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Woodcuts by Ray Gloeckler

On view at the Elvehjem from November 13, 2004 through January 23, 2005, *Woodcuts by Ray Gloeckler* is a selection of some forty-five prints from over 200 editions of prints by the artist. Ray Gloeckler (b. 1928) is a nationally recognized leader in the field of woodcuts. He has made prints by hand in the relief process since 1956, when he was an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh. Over the years his prints have become increasingly sophisticated; he mastered the most demanding type of woodcut, the finely wrought wood-engraving. According to Elvehjem curator of prints, drawings, and photographs Drew Stevens, "If we had living national treasures, Ray Gloeckler would be one of them." The exhibition explores the work of an artist who taught at UW-Madison for over forty years and who has made an impact on the national printmaking scene.

Growing up in Portage, Wisconsin, Gloeckler had early ambitions of being a magazine illustrator. For reasons of practicality, he enrolled at the University of Wisconsin at Madison as a pharmacy major in 1946. He took an elective course in drawing from department of art professor Robert Grilley, and within a year he changed his major to art education. At the University of Wisconsin Gloeckler first focused on painting, but later shifted to printmaking. He earned his BS from UW in 1950 and his MS in 1952. In the early 1950s, he began his teaching career as an art supervisor for the school district in Tomah, Wisconsin, and later taught at Wisconsin State University (which eventually became UW-Oshkosh). He has also held college teaching positions at Eastern Michigan University and Flint (Michigan) Community College. In 1961 he returned to teach at the University of Wisconsin-Madison art department, becoming a full professor in due course, and retiring as professor emeritus in 1993.

The size of Gloeckler's prints range from woodblock prints measured in square yards to wood engravings of a square inch. Gloeckler's subject matter has always derived from his world, often the public world of politics and life in America, and sometimes his own personal world. Religious iconography has appeared in his woodcuts, but the majority of his prints demonstrate his sharp eye for the ludicrous in American society and his abiding sense of humor. Gloeckler has created images that lampoon the inflated and celebrate the everyday. His imagery reflects the spirit of the region and responds to Wisconsin culture, such as his woodcuts of Madison's State Street, the Green Bay Packers, and the sport of curling. His prints have also addressed national topics such as the politics of the 1960s and the uproar over politically-correct speech.

Gloeckler has played a key role in preserving the careful craft of wood-engraving in the United States. Gloeckler is one of only a few masters of this technique in the country. He and a small group of fellow engravers helped keep this special art form, once common in the U.S., vibrant during the twentieth century.

Since the 1960s, Gloeckler's prints have been exhibited in major museums and galleries throughout the world, including the Butler Museum of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio; Cincinnati Art Museum; Detroit Art Institute; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. He was recognized as a Wisconsin Academy Fellow in 2002.

This exhibition will be Gloeckler's first solo exhibition at the Elvehjem Museum of Art. While his work has been exhibited in Elvehjem presentations of the quadrennial UW-Madison faculty exhibition, in *Progressive Printmakers: Wisconsin Artists and the Print Renaissance* (2001), and in *150 Years of Wisconsin Printmaking* (1999), this is the first to focus solely on his work. This exhibition will be a special opportunity for area audiences to see fifty years of Gloeckler's prints that demonstrate the transitions in his oeuvre over this period.

Generous support for this project has been provided by the Elvehjem Museum of Art Council, the Anonymous Fund, Hilldale Fund, Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission with additional funds from the Madison Community Foundation and the Overture Foundation, and Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin.

PREVIEW RECEPTION

Saturday, November 13, 6-7:30 p.m.

Preview reception of *Woodcuts by Ray Gloeckler*; music and refreshments; free and open to the public

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Saturday, November 13, 5 p.m.

Ray Gloeckler gives a gallery talk in Mayer Gallery on his work in the exhibition

CATALOGUE

A catalogue of all of the artist's prints from 1955 through 2004, over 200 editions of prints, published to accompany the exhibition, is available in the [Museum Shop](#) or can be ordered at 608 263-2240. Essay by Andrew Stevens, 17 color plates, 200 duotones, \$24.95.

The Elvehjem Museum of Art is open Tuesdays-Fridays 9-5 pm; Saturdays and Sundays 11-5 pm; closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission to galleries and educational events is free. The museum is located at 800 University Avenue on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is accessible to wheelchairs from the Murray Street (north) entrance. Parking is available at the city of Madison's Lake Street and Frances Street ramps, University Lot 46 on Lake Street between Johnson and University Avenue, University Lot 47 on Johnson Street between Park and Lake streets. Evening and weekend parking is also available under Grainger Hall with entrance on Brooks Street between University Avenue and Johnson streets. The Elvehjem Museum of Art will provide sign language interpreters for associated programs by three-week advance request to Anne Lambert, Curator of Education, weekdays, 608-263-4421 (voice).

"Woodcuts by Ray Gloeckler." Elvehjem Museum of Art (Wayback Machine). Archived on December 20, 2004.

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