

Art

Glankoff's print-paintings are a discovery

By Alan G. Artner
Art critic

Sam Glankoff (1894-1982) made his debut in a Manhattan gallery at age 87, more than a half-century after he first exhibited landscapes at a Whitney Studio Club group show.

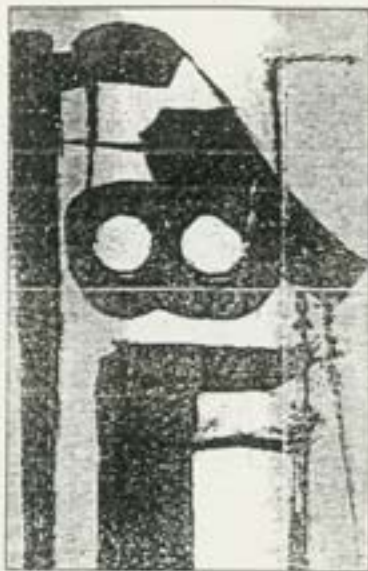
During the intervening years he lived in a two-room apartment, doing commercial design and his own work, which he neither showed nor sold.

The pictures he finally was persuaded to exhibit were the result of a process that combined water-soluble inks and oils in a kind of monotype that he called a "print-painting."

Glankoff did not attend the opening of his exhibition but did see it on the final day of its run. He died six months later.

Several Glankoff print-paintings are on view at the Roger Ramsay Gallery, 212 W. Superior St. They are a splendid discovery.

Pieced together from as many as six identical-sized sheets of Japan paper, the works present simple emblematic forms and abstracted figures. There is a relationship, at times, to Oriental calligraphy, as well as to the



Untitled work by Sam Glankoff's, done in ink and casein.

veiled luminosity of, say, Adolph Gottlieb or William Bazotes.

In general, though, Glankoff's work—completed for the most part during the 1970s—does not reflect a specific period. It could have been done by a new young colorist or a veteran Abstract Expressionist and would have been radiant either way.

The gallery is showing a videotape that records the artist making and viewing his print-paintings. His reactions, at times, are those of a *naif*. But no one should think he did not know what he was doing. Glankoff devoted a decade to the development of his process and knew its capabilities. One feels he got exactly what he wanted from it. The impact is that brilliant.

There he was, lost in his own world, working apart from decades of passing fashion. Here he is now, still removed from the fads of the day, but looking surprisingly contemporary. There is no one way to explain it. The work is clearly individual—and the individual was clearly eccentric. [Through June 20.]

ALSO OF INTEREST: Chicago artist Robert Lostutter's return to oil painting, among watercolors and drawings at Dart, 212 W. Superior St.; through June 9.