



GALERIE FELIXE JENEWEINA MĚSTA KUTNÉ HORY

# BETWEEN

**NATURE AND CULTURE**

**americká grafika**  
**American Prints**

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Světelné lunety **Marka Ritchieho** zachycují slabou vrstvu atmosféry. *Tympanon - východ a Klenba Laramie* tvoří jakési sakrální lunety s využitím neobvyklých forem a reliéfních technik, jež se pokoušejí zachytit zkázu nebes prostřednictvím pohybu vzduchu a světla. **Takeshi Takahara** používá zbytky textilií pro své hlubotisky plné opakujících se značek a masivních strukturálních sil spojených proti minutovým nuancím energie. *Proud X* se opírá o napětí mezi temnou, mostu podobnou formou a jemnou větévkou pod ní, zatímco v *Proudu VII* forma srdcovitého tvaru sbírá a zadržuje vibrující energii.

**Nona Hershey** ve svých hlubotiskách uvádí přírodu do pohybu. V díle *Větve, Jaro ožívají stromy* i větve a proplétají se v pomalém tanci - ovšem v tanci umírajícího opadávání. *Ságy větvičky # 1* vyprávějí o životních formách, jež jsou zkroucené, vyděšené i zjizvené a mluví i o boji uvnitř života. **Karen Kunc** tvoří ve svých dřevorytech ikony přírody i jazyka. *Znamení* sleduje význam náhodných vztahů v přírodě, které jsou možná původem i zdrojem komunikace. Věčnou otázku klade *Kolébka* - otázku rovnováhy mezi otevřeností a nechápavostí, realitou a iluzí. A konečně **David Morrison** úmyslně „zasazuje“ prostředí do svých jemných popisných litografií, vytvářejících nepřírozené, šamanské formy z přírody samé v *Ikoně Penlandského lesa*. Příroda je znovu přispělována i udržována v rovnováze a její krása je pod dohledem v *Zátíší s křížením* pro výsostně lidské, duchovní hledání.

Tato skupina umělců představuje skutečný výběr mezi doslova stovkami jiných zajímavých, zasvěcených amerických grafiků, mezi nimiž bychom našli jiná témata i jiné vzájemné vazby. Tento výběr umělců je však pro mne obzvláště zajímavý, protože jsem velkou obdivovatelkou jejich tvorby a mnoho z nich již dlouhá léta dobře znám. A tyto umělci se formou grafického díla velmi přesvědčivě vyjadřují k tomu, co je nám všem společné - k vazbě lidstva a přírody.

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Between Nature and Culture: American Prints is a great opportunity to introduce the richness of American expression in contemporary printmaking to the supportive Czech audience. This theme aims to examine two divergent sides of the American character - the dominance of our prevailing popular culture through ever expanding means of persuasion and myth-making, contrasted with a love and passion for nature and space that, by this very characteristic, threatens, uses, searches for and deforms, ultimately exoticizing the thing it endangers.

Both sides of our American character contain a sensibility toward critical questioning, recognizing the ideals, misconceptions, realities within the American dream and our own history, which are visually addressed within these contemporary prints. These works eloquently state complexities with simple icons and symbols, using subtle as well as broad narratives, bold irony, and intangible essences.

Of course, there is a great variety represented in the works of these artists, which is part of the diversity of American printmakers, who exist in widely spread locations, most as teachers in academic environments. Yet all of these artists realize the luxury of this versatile medium of printmaking, which can be part of any art trend, refer to historical purposes of printed media, include traditional approaches and innovative directions, and answer personal expression for graphically rich images.

In the area of cultural critique, **Adrian Herman** creates her own absurdist references to a commodity culture in *The Four Seasons*, through our food fetishes and emotional appeasement. With *Paint Chips* she literally makes new definitions of color suggest impossible dreams of modern life. Both works use commercial technologies and presentation for her playful wit. **Randy Bolton's** multiple-print arrangement in *Big Fall* creates a bittersweet pun of natural consequence. His accomplished screenprints suggest nostalgic children's storybook illustrations, and with *Berry Pickers* he presents a metaphor of innocence that belies harsher truths.

The powerful messages of **Bill Fick's** linocuts tell us what we do to ourselves - the horror of human nature and conflict that can create *A Soldier's Story* and *Landmine*. These monumental prints are intricate in gestural cutting and raw pressure for graphic impact. **Thom Shaw** also makes charged images of social struggle in his large woodcut *Hegemony/The Hidden Fury: What's Love Got To Do With It*, and questions the loss of human nature within urban development in *Portraits: Strange Roads*. Here the woodcut tradition for emotional expression is honest and authoritative.

