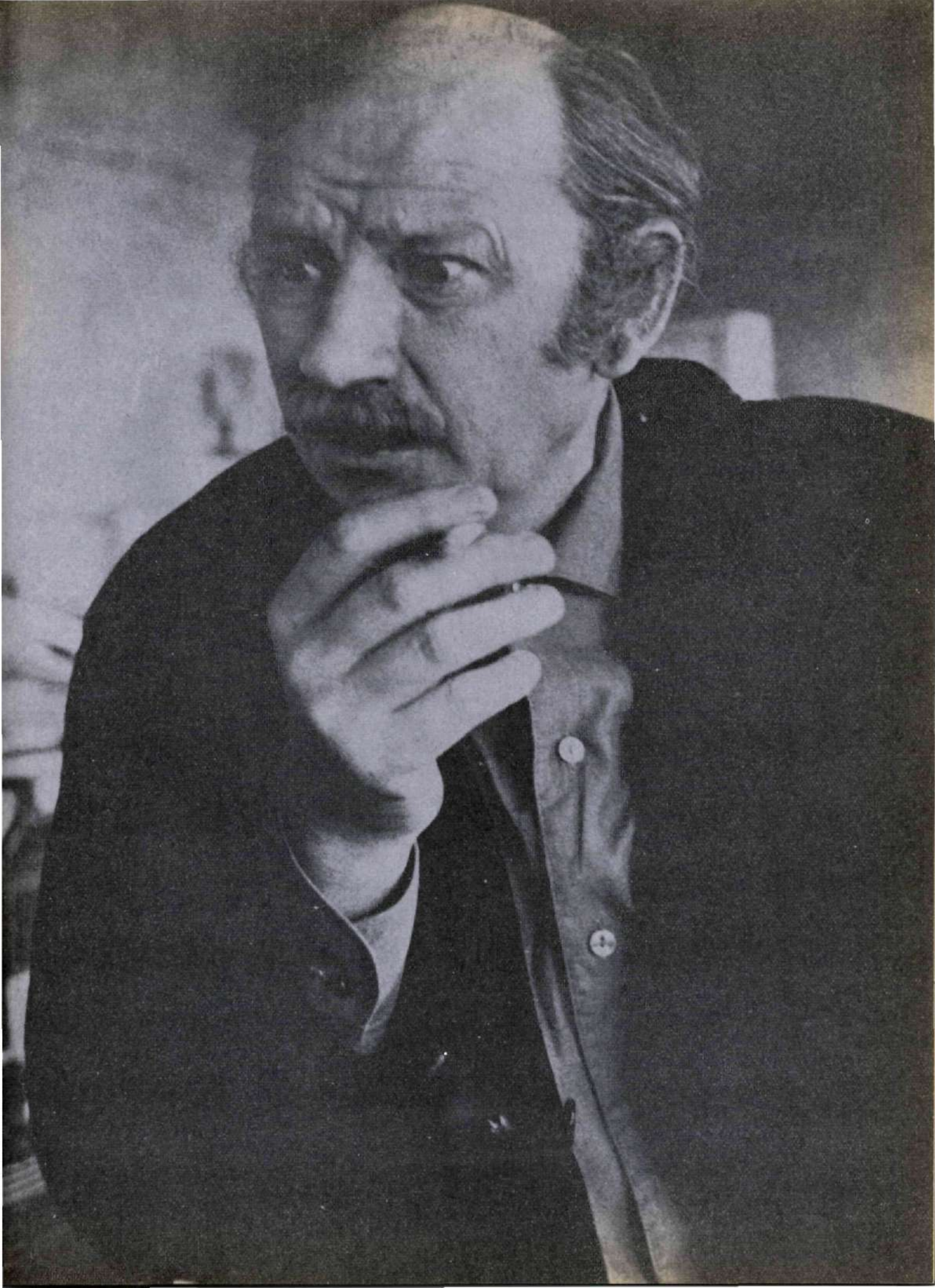


HAP GRIESHABER - WOODCUTS



This exhibition forms part of the Gallery's contribution to the 1966 Auckland Festival. We are very grateful to Professor Grieshaber for his generosity in making such a representative collection of works available and we are greatly indebted to Margot Fuerst for her efforts in assembling the exhibition.
G.C.D. May 1966



Works by Hap Grieshaber have been seen previously in New Zealand, in group exhibitions. In the collection of contemporary German art, which toured here in 1965, he was the only printmaker represented. This present collection offers an opportunity to see in depth the work of an artist who has resurrected the ancient craft of woodcutting and has given it new life.

