

Joe Price

Serigraphs in Light & Tone

Robert T. Wright
Community Gallery of Art



College of Lake County

Joe Price: Serigraphs in Light & Tone

Thirty years ago, the serigraphs of Joe Price were not accepted in graphic exhibitions. The jurors mistakenly thought Price had sent a watercolor or some other painting media to a print competition. Looking at his works it is easy to understand the confusion; they do not fit our preconceptions of a serigraph. Price has captured dazzling effects of light falling over still-life objects revealing rich hues and the subtle gradations of tones. The artist is uncompromising as he defines volumetric space and the nuances of light on surfaces. The effect is of a startling realism not usually seen in a medium known better for its flat use of form and color. Eventually, a juror at the Academy of Design recognized that Price was pushing the medium of serigraphy far beyond its usual boundaries. At that point, his work started to gain a wider acceptance.

Today, Price's work is included in over twenty museums including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, New Orleans Museum of Art, and the Library of Congress. His prints are included in corporate and private collections throughout the United States, and have garnered numerous national and international awards.

The Robert T. Wright Community Gallery of Art is delighted to present *Joe Price: Serigraphs in Light & Tone*. The exhibit consists of thirty-four serigraphs including several graphite studies executed for prints on display. Also on view are a series of color state proofs of Price's serigraph *Secrets*. These eight proofs give a glimpse of the progression of this 106-screen print.

A serigraph is a print made by forcing ink through the open stencil areas of a silkscreen. Joe Price has taken this relatively simple process to create stunningly realistic images in light and tone. While screen printers often use the "reduction" technique, Price has pushed it far beyond its usual application. Price's colors are oil paint mixed with a transparent base. After each color is applied, he slightly reduces the screen's edges of certain shapes. The process is repeated to create numerous and imperceptible "steps" between gradations of colors and tones. He does not rely on photo processes or any other mechanical means. The result is the illusion of soft edges of forms, lights, and shadows. Multiple applications of extremely transparent color gradually build to what appears as opaque color in the final print. One of Price's serigraphs may require eighty or more separate screenings to create its subtle color relationships and extended value ranges.

For One is a small format print (7" x 10"), but required fifty-seven screens. It depicts a glass and a single lemon plucked from the artist's garden. There is a soft fusing of tones and colors more often associated with an oil painting than a silkscreen print. Complementary harmonies are seen between the lemon and its new leaves with their violet cast. The glass, set against a dark background, refracts the sunlight into abstract patterns on the table. The objects are bathed in a warm light set against a cool atmosphere. This directly relates to the imagery, which connotes a cool drink, that is about to be enjoyed on a hot summer day.

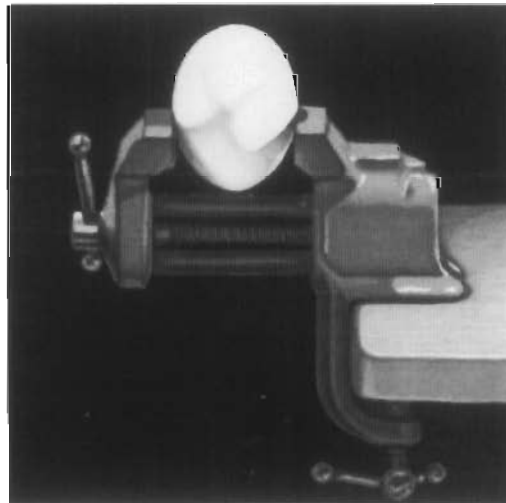
Joe Price's early background first set him on a course in the performing arts. His mother, a classically trained pianist, attuned his ears to a wide variety of musical genres. He played piano from age three up through his late teens. Price's father, an avid

outdoorsman and gardener, attuned his eyes to the beauty of nature and the wonder of a single rose. The family first lived near New Orleans, but when he was ten, they moved to Decatur, Alabama. During high school Price attended a summer theatre program at Northwestern University in Evanston. Returning to Northwestern, Price completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Theatre Arts in 1957. After graduation, he appeared in Off-Broadway and television productions in New York.

By 1960, Price switched coasts to continue his work in theatre and film in Los Angeles. Struggling to make ends meet, he also worked as a graphic designer for the Container Corp of America. This experience eventually led him away from the performing arts and into the visual arts. In another change, Price relocated to San Francisco. Anne K. Foote introduced him to serigraphy at the College of San Mateo (1968-69). He next entered Stanford University where he graduated with an M.A. in Graphic Design in 1970. Price had studied lithography with Nathan Olivera while at Stanford and he experimented with all the classic print media. However, he was more interested in a print form that did not reverse the drawn image. Also, perhaps as a reaction to his years in the graphic arts industry, he now felt drawn to color and a painterly approach to printmaking.

