Exhibition of the American Color Print Society
Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: March 12-31, 1948

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Men Seldom Make Passes* *

Citation: PCS, reel 4232, grid 489-90.

10th Annual Exhibition of the American Color Print Society
Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: March 11-13, 1949

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Death of a Mirror*

Citation: PCS, reel 4232, grid 449-50.

11th Annual Exhibition of the American Color Print Society
Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: March 10-31, 1950

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Squid Under Pier* *

Minna Citron, *Marine*

Citation: PCS, reel 4232, grid 537-8.

12th Annual Exhibition of the American Color Print Society
Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: March 5-23, 1951

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Mythical Mu*

Citation: PCS, reel 4232, grid 597-8.

14th Annual Exhibition of the American Color Print Society
Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: March 6-27, 1953

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Stillness of the Ore*

Citation: PCS, reel 4232, grid 678-9.

Boston Printmakers

Third Annual Exhibition
Paine Furniture Company, Boston, MA: May 18-June 3, 1950

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Trepth*

Minna Citron, *End of Beliefs*

Minna Citron, *Whatever **

Fifth Annual Exhibition
Symphony Hall, Boston, MA: November 9-December 2, 1951

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Douleur Liberatrice*

Seventh Annual Exhibition
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Boston, MA: September 26-October 24, 1954

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Barrier Reef*

Irene Aronson, *Danse Macabre*

Sari Dienes, *Two in One*

Eighth Annual Exhibition
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Boston, MA: December 4-31, 1955

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Monolithic Imagery*

Brooklyn Museum, National Print Annual Exhibitions

1st National Print Annual Exhibition

Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY: March 19-May 4, 1947

Prints included:

Margaret Balzer, *Quartet*
 Minna Citron, *Men Seldom Make Passes*
 Francine Felsenthal, *Portrait of John Scott*
 Perle Fine, *Deep of the Night, No. 1*
 Sue Fuller, *Woman with Bird*
 Jan Gelb, *Grief*
 Terry Haass, *Confidence*
 Fannie Hillsmith, *Composition*
 Ruth Leaf, *Twilight*
 Anne Ryan, *Fantasia* *
 Anne Ryan, *Pentecost*

The 1st Annual traveled to the following venues through the American Federation of Art:

Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR: October 12-November 2, 1947
 San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, CA: November 16-December 6, 1947
 Springfield Art Museum, Springfield, MA: January 25-February 14, 1948
 University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL: February 29-March 21, 1948
 Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, Kalamazoo, MI: April 4-25, 1948
 Museum, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI: July 1-21, 1948

Citation: Anne Marie Henle, letter to Una Johnson, 1 Dec. 1947, Scrapbook, 1st-9th National Print Exhibitions, BM-DPDP.

2nd National Print Annual Exhibition

Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY: March 23-May 24, 1948

Prints included:

Margaret Cilento, *Abstraction*
 Worden Day, *Primeval World*
 Christine Engler, *Gigantic Shell*
 Fannie Hillsmith, *Study, No. 5*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Indicative Displacement* *
 Anne Ryan, *In a Room* *
 Anne Ryan, *Two Figures*
 Anne Wienholt, *St. Jerome and the Lion*

3rd National Print Annual Exhibition

Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY: March 23-May 22, 1949

Prints included:

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Intransitive*
 Lily Ascher, *Angel of the Annunciation*
 Louise Bourgeois, *Hangings*
 Worden Day, *Runic Traces* *
 Ana Rosa de Ycaza, *Marruecos*
 Sari Dienes, *Insight*
 Sue Fuller, *Playing Ball*
 Terry Haass, *Man and Beasts*
 Fannie Hillsmith, *Interior in Pink*
 Anne Wienholt, *Rock Pippit* *
 Vevean Oviette, *Still Life* *
 Anne Ryan, *The Wine Glass*

4th National Print Annual Exhibition

Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY: March 22-May 21, 1950

Prints included:

Irene Aronson, *Circus Fun*
 Minna Citron, *Squid Under Pier*
 Ruth Cyril, *Catalyst*
 Worden Day, *Prima Vera* *
 Ana Rosa de Ycaza, *Black Bull*
 Christine Engler, *White Murex*
 Terry Haass, *Hymn to the Sea*
 Fannie Hillsmith, *The Persian Bottle*
 Marjean Kettunen, *Heavy Bird* *
 Ruth Leaf, *Orchard Street*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Ghostmark*
 Harriet Berger Nurske, *Figures in a Garden* *
 Vevean Oviette, *Head--A Study*
 Anne Ryan, *XXXIV*
 Pennerton West, *Morning Joys*
 Anne Wienholt, *Wind, Bird and other Northern Fauna* *

5th National Print Annual Exhibition

Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY: March 21-May 20, 1951

Prints included:

Worden Day, *Incubala*
 Terry Haass, *Reconstruction*
 Fannie Hillsmith, *Sack—1644*
 Marjean Kettunen, *Songs*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Inverse*
 Joellen Peet, *Vertical Image*
 Anne Ryan, *Capriccioso*
 Doris Seidler, *Forum*

Pennerton West, *Sulfa Worlds*

6th National Print Annual Exhibition

Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY: March 19-May 18, 1952

Prints included:

Worden Day, *Burnt Ordinary*

Worden Day, *Tumuli*

Terry Haass, *Open Mind*

Marjean Kettunen, *Color Forms No. 1*

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Lyric Collusion*

Vevean Oviette, *The Window*

Lucia Quintero, *Submarine Chamber*

Anne Ryan, *Mobile*

7th National Print Annual Exhibition

Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY: April 22-June 21, 1953

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Stillness* (§)

Worden Day, *Arcana II*

Dorothy Dehner, *Bird Machine I*

Sari Dienes, *Composition No. I* (§)

Terry Haass, *Oslafjord ** (§)

Marjean Kettunen, *Flowers to Bloom* (§)

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Twilight* (§)

(§) denotes prints which traveled under the joint auspices of the American Federation of Art (AFA), the National Gallery of Canada, and the Western Canada Art Circuit to the following venues:

J.B. Speed Museum, Louisville, KY: October 2-21, 1953

San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, CA: November 2-22, 1953

Tulane University, New Orleans, LA: January 3-24, 1954

Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH: February 8-March 1, 1954

Huntington Gallery, Huntington, WV: March 15-April 5, 1954

Washburn University, Topeka, KS : April 19-May 10, 1954

North Texas State College, Denton, TX: May 24-June 14, 1954

North Texas State College is now the University of North Texas

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario: July 1, 1954-1, 1955

Public Library, Regina, Saskatchewan: September 11-30, 1954

Brandon Art Club, Brandon, Manitoba: November 6-27, 1954

The Brandon Art Gallery exists today as the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba.

