September 13 - December 14
Redefining the Multiple: Thirteen Japanese Printmakers

September 28, 2:30 pm, Olin 104
Lecture: Japanese Printmaking, Yesterday and Today, Hideki Kimura, Professor, Kyoto City University

also on view:
Selections from Berenice Abbott’s Portrait of Maine

Once again, the MoA is the Maine venue for screenings of Global Lens Films Mondays at 7:30 pm beginning on September 9 in the Olin Arts Center, Room 104

In recognition of the launch of the Latin American Studies Program, the MoA is co-presenter of the film program Memories of the Present Past/Memorias del Pasado Presente, October 11-13, Olin Arts Center 104
When you walk into the George Anderson Gallery in Boothby Square, you’re surrounded by Anderson’s work—vibrant, nearly electric images of waterfront life, fishermen, workboats, gulls, wind, and waves. It’s a one-artist gallery where primary colors climb the brick walls and brighten the entire room.

Except there’s a second artist here. She’s painting behind the desk at the back of the store. Jennifer Lawson, a creative director at L.L. Bean from 1985 to 2003 and a highly sought creative consultant for years after that, is now trading her services as a humble retail gallerina in exchange for her own studio space in a sunny window at Anderson’s gallery, where she focuses on painting.

When did you start this arrangement with George Anderson?
Earlier this year. I knew George because I knew the gallery and I own one of his paint-
He said, ‘You can work here, but you have to paint while you’re here.’ So I thought, hey, I can either paint at home, alone, or I can paint here, in the gallery, in a space where I can focus and work. George has been kind of a mentor. He even calls me, a lot, to make sure I’m painting.

So it’s symbiosis? George keeps after you to keep painting? That’s the deal. For me, it’s a gift.

When did you leave L.L. Bean?
That was in 2003, but I had free-lance consulting clients of my own, so I continued to consult. I worked with Johnny’s Selected Seeds for a few years. I spent 18 months flying to Baltimore every week for a client—until I realized this was nuts. They asked me to move there and work for them. I said, you know, my friends are in Portland. Do I really want to pack up and start over again?

You seem pretty good at starting over.
I grew up on the West Coast—San Francisco.
My family’s still there. I’ve been in Maine since 1982. Leaving L.L. Bean after nearly 20 years was a big step. But I had to try.

Did you go to art school?
I have a BFA from Utah State (1976). I always drew, even when I was a child, and I studied painting, but I didn’t really pick up the pencil and sketchbook until 2007.

You seem at home in different media—oils as well as watercolor, and pen and ink.

I like them all, so I keep at them. Sometime in 2008 I started my own blog to converse with other artists. We follow each other’s blogs, so I’m always connected. And Facebook. I was skeptical at first because of all the personal stuff people put out there. But Facebook’s very immediate. You can just post a picture and you can see other people’s work quickly.

You took the plunge and really started painting. Then what?
Well, I lived in Bali for two years.

What did you do there?
I painted!

And since you returned in 2010?
I’m just really getting into my creative side, trying to do what fulfills me. It’s been great. I climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro by myself last year.

But it’s funny. George was just here this week, so we had a meeting. We both come from the corporate world, so we ‘have a meeting.’ I’d just finished a painting on Monday. George said, ‘We’re going to put a frame around this and sell it.’ I thought, wow, I’m really getting somewhere.

He said I have to start painting bigger canvases. I’m trying. I started painting 6” x 6” and I’ve progressed up to 12” x 12” — big is intimidating. I’m fine to draw it out, but it’s the application of the paint. I feel like my brush strokes are more exposed. George doesn’t work this way—he’s very graphic and his colors are mostly solid, but I’ve got a whole sky to solve.

George says, ‘You can do this.’ He’s such a great guy, but I think he gets a little impatient with me for not becoming big enough fast enough. But there is a world of smaller paintings out there. Not everyone
Maybe turning painting into a career feels too much like another fast track you’ve been trying to get away from? What do you imagine your husband [the late NBC and WCSH-6 news reporter Bob Elliott] might have counseled?

Oh gosh. Bob was from Maine; he left the big time because he really wanted to come back and live here. But for someone trying to be small-town, he played big. I wasn’t even painting back then—I was at L.L. Bean. But I think he would have encouraged me to do what I want.

I’m going to have a show in October, at Clayton’s Cafe in Yarmouth. All oils. I have a lot of these small canvases; part of this ‘learning year’ I’m having is using up what I have. [She points to a plastic bin of blank white canvas squares on the floor.]

White canvas can be terrifying, so I like to start with an undercoat. This green [a dreamy sage square on her easel] is the start of a beach scape.

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