FROM THE NOTEBOOK OF A PRINTMAKER -
ON FORM, CONTENT, SOURCES, AND EXPERIENCES

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by

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I dedicate this thesis to my parents who have helped and encouraged me all through graduate as well as undergraduate school.
FROM THE NOTEBOOK OF A PRINTMAKER -

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INTRODUCTION: PART I

While learning to become a professional artist, I did not notice my own shortcomings in preparation until I had nearly completed my degree program. I have attempted to reinterpret and re-evaluate my classroom experiences as well as to seek to remove myself from that particular context. I have found little reason to question the validity of the curriculum. For a long period of time attitudes concerning the very nature of fine prints, drawings, and paintings were discussed and analyzed. I have been exposed to various attitudes relative to all of these media and have found little reason to question this form of teaching. I believe I have developed a sense of responsibility which determines and underlies all of my current activity.

This responsibility is not blind confidence but a form of integrity which also underlies all of my methods. All activities in which I have been involved have resulted in investigations, both mental and physical, into areas of personal expression. Through trial and error and from the expulsion of detrimental philosophies have come my own

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pictures; I believe that I find my images. I never make them. I never rely on a set of constant values or preconceptions in my printmaking activities. I simply try to put good things together, hoping that something resolved and unique will result. I move forward by relying on my own resourcefulness. I find strength in the power of these attitudes which make for resolution and maturation of my aesthetic concerns.
ON FORM AND AESTHETIC CONCERNS: PART II

I do believe my pictures have become stronger since I entered graduate school. I believe my images and I have mellowed because of these experiences. For me the intaglio processes have become the most important since they have given me the quality and richness of form which are appropriate for my images. The intaglio processes are the most personal of the many graphic media at this stage of my development.

My techniques have become both more subtle and clear while my pictures are still highly structured. They are not yet as open as I would like them to be. My approach, however, has become quite free, even more so than during the last months of undergraduate work when I became concerned with strong form and structure, almost, I believe, architectural in nature.

I believe that I am not overtly influenced by any artist or style although I sincerely admire such printmakers as Lee Chesney, Andrew Rush, and Matta. From these people I have sought guidance and confidence to help me in my own decisions. I enjoy picture making and I find more interest and quality in experiences which come from my mind.
This is why I find little use for photography in printmaking. I believe that the human mind can produce answers more significant than a camera. Photography is a significant art form which should stand alone as a separate graphic form and should not be equated or pitted against the mentally filtered image.

Many of my images have color which can enhance a print, but I feel that color does not by itself resolve or complete a fine print. The structure and form should be strong enough to hold a picture together without having to use color as a crutch or as a cute trick. Sometimes there is a danger that the printmaker can unknowingly become infatuated with the complicated processes of color intaglio work and forget his purposes in using color in the first place. This is why I hold the black and white print in high regard for its own inherent virtues. I do enjoy pretty things but as soon as my own work tends to become pretty I re-evaluate it and usually find that what I did was inadequate in structure. Many colors go well together like a rather pleasant sweater and shirt ensemble; however, too much color coordination can become very dull, so I am constantly searching for a palette of somewhat varied, off-beat hues.
such as black and blue, purple and brown, pink and gray-green as well as black and white. When I used color in the past it was as a colorist and not as a value structurist. This is something that I have been fighting to achieve for some time. Indeed I love color for color's sake, but I believe that for my own pictures color works best to augment value.
ON CONTENT AND DIRECT INFLUENCES: PART III

In my youth, during and shortly after the Korean War, there was a newly founded interest in historical research connected with the Second World War. This research and interest manifested itself in the form of the documented novels, histories, and documentary films. Television also played an important part in the revived interest. You Were There, sponsored by the Prudential Life Insurance Company and hosted by Walter Cronkite, was seen every Sunday evening. This serial usually dealt with the re-creation of some important episode of the Second World War. A few years later this show was renamed The Twentieth Century but the content was the same. The only difference was that actual combat footage replaced the Hollywood reproduction. There were also several other documentary series seen during those years: Air Power, Victory at Sea, Navy Log, and Flight. All of these television shows used actual combat footage taken by Armed Forces personnel. Later, in 1960, Metracal sponsored a series, The Violent Years, which was a pictorial biography of Winston Churchill during the war years. This series was what I considered to be the finest of all due to superb editing and commentary. During my high school years
three Hollywood series were produced for television: Combat, 
Gallant Men, and Twelve O'clock High. These were a constant 
source of information and entertainment for me. These shows 
were also very popular since the United States build-up in 
Vietnam had not yet occurred and anti-war sentiment was all 
but unheard of. A decade after the Second World War had 
ended there was a renewed interest in that war from the 
historical standpoint. This occurred when I was at the 
peak of my younger, impressionable years. I was constantly 
coming into contact with this subject matter. Its influ-
ences were both deep and long lasting. I would ask my 
father about the war and I had my mother bring home from 
the library all of the big picture books. I would read, 
look at pictures, and draw imaginary scenes of that great 
conflict. I can remember when I was nine years old I spent 
the entire summer vacation reading and dreaming about World 
War II. Because of the uniforms, I quickly became en-
amoured with the European theatre of operations instead of 
the Pacific theatre. Both Allied and Axis uniforms were of 
better quality since the climate was always cool and damp 
even during the summer months. Tropical uniforms, on the 
other hand, were usually thin suntan gabardine and quite
drab when compared with English wool and Brooks Brothers cavalry twill. To do battle on the vast plains of Europe with toll houses of the Medieval Hanseatic League at every river bend always seemed more romantic to me than some nondescript, insect infested rain forest. Since the greatest battles of Western man were fought in Europe - wars of attrition, wars of conquest, wars of religion - it seemed only fitting historically that this last, great battle should retrace the footsteps of Bismark, Napoleon, Wellington and Alexander.

