

# GRAPHIC IMPRESSIONS

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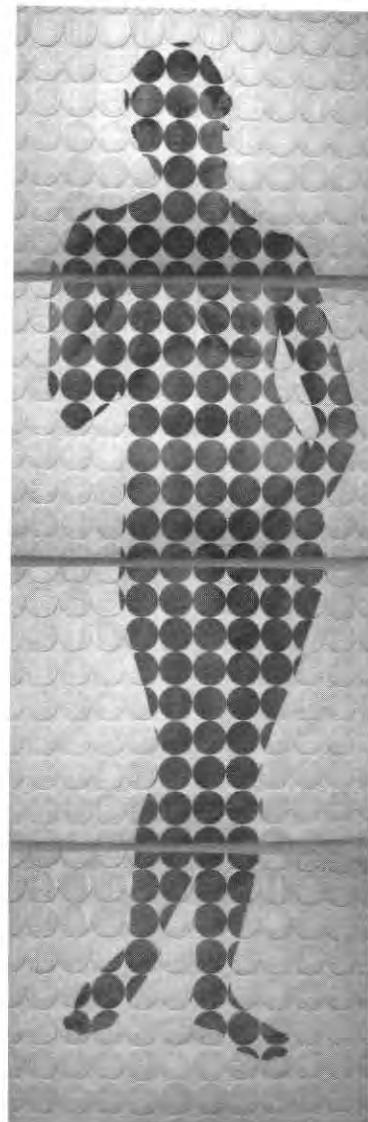
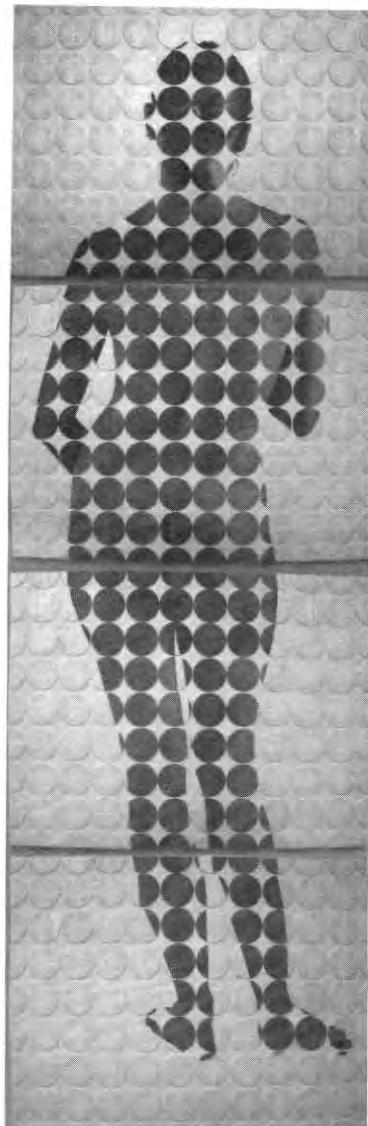
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Cynthia Thompson  
"Prone"  
photopolymer on  
communion wafers  
30" x 80" (2004)

**JUDITH BRODSKY: On the Occasion of  
Receiving the 2004 Southern Graphics  
Council "Printmaker Emeritus Award"**

*Zimmerli Museum, Rutgers, The State  
University of New Jersey, New Brunswick*

I HAD A BAD DREAM LAST NIGHT – that in becoming a printmaker emeritus I wouldn't be able to make any more prints. But as I look around at the illustrious group of which I have now become a member, I know everything will be all right. June, particularly,

is my model once more – she is planning a series of prints when she comes back to Rutgers in May– as she has been throughout so much of my life. If it wasn't for Tamarind, I would never have established the RCIPP. (You do know that we always say the RCIPP, because otherwise it would be the RCI pee pee) and before that, when I had my own shop, I named it Castle Howard Press – Castle Howard was the street I lived on, just as Tamarind is June's street. Nevertheless, as wonderful as it is to receive this award, it's also scary to move from being a person who gives out honors to one who is being honored. I've still got some lines to deliver on the stage before I leave it.