Immediately out of graduate school, Price joined the studio art faculty at the College of San Mateo where he taught until his retirement in 1994. However, it was during a trip home to Alabama during the summer of 1970 that Price's future artistic direction coalesced. His graphic design studies had him working in an abstract manner. He set out to do some "plein air" studies when Price says, "I slowly began to see that true abstraction already exists in the reality of things between the light and shadow." One of these realist studies was a pen and ink drawing with gouache. Returning to San Mateo, he set out to produce a screen print that duplicated the watercolor washes of the original study. This led to his development of realist print images. This exhibition includes examples of his prints from the 1970s to the 1990s.

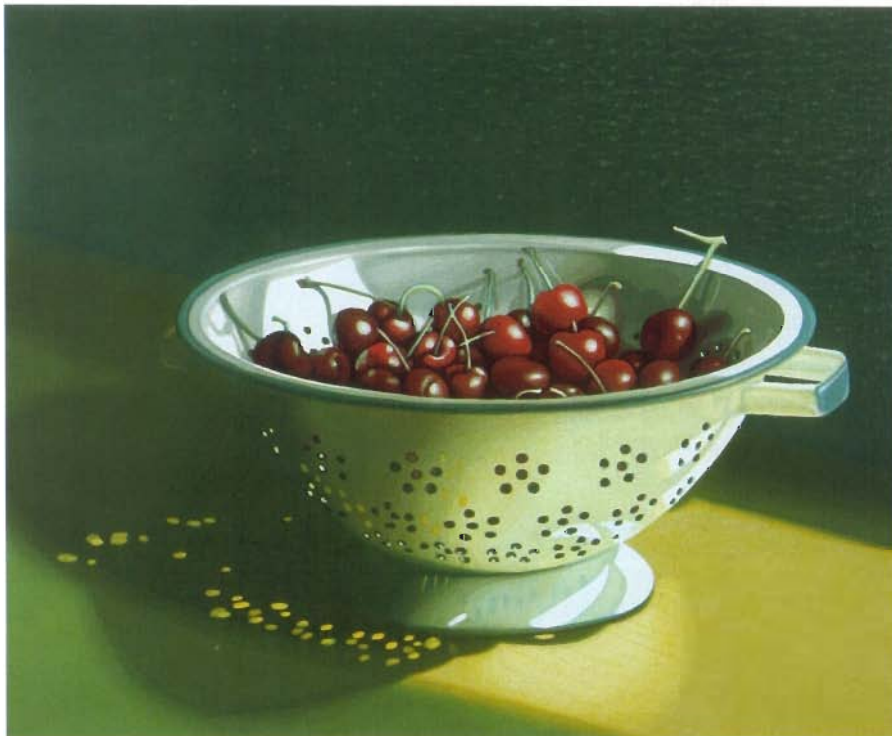
Perhaps Price's use of still life harkens back to his theatrical days. Tabletop objects in a still life are like actors and props on a stage; they can be arranged and lit for dramatic effect. Price's compositions convey a sense of "la vie quotidien", however, these images of everyday life never come off as sentimental. Instead, they are logical assemblages of objects that naturally relate to one another. Often, the artist is able to realize the aesthetic possibilities from simple, mundane activities. For example, one day he had a colander full of cherries picked from his garden tree. The manner that the light was striking the colander sitting on his kitchen counter made Price exclaim out loud, "Yes! Do it!" The serigraph *Bing Cherries* was the result of this inspiration. The print is actually quite formal in the manner in which it plays the reds of the cherries against a variety of warm, cool, and neutralized greens. (Continued on page 5.)



Egg Series I: Red Vise, 1986
51-screen serigraph



For One, 1985
57-screen serigraph



Bing Cherries, 1984
67-screen serigraph



New Growth, 1985
72-screen serigraph

It is the formal pictorial elements of compositional geometry, light, and tone that are the basis of Price's work. His subjects are subordinate to a higher purpose of beauty and harmony. The print *Spring Morning* sets a vibrant red coffee pot against a wall of cool, spring green colors. A swath of sunlight cuts diagonally across the background and it creates dazzling prismatic patterns by reflecting off the sugar dispenser. This sweep of light mimics the spout of the coffee pot. Two coffee mugs nuzzle together in anticipation of the stimulating conversation to follow. The arrangement of objects creates arcs and ellipses that hold together the composition.

