Cover: James Siena, Parentheses, Tesselating, 2018, lithograph (detail), edition of 20. Courtesy of the Artist and The University of the Arts, MFA Book Arts + Printmaking Program
JAMES SIENA:
Resonance Under Pressure

NEW TYPOGRAPHICS:
Typewriter Art as Print

April 19 — July 27, 2019
The Print Center is pleased to present *James Siena: Resonance Under Pressure*, a solo exhibition of new prints by New York-based artist James Siena, and *New Typographics: Typewriter Art as Print*, a related thematic exhibition of typewriter prints by Lenka Clayton, Dom Sylvester Houédard, Gustave Morin, Elena del Rivero and Allyson Strafella. These exhibitions are curated by Ksenia Nouril, PhD, Jensen Bryan Curator.

The Print Center is honored to exhibit new prints by James Siena, published in conjunction with printmaking programs at universities from and beyond Philadelphia. The works’ connection to pedagogy is very important to this exhibition, which includes displays of the various materials, from the matrices to the papers, produced and used by James at each printshop. The result is a diverse picture of the organically collaborative nature of the printmaking process. Jumping off James’ longstanding interest in the typewriter, the exhibition *New Typographics: Typewriter Art as Print* looks at historical and contemporary prints produced by the typewriter — what now, in the face of computers, smart phones and 3-D printers, might seem like an antiquated technology. In conducting research for this exhibition, I was surprised by the range of prints that could be rendered using a manual typewriter — what is a very simple but powerful machine for the creative process.

- Ksenia Nouril

*Right: James Siena, Parentheses, Tesselating, 2018, lithograph, 10" x 8 ¼", edition of 20. Courtesy of the Artist and The University of the Arts, MFA Book Arts + Printmaking Program*
James Siena: Resonance Under Pressure

This exhibition features ten prints produced in 2017 and 2018 by James Siena, who is well-known for his brightly colored paintings of boldly rendered, labyrinthine forms. In these new works, Siena continues his exploration of the potential of modulation and repetition of biomorphic forms, as well as his engagement with typewritten and letterpress text as image. James Siena: Resonance Under Pressure provides an intimate look at the artist’s ever-expanding printmaking practice.

Siena made the prints on view during artist-residencies at Flying Horse Editions at the University of Central Florida (FHE), Orlando; Dolphin Press & Print at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), Baltimore; and the MFA Book Arts + Printmaking Program at The University of the Arts (UArts), Philadelphia. Working alongside students, Siena experimented with a variety of materials and printmaking processes. The exhibition includes examples of plates and matrices, customized handmade papers and numerous
proofs and states that accompany the final prints, bringing the intricate work of the printshop into the galleries. The new prints are complemented by a selection of Siena’s earlier works, including typewriter prints and drawings from his “Wanderers” series. Siena says these recent projects are “deeply fruitful for my practice in which printmaking holds an equal place with painting or drawing, and methods generate new approaches to developing a body of work that doesn’t privilege one mode over another.”