University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia: January 4-22, 1955

Arts Center of Greater Victoria, Vancouver, British Columbia: January 24-February 13, 1955

University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: February 20-March 13, 1955

Allied Arts Centre, Calgary, Alberta: March 25-14, 1955

Citation: Folder 53-16, American Federation of Arts records, 1895-1993, bulk 1909-1969, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

8th National Print Annual Exhibition

Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY: April 28-June 27, 1954

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Rocket*

Ruth Cyril, *Buried City*

Worden Day, *Arcana III*

Jan Gelb, *Of Dark Voices Singing*

Marjean Kettunen, *Landscape No. 4*

Alice Trumbull Mason, *The Starry Firmament*

Norma Morgan, *Granite Tor*

Louise Nevelson, *In the Jungle*

The 8th Annual traveled under the joint auspices of the AFA to the following venues:

Pomona College, Claremont, CA: September 29-October 20, 1954

Art Department, San Jose State College, San Jose, CA: November 1-22, 1954

Capri Theater, San Diego, CA: December 2-23, 1954

Museum of Art, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK: January 3-20, 1955

Iowa State Teacher's College, Cedar Falls, IA: February 12-March 5, 1955

Currently University of Northern Iowa

J.B. Speed Museum, Louisville, KY: March 15-April 5, 1955

Currently known as the Speed Art Museum

Atlanta Public Library, Atlanta, GA: May 30-June 20, 1955

Citation: "Eighth National Print Annual Itinerary," American Federation of the Arts, BM-DPDP.

9th National Print Annual Exhibition

Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY: April 27, 1955-June 26, 1954

Prints included:

Perle Fine, *Wide to the Wind* *

Vevean Oviette, *Aspiration*

The 9th Annual traveled under the joint auspices of the AFA to the following venues:

Akron Art Institute, Akron, OH: September 2-23, 1955

Currently known as the Akron Art Museum
 J.B. Speed Museum, Louisville, KY: October 1-22, 1955
 Currently known as the Speed Art Museum
 Eastern Illinois State, Charleston, IL: November 6-27, 1955
 Currently known as Eastern Illinois University
 Fort Wayne Art Museum, Fort Wayne, IN: January 8-29, 1956
 University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL: February 12-March 4, 1956
 City Art Museum, St. Louis, MO: March 18-April 18, 1956
 Currently known as the Saint Louis Art Museum
 Santa Monica Art Gallery, Santa Monica Public Library, Santa Monica, CA: May 2-23, 1956

Citation: Folder 55-20, American Federation of Arts records, 1895-1993, bulk 1909-1969, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

10th National Print Annual Exhibition

Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY: March 1-July 1, 1956

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Slip Stream*
 Worden Day, *Nunc Fluens* *
 Dorothy Dehner, *Aerial to Infinity*
 Terry Haass, *Lumière dans les Fenêtres*
 Harriet Berger Nurske, *Washing on the Roof*

The 10th Annual traveled under the joint auspices of the AFA to the following venues:

David Strawn Gallery, Art Association of Jacksonville, Jacksonville, IL: October 1-22, 1956
 State Teachers College, Towson, MD: November 3-23, 1956
 Now known as Towson University
 DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, MA : December 5-26, 1956
 Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY: January 7-27, 1957
 J.B. Speed Museum, Louisville, KY: February 7-28, 1957
 Currently known as the Speed Art Museum
 Wyoming Valley Art League, Wilkes-Barre, PA: March 13-April 3, 1957
 Washington University, Saint Louis, MO: April 16-May 7, 1957

Citation: Folder 57-32, American Federation of Arts records, 1895-1993, bulk 1909-1969, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

Dallas Print Society

4th Southwestern Exhibition of Prints and Drawings

Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX: January 21-February 18, 1951

Prints included:Cynthia Brandts, *Deserted House* *Cynthia Brandts, *Horses and Riders**6th Southwestern Exhibition of Prints and Drawings*

Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX: January 15-February 19, 1956

Prints included:Cynthia Brandts, *Whoa!***Library of Congress***1st National Exhibition of Prints*

Library of Congress, Washington, DC: May 1-July 1, 1943

Prints included:Harriet Berger Nurske, *New Jersey Gothic*Minna Citron, *Sheet Aluminum*Terry Haass, *Ruby**2nd National Exhibition of Prints*

Library of Congress, Washington, DC: May 1-July 1, 1944

Prints included:Harriet Berger Nurske, *Morning after Raiders*Harriet Berger Nurske, *Portrait*Louise Bourgeois, *Composition #2, Sunday Clothes*Minna Citron, *Phosphates*Virginia Dudley, *In Spring*Sue Fuller, *Cacophony**3rd National Exhibition of Prints*

Library of Congress, Washington, DC: May 1-July 1, 1945

Prints included:Worden Day, *Delta Folks*Worden Day, *The Glass Cabinet*Francine Felsenthal, *From Nantucket*Francine Felsenthal, *Saturday Night at Morang's*Sue Fuller, *The Heights*Helen Phillips, *Figure in Space*Anne Ryan, *The Spiders**4th National Exhibition of Prints*

Library of Congress, Washington, DC: May 1, 1946-August 1, 1945

Prints included:

Harriet Berger Nurske, *Mural*
 Harriet Berger Nurske, *Young Man at a Table*
 Minna Citron, *Construction*
 Francine Felsenthal, *Back End of a Walrus*
 Sue Fuller, *Spirit of the Sea*
 Terry Haass, *Ferdinand*
 Terry Haass, *Adromache*
 Ruth Leaf, *Tears* *
 Pennerton West, *The Fabulous*

5th National Exhibition of Prints

Library of Congress, Washington, DC: May 1-August 1, 1947

Prints included:

