



Press Release

Carol Wax, “Dance of Shadows”

From March 5th until June 19th, 2011

Exhibition Curators: Paul Firos and Alexandra Van der Staaij

From Saturday, March 5th to Sunday, June 19th the Herakleidon Museum will present the exhibition **Carol Wax “Dance of Shadows”**. The exhibition will include 100 works on paper of the contemporary New York artist Carol Wax. The majority of these works are mezzotints, however a number of pencil and charcoal drawings will also be shown.

The antique sewing machines, typewriters, electric fans, toys, instruments, cameras, projectors, textiles and other items she collects inspire Carol’s images. Living with these objects in her home and studio means she is constantly studying them from different angles and finding new and diverse ways to revisit subjects: *To me, ordinary objects seem extraordinary. Artifacts of early industrial manufacturing, discarded shards of recent technology, and kitsch of any era reveal a great deal about our materialistic culture and changing attitudes toward the “stuff” in our lives. Common objects are laden with magic and symbolic associations that reflect and affect the psyche. (...) My interest in kitschy items has recently been heightened by things I find in the street. Whenever I come across these items, (dollar store chatchkes, gag gifts, broken children’s toys, etc.) I question how they came into being and the effort that went into making them. How many sketches, meetings, prototypes, office memos, man-hours, plastic, and energy went into their manufacture? Who would buy these items, how were they used, and did anyone care when they were discarded? Even finding a single child’s sock on the ground makes me think of the effort that went into its manufacture, thoughts the mother had while buying it, and the sadness that must have been felt upon discovering its loss. It’s not just a lost sock, it’s a mini-opera of human pathos. Each item and the manner of its discovery seem to shout, “Pay attention -- something happened!”*
~Carol Wax

The Herakleidon Museum is privileged to have among its permanent collections the entire body of works of Carol Wax’s printmaking career. In addition, the museum owns several of her pencil drawings and an original copper plate, a generous gift from the artist. The founders of the museum, Paul and Belinda Firos, avid collectors of her work, recognize Carol Wax’s place among the great artists of the emerging twenty first century. She is the foremost authority on mezzotint and has written a book on the subject, *The Mezzotint: History and Technique*, first published by Harry N. Abrams in 1990.

The Herakleidon Museum has published a catalogue raisonné of Carol Wax’s prints created between 1975 and 2005, to acquaint the broader public with her work and to highlight the intricacy and skill involved in the mezzotint technique. It includes Carol Wax’s commentary on a great number of her own works, making it a unique representation of the artist’s inspiration and process.

Carol Wax will also present a series of workshops and tours during which she will demonstrate the technique of mezzotint engraving:

CAROL WAX (b. 1953, New York)

Carol Wax is an internationally recognized artist whose work has been widely exhibited. While she also works in pencil, pastel, and oil paint, mezzotint is her principal métier and the work for which she is best known. With the exception of several printmaking classes, she is self-taught as an artist. The need to learn techniques about which there were no existing

texts prompted her to conduct research that ultimately led her to write *The Mezzotint: History and Technique*. Published in hard cover in 1990 and again in 1996 in soft cover, it has become the definitive book on the subject. Her ongoing research has produced, among other things, a system for weighting mezzotint rockers that facilitates the grounding process. Now manufactured by toolmakers Edward C. Lyons, the weights are the first improvement on this tool in over three hundred years.

Carol Wax's prints are in numerous museum collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Museum of American Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and the Boston and New York Public Libraries. She has had more than fifteen solo exhibitions and has participated in numerous group shows.

Honors include:

- 1987 and 2003 New York Foundation for the Arts Artist's Fellowships
- Concordia Career Advancement Award, 2004
- The American Academy of Arts and Letters Louise Nevelson Award for Printmaking, 1994
- Residencies at the MacDowell Colony (1986) and the Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation's Space Program (1996-97)
- 2009 Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundations Inc. Individual Artists Support Grant

and over thirty prizes in international competitions.

In addition to mezzotint workshops and lectures presented throughout the United States, she has been on the faculty at the Rhode Island School of Design, New York University School of Continuing Education, the State University of New York at New Paltz, and the Montclair State University in Montclair, New Jersey.

M.C. Escher and Books

M.C. Escher's prints from the Museum's permanent collection

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Maurits Cornelius Escher (1898-1972), a print maker who was an extremely skilled craftsman, but a hard to categorize artist, became very well known for his artistic adventures in the realm of mathematics and art. His regular divisions of the plane, his fascination for the interaction between the two-dimensional and the three-dimensional and his playful disruption of our concept of perspective resulted in prints that became appreciated worldwide.

Less known is that as a true print maker, Escher was also interested in the traditional purpose of making woodcuts, that of illustrating books and creating vignettes. Furthermore, he was regularly commissioned by book collectors to create their personal bookplate or *ex libris*.

In the exhibition *Escher and Books*, this other interesting side of a versatile artist is highlighted with works from the museum's collection.

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