

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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From October 5 through November 11, 2007, The Drawing Room in East Hampton is pleased to present **Alan Shields (1944-2005): Selections from the Jones Road Print Shop, 1971-1978**, an exhibition of ten distinctive prints that Shields produced in collaboration with the master printer, William Weege at the experimental print shop Weege founded in rural Wisconsin in 1971. On view concurrently in the adjacent gallery room, **Selected Work: Stephen Antonakos, Robert Kelly, Costantino Nivola, Alan Shields and Jack Youngerman** assembles works that demonstrate the integral role of materials and form for these five gallery artists. Highlights include a striking blue neon wall installation by Stephen Antonakos from 1975, mixed media abstractions by Robert Kelly, two monumental travertine sculptures by Costantino Nivola, stitched canvas works by Alan Shields and contoured, carved and painted wood reliefs by Jack Youngerman.

Alan Shields (1944-2005): Selections from the Jones Road Print Shop, 1971-1978

Upon arriving in New York in 1968 after attending college at Kansas State University, Shields quickly found his place in the vibrant New York art community at a time when the traditional divisions between painting, sculpture and printmaking were being called into question. As a college student, Shields had already begun integrating stitching into his paintings, one of many idiosyncratic techniques that characterized his lifelong approach to art making. Shortly after his inclusion in the first of many shows at the Paula Cooper Gallery in 1968, the grid became a dominant form in both his paintings and his prints. By 1970, his canvas works incorporated colored strips of industrial cotton webbing stitched into open grids and other structures that were often suspended from the ceiling to permit viewing from both sides. Just as his monumental works gained notoriety for defying conventional parameters of painting or sculpture, Shields' expansive use of materials and techniques in his prints earned him high praise. The ten prints assembled for this exhibition offer viewers insight into the broad range of innovative printing methods that he embraced during the 1970s and beyond.

Shields' first collaboration with William Weege was the double-sided *Sun Moon Title Page* (1971), a print that Ronny Cohen singled out as "one of the most spectacular prints of the 1970s." Shields incorporated processes that included dyeing the entire sheets, making potato and other relief prints, cutting diagonal slices into the primary sheet and weaving through it with strips of multi-colored papers to generate unique sequences in each impression. Fostering the random placement of these strips by himself, Weege and other assistants, Shields welcomed the different configurations that appeared in each print. Thus, as Weege later noted, "the whole idea of consistency went out the window." Later stitching of brilliantly colored triangular forms added yet another texture to this wonderfully rich amalgam.

The 1973 lattice print, *Detroit*, is characteristic of several double-sided prints that Shields constructed during this period by interlacing narrow strips of silkscreened paper stitched and glued together in a network of grids. Activating the interior voids and surrounding light, *Detroit* has a sculptural presence and invites viewing from two sides. Some of the prints from later in the decade incorporate Shields' own handmade paper created at Joe Wilfer's Upper U.S. Paper Mill in Oregon, Wisconsin. While the grid continued to occupy Shields intermittently as a key compositional principle, other imagery emerged as he expanded his repertoire of techniques to include embossing, watermarks, flocking and more.

In 1972, Shields bought a house and built a studio on Shelter Island, New York, where he moved full-time a decade later. He is represented in numerous international museum collections and his work from the late 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s will be on view at The Parrish Art Museum's upcoming exhibition, *Alan Shields: Stirring up the Waters*, from October 21 – December 30, 2007.

Gallery hours: Mon & Thurs-Sat, 11 to 5; Sun 11 to 4

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