I became very interested in Germany during this war and consumed every scrap of information that I could find about Rommel, Guderian and Doenitz. As a young boy I really didn't believe all of the bad things that I heard about the Germans. Besides, I always championed an underdog, especially since the brown shoe United States Army seemed rather inelegant when compared to the glittering uniformed East Elbian Junker professionals. I once made a fantastic drawing of German paratroopers dropping onto an American P. T. boat and bayonetting the entire crew. Then, when I became older, my father gave me a liberated German helmet and when I was in the fourth grade I bought an Iron
Cross First Class from a friend with my lunch money of twenty-five cents. It was indeed a prize and it started me on my hobby of collecting military artifacts.

It wasn't until high school that I learned where to acquire actual German uniforms and accouterments and discovered that there were many other people who had the same interests as I did. I went to antique shows all over the state, and while acquiring military artifacts, I developed an interest in firearms for their craftsmanship and intricate beauty. My father owned many different firearms and he took me shooting quite regularly. However, it wasn't until high school that I became seriously interested in collecting firearms too. My father gave me a little Stevens .22 caliber single shot rifle that he had when he was a boy. My gun collection grew and complemented my military collection. The mechanism, the finish, the patina of each weapon is unique with its own intrinsic value as a piece of craftsmanship and as a part of history.

Hunting is also an important part of my life. I believe that it gives me an invaluable peace of mind as it takes me far from city and university to be myself, alone with the world and a fine fowling piece. Many times I
sense that this is a spiritual relationship, especially during the autumn of the year, a time that is as ephemeral as the leaves of the scarlet oak. I am thoroughly convinced that a person who does not at least go into the field prepared to live from it is only existing without knowing the true value of life.

As my collections grew so did my library. Besides my favorite art books, I have books on military history, uniforms, and the heritage of firearms. Although college courses on these topics are rare, I have taken as many as I have had time for, both at Miami University and here at Ohio State. These courses have considerably broadened my outlook on these interests.

I have done considerable research on my own concerning German and American uniforms and equipment since there have been many misconceptions concerning these topics. I believe that a complete dissertation could be written on these matters alone. Since this is a curious and controversial interest, I keep most of it to myself and have become vehemently defensive about this matter. At one time I thought I should apologize for these interests since many people questioned my motives in these pursuits of historical information. These artifacts provide one with a part of
history. I imagine history every day as it manifests itself in these colors and weapons. I have found it difficult indeed to narrow my interests as I am concerned with most periods of military history and weaponry during the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. One cannot come into contact with as much material as I have and not find related topics such as the Church, the State, and economy equally absorbing. I regret only that I have not had the time for these other areas. But this is the age of the specialist, and I have accordingly had to restrict my research.

As an artist I have drawn from these sources of history for my drawings and prints. I am very skeptical, however, of this material as a source and tried to play down the subject matter by keeping it very dark and shadowy or avoiding it altogether. I have made pictures using soldiers but they are only shapes without definition used as an element of structure as in Leibstandarte 1933. (Plate 5) One experimental print, D. F. C. (Plate 3), uses a pair of British Royal Air Force Wings, a pure form, standing as a shape by itself. It is one of the more successful ones in my portfolio.
These military and para-military images are so familiar to me that I sometimes hesitate to use this knowledge in conjunction with picture making for fear of creating useless social commentary that I see too much of today. Although I am aware of the strong associative nature of this military subject matter it is not symbolic and I do not intend for it to mean something that it does not. A depth analysis of this is not necessary since I maintain that there can be no hidden inner meanings and no explanations of why I make certain pictures with military overtones. These prints take no moral stand. They are not anti-war in nature and they most certainly are not pro-war since I have no predilection for war.

I firmly believe that one must have deep interests in life other than one's work, not only to draw from for material, but also to take one away from his work. Picture making for its own sake can become shallow without commitment or roots. One must scrape a great deal out of his personal interests and experiences for his picture making. The artist should trust in himself.
CONCLUSION: PART IV

Concerning my military pictures, I have often been asked if I have a guide or an index by which to judge my work. To this I must answer, "No." I have looked hard at Otto Dix, Francisco Goya, even Bill Mauldin, and have come to the conclusion that the pictures they made were relevant to their times. Theirs were deep studies of institutions, cruelties, ironic comedies or the political decadence of their times, whereas my pictures deal with a time and wars long past. I believe that from this distance I can detach myself and see things not coldly, but almost with a warmth.

Many of my pictures are completely non-objective. I have never made a picture of a battle or a gun because until I find a way to deal effectively with such direct and controversial subject matter, I will refrain from doing so.

I have recently seen the intaglio prints Verdun and Verdun II by Warrington Colescott of the University of Wisconsin. He has come to grips with the direct subject matter based on the 1916 battle. A full description is not necessary for I simply believe that these are very strong prints. Colescott has grabbed hold of a subject and has squeezed every possible piece of pictorial potential out of
it. This is the hallmark of a strong person who has found effective visual forms for his experiences and his imagination. Strength to make vital decisions - an inherent quality that an artist and teacher should possess. Cole-scott has taken the subject matter, which is of primary interest to me, and has found his personal way of making a visual statement. I feel that I am on my way to making my own unique visualizations for my imagination. Now that my graduate study is coming to a close I look forward to the maturation and strengthening of my own aesthetic concerns - my ethos, pathos, and logos.
PLATES: PART V

The following color plates serve as a pictorial record of my activities during the past two years of graduate study. They are not in chronological order since all of the prints precede the drawings.

This pictorial record does by no means represent my entire portfolio, but I do believe that this record exemplifies some of my best work.