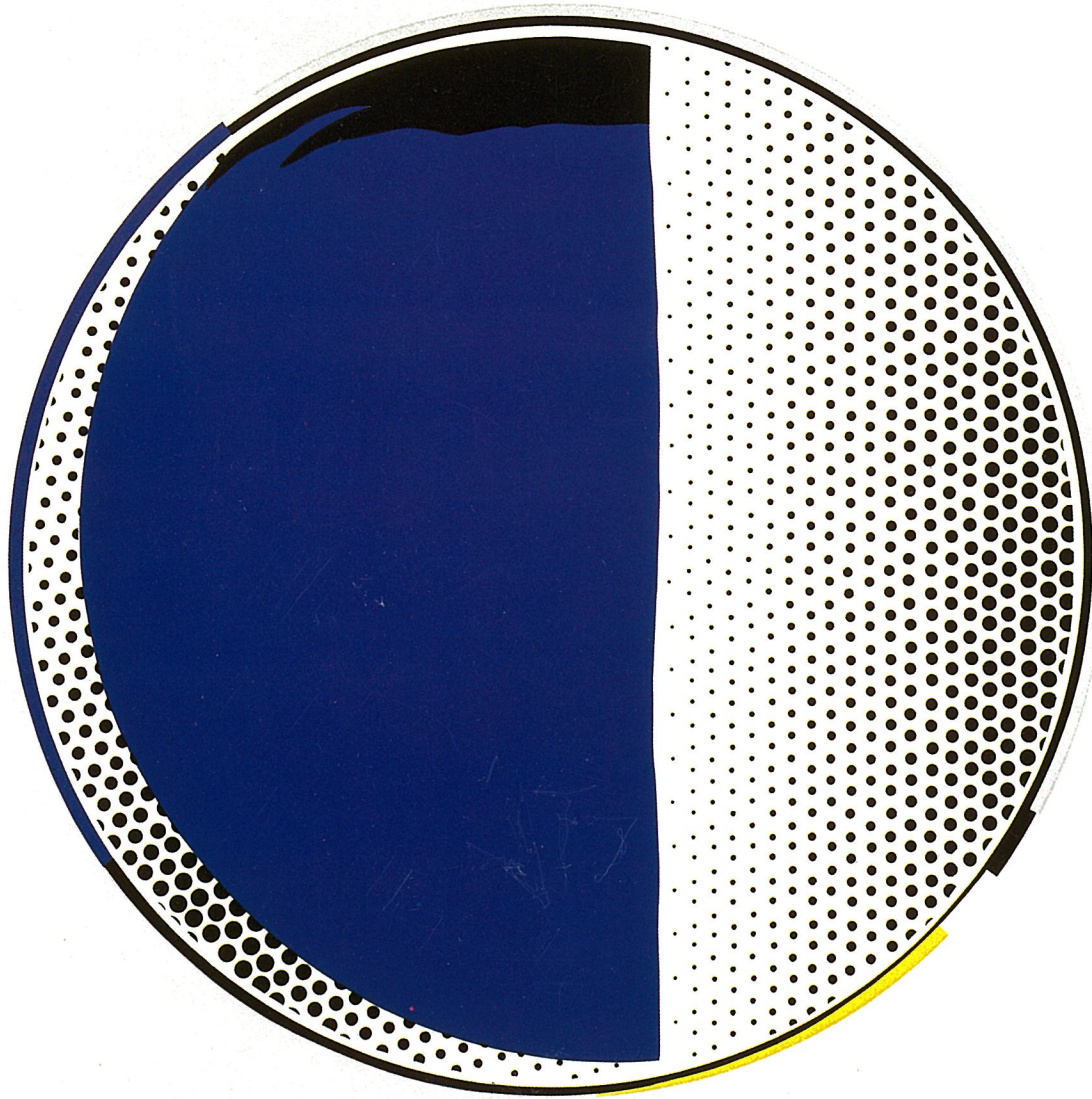


Roy Lichtenstein

Prints from the Collection of John and Kimiko Powers



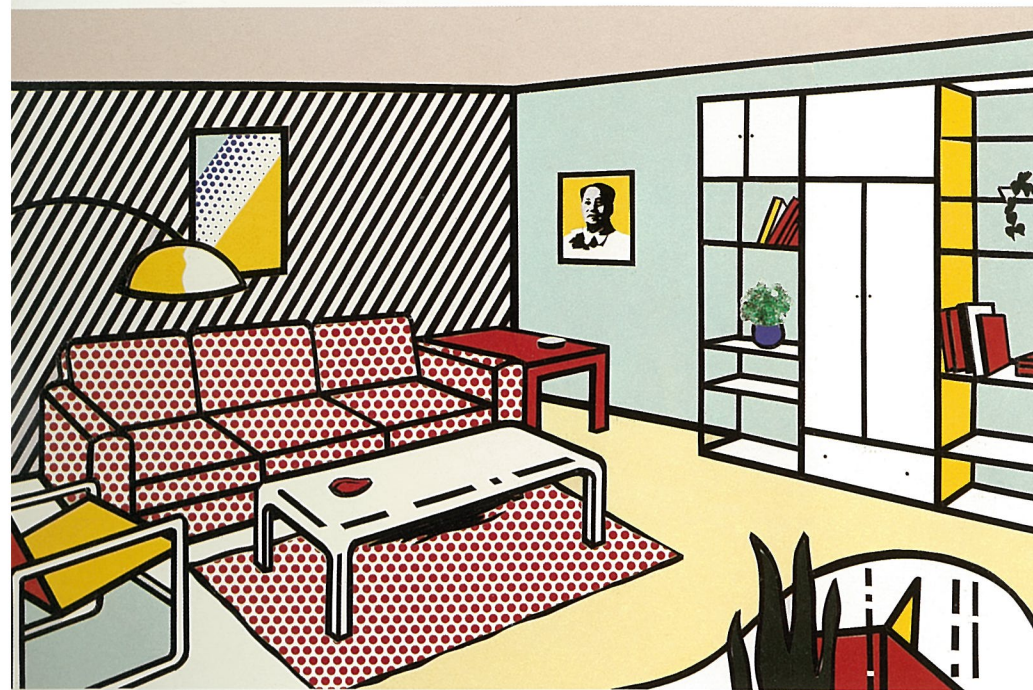
September 13, 1998 – January 3, 1999

1180 of Lichtenstein
MUSEUM COPY

The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art

Roy Lichtenstein

Prints from the Collection of John and Kimiko Powers



Modern Room, 1990 ©Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

With the passing of Roy Lichtenstein in 1997, the art world lost not only one of the most significant pioneers of Pop art, but also an artist who over the last forty years has had a profound influence on the nature of contemporary printmaking. Through his participation in the so-called “print renaissance” of the early 1960s, he contributed not only many new formal and technical innovations, but also helped elevate printmaking as a whole to a more central role in artistic practice. It can be argued that for Lichtenstein printmaking

was his most important area of artistic endeavor, providing not only a material sensibility that was closely aligned with his vernacular sources, but also creating an arena where the artist was more apt to experiment.

If one looks at Lichtenstein’s work as a whole, and particularly his editioned works, it becomes readily apparent that besides the obvious referencing of modernist styles and popular imagery, the artist was engaged in a wry game of self-appropriation, constantly quoting from

his earlier works. As Lichtenstein stated in 1985: “Everything I’m doing now had its origin at the beginning of my career. I’m not removed from how it all started. Everything I do is a comment on something. It’s ironic or humorous. When I do a still life, it’s a comment on the act of doing a still life. I’m composing a still life, but also commenting on the composition of a still life.” Through this rigorously self-aware approach to art-making, he succeeded in condensing the graphic sensibility of the first half of the twentieth century into a personal style that is not only immediately recognizable, but also profoundly revealing about the fundamental nature of representation itself.

