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The City Re-Imagined

La Salle University Art Museum

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THE CITY RE-IMAGINED
ARCHITECTURAL PRINTS FROM THE
19TH & 20TH CENTURIES
January 23-February 25, 2007

La Salle University Art Museum
(Olney Hall Lower Lv1)
Mon-Fri 10am-4pm | Sunday 2-4pm
215-951-1221 | www.lasalle.edu/museum
Charles Meryon (1821-1868), French
La Galerie Notre Dame, Paris, 1853
Etching
Gift of Dr. William K. Sherwin

La Galerie Notre Dame, Paris, is one of several views Meryon created depicting Notre Dame de Paris. Meryon was an admirer of the writings of Edgar Allan Poe and it is from Poe’s poem “The Raven” (1845) that the artist takes the motif of the raven for this work. Meryon picks the vantage point of the interior of the gallery in Notre Dame looking out. The interior space is closed-in yet perforated, and the black birds add a certain malevolent presence.

2.

Samuel Chamberlain (1895-1975), American
*La Charite-sur-Loire*, 1930

Drypoint

Purchased with funds provided by Michael L. Duffy ’72 to honor the distinguished service of Br. Emory Mollenhauer, F.S.C. to La Salle University as Dean, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

The city of La Charite-sur-Loire was built up around the first Cluniac monastic priory. The city’s Notre Dame Cathedral, depicted in Chamberlain’s view, was slated for demolition in 1840, to increase the size of the Royal Road, when the writer Prosper Merimée, who had been appointed the first ever Inspecteur Général des Monuments Historiques in 1834, interceded to preserve the Burgundian Romantic structure. Along with fellow writer Victor Hugo and architect Viollet-le-Duc, Merimée championed the historic preservation movement to protect the architectural legacy of France. In the 19th century, this movement coincided with greater artistic interest in medieval and other historic architecture. In the 20th century, Chamberlain was similarly drawn to the medieval urban architecture of France, and like many French printmakers more than half a century before, he chose drypoint as the medium to impart the rustic, evocative qualities of the medieval buildings.
3.

Charles Meryon (1821-1868), French
*St. Etienne du Mont*, 1852
*Etching*

Meryon’s work is known for a masterful clarity and precision of line and also for a certain quality of the uncanny. The artist’s meticulousness contrasts with the spontaneity and sketchiness for which the medium is often known and appreciated. Meryon did not rely on atmospheric, heavily smeared inking to create a disconcerting mood. His compositional choices and use of strong contrasts, nonetheless, help to convey a sense of the familiar made unfamiliar. He also chose a tightly framed format similar to that of photography over the then popular panoramic view.

*St. Etienne du Mont* was accepted as an entry for the Paris Salon of 1852. Meryon chose an urban and modern vantage point with his main subject viewed between two other structures as a pedestrian might approach the view on the street. The church of St. Etienne du Mont, with its Renaissance façade, is flanked by the now destroyed Collège de Montaigu on the left and the Panthéon on the right. Meryon lived only a block away from this very spot. As is typical of Meryon, the scene is populated with small human figures, dwarfed by architecture. The disparity of scale allows the built world to overwhelm the sometimes teeming masses who inhabit Meryon’s compositions.
4.

Charles Meryon (1821-1868), French
*Tourelle, rue de la Tixeranderie, 1852*
Etching

Meryon created this etching from his sketches of a building that had been torn down in 1851. (He etched the words “Tourelle, rue de la Tixeranderie démoli 1851” into the plate. They are not extant in this later state.) Meryon was one of several artists and photographers who documented the architecture of old Paris slated for demolition during the Second Empire. Note the knight on his horse, which Meryon includes as an allusion to the building’s medieval history.

5.

Charles Meryon (1821-1868), French
*Tourelle, Rue de l'Ecole de Medecine, 22 Paris, 1863*
Purchased with donations from the Art Angels Fund

The turreted corner house in this etching is the location where Charlotte Corday murdered the Jacobin Revolutionary leader Jean-Paul Marat in 1793. Note the two roofers on the roof across the street. In an alternate version of this composition, their attention is drawn by allegorical figures floating in the sky above the street.
Charles Meryon (1821-1868), French

*Ministère de la Marine*, 1865

Etching

Purchased with funds provided by the Marjorie M. and Irwin Nat Pincus Fund for Prints and Drawings.

