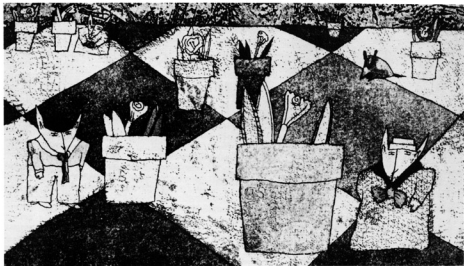


**Burnaby  
Art  
Gallery**

November 29  
to  
December 16  
1990



Polly Faminow  
**A 204** 1980  
Etching  
6x10cm



## Malaspina: A Brief History

Founded by Bob Everman and Gary Bowden, instructors at Emily Carr College of Art & Design, and Warner True, then Director of Mido Gallery, Malaspina Printmakers

David Ostrem  
**Red Wine** 1981  
Serigraph  
25x20cm



Society (MPS) was first established in 1975. The function of the Society was to promote fine art prints and printmaking. Its most important function initially was to establish a printmaking workshop. In 1976, the Society received a \$12,000 Opportunities for Youth Grant which allowed a facility to be established at Mather House, Deer Lake Park, in Burnaby, British Columbia. The following year its first Canada Council Grant was received, enabling the Society to engage a Director. As a condition of its funding, Canada Council required the Society to document the work being produced in its workshop. Hence, in 1977 the Malaspina Archives were initiated. As part of their contract with Malaspina, member artists give one print from each edition to the Archives. Thus, the Archives are a permanent record of print activity in Western Canada and are an extremely important collection of works on paper, arguably one of the largest and most important collection of contemporary prints in Western Canada.

In November 1979, the Society moved the workshop briefly to Pender Street, Vancouver, and then, in April 1981, to its present location on Granville Island, Vancouver. Society membership has nearly doubled since the move to its present location, increasing from 150 to 275 people.

Since its inception, Malaspina has been the centre of printmaking activity on the West Coast of Canada. Until the very recent setup of Manitoba Printmakers Association in Winnipeg and A/P in Calgary, MPS was the only fully-equipped printmaking facility west of Toronto. Geographically isolated from the artistic centres of Eastern Canada, MPS has nevertheless managed to maintain a strong commitment to its member artists and a firm belief in the unique characteristics of print aesthetic and production. By allowing the opportunity exhibition and dialogue amongst its members and the community at-large, Malaspina encourages an active and often critically engaged print production. The diversity of its member artists has meant that the work produced at Malaspina has never congealed into a 'house style' dictated by art historical or theoretical pressures.

**Lisa A. MacLean**  
**MPS Director**  
**November 1990**



### Malaspina: The Archives

'Contemporary Prints', an exhibition of approximately fifty prints culled from the Malaspina Printmakers Society Archives, appears to function on several levels, two of which are immediately evident. Firstly, the show is a sampling of works that represent the artistic activity occurring at Malaspina Printmakers Society (MPS) during the period 1976 through 1987; thus it is a historical document. Secondly, it is a unity of pieces made by individuals who were all subject to the sometimes useful, sometimes distressing connection of a shared work space. Viewing the exhibition then, is a little like taking a random look at individual parts of a body over time.

The decade and a half during which the prints were made was an era in which an array of trends and styles developed in the printmaking world, not the least of which was a response to the status of the print within the art world at large. Following the veritable "Print Renaissance" of the sixties, the decade of the seventies invited a stylistic pluralism ranging from the realist printmaking of Richard Estes and Chuck Close to the minimalist and conceptualist images of Sol Lewitt and Robert Morris. The painterly print reworded Abstract Expressionist ideas in the works of Jasper Johns, Frank Stella and others during that decade as well.

Against this backdrop the work that was produced at MPS in the seventies and early eighties seems at times to have been made with an approach oblivious to the prevalent art practices, while at others as if the producers were looking with a somewhat jaundiced eye at the entire landscape of the art world.

In a remarkable way the MPS prints of the seventies and early eighties are unified in their refusal to cohere and with one another: they are most often uniquely individual and at times strange. Frequently they reflect an absurd optimism (or perhaps a relaxed pessimism) in their playfulness. Rarely in the works of Malaspina at this time are the means laboured; more often the materials themselves in large part provide solutions to artistic demands. When the rejection of seriousness and labouriousness succeeds the works are eloquent; when it fails they become pedantic.

Toward the middle of the 1980s the neo-expressionistic movement saw many artists re-examine the figure and adopt stylistic forms that were derived from conservative sources. Printmakers were by no means excepted from this practice, and many, like Susan Rotherberg and Francesco Clemente, sought analogies in print media to the qualities they had achieved in painting. Neo-expression had a self-conscious sense of being outward looking, and similarly the work that was made at MPS at the time reflects a sense of its producers being

Barry Koochin  
**Line Up** 1980  
Linocut  
32x23cm



"on the lookout" more than before. Undoubtedly the gain in awareness of movements within the art world provided an opportunity for printmakers at Malaspina to judge their work within the framework of contemporary practices. It is perhaps too early to decide, however, if the personal and idiosyncratic quality that characterized so many early Malaspina prints will have been lost in the transaction.

**Pat Mahon**  
MPS Member  
November 1990

### Prints: An Overview

"The building of integral relationships between technique and form – that is, printing process and printed image – is one of the main determinants of quality in prints."

**Ron H. Cohen**  
Print Collectors Newsletter  
May/June 1990

Printmaking is an art form that has been misaligned by individuals outside the productions and abused by many inside the milieu. Considered by some to be a secondary form of artistic expression, the parameters of print production are being helped along by contemporary art's ever expanding dialogue with the medium. When the wheel of interest regarding art styles comes to rest in the field of contemporary prints and printmaking, a picture emerges which tends to be refreshing and free of the usual clichés, assumptions and narrow views.

Because of its inherent tendencies towards flatness, the print forces the issue of image. The artist is left with basic art tenets: line, plane, form or shape, space, colour, surface and material to produce usually on paper, an image reflecting contemporary thought filtered through individual artistic vernaculars. These universals of form stating, presenting and packaging simple rudimentary aspects in specific terms begin an active and certainly most stimulating role that prints and printmaking have played in art production.

The high points of printmaking in art history occur as a result of either need for inexpensive abundant imagery or, technological demands exposed through the different print mediums. Take for instance printmaking during the Renaissance, primarily Northern German, and later, Mannerist printmaking in Italy, Holland, Germany and Spain; the invention of photography 150 years ago; the Etching revival in France and England of the late 19th and early 20th century; the European print ateliers of pre-WW II; and the revitalization of an art form, especially hand lithography, combined with major technological advances which heralded the North American ateliers and University/Art School printshops of the 1960s through to the present day.

It is a catch phrase to say that "prints" and "multiples" are used by artists to widen public access to their ideas. Like underpaid social workers of the artworld, prints are seen by most artists as another way of pursuing an idea or as part of a working process, rather than entity unto itself. But it has been true on many occasions that the manifested print is confined to one narrow idea or another, mostly by the provincial printmaker, as opposed to a more universal view of print as book; print as mixed media; print as documentation; as process; as poster; as multiple or monotype; as phototype; as offset original or limited edition xerox; and in the near future as disc-stored modern transmitted laser print.

Printed images, after all, have always been employed as a means of communication and have served the art world well by introducing new aesthetics to interested but still financially uncommitted audiences. A virtue that in no way diminishes the inherent satisfaction prints offer in and of themselves as art.

**Todd A Davis**  
November 1990

Michael Morris  
**London Nuts** 1977  
Woodcut  
31x23cm

