

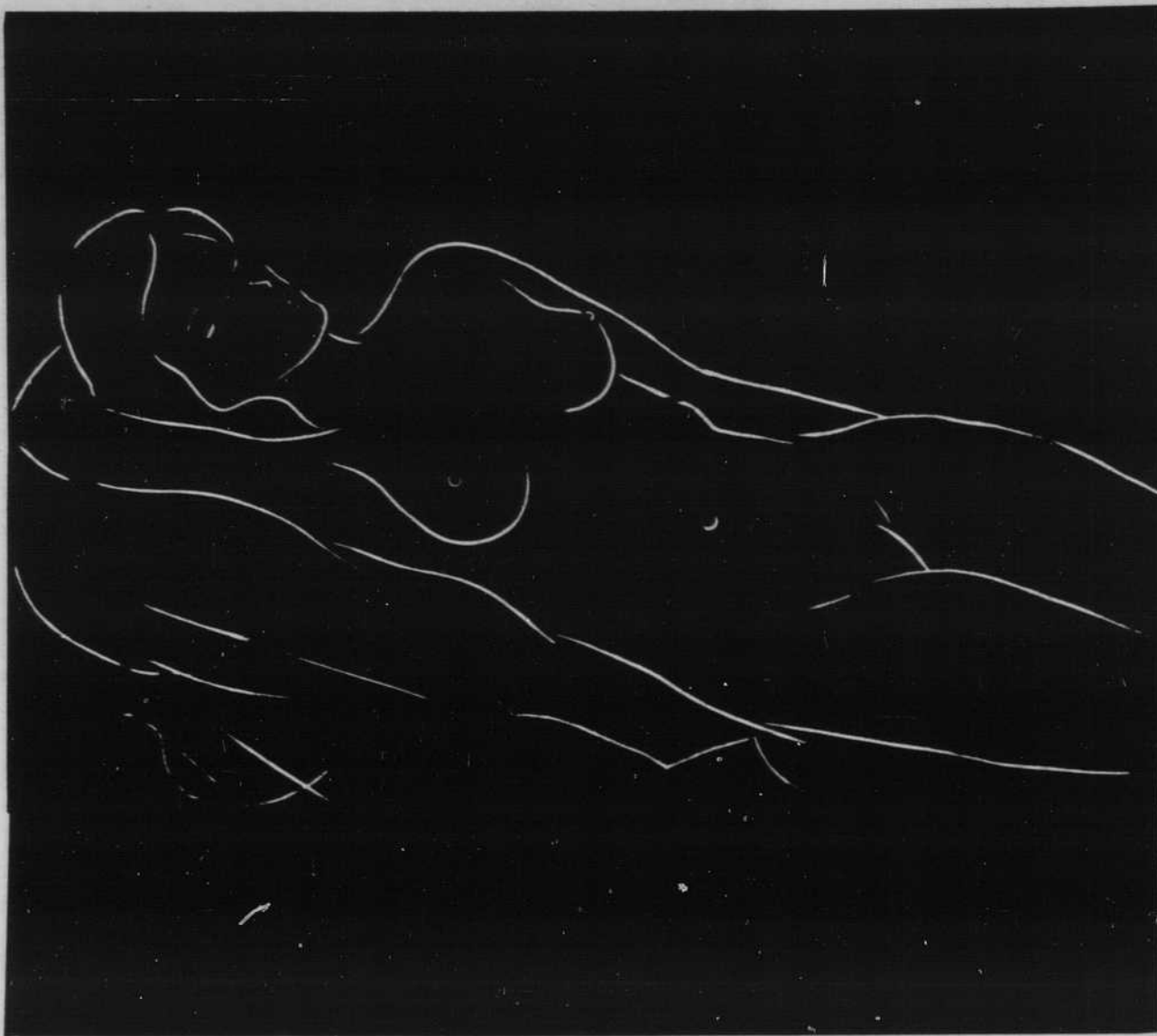
The female figure

An exhibition of prints, with a unifying theme of the female figure, by artist Branson Stevenson is currently on display at the EMU through June 21.

A faculty member at the College of Great Falls, Montana, since 1964, Stevenson has travelled throughout the world. He has exhibited at the National Academy of New York and the Library of Congress in New York, as well as the Henry Gallery at the University of Washington, the Denver Art Museum, C.M. Russell Gallery, and other museums and galleries throughout the western United States.

This exhibition includes drypoints, etchings, lithographs, woodcuts, colographs, and other media. The work presented is a retrospect of over 40 years of printmaking by one man. The exhibition is sponsored by Statewide Services of the University's Museum of Art.

Statewide Art Services programs are made possible through the cooperation of public and private agencies. Supporting agencies include the Oregon Arts Commission through the National Endowment for the Arts, the University, the Friends of the Museum, the Collins Foundation and the U.S. National Bank.