This exhibition is a selection of Lichtenstein’s multiple-editioned works from 1964 to 1996, chosen from the collection of John and Kimiko Powers, who have assembled one of the most significant private collections of the artist’s work. The Powers, besides collecting Lichtenstein’s prints in depth, also became lifelong friends of the artist and his wife, Dorothy. I am grateful to John and Kimiko for not only generously lending from their collection to the exhibition, but also for their patience with the myriad of details that were necessary to accomplish this project.

Special thanks go to Cassandra Lozano, administrator of the artist’s studio, for expediting the exhibition’s planning; the staff at Gemini G.E.L. for clearing up questions on some of the recent works in the exhibition; and Bob Monk for his assistance with practical details. My profound appreciation goes to Dorothy Lichtenstein for both her willingness to contribute to the project and her thoughtful insights on the artist and his work.

—Richard Klein

An Interview with Dorothy Lichtenstein

The following conversation between Dorothy Lichtenstein and Richard Klein took place in New York in July 1998.

RK John Powers’s interest in Pop art was the impetus for his starting a visiting summer artists’ program in Aspen in 1966, which led to the creation of the Aspen Center for Contemporary Art. Roy participated in the program in 1967, along with several other artists, including Claes Oldenburg and Robert Morris. Is this when you first met John?

DL No. I met John Powers in probably 1963 or 1964 when I was working at the Bianchini Gallery and he would come by the gallery regularly to look at work. I believe he was at that time a member of the Young Presidents of America—people who had gotten to be heads of corporations before they were 40 years old—and he had a lot of connections and people he interested in art and collecting. He was a good friend of Paul Bianchini’s and he would look at work and buy a piece for himself—and occasionally say, “Pack this up and send it out to so-and-so in Boise, Idaho, and send them an invoice”!

RK What kind of work was he interested in at that point?

DL I know he had a huge number of de Kooning sketches and drawings. Occasionally, we would have a piece of Roy’s or something of Andy’s and he would take an interest. For example, we did a show called *The American Supermarket* in 1964, with various things that were made by artists to represent food, and we set up the gallery to look like sort of a supermarket. Instead of doing a poster we got Roy and Andy to put an image on a shopping bag. I recall John getting one of the bags done by Roy.

RK The influence of music on Roy’s work has been much on my mind as I worked on this exhibition. I know that John and Roy shared a love for jazz, and in my conversations with John I was surprised to find out that he had played the saxophone since he was a kid and encouraged Roy in taking up the instrument.

DL Probably one of Roy’s pivotal experiences was when as a teenager he heard jazz for the first time. I think he heard Charlie Parker—and it was a real coming of age experience. He took some clarinet lessons when he was a child and when he was older he had fiddled around with the flute. At some point I decided to take some flute lessons from someone who also taught saxophone who lived in Sag Harbor, and Roy always used to pick it up and play around with it. He actually had an ear for music, but not that much knowledge—he could listen to something and figure it out after one or two tries, and get the notes right. I knew he really loved this, and so maybe five years ago I decided to buy him an alto saxophone for Christmas.

RK It was a total surprise?

DL Yes! He loved it, and he started taking lessons. He really had a talent for it. What he needed to do was build up his chops, as they say, and he also started studying and learning how to read music. As soon as John Powers realized that he had a saxophone, he started calling him