From 1855, Meryon’s artistic abilities were compromised by his progressively worsening physical and mental health. He could no longer draw with the same sureness of hand and his compositions lost some of their geometric precision and clarity as well. By then, however, his work had gained the appreciation of writers such as Charles Baudelaire, Théophile Gautier, and Victor Hugo. Meryon received some commissions through supporters and showed work in the official Paris Salon from 1863 to 1866, but continued to find it difficult earning a living.

*Ministère de la Marine* was published by the Société des Aquafortistes in 1866, the year Meryon’s final hospital confinement began. Meryon had served in the navy as a young man, and here he depicts the French Navy’s headquarters. Whimsical and bizarre flying marine creatures alongside horses and riders descend towards, perhaps even assail, the Ministère de la Marine. The creatures and people appear Polynesian, which further connects the imagery to Meryon’s navy days when he sailed in the South Pacific. According to Philippe Burty,
Meryon's friend, collector, and first cataloguer, Meryon was expressing his anger towards the French government for not sending aid expediently to colonists threatened in New Zealand in 1848.

7.

Hedley Fitton (1859-1929), British
Chichester Cross, 1926
Drypoint

During the early part of his life, Hedley Fitton (1859-1929) worked as an editor and illustrator for The Daily Chronicle in his home town of Manchester, England. He specialized in architectural etchings and gained notoriety for his finely detailed etchings of well known British and European structures. His etchings include street scenes and prominent cathedrals of such cities as London, Florence, Edinburgh, and Paris. In 1907, Fitton's works won him the Gold Medal awarded by the Société des Artistes Français, and in 1908 he was elected an associate member of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers. Fitton's works are etched with great attention to detail and show variations in shading and a subtle use of light and dark. This print concentrates on the highly ornate structure of Chichester Cross: dematerialized both by the lavish ornament and by the wide, open archways on which it rests, the building stands in contrast to the solid, unadorned, more modern buildings that flank it.
8.

Edgar Chahine (1874-1947), French
*Portail de Saint-Germain L'Auxerrois*
Etching
82-G-1208

Chahine grew up in Constantinople and received his first artistic training there. In 1892, however, he moved to Venice to pursue his artistic education, and began copying etchings by Tiepolo. His principle interest was the representation of local peoples and the poor. A disabled man drags himself into the church on crutches and other beggars loiter at the entrance of the church in the hopes of receiving some alms. The gargoyles and sculptures that adorn the building lend a rather menacing air to the image.

9.

David Young Cameron, (1865-1945) Scottish
*Gloucester Cathedral*, 1931
Etching and drypoint
86-G-1390
Purchased with funds donated by Donald E. Smith '60

The son of a clergyman, Cameron had a keen interest in the church, particularly in church music and ceremony. By 1905, Cameron was making drypoint additions to his etching in order to achieve greater depth and richness in the shadows. This print, created
in a combination of etching and drypoint, shows the interior of the Cathedral. Gloucester cathedral consists of a Norman nucleus with additions in every style of Gothic architecture and reflects the artist’s fascination with medieval buildings. The artist traces a series of arches with Gothic tracery, progressing from the dark interior closest to us, towards the light in the background. The rich tones and strong contrasts of light and dark convey a sense of the setting’s mystery.

10.