It is a delight, however, to be honored tonight by Southern Graphics Council. Not just because Southern Graphics Council is the largest and most significant printmaking membership organization in the world – even the universe unless we discover printmaker life on Mars, but because Greg Carter was a student of mine – actually my first graduate assistant when I came back to teaching after deaning and provosting. To see Greg in this role as President of the Graphics Council is really exciting and fulfilling for me.

One of my skills has been the ability to figure out who the wonderful people are – Greg is one of them as you all know and also Trish, Greg's wife, whom you all know too. I'm so proud that I knew immediately when I saw Trish's first print in my beginning etching class that she could do

*continued*

nothing but become an artist— and that started her on her career. I felt the same way when I first met Lynne. Marge Devon may still be mad at me for taking Lynne away from Tamarind, but the minute Lynne walked into my office and I took her for a ride around New Jersey to look at houses, I knew she was my successor. So tonight to be here where Greg gives me the Printmaker Emeritus Award at this incredible conference that Lynne and Barb have organized (Lynne picked Barb so I can't take any credit for that, but Lynne has the same gift for picking the right people) is an amazing experience for me. I can't thank you all enough.

When I took June around to see the wonderful print exhibitions that are up for this conference— the Rutgers Archives for Printmaking Studios here at Zimmerli, the exhibitions that Lynne, Catherine Bebout, and others have curated at Mason Gross, June said she felt obsolete. But that's what's wonderful about printmaking. Printmakers absorb new stuff all the time and turn all that new stuff into their materials and tools. That's particularly true in our era. Other than film and video, prints may be the ultimate expressions for our time— I'm not talking here about new techniques for their own sake, but rather how print techniques provide the opportunity for artists to deal with particular complications of our world. For me, the layering of prints is the perfect metaphor for expressing the complexities of our culture— terrorism against tragedy of blowing up innocent people, extreme poverty against extreme wealth, countries devastated by AIDS against countries where the life expectancies are surpassing any expectations, an esoteric high culture against hip-hop, the ideal of being thin against fat people of the real world— one could go on and on from the global to the frivolous.

I fell in love with prints years ago and I still love them. I feel free when I make prints. If I want to use text, I can. If I want to use the computer to scan images rather than drawing, I can. Obviously I mention those two devices because they're at the essence of



Judith Brodsky receiving award plaque from Greg Carter

the work of mine you see here tonight. This project started as an homage to my family. I didn't want them after they died to disappear into the black hole of being forgotten, the disappearing that happens once the generation that knew them also dies. But this installation isn't a documentary. I don't care so much about their statistics as I do about how to make them live again. And I did through the writing— anecdotes that I hope make them come alive for people who view the show. But it's also about my ethnic heritage— about being Jewish, about coming from an immigrant family that came to America to escape being killed in the pogroms in Eastern Europe in the late 19th century. It's also about being a girl. I don't want to be called a Jewish artist, but I do think of myself as a woman artist. I just happen to be using Jewish material in this one project, but being a woman artist shapes my entire work.

This may be a little serious for a celebratory evening, but you all deserve my seriousness. I wanted to show my respect and gratitude by talking about some of the things that mean the most to me. I'm thrilled to receive this award and I salute you all! Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

## 2004 SGC STUDENT FELLOWSHIPS

The Southern Graphics Council is proud to announce the first "SGC Student Fellowship Awards." These fellowships represent the ongoing effort of the Southern Graphics Council to enhance print education by providing various levels of support to students in research, communication, and visibility. Our congratulations go out to:

**Stephanie Dotson, MFA Candidate, Lamar Dodd School of Art, The University of Georgia, Athens**  
"SGC Graduate Student Fellowship" (\$1,000)

Stephanie will conduct research related to hand-felting in Merino wool for printed, shaped, dimensional objects in combination with cut and layered ornamental digital printmaking for large scale wall installations. Stephanie is currently in the UGA Studies Abroad Program in Cuba. She holds a BFA from Kansas City Art Institute and has received a "Graduate Student Research Grant," and a "Freeman Research Award" from the University of Georgia, an "Artist Residency" at Ox-Bow in Saugatuck, and a "First Place Award" at the Southworks Arts Festival in Athens, Georgia.

