



Much of What is Seen is Not: Frank Boyden as Printmaker

January 23 – June 8, 2014

This exhibition debuts a selection of prints presented to RAM by the nationally recognized ceramicist, **Frank Boyden**. This gift of nearly 30 of his prints and folios from the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s depict fish, animals, and insects—which are also subjects in his ceramic work.

While artists are not always interested in—or successful at—exploring their ideas in different dimensions, Boyden has pursued concepts through multiple media for decades. He was trained as a printmaker, painter, and art historian; but he has created sculpture and public art. Boyden admits to being “seduced” by clay, a material he has worked with since the early 1970s. Inspired by Pre-Columbian and contemporary ceramics, Boyden has often chosen to use an anagama—or wood-fired—kiln to produce his clay vessels.

Boyden has produced almost 400 editions since his return to printmaking in 1984. Not only does he design and create the compositions, Boyden also pulls the prints himself, working in a large studio full of equipment that he built. A strong believer in creating art that reflects the natural world, Boyden connects his animal imagery to the species that inhabit the area near his home at the mouth of the Salmon River on the Oregon Coast.

Information on the artist pulled from his website, www.frankboydenstudio.com:

On Printmaking

- Boyden began making prints in 1963 at Colorado College and studied with **Gabor Peterdi** at Yale during graduate school.
- In 1999, Boyden built a large print facility at his home on the Oregon Coast, making his own presses and all his own equipment.
- From 1984 to 2000, much of Boyden’s printed imagery paralleled the imagery found on his ceramics. However, in 2000, Boyden began to produce prints that explored the human condition as well as a series of mystical landscapes. Of note are the *Uncle Skulky* prints (a suite of 21), the *Lens* prints (a suite of 9), and *The Empathies* (a suite of 96).
- With the prints he began in 2000, Boyden was encouraged to focus more on narrative imagery and visual and psychological story telling.

- Boyden's suite titled *The Irreverences, Provocations & Connivances of UNCLE SKULKY* recounts the trials and adventures of the artist's alter ego, Uncle Skulky. In this series, Uncle Skulky emerges from Boyden's psyche as a skeleton reminiscent of those in Mexican art created for the Day of the Dead and the haunting ghosts that figured in Japanese eighteenth- and nineteenth-century woodblock prints. With wit, charm, sarcasm, and a touch of vulgarity, the artist, in the guise of Uncle Skulky, pokes fun at contemporary society, current events, and, in general, the plight of humanity.
- In 2006, Boyden again blended the subjects of his prints and his ceramics as he included the Uncle Skulky character in a series called *Democracy Pots*.

On Ceramics/Sculpture

- From 1968 to 1981, Boyden worked mostly with native materials and clays and low temperature firing techniques. During that time he received grants to study Pre-Columbian—as well as contemporary—ceramics in the Peruvian jungles. He also received a National Endowment for the Arts grant.
- In 1984, he built the sixth anagama kiln in America and has spent the time since then perfecting the discipline of wood firing at high temperatures.
- Since 1993, Boyden has worked only with porcelain.
- In 1989, Boyden started to produce cast bronze works, and in 1991, he was awarded several large commissions

On Life/Work

- Boyden's artistic practices reflect his lifelong interests in the environment and the biological sciences.
- He founded the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology in 1970 and the Margery Davis Boyden writing residency program in 1991.
- Boyden has conducted hundreds of workshops and lectures around the world. He has acted as advisor and guest editor for *Ceramics: Art and Perception* and *Studio Potter* periodicals. Boyden is a member of the International Academy of Ceramics and National Council on Education for Ceramic Arts (NCECA).