

Juror's statement

I was fascinated by the wide variety of works submitted to be considered for the second *National Exhibition of Monotypes and Monoprints*. Many were created in combination with other printmaking techniques, and some included other elements such as collage or sewing thread. Some were so complex it was difficult to determine which parts of the image were printed by monotype. In the end, however, it was the power of the image, not the technique or materials, that determined which works I selected for the exhibition.

As I was choosing pieces for the show, I became aware of how the selection process favored some types of work over others. Simple, bold images were easier to grasp than images with more complex, subtle relationships. Sometimes it was difficult to appreciate line quality, texture, paper, and nuance of color by looking at a digital reproduction of a monotype. Nonetheless, reviewing digital images was far superior to looking at slides, since I was able to enlarge the images and focus on details in a way I could not with slides.

I also became aware of some personal biases. I tend to favor simplicity and directness over complexity. I like to see the white or color of the paper integrated into the overall composition rather than having it completely covered with ink or paint. I appreciate the importance of chance in printing a monotype image, but I want to sense that the artist has control over the process and is not relying too heavily on chance effects.

Being a juror for an exhibition such as this one is a very satisfying experience. I have the opportunity to become acquainted with the work of artists I might never have seen, and I can see the latest work by artists whose work is already familiar to me. Awarding the prizes is more difficult than selecting the show, since each work in the exhibition has something special that attracted my attention. The one quality that all the award winners share is my continuing interest in looking at them.

Earlier this summer I met with an artist whose drawing was currently in an exhibition of works on paper from the Museum's collection. She is best known as a painter, but had recently begun making monotypes. Her voluble enthusiasm for the process reminded me of the joy, spontaneity, and challenge of making monotypes that I heard from artists throughout the 1990s, when I was doing research on the history of monotype in America. Clearly, the process continues to entice artists with its possibilities, just as it continues to appeal to a broad and diverse audience.

Joann Moser

Senior Curator

Smithsonian American Art Museum