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Friends of the Connecticut College Library

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Winter Newsletter 2006

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SPRING SEMESTER EVENTS AND EXHIBITIONS

January 20-February 17. *That Various Field: A Salute to James Schuyler, an Artist's Book* by Miles Ladin. The library exhibition will coincide with an exhibition in Cummings Arts Center, *Photography and the Page: Laura Wilson, Philip Trager, Miles Ladin and Ted Hendrickson*, January 30-March 3. Roundtable discussion, Cummings 308, February 15, 4-5 p.m. followed by a reception in Cummings from 5-6 p.m. Miles Ladin '90 is a professional photographer.

February 20-March 10. *Exhibiting Activism.* An exhibition sponsored by the Holleran Center for Community Action and Social Policy. The program this year will focus on alumni and social entrepreneurship and will be part of the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Holleran Center.

March 20-May 5. *Walking: An Exhibition of Small Works* by Elizabeth Enders. There will also be an exhibition of Enders's large works at the Alva Gallery on State Street from March 18-April 29. Elizabeth Enders, a member of the class of 1962, had an exhibition called "Look at Art" in the library in 2004.

As we go to press, plans are being made for the following exhibition and lectures. Dates and times will be announced.

May-end of summer. The 75th Anniversary of the Arboretum will be celebrated with a display of materials from the College Archives.

Dale Wilson, Assistant Professor of Music, on Chinese music

Nancy Steenberg, Assistant Professor of History, at the University of Connecticut, Avery Point, on New London historian Frances Caulkins

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FIRST PURCHASE FROM PRICE FUND

The Death of the Narcissus, published in 1970, is one of Barry Moser's earliest publications and his first illustrated book. Moser was teaching at Williston Academy in 1969 when he convinced the headmaster that the school needed a printing press. Used equipment was purchased and installed on school property. In the essay "Leper & Witch's Garden" in his book of essays *In the Face of Presumptions* Moser describes the establishment and early years of the fledgling Castalia Press when he taught his students and himself the art of printing, printmaking and other aspects of the arts of the book. He enrolled in the MFA program at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst to learn more. To avoid fiscal confusion, Moser soon established the separate name "Pennyroyal Press" for the prints and books produced for his own profit. During the period from 1970 to 1974, Moser produced six books under the Pennyroyal imprint and two under Castalia.

Moser writes of his early efforts, "Etching was, for me, then, an easier medium to handle than wood engraving, so the next project that I did was a portfolio of etchings on what I called a "Botanico-Erotic" theme. It was called *The Death of the Narcissus*, and consisted of eleven sequential images, a haiku poem by Onitsura printed in 48-point Centaur, a title page, half title, a colophon. It was laid into a rather ill-fitting tray case that was, again, made by the South Hadley Book Bindery."

Special Collections has now acquired a scarce copy of this limited edition of 35.



Etching number 11 from *The Death of the Narcissus*

Moser inscribed this copy to his printer. It bears the imprint "Castalia Press" although the artist himself considered it a Pennyroyal publication. The workmanship of *The Death of the Narcissus* is noticeably less sophisticated than his later Pennyroyal publications of which Connecticut College has a respectable collection including *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Through the Looking Glass*, *Frankenstein*, *The Holy Bible*, and *The Wizard of Oz*.

The late Charles Price was a great fan of the work of Barry Moser so it is fitting that *The Death of the Narcissus* is the first major purchase of the fund that was established in his memory.



ERAGNY PRESS BOOK FROM THE LIBRARY OF JOHN MASEFIELD

The Friends of the
Connecticut College Library

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January 2006

One of the most interesting recent additions to Special Collections is a rare publication by the Eragny Press, an edition of Pierre de Ronsard's *Abregé de l'Art Poétique François*. The Eragny Press was the collaborative enterprise of Lucien Pissarro, the son of the French Impressionist painter Camille Pissarro, and his artist wife Esther Bensusan Pissarro, with whom he ran the press in England from 1894 to 1914. Born in Paris, trained as an artist and greatly influenced intellectually and artistically by his father, in England the younger Pissarro was caught up in the private press movement.

According to Lora Urbanelli in her book *The Wood Engravings of Lucien Pissarro & Bibliographical List of Eragny Books* "... Lucien brought together, in a way that no one else at the time was able, the avant-garde ideas of the Parisian Neo-Impressionists and the rich tradition of the English Arts and Crafts publishing embodied in the work and life of William Morris." Lucien and Esther Pissarro made their home in Epping and named their press after the Pissarro ancestral village in France. The Eragny Press produced thirty-two titles, printed in small editions, all distinguished by their beautiful flowered covers, wood-engraved borders, illustrations and fancy capitals. Needless to say, this very labor-intensive business was not profitable and it took little more than the difficulties presented by the outbreak of the First World War to close the press.