- 1909 Helmut (H.A.P.) Grieshaber was born in Rot an der Rot, a village in that part of South Germany known officially as Württemberg and informally as Schwaben. Once an independent kingdom, it became part of Bismarck's Greater Germany in 1871. Its inhabitants speak a strong and pungent regional dialect, related to the p \hat{a} tois spoken by the neighbouring Swiss. The Swabian people have retained a sturdy independence and a pride in their own tradition, art and literature. Three great German writers, Schiller, Hölderlin and Möricke, belong to Württemberg.
- 1926/27 Grieshaber's formative years were spent in the Germany of the Great War and in the post-war turmoil, when the spectre of Hitler was slowly rising over the country. At the age of 17 he was apprenticed to the printing trade in Reutlingen, a thriving old town at the foot of the Achalm mountain. During this time
- 1928/31 he studied art at nearby Stuttgart. This was followed by a period of travel, to Paris and to London where he held his first exhibition.
- 1931/32 Later Grieshaber travelled in Egypt, Arabia and Greece. These early impressions of foreign countries have had a lasting effect on his work and on his outlook. He became a cosmopolitan and a pacifist — in a country swept off its feet by nationalism and racial hatred.
- 1933/45 During twelve years of Nazi rule he sought refuge in his craft, his love of printing and printmaking. Six of those arid years he was obliged to spend in Hitler's army and, as a prisoner of war, doing forced labour in Belgian mines. Whilst in the army he had joined a group of fellow artists in the production of pamphlets printed by the "presse clandestine, Haguenu".
- 1946 When Grieshaber finally returned, his native country was in a state of mental and physical desolation. He set up a small studio in a cottage on the Achalm, and there he has remained, with short interruptions, ever since.

After twelve years of regimentation, German artists eagerly followed new art forms developed in England and America. Grieshaber continued to go his own way, devoting himself to the development of the woodcut. Inspired by the beginnings of German graphic art, the single woodcuts and block-books of the 15th century, he brought to the art of woodcutting new forms of expression. This became and still is his principal medium. His work ranges from small vignettes and illustrations to monumental tableaux exceeding the previously established limits of graphic art.

At the same time Grieshaber remained faithful to his early love of typography, which had become an integral part of his work. He carried out commissions for the printing trade, combining woodcuts with new forms of lettering. His bold designs defied the conservative traditions of the trade and in his hands concert and theatre programmes became individual works of art. In the long-neglected field of poster design he created a new outlet for the graphic artist.

1949 The first retrospective exhibition of Grieshaber's work was shown in the "Studentenstudio für moderne Kunst" at the neighbouring University town of Tübingen. During the next two years his prints began to gain official recognition and he was awarded second prize in the German Graphics Competition organised by the magazine *Kunstwerk* and the "Junger Westen" prize.

1950
1951 For two years he taught at the "Bernsteinschule", a school of art; founded after the war, in a deserted convent at Sulz am Neckar. Grieshaber had, in fact, been delegated by the administration to dissolve the enterprise; but instead he accepted the few young people still living there as his pupils, publishing with them the Bernstein prints. His directions to them are typical of the pungent and original prose with which he addresses himself to those seriously concerned with art: *Stay young. Do not fall in with those Who copy Picasso and Klee and who slavishly limp behind them. Rise to the level of our time and hold on to it. Include everybody in it.*

1954 Two major exhibitions, in Stuttgart and Hanover, drew attention to Grieshaber's achievement as an artist. He was appointed Professor at the Academy of Art in Karlsruhe and in the following year received a commission to execute murals for the Department of Justice in Offenburg. He became a member of the Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin and joined the German Arts Council.

1955
1956 International recognition came to Grieshaber with a major retrospective exhibition at Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum. Worldly success has not destroyed his humanity; it has not sapped his feeling for the oppressed and bereaved, for the victims of war. To the defenders of peace and justice he lends his active support. His posters advertise their meetings.

