Selections from the Anderson Graphic Arts Collection: Contemporary Portraits

FINE ARTS MUSEUMS OF SAN FRANCISCO
Contemporary Portraits

By Karin Breuer, Associate Curator
Collection Manager, Anderson Graphic Arts Collection

The portrait, whether it is painted, sculpted, drawn, printed, or photographed, has a long history as significant subject matter for artists. In modern times, however, its functions and status have changed so that it is no longer necessary for artists to conform to demands for likeness or other conventions. Indeed, in the hands of many contemporary artists, the portrait has become a vehicle for extensive artistic interpretation and investigation.

The portrait often has been a primary concern for many of the artists in this exhibition, especially Robert Arneson, Chuck Close, Jim Dine, and David Hockney. Dine, for example, regards the human face at the top of the hierarchy of subject matter in his work because as he has said, “It is the depiction of ourselves.” Dine’s self-portraits are also closely involved with psychological self-examination, apparent less in his symbolic self-portraits (such as the Bathrobe prints) than in representational images such as the revealing Self-Portrait as a Negative. For Close, however, gridded photographic portraits function as little more than formats for his experimentation with continuous tone and mark-making systems, not as insights into human nature. When he made Self-Portrait, Black on White, for example, he described it as a “recycled” image, used in this instance for an exploration of the stark etched line. Hockney, on the other hand, considers the portraits of himself and his friends as more than just exercises in technique, claiming that “they are made up of other insights as well.” In his portraits of Celia Birtwell and Ken Tyler (The Masters Printers of Los Angeles), Hockney’s sensitive use of line is evident in each, but particularly as it describes these self-contained personalities in quiet isolation.

Robert Rauschenberg, Marisol, and Kiki Smith eschew tradition by employing their own bodies in self-portraits that also reflect contemporary artistic approaches. For example, Smith’s My Blue Lake, a recent addition to the Anderson Graphic Arts Collection, can be seen as a kind of conceptual self-portrait but also as representative of her “body art” of the mid-1990s. Traditional portraits of art print publishers, such as Kathleen Brown of Crown Point Press by Richard Diebenkorn, Tatyana Grosman of Universal Limited Art Editions by Robert Rauschenberg, and Ken Tyler of Tyler Graphics Ltd. (then with Gemini G.E.L.) by David Hockney, express the close relationship between artist and publisher in the contemporary art world.

The self-portraits by Ed Ruscha and Ellsworth Kelly are surprising images because neither artist has been concerned with the representation of the human form. Their drawings are part of a larger group, generously loaned by the Andersons from their personal collection, in which artists were specifically requested to use facial make-up instead of traditional drawing media in creating self-portraits. As with all of the prints and drawings in this selection, the results are as varied as the personalities involved, each one a decidedly contemporary response to facing the mirror.

2 David Hockney, quoted in Harris, 298.
Exhibition Checklist

Unless otherwise noted, all prints are from the Anderson Graphic Arts Collection, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, gift of the Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson Charitable Foundation. Drawings have been generously loaned from the private collection of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson. Sheet measurements for prints and drawings are in inches, height preceding width.

PRINTS

Robert Arneson
Benediction, 1980–1992 Benicia, California

Robert Arneson, from the series Five Guys, 1983
Woodcut, 31 1/4 x 25 in.
Published by Experimental Workshop, San Francisco
Printed by Will Foy and John Stener
1996.74.20

Pablo Picasso, from the series Five Guys, 1983
Woodcut, 31 1/4 x 25 in.
Published by Experimental Workshop, San Francisco
Printed by Will Foy and John Stener
1996.74.1

Jonathan Borofsky
b. Boston, Massachusetts, 1942

Self-Portrait, 1982
Color lithograph, 40 x 30 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by Alan Holoubek and James Reid
1996.74.45

Chuck Close
b. Monroe, Washington, 1940

Self-Portrait, Black on White, 1977
Etching, 54 1/8 x 40 3/4 in.
Published by Pace Editions, New York
Printed by Patrick C. and Crown Point Press, Oakland
1996.74.65

Richard Diebenkorn
Portland, Oregon 1922–1993 Berkeley, California

Self-Portrait, 1980
Drypoint, 19 1/8 x 13 1/4 in., G p.110
Published by Crown Point Press, Oakland
Printed by Lilah Toland
1996.74.85