Sue Fuller, *Tension*
 Jan Gelb, *The Beast*
 Terry Haass, *Confidence*
 Ruth Leaf, *Twilight*

6th National Exhibition of Prints

Library of Congress, Washington, DC: May 15-August 15, 1948

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Trepth*
 Terry Haass, *Chamber Music*

7th National Exhibition of Prints

Library of Congress, Washington, DC: May 1-August 1, 1949

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Squid Under Pier*
 Christine Engler, *Circus*
 Sue Fuller, *Nightingale*
 Terry Haass, *Last Snow*
 Pennerton West, *In Action, Wonder Wide*
 Anne Wienholt, *The Owl and the Pussy Cat*

8th National Exhibition of Prints

Library of Congress, Washington, DC: April 24-September 1, 1950

Prints included:

Worden Day, *Prima Vera*
 Ruth Cyril, *Entropy*

Worden Day, *Prima Vera*
 Ruth Cyril, *Entropy*

9th National Exhibition of Prints

Library of Congress, Washington, DC: May 1-August 1, 1951

Prints included:

Norma Morgan, *Tired Travelers*

10th National Exhibition of Prints

Library of Congress, Washington, DC: May 1-August 1, 1952

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Chartreuse*

Ruth Cyril, *Au Desus de la Vie*

Christine Engler, *Dance of a Celestial Nymph*

Doris Seidler, *Luna Composition #2 – Landscape*

11th National Exhibition of Prints

Library of Congress, Washington, DC: May 1-August 1, 1953

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Stillness of the Ore*

Christine Engler, *Dance of the Worship of Arms*

Norma Morgan, *Moor Claimed*

Doris Seidler, *Daedalian Theme #3*

12th National Exhibition of Prints

Library of Congress, Washington, DC: May 1-August 1, 1954

Prints included:

Lily Ascher, *Quartet in D Major*

13th National Exhibition of Prints

Library of Congress, Washington, DC: May 1-September 1, 1955

Prints included:

Irene Aronson, *L'Opéra*

Norma Morgan, *Granite Tor*

Norma Morgan, *Moorland Haven*

Northwest Printmakers

Northwest Printmakers, *17th Annual Exhibition*

Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA: March 7-April 1, 1945

Prints included:

Worden Day, *The Glass Cabinet*

Northwest Printmakers, *18th Annual Exhibition*

Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA: March 6-April 7, 1946

Prints included:

Sue Fuller, *Garden*

Sue Fuller, *Hen* *

Northwest Printmakers, *19th Annual Exhibition*

Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA: March 5-April 6, 1947

Prints included:

Margaret Balzer, *Quartet*

Minna Citron, *Death of a Mirror*

Francine Felsenthal, *A. Picard Examining his Universe in a Bathtub*

Sue Fuller, *Young Bird*

Sue Fuller, *Cacophony*

Pennerton West, *Eclipse*

Northwest Printmakers, *20th Annual Exhibition*

Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA: March 10-April 4, 1948

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Trepth*

Sue Fuller, *Bat*

Northwest Printmakers, *21st Annual Exhibition*

Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA: March 9-April 3, 1949

Prints included:

Worden Day, *Runic Traces*

Minna Citron, *Diac*

Minna Citron, *Rallentando*

Sue Fuller, *Little Girl Jumping Rope*

Northwest Printmakers, *22nd Annual Exhibition*

Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA: March 8-April 2, 1950

Prints included:

Worden Day, *Medallion*

Worden Day, *Prima Vera*

Northwest Printmakers, *23rd Annual Exhibition*

Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA: March 7-April 4, 1951

Prints included:

Sue Fuller, *New York, New York!*

Northwest Printmakers, 24th Annual Exhibition

Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA: March 5-April 6, 1952

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Squid Under Pier*

Northwest Printmakers, 25th Annual Exhibition

Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA: March 4-April 5, 1953

Prints included:

Doris Seidler, *Guna Comp #3—City*

Northwest Printmakers, 26th Annual Exhibition

Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA: March 10-April 4, 1954

Prints included:

Ruth Cyril, *Le Sol Attendait*

Jan Gelb, *Forsaken Idol*

Dorothy Dehner, *Bird Machine #2*

Philadelphia Print Club

Etching and Engraving Annuals

19th Annual Exhibition of American Etching

Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: April 13-29, 1942

Prints included:

Minna Citron, Sherman

Citation: PCS, reel 4232, grid 196-7.

20th Annual Exhibition of Etchings

Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: April 1-30, 1943

Prints included:

Louise Bourgeois, *Sunday Clothes*

Citation: PCS, reel 4232, grid 237.

21st Annual Exhibition of Etchings

Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: April 1-30, 1944

Prints included:

Worden Day, *Drought Moon* *

Sue Fuller, *Lancelot and Guinevere* *

Citation: PCS, reel 4232, grid 258.

22nd Annual Exhibition of Etching

Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: April 1-30, 1945

Prints included:

Ryah Ludins, *Strafing*

Anne Ryan, *In the Meadow*

Sue Fuller, *Mosaic*

Citation: PCS, reel 4232, grid 299.

23rd Annual Exhibition of American Etching

Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: April 1-30, 1945

Prints included:

Sue Fuller, *Trio*

Sue Fuller, *Sailor's Dream*

Sue Fuller, *Hen*

Frances Mitchell, *End of the World* *

Sherry Martinelli, *Mother Kite and Little Girl Kite*

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Labyrinth of Closed Forms* *

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Interference of Closed Forms* *

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Orientation of Closed Forms* *

Anne Ryan, *Pegasus I*

Anne Ryan, *Pegasus II*

24th Annual Exhibition of American Etching

Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: April 8-29, 1947

Prints included:

Christine Engler, *Gigantic Shell* *

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Surface Tension*

Frances Mitchell, *Crucifixion*

25th Annual Exhibition of Etching

Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: April 9-30, 1948

Prints included:

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Meanderthal Roturns*
 Harriet Berger Nurske, *Figures in a Garden* *
 Anne Wienholt, *Nativity*
 Anne Wienholt, *St. Jerome and the Lion*

26th Annual Exhibition of Etching

Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: April 8-29, 1949

Prints included:

Ellen Abbey, *Annunciation*
 Minna Citron, *Squid Under Pier*
 Sue Fuller, *Little Girl Jumping Rope*
 Sue Fuller, *Playing Ball* *
 Pennerton West, *Eskootal*

