

FIRST IMPRESSIONS: NEW WORK BY PEREGRINE PRESS ARTISTS

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The energy surrounding the statewide *Maine Print Project* two years ago is carried forth in this formidable exhibition of work by the thirty artist members of the Peregrine Press, a printmaking cooperative founded in Portland in 1991. The exhibition is divided in three parts, which fit perfectly into a trio of contiguous galleries on the main floor of the Saco Museum.

The Portfolio Project, a limited-edition collection of prints by twenty-four of the Peregrine Press artists, is the opening act. The diversity of images is matched by the range of printmaking techniques. Richard Wilson offers *The Professor*, a lithograph showing a suited man helping a nude woman walk across a sofa back. In Kate Cheney Chappell's *Armistice Revisited*, an etching with chine collé, five arrowheads trail wisps of string. Sissy Buck's monotype *Spine Pentimento* is a ghostly arrangement of vertebrae shapes inspired by back surgery.

Four glassed-in cases in the middle gallery offer the next best thing to actual demonstrations: an overview of printmaking techniques,



Richard Wilson, *The Professor*, lithograph, 11 x 8", 2008. Photo by Jay York, courtesy of Peregrine Press.

from etching to woodcut. The processes are highlighted through the work of Peregrine Press artists, including Susan Amons, whose monotypes of birds are the more remarkable for knowing how they are made.

The third space offers an exhibition of new

work by all press members, curated by Linda Konheim Kramer, executive director of the Nancy Graves Foundation. The variety is extraordinary, from Stephen Burt's old master-like etching *The Flowers of Wrath* to Dorothy Schwartz's *Abu Ghraib*, a striking configuration of chine collé, woodcut, and thread. Judith Allen-Efstathiou, Blair Folts, Alison Hildreth, Mary Lou Lipkin, Frankie Odom, and Alice Spencer number among the other standouts.

Each year, in memory of two members who died of breast cancer, the press offers a year-long scholarship to a student at the Maine College of Art or the University of Southern Maine. This year's recipient, Tyson Jacques, used giclée prints, serigraphs, and beeswax to create the installation *In the Hive*, a provocative sociological statement.

In his landmark study *The Imprint of Place: Maine Printmaking 1800–2005*, art historian David Becker notes that the Peregrine Press has "thrived as an active collaborative print community." That assessment is more apt than ever.

—Carl Little