THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

Department of Prints and Drawings
OCTOBER 25 - DECEMBER 8, 1946
Gallery 16

Lithographs by

RICHARD A. FLORSHEIM
Richard Florsheim is not a newcomer to the gallery visitor, as his biography at the end of this catalog shows. He has become known, however, exclusively as a painter. His oils and gouaches have been in a number of one man shows both in Chicago and New York, and in a number of competitive exhibitions. Never before has he shown a comprehensive group of his lithographs. Indeed, few of his friends were aware of the fact that, in recent years, he spent much time and energy in developing his skill in this medium. His first experiments in lithography go back to 1940, and since then he has produced fifty-five compositions on stone.

His lithographs are not merely a casual artistic pastime in which he seeks relaxation from more strenuous work in the "important media" such as painting and sculpture. Nor are they a convenient means of spreading his work in these media by repetitious reproductions in black and white of his "finished compositions." This is so often the case when a painter "does prints," showing his utter incomprehension of the artistic possibilities and purpose of the original print. From the very beginning, Florsheim approached lithography with a will to arrive at an independent solution of a given problem. This problem was to be expressed through the lithographer's craft and none other. And, although he does not print his own stones, he has worked hard to explore the possibilities of lithography through a full range of tone, from a delicate haze-like grey to the deepest thick and rich black. To achieve this he uses both lithographic crayon and ink (fusche). He
makes frequent use of the scraper and similar tools. In developing his
technique he is methodical. He often does extensive research into a
variety of methods in order to achieve what at first seems to be but
a minor nuance but which, in the end, proves to be an important step
toward a harmonious whole. Though he has paid much attention to
his technique he has avoided the dangers of becoming so engrossed
with it that it becomes an end in itself.

Prints were originated by men who had something to say beyond
aesthetic perfection, beyond pictorial interest, beyond color and form.
As they could simultaneously belong to more than one person, prints
were conceived for the distribution of ideas. It is an irony that prints
became so involved in their own making that they were often an end
to themselves: rare and precious, mentally shallow and slick, simply
technique per se. Florsheim is one of those few artists who have remem-
bered the purpose of the print. Because he has something to say and
feels the responsibilities of a thinking man, it is natural that prints
should become an important part of his artistic production.

Although his lithographs were not conceived as a cycle with some
literary leit-motif they have a close continuity of thought. This is not
a coincidence but a logical result of the artist’s spiritual participation
in the tremendous events of recent world history. He lived with them,
suffered from them and was matured by them. Throughout these years,
he has been close to much of the great tragedy around us and his
work anxiously follows the step by step progression toward chaos.
In these titles which he has chosen for his lithographs the artist reflects,
in a few words, in shreds of a sentence which are as tortured as the
contents of his lithographs, the tale of human suffering and folly. Using
generalized symbols rather than individual histories, he tells of this
sober drama with arresting earnestness.

CARL O. SCHNIEWIND
CATALOG

1. This is how it all began . . .
2. . . . a wind swept through the leafless trees . . .
3. . . . and rocks that shielded broken branches . . .
4. . . . on seashores heavy with approaching storms.
5. They turned away from where he fell . . .
6. . . . while visions weighed him, crushed and speechless . . .
7. . . . the struggling saw no others' faces . . .
8. . . . or marched in rhythm through a gathering darkness . . .
9. . . . and homeless wandered.
10. The wind was gone, the branches torn . . .
11. . . . strange symbols stood upon the beachheads . . .
12. . . . while shadowed figures searched.
13. The thunder broke upon the beaches . . .
14. . . . with remnants tattered . . .
15. . . . now harbors filled with tangled wreckage . . .
16. . . . the bombers left a tumbled pattern . . .
17. . . . and armies marched in torn confusion . . .
18. . . . smoking ruins gave no shelter . . .
19. . . . and women watched . . .
20. . . . the broken landscapes . . .
21. . . . and homes were emptied of their meaning.

22. The peace has come . . . 1946
23. . . . and sun throws shadows . . .
24. . . . the birds . . .
25. . . . the beasts . . .
26. . . . the insects . . .
27. . . . rodents . . .
28. . . . fish . . .
29. . . . and symbols of another age.

30. The marchers halt, averting faces . . .
31. . . . and cities rest again in valleys . . .
32. . . . the land once more regains its cycle . . .
33. . . . and distant hills retain their rhythm . . .
34. . . . and man has time for other meanings.
35. It ends in new beginning.

All lithographs are for sale at the following prices: $7.50 (Numbers 3, 5, 6, 26, 30), $10.00 (Numbers 1, 4, 7, 9-25, 27, 28, 31-33, 35), $15.00 (Numbers 2, 8, 29, 34).
16. ... the bombers left a tumbled pattern ...
1916  Born, Chicago
1923-34  Chicago Latin School
1934-35  Studied with Kenneth Shopen, Aaron Bohrod
1935  One Man Show (Oils, Water Colors), Milwaukee Little Gallery, Milwaukee
1935-36  Student, University of Chicago
1936-38  Studied in Europe and Near East
1940  One Man Show (Oils), Quest Gallery, Chicago
      First lithographs begun.
      One Man Show (Temperas), Quest Gallery, Chicago.
1942  Enlisted, U. S. Navy
1944  One Man Show, New School for Social Research, New York City
      Pacific Theatre Duty
1945  European Theatre Duty
1946  Demobilized

Exhibited

The artist wishes to express appreciation to Max Kahn, Murray Jones, and George Miller for their understanding interest in the printing of these and other lithographs.