See Stephanie's work on the back cover of this issue—ed.

**Crystal Wagner, BFA student, Atlanta College of Art, Atlanta, Georgia**  
"SGC Undergraduate Student Fellowship" (\$500)

Crystal is an expert in the art of aquatint. As an undergraduate at ACA, she has distinguished herself with her complex black and white figurative intaglios. Her research will include the completion of a large-scale zinc-plate intaglio triptych, centering on the concept of imagination through the use of the circus as metaphor for the imagination. The figurative elements are contextualized with organic imagery, emphasizing man's connection with nature. Crystal holds an Associate of Arts degree (in Fine Arts) from Keystone College in LaPlume, Pennsylvania.

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The SGC Awards Steering Committee for Nominations is now soliciting the SGC membership for our 2005 awards. Please contact Yvonne Leonard, Awards Committee Chair for complete nomination guidelines before making nominations. [yleonard@meganet.net](mailto:yleonard@meganet.net)

### Printmaker Emeritus Award

Nominees for this award should be a senior printmaker, i.e., one whose career is well established. The candidate's primary area of artistic endeavor should be in the field of printmaking, papermaking or artist's books, whether as a practitioner, educator or administrator.

### Excellence in Teaching Printmaking Award

The SGC Excellence in Teaching Printmaking Award is awarded to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to teaching printmaking and has demonstrated excellence in his or her own creative work.

### Honorary Member of the Council Awards

Honorary Members of the Council are individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service to the Southern Graphics Council organization.

### SGC Student Fellowships

SGC Student Fellowships, \$1000 for a graduate student and \$500 for an undergraduate, are awarded to individuals who exhibit outstanding promise in the fine art practice of printmaking. Each institution may submit the name of one graduate and one undergraduate student candidate. In order to be considered, students and the institutional representative nominating them must be members in good standing.



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

### NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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APRIL KATZ  
SGC PRESIDENT

AS THE TIME APPROACHED for the start of the conference at Rutgers and my term as president was about to begin, I thought a lot about the role the Southern Graphics Council played in my life. In their 1994 book, *The Renaissance Print 1470 – 1550*, David Landau and Peter Marshall discuss the fact that this then new endeavor called printmaking did not fit easily into the traditional guild categories. Like carpenters and cabinet makers, some early printmakers planed and carved wood. Like metal smiths, printer/engravers etched and scribed lines into metal. Yet, our involvement with wood and metal didn't reflect our final products. In Basel, printmakers were included in the guild that focused on the creation of small, marketable objects with workers such as tapesters, glove makers and apothecaries but excluding goldsmiths, painters and sculptors. Most commonly however, printmakers were seen in a more conceptual light as makers of images with the magic Chuck Close alluded to and the content celebrated by David Kiehl and were absorbed into guilds that included painters, sculptors, map makers and book printers.

This backward glance speaks enormously of the richness of our endeavors that have grown even more complex. We now count among our members those who work with a variety of woods, metals, plastics, and of course paper. Some of us draw, some paint, others photograph and others manipulate digital files in order to generate the image. We roll, crank, wipe, burnish, and rub. The labels we

embrace and territories we navigate through continue to evolve.

So what of the question regarding the Southern Graphics Council's role in our lives? Through the annual conferences, the newsletter, web site and list serve SGC builds community for those passionate about printmaking. Our dialogues about the evolving processes and definitions of printmaking fire our enthusiasm and keep us engaged.

I encourage all members to become actively involved in our council. The board is currently involved in quite a few projects to expand what SGC does. You can volunteer to help with the web site or list serve, the archives, or the new 501(C)3 non-profit appendage. Plan an exhibit, write an article, propose a CAA panel (we are now an official affiliated society), organize an exchange folio, initiate a print auction to raise money for scholarships, or plan to host a conference. The more you put into the organization the more you'll get from it. Please share your ideas with the new board; we are eager to hear from you.

### SGC new web site: coming soon!

*Graphic Impressions* is published three times annually by the Southern Graphics Council. 1,700 copies are printed using Minion, Legacy, and Broadband typefaces on Mohawk Superfine paper. The newsletter is distributed to current members of the Council and related arts organizations.