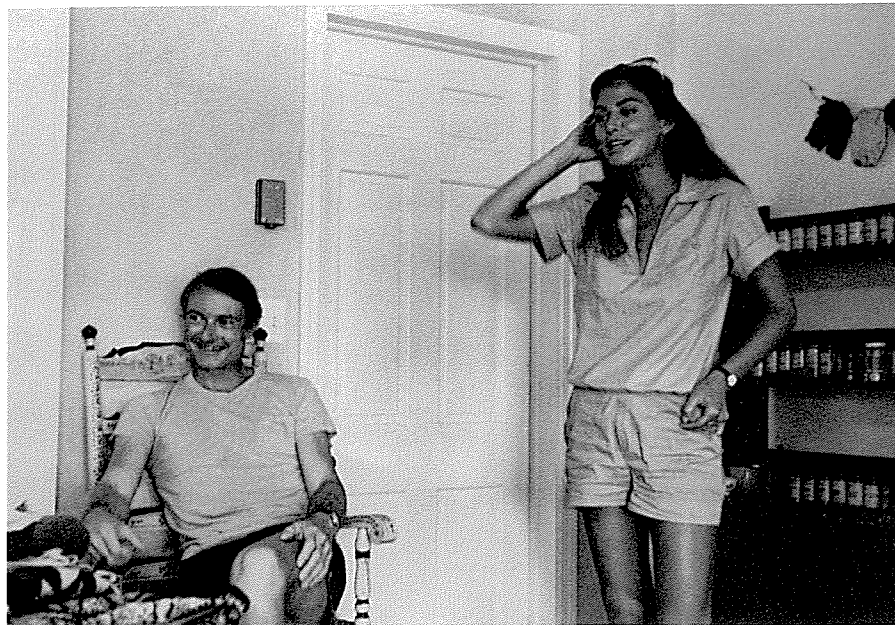
and sending him scales to study, books on instruction, sending him new reeds to try. They had seen a lot of each other, but with John living in Aspen, they had just sort of drifted apart. This interest brought them back together again. I was amazed to learn that John plays the saxophone a couple of hours every day.

RK Jazz has been a significant influence on many twentieth century artists. In looking at the prints that are in this exhibition, my thoughts often turned to Stuart Davis—another artist influenced by the rhythm and improvisational nature of jazz. Did Roy ever talk about Davis’s work?

DL Well of course. When Pop started, many people looked back to Stuart Davis and also to Gerald Murphy, so I think it was clearly an influence. Certainly the strongest influence for Roy was Cézanne and Picasso, and that had to do with his art professor at Ohio State University. From then on he looked at things in a different way. But I definitely think that jazz influenced him. Some of the last prints that he worked on, the *Compositions*, were inspired by his renewed interest in music.

RK We have *Composition I* and *Composition II* in the exhibition. It seems to me—instead of interpreting Roy’s quotation of other artists’ work as pure appropriation—it might be more correctly seen as an analogy to jazz’s approach of taking a popular melody and expounding on it.

DL That’s a great point. I mean I hadn’t thought of it that specifically, but that does describe the way he thought about art when he was appropriating a style. Even earlier than the Pop days, his work was a play on American historical painters like Benjamin West, or Charles Willson Peale.



Roy and Dorothy Lichtenstein, 1977 ©Estate of Roy Lichtenstein

RK I want to ask you about the play between representation and abstraction in Roy's work. In looking at the prints in this exhibition, one becomes aware of a question that Roy explored brilliantly: "What's the least amount of information needed in a picture to create an illusion of something?" Much has been written about the influence of popular sources—comics, phonebook illustrations, those sorts of things, as models for this kind of reduction. But this type of simplification—you mentioned Picasso—is a thread that runs through all of modernism.

DL If one was to look at, for example, the Mirror series, it is really about that kind of two-dimensional, simple printing that someone would do in a phone book or newspaper illustration—say in an ad for a mirror or a glass company. They're simply these abstract marks and if you say these are mirrors, people will take them

for mirrors. It seems to me that he always moved back and forth—he would do something that was very, very graphic, and then the next series would be a play between abstraction and representation. A good example would be the Brushstrokes.

RK The Powers have most of the Mirror series in their collection. Those works are so sophisticated with really such a little amount of visual information. This brings up the issue of visual humor in Roy's work—not the overt humor in the early comic works, but the witty, ironic humor in, say, the Mirror series or the Interior series. What did Roy feel about the incorporation of humor into the work; I mean, how conscious was he of it?

