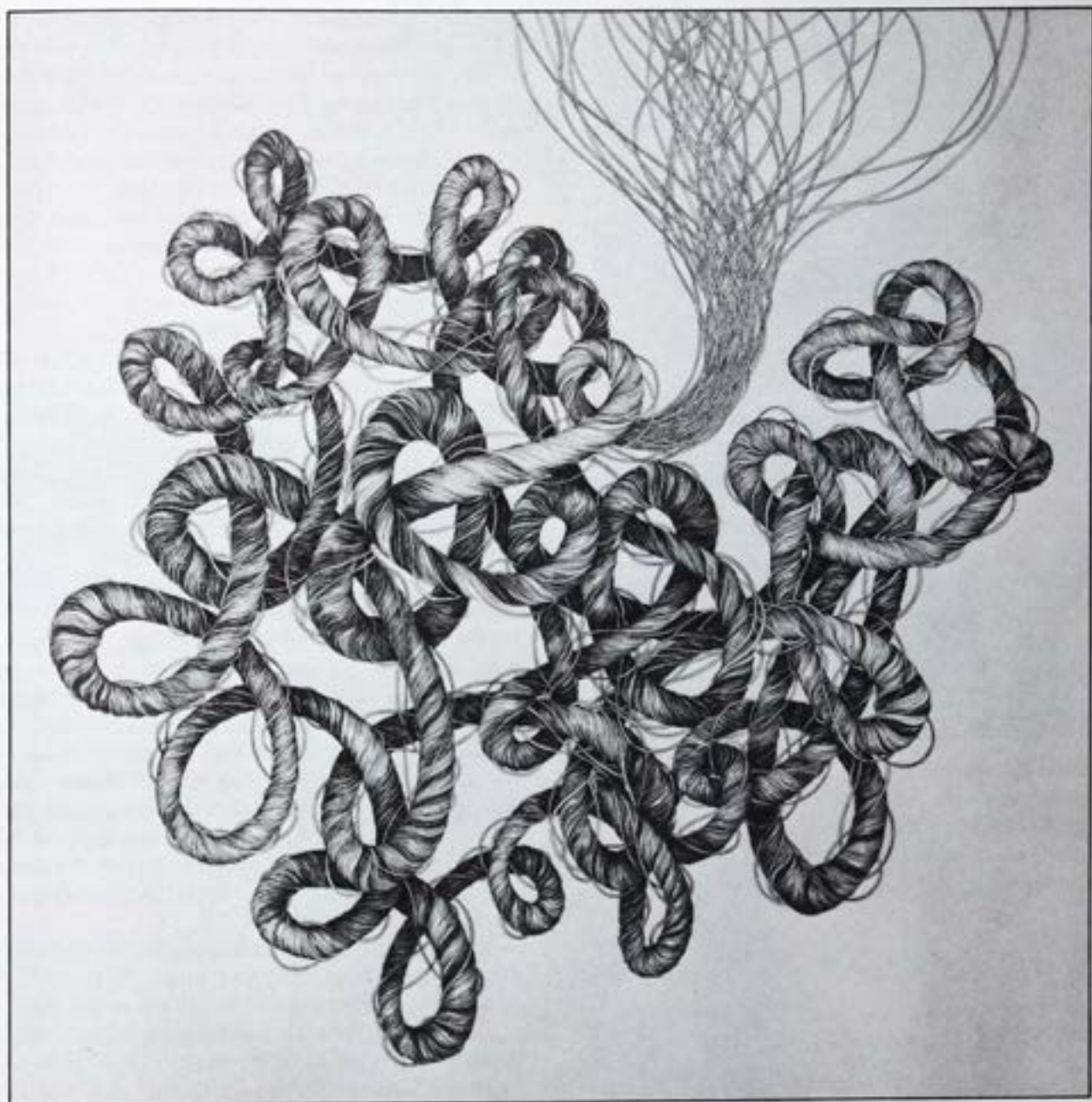


HISTORY LESSON

The Art of Evan Lindquist



All works © Evan Lindquist

Thought, a 1970 work, is a typically intricate Lindquist engraving.

Evan Lindquist of Jonesboro, professor of art at Arkansas State University, is one of Arkansas's most highly regarded artists. He's perhaps best known for his engravings, but during his two decades in Arkansas he has produced distinguished woodcuts, wood-engravings, and work in what he calls "various intaglio methods, including etching and drypoint." He's had more than fifty one-man exhibitions, and his work has been selected for inclusion in more than one hundred twenty juried exhibitions, in which it has received sixty-one awards.

Lindquist was born in Kansas in 1936. He came to Arkansas in 1963 after receiving a graduate fine arts degree at the University of Iowa, where he studied under Mauricio



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Lasansky, the Argentine master. He came to ASU to teach, believing that the art community in nearby Memphis would be stimulating. "At first Memphis was important," he says, "but now I take my nurture here. After twenty-two years, I've spent more time in Arkansas than most of my students who were born in the state. It's home." His wife Sharon is also a Jonesboro artist-educator, and they have two sons.

In his printmaking, Lindquist works with tools that haven't changed much in three hundred years. The principal one is a burin, a square-shafted cutting tool that is held in the palm of the hand. The burin "attacks the metal," cuts through it, picks up the shavings and leaves the line clean. Engravers work with a variety of metals, but most of them, Lindquist says, "fight back." So he limits himself mainly to copper. "Only copper resists in a consistent manner," he says. "It's a partner you can count on and come to love."

He prints most of his work in black and white, although he's currently creating a series of three-colored prints called "History Lessons," which he describes as being in part a study in color and design.

Lindquist begins a work by first roughing out his ideas on paper. He doesn't do finished sketches, though. "I take to the plate a general idea, and the idea changes and grows more intricate as I engage the metal," he says.

He thinks his work took a decisive turn in 1967 with an engraving he titled "Adam and Eve." He calls it "the most important work I'd done up to that time." It pictured Adam with the head of an ape and in the same pose as Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel Adam. It showed Eve emerging from Adam's side. She had too many arms and too many joints, and was represented with one hand poised, perhaps flirtatiously, on her hip. The view of Adam's skull was anamorphic, with the mushroom cloud of an atomic blast rising from the head and dominating the top of the print.

"I tried to get the full scope of man from the distant past to the future where man is no longer recognizable as man," Lindquist says.

He has done more important engravings since, he says—notably a series of abstracts called "Gravity"—"but I couldn't have done them without 'Adam and Eve.'"

Lindquist has recently found inspiration in other cultures. A group of five prints—"Homage to Ukiyo-E"—is a eulogy to the Japanese woodcut artists of past centuries. The prints hardly resemble the Japanese works, but, as their titles reveal, they evoke some of the familiar favorite themes of the Japanese artists: "Actor," "Dancer," "Sumo Wrestlers," and "Celebrated Place." Appropriately, the final print, "Foreigners Enter Edo," depicts the arrival in Japan of Commodore Perry and consequently of the Western influences that undermined traditional Japanese culture and its art styles.

The "History Lessons" series that he's currently working on conveys a sense of political foreboding, depicting as it does such characters as Machiavelli and Cesare Borgia.

Lindquist says he expects his art to disturb its viewers. But he says "the point is not merely to shock but to cause to think, and beyond that, to see freshly and more keenly."

—Bill Berry



A recent Lindquist work, completed this year, is The River: Tornado.



History Lesson: Borgia (1984) is part of a current series of engravings that convey a sense of political foreboding.