



Andrew Stasik: Printer. Artist. Professional.

Andrew Stasik's reputation in printmaking extended far beyond the recognition we more commonly associate with him as a studio printer, co-director and chairman of the highly-regarded Pratt Graphics Center, managing editor for the publication *Artist's Proof*, and founder and editor of *Print Review* magazine. As part of his efforts to promote and encourage the pursuit of fine art printmaking at all levels, during the course of his career, Stasik was sought out as an advisor internationally and traveled across Eastern Europe, as well as to Caracas, Venezuela; Oslo, Norway; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and Calgary, Canada giving talks and participating on advisory councils, shaping the direction for future communal workshops and discussing how to establish them. Our organization, the Center for Contemporary Printmaking, exists as part of the legacy Andrew Stasik left behind, shaped from his experience and belief in this model of studio workshop with public-facing exhibitions and public programs.

His expertise as a consultant informed projects for the NY State Council on the Arts, the National Collection of Fine Arts for the Smithsonian Institution, the government of Canada, the Latin American Print Biennial in Puerto Rico, and he received travel grants from the Japan Foundation, the Swiss Arts Council, and the Royal Ministry of Norway in combination with the international exhibitions he developed. Stasik was appointed to the board of directors for the newly-established National Print Council here in the United States in 1980. He spoke about print collecting and what are original prints, serving on panels with the likes of Sylvan Cole from Associated American Artists.

Over many years Stasik cultivated relationships with printmakers in Eastern Europe, at one point traveling to five different countries in preparation for a book about Eastern European printmaking for Harry Abrams. The book was never published, but in 1970 he compiled a portfolio of 10 prints by Eastern European printmakers now held in the collection of the New York Public Library. His first portfolio project came earlier in 1962, composed of haiku poems printed as individual folios with his own prints inserted into each of them, and collected by major American museums with one held by the Smithsonian Institution. And he not only established exhibitions, such as the *Biennial International Miniature Print Competition and Exhibition*, at Pratt Graphics Center, but he repeatedly served as a juror for other exhibitions, co-jurying with Marcel Duchamp, Peter Milton, and Bernard Childs.

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In addition to all of the professional administrative efforts, Andrew Stasik was also an artist and printmaker himself. And like many printmakers, Stasik worked across multiple mediums, including painting, sculpture, and collages, often blending techniques together to create sculptural paintings or collaged sculptures. Throughout his body of work made during the 1950's into the 1980's, Stasik developed a unique visual vocabulary all his own using basic shapes and forms that created a throughline from one work to the next, whether it was his use of books in his sculptural pieces, or the series of motifs seen in his prints. In this exhibition at the Center for Contemporary Printmaking, the selected works highlight the varying ways he reinvented this series of symbols, the house, table, cup, vessel, flowers, apple, circle, triangle, and dots across multiple decades of work. Some of these prints were exhibited in galleries and museums on multiple continents, some received prestigious awards internationally, and some found their way into collections at major institutions such as the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution, the Museum of Modern Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art and many more. By no means is this a comprehensive survey of Stasik's full body of work, but through these examples we see some of the major pieces for which he received recognition, demonstrating both the commitment to his personally-derived visual vocabulary and the incredibly modern imagery and use of experimental techniques that set his work apart as they informed and developed his skills as a printmaker.

Andrew Stasik was born in 1932 in New Brunswick, NJ, growing up in a house not only with his parents and sisters, but also an aunt, uncle, and his grandmother. His grandmother spoke only Hungarian but was a major influence in Andrew's early life. A talented student, he excelled in math and played the piano, eventually studying at Columbia University, though not in medicine, as his father wished, but art and set design, graduating in 1954. Stasik then continued his studies at Ohio University, earning a Masters in Art in printmaking in 1956. By 1957, Stasik was working for the Pratt-Contemporaries Graphic Arts Center in Manhattan as a professional printer in the recently-transitioned organization founded by Margaret Gronlund as a workshop/gallery earlier in the decade, then absorbed by Pratt Institute the previous year.

Stasik demonstrated talent and excellence, not only by holding a faculty position as a printmaking professor at the Pratt Institute, but winning awards for his own artwork: the Collins Prize for lithography from the Print Club of Philadelphia, 1st Place in the *III Exposition Internationale Gravure*, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, and inclusion in *American Prints Today* at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York all just in 1959. By 1961 he was named assistant director of the Pratt Graphic Arts Center, working with then-director, Fritz Eichenberg on the highly-regarded Pratt produced magazine *Artist's Proof* as managing editor from 1961-71.



Then between 1963 and 1966, Stasik held the role of associate director of the Center until taking on a greater leadership role when Fritz Eichenberg decided to step down from some of his duties, providing the space for Stasik to take on the position of co-chairman from 1966 until 1968 when Eichenberg retired and Stasik was fully appointed director.

During his years as director, Stasik maintained a robust program of exhibitions with approximately 10 exhibitions each year at the Center and another ten or more exhibitions traveling to other institutions, libraries, museums, or galleries. Beginning in the late 1960's he also lectured on printmaking at Yale University in New Haven and taught as a visiting professor in the early 1970's. By 1972 he founded and served as editor for *Print Review* magazine as well as accepting speaking engagements, jurying exhibitions, and exhibiting his own award-winning work all over the world. Stasik continued working as director at Pratt Graphics Center and serving as Director of Exhibits for the Pratt Manhattan Center Gallery until 1986 when he stepped down once Pratt decided to move everything located in Manhattan to Brooklyn, selling the valuable real estate in Manhattan.

In the late 1980's Stasik spent a few years as the Gallery Director for the Silvermine Arts Center in New Canaan, Connecticut and launched their short-lived gallery space at Metro Center in Stamford. He also spent a year as Gallery Director for John Szoke Gallery in New York while working as an independent curator and fine art and antiques dealer. It was shortly after this, in the early 1990's that planning for the Center for Contemporary Printmaking (CCP), then Connecticut Graphic Arts Center (CGAC), got underway. The structure of this new facility derived directly from Andrew Stasik's decades of experience and dedication to the communal studio and workshop model alongside exhibition spaces. During his tenure at CGAC Stasik contributed to all areas of the Center's development, most especially in the quality of the exhibitions, 12 of which were reviewed by the New York Times. He also attracted like-minded professionals from the printmaking community to the board and programming areas. The organization benefited from his involvement and direction for the five initial years he served on the staff, finally retiring from CGAC at the end of 1999. His contributions to the Center cannot be overstated and we recognize him for the high standard he set that the organization strives to continue today.

Written by Kimberly Henrikson, Executive Director, CCP