DL It was something that was inescapable for him. It was already in his very early work—they were parodies on these grandiose themes of American history. In the early cartoon paintings he used the heroic subjects of romance and war in order to play with the clichés of love and

romance and the stereotype of the hero. It was also that ironic humor of representation that seriously intrigued him—this idea that it could simply be marks on paper, or an image of something, a mirror or a brushstroke.

RK I love the way Roy would quote himself—like in the Interior series. He would put versions of his own works—Mirrors, or miniature versions of the Imperfect series—on the walls of the rooms. Or like in *Modern Room* or *Yellow Vase*—miniature quotations of Warhol paintings! It's really funny in this very subtle sort of way—there's so little art that has a genuine humor that's not gratuitous, if you know what I mean . . .

DL Yes . . .

RK And humor is such a profound emotion, in some ways the most human of emotions . . .

DL The most *humanizing* perhaps! You know, it is a key thing, and I'm sure he would be very happy to hear you say it. In a sense people sometimes make an assumption that art has to be serious, and if it's humorous that somehow it's brought down to a lower level, which it's not. He was very fond of and impressed by Saul Steinberg's work, and he thought that Saul was just really a terrific artist. Saul understood all the styles and how they could work together beautifully—always managing to do it with an enormous amount of humor and wit.

RK How much of each year did Roy generally spend on printmaking? I know he was very disciplined and had a seasonal rhythm. I understand that in the winter he usually went to work at Gemini in Los Angeles.

DL He always knew what he was going to do before he went to Gemini. He would work for four or five months on developing ideas before he would go out to Los Angeles. He would make some small sketches, and then usually make a collage for a print. Once the idea had gelled he would start thinking about process—frequently sending some of the collages out for the printers to look at, or Sid Felson might come by and visit the studio. By the time Roy showed up the printers would be ready so he could really work—they could start making trial tests. He didn't really want to leave empty space when he wasn't working. He would stay at Gemini for six weeks or two months, and maybe go back later to see proofs, or they might be sent to the studio for Roy to approve.

RK Was there usually a connection between the paintings that were being worked on and what was going on in the print studio?

DL Usually. There were times when he did prints, or was working on an idea for a print, and then wanted to incorporate the development in a painting—or it might become incorporated in a sculpture. The printmaking process was a very integral part of his working, often a jumping-off point for a painting.

RK When you look through the catalogue raisonné of the prints, it seems that printmaking formed the core of what he was doing—certainly as important as the painting.

DL I was struck by that idea when I saw the print show that was traveled by the National Gallery. Because of the different materials and techniques—embossing,

woodcut, etching—the prints actually have a lot more texture—physical presence—than the paintings. The printmaking process adds a lot of depth to the work.

RK Were there any prints that Roy considered his most significant, most important—ones that he would come back to?

DL Well, there were things he liked about them all, but I know he loved the Cow series—with the cow becoming more and more abstract. Around 1970, when he was exploring the "modern" style, the Modern Head prints that he did at Gemini, he really loved those. John and Kimiko have a number of them. I think he really liked the idea of the Mirrors. People always tended to like things that were an immediately recognizable image.

RK Considering the time that they were done—the early 1970s—did he think of the Mirror series as a comment on minimalism?

DL Oh, he absolutely thought that. In fact his Entablatures were a comment on color field and stripe paintings—artists like Noland and Lewis. He never made any—but he toyed with some other ideas, like drips on graph paper. At that time a lot of artists were working with grids or graph paper. Yes, in that period he definitely felt he was dealing with minimalism.

RK In the last decade or so there has been an enormous increase in younger artists doing editioned work, and a lot of it seems to have the same spirit that Roy had earlier—working with unusual materials, designing functional commercial items, mass-producing prints so that they could be given away. This attitude about infiltrating art into life seems to be one of Roy's main artistic legacies.

