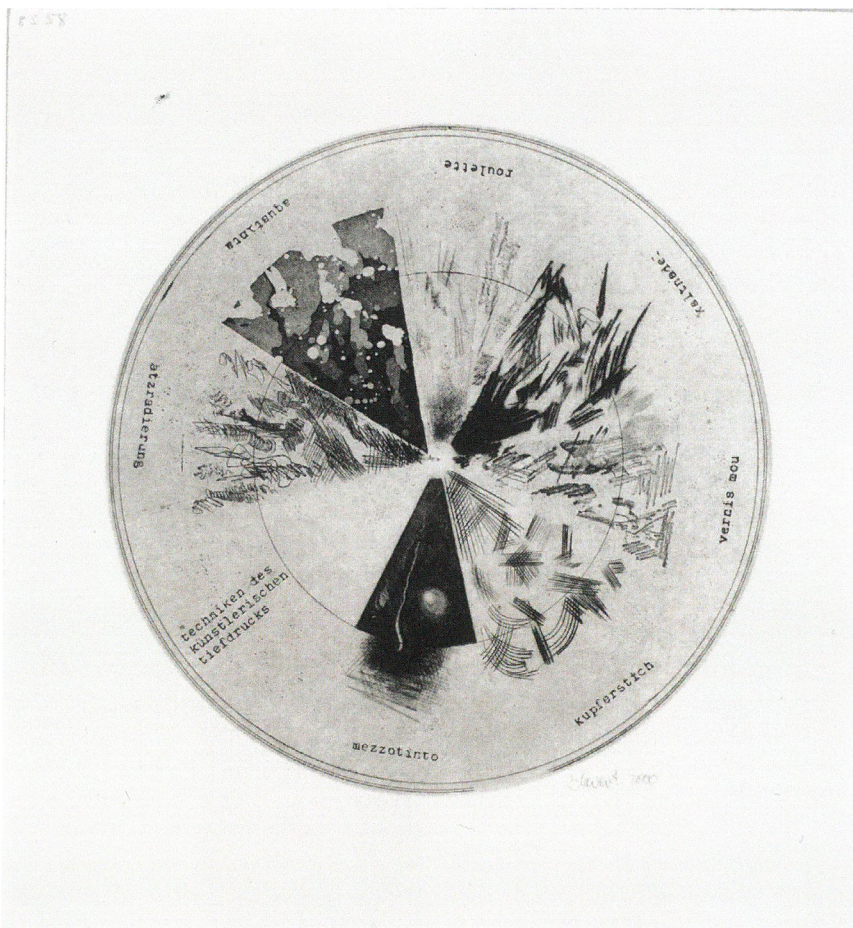


A Paper Conservator's Print Collection at Tübingen University

By Karen Köhler and Irene Brückle

Collecting prints is an interest not exclusive to art collectors. Among others, it has been pursued by paper conservators, especially those specializing in the treatment of artworks, out of a love of art; an interest in artists' methods and the technical intricacies of paper and media that are the material basis of print production; and formerly, as a supply of materials. The earliest such collections, associated with 19th-century restorers, were literally used—even used up—in the process of restoration, as can be seen by extant restoration work.¹ In order to make complicated, hardly visible repairs on saleable but damaged prints, matching pieces of paper were cut from old prints deemed to have no commercial value (many were donated for this purpose). Today, of course, professional ethics have changed such that cannibalizing historic materials—even blank paper—is out of the question.²

Since the mid-20th century, paper conservators have collected prints for the less destructive purpose of teaching. The need for systematic training for conservators was recognized even before the first German programs in the discipline opened their doors around 1990. Barbara Schulz (1920–2013) stands out among the fledgling group of professionals for her dedication to the study of fine art printing technology, and she formed a collection of 196 prints that she used in teaching, starting in the 1970s. In 2005, she sold this collection to the Institute of the History of Art, Eberhard Karls University Tübingen, where it rests today. (The choice of institution was no doubt inspired by her long-term collaboration with librarian Gerd Brinkhus, who also served as head of preservation at Tübingen University.) It is the first paper conservator's collection to be acquired by a public collection in Germany, but it is likely that similar collections will now move to other institutions (at Stuttgart, where the authors of this essay work, a collection donated by British paper conservator Kate Collier is presently being inventoried, while in the United States,