27th Annual Exhibition of Etching and Engraving

Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: April 10-28, 1950

Prints included:

Worden Day, *Terra Incognita* *

28th Annual Exhibition of Etching

Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: April 2-20, 1951

Prints included:

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Congo*

29th Annual Exhibition of Etching and Engraving

Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: April 4-May 25, 1952

Prints included:

Doris Seidler, *Luna Composition No. 3—City* *
 Ruth Cyril, *L'Univers*

30th Annual Exhibition of Etching

Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: April 6-24, 1953

Exhibiting artists included:

Alice Trumbull Mason

31st Annual Exhibition of Etching

Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: April 2-23, 1954

Prints included:

Terry Haass, *Gota Alv* *
 Terry Haass, *Gare du Norde* *

Worden Day, *Arcana III*

32nd Annual Exhibition of Etching and Engraving
Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: April 1-25, 1955

Prints included:
Norma Morgan, *Granite Tor* *

Woodblock Annuals

19th Annual Exhibition of American Wood Engravings, Woodcuts and Block Prints
Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: February 1-28, 1945

Prints included:
Alicia Bell Legg, *Pat*

Citation: PCS, reel 4232, grid 296.

20th Annual Exhibition of American Wood Engravings, Woodcuts and Block Prints
Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: February 15-March 8, 1946

Prints included:
Anne Ryan, *Fruit on Green Cloth* *
Anne Ryan, *Monkey and the Lamp*

21st Annual Exhibition of American Wood Engravings Woodcuts and Block Prints
Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: February 7-28, 1947

Prints included:
Anne Ryan, *Orpheus*
Anne Ryan, *Primavera*

23rd Annual Exhibition of Woodcuts and Wood Engravings
Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: February 8-25, 1949

Prints included:
Fannie Hillsmith, *Interior in Pink*

27th Annual Exhibition of Woodcut and Wood Engravings
Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: February 4-25, 1953

Prints included:
Worden Day, *Marginal Peripheries*

28th Annual Exhibition of Woodcuts, Wood Engravings and Block Prints
Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: February 5-26, 1954

Exhibiting artists included:
Sari Dienes

29th Annual Exhibition of Wood Engravings and Woodcuts
Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: February 4-25, 1955

Exhibiting artists included:
Worden Day

Miscellaneous exhibitions

Members of the Print Club Workshop
Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: 1946 (dates unknown)

Prints included:
Jean Francksen, *Bouquet*

Fortieth Anniversary Exhibition
Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: May 4-June 1, 1955

Prints included:
Sue Fuller, *Ball Player*

The Printmakers of Southern California

First National Exhibition of Prints
University of Southern California, Department of Fine Arts, Los Angeles, CA: May 1-25, 1952

Prints included:
Irene Aronson, *Le Cirque II*
Minna Citron, *Marine*
Alice Trumbull Mason, *Inverse*
Doris Seidler, *Luna Composition 32 – City*

Second National Exhibition of Prints
University of Southern California, Department of Fine Arts, Los Angeles, CA: April 5-May 3, 1953

Prints included:
Minna Citron, *Stillness of the Ore*
Alice Trumbull Mason, *Dactyl*
Louise Nevelson, *Majesty*
Doris Seidler, *Daedalian Theme, No. 4*

Third National Exhibition of Prints

University of Southern California, Department of Fine Arts, Los Angeles, CA: June 1-30, 1954

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Stillness*

Minna Citron, *Flowering Wilderness*

Doris Seidler, *Shore Forms*

Society of American Graphic Artists (note name changes)Society of American Etchers, 25th *Annual Exhibition*

National Arts Club, New York, NY: December 2-28, 1940

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Staten Island Ferry*

Society of American Etchers, 26th *Annual Exhibition*

National Academy of Design, New York, NY: February 11-28, 1942

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Lady with Program*

Minna Citron, *Flags*

Society of American Etchers, 27th *Annual Exhibition*

National Academy of Design, New York, NY: September 1-November 1, 1942

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Sherman*

Minna Citron, *Nude*

Minna Citron, *Everything's Upside Down*

Minna Citron, *Tom Goes Marching to War*

Virginia Dudley, *Sharecropper*

Virginia Dudley, *East Side*

Society of American Etchers, 28th *Annual Exhibition*

National Academy of Design, New York, NY: November 17-December 8, 1943

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Lady with Program*

Minna Citron, *Heifer*

Minna Citron, *Dealer*

Minna Citron, *Aluminum Sheets, No. 2*

Society of American Etchers, 29th Annual Exhibition
National Academy of Design, New York, NY: November 10-December 5, 1944

Prints included:

Harriet Berger Nurske, *The Neighbor*
Christine Engler, *Madonna and Child*
Perle Fine, *Carousel*
Sue Fuller, *Cock*
Sue Fuller, *Mosaic*

Society of American Etchers, 30th Annual Exhibition
National Academy of Design, New York, NY: October 17-November 7, 1945

Prints included:

Harriet Berger Nurske, *Child*
Minna Citron, *Construction*
Minna Citron, *Whatever*
Christine Engler, *Two Horses*
Christine Engler, *Christmas Eve*
Sue Fuller, *Mosaic #IV*
Sue Fuller, *Lancelot and Guinevere*
Sue Fuller, *Tides of the City*
Sue Fuller, *Emperor's Jewels*
Ryah Ludins, *Bombing*

Society of American Etchers, 31st Annual Exhibition
National Academy of Design, New York, NY: November 12-December 3, 1946

Prints included:

Ellen Abbey, *Scattered Journey*
Harriet Berger Nurske, *Tiger*
Minna Citron, *Men Seldom Make Passes*
Minna Citron, *Death of a Mirror*
Minna Citron, *Shattered Monocle*
Christine Engler, *Classic Grandeur*
Perle Fine, *Calm After Storm*
Perle Fine, *Omnipotent One*
Perle Fine, *Weathervane*
Sue Fuller, *King*
Sue Fuller, *Knights*
Sue Fuller, *Bird*
Alice Trumbull Mason, *White Scaffolding*
Alice Trumbull Mason, *Suspension*
Frances Mitchell, *End of the Day*
Frances Mitchell, *Crucifixion*
Frances Mitchell, *End of the World*