Send membership inquiries and change of address to: Melissa Harshman, Lamar Dodd School of Art, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602 or email: mharshma@uga.edu. Deadlines for submissions are August 15, December 15, and April 15. Submissions for publication are accepted as space allows. Final content decisions are made by the editor. The views expressed by the contributors and editor do not necessarily reflect those of the Southern Graphics Council.

## COMMENTARY

### The Southern Graphics Council as a Gift Economy

by Beauvais Lyons

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

MY COLLEAGUE JEFF KOVAK from The University of Tennessee, Knoxville Department of Chemistry recently published an article in *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* (Fall/Winter 2002) titled "Gifts and Commodities in Science." Building on Lewis Hyde's seminal book *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* (Vintage Books, 1983) Kovak addresses some of the ethical questions that stem from our increasing commodification of scientific knowledge. In this essay I will apply some of the arguments Kovak makes about science to the field of printmaking, specifically the Southern Graphics Council.

Those who think the impulse to make art is "hard-wired" into our biology rather than being learned behavior perceive artistic talent as a gift. Hyde devotes a good portion of his book to this, citing the rapture of poets or the Aeolian harp. This is a perspective on the artist and creativity that stems from the Romantic tradition and expresses itself in the critical writings of Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867).

More interesting for me is Hyde's assertion that the concept of the gift should be extended to include the work of art after it leaves the artist's hand and becomes part of the external world. Drawing from anthropology, sociology, literary studies and economics, Hyde makes the case that the significance of art is independent of its market value. Hyde positions the work of art as part of two economies: a gift economy and a market economy. The two economies may be understood as the difference between "worth" (in a gift economy) and "value" (in a market economy). Hyde asserts that only the gift economy is essential, claiming that a work of art can survive without the market, but where there is no gift, there is no art.

In this context there is often a tension between the intrinsic worth of a work of art and its value in a market economy. A value-



SGC Open Portfolio session

driven market economy can have a negative impact on artistic worth. Art-buyers may appreciate the art or they may merely imitate the buying patterns of others. To "sell out" is double coded, meaning either success or complicity with a market, motivating an artist toward the production of work that has "value" rather than "worth."

As an example of a gift economy, Hyde cites the customs of the Massim, a people of the Trobriand Islands near the eastern tip of New Guinea. The Massim gift economy is founded on the ceremonial exchange of arm shells and necklaces, which are meant to circulate among individuals on different islands. For the Massim, wealth confers status and provides a measure of personal virtue, but possession is best expressed in the act of giving or sharing. Hyde's focus on gift giving in these economies defines an aspect of human response to extending the effect of the creative act.

Like the gift economy of the Massim, Kovak makes the case that scientific culture is part of an economy of based on "worth" rather than "value." The scientific gift economy is motivated by intellectual exchange to gain prestige among a group of peers. The gift economy in science is expressed through the journals and academic associations that define a given profession. Common events at many chemistry conferences are "poster" sessions, where attendees present their recent research in a table display. To foster a social environment, these events usually include an open or cash bar. This sounds like one of the open portfolio sessions at a printmaking conference, doesn't it? While the content is different, the American Chemical Society and

the Southern Graphics Council gift economies take similar forms.

Gift economies develop a sense of community and a set of dynamics for working within the group as well as rules for negotiating outside exchanges. Hyde distinguishes between work and labor. People do work by the hour, usually for money, which has economic value. People seem prompted to do labor by something beyond personal desire, something that has its own rhythms and rules and that discovers its fruits rather than predicts them. The labor of the artist and the scientist share a similar impulse to create something of worth that contributes to a gift economy.

However, Kovak makes the argument that science is increasingly motivated by a market economy, and seldom contributes in meaningful ways to fundamental scientific knowledge. He asserts that funded scientific research today is being dominated by the science of application rather than the science of discovery. We see this in the kinds of research private corporations fund, resulting in pressure on university scientists to patent and commercialize the results of their research. As this is happening, the work of science shifts from an open culture, with the free exchange of ideas to a culture of secretive independent research. The quest for fundamental understanding in science suffers as a result.

