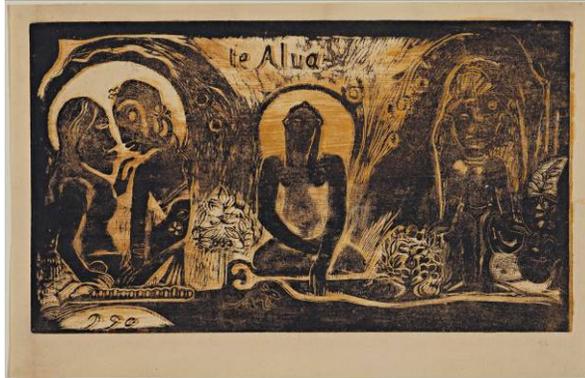


For Immediate Release: September 11, 2008

Contact: Sarah L. Stifler, Associate Director, Communications, 310-443-7056, stifler@hammer.ucla.edu

GOUGE: THE MODERN WOODCUT 1870 TO NOW

On view at the Hammer Museum November 9, 2008 – February 8, 2009



Above: Paul Gauguin block. Parts of background printed through third printing in ochre, 9-3/4 x 14-13/16 in. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller. s of ten woodcuts, 8-1/16 x 14 inches (image); 9-3/4 x 14-13/16 inches (sheet). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller.

Los Angeles, CA – *Gouge: The Modern Woodcut 1870 to Now* examines the woodcut in terms of its diverse forms and uses in the modern era. A thematic survey, it invites parallels between the medium in countries as diverse and geographically distant as Mexico, France, and Korea. Woodblock printing is, in fact, one of the most common artistic practices throughout the world. Although the motivations of each artist and the circumstances in which the woodcuts were made may differ greatly, the visual character of the gouge cuts is a defining thread among the selected works in this exhibition.

In its most basic form, the making of a woodcut requires just a block of wood, a cutting tool known as a gouge, some ink, and a sheet of paper. This ancient practice of printmaking was devised by Buddhist monks for devotional purposes in the eighth century and was refined during the Renaissance, but was succeeded as a fine art medium by intaglio techniques. The coarse line of the woodcut could not compete with the smooth, detailed renditions achieved by etching and engraving. A radical departure in the history of printmaking occurred towards the end of the nineteenth century when the woodcut ceased to emulate these more sophisticated methods and artists began to seek out the very raw quality of the medium that had contributed to its fall from favor two centuries earlier.

Paul Gauguin was one of the first modern artists to incorporate the rugged textures and imperfections of the wood grain into his prints. His work set the stage for a host of artists who experimented with the medium thereafter; this was the beginning of the modern woodcut. It became the vehicle for a new and spontaneous graphic language that evolved throughout the twentieth century and continues to take new directions within the contemporary studio.

The exhibition is divided into four thematic sections. The first section traces the woodcut's emergence as a modern medium with works by **Paul Gauguin, Edvard Munch, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Wassily Kandinsky**, and the German Expressionists. It also features woodcuts by skilled yet little known Indian artists working in Calcutta in the 1870s. The second section focuses on artists who incorporate the grain of the wood within their compositions, thus making the medium integral to the subjects depicted. Here, Munch's iconic *The Kiss* (1897-1902) is displayed among works by **Joseph Beuys, Anselm Kiefer, Susan Rothenberg, Terry Winters**, and anonymous Mexican and Tibetan artists. The third section examines the use of the woodcut as a vehicle for public expression. It includes monumental Cuban revolutionary banners, bold cuts by members of the Mexican graphics collective El Taller de Gráfica Popular such as **Elizabeth Catlett and Leopoldo Méndez, Georg Baselitz's** haunting *The Eagle* (1981), and the powerful yet eerie *Stowage* by **Willie Cole** (1997). The final section looks at sacred and devotional imagery in woodcuts. Among the highlights here is the sculptural installation *The Ways of Wisdom* (2000) by Korean artist **Shin Young-ok**. Drawing on a tradition of printed prayer books and literary texts that stretches back over centuries, she has woven streams of paper cut from a woodblock-printed book into five separate three-dimensional scrolls. Her reinterpretation of the woodcut medium and the historical inspirations behind it encapsulate the core motivations of the artists in this exhibition.

Curated by Allegra Pesenti, UCLA Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, Hammer Museum.

A Note on the Curator

Associate Curator Allegra Pesenti joined the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts at the Hammer Museum in March 2007. She is responsible for researching and curating exhibitions of old master, modern, and contemporary works on paper and will curate an exhibition on the drawings of Rachel Whiteread in 2010. She is also involved in the acquisition of works of art for the Grunwald collection. Allegra earned her PhD in 2006 from The Courtauld Institute of Art in London, and formerly served as Assistant Curator of Drawings at the J. Paul Getty Museum. She organized several exhibitions at the Getty Museum including *Raphael and His Circle: Drawings from Windsor Castle* (2001) and *Drawing Italy in the Age of the Grand Tour* (2002).

Join curator Allegra Pesenti for an exhibition walkthrough on **Sunday, November 9, at 1pm.**

Gouge: The Modern Woodcut 1870 to Now is made possible by a major gift from Susan Steinhauser and Daniel Greenberg and the Greenberg Foundation in loving memory of Ruth Greenberg.

The exhibition is also generously supported by Catherine Glynn Benkaim and Barbara Timmer and Gail and Gerald Oppenheimer.

Additional funding is provided by Anawalt Lumber Co. and The Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation.

ABOUT THE HAMMER MUSEUM

The Hammer Museum, a public arts unit of the University of California, Los Angeles, is dedicated to exploring the diversity of artistic expression through the ages. Its collections, exhibitions, and programs span the classic to the cutting-edge in art, architecture, and design, recognizing that artists play a crucial role in all aspects of culture and society.

Founded by Dr. Armand Hammer in 1990, the museum houses the Armand Hammer Collection of Old Master, Impressionist, and Post-Impressionist paintings and the Armand Hammer Daumier and Contemporaries Collection. Associated UCLA collections include the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, comprising more than 45,000 prints, drawings, photographs, and artists' books from the Renaissance to the present; and the Franklin D. Murphy Sculpture Garden on the UCLA campus. The Hammer's newest collection, the Hammer Contemporary Collection, is led by works on paper, particularly drawings and photographs from 1960 to the present.

The Hammer presents major single-artist and thematic exhibitions of historical and contemporary art. It also presents approximately ten Hammer Projects exhibitions each year, providing international and local artists with a laboratory-like environment to create new work or to present existing work in a new context.

As a cultural center, the Hammer offers a diverse range of free public programs throughout the year, including lectures, readings, symposia, film screenings, and music performances. The Hammer's Billy Wilder Theater houses these widely acclaimed public programs and is the new home of the UCLA Film & Television Archive's renowned cinematheque.

HAMMER MUSEUM INFORMATION

For current program and exhibition information call **310-443-7000** or visit **www.hammer.ucla.edu**.

Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, 11am – 7pm; Thursday, 11am – 9 pm; Sunday, 11am – 5 pm; closed Mondays, July 4, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

Admission: \$7 for adults; \$5 for seniors (65+) and UCLA Alumni Association members; free for Museum members, students with identification, UCLA faculty/staff, and visitors 17 and under. The Museum is free for everyone on Thursdays.

Location/Parking: The Hammer is located at 10899 Wilshire Boulevard, at Westwood Boulevard. Parking is available under the Museum. Rate is \$3 for three hours with Museum validation.

Hammer Museum Tours: For group tour reservations and information, call 310-443-7041.