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Jon Fasanelli-Cawelti

Iraq

Courtesy of the Artist

Three intaglio printmakers have combined their works for a show at the gallery at the **LeRoy Neiman Center for Print Studies at Columbia University**. Although the three have distinctly different styles, they have one big thing in common: their teacher, Mauricio Lasansky.

Drawing Beneath the Surface: Contemporary Intaglio Prints, runs September 30 through October 21, 2008. While the work is contemporary, the three say the show also marks a tribute to the old methods of intaglio.

Richie Lasansky and Brian Lynch of New York City and Jon Fasanelli-Cawelti of Iowa, all studied with the iconic Mauricio Lasansky, founder of the printmaking department at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Richie Lasansky has another connection to Mauricio Lasansky: Richie is his grandson.

Lynch and Fasanelli-Cawelti studied with Mauricio Lasansky while attending the University of Iowa, but Rich Lasansky completed his B.A. at **Brandeis University** and went on to study with his grandfather in his studio.

"Brian and I were among his last students at the university," said Fasanelli-Cawelti. "It was a wonderful opportuni-

ty. He always urged us to dig as deeply as we could, and told us good things don't come easily. He called it 'creative doubt'."

Mauricio Lasansky is perhaps best-known for his internationally acclaimed Nazi Drawing, 33 life-size and larger drawings completed in 1966, that along with shows by Andrew Wyeth and Louise Nevelson, formed the opening exhibition at the new **Whitney Museum of American Art** in New York in 1967.

"We all share a love of the printmaking medium. We're not super-traditionalists, but we love the materials, and we all draw a lot," said Lynch. When Fasanelli-Cawelti traveled to New York for a one man show last year "we all got together and mixed up a batch of ink."

All three use fine, hand-made paper containing long vegetable fibers, on rolls "so we wouldn't be limited by the size of the paper," said Fasanelli-Cawelti. "I made one print that is six feet long."

"We all work in several sizes, which is also a reflection of Mr. Lasansky, who encouraged people to 'work the size you feel.' He was making a statement about having a personal relationship with what you do. He would ask why can't this be seen on the same

Drawing Beneath the Surface: Contemporary Intaglio Prints

Through October 21, 2008
LeRoy Neiman
Center for Print Studies,
Columbia University, NY

scale as sculpture. There's a monumentality about it."

"When we came up with the title for the show I obviously thought of the definition of Intaglio - beneath the surface of the plate," said Lasansky. "And I also think all our work has a strong foundation in drawing."

He is the fourth generation of printmakers in the Lasansky family. His great-grandfather was a commercial printer in Lithuania, and two of his uncles - Leo and Tomas Lasansky - are intaglio printmakers.

Along with a love of the physical involvement with the materials of printmaking, their teacher instilled in all three a love of drawing.

"Mauricio wasn't as interested in our finished prints as he was in our drawings. It's a more immediate interest in seeing where our ideas come from," said Lynch. "And he expected to see a lot of them when he did critiques."

"Both of them (Lynch and Fasanelli-Cawelti) influenced me and since they are both older and wiser and they've been at this longer than I have, I've learned a lot from watching the direction their work has taken," said Lasansky, 38. "Jon seems to be getting more abstract."

"Jon is a real beast with the plate; he engraves, gouges, uses nontraditional tools, acid and literally turns the plate upside down or even chops it down," said Lasansky. On one piece, "I think he even drilled a hole through the plate. His drawing is pretty similar - lots of collage. He also has a very poetic/verbal side and his titles are always crucial."

Fasanelli-Cawelti is also a

musician who believes music and art have much in common: "You have to practice every day, and they are both humbling on a daily basis."

Lynch recently began drawing on a Palm Pilot with a stylus - sketching people, then uploading the images to a computer. "I liked the simplicity I could get. I developed it into a printing technique using those drawings as a basis. Some people think it looks like an Etch-a-Sketch. It's just another way to draw and it simplified the image in a way I find interesting. It reminds me of a woodcut."

"Brian is most figurative, but he only draws what he sees. I would say he reveals the significance of observed moments - makes the ordinary, extraordinary," Lasansky said. "He figured out how to ink up the paper litho and transfer the ink to a copper plate as a lift ground. Then he can etch the plate but it still has the residual feel of a palm pilot drawing."

"All of this seems complicated technically, but what



Brian Lynch

Upper West Side

Courtesy of the Artist

strikes me is that there are various ways to get at the same thing and there are no rules. So, just like Jon, Brian is using all tools at his disposal to get the image the way he wants it."

Lasansky describes his own work as traveling in the direction of magical realism. A recent solo show of his large-scale, pencil-on-paper animal drawings in a Maine gallery revealed this theme, "animals and people with more of a narrative, mostly figurative."

"Art should be more poetic and symbolic than literal;

the marks in a print or drawing are important, but it's the tension and space between them that have the power to capture your imagination," said Lasansky.

The show will travel from New York to several venues that will be announced later. For more information, see www.richielasansky.com.

The Gallery at The LeRoy Neiman Center for Print Studies at Columbia University is located at 310 Dodge Hall, 2960 Broadway at 116th St., New York, NY.



Richie Lasansky

Deer Babies

Courtesy of the Artist