His essay "The Woodcut" sets out his credo as an artist: *I had promised to talk to you about woodcuts, by way of a detour. But I am one of those who have no time to make detours, those who always make straight for the platform where the trains leave. When I was twenty, no obstacle hindered my progress. The Republic offered us a sense of freedom. Peace seemed a reality and new impulses were budding everywhere. All trains were moving in one direction: forward. We were excited to see nations stirred by progress breathing the fresh air of freedom. There were friends and sympathisers everywhere. Not yet did one German spell fear and terror to his neighbours. Not yet was he an enemy, who thought and held opposite views.*

Today Grieshaber still lives in his mountain retreat, grown now into a compound of workshop, living quarters, open-air exhibition and stables for his animal friends: a pony which carries him on long rides across the country; a monkey; a strutting peacock. And in harmony with all — an ancient printing press, restored to its former dignity.

There he works, in self-chosen seclusion, overlooking the soft contours of the Swabian hills and the town, old and new: remote, yet at one with his environment.

W. S. & L. M. AUBURN



Angel and Eagle 1959

"I advise the layman to spread India ink on an uncarved board, lay paper on top of it, and print it. He will get a black print, but the result is not the blackness of ink, it is the blackness of prints." Shiko Munakata.

Within the art of printmaking there exists three distinct kinds of print, classified according to the method by which the image is transferred to the paper; the relief print, the intaglio print and the surface print. The first of these processes corresponds to the woodcut and wood engraving, the second to etching and engraving on metal and the third to lithography and prints made by processes which transfer an image drawn on one surface to another. Many modern printmakers have combined two or all of these processes in a single print.

In relief printing the image is transferred to the paper from the raised part of the block; the block itself is made by cutting away with knife or graver the areas not required to print. The intaglio print reverses this process; the cuts made in the plate hold the ink which is transferred by forcing the paper into them and lifting the ink out. The raised surfaces of the plate are wiped clean of ink before printing. Surface prints are made by treating the plate or stone in such a way that the image will hold ink while the areas not required to print will resist it.

Each technique has its own distinctive quality. Great artists have produced master works in etching, engraving and lithography, but the woodcut, by the directness and power of the image it produces, seems to epitomise the finest qualities of the print. The woodcut has had long periods of decadence and has been reduced to a merely reproductive process. But at its best, in its exuberant youth in the 15th century and since its revival in the late 19th century, it has produced some of the greatest examples of printmaking.

Grieshaber has defined the region of the graphic arts as being somewhere between painting and sculpture. Perhaps in the closeness of the technique of the woodcut to that of wood sculpture, lies its particular power. In the modern development of the craft the two have sometimes merged; a number of the prints of Paul Gauguin have in fact been taken from his relief carvings and some German Expressionists, notably Kirchner, Heckel, Pechstein and Schmidt-Rottluff, were led by their experimentation with the woodcut directly to the production of sculpture. Indeed, even at the very beginnings of the craft in Europe, the woodcutter and woodcarver were often the same craftsman.

Traditionally the woodcut has taken two principal forms: the white-line cut where the image stands out against a black ground, the cut areas being the positive aspect of the design, and the black-line cut where the image stands out against a white ground, the cut areas being the negative aspect of the design. Two other techniques, which are less important to the history of the woodcut, but which are highly important in relation to the modern development of the craft, were also employed: the chiaroscuro print where more than one block was used to introduce solid areas of either colour or tone, and the dotted print which was a curious combination of the black-line and white-line cuts. In the latter prints the image sometimes stood out as a solid against a white ground and was defined or relieved within the form by cut or punched white lines and dots, however the technique was usually employed for the production of decorated borders.

Until the end of the 19th century the woodcut image was essentially linear. From the European origins of the craft about the end of the 14th century until the close of the 18th century, the usual form of the woodcut was the black-line cut. Line was employed in the woodcut in three distinct ways. In the earliest cuts it was most often a bounding line suggesting form by its quality and movement, and rendering drapery by conventions such as the pot hook or branching line. Most of these early prints took the form of playing cards or images of Saints and religious subjects for distribution by the Convents, and were usually intended to have colour added by hand.

