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River View

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"River View"- 5 color lithograph from stone

Jacob Van Wyk

Lithograph literally means stone-print and is a method of printmaking that involved drawing with grease based crayons on a fine grained lithographic limestone. The stone used for the print, "Blind Performer", measures 24" by 30" and weighs 285 lbs. All litho stones are imported from the Solnhofen mines in Germany and were used extensively as the standard for the printing industry at the turn of the 20th century. What is now called offset lithography is actually a photo-mechanical image transferred from a grained aluminum plate designed to simulate the inking and printing characteristics of the original stone. Today's complex printing equipment produces print matter with amazing speed and clarity while the stone remains a unique printmaking method for the fine artist. An artist working with hand drawn passages can exploit the rich textural and color overlay potential of stone lithography. Each color is gained through the same sequence of graining, drawing, stabilizing, registering, and printing on hand made papers.

The lithograph entitled "Blind Performer" is part of series of 7 prints based essentially on formalist concerns of spacial ambiguity, textural exploration and asymmetrical balance. The major source of inspiration for the series as well as the majority of my work is nature. This rich well-spring of visual variety and spacial dynamics reveal God's awesome power in natural phenomenon. "Blind Performer" is a personal response to the theme of Christ's passion and scourging within a structural framework of the dynamics of nature. The symbolic hooded Christ is a reference to the blind lamb of sacrifice. Traditional symbols of the cross or *tree*, the rock, and impending darkness are mixed with violent movement and spacial tension.

Our responsibility as viewer of this piece and any art work must first take into account the formal terms of the art object and also understand that it is a product of human interpretation and not historical fact. I refer to the terms of the art object as the structure or organization of the basic elements of design. The contemporary artist often emphasizes the trial and error or playful aspect of the process of artistic decision-making. This personal language is less concerned with traditional beauty and familiar themes. The arts in the 20th century have rapidly expanded into pluralistic styles that reflect a wide-range of experience and allegiances in contemporary life. Many of the discordant and abstract styles of visual art do indeed reflect modern man's alienation with fellow man, with nature, and ultimately with God. Contemporary art, however, has been able to free artists to work with new and important visual combinations opening up new and significant levels of aesthetic enlightenment. I believe the challenge for the Christian artist and the Christian community is to embrace the ground-breaking and celebrative aspects of contemporary art and reclaim it in God's name and for His honor.