Pennerton West, *The Fabulous*

Society of American Graphic Artists, Society of American Etchers, Gravers,
Lithographers, and Woodcutters, 32nd *Annual Exhibition*
National Academy of Design, New York, NY: November 12-December 3, 1947

Prints included:

Lily Ascher, *Sea Dragon*
Lily Ascher, *Flame*
Minna Citron, *Amphitryon*
Christine Engler, *Gigantic Shell*
Christine Engler, *The Sheltering Arm*
Jean Francksen, *Departure*
Sue Fuller, *Zebra*
Sue Fuller, *Bat*
Alicia Bell Legg, *Objects*
Alicia Bell Legg, *Buildings*
Alice Trumbull Mason, *White Burden*
Alice Trumbull Mason, *Surface Tension*
Lucia Quintero, *Rhythmic Roses*
Anne Ryan, *Frightened Bird*
Anne Ryan, *Arabesque*

Society of American Etchers, Gravers, Lithographers, and Woodcutters, 33rd *Annual Exhibition*
National Academy of Design, New York, NY: November 5-18, 1948

Prints included:

Lily Ascher, *Angel of the Annunciation*
Lily Ascher, *Fireworks*
Minna Citron, *Treph*
Christine Engler, *White Murex*
Sue Fuller, *Nightengale*
Sue Fuller, *The Sorceress*
Terry Haass, *Relations of Instruments*
Alice Trumbull Mason, *Meanderthal Roturns*
Alice Trumbull Mason, *Penetration*
Pennerton West, *Color Print*
Anne Wienholt, *The Owl and the Pussy-Cat*
Anne Wienholt, *The English Child*

Society of American Etchers, Gravers, Lithographers, and Woodcutters, 34th *Annual Exhibition*
Kennedy and Company, New York, NY: February 2-28, 1950

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Squid Under Pier*
 Worden Day, *Primavera*
 Christine Engler, *Circus*
 Marjean Kettunen, *Beginning*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Ghostmark*
 Sue Fuller, *Bonnie Prince Charlie*

Society of American Etchers, Gravers, Lithographers, and Woodcutters, *35th Annual Exhibition*

Kennedy and Company , New York, NY: February 1-28, 1951

Prints included:

Lily Ascher, *Cassiopeia*
 Minna Citron, *Flight to Tomorrow*
 Christine Engler, *Clowns*
 Sue Fuller, *New York, New York!*
 Jan Gelb, *Of Fire and Water **
 Terry Haass, *Breaking the Vicious Circle*
 Doris Seidler, *Daughters of Wodan*

Society of American Graphic Artists, *36th Annual Exhibition*

Kennedy and Company , New York, NY: January 31-February 29, 1952

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Doleaur Liberatrice*
 Christine Engler, *Dance of a Celestial Nymph*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Inverse*

Society of American Graphic Artists, *37th Annual Exhibition*

Kennedy and Company , New York, NY: February 5-28, 1953

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Stillness of the Ore*
 Christine Engler, *Dance of the Worship of Arms*
 Sue Fuller, *Catch Me a Planet*

Society of American Graphic Artists, *38th Annual Exhibition*

Kennedy and Company , New York, NY: February 4-27, 1954

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Flowering Wilderness*
 Christine Engler, *Snake Charmer, Shankar*

Society of American Graphic Artists, *39th Annual Exhibition*

Kennedy and Company , New York, NY: February 3-26, 1955

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Barrier Reef*
 Christine Engler, *Bird of Evil Omen*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Tidal Depths on Sekishu*
 Norma Morgan, *Moor Lodge*
 Doris Seidler, *Aftermath*

Society of American Graphic Artists, *40th Annual Exhibition*
 Kennedy and Company, New York, NY: 1956 (dates unknown)

Prints included:

Irene Aronson, *L'Opera*
 Minna Citron, *Variation on a Linear Pattern*
 Minna Citron, *Miniature*
 Worden Day, *The Burning Bush*
 Dorothy Dehner, *Aerial to Infinity*
 Christine Engler, *Dancer of Spain*
 Jan Gelb, *When the Sun Dies*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Laughter*
 Norma Morgan, *David in the Wilderness*
 Doris Seidler, *Fetish*

University of Minnesota Annuals*First National Print Annual Exhibition*

University Gallery, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN: December 6, 1950-
 January 19, 1951

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Squid Under Pier*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Transitive*

APPENDIX D

Atelier 17 Exhibitions

New Directions in Gravure: Hayter and Studio 17

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY: June 18 - October 8, 1944

Prints included:

Perle Fine, *Weathervane*

Perle Fine, *Calm after Storm*

Sue Fuller, *The Sailor's Dream*

Sue Fuller, *Cock*

Sue Fuller, *Mosaic*

Sue Fuller, *The Emperor's Jewels*

Sue Fuller, *The Emperor's Jewels* (plaster)

Sue Fuller, *The Connoisseur*

Helen Phillips, *Figure in Space*

Anne Ryan, *Centaur*

Catherine Yarrow, *Head*

The show traveled to the following locations:

Cincinnati Modern Art Society, Cincinnati, OH: December 2-16, 1944

Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD: January 4-25, 1945

St. Paul Gallery and School of Art, Minneapolis, MN: February 4-25, 1945

[The St. Paul Gallery and School of Art became the Minnesota Museum of American Art in 1992. The institution closed in 2009]

Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI: March 11-April 1, 1945

San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, CA: May 29-June 26, 1945

[The San Francisco Museum of Art is now known as the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art]

Fort Worth Art Association, Fort Worth, TX: September 1-25, 1945

Museum of the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI: November 4-25, 1945

Henry Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, WA: January 14-February 4, 1946

School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Boston, MA: February 18-March 11, 1946

Willard Straight Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY: March 25-April 15, 1946

Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY: May 18-June 8, 1946

Citation: "New Directions in Gravure – Hayter Studio 17" at MoMA Archives, CE 11.1.86.2.1.

Another version of *New Directions in Gravure* circulated to South America via the Inter-American Office. An itinerary has not yet been located.

