

Detail from *The Book*

An illustration in a flat, graphic style. A person with short black hair, wearing a mustard yellow sweater, is shown in profile from the chest up, holding a dark book. Their right hand is resting on the head of a black cat with yellow eyes. The background is a light grey, with a dark blue shape behind the person's head. The overall style is minimalist and modern.

WILL BARNET FROM THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

March 3–May 29, 2023

Curated by Christine McCarthy



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WILL BARNET



Detail from *Idle Hands*

Born in 1911 in Beverly, Massachusetts, Will Barnett knew by the age of ten that he wanted to be an artist. As a student, he studied with Philip Leslie Hale at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and viewed first-hand John Singer Sargent at work on the murals of the Boston Public Library. In 1930, Barnett studied at the Art Students League of New York, with Stuart Davis and Charles Locke, beginning his long association with the school. Here he concentrated on painting as well as printmaking, and, in 1936, he became the official printer for the Art Students League. There, he later instructed students in the graphic arts at the school and taught alongside the likes of Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Robert Beverly Hale and Richard Pousette-Dart. Barnett influenced a generation

of artists, including James Rosenquist, Knox Martin, Emil Milan, Paul Jenkins, Ethel Fisher and Cy Twombly. Barnett continued his love of teaching with positions at the Cooper Union, at Yale University, and at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

PAAM is extremely grateful to Jack Krumholz and Marjorie Jacoby for gifting this collection of 68 Will Barnett artworks to PAAM in 2022. Carefully curated over decades, this collection represents a well-rounded selection of both figurative and abstract works that highlight the significant career of Will Barnett.

All artworks in this exhibition are the Gift of Jack Krumholz and Marjorie Jacoby, 2022.

Will Barnett on his work of the 50's – 60's:

In the late 1940's I began looking for abstract forms that symbolized the figures I wanted to represent. I concentrated on eliminating illusional representation in favor of a formal approach that gave equal attention to positive and negative space. It was an intense period of searching which led to radical aesthetic solutions.

My search was to find forms that belonged to the pure matter of painting itself but which were equivalent to the substance and forces I felt in nature. I eliminated realistic space and substituted a painting space based purely on the rectangle: the vertical and horizontal expansion of forms. These discoveries also translated into my graphic works. [...]

My work is constantly revitalized by direct contact with reality. The abstract work is never concerned with amorphic feelings but always with visual images of very real experiences, which demand that each form exist in its own sharply defined character.

–Will Barnett
New York City, 2009

LIST OF ARTWORKS

The White Stairway, 1974
Color serigraph on Arches paper,
artist's proof, 36" x 13.5"

The Caller, 1977
Color lithograph and serigraph on
Arches paper, 293/300, 40" x 15"

Woman, Cat, and String, 1980
Aquatint and etching, 13/50, 26" x 26"

Woman and Cats, 1969
Color lithograph on Arches paper, 33/100,
21" x 22.5"

Circe II, 1980
Color lithograph on cream Arches wove
paper, edition of 150, 18" diameter

The Robe/To Lillian and Dionigi, 1964
Etching and aquatint on Rives paper,
edition of 25, 12.25" x 13.25"

Child Among Thorns, 1952
Color lithograph on Rives paper, edition of 8,
23.75" x 18.5"

Guinea Hens, 1948
Etching and drypoint on Rives paper,
artist's proof, 7.375" x 9.625"

Big Grey, 1987
Woodcut, artist's proof, 11" x 9"

Woman by the Sea, 1973
Color lithograph on Arches paper, artist's
proof, 29" x 23"

Memory of Childhood, 1950
Color lithograph on Rives paper, artist's proof.
12.125" x 12.625"

Go-Go, 1947
Color serigraph on Rives paper, edition of 50,
12" x 9.625"

Idle Hands, 1935
Lithograph on Rives paper, edition of 10,
14" x 11.375"

The Book, 1975
Color serigraph on Arches paper, artist's
proof 9/10, 26" x 18"

Red Image, n.d.
Color lithograph, artist's single proof, 17" x 10"

Cheat Sheet – Know Your Types of Prints

Serigraph: Designs are placed on a piece of (traditionally) fine-mesh silk tacked to a wooden frame with a stencil on the surface, and ink is scraped over the stencil with a squeegee.

Lithograph: A drawing is made with greasy crayons and inks on a limestone slab, moistened so the uncovered parts of the stone become wet, and an oily ink is applied to adhere to the crayoned areas.

Woodcut (block print): A design is cut out on the surface of wood, ink is rolled on the raised surfaces of the image, printing the image in relief.

Etching: Similar to woodcuts but on a metal plate, an image is carved on the surface. Unlike a woodblock, ink is applied and wiped off, leaving only the incised lines to be printed.

Aquatint: A metal surface is engraved and applied with fine particles of acid-resistant material. The plate is bathed in acid, which eats at the metal and creates a granular pattern that holds the ink, creating larger areas of tone rather than fine lines.

Drypoint: Images are engraved on a metal surface, like an etching, but with a sharp-ended needle rather than rounded, producing a softer visual effect.



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