Kovak cites Donald Stokes's book *Pasteur's Quadrant*, in which Stokes claims that there is an overlap between science that quests for fundamental understanding and science that is "use-inspired." A good example is Louis Pasteur (1822-1895), who solved the mysteries of rabies, anthrax, chicken cholera, and silkworm diseases, and contributed to the development of the first vaccines. Pasteur also debunked the widely accepted myth of spontaneous generation, thereby setting the stage for modern biology and biochemistry. He described the scientific basis for fermentation, wine-making, and the brewing of beer. Pasteur's work gave birth to many branches of science, and he was responsible



SGC Open Portfolio session

for some of the most important theoretical concepts and practical applications of modern science.

In this regard, Kovak makes the case that science has two main sources, philosophy and craft, both of which contribute to furthering each other. Experimental science has roots in the crafts of tanning, metallurgy and the building of mechanical devices. The philosophy and craft of science are interconnected, as Kovak writes "science owes as much to the steam engine as the steam engine does to science." Like science, art has its own traditions of philosophy (theory) and craft (practice). Printmaking in particular is immersed in craft traditions. Indeed, the craft/practice side of printmaking is sometimes falsely used to claim that printmaking lacks a philosophical/theory dimension. Like Louis Pasteur, printmakers understand that philosophy and craft are not mutually exclusive, and can often inform one another.

The history of printmaking methods traces an evolution of proprietary techniques. Shortly after inventing lithography in 1798, Alois Senefelder took out patents on the process in Germany, France, England and elsewhere. Today most self-published prints use antique processes for their aesthetic worth rather than their market value. While self-published prints certainly have the capacity to be part of a market economy, art needs to retain its place in a gift economy to play a role in personal or societal growth. Only after it has successfully done this will art have any chance of having lasting market value.

Last year at the IMPACT Printmaking Conference in Cape Town, South Africa, John

Phillips of the London Print Studio made a case for the social value of printmaking. Drawing on the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's 1979 book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Routledge, 1984, translation by Richard Nice), Phillips claimed that printmaking has greater social capital than economic capital. Printmaking has a rich tradition of social and political commentary, and is often motivated by democratic ideals. In essence, Phillips encouraged printmakers to embrace the capacity of printmaking to be part of a gift economy.

The concept of the gift economy may also be applied to other aspects of the Southern Graphics Council. At our conference this year a new group of volunteers was elected to the SGC Board. These individuals, especially the president, vice-presidents, treasurer, and the editor of this newsletter make a significant investment of their time and personal resources to further the mission of our council. Their efforts are a significant part of our gift economy and merit our respect and praise. Likewise, those who host our conferences also play a significant role in our gift economy. It is noble to make art. It is an even greater thing to make art and facilitate a learning community of artist colleagues.

One reason the Southern Graphics Council has been so vibrant as an organization is that printmakers by nature and training are oriented towards the social role of art, towards gift economies. This is an intrinsic worth of the printed arts.

## Jeanet Steckler Dreskin Receives Governor's Award by Joe Sanders



The South Carolina Arts Commission awarded Jeanet Steckler Dreskin a "2004 Elizabeth O'Neill Verner Award," the official Governor's Award for the Arts. These annual awards recognize outstanding achievements and contributions to the arts in South Carolina, and are the highest honor the state gives in the arts. Ms. Dreskin's award was for "Lifetime Achievement."

Ms. Dreskin graduated from Tulane University and was the first person to earn a Master of Fine Arts Degree from Clemson University in 1973. She was instrumental in establishing the Museum School at the Greenville Museum of Art, serving as both director and teacher. She helped establish the Fine Arts Center of the School District of Greenville County and the South Carolina Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities. Her work is represented in major collections such as the National Museum of American Art at the Smithsonian. She recently had a retrospective of her work at the Greenville County Museum of Art.

Ms. Dreskin served the Southern Graphics Council as its first secretary/treasurer from 1974-1976, and treasurer from 1988-1990. In 1975 she hosted the annual SGC conference at the Museum School. Interestingly, the individual the Governor's Award for the Arts is named for, Elizabeth O'Neill Verner, was also a printmaker and a member of the Southern Graphics Council. Ms. Verner received the very first Southern Graphics Council Printmaker Emeritus Award in 1975.

