

University Gallery

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Under Pressure: Prints from Two Palms Press explores the collaborative relationship between artist and master printer. The exhibition highlights the innovative techniques that developed when David Lasry, founder of Two Palms Press, invited different artists to work with him on respective projects. Works by Pedro Barbeito, Mel Bochner, Chuck Close, Tara Donovan, Carroll Dunham, Sol LeWitt, David Row, Jessica Stockholder and Terry Winters are presented along with several printing plates and photographs of these artists at work in the studio. The selection of individual collaborators is based on Lasry's aesthetic interests as he himself is an artist. *Under Pressure* will be on view at the University Gallery, University of Massachusetts Amherst from February 2 through March 15, with an opening reception on Friday, February 1 from 5 to 7 p.m.

Originally intending to have artists come for a brief two week "visit" to the print shop, Lasry soon realized that the projects were more of a process than a fixed event. The collaborators work for "as long as it takes" to pull the idea from the press. It is not unusual for a new printing process or technique to be invented along the way, and the endless possibilities available through computer technologies often provide the means to reach surprising and new results. Each artist's distinctive skills and experience enhances the collaboration, creating a working environment of discovery, challenge and constant evolution.

Chuck Close immediately grasped the potential for embossment when he encountered the hydraulic press at Two Palms Press. Working from a self-portrait ink drawing, the only drawing Close has made since the onset of his illness in 1988, the image was deeply laser burned (engraved) into a plate. The necessity of having to deeply engrave the drawing in the plate for heavy embossment and the delicacy of the marks ruled out the traditional use of etching acids to create the printing plate. This same image was executed in two different manners to create two embossed/relief prints that made the characteristic marks which constitute the images for which Close is well-known.

Sol LeWitt's grid of 36 *Five-Pointed Stars* (1996) is part of a set of seven such grids representing various star shapes. As is usual with LeWitt, a simple formula grows more complicated as it materializes. Seven types of stars, from three to nine points, are printed in all of the possible two-part color combinations of white, black, and gray, as well as red, yellow, and blue with the paper being tinted one color and the aluminum relief plate inked another. The result is seven groups of 36 similarly starred panels aligned in six rows of six. Aluminum plates were industrially manufactured and run under enormous

pressure through Lasry's hydraulic press, producing a deep relief in the soft, thick paper. Because of the somewhat watery, translucent tints, the compromised colors are akin to LeWitt's wall paintings.

Jessica Stockholder's monotypes (unique prints) are made using "linoleum, a sweater, some wire, a hose, just stuff from my studio." Stockholder's fascination with materials is evident—she is a great observer of the innate capacities of ordinary stuff—and the systematic nature of the ways she uses them emerges only after prolonged consideration. The result of the interactions among sequences of simple positive and negative is complex.

Under Pressure: Prints from Two Palms Press was organized by Alexandra Muse and Pamela Auchincloss *Arts Management*. A catalogue, with an essay by art critic Barry Schwabsky, accompanies the exhibition and is available at the University Gallery. The exhibition is on national tour and its presentation at the Gallery's venue is supported in part by funds from the Umass Arts Council.

The University Gallery, located on the lower level of the Fine Arts Center, is open to the public Tuesday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 2 to 5 p.m. The Gallery is also open to audiences for evening performances held in the Concert Hall of the Fine Arts Center. For further information, please call (413) 545-3670 or visit the Gallery's web site at www.umass.edu/fac/universitygallery.