The earliest printed books were printed from woodcuts incorporating text and picture in the same block. The most important of these block books originated in the Netherlands and various contemporary copies of them were produced in Germany. However, Germany, up until the end of the 15th century, was the most productive among the European countries making prints. Certainly some of the finest productions of the 15th century were German in origin.

The invention of printing from movable type, which occurred in Germany and at Mainz about the middle of the 15th century, had a profound influence on the development of the woodcut. Woodcut and type, both being relief techniques, could be used together easily. The woodcut was adopted by printers for initials as early as 1457 and about 1460-61 for actual subject illustration. 1470 marks the beginning of the most fertile period for the woodcut in Germany.

Despite the extensive use of the woodcut in combination with type, at its finest the art in Germany is notable for the single print. Albrecht Dürer represents the very peak of the woodcut and at the same time the beginnings of its decline.

From the middle of the 15th century the technique of woodcut had become more sophisticated. Line had been increasingly employed to render form by means of contour, moving across the surface of forms and defining them by changes in weight and direction. From the turn of the 16th century the Gothic linearity which predominated in the woodcuts of the North and gave them their strength of design and power, gradually yielded to the influence of the Renaissance, the revival of classical design and ornament. In the hands of artists like Dürer, Hans Burgkmair or Hans Holbein these influences could produce great works of woodcut, but in general there began a gradual deterioration in design. By the end of the 16th century the woodcut had been almost entirely supplanted by line engraving.

Not until the end of the 18th century, when the work of Thomas Bewick did much to restore the popularity of the craft, was there any serious revival of the woodcut. The greatest artist among Bewick's contemporaries to produce woodcuts was William Blake. However the work of Bewick and his school was almost exclusively in the employment of white-line cuts for illustration and by the middle of the 19th century the craft had once again declined to the level of mere mechanical reproduction later supplanted by photo-mechanical processes.

William Morris and the Kelmscott Press used the woodcut in their production of fine books, and in doing so came close to the original spirit of the craft. However the medium was practically eclipsed by the more fashionable and perhaps less demanding technique of etching.

Paul Gauguin is perhaps the creator of the modern woodcut. It is significant that Gauguin saw the technique in terms of its primitive origins, not in its contemporary usage which he regarded as being almost indistinguishable from photogravure. In a letter to his friend Montfried he expressed his confidence that the very difference of his prints would, in time, cause them to be valued.

Although Gauguin looked to the beginnings of the woodcut, and added to his use of it his knowledge of Japanese and primitive art, his own contribution was highly original. His prints are linear in character, but the lines are used to hold together a design of black and white patches. His woodcuts are closely related to his wood-carving and in them he has made full use of the inherent qualities of the material.

Gauguin's woodcuts exerted a considerable influence on Edvard Munch; his innovations became basic to Munch's own method. Munch further extended the medium and developed forms directly related to it, rather than transposing images from paintings or drawing. Munch's woodcuts are amongst his most powerful and consistent works and in them his influence on the German Expressionists can most clearly be seen.

Gauguin, Munch and the German Expressionists restored to the woodcut the dynamism and power it had progressively lost since the end of the 15th century. Hap Grieshaber has carried this movement further and revived in the medium its original spirit and purpose — "carrying art into the realm of the people".* It should not be forgotten that even the sophisticated productions of Albrecht Dürer were sold at fairs and festivals.

Grieshaber has done more, for the vast scale of some of his woodcuts have redefined the limits of the medium. He has lifted the woodcut out of the realm of the book or portfolio and given to it the dimensions and autonomy of painting and sculpture. In doing this he has not, as have so many modern printmakers, allowed the technique to overwhelm the print, but has carried intact to this new scale the singular qualities of the woodcut.

HAMISH KEITH

*Margot Fuerst, *Hap Grieshaber—Woodcuts*: New York, Arts Inc. 1965

Sizes given are given in centimetres, height before width. Unless otherwise stated the size given is that of the image.