**Adele Henderson** has developed a rich lexicon of pseudo-scientific forms in *Abiogenesis: No.8*. She includes multiple layers of lithographic printing, of her own drawings and found source images, with suggestions of a natural development that has been mechanized, and ultimately deformed in *Heteronomous, No.3*. The lone figures in **Jeanine Coupe Ryding's** *Diver and Washing* exist in a scared, weathered ground, floating, lost, submerged. Her woodcut prints are masses of cut marks and layers of ink for a rich physical surface.

**Tom Christison** makes sacrificial icons of flesh in *Poulet No.4*, referring to our holiday of Thanks and overabundance. But there is a charged atmosphere in these beautiful lithographs - of a dangerous touch and electric shock in *Main No.3*. **Robin McCloskey** integrates photo-etchings with monoprint, and in *Gulf* there is a nostalgic sense of memory, loss of time. *Water's Edge* portrays an idyllic, but moody rural setting, forever lost in our collective past. She uses her autobiographic story to speak for our universal cultural experience.

Turning to the examination of nature, **Leslie Koptcho** looks inside, at the pulses of microscopic life in her lithograph and intaglio print *Subcutaneous*. Her paired images move between science and abstraction, densely colored and subtle in *Untitled*. **Lise Drost** fills her prints with energy from a myriad of fragmentary references to lush growth, and overgrown tangles. Her prints *The Forrest* and *SIU Exchange* combine print media that echo the contextual complexity. **Ellen Price**, on the other hand, notes a fragility in nature in the etching *Staked*, where the botanical samples in our urban surrounding need artificial support. Her prints have a soft, transitory impression, and *Fruits and Flowers* offers a delicate tracery of former abundance.

**Paul Stewart's** highly embossed prints *White Landscape* and *Grasslands* on handmade paper seem to carry the impression of the earth itself. There is the suggestion of presenting aerial views and maps, at once presenting the ancient geological forces that shaped the earth, and also the man-made cuts, striations and scars of beginning farming furrows to massive earthworks, that irrevocably alter the face of the earth.

**Sara Tabbert** creates a sense of rich intimacy with nature, of mosses, lichens, corals in *Time Rising*, that somehow exist within massive, destructive geologic forces over time, and encroaching man. These reductive wood engravings compress vast notions of monumental space, particularly in *On the Tail of the Typhoon*, with a vignette of Mount Denali within the detailed patterns.

**Bob Nugent** creates an exotically strange sense of natural life, seemingly quickly sketched, recorded on the edge of extinction. His extensive travels in the Amazon influence *Sertão # 1* and *Sertão # 3*, which means "wilderness" in Portuguese. The prints are made of deeply etched lines, flecks of fading colour, and accidental residue - a natural sense of decay.

The luminous lunettes of **Mark Ritchie** capture a slice of the atmosphere. *Tympanum - East* and *Laramie Vault* form sacred windows, using unusual forms and relief techniques that try to capture the doom of the sky, through movements of air and light. **Takeshi Takahara** uses textural residues in his intaglio prints of repetitive marks and massive structural forces paired against minute nuances of energy. *Flow X* relies on the tension of the dark bridge-like form above the delicate branch, while in *Flow VII* a heart form collects and contains vibrating energy.

**Nona Hershey** has animated nature in her intaglio prints. In *Branches, Spring*, the trees and branches become alive and entwined in a slow dance - yet, it is a deadfall. *Aborescent Sagas # 1* tell of life forms that are knotted, scared, pitted and speaks of the struggle within life. **Karen Kunc** creates icons of nature and language in her woodcuts. *Signs* sees meaning in accidental relationships in nature, perhaps the origin and source of communication. An eternal question is posed in *Riddle* - of the balance of openness with density, reality and illusion. And lastly, **David Morrison** deliberately "sets-up" the environment in his delicately rendered lithographs, creating unnatural, shamanistic forms from nature itself in *Penland Forest Icon*. Nature again is pinned and poised, beauty under restraint in *Stillwater Cross Section*, and for an ultimately human spiritual quest.

This group of artists is very selective, from among literally hundreds of other interesting, dedicated American printmakers, where other themes and interrelationships could be developed. But this collection of artists is particularly interesting to me, as I am a great admirer of their work, many I have known very well for many years. And these artists speak with great conviction to our common interests about the interface of mankind and nature through printed expression.

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