#28 (Kathan Brown), from 41 Etchings
Drypoints, 1964
Drypoint, 17 3/4 x 14 3/4 in., G p. 119
Published by Crown Point Press, Berkeley
Printed by Kathan Brown
1996.74.76.28

Jim Dine
b. Cincinnati, Ohio, 1935

Self-Portrait as a Negative, 1975
Etching, drypoint, and power tool, printed in white on black Fabriano paper, 26 1/8 x 20 1/8 in., W. 196
Published by Universal Limited Art Editions, West Islip
Printed by Zigmond Priede
1996.74.101

Fourteen Color Woodcut Bathrobe, 1982
Color woodcut, 77 1/2 x 42 in.
Published by Pace Editions, New York
Printed by German Tullis at Experimental Workshop, San Francisco
1996.74.102

Sam Francis
San Mateo, California 1923–1994 Santa Monica, California

Self-Portrait II, 1972 (published 1982)
Sugarlift: aquatint, 19 3/8 x 15 in., L.1 20
Published by 3F Ltd., Palo Alto
Printed by Kiyore Kiarahara
1996.74.126

David Hockney
b. Auburn, California, 1943

Selbstbildnis mit Tod (Self-Portrait with Death), from the series 3-A, 1983
Monoprint etching, 22 1/2 x 30 1/8 in.
Published by 3F Ltd., Palo Alto
Printed by Kiyore Kiarahara
1996.74.147

David Hockney

Celia 8365 Melrose Ave., Hollywood, 1973
Litograph, 47 1/2 x 37 1/2 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by Serge Lozingot and Kenneth Tyler
1996.74.178

The Master Printer of Los Angeles, 1973
Color lithograph and screenprint, 48 x 32 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by Kenneth Tyler and Jeff Wasserman
1996.74.179

Jim Dine
b. Cincinnati, Ohio, 1935

Self-Portrait as a Negative, 1975
Etching, drypoint, and power tool, printed in white on black Fabriano paper, 26 1/8 x 20 1/8 in., W. 196
Published by Universal Limited Art Editions, West Islip
Printed by Zigmond Priede
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Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by Kenneth Tyler and Jeff Wasserman
1996.74.179
Larry Rivers
b. Bronx, New York, 1923

Three-dimensional color lithograph on four sheets of paper, 22 5/8 x 26 5/8 in.
Poem by Kenneth Koch printed in letterpress
Published by Universal Limited Art Editions, West Islip
Printed by Frank Akers and James V. Smith; letterpress by Juda Rosenberg
1996.74.424

Kiki Smith
b. Nuremberg, Germany, 1954

My Blue Lake, 1995
Color lithograph and photogravure, 43 1/2 x 54 3/4 in.
Published by Universal Limited Art Editions, West Islip
Printed by Craig Zammuto
Museum purchase, gift of Michael Welsey and the Lucille Brugh Memorial Fund
1997.143

**DRAWINGS**

Jennifer Bartlett (b. Long Beach, California, 1941)
Chuck Close (b. Monroe, Washington, 1940)
David Hockney (b. Bradford, England, 1937)
Alex Katz (b. New York, New York, 1927)
Elsworth Kelly (b. Newburgh, New York, 1923)
Helmut Middendorp (b. West Germany, 1953)
Larry Rivers (b. Bronx, New York, 1923)
Ed Ruscha (b. Omaha, Nebraska, 1937)

Group of eight Charles of the Ritz make-up drawings, 1982–1983

Make-up on paper, 18 x 14 in. (each)
Collection of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson

**Diptych, 1971**
Lithograph, 48 x 31 3/4 in.
Published by Universal Limited Art Editions, West Islip
Printed by Zigmunds Priede and Steve Anderson
1996.74.279-280

Robert Rauschenberg
b. Port Arthur, Texas, 1925

Booster, 1967
Color lithograph and screenprint, 72 x 36 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
Printed by Kenneth Tyler
1996.74.401

Tanya, 1974
Lithograph, 22 1/2 x 15 1/4 in.
Published by Universal Limited Art Editions, West Islip
Printed by Bill Goldston and John A. Lund
1996.74.412

David Gilhooly, Selbstbildnis mit Tod (Self-Portrait with Death), from the series 3-A, 1983

Jonathan Borofsky, Self-Portrait, 1982