DL Yes, that was very important. The first prints, when he was at Castelli, were actually posters and mailers; they were usually folded up and mailed out. They would also have a stack of them at the gallery selling for five dollars each. Roy loved that idea—that a lot of people could buy one, that the work could be in a lot of places because it was inexpensive. Of course in the sixties that was actually part of the joy of the work, in a certain way the art world was innocent of big money at that time. In the late 1960s, Bert Stern, the photographer, briefly had a shop called On 1st that sold inexpensive, artist-designed items. Roy designed dishes in multiple, manufactured by the Durable Dish Company, glazed to make the dishes look like three-dimensional objects with shadows. This was also the time he made the paper plates—he really loved the idea that they were easily available; you could buy them, or you could give them away. I think that his pleasure in bringing art into our everyday environment made Roy among the most inventive of printmakers.

Works in the Exhibition

All dimensions are sheet size (in inches),
H × W × D

Except where noted, all works published by
Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles

CRAKI, 1963–64
Offset lithograph on white wove paper,
edition of 300, unnumbered
19¼ × 27⅞
Published by Leo Castelli Gallery, New York

Sandwich and Soda, 1964
Screenprint on clear plastic, edition of 500,
unnumbered
20 × 24
Published by The Wadsworth Atheneum,
Hartford, Connecticut

Brushstroke, 1965
Screenprint on white wove paper, no. 93/280
23 × 29
Published by Leo Castelli Gallery, New York

Shipboard Girl, 1965
Offset lithograph on white wove paper,
edition unknown, unnumbered
23 × 29
Published by Leo Castelli Gallery, New York

Reverie, 1965
Screenprint on white wove paper, no. 91/200
30⅞ × 24
Published by Original Editions, New York

Sweet Dreams Baby!, 1965
Screenprint on white wove paper, no. 92/200
37⅞ × 27⅞
Published by Original Editions, New York

This Must Be the Place, 1965
Offset lithograph on white wove paper,
edition unknown, unnumbered
24¾ × 17¾
Published by Leo Castelli Gallery, New York

As I Opened Fire Poster, 1966
Offset lithograph on wove paper
Poster reproduction of *As I Opened Fire*
painting (1964) in the collection of the
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.
Printed in six editions (1966, 1974, 1983, 1988,
1990, and 1991), unnumbered
Triptych; each panel 25⅜ × 20¾
Published by the Stedelijk Museum

Aspen Winter Jazz Poster, 1967
Screenprint on white paper, A/P
(project initiated by John and Kimiko Powers
for the Aspen Winter Jazz Festival)
40 × 26
Published by the artist and Leo Castelli
Gallery for the Aspen Winter Jazz Festival

Fish and Sky, 1967
Screenprint on silver gelatin photographic
print mounted on three-dimensional lenticular
offset lithograph on white board with window
mount, no. U/Y
23¾ × 20
Published by Tanglewood Press, Inc., New York

Ten Landscapes, 1967
Published in portfolio box with a plexiglass
top, designed to display one print at a time
Published by Original Editions, New York
(with Leo Castelli Gallery, New York)

Landscape 1, Screenprint on rag board,
mounted on board, no. 66/100
16⅞ × 21⅞

Landscape 2, Screenprint on rag board with
Rowlux overlay, mounted on board, no. 66/100
16⅞ × 21⅞

Landscape 3, Screenprint on chromogenic
photographic print, mounted on rag board,
mounted on board, no. 66/100
16⅞ × 21⅞

Landscape 4, Screenprint on Rowlux, mounted
on board, no. 66/100
16⅞ × 21⅞

Landscape 5, Screenprint on Rowlux, with
Rowlux collage, mounted on board, no. 66/100
16⅞ × 21⅞

Landscape 6, Screenprint on Rowlux with
chromogenic photographic print collage,
mounted on board, no. 66/100
16⅞ × 21⅞

Landscape 7, Screenprint on rag board, with
mylar collage, mounted on board, no. 66/100
16⅞ × 21⅞

Landscape 8, Mylar collage on Rowlux,
mounted on board, no. 66/100
21⅞ × 16⅞

Landscape 9, Screenprint with chromogenic
photographic print collage, mounted on board,
no. 66/100
16⅞ × 21⅞

