

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

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MAJOR EXHIBITION OF RECENT PRINTS AND SCULPTURE  
AT NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

WASHINGTON, D.C. July 17, 1984. In the years since 1945, the production of graphic arts and edition sculpture has flourished in the United States as never before. Increasingly, major painters and sculptors have been drawn to printmaking, often relying on the technical expertise of professional craftsmen to bring their ideas to final form. Gemini G.E.L.: Art and Collaboration, on view in the National Gallery of Art's East Building from November 18, 1984 through February 24, 1985, celebrates the achievement of one of the most important and influential printmaking workshops and art publishers in the United States--Gemini G.E.L. [Graphic Editions Limited].

Established in Los Angeles in 1966, Gemini has published to date more than eleven hundred works of art, including edition prints and sculpture as well as monoprints and one-of-a-kind dimensional pieces. This exhibition includes works by 31 artists and presents a survey of Gemini's diverse publications, drawn from the Gemini G.E.L. Archive established at the National Gallery in 1981.

In this exhibition and accompanying catalogue, curator Ruth E. Fine of the Gallery's Department of Prints and Drawings examines not only the works of art produced by artists at Gemini G.E.L., she also explores in depth for the first time the process of collaboration that is an essential component of the creative efforts at Gemini.

The versatility of the work resulting from collaboration at Gemini, in which the ideas of artists are joined with the expertise of imaginative technicians and craftsmen, reflects the history of printmaking over the past two decades: from an

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early emphasis on lithography, Gemini expanded into screenprinting, etching, and the woodcut (often combining several processes in a single print), as well as the production of edition sculpture.

Beginning with Albers' White Line Squares (1966) (Gemini's first major undertaking), the exhibition traces the development of the shop. Artists at work in the late sixties and early seventies focused their attention on issues of technique and scale. Highlights from these first years include Robert Rauschenberg's Booster (1967) (measuring 72" x 35½"), which, with its life-size X-ray of the artist dominating the image, redefined the possibilities of size and scale in contemporary prints; Frank Stella's Double Gray Scramble (1972-1973), a screenprint so complex that it required one hundred and fifty runs to complete each image; and Claes Oldenburg's outsize objects from everyday life such as Ice Bag (1971) and Soft Screw (1976).

Sections of the exhibition are devoted specifically to works created at Gemini by several of the most important and exciting artists working in the U.S. today: Rauschenberg, whose Pages and Fuses series (1973-1974) was executed at a centuries-old French paper mill and stimulated artists' interest in using paper pulp as a medium; Ellsworth Kelly, whose carefully honed, elegant abstractions are represented by three-dimensional pieces including his Painted Wall Sculptures (1981-1982) as well as several prints; David Hockney, whose captivating portraits of friends from the worlds of art and literature include a group of special proofs of the lithograph Henry with Tulips (1976), depicting Henry Geldzahler; Jasper Johns, whose Four Panels from Untitled 1972 (1973-1975) is among the most complex and enigmatic prints of the period; Sam Francis, whose expansive, lyrical abstractions include the recent Indigo Wood (1984), a dark, somber piece; and Roy Lichtenstein, whose personal, often ironic reflections on the history of art include his recent "Paintings" Series (1984), in which the artist combines woodcut, lithography, screenprinting and collage to produce printed images of paintings.

The exhibition closes with works from the 1980s, a period in which Gemini has collaborated for the first time with Jonathan Borofsky, whose Flying Man with Briefcase

No. 2816948 (1983) is among the works on view. Other first-time collaborations during this period have been with Isamu Noguchi, represented by two galvanized steel pieces including Cloud Mountain (1982-1983); and Richard Diebenkorn, whose emblematic lithograph Untitled (from Club/Spade Group '81-2) (1984) will be shown along with the original drawing for the print. Recent sculpture by Mark di Suvero, Richard Serra, and Edward Kienholz will be on view, as well as new prints by James Rosenquist, Michael Heizer, Edward Ruscha, and Dorothea Rockburne.

In addition to a general history of Gemini and recent printmaking in the United States, the exhibition catalogue contains detailed entries on each work, biographies of individual artists, and an extensive bibliography by Lamia Doumato, reference librarian at the National Gallery. All works in the exhibition are illustrated in color; approximately 100 documentary photographs of the artists at work are also included. The catalogue will be co-published with Abbeville Press, Inc.

After its premiere at the National Gallery, Gemini G.E.L.: Art and Collaboration will be on view at the Seattle Art Museum; The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

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