During the mid-1990s, Price developed an allergic reaction to the toxic fumes associated with screen-printing. He did not feel that he could replicate his depth of colors and tones in water-based color. So when Price moved from San Mateo to Los Angeles in 1999, he divested himself of his printing equipment, not to print again. The selections in this exhibition offer a good overview of the artist's extraordinary three decades of printmaking.

All of Joe Price's works on display are courtesy of M. Lee Stone Fine Prints, Inc., San Jose, California. For more information on the work of Joe Price visit: <http://Lee@mleestonefineprints.com/>

Steven Jones
Art Gallery Curator
College of Lake County



Trio, 1985
35-screen serigraph

JOE PRICE

BACKGROUND

Born: Ferriday, Louisiana; 1935
Education: Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, B.S., 1957
Art Center College of Design, Los Angeles, CA, 1967-68
Stanford University, CA, M.A., 1970
Métier: Professor of Studio Art, 1970-94, College of San Mateo, CA

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1995 Eleanor Austerer Gallery, San Francisco, CA
1990, Wenniger Graphics, Boston, MA (and 1989, 1988)
1987 Huntsville Museum of Art, Huntsville, AL
1986 Triton Museum of Art, Santa Clara, CA
1984 Ankrum Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
New Talent in Printmaking, Associated American Artists, New York & Philadelphia

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

1998 *Printed on Paper* competition, Arches/Canson-Talens Headquarters, So. Hadley, MA
1997 Chicago Center for the Print, Chicago, IL
1994 *Diversity & Visions of the Printed Image*, Triton Museum of Art, Santa Clara, CA
1993 *American Prints: Last Half 20th Century*, Jane Haslem Gallery, Washington, D.C.
1991 *International Print Triennale '91*, Cracow, Poland
1991 *49th Audubon Artists Annual Exhibition*, New York, NY (and nine previous exhibitions)

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Musee du Petit Format, Couvin, Belgium
National Collection of Poland, Cracow National Museums
National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
New Orleans Museum of Art, Louisiana
Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California
University of Chicago, Illinois

SELECTED HONORS

Prints on loan to the U.S. Arts in Embassies Program in Chile and Australia
Audubon Artists 49th Annual Exhibition, New York, NY; awarded Silver Medal
Northern California Print Competition, 1984, 1st Place Serigraphy; 1982, 1st Prize

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

The California Art Review, 3rd Edition, 1991, American References, Inc.
American Artists: An Illustrated Survey of Leading Contemporaries, Second Edition, 1990
The New York Art Review, 3rd Edition, 1988, American References, Inc.
Who's Who in America, 44th Edition, 1987
International Who's Who, Cambridge, England, 1985
American Artist, Oct. 1977, feature article

