

## **Rebecca Gray Smith**

### **The Alphabet**

In the 1980's when the plague of AIDS roared onto the scene, the most prominent artworks addressing the issue were the AIDS quilts. The Alphabet was my reaction to the AIDS crisis as an attempt to present images that looked head-on at the fact that death was in our midst, striking down so many before their time, in a torturous, wasting, painful disease. This was not a pretty picture, and certainly not a cuddly quilt. The growing and frightening tragic absurdity of so many newly dead, was looked at through the catharsis of the lens of my work. My first work on the Alphabet began as drawn and painted images interspersed with collages of newspaper clippings. As the images materialized, however, I realized that they must be intaglio etchings instead of paintings, drawings, or collages.

The Alphabet suite of 39 etchings examines how the Medusa of Death stalks us all, in all walks of life, while at the same time looking at the caprichos (caprices) inherent in the present: the absurdities, cruelties, and horrors of modern existence. The core beliefs which underlie my passion for printmaking are: how the democratic qualities of printmaking's multiplicity of images allows for fine art to be accessible to the populace, not just a select few; how printworks can be powerful agents and bellwethers of the apexes and abysses of the human condition; and the how the reversal process in the matrixes of printmaking results in mind-altering mirrored perspectives and changes in direction. In addition, the history of printmaking is elemental in the helix of human civilization, a taproot reaching back to the prehistoric dawn of mankind.

### **Biography**

Rebecca Gray Smith, born in 1953, is a Chicago based, artist, printmaker, and instructor, who has practiced printmaking for over 30 years. Smith holds a MA in liberal arts from the University of Chicago, with undergraduate studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in printmaking, anatomy, drawing, and painting. Smith has taught courses in printmaking and fine art for the University of Chicago, the Chicago City Colleges, the Chicago Park District, and the Chicago parochial school system for children at risk. Smith's artworks have been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in the USA, and Europe. Her work is in private collections in the USA, England, Netherlands, Belgium, India, China, and Japan.

# Rebecca Gray Smith

## Resume

### Solo Exhibitions

2016

The Alphabet, Completed Suite of 39 Etchings; Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago IL, USA

2014

The Alphabet, Completed Suite of 28 Etchings; Bert Green Fine Art, Chicago IL, USA

2012

The Alphabet, Partial Suite of 20 Etchings, University of Chicago, MLA Presentation

2003

Paintings, Prints, and Masks; DeCourtenay Galleries, Pontiac, MI, USA,

2002

Retrospective of 72 Prints, DeCourtenay Galleries, Mons, BELGIUM,

2000

Memorials to AIDS Victims, Paintings & Sculptured Masks; World AIDS Day, Oak Park, IL, USA

1978

Paintings and Drawings; Union Church, Hinsdale, Illinois, USA

1977

Paintings and Drawings; Alpha Gallery, Chicago, USA

1971

Paintings and Drawings; 5th Dimension Gallery, Honolulu, USA

### Group Exhibitions

2014

2014 The Alphabet, 28 Etchings, Dia de Los Muertos; El Gran Garage; Winslow AZ, USA

2011

University of Chicago Quadrangle Club, MLA Program

2009

Franciscan Festival of the Arts, Saint Peter's in the Loop, Chicago, USA

1997

Urban Views, Alumni Association of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, USA

1996

Urban USA Show, Seton Hall University, Orange, New Jersey, USA

Urban USA Show, Frederick Baker Gallery, Chicago, USA

Works on Paper Show, New York, NY, USA

1994

Prints Chicago Show, Chicago, Illinois, USA

1993

Prints Chicago Show, Chicago, Illinois, USA

1992

Chicago City Colleges, Harold Washington College; Chicago, USA

1991

Chicago City Colleges, Harold Washington College; Chicago, USA

1982

Illinois Art Association; Benefit Auction, Chicago, USA

1973

Wabash II Gallery, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, USA

1969

School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago; USA: group show

### **Bibliography**

New City, Arts Section; "Portrait of the Artist Rebecca Gray Smith," 29 May 2014

Marc Temmerman, Interview, Radio Judaïcia, FM 90.2, Brussels, Belgium, 4 Oct. 2002.

La Province, Newspaper interview and review with photograph of the artists, "Mons Exposition des oeuvres de Rebecca Gray Smith: La Double Vision de la Réalité," Mons, Belgium, 16 Oct. 2002, p. 27.

DiManche, Newspaper review with photograph of artwork. "Decourtenay-Galleries á Mons: Rebecca Gray Smith" Mons, Belgium, 30 Sept. 2002, p. 5.

SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe) Community Life Magazine, Review "Exhibition of Works by Rebecca Gray Smith," Vol. 35, No. 17, Mons, Belgium, 26 Sept. 2002, p. 11.

Mons Info Tourism Magazine, Exhibition announcement with photograph of artwork, "Expositions à MONS: Rebecca Gray Smith – Herculean Adventures" Mons, Belgium, Sept. – Oct. 2002, p. 48.

Eileen Watkins, New Jersey Star Ledger, Exhibition review, "'Urban USA' at Seton Hall: Cityscapes Combine Elegance Violence," Newark, NJ, 4 October 1996, n.p.

### **Selected Collections**

The Most Reverend and Rt. Hon. Dr. George L. Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury; UK

Fr. Theodore Hesburg; President Emeritus, Univ. of Notre Dame, USA

Fr. Andrew Greeley; Theologian and Sociologist, University of Chicago, Chicago, USA

The Rt. Hon. Rev. Frank T. Griswold; Bishop Primate 1997 - 2005, Philadelphia, PA USA

Private Collections in the USA, UK, Belgium, Netherlands, Japan, China, and India

### **Education**

2012

A.M., Liberal Arts, University of Chicago

2003

Certificate, Writing in Business & Professions, University of Chicago

1996

Printmaking, Intaglio & Relief, Chicago City Colleges

1983-1985

Printmaking, Lithography, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

1971-1973

Painting and Anatomy, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

1968-1970

Painting and Drawing, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

### **Teaching**

2013 – 2014

Adjunct Faculty; University of Chicago Division of the Humanities Civic Knowledge Project;

Courses on the History and Process of Fine Arts Printmaking

1997 – 2002

Instructor, Continuing Education Fine Arts Printmaking; Chicago City Colleges

1995 – 1997

Instructor, Fine Arts; St. Gregory Episcopal School (3rd – 8th grades), Chicago

1991 – 1996

Artist in Residence & Teaching Assistant volunteer with Prof. Michael S. Parfenoff,  
Fine Arts Printmaking Credit Courses, Chicago City Colleges Harold Washington College

1993 – 1994

City of Chicago, Department of Human Services Visual Arts Youth at Risk Program

1992

Instructor, Visual Arts, Apna Ghar Women's Shelter, Chicago

1985 – 1990

Instructor, Visual Arts: Children & Adult courses, Chicago Park District, Chicago