



ARTIST

Joan Lyons

TITLE

No title

DATE

1979

DIMENSIONS

23 in H x 17.5 in W

MEDIUM

Offset Lithography

CATALOGUE NUMBER

1979.020

CURRENT LOCATION

2024-1C

JOAN LYONS

BORN

1937

GENDER

Female

CITIZENSHIP

United States

CULTURAL HERITAGE

European-American

LIGHT WORK RELATIONSHIP

Other, 1977

On the Offset Press exhibition at the Everson MuseumLight Work Gallery, 1980

Light Work Retrospective Exhibition, 1985

Robert B. Menschel Gallery, 1989

LIGHT WORK PUBLICATIONS

On the Offset Press exhibition catalogue

Contact Sheet 2

Contact Sheet 14

Menschel Gallery Catalogue 17

Exhibition Catalogue: Alternative Imaging

ESSAYS

While the process of recording a photographic image is a mystery to many, photographs communicate as effectively as a familiar phrase to a stranger and can be understood as readily as we understand our own words and descriptions. Joan Lyons combines these two opposing qualities of photography in her work to produce a melody of visual languages. The starting point in her work might be as simple as the recognition of her daily routine of looking out the window at a tree in her yard, as personal as the desire to investigate her political convictions or as intellectual as the process of digesting the accumulations of forgotten projects. Reproduced on the cover of this brochure is a detail from a piece titled *Collected Works 1965-1986*. The piece consists of 80 twelve by eighteen inch panels of handmade paper constructed out of two decades worth of notes, prints, sketches and unfinished projects. Lyons reconstitutes these raw materials into individual sheets of paper that while subtly revealing their origins only hint at their content. The protests at a government nuclear warhead storage facility in Seneca Falls, New York is the subject of her series *Women's Peace Encampment*. Women from all over the world come to protest the storage of nuclear warheads at the Seneca Falls army depot. Each piece in the series features a snapshot of other women drawn to the protest underscored with a few short words written by each subject. The snapshots and words are sewn onto a large photogram diazo print. Each photogram was created by the women as they stood on the sensitized photo paper as it was exposed to the sun. The casual quality of the snapshots, the direct pleas of the written messages and the photograms that allude to a human imprint left by a nuclear blast, builds a voice like no single image can. Lyons employs the same strategies in her series *Some Trees Around the House*. In one piece about a white ash tree she presents the idea of her neighborhood as a museum for trees through words she includes in the image. The palladium prints layered into the piece are museum-like objects and to complete the tour she includes a small Polaroid print of the ash tree that has been adorned with photographs of itself. What Lyons is saying becomes indistinguishable with how she is saying it. Unfinished work becomes a completed piece in *Collected Works*. Women stand up for peace and equal rights, metaphorically and figuratively, in *Women's Peace Encampment* and the personal significance of a tree in her yard grows into a symbol of public display in *Some Trees Around the House*. As the viewer we complete her work as we discover her unique visual language celebrating the process of picture making. Joan Lyons lives in Rochester, New York and is the Coordinator of the Visual Studies Workshop Press. Jeffrey Hoone (c)1989

ON THE OFFSET PRESS More and more, one comes to know an artist's work through the widespread reproduction of artwork in books, periodicals and special editions. The great progress that has been made in offset lithography's ability to reproduce art has redefined the relationship between the artist and his/her audience. The size of the audience has undeniably expanded, but this new audience has had to share a given artwork at an aesthetic distance determined by the lithographer's (printer's) inability to precisely reproduce the artwork. Quite simply, the painter's pigment is not ink; neither is the photographer's silver. While many artists have shrugged off the issue of reproduction as merely an old misfortune, others have sought to address the problem by securing the best (and, necessarily, most expensive) offset printing, or by accepting ink as a workable means of expression. ON THE OFFSET PRESS presents the work of four contemporary Americans who have approached the machinery of reproduction to produce original artworks. Scott Hyde, Syl Labrot and Todd Walker are photographers; Joan Lyons, though primarily a printmaker, has long been associated with photography. Their offset pieces certainly reflect this shared tradition but also explore the color and tonal possibilities of ink applied by machine to paper. While the printing process serves each artist as the form of their expression, the source and content of their works come from places as diverse as the artists themselves. Todd Walker, who operated a highly successful Beverly Hills photography studio for more than 25 years, received considerable acclaim during the 1960's for his solarized photographs of nudes. These photographs, together with the masterful solarizations created by the late Man Ray during the 1920's and 30's, remain one of the most exciting achievements in manipulative photography. He began working with the offset press about ten years ago as a means to publish his own work. His current imagery is derived from black and white negatives; the color is synthesized by a series of photo-mechanical masks. He has produced three small edition books of his photographs and writings during the last year: for nothing changes, a few notes, and three soliloquies. Joan Lyons is a printmaker who has utilized various image-generating machines to create a surprising personal expression. Her prints characteristically undergo several generations of reproduction including drawing, xerography and color offset lithography. She has produced several book editions of her work, including *Bride Book: Red to Green*, and Abby Rogers to her Granddaughter, and two portfolios of offset prints. A co-founder of Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, NY, she currently directs their print shop. Syl Labrot's recent photographically-derived offset work is a significant departure from the traditional single image. *Pleasure Beach*, a lavish extension of the photographic book, is a remarkably dramatic exploration into his own history and imagination. Its foundation is Labrot's long-standing concern with the color photographic print as a space quite separate from both the reality reproduced by the camera and the graphic forces of the print: the print transcends its parts, yet is deeply linked to them. Working with offset allowed him to reconstruct and redefine his own evidence, much as if he were his own archaeologist. Scott Hyde's interest in de-mystifying art led him long ago to the inherent possibilities of inexpensive, large-edition offset lithography. His work is deceptively simple in the way that Stieglitz, Atget and Evans are simple. His subject matter is not exotic, but rather commonplace. A patch of grass, a few brushes, a sidewalk synthesis drawn from his own neighborhood: simple objects, when really seen, may well reflect the depth of experience that an artist may bring to them. During the process of preparing this exhibition, we were saddened by the death of Syl Labrot. He was a special friend to many in the world of photography, and was a teacher for many young offset artists. We hope that their work and this assemblage of offset prints serve him well. Phil Block and Tom Bryan

Light Work 1977 Joan Lyons September 4 – October 22, 1989 While the process of recording a photographic image is a mystery to many, photographs communicate as effectively as a familiar phrase to a stranger and can be understood as readily as we understand our own words and descriptions. Joan Lyons combines these two opposing qualities of photography in her work to produce a melody of visual languages. The starting point in her work might be as simple as the recognition of her daily routine of looking out the window at a tree in her yard, as personal as the desire to investigate her political convictions or as intellectual as the process of digesting the accumulations of forgotten projects. Reproduced on the cover of this brochure is a detail from a piece titled

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