Joe Price: Serigraphs in Light & Tone

August 15 - September 28, 2003

Exhibition Checklist

Title	Medium	Edition No.	Dimensions
<i>Artist's Study</i> , 1981	56-screen serigraph	57/100	8" x 12"
<i>August Morning</i> , 1978	58-screen serigraph	33/50	16 1/2" x 21 1/2"
<i>Bag of Candy</i> , 1984	63-screen serigraph	24/50	12" x 18"
<i>Belladonna</i> , 1986	63-screen serigraph	88/100	18 1/2" x 17"
<i>Bing Cherries</i> , 1984	67-screen serigraph	62/100	10 1/2" x 12 1/2"
<i>Broken Blue</i> , 1984	56-screen serigraph	59/100	11" x 9 1/2"
<i>Broken Blue</i> , 1984	graphite drawing study		11" x 9 1/2"
<i>California Morning</i> , 1981	66-screen serigraph	72/100	13" x 22"
<i>Egg Series I: Red Vise</i> , 1986	51-screen serigraph	82/100	4" x 4"
<i>Egg Series III: Barbed Wire</i> , 1987	46-screen serigraph	64/100	5 3/4" x 7"
<i>Egg Series IV: String</i> , 1988	57-screen serigraph	47/100	6" x 8"
<i>Egg Series VI: Knife</i> , 1988	47-screen serigraph	44/100	9" x 12"
<i>Egg Series VII: Scale</i> , 1988	57-screen serigraph	38/100	12 1/2" x 16"
<i>Fan with Feathers</i> , 1984	44-screen serigraph	76/100	7" x 8"
<i>Fan with Orange</i> , 1984	47-screen serigraph	76/100	7" x 8"
<i>For One</i> , 1985	57-screen serigraph	50/100	7 1/4" x 10 1/8"
<i>Garlic</i> , 1983	36-screen serigraph	80/100	1 1/2" x 2 1/2"
<i>Garlic</i> , 1983	graphite drawing study		5 3/4" x 10 1/2"
<i>Garlic</i> , 1983	watercolor study		5 3/4" x 10 1/2"
<i>Iris and Brown Bottles</i> , 1987	90-screen serigraph	74/100	24" x 18"
<i>New Growth</i> , 1985	72-screen serigraph	48/100	11" x 9"
<i>New Growth</i> , 1985	graphite drawing study		14 1/2" x 13"
<i>On a White table</i> , 1983	61-screen serigraph	56/100	8" x 10"
<i>Pomegranates</i> , 1989	71-screen serigraph	50/100	10 1/2" x 13"
<i>Raincatcher</i> , 1979	82-screen serigraph	70/75	10" x 7"
<i>Red Ripe</i> , 1984	74-screen serigraph	34/100	12" x 18"
<i>Secrets</i> , 1990	106-screen serigraph	48/100	14" x 18"
<i>Secrets</i> , 1990	graphite drawing study		16" x 22 1/4"
<i>Shadows</i> , 1977	42-screen serigraph	30/50	15 1/4" x 21 1/2"
<i>Soaring Thoughts</i> , 1986	40-screen serigraph	55/100	14" x 20"
<i>Spring Morning</i> , 1991	72-screen serigraph	53/100	11" x 14"
<i>Trio</i> , 1985	35-screen serigraph	76/100	14" x 18"
<i>Tulips</i> , 1988	69-screen serigraph	79/100	18" x 24"
<i>Winter Comes Gently</i> , 1976	27-screen serigraph	39/50	8" x 8"

* All works courtesy of M. Lee Stone Fine Prints, Inc., San Jose, California.

Gallery hours:

Mon-Fri 8:00 am-9:00 pm

Sat 9:00 am-4:30 pm

Sun 1:00-5:00 pm

Hours vary during college breaks

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College of Lake County

19351 West Washington Street

Grayslake, Illinois 60030-1198

Gallery information: 847/543-2240

E-mail: sjones@clcillinois.edu

<http://yyz.clc.cc.il.us/artgallery/>

The Robert T. Wright Community Gallery of Art is a project of the College of Lake County Foundation. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Art Council, a state agency.





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August 15 – September 28, 2003

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Robert T. Wright Community Gallery of Art
August 15 – September 28, 2003

Reception: Friday, Aug. 22, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Gallery Talk by Joe Price, Aug. 22, 6:30-7:00 p.m.

Free and open to the public.

California artist Joe Price developed a unique approach to serigraphy that requires up to 106 separate screenings of transparent color. Price captures dazzling effects of light on still-life objects that reveal rich hues and subtle gradations of tones. This exhibition encompasses three decades of Price's prints, working drawings, plus state proofs that document process. Price's works are represented in over twenty major museum collections.

All works are courtesy of M. Lee Stone Fine Prints, Inc.,
San Jose, California.

Gallery hours:

Aug. 15: 18 – 22

Mon-Fri 8:00 am-4:30 pm

Information: 847-543-2240

Aug. 25 – Sept. 28

Mon-Thu 8:00 am-9:00 pm

Fri & Sat 9:00 am-4:30 pm

Sun 1:00-5:00 pm

Closed: Sept. 1 & 2

Email: sjones@clcillinois.edu

Web page: <http://yyz.clc.cc.il.us/artgallery/>

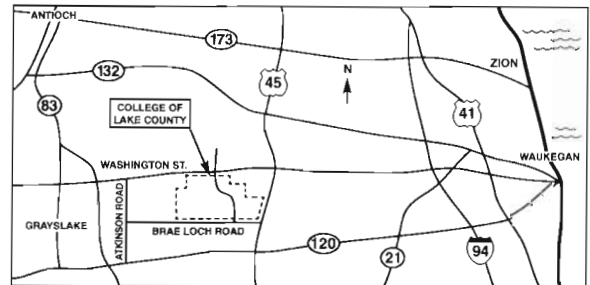


This program is sponsored in part by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency. The Robert T. Wright Community Gallery of Art is a project of the College of Lake County Foundation.

Obverse: Joe Price, *California Morning*, 66-screen serigraph

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19351 West Washington Street
Grayslake, IL 60030-1198

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The Gallery is located in the west wing of the main building.