1934

1 JOB III (DIALOGUE) *Hiob III (Gespräch)*
two blocks 18 x 28

1937

2 READER I *Vorleser I*
one block on tinted paper page size 30 x 43

3 READER II *Vorleser II*
one block on tinted paper 30 x 45

4 FIELD *Feld*
two blocks 22 x 30

1939

5 PATH (EARLY SPRING) *Weg (Frühlingsanfang)*
two blocks 38 x 42.5

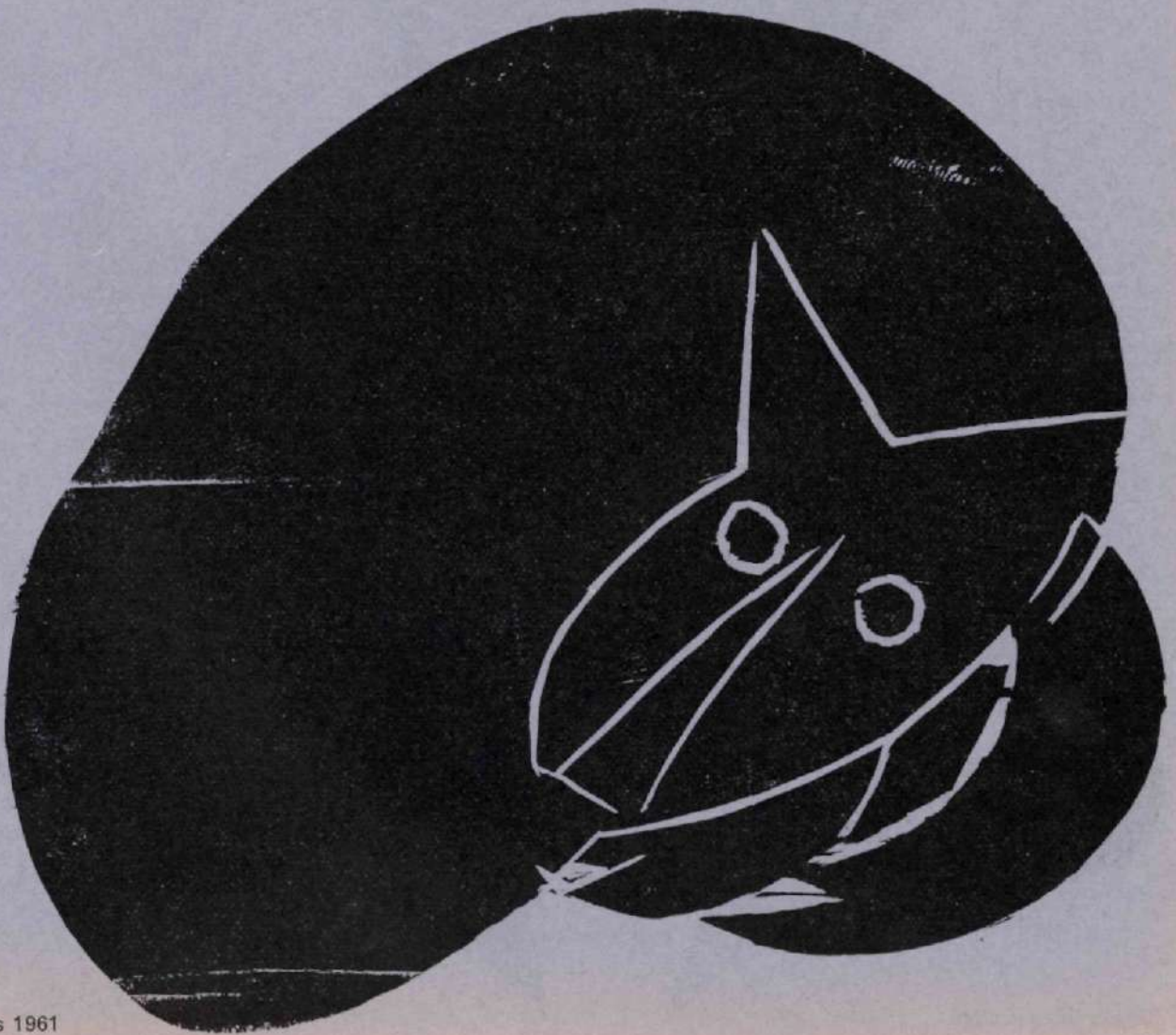
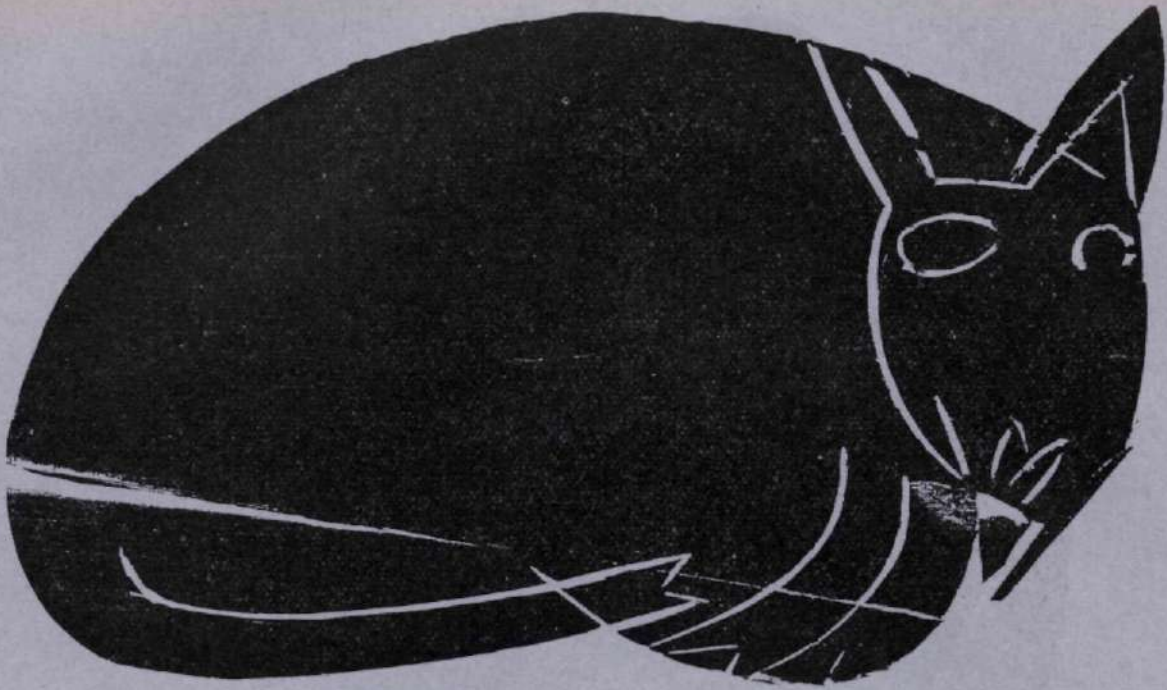
1947