The embossed watercolor monoprints Siena made with master printer Phil Sanders and students at Flying Horse are a major development for the artist. Pulled using custom-built, laser-cut Plexiglas matrices, they achieve three-dimensionality. Color is printed in counter-relief, while the bare white of the hand-made Twinrocker paper rises an eighth of an inch in relief. The results are boldly colored, textured prints in which the paper appears to bubble up to the surface. Siena began designing the matrices for these prints with a line drawing. He then placed a sheet of Mylar over the first drawing, which served as a parameter for a second drawing. Albeit generative, the first drawing remains only in the negative space of the print, whose inked pattern mirrors that of the second drawing. Around the time Siena was working on the compositions of these densely interlocking prints, he was developing a new body of paintings featuring closed circuits of interlacing lines. In some, the circuits melt into one another. In others, the circuits separate at points, creating fissures. Siena echoes these compositions in the multiple versions of the Feedback Loop Resonator monoprints as well as in a number of new lithographs, including Reverbatron I and Reverbatron II. “These images are also somehow about the physical representation of sound, in which circuits resonate from one to the other, and iterative waves cross the image,” says Siena. The artist’s genuine appreciation for sound and his adept ability to transpose audio into visual representation inspired the title of this exhibition, which also references the printmaking process.
Siena’s ability to travel seamlessly across media is evident in the prints *Seven Radiating Lobes, Wandering* and *Displaced Non-Map Fragment*, which directly relate to his “Wanderers” drawings made between 2014 and 2017. Begun in homage to the American minimalist Frank Stella, the drawings decentered the figure on the page to the point where it moved beyond the paper and onto the mat and even into the bevel and fillet, until it expanded beyond the frame as sculpture. Reflecting on the progression of this idea, Siena says, “I wanted to extend Stella’s activation of different kinds of presentational space, and had, since making these works [the drawings], wanted to make etchings that appeared, initially, to drift or wander off of the plate and into the margin, usually a pristine field meant to isolate the work from the outside world.” Siena fulfilled this desire working with students in the MFA Book Arts + Printmaking Program at UArts. While he initially intended to pull the large print *Displaced Non-Map Fragment* with a single plate, discussions with master printer Alex Kirillov led Siena to use two plates — one rectangular plate inked with a transparent base that leaves a faint but visibly shaded tone and another shaped plate inked with a dark color. This freed the artist to experiment with the composition in a number of states and proofs. Such exploration is also evident in the poetic text-based letterpress prints Siena made
with master printer Gail Deery and students at MICA’s Dolphin Press & Print. While neither *Roma tibi subito motibus ibit amor* nor *is it I? It is I!* is made using a typewriter, they directly relate to Siena’s obsession with this late 19th century invention. Siena first used the typewriter to make prints featuring combinations of letters, numbers and punctuation marks in 2013, when he was the Mary Miss Artist in Residence at the American Academy in Rome. Some of these arrangements were palindromes, that is, phrases reading the same from left to right as from right to left. Siena pays homage to his time in Rome with the print *Roma tibi subito motibus ibit amor*, a Latin palindrome that translates to “Rome, to you love will come, with sudden passion.” Its red ink and buff paper are evocative of the colors one sees around the ancient city. The print *is it I? It is I!* uses 36 point Caslon Bold type handset by the artist and printed on custom, handmade paper scattered with typewritten letters. “The punctuation, while grammatically incorrect, was visually appealing to me,” says Siena. For this work, the artist took advantage of MICA’s papermaking studio as well as its legendary Globe Collection of moveable type. Once again, the block of type is positioned off-center, referencing his own “Wanderers” as well as earlier precedents that push the boundaries of the paper and its frame. Siena’s obsession with type and the
making and breaking of rules extends to the print *Parentheses, Tesselating*. It is a Pronto or polyester plate lithograph in which the parentheses are typed at right angles, forming an undulating web. It was pulled at UArts and is reproduced in detail on the cover of this booklet.

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.


Right: James Siena, *is it I? It is II*, 2018, 17” x 12 ½”, letterpress on handmade paper with typewriter letter inclusions, edition of 44. Courtesy of the Artist and Dolphin Press & Print, Maryland Institute College of Art
About the Artist

James Siena (b. 1957, Oceanside, CA) is a New York-based artist who works in painting, drawing, engraving, etching, relief printing, lithography and sculpture. He received a BFA from Cornell University, Ithaca, 1979. He has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the University Art Museum, University of Albany; Mario Diacono Gallery, Boston; Pierogi 2000, Brooklyn; Hiram Butler Gallery, Houston; Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University; Daniel Weinberg Gallery, Los Angeles; Atlantic Center for the Arts, New Smyrna Beach, FL; Cristinerose Gallery, Dieu Donné, Gorney Bravin + Lee, The Museum of Modern Art, Pace Gallery, Pace Prints and PaceWildenstein, all New York; William Shearburn Gallery, Saint Louis; Daniel Weinberg Contemporary Art, San Francisco; San Francisco Art Institute; Greg Kucera Gallery, Seattle; and J. Noblett Gallery, Sonoma, CA as well as Xippas Art Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland and Galerie Xippas, Paris.

His work has been included in numerous group exhibitions at institutions including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Brooklyn Museum; Contemporary Arts Center, Buffalo; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; University Art Museum, California State University, Long Beach; P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, NY; Milwaukee Art Museum; American Academy of Arts and Letters, The Drawing Center, FLAG Art Foundation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Morgan Library and Museum and Whitney Museum of American Art, all New York; Locks Gallery, Philadelphia; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington as well as Central Academy of Fine Arts Museum, Beijing; Green On Red Gallery, Dublin, Ireland and Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal. His work is held in many prestigious public and private collections, including the Baltimore Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art and Whitney Museum of American Art, all New York; and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

He is represented by Pace Gallery, New York. Siena teaches in the MFA program at the School of Visual Arts in New York and is a member of the Corporation of Yaddo and the National Academy of Design.
About the Print Publishers

Flying Horse Editions (FHE) is a collaborative research studio for visual artists at the University of Central Florida. A nonprofit publisher of limited edition prints, artist books and art objects by internationally renowned artists, FHE offers unique opportunities for artists, students and the Central Florida community. FHE offers visiting artists the opportunity to work with technicians to push the boundaries of their work while providing a unique educational experience for students.