David Muirhead Bone (1876-1953), Scottish

*The Trevi Fountain, Rome*

Etching and drypoint
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. William K. Sherwin

Born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1876, Bone was trained as an architect, but later worked as an etcher and watercolorist. In 1901, he settled in London, where he became a member of the New English Art Club. Bone’s first prints date from 1898 and reflect his interest both in the subject matter and style of previous generations of etchers, including Piranesi, Meryon [see catalogue 1, 3,4,5,6] and Whistler. Many of his etchings were inspired by his travels abroad. This etching, executed mostly in drypoint, offers an uncharacteristic view of the area around *Trevi Fountain* in Rome. Rejecting the full frontal view onto the fountain, he instead leads us up the street flanking the fountain towards the lesser-known baroque church of *Santi Vincenzo ed Anastasio*. 
Frederick Garrison Hall (1879-1946), American

*Eglise de St. Nicolas du Chardonnet*

Etching

Purchased with funds provided by Donald E. Smith

During the 1920s, Hall was one of the most sought after etchers in the United States. Unlike many of his European predecessors, however, he was trained first as an architect, though early on he also began making prints. He became very skilled as a printmaker, being named member of the Chicago Society of Etchers, the Brooklyn Academy of Etchers and the American Federation of the Arts. During the 1920s, he etched many examples of French medieval and Renaissance architecture. St. Nicholas du Chardonnet is a Roman Catholic church in the center of Paris. This finely etched work has a staged feel, as we witness a religious procession entering into the church. The theatrical aspect of the image is enhanced by the bolt of cloth in the foreground, which seems to have been just unfurled in to allow us a view onto the church. The name of the church is inscribed on the canvas cloth.
12.

Katherine Kimball (1866-1949), American
Saint-Nicolas du Chardonnet
Etching

Kimball is one of the rare female etchers of this period. Born in New Hampshire, she studied at the National Academy of Design in New York and then at the Royal College of Art in London. Kimball treats the same subject as Frederick Hall [catalogue 11], but her print is set further away from the church and offers a more impressionistic, summary treatment of the building and surrounding life. The setting allows for a more ample view onto the picturesque building in front of the church with windows half open and half closed. The street is peopled with pedestrians and a vendor pulling his wares in a wooden cart.

13.

Frank Brangwyn (1867-1956), English
Meat Market, Bruges, 1906
Etching and drypoint

Largely self-taught, Brangwyn is known today for both his prints and his paintings. During the early part of his career, he assisted his father an ecclesiastical architect and textile designer in Bruges until his family moved to England in 1875. Brangwyn then
entered the South Kensington Art School and from 1882-84 worked for the textile designer William Morris. He began to make etchings in 1904, and this print executed just two years later treats a subject from his native Bruges. Unlike many of his peers, such as Frank Short, for example [catalogue 16], Brangwyn employs a more dramatic use of line, coupled with a dark range of tonal effects, which gives his work a grainier, and grittier appearance. The image has a harsh feel that is enhanced by the artist’s dramatic and slightly rough treatment of line. This treatment seems particularly well suited to a genre subject like the *Meat Market*, which depicts the dirt and bustle of an outdoor market filled with local shoppers and vendors.

14.

Earl Horter (1881-1940), American
*Dismantling*, c. 1910s
Etching
Gift of Mrs. Earl Horter

Horter was a Philadelphia artist and important early collector of modern—Cubist especially, African, and Native American art. He went to work for an advertising agency in New York City in 1903 and moved back to Philadelphia in 1916 with every intention of making his stay brief. Instead, he lived the remainder of his life in his hometown. He was largely self-taught, which was typical of etchers working in
New York before World War I. He admired the work of Whistler, Meryon, and Joseph Pennell. Like Meryon [see Catalogue 4] and some of the other nineteenth century printmakers on view, Horter makes reference to the ephemeral fate of the built world. Though many of his works in the 1920s show the influence of Cubism, the gritty realism of this earlier work, *Dismantling*, evokes the etching revival of the nineteenth century.

15.

Earl Horter (1881-1940), American

*Rainy Night – Chinatown*, c. 1934

Aquatint

Gift of Mrs. Earl Horter

In this aquatint, Horter exploits the medium’s ability to replicate the look of watercolor paint to its fullest. The moody, dark pseudo-washes makes the scene look like it has just stopped raining with puddles in the street and rainwater still refracting the light off the buildings. *Rainy Night – Chinatown* has the noir light and shadow quality of Expressionism. Horter does not bring out the details that would locate Chinatown as a geographically specific Asian neighborhood, although one could figure out the location in relationship to the tower of City Hall. Horter instead focuses on the emotive qualities of the print’s black and gray tones.
16.

