

**New View: Janet Turner Paintings and Scratchboards
August 27 – September 23, 2012**

Dr. Janet Elizabeth Turner (1914-1988) began her artistic career at the Kansas City Art Institute in 1936. Her diplomas from that institution and subsequently from Claremont College in 1947 were in painting. During her time in Chico from 1959 to 1988 she developed an international reputation as an artist, educator and printmaker. Her inspirational private print collection was left to CSU, Chico in 1981 where it formed the origins of the Janet Turner Print Museum. The Museum's collection continues to grow and contribute to the arts in Northern California.

The Vernon and Marie Fish collection, a retrospective gathering of Turner's work in drawing, painting and printmaking, was also a gift to the Turner collection and forms the genesis of this exhibition. This circumstance allows for curatorial insight exploring technique, style and media as Turner expressed her artistic vision.

Her work is primarily regionalist and representational with subjects reflecting the natural world of her surroundings. While some early work have the human as subject, later works demonstrate her attachment to the metaphor provided by flora and fauna in the observed landscape. These works describe different aspects of environmental concern, interdependency of existence, and a sense of time and locale with a keen, precise and educated eye. Certain works seen here describe her artistic vocabulary in spatial terms. The flatness and overlapping forms of the "Koi" are a testament to the influence of Japanese art, especially printmaking in both design and color. The more static "Pintails" arrests movement in its balanced still life. "Red Shouldered Hawk" is a counterpoint in its soaring, rushing flight.

As an artist primarily preferring the representational subject, her battle with the emerging Abstract Expression movement in the post WWII era created a struggle for her. Her most accomplished resolutions such as “Stump and Leaves” and “Study of Coral” harmonize a recognizable subject within a swirling composition often in a flattened picture plane. These scratchboards are in contrast with the egg tempera painting “Ribbons” with its fluttering strands delineated by color and value but retaining a non-specific background.

Turner’s reputation as an artist is as a printmaker, and in this exhibition the viewer can begin to see the influence of painting on her prints. In working out her artistic image, the primary use of either painting or scratchboard to inform the subsequent print was not unusual to her. Rather it becomes evident that printmaking was a part of her image building and in its multiplicity would have wider distribution. The prints, paintings and scratchboards are linked; yet they retain a singularity of artistic purpose and intent. Many of the smaller black and white scratchboards more clearly serve the purpose of studies and become a roadmap of her block cutting dexterity and the fine and precise line work she would translate to printmaking.

Exhibiting this selection of her work without any relationship to prints was intended to give an opportunity to understand and experience this well-known artist with a different view of production and artistry. I believe she continued to paint in some manner, whether it is tempera, watercolor, acrylic or scratchboard, because she was a painter and drawing was her first response to developing her image. As some of these works did serve as a preparatory step in printmaking, they nonetheless lose no impact as singular, individual and unique artistic expressions. What forms appreciation for her great body of later prints is the manner in which she, with transparent overlays of color combined with precise drawing skill, could retain her painterly concerns.