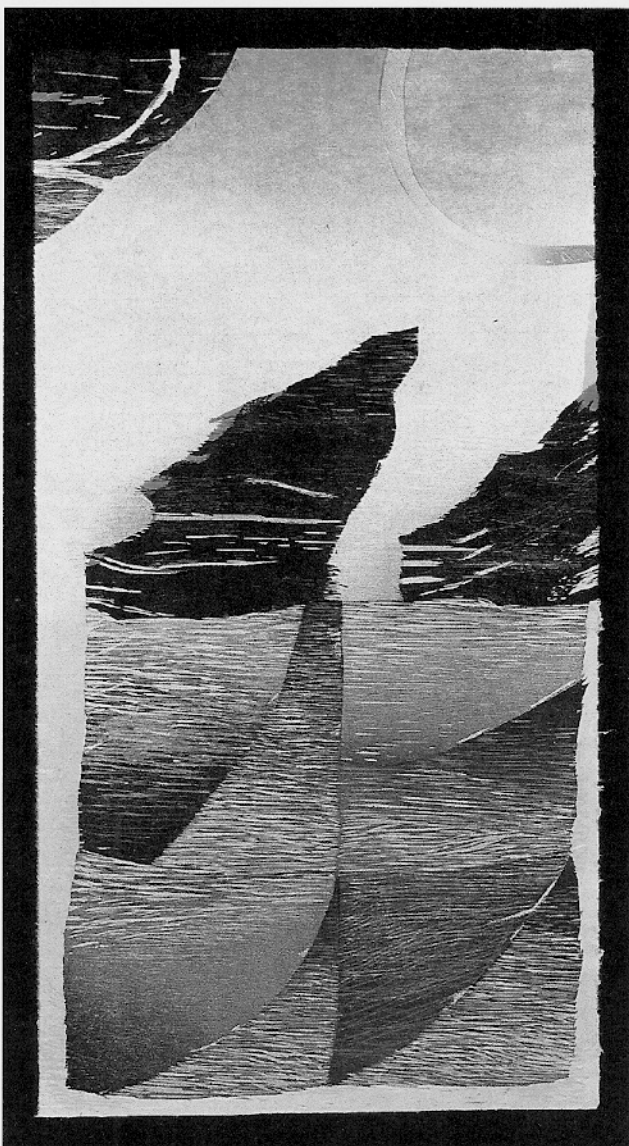


Karen Kunc, *True Ring at Tempest Time*, 1991, woodcut, diptych on shaped paper, 940 x 1067

Karen Kunc, *Island*, woodcut, 1984, 864 x 457



## For Karen

Printmaking has become a land of dichotomies, the crayon and mouse define areas of activity. The vernacular opposes the fine, the radical opposes the traditional, and the personal opposes the communal. In a time when the redefinitions of what comprises contemporary art and printmaking are themselves being redefined Karen Kunc continues to create a coherent and personal vision. A vision that is inseparable from her use of reduction relief printing.

Knowing can be separated into two fundamental epistemological systems. The location of one is in the mind, the other in the movement and spontaneity of the body. In the first art is a matter of communication, in the second the created object is imbued with the energy and life of the creator. Karen Kunc's works are directed by the spontaneity which only comes with repetition and deep commitment to her chosen materials and process, relief and reduction printing. She has themes and intentions which inform her work but it is the intensity of her knowledge and exploration of the materials that creates the sublime beauty to be discovered in her relief prints. She is guided by a sustained inner knowledge developed out of repeated interaction with the wood, inks, the use of stencils, brayers, and cutting tools. She produces an authentic translation of her ideas and perception through the accumulated knowledge of her gesture. Like a great dancer her prints have a sustained boundless sense of movement. Beauty is created from the body's knowledge of having learned the language of spontaneous expression.

In Kunc's prints the body's gesture and knowledge are focused to express the wordless aspects of our existence. Her images are simultaneously about the continuity and progression of nature. The prints speak of nature's constant change, chaos and evolution. The balance of concordant and discordant visual marks in her relief prints create images that express the range of attitudes by which we relate to nature and society. Her images show nature as both microscopic and as universal. The spatial patterns of her prints produce shifting points of view from satellites above, to geological cross sections, to the microscopic world below.

Karen Kunc's work answers persistent questions about the authenticity of the hand and the viability of abstractions as a legitimate creative language at the turn of the century. Her work speaks not only to the issues of abstraction but more deeply to a mode of knowing and understanding that comes from sentience, from the epistemology of the body.

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