



From Picasso to Jasper Johns. Aldo Crommelynck's workshop

The Bibliothèque nationale de France pays tribute to Aldo Crommelynck (1931-2008), the famous printer of works of art, by tracing the history of his workshop that contributed in making Paris a famous city in the field of prints and engravings. The exhibition presents about a hundred works achieved thanks to the collaboration between the printer and foreign artists with whom he worked in Paris and New York. It is an outstanding opportunity to discover rarely presented prints by Richard Hamilton, David Hockney, Jim Dine or Jasper Johns.

Introduced to printing by the master-printer Roger Lacourière, Aldo Crommelynck opens his own workshop in 1956. In 1963, with his brother Piero, he puts in a printing press in Mougins, near Picasso's house. The Crommelynck brothers are always ready to collaborate, which incites Picasso to be particularly creative: as a result, the artist creates 750 plates, among which the series of the 347 prints in 1968 and the 156 ones between 1970 and 1972. In 1969, the Crommelynck brothers' Parisian workshop moves to a private mansion located rue de Grenelle.

In 1973, attracted by the reputation of Picasso's printer, Richard Hamilton comes and works in the workshop where he strikes up a friendship with Aldo. He is followed by foreign artists the major part of whom are English and American such as Jasper Johns, Jim Dine, David Hockney, Peter Blake or Donald Sultan; and then, by younger artists like George Condo or David Salle. Francesco Clemente, the Italian artist belonging to the Trans-avant-garde movement, the German painter Penck and the Swiss artist Martin Disler also come and work there. They all value the talent of the printer who serves their projects and creativity. He offers them his outstanding expertise, his perfect mastery of the aquatint process and a great rigour when he helps them to master the technique of copper-plate engraving. In 1986, after breaking off his collaboration with his brother, he opens a second workshop in New York. Until the end of his career in 1999, he divides his time between Paris and the United-States where he collaborates with other artists, among whom Ed Ruscha, Chuck Close, Dan Flavin or Claes Oldenburg. In 2010, his daughter, Corinne Buchet-Crommelynck passes on to the BnF's Department of Prints and Photographs a collection of over 200 works by famous contemporary artists printed by his father.

The exhibition is organized around the printing work of Picasso. Several major prints – among which the famous *Ecce Homo* – realized during his exceptional collaboration with Aldo Crommelynck are presented. Several creations by artists who came and worked afterwards with Crommelynck pay tribute to Picasso: *Artist and Model* by David Hockney, *Picasso's Meninas* by Richard Hamilton, a virtuoso and ironic reinterpretation of Picasso's work after Velásquez, that used over six processes of copper-plate engraving.

The exhibition also focuses on the printer's collaborations with American artists, so offering the opportunity to discover a less known but worthy of interest aspect of major American artists' works.

The following works are presented: the series of the *7 Sunliners* by Edward Ruscha; Jasper Johns' plates that go with the outstanding book entitled *Foirades/Fizzles* that includes texts by Samuel Beckett; a very subtle self-portrait by Chuck Close; or a never-presented before aquatint and dry-point engraving by Dan Flavin, *For Janette Affectionately*, a few slender lines over a fluorescent yellow flat tint that remind the artist's neon sculptures.

The works presented were printed in Aldo Crommelynck's workshops between 1982 and 1999, in Paris and New York by 26 artists who, for the major part of them, are American or work in the United-States. Aldo Crommelynck asked all these worldwide famous artists to sign prints intended to the BnF, while the legislation about legal deposit did not apply for works created abroad. These works were published by the most famous houses: Pace Prints in New York, Waddington in London, the Eric Franck gallery in Geneva, Maximilian Verlag in Munich. These prints enrich the heritage collections of the library in an exceptional way.

Exhibition

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April 8 | July 13, 2014

BnF | François-Mitterrand
Galerie 1
Quai François-Mauriac, Paris XIII^e

Tuesdays to Saturdays 10 a.m.- 7 p.m.
Sundays 1 p.m.-7 p.m.
Closed on Mondays and holidays
Ticket 9 euros - reduced rate 7 euros

Curators

Céline Chicha-Castex, BnF, curator in the Department of Prints and Photography.

Marie-Cécile Miessner, curator in the Department of Prints and Photography.

Cécile Pocheau-Lesteven, curator in the Department of Prints and Photography.

Publication

De Picasso à Jasper Johns. L'Atelier d'Aldo Crommelynck

128 pages, 80 illustrations
Price: 32 euros
Coedition BnF/Musée Soulages Rodez

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Pictures:
1 - Pablo Picasso, *Fumeur à la cigarette verte*, 1970
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3 - Jasper Johns, *Périscopes*, 1981
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2 - Christina Ljubanovic, *Portrait d'Aldo Crommelynck*, 1985
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