Landscape 10, Screenprint on chromogenic
photographic print and Rowlux collage,
mounted on board, no. 66/100
16⅞ × 21⅞

Still Life, 1968
Screenprint on aluminum panel, no. 37/50
36 × 36
Published by Tanglewood Press, Inc., New York

Paper Plate, 1969
Screenprint on paper plate, edition unknown
10¼ diameter
Published by Bert Stern, for On 1st, New York

Haystack #2, 1969
Lithograph and screenprint on
Rives BFK paper, no. 53/100
20¾ × 30⅞

Haystack #3, 1969
Lithograph and screenprint on
Rives BFK paper, no. 53/100
20⅞ × 30¾

Haystack #4, 1969
Lithograph and screenprint on
Rives BFK paper, no. 53/100
20⅞ × 30¾

Haystack #5, 1969
Lithograph on Rives BFK paper, no. 53/100
20⅞ × 30¾

Haystack #6, State II, 1969
Lithograph on Special Arjomari paper,
no. 53/100
20⅞ × 30¾

Haystack #6, State III, 1969
Lithograph on Special Arjomari paper,
no. 11/13
20⅞ × 30⅞

Cathedral #1, 1969
Lithograph and screenprint on Special
Arjomari paper, no. 53/75
48½ × 32½

Cathedral #3, 1969
Lithograph on Special Arjomari paper,
no. 53/75
48½ × 32½

Cathedral #4, 1969
Lithograph on Special Arjomari paper,
no. 53/75
48⅞ × 32⅞

Cathedral #5, 1969
Lithograph on Special Arjomari paper,
no. 53/75
48⅞ × 32½

Cathedral #6, 1969
Lithograph on Special Arjomari paper,
no. 53/75
48⅞ × 32⅞

Modern Head #1, 1970
Woodcut on Japanese Hoshi paper, no. 34/100
24⅞ × 19

Modern Head #5, 1970
Embossed graphite with die-cut paper overlay,
mounted in lacquered aluminum frame with
wood support, no. 34/100
28 × 19½

Peace Through Chemistry I, 1970
Lithograph and screenprint on
Special Arjomari paper, no. 26/32
37⅞ × 63½

Mirror #3 (from the *Mirror Series*), 1972
Line-cut and screenprint with embossing on
Arjomari paper, no. 13/80
27⅞ × 27⅞

Mirror #5 (from the *Mirror Series*), 1972
Lithograph and screenprint on Special
Arjomari paper, no. 13/80
43⅞ × 33⅞

Mirror #6 (from the *Mirror Series*), 1972
Lithograph and screenprint on Special
Arjomari paper, no. 13/80
40⅞ × 29⅞

Mirror #7 (from the *Mirror Series*), 1972
Lithograph and screenprint on Special
Arjomari paper, no. 13/80
38⅞ × 25½

Mirror #8 (from the *Mirror Series*), 1972
Lithograph and screenprint on Special
Arjomari paper, no. 13/80
40⅞ × 53

Blonde (from the *Surrealist Series*), 1978
Lithograph on Arches 88 paper, no. 13/38
29¾ × 27

A Bright Night (from the *Surrealist Series*), 1978
Lithograph on Arches 88 paper, no. 13/38
26½ × 29

At the Beach (from the *Surrealist Series*), 1978
Lithograph on Arches 88 paper, no. 13/38
26 × 42

Reclining Nude (from the *Expressionist Woodcut
Series*), 1980
Woodcut with embossing on Arches cover
paper, no. 13/50
35 × 40⅞

Morton A. Mort (from the *Expressionist Woodcut
Series*), 1980
Woodcut with embossing on Arches cover
paper, no. 13/50
29¼ × 39

Tea-Set, 1984
23-piece tea service in glazed porcelain,
no. 21/100
Service consists of tea pot, creamer, sugar
bowl, and ten cups and saucers.
Published by Rosenthal China