- Project Director: Theo Lotz
- Collaborating Master Printers: Adrian Gonzalez, Phil Sanders
- Collaborating Student Printers: Evan Rosato

Dolphin Press & Print is a professional printmaking and letterpress shop in the Printmaking Department at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), closely tied to the Printmaking curriculum. The Press offers students the opportunity to work in collaboration with established artists, writers and printers. Classes, internships and employment opportunities at the Press give students real-world experience by collaborating with renowned artists and designers to learn professional production practices and develop entrepreneurial skills. All proceeds from the sale of Siena’s prints pulled at Dolphin Press & Print support the James Siena Award for MICA students.

- Project Director: Gail Deery
- Collaborating Printers, *is it I? It is I!*: Lauren Jackson, Ursula Minervini (principal), Madison Scillian
- Collaborating Printers, *Roma tibi subito motibus ibit amor*: Lauren Jackson, Ursula Minervini (principal)
- Collaborating Team, *Roma tibi subito motibus ibit amor*:
  - Sophia Gallo, Tyler Mathai, Victoria Schanken, Adriana Torres

The University of the Arts offers programs in visual & performing arts, design and liberal studies. Its MFA in Book Arts + Printmaking offers students conceptual and technical experience through an intense, interactive and rigorous studio environment. Students enrolled in the graduate course “The Atelier” work with artists-in-residence to produce an edition.

- Project Director: Cynthia Nourse Thompson
- Collaborating Master Printer: Alex Kirillov
- Collaborating Student Printers: Elizabeth Arden, Kexin Chen, Yu Chen, Zhu Hongjing, Ben Iluzada, Jane Kim, Melanie Mauro, Yiyun Qin, Alex Quinones
New Typographics: Typewriter Art as Print

This exhibition looks at work by artists who use the typewriter as a matrix for forming text into image. In printmaking, the matrix is the surface, such as a copper plate, woodblock, or lithography stone, that, when inked, transfers an image. Typically referred to as typewriter “art” or typewriter “drawings,” the works on view by Lenka Clayton, Dom Sylvester Houédard, Gustave Morin, Elena del Rivero and Allyson Strafella are recognized here as prints in light of the mechanism and process of their production. The title New Typographics is a humorous twist on the landmark exhibition New Topographics (International Museum of Photography, George Eastman House, 1975), which also redefined a genre.

Early examples of typewriter prints date to the late 1800s, when the typewriter became a commercially produced and publicly accessible machine. Typewriter prints flourished in the experiments of Futurism, Dadaism and other avant-garde movements at the turn of the 20th century as well as in concrete poetry, mail art and conceptual art after World War II. In the United States at mid-century, the typewriter was a staple of daily life, used in offices and
homes alike. Artists today continue to turn to the typewriter as a tool and an inspiration. The artists included in New Typographics: Typewriter Art as Print manipulate both the paper and the machine to create works that range in form from abstract to figurative.

In 2012, Lenka Clayton began a ritual of making one typewriter print per day using a portable 1957 Smith-Corona Skyriter. This long-term series is one of many in her research-based and socially-engaged practice that meditates on the subtle intricacies of daily life. “I use the typewriter against itself. It was built to draft first chapters of novels and resignation letters; I use it to draw my son’s eyelashes and knitted socks,” says Clayton, “I really enjoy that this process allows me to focus on those very simple forms and moments that are, perhaps, usually overlooked.”

Early Annie Albers 07/04/2017 references the legacy of printmaker and textile artist Anni Albers (1899-1994), whose work transcends the borders between practical craft and fine art. Clayton creates a parallel between the type slug of a typewriter and the shuttle of a loom in this print, making a humorous comment on the trials and tribulations of artistic labor.

Concrete poets Dom Sylvester Houédard and Gustave Morin highlight the typewriter print’s immense potential for both visual and linguistic communication. In concrete poetry, the representation of language supersedes its legibility and even meaning. The results are wildly whimsical and fantastically funny renderings that allude to historical and imaginary people, places, and things. Houédard, whom Morin calls “The Great Typewriter Poet,” was a Benedictine priest in post-World War II England. His typewritten visual poems, which he named “typestracts,” were developed together with leading conceptual writers and artists of the period, including but not limited to William S. Burroughs, Bob Cobbing, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Allen Ginsberg and Yoko Ono. “Since he set such high standards 50 years ago, my own work is in part an attempt to grapple with his formidable legacy, while also trying to rescue and preserve the form of the typewriter poem itself.