It is the connection with John Masefield that makes this copy of Ronsard's *Abregé* particularly interesting to Connecticut College. In 1983, C. Herbert Simmons and his wife Roxanne (the parents of Rob Simmons, Representative of the Second Congressional District of Connecticut) gave to Special Collections an interesting and valuable collection of books written by English Poet Laureate John Masefield (1878-1967). Masefield was the author of many books of poetry and prose but he is perhaps best known today for his poem "Sea Fever." Also included in the Simmons gift is a handsome series of poetry broadsides printed at the Cuala Press near Dublin by Elizabeth Yeats, the sister of W. B. Yeats. The collection was actually formed by C. Herbert's father, Charles H. Simmons, who corresponded with Masefield and

compiled *A Bibliography of John Masefield* published by Columbia University Press in 1930.

The Connecticut College copy of the *Abregé*, brought to our attention by Rhode Island book dealer Barry Scott who was aware of the Masefield collection in Shain Library, bears the book plate of



From the title page of the *Abregé*

John Masefield and an inscription on the front endpaper, "To Macey, Christmas 1938." Special Collections is fortunate to own two other examples of the work of the Eragny Press, *Areopagitica: a Speech of Mr. John Milton For the Liberty of Unlicenc'd Printing, To the Parliament of England* and *A Brief Account of the Origin of the Eragny Press & a Note on the Relation of the Printed Book as a Work of Art to Life* by T. Sturge Moore.

CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH FOUNDATION PAPERS

Professor Emeritus of Botany Richard H. Goodwin, a former Chairman of the Botany Department at Connecticut College and one of the nation's leading conservation advocates, gave the papers of the Conservation and Research Foundation to the library a number of years ago. Dr. Goodwin has served as the President of the Foundation since it was incorporated in 1953.

The purposes of this foundation are "to promote the conservation of our renewable natural resources; to encourage study and research in the biological sciences; and to deepen understanding of the intricate relationship between man and the



environment that supports him." These objectives are fulfilled primarily by awarding grants to organizations and individuals

to aid their conservation programs and to support research in neglected areas. This broad philosophy is reflected in the diversity of grants awarded by the Foundation.

The collection deals mostly with the grants that were awarded by the Foundation between 1953 and 2003. The papers are arranged into 22 document boxes. Although the papers have been available to researchers, there has never been a guide to the collection. But now with the creation of a detailed finding aid by reference librarian Linda Alexander and its publication on the Special Collections home page, the Foundation's papers are likely to attract the attention they deserve.

NEWS FROM THE CHU ROOM

We hope that many of you got a chance to see *Reviving the Flower and Bird Tradition: Paintings by Li Weihong*, an exhibition of sixty works that was on display in the Chu Room from December 1-15. At once traditional and modern, Chinese artist Li Weihong's strong use of color created a stunningly beautiful show, her first in the United States.

Fans of the work of Charles Chu will be pleased to hear that the next major show in the Chu Room will be an exhibition of his paintings curated by Ning Qiang, Chu-Niblack Associate Professor of Art History and Curator of the Chu-Griffis Asian Art Collection. The details for this show have not been finalized but it will open sometime in May. An announcement will be mailed in the spring.

PLEASE JOIN THE FRIENDS OF THE CONNECTICUT COLLEGE LIBRARY!

Another year begins and we invite you to renew your membership for 2006, as an old or a new member, in the Friends of the Connecticut College Library. Membership contributions are the primary source of support for Special Collections events.

During 2005 the Friends sponsored a variety of interesting lectures and exhibitions, such as the African-themed artists books of Mary McCarthy, a lecture on Chinese bronzes by Professor Chen Wangheng, a PowerPoint presentation on Historic Neighborhoods of New London by New London Landmarks, a lecture on Eugene O'Neill by professor Linda Herr, an exhibition of Japanese prints from the collections of the Art History department and from the library, and an exhibition of World War II artifacts and documents from Special Collections. This year money from the Friends was also used to pay for the archival preservation of seventeen of the most valuable prints in the Japanese Print Collection.

Membership includes the benefit of receiving this newsletter and announcements of and invitations to exhibition openings and lecture receptions. Members who contribute at the \$50 level and above are entitled to borrowing privileges from the excellent collections at Shain Library and Greer Music Library.

Laurie M. Deredita

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