Frank Short (1857-1945), English
*The Zuider Zee, Holland*
Etching

Born in Worcestershire, Short was the only son of an engineer and trained and worked for a short time in his father’s profession. In 1883, he entered the Royal College of Art, eventually becoming an instructor of etching and the head of that institution’s first engraving school. He was elected President of the Society of Painter-Etchers in 1910 and served in that capacity until 1938. He was also selected as an academician of the Royal Academy of Art and served as its treasurer from 1919 to 1932. This print was created around the fishing villages of the Zuiderzee in the Netherlands. This bucolic scene, which shows a group of Dutch men and women dressed in clogs, documents the dress and lifestyle of the people of this village, and reflects the etching-revival preference for genre subjects.

17.

Sir David Muirhead Bone (1876-1953), English
*Leeds Cathedral*
Etching and drypoint
Purchased with funds from the Marjorie M. and Irwin Nat Pincus fund for Prints and Drawings.
In addition to his prints depicting scenes from his overseas voyages, Bone also made etchings of important English and Scottish monuments. This image shows the Catholic Cathedral in Leeds. Construction began on the monument in 1901 and was completed in 1904. The design was given to the London architect John Henry Eastwood (1843-1913), who was born near Leeds and who produced an outstanding design in the Arts and Crafts Neo-Gothic style. Viewed against an embankment, from which the building seems to rise, the structure is indistinguishable from monuments of medieval design.

18.

David Young Cameron (1865-1945), Scottish
_A Venetian Convent, 1895-96_
Etching
Purchased with funds donated in memory of Claude Koch.

In addition to his views of Scotland and England, Cameron executed a number of continental sets, including views of North Holland, North Italy, Paris and Belgian. Like Bone and Whistler, Cameron made views of Venice, many of which were executed for a portfolio known as _Etchings in North Italy_, published in Glasgow by William B. Paterson between 1895 and 96. Whereas Cameron’s _St. Mark’s_ [catalogue 19] focuses on the church’s interior, this print offers a view down one of Venice’s picturesque side canals. And, whereas the former looks quite carefully at the
worshippers, this print gives rather little attention to the nuns and their convent and instead dramatizes the canal with its gondolas and shifting water reflections. The overall dark tonality of the print was achieved by selectively wiping the plate and captures the city’s humid, marine atmosphere.

19.

David Young Cameron (1865-1945), Scottish
*St. Mark’s Venice, No. 1, 1895*
Etching
Purchased with funds donated by the La Salle College Guild, 1984

This print belongs to the same series as the one seen before, picturing a *Venetian Convent* (catalogue 18). In this work, the artist focuses not on St. Mark’s grandiose façade, but on its interior and seems to be as intent to convey an impression of the devotional works as of the devotees themselves. Two large crucifixes dominate the foreground, and we see a priest at left front praying to an artwork, which remains hidden from the viewer. Further down the aisle, a group of figures waits to give confession.
20.

Wynand Otto Jan Nieuwenkamp (1874-1950), Dutch
The Old Bridge
Woodcut
Given by Dr. and Mrs. Ulrich Hiensinger

The similarity of Nieuwenkamp's style to that of Symbolist Jan Toorop's reflects a connection of these Dutch artists to Indonesian Art. (Toorop was born in Java and part Javanese.) Nieuwenkamp was the first Western artist to visit Bali and his flattening curvilinear surface pattern reveals the influence of Balinese aesthetics. The cropped boundaries of The Old Bridge prevent the viewer from locating the bridge in a specific time and place: This lack of temporal specificity opens the work up as a space for the viewer to interpret using his or her own imagination. Both photography and the Western Modernist interest in Japanese woodcuts inspired artists to adopt cropping as a compositional device.

21.