We in the Southern Graphics Council salute Ms. Dreskin for her many achievements, for this particularly prestigious award, and for her many contributions and years of service as a volunteer and leader for our organization.

## Power in Print: Make Your Mark 2005 Southern Graphics International Conference March 30 - April 3, Washington, DC

Call for Panels  
Deadline: July 1, 2004

As the capitol of the United States, Washington DC is synonymous with power to many people around the world. The 2005 Southern Graphics International Conference will explore power in print: its dynamics, manifestations, and effectiveness. Just as the printing press and moveable type were central to the development of Western Civilization, printed images were among the earliest forms of mass communication. Prints disseminated religious, political, and scientific information to the illiterate masses as well as the educated elites. Artistic considerations amplified their appeal, and their portability assured their spread across borders.

<http://powerinprint.gmu.edu>  
Conference Coordinator - Susan Goldman  
goldmanprint@comcast.net

## Support the American Print Alliance Subscribe to *Contemporary Impressions*

The American Print Alliance is a consortium of non-profit printmakers' councils in the United States and Canada. Contact the Alliance through their web site or write to:  
**American Print Alliance**, 302 Larkspur Turn, Peachtree City, Georgia 30269-2210 USA  
[www.printalliance.org](http://www.printalliance.org)

## KUDOS

**Jennifer Anderson** (Indiana State University) had a solo exhibition at ArtSpace, Raleigh, North Carolina from March 5-April 16, was awarded a Puffin Foundation Grant and will be in residency at the Frans Masereel Centre this summer.

**Ed Bernstein** (Indiana University, Bloomington) has a solo show, "Chiaroscuro" at the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica in Venice from May 25 - June 19 and will have a larger show (same theme) at Anchor Graphics in Chicago this fall.

**Dr. Wendy Dickinson** has had work included in the Sarasota Film Festival's Annual Art Auction. Proceeds from the auction benefit independent filmmakers and visual artists.

**April Flanders** enjoyed a solo exhibition of her work, "Diphyllobothrium Latum" at Manatee Community College in Bradenton, Florida and was awarded an Artist's Grant from the Vermont Studio Center in Johnson, Vermont.

**Melissa Harshman** (University of Georgia) was a resident at the Frans Masereel Centre in Kasterlee, Belgium this spring. She will teach a two week Intaglio class at Penland School of Crafts and will create a print at Flying Horse Editions in Orlando, Florida this summer.

**Ken Kerslake** (Professor Emeritus at University of Florida) was honored with the very first "SGC Excellence in Printmaking Education Award" at the 2004 annual Southern Graphics Council International Conference at Rutgers University. Ken was also invited to participate in the exhibition "The Nature of Craft and the Penland Experience" at the Mint Museum of Crafts, Charlotte, South Carolina this summer.

**Michael Krueger** (University of Kansas) was awarded a six-month Fellowship at the Kala Institute of Art in Berkeley California. Michael will create twelve new prints that will be exhibited in Berkeley at the Kala Institute Gallery.

**Stephen LeWinter** (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga) has been awarded a Sasakawa Fellowship from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities to participate in the Japan Studies Institute at San Diego State University.

**James Pace** (Oge' Professor of Visual Art, University of Texas at Tyler) has been accepted to the International Residency Program in Budapest, Hungary for the summer of 2004. The program is sponsored by the Hungarian Cultural Ministry and the American Embassy.

**Cynthia Thompson** (Memphis College of Art) was awarded a Book Arts Residency Grant from the Women's Studio Workshop this summer. She had a solo exhibition at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee and will have a solo exhibition at the Robert C. Williams American Museum of Papermaking in Atlanta, Georgia in the fall of 2004.  
*See Cynthia's work on the cover of this issue - ed.*

**Shelley Thorstensen** (Moore College of Art and Design) won a Digital Printmaking Fellowship from Silicon Gallery in Philadelphia. The award and a sample of her work can be viewed at <http://www.fineartprint.com/Grant.htm>

**Sylvia Solocheck Walters** (San Francisco State University) has announced her retirement as Chair of the Art Department effective this August after holding the office for twenty years. Sylvia will continue to teach in the Art Department on alternate semesters as part of her retirement plan. Otherwise, she plans to catch up on lost time in the studio.

