

# The New York Times

## Marquee Works Amid Buried Treasure

### The Print Fair Has a New Emphasis on Gallerylike Shows

By KAREN ROSENBERG NOV. 6, 2014

For a little taste of May in November, head to the Park Avenue Armory for the annual Print Fair of the International Fine Print Dealers Association. Now in its 23rd year, the fair, which opened on Wednesday night, continues to court veteran print collectors with Dürers and Goyas and lure entry-level contemporary collectors with editions from brand-name artists.

As before, accessing its treasures sometimes requires a willingness to poke around; to dig through bins, scan crowded walls or pester dealers to open up rare portfolios. But the event is looking more and more like the big spring fairs, with plenty of assertive, large-scale works for immediate perusal and an increasing emphasis on gallerylike solo and theme exhibitions.

An embossed monoprint-collage by Mel Bochner, at Two Palms, measures a whopping 92 by 76 1/2 inches and comes with a price tag in the upper five figures. It's also big on attitude, with multicolored letters that spell "BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH."

Some of the fair's supersize works have a subtler appeal, reflecting an unexpected dedication to printmaking by artists better known for their paintings or sculptures. Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Moisant Weyl is showing an ambitious group of four 4-by-7-foot etchings by Julie Mehretu. Collectively titled "Myriads, Only by Dark," they intrigue with multicolored vectors and swarms of tiny calligraphic marks.

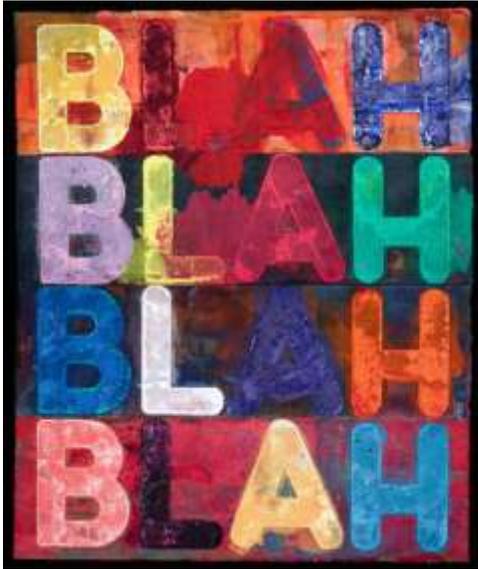
Crown Point Press, meanwhile, has Charline von Heyl's commanding sugar lift and spit bite aquatints with soft ground etching and drypoint. With their flattened gestural knots, they seem to rehash imagery from Ms. von Heyl's paintings. But like her collages in this year's Whitney Biennial, which layered drawing over torn-up photogravures, they show off her knack for integrating different techniques and materials.

Also in experimental mode is the sculptor Alison Saar, with one-of-a-kind woodblock prints made on old sugar sacks (at Tandem Press). The burlap sacks, stitched together into quilts, add texture and a kind of patina and, not incidentally, make oblique reference to the role of sugar in the slave trade.

Although many booths retain the cluttered look of earlier Print Fairs, a few are hosting solo exhibitions elegant enough to pass muster at the Art Dealers Association of America or Frieze fairs. Senior & Shopmaker, for instance, has an immaculate 30-year survey of abstract woodcuts by Robert Mangold. Some were printed from blocks of wood found on the grounds of his home in upstate New York; others were made in Kyoto, Japan, with traditional ukiyo-e techniques.



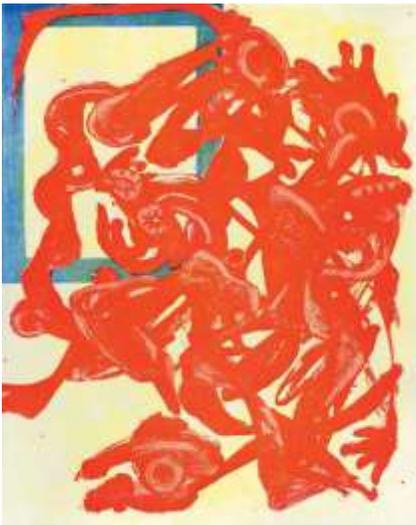
Alison Saar's "The Cotton Eater." CreditTandem Press, Madison, WI



A monoprint by Mel Bochner.  
Credit: Courtesy of the artist and Two Palms



Robert Mangold's "Five Color Frame." 2014  
Robert Mangold/Artists Rights Society (ARS),  
New York, Senior & Shopmaker Gallery, New York



Charline von Heyl's "Nightpack (Red, Yellow and Blue)."  
Credit: Crown Point Press



One of Ed Ruscha's "Rusty Signs."  
Credit: Mixografia, Los Angeles, CA

At the booth of the Los Angeles workshop Mixografia, Ed Ruscha is introducing his new series "Rusty Signs." These mottled prints on handmade paper look convincingly like weathered metal signage, with raised block letters bearing messages of desperation — "Dead End," "For Sale" or "Cash for Tools"— and a hint of the artist's characteristic deadpan humor.

As always, plenty of older material is on hand. David Tunick has an early impression of Dürer's "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" and a Mantegna engraving from around 1465 that may be the oldest work in the fair. Lithographs by Vuillard and Toulouse-Lautrec are among the diverse selection at R. S. Johnson. And two exhibitors are noting the centennial of World War I with thematic displays: Galerie St. Etienne, with visceral Expressionist works by Otto Dix, George Grosz and others; and Osborne Samuel, with Cubo-Futurist scenes from the Western Front by the Briton C. R. W. Nevinson.

Then there is the matchup of Matisse and Picasso, at Frederick Mulder. Selections from Matisse's late book of cutout-based prints, "Jazz," face off with a complete edition of Picasso's "Vollard Suite" (the portfolio of 100 etchings named for his dealer Ambroise Vollard, who appears in three of them). Any multimedia artist who wants to become more invested in printmaking would do well to spend some time with these modern classics.