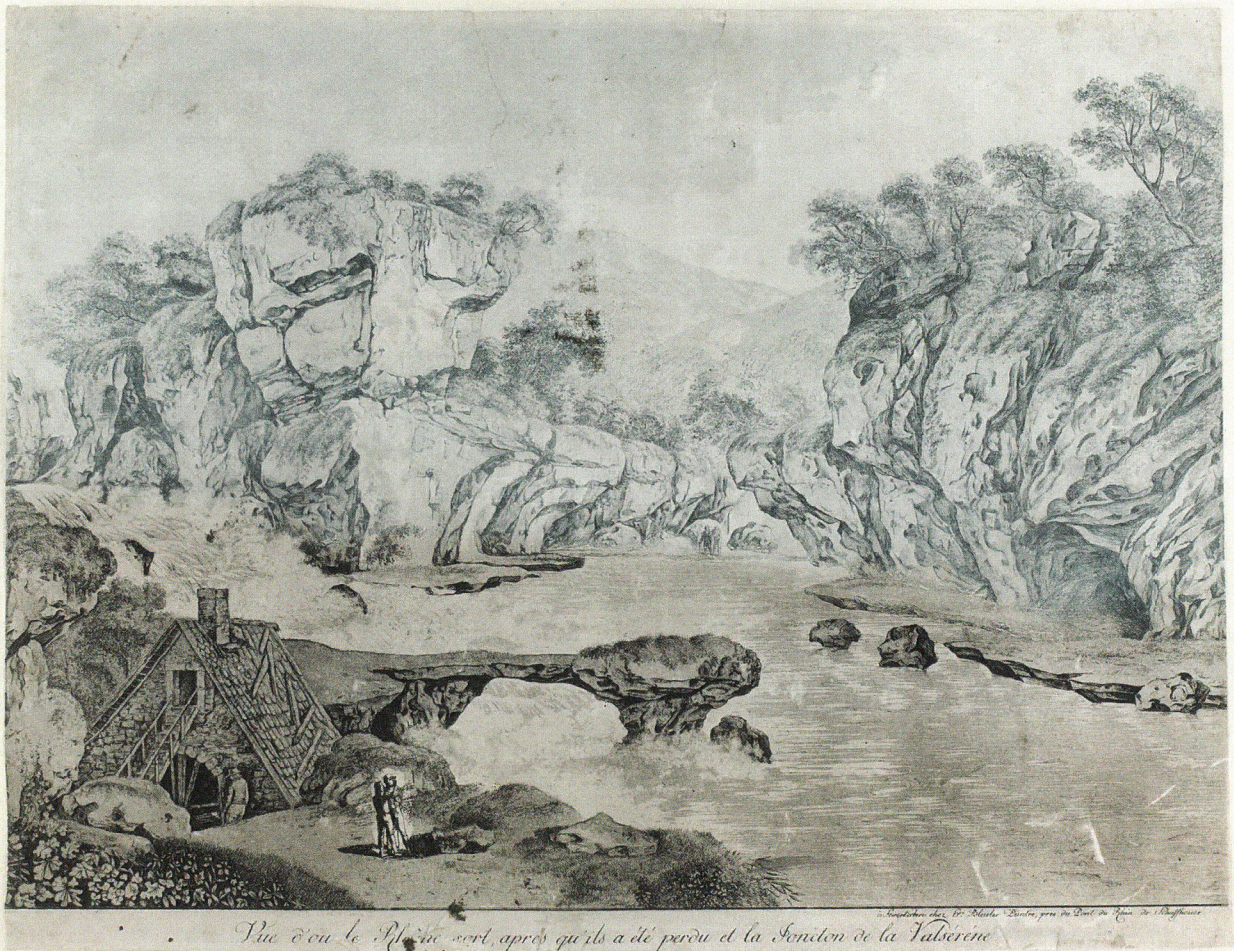


Wolfgang Blauert, no title/undated, intaglio print showing (counter-clockwise from the bottom): mezzotint, engraving, soft ground, dry point, roulette, aquatint, etching, 27.0 x 25.2 cm, *Graphische Sammlung*, Eberhard Karls Universität, Tübingen. Photo: Karen Köhler.

the paper collection of Boston-based conservator Christa Gaehde (1922–2002) recently went to Yale University).³

Schulz first learned about printing as a child in Berlin, hovering in the workshop of her father, the artist and etcher Karl Heinrich Schulz, and later studied painting and design at Universität der Künste Berlin, from 1939 to 1943. Shortly before the end of World War II in 1945, Schulz and her mother fled westwards (her father remained behind and did not survive). Schulz supported herself with portrait and landscape drawings, worked for some time at the archeological institute

at Marburg University, and eventually settled in Darmstadt, where she became paper conservator for the *Graphische Sammlung* (prints and drawings collection) of the Hessisches Landesmuseum, a position she held from 1958 to 1982. One of the first female members of the International Association of Book and Paper Conservators, she published articles in the 1970s–90s on print technology, her favorite subject, and in 1982 curated an exhibition and symposium at the Darmstadt museum, “Der künstlerische Tiefdruck—Techniken” (the artistic intaglio print—techniques).⁴



Vue d'ou le Rhône sort, après qu'ils a été perdu et la Joncton de la Valsérène

Johann Heinrich Bleuler, *Vue d'ou le Rhône sort, après qu'ils a été perdu et la Joncton de la Valsérène*, aquatint in two colors, 40 x 52 cm, Graphische Sammlung, Eberhard Karls Universität, Tübingen. Photo: Karen Köhler.