Left: Lenka Clayton, Early Annie Albers 07/04/2017 from the series “Typewriter Drawings”, 2017, typewriter paper and ink, rendered with a portable 1957 Smith-Corona Skyriter typewriter, 11” x 8 ½”. Courtesy of the Artist and Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco
from the superficial oblivion to which our culture would relegate the typewriter," says Morin. Following Houédard’s example, Morin challenges labels and blurs the lines between text and image with the help of a typewriter.

Although she does not identify as a concrete poet like Houédard and Morin, Allyson Strafella utilizes the typewriter to engender communication. “I began writing with a typewriter, a tool that could keep up with my thoughts. However, I employed no rules of the written language: no capitalization, no punctuation, no paragraphs. The writing slowly transformed – the words left the page and what remained has become my language,” she says. The artist approximates the gestures of color field painting through repeated typed marks on specially made pigmented abaca and carbon papers. She embraces the delicate nature of her prints, which often are marred by indentations, holes and tears, by exhibiting them hinged directly to the wall without mounts or frames.

Elena del Rivero obfuscates communication in her series “Mended Flying Letters”. The prints Censored and Stitched, comprise swathes of typewritten texts on handmade abaca paper stitched together with thread. Like much of del Rivero’s work, they harness
abstraction to refer to historical events – from the dictatorship in Francoist Spain to the September 11, 2001 attacks – that directly have impacted her life. In their materiality and composition, the works physically embody the ineffable fragility of human life.

2. Gustave Morin, email to Ksenia Nouril, 30 March 2019.

Left: Allyson Strafella, blue piece, 2015, typed marks on pigmented abaca paper, 11 ¾” x 10”. Courtesy of the Artist and Gallery Joe, Philadelphia

Right: Elena del Rivero, Censored, 2011, from the series "Mended Flying Letters", 2010-2011, silk thread, graphite and typed marks on torn, hand-made abaca paper, 29” x 21½”. Courtesy of the Artist
About the Artists


Her work has been internationally exhibited, including at The Museum of Modern Art and Anthology Film Archives, both New York; the Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, Switzerland; Frac île-de-france, Le Plateau, Paris; and the Iran International Documentary Film Festival, “Cinema Vérité”, Tehran. Clayton has been artist-in-residence at The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia; Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA; and Palais de Tokyo, Paris. Her work has appeared in Creative Nonfiction, The Daily Telegraph, Esquire Russia, Frieze, The New Yorker Blog, The New York Times and Typewriter Art, A Modern Anthology, (Laurence King Publishing Ltd: London, 2014), among others. She is a recipient of an Art Matters Award, the Carol R. Brown Creative Achievement Award, The Heinz Endowments & The Pittsburgh Foundation Creative Development Grant and the Sustainable Art Award. Her work is held in many public and private collections including the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX; The Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Fabric Workshop and Museum; Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Carnegie Museum of Art. Clayton lives and works in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
**Dom Sylvester Houédard** (1924 – 1992, Guernsey), also known by his initials “dsh” or as “the Dom,” is recognized as one of the leading theorists and outstanding international practitioners of concrete poetry. Born Pierre-Thomas-Paul Joseph, he was educated in Rome and at Jesus College in Oxford, England. Houédard worked as a military intelligence officer during World War II before joining the community at Prinknash Abbey in Gloucestershire in 1949. Ordained as a Benedictine monk a decade later, Houédard OSB (Order of Saint Benedict) went on to help introduce concrete poetry to Britain in 1961, exploring its links to cybernetics and Wittgenstein’s linguistic theory. He was literary editor of *The Jerusalem Bible* from 1961 to 1966 and founded the Gloucestershire Ode Construction Company in 1967. Houédard published prodigiously, lectured at the Royal College of Art and other venues and collaborated with artists such as John Cage, Gustav Metzger and Yoko Ono. Additionally, he showed his work at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1965; Lisson Gallery, regularly between 1967 and 1970; and the Victoria & Albert Museum, 1971, all London; the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, England and the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle, England, both in 1972. His “typestracts,” visual poems produced with a typewriter, were recently on view in *from the truer world of the other: Typewriter Art from PAMM’s Collection*, Miami, 2017 - 2018.