**Dan Welden** was just awarded a grant from the Vogelstein Foundation to create a film on the "Solarplate" technique.

**Kurt Wisneski** was awarded "First Prize in Printmaking" at the 2004 Winter Juried Show, The Art Complex, Duxbury, Massachusetts.

## Conference Report I

by Mark Hosford  
Vanderbilt University

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE has come and gone. As usual it was a mixture of work, vacation, intelligent discourse, as well as the occasional cocktails and tom foolery that seems to occur once the sun goes down. One of the great blessings of this round was having all of the events in walking distance. Our convenient location to all the events liberated us from the inevitable "I think the buses forgot about us" feeling that occurs when having to rely on the shuttle system. We were allowed to be on our own schedule and could move about on a less restricted clock.

A refreshing change in this conference was the use of conversation rather than traditional lectures for June Wayne and Chuck Close. By having a conversation with these great artists, we were able to gain greater insight into their personalities and thoughts. This forum allowed for more personal information to come to the table. I for one learned a great deal more about what goes on in a French print studio behind closed doors. We have all seen the great works produced by these two artists, and now we were all able to pull up a chair and have a conversation as well.

It is in fact conversation that always keeps me coming back to SGC year after year. As artists, curators and educators, we are scattered all over the globe. We use this event to bring us all back together. It is important to reunite with friends, collaborators, and colleagues, keeping a dialogue of art in continuation. It is a time to discuss current ideas with old friends as well as new. The conversations during a conference remind me that I am part of a larger community that shares common concerns and ideology. It is a way to see oneself as a piece in the larger puzzle. I hope the future will hold further conversations as interesting and engaging as those had in New Brunswick.



June Wayne in conversation with Robert Conway

## Conference Report II

by Hilary Lorenz  
Long Island University

WHEN I PICKED UP MY VERY SPECIAL, really cool bag of treats from the registration table at the Southern Graphic Conference at the Mason Gross School of the Arts I knew it was going to be a spectacular conference. I was so impressed with the printing of the catalog that I fondled the deep red embossed letters on the cover before opening it to the excellent design and layout of lectures and events.

I attended this year's conference with a mission, to learn new techniques that I could use in my classes and to rekindle and/or forge relationships with others from the printmaking community. Wednesday night's reception was a great kickoff and the exhibition was fantastic, particularly "International Flavors" which included prints that engaged in innovated digital and conceptual practices. I was particularly pleased to see a number of international artists, including my friends from the Frans Masereel Center in Belgium. On my train ride back to the city, I poured over the schedule and selected the panels for the next days, focusing on internationally related subjects, artist books and/or publishing. I was very excited to see Xu Bing speak on the panel "Interconnections: East/West Perspectives." I have followed his work for many years and being a former resident of Taiwan, I wanted to hear about Bebout, Foti, Bing, and Kurosaki's experiences. In particular I liked the presentation by Eileen Foti showing the contemporary art making in Thailand. All too often, I feel that people are not exposed to contemporary artwork from Asian countries, but rather an unfortunate form of tourist art.



Conference demonstration at Mason Gross

### Conference Report III

by Janet Maher

Loyola College in Maryland

AFTER AN EMBARRASSING NUMBER of non-attendance years I finally made it to a Southern Graphics Council conference! This conference may have been beginning at the top. As amazing as I'd heard SGC to be, I returned as if having been supercharged by a creative reality I had almost forgotten existed. Surrounded by great art and serious working artists together on a grand scale, amassed through a shared belief that we belong in our own small ways to something much larger than ourselves, I was reminded why I chose the path of art for my life and why I must not lose sight of my particular practice within it.