Tenth Exhibition: Prints by 35 Members of Atelier 17 Group

Willard Gallery, New York, NY: May 15-June 2, 1945

Prints included:

Teresa Fourpome, *Branco e Negro*
 Sue Fuller, *Tides of the City*
 Lili Garafulic, *Cellista*
 Ryah Ludins, *Bombing*
 Hope Manchester, *The Poet*
 Maria Martins, *Dream*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Passage Tension*
 Lucia Quintero, *Arpa de Viento*
 Anne Ryan, *Women Undressing*
 Catherine Yarrow, *Three Witches*

Citation: "Tenth Exhibition: Prints by 35 Members of Atelier 17 Group," ATM, reel 630, grids 471-472.

Atelier 17: New Etchings and Engravings by Members of the Group

The Leicester Galleries, London: March 1-31, 1947

Prints included:

Ellen Abbey, *Scattered Journey*
 Minna Citron, *Shattered Monocle*
 Perle Fine, *Calm after Storm*
 Perle Fine, *With Abandon*
 Teresa Fourpome, *Branco e preto*
 Sue Fuller, *Tides of the City*
 Sue Fuller, *Lancelot and Guinevere*
 Ruth Leaf, *Tears*
 Ryah Ludins, *Bombing*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Suspension*
 Hope Manchester, *Dream*
 Sherry Martinelli, *Butterfly in Well*
 Frances Mitchell, *End of the World*

Harriet Berger Nurkse, *Mural*
 Lucia Quintero, *Totems at Night*
 Pennerton West, *On Such a Night*

Fourteenth Exhibition of Prints by Members of the Atelier 17 Group
 Laurel Gallery, New York, NY: March 14-April 1, 1949

Prints included:

Ellen Abbey, *Mnemosyne*
 Ellen Abbey, *Sun Spots*
 Lily Ascher, *The Dancer*
 Lily Ascher, *Lovers' Knit*
 Margaret Balzer, *Quartet*
 Harriet Berger Nurkse, *Figures in Garden*
 Harriet Berger Nurkse, *Figures*
 Louise Bourgeois, *Upon my word of honor, sir, I couldn't possibly do it here*
 Louise Bourgeois, *Looking at me sidewise, she said, "Will you sweep that room over? I can see some dust near the piano"*
 Margaret Cilento, *Fall of Icarus*
 Minna Citron, *Squid Under Pier*
 Minna Citron, *End of Beliefs*
 Minna Citron, *Marine*
 Ruth Cyril, *Between Wind and Water*
 Worden Day, *Boundless, Still World*
 Sari Dienes, *Insight*
 Francine Felsenthal, *Bathers*
 Sari Dienes, *Composition*
 Francine Felsenthal, *Child with Bubble Gum*
 Perle Fine, *Veiled Personage*
 Perle Fine, *Deep of the Night*
 Sue Fuller, *Playing Ball*
 Sue Fuller, *Marsh Bird*
 Sue Fuller, *Hen*
 Terry Haass, *Relations of Instruments*
 Fannie Hillsmith, *Study No. 5*
 Fannie Hillsmith, *Interior with Lamp*
 Marjean Kettunen, *Morass*
 Marjean Kettunen, *Solid Forms in Space*
 Ruth Leaf, *Twilight*
 Ruth Leaf, *Pray for Us*
 Hope Manchester, *Ophelia*
 Hope Manchester, *Seascape*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Surface Tension*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *White Scaffolding*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Indicative Displacement*
 Jean Morrison, *Interstices*

Lillian Orloff, *Bar Relief*
 Vevean Oviette, *Nue Assiese*
 Anne Ryan, *In the Meadow*
 Molly Tureske, *Floating*
 Pennerton West, *Eskootal*
 Pennerton West, *Eclipse*
 Pennerton West, *In Amber and Red*
 Anne Wienholt, *Wind Bird and Other Northern Fauna*
 Anne Wienholt, *Owl and the Pussy-Cat*
 Madelieine Wormser, *Two Ladies*
 Ana Rosa de Ycaza, *Marruecos*

Atelier 17

Grace Borgenicht Gallery, New York, NY: September 24-October 14, 1951

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Disillusion*, 2
 Ruth Cyril, *Tailspin*
 Worden Day, *Incubala*
 Christine Engler, *Dance of India*
 Terry Haass, *Projections*
 Anita Heiman, *Naturaja*
 Fannie Hillsmith, *Interior with Bottles*
 Marjean Kettunen, *Songs*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Transition*
 Norma Morgan, *Etched Symphony*
 Nina Negri, *Formes Etirés*
 Nina Negri, *Gravure Verte*
 Joellen Peet, *Vertical Image*
 Pennerton West, *Masaverde*
 Ana Rosa de Ycaza, *Atinieba*
 Ana Rosa de Ycaza, *Black Bull*

The Grace Borgenicht show traveled to the following locations (dates are unknown):

Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD
 Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN,
 Michigan State College, East Lansing, MI

Recent Prints from Atelier 17

Chapman Memorial Library Gallery, Milwaukee-Downer College, Milwaukee, WI:
 October 10-November 3, 1952

Exhibiting artists included

Minna Citron, print unknown

Worden Day, print unknown
Gwyn Ferris, *Subterranean*

Citation: Postcard announcement, AAM/GC.

Atelier 17

Peretz Johnnes Gallery, New York, NY: July 1-31, 1952

Exhibiting artists included (print tiles are unknown):

Norma Morgan
Joellen Peet
Fannie Hillsmith
Sari Dienes
Ruth Cyril
Irene Aronson

Citation: "Atelier 17 Group," *Art Digest*, v. 26 (July 1952): 19

Printmakers from Atelier 17

Highfield Gallery, Falmouth, MA: 1952

Exhibiting artists included:

Peter Grippe
Names of other artists are not known

Citation: AAM/GC

Selections from the Collection of Atelier 17, Selected by Lotte Jacobi

Lotte Jacobi Gallery, New York, NY: November 30-December 21, 1954 [??]

Exhibiting artists included:

Mar Jean Kettunen (referred to on the cover as Kett)
Other male printmakers include: Josef Hecht, Stanley William Hayter, Roger Vieillard, Pierre Courtin, Leo Katz, Gabor Peterdi

Note: 1954 is an estimate, based on Jacobi's interest in Atelier 17 and her recent show of Louise Nevelson's etchings in January 1954.

