Hard Edge
Abstract Prints from Albers to Held

"Hard edge" was first used in 1959 by the California art critic Jules Langsner to describe the works of four young American artists whose abstract, geometric paintings were being exhibited at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The term was used subsequently to identify a style of painting for artists, most of them American, whose primary interest was in geometric form, color, or optical effects. For many artists, such as Ellsworth Kelly, the term was not a completely appropriate description of their work. ("I'm not interested in hard-edge painting. I'm interested in form and mass," he said in 1988.) Nevertheless, it served as a generic description of the work of a generation of painters who combined color-field painting with the formal vocabulary of geometry. Many of these artists, including Josef Albers, Frank Stella, and Kelly, made prints in the 1960s and 1970s after discovering that printmaking techniques such as screenprint and lithography could easily produce the effects of flatness, unmodulated color, and sharp edges that their work required. The thirty prints in this exhibition—by Albers, Anni Albers, Ron Davis, Al Held, Kelly, Ed Moses, Ad Reinhardt, and Stella—were selected primarily from the Anderson Graphic Arts Collection and show the evolution of "hard edge" in printmaking over the course of twenty years.

Karin Breuer, Curator
Anderson Graphic Arts Collection
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. Sheet measurements for prints are in inches, height preceding width.

Anni Albers
Berlin, Germany 1899–1994 Orange, Connecticut
Blue Meander, 1970
Color screenprint, 27 3/4 x 23 7/8 in.
Published by Brooke Alexander, Inc., New York 1996.74.3

Orange Meander, 1970
Color screenprint, 28 x 24 in.
Published by Brooke Alexander, Inc., New York 1996.74.4

Josef Albers
Bottrop, Germany 1888–1976 New Haven, Connecticut
Homage to the Square: Ten Works by Josef Albers, 1962
1 Wide Light
2 Shielded
3 Reserved
Color screenprints, 16 7/8 x 16 7/8 in. (each sheet)
Published by Ives-Sillman, New Haven, Connecticut 1996.74.6.1, 7, 9

Homage to the Square: Soft Edge, Hard Edge, 1965
1 Golden Gate
2 Palatial
3 Late
5 Porta Negra
6 Emeraude
8 Arctic Bloom
10 Arrived
Color screenprints, 17 x 17 1/16 in. (each sheet)
Published by Ives-Sillman, Inc., New Haven, Connecticut 1996.74.7.1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10

Ron Davis
b. Santa Monica, California, 1937
Double Slice, 1972
Inkless intaglio on color lithograph
20 1/4 x 39 1/2 in.
Published by Gemini G. E. L. 1996.74.71

Al Held
b. New York, New York 1928
Magenta, 1990
Color aquatint and spit-bite aquatint

Frank Stella
Ifaha II, from the V Series, 1968

Frank Stella
Quathamba I, from the V Series, 1968

Anni Albers
Blue Meander, 1970

Josef Albers
Porta Negra, from the series Homage to the Square: Soft Edge, Hard Edge, 1965
Ellsworth Kelly
b. Newburgh, New York, 1923
Two Whites and Black, 1973
Screenprint with embossing.
Axson 85
23 1/4 x 47 1/4 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
1996.74.233

Two Blacks and White, 1973
Screenprint with embossing. A. 86
23 1/4 x 47 1/4 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
1996.74.234

Black Curve I (White Curve I), 1973
Lithograph with graphite. A. 100
34 x 34 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
1996.74.235

Ed Moses
b. Long Beach, California, 1926
P-F, 1980
Color monotypes
14 1/4 x 37 in. (each sheet)
Published by 3EP, Ltd., Palo Alto, California
1996.74.302-304

Frank Stella
b. Malden, Massachusetts, 1936
Ilfa I, from the V Series, 1968
Color lithograph, Axson 21
16 1/4 x 22 3/8 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
1996.74.411

Ifa I, from the V Series, 1968
Color lithograph, A. 22
16 1/4 x 22 3/8 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
1996.74.442

Quathlamba I, from the V Series, 1968
Color lithograph, A. 25
16 1/4 x 28 7/8 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
1996.74.447

Quathlamba II, from the V Series, 1968
Color lithograph, A. 26
16 1/4 x 28 7/8 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
1996.74.447

River of Ponds IV, from the Newfoundland Series, 1971
Color lithograph and screenprint, A. 53
38 x 38 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
1996.74.466

Bonne Bay, from the Newfoundland Series, 1971
Color lithograph and screenprint, A. 55
38 x 70 in.
Published by Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles
1996.74.465

Ad Reinhardt
Untitled #1–#10, from the portfolio
10 Pieces, 1966
Color screenprints, 21 3/4 x 16 13/16 in.
Designed and produced by Ives-Sillman, Inc.
Published by the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut
1996.74.419.1–10

Frank Stella, River of Ponds IV from the Newfoundland Series, 1970

Ellsworth Kelly, Black Curve I (White Curve I), 1973

Al Held, Magenta, 1990