The weekend was a full-scale exchange of ideas and technical methods between printmakers who represented all stages of experience. We heard stories of struggles to arrive at various versions of success and honored those who paved the way to the present through the quality of their hard work and the breadth of their mentoring. The spirit of printmaking, and its sister, book arts, are permeated with collaboration, assistance, cooperation and mutual respect for careful craft and the attentive sharing of space, along with the cycle of learning, doing, and giving back. It is no surprise that printmaking and book arts are acknowledged as being at the cutting edge of the contemporary aesthetics and critical thinking that embrace multiculturalism and interdisciplinarity and that these genres have advanced the collective creative dialogue globally. Prints and books, like women and non-white non-European artists, are no longer second-class citizens in the art world.

There were many quotable and memorable moments throughout the two days I was there. In his on-stage conversation with Terri Sultan, Chuck Close commented "Inspiration is for amateurs. The rest of us just show up and get busy." Getting busy and working hard, continually, and with grace, epitomized Judith Brodsky's life and work and the

wholeness of her personal and professional involvements, evidenced by the tender and loving testaments which accompanied her entry into the ranks of SGC's Printmaker Emeriti. Ken Kerslake, honored with the first *SGC Excellence in Printmaking Education Award*, wondered along with his thanks, "don't teaching and printmaking go hand in hand?"

Keynote Speaker June Wayne, through poignant and funny stories of her fascinating journey, urged the women artists in the audience to be true to what she and her peers in the American Women Artists Movement gave us. Faith Ringgold encouraged us to hold to our visions against all odds. She reminded us that being an artist is a way of life and it should be viewed with joy every day. "Struggle when you're young (as she, and many of us in the 'second wave', did)," she humorously but truthfully advised the students, "you don't have as much energy later," and to the majority of "boomers" in the audience, she advised, "if you live long enough, you'll get everything you're supposed to." "Remember," she said, "everything that comes to you is about somebody calling your name and having no one else cross it out."

The importance of content and patience with process was echoed again and again, the "what" of printmaking being in the forefront of everyone's thinking, in visual form through the extraordinary wealth of works among the galleries, hallways, and the Zimmerli Art Museum, as well as in the works of the hundreds of artists (students and professionals, alike) who participated in the open portfolio sessions. "In our culture, problem solving is greatly overrated," Chuck Close stated, "What's more important is coming up with good problems to solve." David Kiehl, while providing a thorough history of printmaking at the forefront of every major art movement, exhorted us never to forget that content is paramount. Tools and techniques, inherently captivating as they are, are only means to an end. What do we address? What is our purpose for

The panel by Buzz Spector, "Is the Reader the End user?" presented the audience with a diverse group of speakers. Platzker, Frederick, and Clay addressed issues such as the collaborative process, the book, digital innovations, and markets for book artists. It was entertaining to hear all the titles or subjects that David Platzker will not stock at *Printed Matter*; that was a book in itself.

The demonstrations certainly satisfied the traditional printer in me (learning new methods of chine colle) and the digital artist in me (trying to do as much on the computer as possible). I am thrilled to know that I can now get litho plates and just send them through my Epson 7600—clean, fast, and neat. And after seeing the polyester plates printed I finally tried making my own. I invited my friend Ben Rinehart to my university and we set up shop to try two types of plates and can easily say we are hooked.

There were so many moments and really good experiences at the conference I could not possibly go into them, except that I did get the immense honor of owning a Leon Golub print, I am still beaming over it. It was more the whirlwind of excitement, to see so many artists—over 1,000 I heard— together, talking about something that we all have a passion for, the print, irregardless if it is traditional, digital, etching, lithography, book, projected or on paper.



Judith Brodsky and Boyd Saunders



April Katz accepts the President's Gavel!



Carmon Colangelo, Christopher Hocking and Rick Johnson



Ed O'Neil, trade show organizer



Chuck Close (right) enjoying reception under the "Big Top"



Matt Christie demonstration



Open portfolio sessions just keep going...



Faith Ringgold

Hosted by:  
Mason Gross School of the Arts  
Rutgers, The State University of  
New Jersey, New Brunswick

*Photo submissions in this issue courtesy of Martha Jane  
Bradford, Ken Keslake, Glenn Koslowsky Jr., and Roger Steele*



"Girl Talk," one of several conversation-formatted events



Ken Keslake accepts the first "SGC  
Excellence in Teaching Printmaking Award"



Mason Gross welcomes SGC conference attendees