The works in her collection are mostly from the 19th and 20th centuries, donated by artists and collectors, or purchased in Darmstadt galleries and antiquarian bookstores; a few are commissioned works created for her by artists. Intaglio prints, her primary subject for many years, make up the more than half the collection (114 works), followed by relief (54), planographic (23), one screenprint and six miscellaneous works. The selection was not predicated on artistic merit, and as the prints were her personal property, they could be handled and viewed with a magnifying glass by course participants—usually following a slide lecture that featured masterpieces in respective techniques. Decades of such handling did, she noted, create wear.⁵ The collection is still housed in the portfolios and boxes she constructed, which will be preserved when the prints are rehoused.

Among the works she collected are those with telltale signs of particular printing processes, such as the view of the Rhône river by Johann Heinrich (Henri) Bleuler, an aquatint printed *à la poupée* in blue and black ink. In her notes, Schulz points out the splotchy transition between the two colors, and comments that the print would have been meant to receive either further printed color or, more likely, handcoloring. She further records that the print was given to her as a present by the Darmstadt artist Claire Orth in whose family it had survived as a damaged “war remnant,” which may account for the creases and scratches in the paper. Two other impressions pulled from one plate illustrate printing process variations that result from different ink color and, likely, consistency. The first dates from the 19th century, while the second was pulled in 1984 from the war-damaged plate, and

was (to an extent not specified) restored before printing by the Darmstadt artist Wolfgang Blauert. Some evidence of damage in the form of dents showing as inked features remains. Blauert also created a teaching print for Schulz that features a spherical arrangement of eight intaglio printing techniques; this was handed out to course participants.

Schulz’s notes enhance the interest of the collection. Despite the narrow focus on facts about prints, they read a bit like a diary, giving glimpses of life through the objects that were gathered.

Since Schulz’s time, print identification pedagogy has blossomed; it is now a standard module in paper conservation curricula, and conservators and art historians, sometimes working in collaboration, have published many studies on historic printing methods, both in relation to artistic oeuvres as well as individ-

ual techniques. The value of Barbara Schulz's collection, however, remains undiminished; we anticipate that future generations of art history, art and conservation students will consult the collection and perhaps add more detail to the records, consulting in parallel the resources available on the Web. Were she still alive, Schulz surely would relish this broadened plane of research options and would have had much to contribute. ■

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Anette Michels, head curator at the Graphische Sammlung at the Eberhard Karls Universität, Tübingen, for offering the collection as a topic for the BA thesis carried out by Karen Köhler, who documented it and transcribed Schulz's analog records. Colleagues Martina Noehles in Mühlheim; Ruth Schmutzler at the Städel Museum in Frankfurt; Leslie Paisley in Williamstown, MA; and Gerd Brinkhus in Tübingen contributed their recollections.

Karen Köhler is a paper conservation graduate student completing her MA at the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Stuttgart.

Irene Brückle is a Professor and head of the Program Konservierung und Restaurierung von Kunstwerken auf Papier, Archiv und Bibliotheksgut.

Notes:

1. Karin Holzherr, "Beispiele für Restaurierungen durch Johann Michael von Hermann und Ludwig Albert von Montmorillon" and Susanne Wagini, "Johann Michael von Hermann (1793–1855). 'Erfinder der wahren Kupferstich-Restauration' und Vorläufer von Max Schweidler," in Susanne Wagini, ed., *Lucas van Leyden 1489/94–1533: Meister der Druckgraphik* (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2017).
2. Selina Dieter, Irene Brückle, Oliver Masson, and Georg Josef Dietz, "Print Facsimile Repairs on Old Master Prints or What we can learn from Schweidler," *Journal of Paper Conservation—Mitteilungen der IADA* 19, no.1 (2018): 5–17
3. Email from Theresa Fairbanks, 2019. 25 Apr 2019. Another part of the Gaehde collection is at Stuttgart.
4. Barbara Schulz, *Der künstlerische Tiefdruck: Techniken* (Darmstadt: Hessisches Landesmuseum, 1982).
5. Barbara Schulz, "Über die Oberflächenempfindlichkeit von ein- und mehrfarbig gedruckten Tiefdrucken," *Restauo* 98 (1992): 252–257.



Slide storage page from the slide collection of Barbara Schulz, private collection.
Photo: Ruth Schmutzler.

US \$30

Art **in** Print

The Global Journal of Prints and Ideas
September – October 2019
Volume 9, Number 3



PICTURING THE INVISIBLE: ART, FORENSICS AND MORE • RECOMMENDED READING FOR THE PRINT-CURIOUS PART II
EDVARD MUNCH • KIP GRESHAM • IRISH ETCHERS • LORNA SIMPSON • THOMAS KILPPER • BARBARA SCHULZ • PRIX DE PRINT • NEWS