Samuel Chamberlain (1895-1975), American
Early Morning Market, Senlis, 1939
Drypoint
Purchased with funds from the Restricted Acquisition Funds of John Wallen Books, Philadelphia

American Chamberlain served in the French army as an ambulance driver during World War I and
subsequently returned to sketch the medieval architecture of rural French towns. Like several of the other artists represented in this exhibition, Chamberlain considered architecture as a career before choosing to become an artist. He lived in Senlis for several years and not surprisingly sketched views of Senlis more than any other village. His bird’s-eye-view is probably from the tower of the Cathedral. He depicts the medieval, originally Gallo-Roman walled town center as an almost claustrophobic, compact cluster of civic and domestic buildings boxing in a central market square of covered stalls in front of the 12th-century Church of St. Pierre. The open wooded area beyond on the upper left and the view of close rooftops at the foreground in the lower right further serve to compress the dense city center into a diagonally-oriented parallelogram. Chamberlain’s frontal village-scapes are typically relieved by expanses of clear sky, as in *La Charite-sur-Loire* [Catalogue 2]. This composition is more uniformly dark.

22.
John De Pol (1913-2004), American
*Lonely Corner, Belfast, Ireland*, c. 1950
Wood-engraving
Purchased with funds from the Restricted Acquisition Funds of John Wallen Books, Philadelphia
De Pol was largely self-taught and left a career on Wall Street to work in commercial printing firm after years of being an amateur print-maker. While stationed in Northern Ireland as a member of the U.S. Air Force from 1943 to 1945, he created a series of sketches, which would serve as studies for his later wood-engraving series. In *Lonely Corner, Belfast, Ireland*, the juxtaposition of the dark, foreboding sky, the complete lack of vegetation, and the deserted city street lend the scene an ominous, uncanny quality suggesting that this urban area is unpopulated. This sense of urban abandonment would have been especially charged in the context of World War II when the original sketches were created. This print won Honorable Mention at the Philadelphia Print Club in 1950 and was also exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum’s Annual Print Show and the Annual Exhibition of American Etchers, from where it was purchased by the Library of Congress.

23.

Patricia Neumann (20th Century), American
*Chicago Summer*
Etching
73-G-484

Like Estes [Catalogue 25], Neumann excludes figures from her scene of a Chicago Summer. A human presence is nonetheless suggested by laundry drying
on a clothesline on the third floor as well as by the slightly drawn curtains in the first floor apartment. The intensity of this summer day is conveyed by stark contrasts of vigorously etched and completely unetched areas, which convey effects of bright sunshine and deep shadow.

24.

Peter Milton (1930- ), American
*Passage I*, 1971
Photosensitive-ground etching, and engraving
Purchased with funds provided by Associated American Artists

Like Charles Meryon over a century earlier, Milton abandoned painting for monochromatic printmaking after learning that he was colorblind. In his photosensitive-ground etchings, Milton combines drawings and photographs on transparent Mylar sheets and transfers the images to photo-sensitized copper plates for printing. *Passage I* is the first in a series that juxtaposes architectural spaces with figures in ways that highlight qualities of displacement in terms of psychological as well as physical space. In the mid-ground, a young girl stands in front of a dematerializing backdrop that is framed in such a way as to play with the perception that it is a framed theater stage backdrop. The girl’s lower legs are cropped out of the composition as if her feet would have to go through the floor. The effect looks like photographic montage. In the foreground, interior
flooring runs up to the outdoor location of the background/backdrop. The arrangement of these compositional elements emphasizes qualities of memory and nostalgia as the mind attempts to reassemble disparate imagery through the haze of time. Memory and nostalgia are currents that run through Milton’s oeuvre. The artist often uses his own and neighbor children as models as well as appropriating images to express ideas about his own relationship to the past and present.

25.

Richard Estes (1932- ), American
Salzburg Cathedral, 1982
Serigraph

Working in a photo-realist style, Estes specializes in cityscapes. His images have a still, frozen quality, from which the human presence is excluded. In this image, Estes follows the lead of many late nineteenth and early twentieth century etchers in treating a well-known medieval monument. Pictured through a modern glass door, however, the effect is to confront the medieval and modern worlds in terms of an irresolvable difference. The absence of all human presence further conveys a sense of twentieth-century, urban alienation.