

By Melody Knight Leary

Plates, stones, acids, grounds, scoring, gouging, brayers and barens; all add up to ink meeting paper under pressure. What sounds like an incantation for a secret society is nothing more than tools of the trade for printmakers and is a big part of the allure of working with the transferred image. An instantaneous collegiality exists among artists working in the print medium; they're enthusiastic about what they do, and are generally very generous with their knowledge and insights. If you meet another printmaker, talk inevitably turns to techniques and materials because printmakers inevitably recognize that spark of craftsmanship within other printmakers. It was in this spirit of sharing and camaraderie, that a small group of dedicated artists banded together to form the **Printmakers Network of Southern New England (PNSNE)**.

United in their love of printmaking and with an enthusiasm for promoting the art of making original prints, their goal was to coordinate efforts aimed at facilitating support for regional artists working with printed images and to help educate the public about this exciting medium. Twenty years have passed since that initial alliance, and over that time, the PNSNE has grown to become a diverse group of artists who have exhibited their work throughout the east coast, produced an educational video, and have conducted a number of interactive workshops, which provided the public with a variety of information on the print processes.

The PNSNE has produced five portfolios of original prints, and has collaborated with local poets to produce a book entitled *Travel*. Their work is included in numerous collections some of which include: Wheaton College, Fairfield University, the Dodd Center at the University of Connecticut and the Newport Art Museum.

To mark their twentieth anniversary, PNSNE has just completed their sixth portfolio entitled *Score/2012*. For added interest, images were printed on paper measuring twenty inches by twelve inches. A clamshell case holds this collection of twenty-six prints exhibiting a wide range of print processes.

*Score* has a variety of definitions and members were challenged to creatively interpret using any print medium of their choice. Shirley Bernstein's, reduction color woodcut, "X at Sea," (2012) lifts your attention to the clouds and was inspired by a sunset experienced at sea. In addition to keeping score of the times each print was put through the press, Bernstein chose to interpret the theme as the physical aspect of scoring into the wood itself.

In a more implied interpretation, Melody Knight Leary's print, "From Here



Shirley Bernstein, "X at Sea," Reduction Color Woodcut, 2012



Melody Knight Leary (2012). "From Here to God,"  
Intaglio-type with chine colle & watercolor

*To God,* (2012) explores the progression of time in our temporal existence. Metaphorically using images related to birds, score is referenced in terms of years; milestone shifts within a lifetime from birth, adulthood, middle age and old age, ever moving toward the unknown.

Eric Goldberg's, "Winter Sonata," (2012), is an image reminiscent of a musical score. The visual similarity between the lines and notes of music and the cast shadow patterns and the markings of the birch trees read like a musical composition.

A musical score was also the inspiration for Rhea Nowak. Her print, "Finding Away," (2012) interprets score as "A segment of a musical score for life, an overlapping series of lifetimes. Characters arrive, play their part, and go



7:00. Additional works by the Printmakers Network of Southern New England will also be on display. Additional information about the Printmakers' Network of Southern New England can be found at [www.melodyknightleary.wordpress.com](http://www.melodyknightleary.wordpress.com) [www.printmakersnetwork.org](http://www.printmakersnetwork.org)

Melody Leary works in a variety of printmaking media, preferring less toxic printmaking materials and processes. After a long and rewarding career in art education, she now works in her home studio in southeastern Connecticut.

Grace Bentley Scheck, "Scoring,"  
Collagraph, 2012

leaving behind echoes in those still playing. Each of us is an aspect of a much larger whole. A seemingly infinite ensemble playing an endlessly complex continuously evolving score."

On a playful note, Grace Bentley Scheck offers a collagraph entitled "Scoring". The title refers not only to the act of scoring lines into the plate but also alludes to sexual attraction. "The man at the bottom is scoring a woman, or perhaps she is scoring him. Who could say?" Either way, it makes for a lighthearted interpretation of the portfolio's theme.

An anniversary is a time to celebrate accomplishments and *Score/2012* is a fitting tribute to the endurance of the PNSNE and showcases the creative diversity of this dedicated group of artists. Although the PNSNE has expanded since its inception in 1992, traditions of exploration and education remain central to this group of artists, as evidenced by the work developed for *Score/2012*, and provides proof that printmaking is a powerful force for artistic expression.



Eric Goldberg,  
"Winter Sonata," 2012



Rhea Nowak, "Finding Away," 2012

The Akus Gallery of Eastern Connecticut State University in Willimantic, Ct. will host the inaugural exhibition of *Score/2012* from **August 30th to October 11th** with an **opening reception on September 6th from 5:00 to**

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