Citation: HPP

APPENDIX E

Museum And Gallery Exhibitions

Organized chronologically by date of first show (if multiple venues)

Modern American Color Etchings and Other Intaglio Prints

George Binet Gallery, New York, NY: December 18, 1950-January 12, 1951

Exhibiting artists included:

Minna Citron

Sue Fuller

Anita Heiman

Alice Trumbull Mason

Citation: ATM, reel 630, grid 502

Some American Prints, 1945-50

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY: July 3-September 13, 1951

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Way Through the Woods*

Ana Rosa de Ycaza, *A Tiniebla*

Sue Fuller, *Snake*

Anne Ryan, *The Captive*

New Expressions in Fine Printmaking

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY: September 15-December 23, 1952

Prints included:

Anne Ryan, *Fantasia*

Worden Day, *Incubala*

Worden Day, *Marginal Periphery*

Sue Fuller, *Hen* (1st state)

Sue Fuller, *Hen* (4th state)

Sue Fuller, *Hen* (preparatory lace collage)

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Indicative Displacement*

Anne Ryan, *Collage in White, Grey and Beige*

Anne Ryan, *Collage in Blue, Grey and Yellow*

The show traveled to the following European venues:

Municipal Museum of the Hague (Gemeentemuseum Den Haag) , Den Haag,
Netherlands: October 23-December 6, 1953
Kunsthaus, Zurich, Switzerland: May 1-31, 1954 (approximate dates)

American Water Colors, Drawings, and Prints

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY: December 5, 1952-January 25, 1953

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Squid Under Pier*

Worden Day, *Arcana*

Christine Engler, *Dance of the Worship of Arms*

Marjean Kettunen, *Fragments of Two Worlds*

Exhibition of Contemporary American Prints

Boston Public Library, Boston, MA: January 5-31, 1953

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *End of Beliefs*

Sue Fuller, *Knights*

Alice Trumbull Mason, *White Scaffolding*

Anne Ryan, *The Wine Glass*

The exhibition first went to the Petit Palais in Paris (June 2-29, 1949), after which several slightly different versions traveled extensively throughout Europe.

Version A:

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Inverse*

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Transitive*

Minna Citron, *Trepth*

Minna Citron, *Squid Under Pier*

Sue Fuller, *The Sorceress*

Sue Fuller, "*Bourgeois tendres*" (title unknown in English)

This show traveled to the following venues:

Les Peintres Graveurs Actuels Aux Etats-Unis, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris:
December 1-31, 1951.

Citation: ATM, reel 630, grids 649-50.

La Gravure Contemporaine Aux Etats-Unis, Musée des Beaux Arts, Lyon: ca.
1952

Citation: ATM, reel 630, grid 676.

L'Art de la Gravure aux Etats-Unis, Le Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen, Rouen:
1952,

Citation: ATM, reel 630, grids 520-21.

L'Art de la Gravure Aux Etats-Unis, Musée Municipal, St. Brieuc, France: May 1-31, 1956

Le Musée d'Art et d'Histoire may be the current name for the Musée Municipal, St. Brieuc

La Gravure Contemporaine Aux Etats-Unis, Musée Paul Dupuy, Toulouse, France: April 1-May 31, 1954

Arthur Heintzelman, postcard to Alice Trumbull Mason, 14 May 1954, ATM, reel 629, grids 501-2.

The show also went to Perpignan and Narbonne, France (exhibition venue and dates unknown)

Arthur Heintzelman, postcard to Alice Trumbull Mason, 14 May 1954, ATM, reel 629, grids 501-2.

Version B:

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Ghostmark*

This show traveled to the following venues:

Gravures Contemporaines Américaines, American Embassy in Paris: January 26-February 23, ca. 1953

Citation: Les Services des Relations Culturelles de l'Ambassade des Etats-Unis, "Gravures Contemporaines Américaines," Paris: 195?, ATM, reel 630, grids 489-490.

Version C:

Sue Fuller, *Knight*

Anne Ryan, *The Wine Glass*

This show traveled primarily in Germany as *Graphik aus den USA*. It went to Nuremberg, Berlin, Munich, Hamburg, Heidelberg, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, and Frankfurt (exhibition venue and dates unknown)

Citation: Arthur Heintzelman, "Exhibition of Contemporary American Prints," Boston: Boston Public Library, 1953; Office of the Land Commissioner for Wuerttemberg-Baden.

Version D:

Minna Citron, *Men Seldom Make Passes*

Worden Day, *Silographia*

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Three Elements*

This show traveled primarily in Italy as *Incisori Degli Stati Uniti*. It began at the Calografia Nazionale, Rome (now the Istituto Nazionale Per La Grafica) in approximately 1950-51. Subsequently it traveled to: Naples, Palermo, Florence, Bologna, Venice, Milan, Torino, Carrara.

Graphic Art Today

Mead Art Museum, Amherst, MA: April 22-May 17, 1953

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Stillness*

Christine Engler, *Horse*

Christine Engler, *Shellscape*

Louise Nevelson, *In the Forest*

Anne Ryan, *Fantasia*

Young American Printmakers

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY: November 25, 1953-January 31, 1954

Prints included:

Sue Fuller, *Hen*

This show traveled to the following European venues:

Salzburg Künstlerhaus, Salzburg, Austria: July 27-August 31, 1952

Neue Galerie, Linz, Austria: September 1-October 12, 1952

Sessession Gallerie, Vienna, Austria: October 18-November 15, 1952

Neue Galerie, Graz, Austria: December 1-30, 1952

AmerikaHaus, Berlin, Germany: January 1-February 28, 1953

American Graphic Arts

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY: December 15, 1953-October 18, 1954

Prints included:

Sue Fuller, *Xmas Card*

Minna Citron, *Squid Under Pier*

The Growth of a Print: A Selection of Contemporary Graphic Art, A Display of Its Techniques

Art Gallery, Douglass College, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ: March 4-22, 1957

Prints included:

Worden Day, *The Burning Bush*

Vevean Oviette, *La Joie*

Vevean Oviette, *Prehistorie*

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Inverse*

Citation: ATM, reel 630, grid 558.

