



THE JANE VOORHEES ZIMMERLI MUSEUM

Background Information: Art Exhibition
Sam Glankoff (1894-1982) A Retrospective

The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, will present the first retrospective of the art of the late Sam Glankoff (1894-1982). The exhibition will open September 16 and extend through November 27, 1984.

Throughout his lifetime, Sam Glankoff shunned public exposure and was finally persuaded in 1981 to have his first one-man show, which was held at the Graham Gallery, New York. John Russell chief art critic of *The New York Times* wrote, "It is not every day that an artist of stature makes his debut in New York at the age of 87....The show breathes deeply, calmly, and the individual images are harmonious....The color sings – but quietly, like a well-behaved kettle..." Glankoff's work is represented in public and private collections including The Guggenheim Museum, The Detroit Institute of Arts, Philip Morris Inc. and Becton Dickinson and Company.

The retrospective was organized by Wendy Snyder, Director of the Estate of Sam Glankoff and Jeffrey Wechsler, Assistant Director of the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum. According to Mr. Wechsler, "Glankoff realized that the effects of color and surface he desired were only feasible through a complex printmaking process. He exemplifies the artist who has made his greatest contribution to contemporary art through the medium of printmaking by innovation and development of a new form: that of print-painting. Since the Zimmerli Art Museum concentrates on research in the graphic arts, it is appropriate that we display this first retrospective of Glankoff's art."

Sam Glankoff was born in 1894 in New York City. He painted still life's, portraits and landscapes as a youth, but did not begin to experiment with woodcuts until the 1920s, when he exhibited his art in both media at the Whitney Studio Club. For fifty years he drew sharp distinctions between his personal art and the commercial work he produced to earn a living.

In the 1970s, he developed his innovative process of printmaking. He replaced the woodcut medium's traditional block of wood with multiple plywood boards scaled to the handmade Japanese paper that he used. By printing several layers of color with water-soluble inks and casein, he was able to achieve a unique luminosity of surface. Glankoff defined his technique as "using a printing method to make a painting."

While Glankoff's early imagery was representational, by the later 1940s it had become abstract. These complex compositions were eventually distilled down to the simple and very personal symbols of his print-paintings. As Glankoff's images became more primitive, color assumed increasing importance.

Over one hundred works of art, including Glankoff's early paintings, woodcuts and commercial illustrations will be on display. The works range in size from 5 x 7 inch woodcuts of the 1920s, to his final multi-panel print-paintings, some measuring 5 x 6 feet. Such large dimensions are highly unusual for printmaking techniques.

A catalogue of the exhibition will be available at the Museum. A video-tape featuring the late artist and his work will be shown at regular intervals.