6 CATS IN THE SNOW *Katzen im Schnee*
three blocks 32 x 42

1959

7 THE DARK WORLD OF ANIMALS *Die dunkle Welt der Tiere*
a cycle of ten woodcuts, two blocks each 38 x 53

Hercules and the Lion *Herkules und der Löwe*; Plumed Serpent *Gefiederte Schlange*; Animal-Madonna *Tier-Madonna*;
Primeval Animal *Urtier*; The Horse *Das Pferd*; Bird-Men *Vogelmenschen*; Elephant *Der Elefant*;
Angel and Eagle *Engel und Adler*; The Boat *Das Boot*; Garden of Owls *Eulengarten*
boxed: edition of 35; Rothe, Heidelberg





Couple in Love 1963

1961

8 TO THE FIREBIRD *Dem Feuervogel*

a cycle of ten colour woodcuts 52.5 x 39

cover woodcut: Cellist *Cellospieler*; boxed: edition of 50; Rothe, Heidelberg

1962

9 SEVEN ANGELS *Sieben Engel*

eight proof impressions 2-3 blocks each 22 x 16

from the book of the same title: edition of 300; Manuspresse, Stuttgart

10 OH YOU MY RIVER NECKAR *O du mein Neckar*

stone engravings page size 50 x 65

Zephyros; Württembergia; Oceanus; Nereus

colour woodcuts page size 65 x 85

Source of the Neckar *Ursprung des Neckar*; Angel of the Neckar *Engel des Neckar*; Harpy *Harpyie*; Centaurs *Kentauren*; Tritons *Tritone*; Poseidon

portfolio with title page woodcut: edition of 20; Kunstverlag Fingerle, Esslingen