"Reclining Figure" by Stevenson

Bonnard's subtle work does not shout

The drawings of Pierre Bonnard, now on exhibit at the art museum, offer a unique view into the inner workings of an artist. Bonnard is known primarily for his colorist paintings in a late Impressionist technique known as "Intimisme" and is regarded as one of the century's greatest masters of color. He did not exhibit his drawings, regarding them more as a private source of inspiration. The drawings reveal yet another solid aspect of the artist's career: Bonnard was a master of line as well as color.

The collection, therefore, is presented in rather strange circumstances: the linear works of a colorist never meant to be exhibited now gathered into an exhibit. Bonnard's contemporary, Matisse, once wrote him that the drawing of a colorist is not a picture; first the equivalent needs to be rendered in color. The drawings, then, should not be regarded as the last word on Bonnard's artistic production, but as an insight into his view of the world, a footnote to his major works.

The fact that the drawings were assembled by two British collectors after the death of the artist has led to the suggestion that the works are not representative of Bonnard's artistic development, but rather of the tastes of those who collected the drawings. Be that as it may, the works span the majority of Bonnard's career, from 1893, about four years after he became a painter, until 1946, the year before his death. The quality of the works varies; some are embarrassingly poor; others rival the best of his paintings. One wonders how much of this material Bonnard would have wanted to be considered part of his total oeuvre, if it is indeed fair to the artist to exhibit just about anything. This, however, is the most interesting aspect of the exhibit: we are given a view into the private life of an artist, with works good and bad covering the major part of his career. Through this visual diary, we can see a development that parallels his growth as a painter.

The early drawings are perhaps the most spotty and show the influence of Bonnard's contemporaries: "Nude in the Tub" suggests

the elegant awkwardness of Gauguin's Tahitian women; the flatness and subject matter of the "Little Laundress" and the drawings of street dancers suggest the work of Toulouse-Lautrec; his landscapes resemble the work of Van Gogh. It is his later drawings that reveal his strength as a graphicist. His baskets of fruit, various nudes and landscapes show his ability to capture an impression through an uncompromising, unmodulated line.

Bonnard's choice of what could be called bourgeois subject matter varied little throughout his career. For him no particular motif was as important as his art. He renders what is familiar — domestic scenes, landscapes, figure studies — attempting in each to bring a fresh response into existence. His drawings, as his primary inspiration, show a remarkable versatility not seen in his paintings. He is able, for example, in his studies of baskets of fruit, to repeat a motif with entirely different results. His studies of cats, on the other hand, show a naive, child-like quality that belies his graphic ability. In other works, for example such as "Young Women on the Croisette," his talent as a colorist is apparent, with a careful modulation of tones similar to the treatment of color in his paintings.

Bonnard's works are inherently subtle, and for this reason I don't expect the exhibit of his drawings to meet with the success it deserves. His name is not on the tip of everyone's tongue — he has done no "Mona Lisa." His works do not shout, they merely whisper. Hopefully, Eugene will hear the whisper.

Connected with the Bonnard drawings are a few paintings contemporary to the works of Bonnard. Among these, one merits attention. It is an unfinished group portrait by the Austrian artist Ferrari entitled "The Last Audience of the Hapsburgs." The portraits of dowager hausfraus, shriveled gentlemen, and rosy-cheeked children are indeed remarkable.

Robert Ousterhout

photography

Exhibit seems not complete

Photography by current University students may be seen at Lawrence Hall, in the lobby, until the end of spring term. The new photographs added to the show since it was at LCC change its tone to more of a group approach. This gives a better view of each person's work and adds character to the group.

While its tone makes it a group show, the physical limitations are distracting to the point of weakening it overall. The prints are crowded into a small display area with bad back lighting, which makes contact with the individual prints very difficult. And, some of the most sensitive, requiring closer scrutiny, are put high above the "normal" viewing range.

While showing more individual depth than the previous LCC show, this presentation seems incomplete. The diversity of images has perhaps narrowed to a more distilled point, but the result is static. What's missing is a total unity that pulls these individual groups together. The boundaries of the medium and the program need to be explored in more detail. This would provide the necessary life for a more complete view of these students' work.

In the Museum of Art photography gallery is a final project for the Honors College by Charles Kogod.

Kogod, in his one-man show, gives the viewer more perspective on a single photographer. Kogod's project involved representing his view of a small Mexican village. Wide, distant shots show the open-air marketplace and the people interacting within it. Other photographs are of the people, close-up or in relationship with their surroundings. This is a perfect example of a photographer's interest being combined with a sensitivity to the medium to produce beautifully done photographs. They are an insight to the Mexican life and culture as well as being Kogod's view of it.

Photography is a medium that needs close consideration for full appreciation. Its vibrancy and life come from intimate contact with the silver image. By taking time to view these two shows you will see carefully done photographs and may gain an appreciation for photography as a means of creative expression.

Steve Fritz
Thursday, May 31, 1973