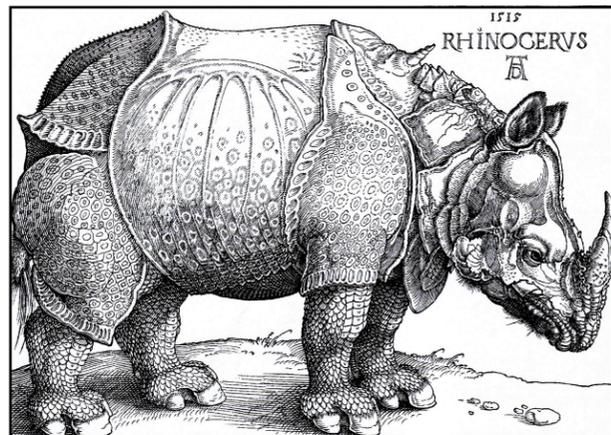


# 1967 Revisited- SUMMER OF LOVE & ARTS:

## An Introductory Dilemma to a Thing on Printmaking, or: ARE ARMOR PLATED RHINOCERI REALLY NEARSIGHTED?

A painting (the only one of itself), hangs in a gallery in tangles of *valueprice&profit* that have nothing to do with the tangles *epicentered* in the spine if you dig it. The gallery; sets fashions in style, manipulates tastes and prices, speculates in the art market, While cohort critics hustle the hustle.

Who buys this painting hanging in this gallery? someone who goes to galleries who sees this painting, hanging in a gallery who can pay the price. a system, an audience.



Is the artist free? Coca-Cola flashes on the screen for 1/24th of a second and you go out to the lobby & buy, Coca-Cola. Is he free to paint what the system & the

audience don't want to see and if he ain't gonna work on Maggie's farm no more then where the fuck's he gonna work?

## A SHORT HISTORY OF PRINTMAKING recorded by a partisan artisan.

One thousand years ago someone cut a design into wood then inked the block so that he could press it on cloth and repeat the pattern over and over again. Not Art, (*sacred bullshit untouchable Art*) but an artifice, for reproducing his prototype many many many many many many many times.

About 1400 AD paper became cheap. About 1400 AD prints appeared on paper, pictures of saints, for pilgrims to buy as souvenirs, crude linear saints, to be colored in by hand like a child's coloring coloring book.

Popular art as naturally as any art which is inexpensive enough for the populace to obtain it, not one great painting for a pope or prince to own, but hundreds of copies, for the hundreds who wanted them.

Until the 19th century, traveling peddlers sold woodcuts of fables, battles, religious figures, depictions of sensational crimes, lurid with gory descriptions, & people who couldn't read got the picture anyway.

Prints conveyed information visually They were more than a decoration, people learned of the world beyond their world from the pictures of the printmaker before the TV tabloid photograph. What the printmaker saw and crafted became the picture many people held in their heads of things they had never seen.

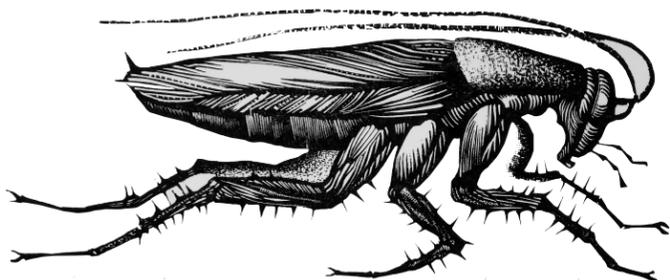
Some kind of lines are easier to cut in wood other lines are easier in copper Sometimes the image of the world was graven to suit the material.

Faulty observations by early artists could establish visual misconceptions as the accepted illusion of reality. Thus Rhinoceri had armor plates until the 19th century.

The graphic artist excelled in detail and refinement of line often he confused the issue by conveying more details than information.

Pen and paper, Knife and wood different tools, different materials two guilds shared the labor of making woodcuts the picture was drawn by the artist in one guild the block was cut by the artisan in another.

The wood crafter, took pen and ink drawing and copied it into the other medium but it was another medium with its own quality and limitations.



Artist and craftsman co-existed antagonistically in their separate guilds. The artist, feeling superior as the creator delighted in drawing flourishes & complexities difficult to render in wood and the cutter, proud of his skill with knife & wood took his tools and material, and added detail and texture to the artists picture without concern for the original intent.

The antagonism ended with the photomechanical reproduction the woodcutter became automated out of the conflict and who mourns the dead? When a war becomes History (bullshit objective memorize the dates History) ?

Woodcuts began the print process, but as the desire for detail grew new techniques developed, which were more economical the craft moved into new materials, which reproduced the detailed effects of the woodcut with less time and effort. As each new process was refined, and was replaced with still more advanced techniques the old form became, Art.

The woodcutter became art when the metal-engraving supplanted it, the etching following engraving turned engraving to art, then mezzotint, aquatint, wood-engraving, lithography, photography, the new form freeing the older form to search its own form Art, because it was no longer necessary.

Graphics reflected tastes and values of their audience, as the middle class grow and learned to read, novels proliferated illustrated with engravings. In 1712 the first wood-engraving appeared in a book with the apologetic bourgeois lament "Copper would be more beautiful, but more expensive."

Graphics is the medium of critic artists **Goya, Hogarth, Daumier, Kollwitz**. The names of the techniques call for strong content etching is worked with acid which "bites" the plate woodcuts are carved with knives and gouges.

Social satire and protest fit well with woodcuts and wood-engravings for the work is a negative process. What is white on the print is cut away from the surface of the wood what is black is untouched. the raised uncut surface receives ink from the

roller and transfers it to the paper the image is the reverse of the picture on the block the carved out sections (too low to catch the ink, too low to touch the paper, appear absent from the final picture.

Other arts love subtlety and nuance but the woodcut (freed of its medieval simplicity renaissance flourishes, and bourgeois pretensions) demands strong statements creating black & white images out of wood with a knife. Printmaking changed as the world changed, events were reported and printed daily as the 19th century blossomed into mass communications, with newspaper. But graphic illustrated news could no longer be the work of one artisan. Deadlines were too short for time consuming craftsmanship, so the block was cut into sections, a different man on each piece and rejoined into a whole for the hurry up press run. technique had to be homogenized no individual embellishing here. Form was determined by the organization of the new economy by the rush and efficiency of capitalist production by new considerations, with which art has yet to make its peace.

Today's graphic artist pulls a set number of prints from his block, carefully numbering each print, so the buyer will know, how very rare his purchase is and then he takes his block, his crystalized skill his *per' & con' ceptions* cut in wood and he destroys it. He takes a hatchet and marks the block, mutilates its surface, so no more prints can be printed and then his numbered editions are valuable he has created scarcity, he has destroyed his work himself in order to increase its value.

A print (1/20, 2/20, 3/20, 4/20, 5/20, etc./20) hangs in a gallery in tangles of *valueprice* and profit & silent sucker artists succor the system.

**And do you wonder, about the stillness in the spine in a gallery?**

by Frank Cieciorka & Ellen Estrin

Originally published in 1967 by the **SAN FRANCISCO EXPRESS TIMES**  
Activist and artist, Frank was a Humboldt county resident from 1972, till his death in 2008.  
His 1965 rendering of a raised fist became an iconic image of anti-establishment protest.