**Gustave Morin** (b. 1972, Canada) is both a poet and an artist. He has published 15 books, most recently *Clean Sails* (New Star Books: Vancouver, 2015); *The Big Tomato* (Xerolage 68, Xexoxial Publications: La Farge, Wisconsin, 2018); *A Few Poetry* (Nietzsche’s Brolly: Toronto, 2018); as well as *mice t.v.*, a supplement to issue 72 of the journal *Unarmed* (2019). In addition, his work has appeared in over 100 publications and a dozen anthologies. He has been the subject of three solo exhibitions and part of numerous group exhibitions since the 1990s. His most recent solo show, *Chthonic Youth*, opened at Artcite Inc., Windsor, Ontario in 2016. He also has produced over 3,000 collage postcards since 2004. Morin lives and works in Ontario.
Elena del Rivero (b. 1949, Spain) produces paintings, works on paper, large-scale installations and performances with an interest in printmaking and analog photography. She studied at the University of Valencia, Spain; Cambridge University, England; Arjona Studio & Oscar Manesi Printshop; and the Conservatorio, Madrid. She has received numerous grants and prizes including the Prix de Rome, Real Academia de Bellas Artes de España; two Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grants; a Creative Capital Foundation Grant; The New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship; The Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center Residency; and the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award. Most recently, she was awarded a residency at the Joan Mitchell Center in 2017.

Del Rivero’s work is in the collection of the Baltimore Art Museum; Birmingham Museum of Art, AL; Fogg Museum, Harvard Art Museum, Cambridge; Pollock Gallery at Southern Methodist University, Dallas; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Museum of Modern Art, both New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, ME; Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid; and the Institut Valencià d’Art Modern, Valencia; among others. Del Rivero lives and works in New York.

Allyson Strafella (b. 1969, United States) has been making art with a typewriter for over 25 years. She received a BFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University, Boston, 1993. Recent exhibitions include field, Bartha Contemporary, London; field notes, Cairn Gallery, Pittenweem, Scotland; and wander, Sleeper, Edinburgh, Scotland, all 2018. Other selected exhibitions include path, Nina Freudenheim, Buffalo, 2017; fieno, fieno, fieno, with Helen Mirra, Galleria Raffaella Cortese, Milan, 2016; suchness, with Helen Mirra, Large Glass, London, 2016; studyline, Gallery Joe, Philadelphia, 2013; and Notations: Contemporary Drawing as Idea and Process, Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Washington University, St. Louis, 2013. Strafella is the recipient of an Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation Individual Support Grant, John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, The Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant and the Sustainable Art Award. She has had residencies at the MacDowell Colony and Yaddo. She was a workspace fellow at Dieu Donné, New York. Her work is included in the collections of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; The Metropolitan Museum of Art; and The Museum of Modern Art, among others. Straffela lives and works in Hudson, NY.
Programs

James Siena: Guided Gallery Talk
Thursday, April 18, 5:30pm

James Siena will lead a walkthrough of the exhibition James Siena: Resonance Under Pressure.

Create Your Own Typewriter Print
Ongoing during the exhibition

The Print Center will host a “Public Typewriter” as part of Philly Typewriter’s “Philadelphia Public Typewriter Program”. Philly Typewriter is a retail store located in Philadelphia that also repairs typewriters and hosts classes and events. A temporary loan of a manual typewriter prepared for use by restoration classes at Philly Typewriter will allow visitors to the exhibition New Typographics: Typewriter Art as Print to make their own typewriter prints.
(phillytypewriter.com)
Programs (continued)

The Printer’s Perspective:
Gail Deery and Alex Kirillov on James Siena
Wednesday, April 24, 6:00pm

Gail Deery, Professor of Printmaking, Papermaking and Book Arts and Co-Director of Dolphin Press & Print at MICA, and Alex Kirillov, Senior Lecturer, MFA Book Arts + Printmaking and Studio Art at The University of the Arts, both worked with Siena when he printed at their respective institutions. Deery and Kirillov will give a tour of the exhibition _James Siena: Resonance Under Pressure_ from the printer’s perspective, walking through the various processes used by Siena and their students during his artist-residencies in 2018.

Curator’s Talk
Thursday, May 2, 6:00pm

Ksenia Nouril, Jensen Bryan Curator, will give a talk on the history of typewriter prints, highlighting key moments and artists that were influential to her thinking around the exhibition _New Typographics: Typewriter Art as Print._
About The Print Center

For more than a century, The Print Center has encouraged the growth and understanding of photography and printmaking as vital contemporary arts through exhibitions, publications and educational programs. The Print Center has an international voice and a strong sense of local purpose. Free and open to the public, it presents changing exhibitions which highlight established and emerging, local, national and international contemporary artists. It mounts one of the oldest art competitions in the country, now in its 94th year and the Gallery Store offers the largest selection of contemporary prints and photographs available for sale in Philadelphia, as well as being available online.
Funders

Gallery notes are generously provided by

brilliant:

Exton, PA
brilliant-graphics.com