

Evan Lindquist

(Jonesboro, Arkansas)

By Edgar A. Albin

Arkansas artist, Evan Lindquist, admires the classic European etchers and engravers. Albrecht Durer, Martin Schongauer, Piranesi, Giandomenico Tiepolo, Francisco Goya y Lucientes, and the master engraver of 18th Century England William Blake, are among his heroes.

Lindquist is not a Renaissance artist. This was clearly seen in his one-artist exhibition viewed recently at Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

Lindquist is a man of this era; sophisticated and knowledgeable about 20th Century assumptions, both scientific and esthetic.

The Cape Girardeau exhibition presented work produced during the past eight years from five suites of prints, beginning in 1969 with the *Fibres Suite*, developed from an engraving with Adam and Eve as the theme. Many preparatory drawings were done. As Lindquist studied these he noticed the figures seemed to be lifeless—unmotivated by human souls. He attached pictorial strings to them and made them into marionettes:

"These strings," says Lindquist, "became vaguely symbolic of soul and other forces which seem to control human destiny."

As the suite developed, the engravings became more abstract until finally only the strings, the fibres, remained. "Sometimes these things get so personal I find it difficult to say things about them that are meaningful," explains Lindquist.

The artist, of course, says the meaningful through craft and concept. The engravings of Evan Lindquist reveal a consummate skill with the burin, and an esthetic sensitivity which transfers to the copper plate a profound understanding of spatial relationships and a deft ability to translate, through the burin stroke, the character of the space revealing light.

However, Lindquist's prints are much more than brilliant technique. Conceptually they spring from richly varied experience. They relate to his interest in biology, geometry, philosophy, oriental rugs and calligraphy, as well as the explorations of Surrealist artists and authors into the realm of the subconscious.

In 1973 there is a transition from the *Fibres Suite* to the *Genesis Suite*. In this group of prints, the orderliness of the previous engravings gives way to a space that becomes a whirling maelstrom whose energy transcends a solid plane below, as in *Genesis II*. This idea continues in *Genesis III* and *Genesis IV*, culminating in dervish forms which suggest the power of tornadic winds. Subjectively, this work relates to a disastrous tornado which struck Lindquist's town, Jonesboro, Arkansas, in 1973.



The Artist . . .
Evan Lindquist.

Evan Lindquist
Document: Theory, 1977
Engraving
13" x 18"

Photos courtesy of the artist

A suite of prints based on *The Lamp* also develops in 1973-74. These resulted when an electric blackout occurred while Lindquist was working on an engraving. He lighted an old kerosene lamp and continued his work. Soon the flickering lights and shadows asserted themselves. New images began to flow. Print one of this suite is linear and descriptive. As successive prints develop, however, the lamp motif moves from its original material containment to a fleeting, changing reality. Corporeal form becomes psychic form.

Number Seven in the *Lamp Suite* seems a summation of Lindquist's artistic development to date. It is incredibly rich in many dimensions: rhythm, composition, technical skill, variety and a complex ordering of space.

Lindquist calls the next suite to develop *Artifacts*. The idea began when he made some cast wax models of several pairs of scissors, which, had they been cast in metal, could not possibly function. These bizarre wax models motivated new images and the *Artifact Suite* was on its way.

From the scissors motif, Lindquist moved to musical instruments, the lute and violin in particular.

These artifacts, baroque in character, invited the florid curvilinear rhythms which characterize the suite. It is interesting to note that these musical instruments also cannot possibly be played. The conflicting silence is assured by missing strings, a broken bow or some distorted member. Only Lindquist's burin sings as he engraves each active line.

Another element that has been important throughout Lindquist's development is his great interest in calligraphy. Since early school days he has been an inveterate doodler. His interest became lucrative during college days, when he secured a job creating certificates and charters for a national fraternity.

These calligraphic interests have surfaced dramatically in the *Document Suite*. The first engraving here is simply



called *Document*. The image is an icosahedron, a twenty-sided geometric figure. However, the icosahedron is presented in crisp, clear lines in much the same manner that an orthographic projection lays out various surface views on a two dimensional plane.

Ropes of fibres are distributed over these views. The work is conceptual in that the viewer can, by following the various views and relating them in an isometric manner, construct a thought image which is three dimensional and, furthermore, presents the fibres as enclosing the icosahedron.

Document Man (or *Forgotten Man* as Lindquist sometimes refers to the work) presents universal man merging into murky darkness while the frame around him becomes alive with serpentine, Spencerian calligraphy.

Lindquist's most recent engraving continues the *Document Suite*. It is called *Document Theory*. The image has shifted to empty vinyl gloves whose limpid, phallic forms move fluidly over rigid blocks of calligraphy.

Evan Lindquist was born at Salina, Kansas in 1936, and in 1958, he was awarded the B.S.E. degree at Emporia State University. In 1963 Lindquist earned his M.F.A. from the University of Iowa. At Iowa, Lindquist trained in the workshop of the eminent printmaker, Mauricio Lasansky.

Lindquist has taught art at Arkansas State University since 1963, and holds the special degree of Distinguished Associate Professor.

Lindquist seems to have survived his formal education with a "whole skin." He is Evan Lindquist, individual and artist—whose alert, inquiring mind leads him into ever-new frontiers with space, the copper plate and the burin as tools for the conquest.

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