Aspects de l'Art Contemporaine Aux États-Unis

École Municipale des Beaux Arts, Casablanca, Morocco: January 1-December 31, 1960

Prints included:

Dorothy Dehner, *River Landscape II*

Christine Engler, *Tiger*

Sue Fuller, *New York, New York!*

Terry Haass, *Forge du Diable*

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Cool Arch*

Norma Morgan, *Moor Claimed*

Citation: "Aspects de l'Art Contemporaine Aux États-Unis," exhibition brochure, ATM, reel 630, grids 625-631.

APPENDIX F:

Group Exhibitions

Vanguard

Vanguard, Exhibition of Prints by Members of Vanguard
Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia, PA: March 1-22, 1946

Prints included:

Sue Fuller, *The Tides of the City*

Francine Felsenthal, *August Picard Examining His Universe in a Bathtub*

Anne Ryan, *Frightened Bird*

Anne Ryan, *Juggler*

The show traveled to the following venues:

Cliff Dwellers, Chicago: May 1-31, 1946

Little Gallery, Springfield, MA: June 20-July 11, 1946

Olivet College, Olivet, MI: September 28-October 12, 1946

Brooklyn Museum of Art, November 6-December 15, 1946

Pasadena Art Institute, Pasadena, CA: January 14-February 15, 1947

Chicago Art Institute, Chicago, IL: March 1-May 31, 1947 [The Pasadena Art Institute is now the Norton Simon Museum]

7 Painter-Printmakers

7 Painter-Printmakers, Color Lithographs

Jacques Seligmann Gallery, New York, NY: December 10-16, 1950

Exhibiting artists included:

Sue Fuller

10 Painter-Printmakers

10 Well-Known Painters, Color Prints by 10 Well-Known Painters

Contemporaries Gallery, New York, NY: ca. 1951-52

Exhibiting artists included:

Sue Fuller

14 Painter-Printmakers

14 Painter-Printmakers

Stable Gallery, New York, NY: May 25-June 20, 1953

Exhibiting artists included:

Minna Citron

Worden Day

Sue Fuller

Jan Gelb

Alice Trumbull Mason

Anne Ryan

Citation: "14 Painter-Printmakers," Stable Gallery announcement, ATM, reel 630, grid 534.

14 Painter-Printmakers

Kraushaar Galleries, New York, NY: June 1-18, 1954

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Stillness of the Ore*

Minna Citron, *Disillusion*

Worden Day, *Arcana #3*

Worden Day, *Arcana #4*

Sue Fuller, *New York, New York!*

Sue Fuller, *Playing Ball*

Jan Gelb, *Of Dark Voices Singing*

Jan Gelb, *Hyaline Pavane*

Alice Trumbull Mason, *Nine Triangles*

Alice Trumbull Mason, *White Burden*

Anne Ryan, *Fantasia*

Anne Ryan, *Frightened Bird*

The show traveled to the following venues through the American Federation of Art:

Atlanta Public Library, Atlanta, GA: September 11-October 2, 1954

Akron Art Institute, Akron, OH: October 10-31, 1954 [Currently known as the Akron Art Museum]

Indiana State Teacher's College, Terre Haute, IN: November 5-December 14, 1954 [Subsumed into Indiana State University]

Art Association of Richmond, Richmond, IN: January 3-31, 1955 [Currently known as the Richmond Art Museum]

Municipal Art Center, Long Beach, CA: February 27-April 3, 1955

George Peabody College, Nashville, TN: April 15-May 5, 1955

Citation: "Fourteen Painter-Printmakers Itinerary," Exhibition #54-38, ATM, reel 630, grid 409.

14 Painter-Printmakers

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY: December 16, 1955-January 9, 1956

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Genesis Eternal*
 Minna Citron, *Flowering Wilderness*
 Minna Citron, *Barrier Reef*
 Worden Day, *Primavera*
 Worden Day, *Marginal Peripheries*
 Worden Day, *The Burning Bush*
 Perle Fine, *Lair*
 Perle Fine, *Descent*
 Perle Fine, *Wide to the Wind*
 Sue Fuller, *Protazoa*
 Sue Fuller, *Young Bird*
 Sue Fuller, *Wayzata Leaves*
 Jan Gelb, *Radiant Webs*
 Jan Gelb, *When the Sun Dies*
 Jan Gelb, *Space Traveller*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Indicative Displacement*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Congo*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Tidal Depths*

14 Painter-Printmakers

Kraushaar Galleries, New York, NY: May 20-June 7, 1957

Prints included:

Minna Citron, *Spirit of War*
 Minna Citron, *Evocative Souvenir*
 Worden Day, *Prismatic Presences*
 Worden Day, *Now Flowing IV*
 Perle Fine, *Printed Collage #1*
 Perle Fine, *Printed Collage #3*
 Sue Fuller, *Interplanetary Travel*
 Sue Fuller, *Spring Bamboo*
 Jan Gelb, *Hommage to Phosphor*
 Jan Gelb, *Channels of Night*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *White Current*
 Alice Trumbull Mason, *Starry Firmament*

The show traveled to the following venues through the American Federation of Art:

Eastern Illinois State College, Charleston, IL: October 3-23, 1957
 Southwestern University, Georgetown, TX: November 6-25, 1957
 Dickinson State Teachers College, Dickinson, ND: December 5-25, 1957

University of Wichita, Wichita, KS: February 8-28, 1958
 Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX: March 14-April 12, 1958

Citations: "14 Painter-Printmakers," Kraushaar Galleries, exhibition brochure, ATM, reel 630, grid 565; Folder 57-32, American Federation of Arts records, 1895-1993, bulk 1909-1969, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Unique Impressions (14 Painter-Printmakers)
 Deitsch Gallery, New York, NY: March 8-26, 1960

Exhibiting artists included:

Minna Citron
 Worden Day
 Sue Fuller
 Jan Gelb
 Alice Trumbull Mason
 Perle Fine
 Pennerton West
 Dorothy Dehner
 Sari Dienes

Citation: "Unique Impressions," Deitsch Gallery press release, ATM, reel 630, grid 642.

Unique Images (14 Painter-Printmakers)
 Joseph Grippi Gallery, New York, NY: May 21-June 8, 1963

Exhibiting artists included:

Minna Citron
 Worden Day
 Sue Fuller
 Jan Gelb
 Alice Trumbull Mason
 Perle Fine

Citation: "Unique Images," invitation, Joseph Grippi Gallery, ATM, reel 630, grid 593.

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