11 LEMURIA

woodcut 240 x 120

1963

12 BIRTHDAY GREETINGS *Glückwunsch für Hanna Bekker vom Rath*

four blocks page size 29.5 x 21: edition of 250

13 PAN

woodcut 195 x 126

14 NUCNUC

five colour woodcuts from two blocks, one single block, page size 44 x 31

published *Spektrum* 25, accompanied by artist's text

15 EASTER RIDE *Osterritt*

book of woodcuts, twenty-three colour, fifteen black and white 32 x 27

text by Riccarda Gregor-Grieshaber: edition of 500; Gallery Der Spiegel, Cologne

16 FRAGMENTS *Scherben*

cycle of six woodcuts, gold and copper on black board 35 x 50

boxed: edition of 240; Gallery Der Spiegel, Cologne

17 THE LORD'S BLACK NIGHTINGALE

six colour woodcuts from four blocks: dedicated to Mahalia Jackson

Couple; Gospel Singers; Family; Star Spangled Banner; Slaves; Spiritual

collected in folder: edition of 65 + 10; Gerde Hatje, Stuttgart

18 ANGEL *Engel*

four blocks 41 x 29.5

from Angel of History I *Engel der Geschichte I*: edition of 100; Manuspresse, Stuttgart

19 IN PRAISE OF THE WOODCUTTER *Zum Lobe des Holzschneiders*

five woodcuts published *Xylon* 8, edition of 1000 printed from the blocks

20 SHAKESPEARE

three blocks page size 87 x 62

poster for the German Shakespeare Association Festival: edition of 6000

21 MOTHER *Die Mutter*

two blocks, one cut 1952 the other 1962, 240 x 120



1965

22 ANGEL *Engel*

two blocks on Japanese paper page size 55 x 44.5
from *Angel of History II*: edition of 100; Manuspresse, Stuttgart

23 FALCON *Der Falke*

one block, black with four colour underprint 40.5 x 56
edition of 100; Manuspresse, Stuttgart

24 THE SCRIBE *Der Schreiber*

two blocks 29 x 22
edition of 100; Manuspresse, Stuttgart

25 CHRISTOPHORUS

three blocks 60 x 40
edition of 40; Manuspresse, Stuttgart

26 CARMINA BURANA

thirteen woodcuts on Japanese paper page size 67 x 52

Floret silva | chum geselle min | o Fortuna primo vere | uff dem anger I | uff dem anger II | ego sum abbas | in taberna I | in taberna II | cours d'amour I | cours d'amour II | Blanziflor et Helena

portfolio: special edition of 40 of the illustrated book to which Carl Orff contributed some sheets of music, and Jacques Prévert a poem; Manuspresse, Stuttgart

27 THE LARGE GARDEN OF HERRENHAUSEN *Der Grosse Garten Herrenhausen*

thirteen woodcuts on Japanese paper page size 66 x 51
portfolio: edition of 30

28 PABLO NERUDA: THE HEIGHTS OF MACCHU PICCHU

book with ten two-colour woodcuts 28 x 39.5

Bibliophilistic edition of Stamperia Valdonega, Verona (Giovanni Mardersteig)
edition of 810 + special edition of 190; Hoffmann & Campe, Hamburg

29 THE PRINTER *Der Drucker*

four woodcuts on Japanese paper page size 67.5 x 52.5

Type-setters *Setzer*; Printer and Demon *Drucker und Dämon*;
Printer and Hydra *Drucker und Hydra*; The Print *Der Druck*

edition of 30; Hatje Verlag, Stuttgart

30 SPES CONTRA SPEM

four woodcuts on Japanese paper page size 67.5 x 52.5
portfolio: edition of 60; Manuspresse, Stuttgart

31 WINTER 65/66

two blocks on black Ingres paper 50 x 65
edition of 100

32 EAST-ANGEL *Ostengel*

four blocks 40 x 28.5

edition of 100: from *Angel of History III*; Manuspresse, Stuttgart

33 THE SOVIETS *Die Sowjets*

fibre blocks 40 x 57.5

edition of 100: from *Angel of History III*; Manuspresse, Stuttgart

34 BLIND *Die Blinden*

woodcut 300 x 120