The Sower (from the *Landscape Series*), 1985
Lithograph, woodcut, and screenprint on
Arches 88 paper, no. 13/60
41⅞ × 55½

1985 Champagne Taittinger Brut Bottle, 1985
(released 1990)
Screenprint on polyester encasing over glass
bottle, Edition of 100,000
13½ (height) × 3¾ (diameter)
Published by Taittinger, Reims, France

Imperfect 67 × 79⅞
(from the *Imperfect Series*), 1988
Woodcut, screenprint, and collage on 3-ply
Supra 100 paper, no. 6/45
67 × 79⅞

Blonde (from the *Brushstroke Figures Series*), 1989
Lithograph, waxtype, woodcut, and screenprint
on Saunders Waterford paper, no. 50/60
57⅞ × 37⅞
Published by Waddington Graphics, London;
and Graphicstudio, University of South
Florida, Tampa

La Sortie (from the *Interior Series*), 1990
Woodcut on Paper Technologies, Inc. museum
board, no. 36/60
56¾ × 78½

Modern Room (from the *Interior Series*), 1990
Lithograph, woodcut, and screenprint on
Paper Technologies, Inc. museum board,
no. 45/60
56⅞ × 80⅞

Water Lily, 1993
Screenprint on Lana Royale paper, no. 93/280
18½ × 23
Published by the artist and Gemini G.E.L.,
Los Angeles, for the benefit of the Joel Wachs
campaign

Modern Art I, 1996
Screenprint, no. 2/50
51¼ × 37½

Landscape with Poet, 1996
Lithograph and screenprint on
Lanaquarelle paper, A/P no. 11/12
90½ × 36⅞

Landscape with Boats, 1996
Lithograph and screenprint on
Lanaquarelle paper, no. 13/60
35⅞ × 65

Composition I, 1996
Screenprint, no. 13/50
47⅞ × 34⅞

Composition II, 1996
Screenprint, A/P no. 25/36
35⅞ × 44⅞

Board of Trustees

Larry Aldrich
Founder and Chairman Emeritus

Joel Mallin
Chairman

Marc J. Straus
President

Peter Wasserman
Secretary/Treasurer

Leon Levy
Honorary Trustee

Louis J. Lipton
Honorary Trustee

Richard Anderson

Dede Thompson Bartlett

Meagan Julian

Stephen M. Kellen

Perry J. Lewis

Sherry Hope Mallin

Douglas F. Maxwell

Deanne K. Mincer

Sheila Perrin

Martin Sosnoff

Richard Tucker

Museum Staff

Jonathan Bodge
Head Preparator

Nancy Bradbury
Office Assistant

Nina Carlson
Curator of Education

Lynda Carroll
Associate Curator of Education

Suzanne Enser-Ryan
Music Coordinator

Trish Freer
Gallery and Event Manager

Paul Harrick
Maintenance

Heide Hendricks
Public Affairs

Jessica Hough
Curatorial Assistant

Richard Klein
Assistant Director

Eva Lee
Curatorial Intern

Jennifer Millett-Barrett
Membership Coordinator

Sherean Nezhad
Intern

Wendy Northup-Moran
Volunteer Coordinator

Harry Philbrick
Director

Robin G. Phillips
Accounting

Kay Usher
Museum Secretary

Dawne B. Williams
Assistant to Director



Reverie, 1965 ©Estate of Roy Lichtenstein.
Photo: Robert McKeever

Cover: *Mirror #3* (from the *Mirror Series*), 1972
©Gemini G.E.L., Los Angeles

the **al**drich
museum of
contemporary
art

258 Main Street
Ridgefield, CT 06877
Telephone 203 438-4519
Fax 203 438-0198
www.aldrichart.org

A portion of The Aldrich Museum's general operating funds has been provided through a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, a Federal agency serving the public by strengthening museums and libraries.

Exhibition and education funding provided, in part, by the Connecticut Commission on the Arts.

Design: Marcus Ratliff
Composition: Amy Pyle
Printing: V & L Printers