



CONTEMPORARY IMAGES IN PRINT SINCE 1915

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Color Motion: Edna Andrade Prints
September 14 – November 17, 2012
Thursday, September 13: Reception 5:30-7:30pm

PHILADELPHIA: Noted Philadelphia artist **Edna Andrade** (1917-2008) is best known for her hard-edged Op Art abstractions. This retrospective exhibition is the first dedicated to her printed works and will bring together over two dozen prints created in the 1960s through 1980s. The exhibition installation will feature three walls covered in Andrade print motifs, designed by ANONA Studio. An accompanying publication with text by The Print Center's Jensen Bryan Curator John Caperton is available for \$20.

Born in Portsmouth, VA in 1917, Edna Andrade received her BFA degree from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1937 and subsequently made Philadelphia her home for most of her adult life. In 1965, at the age of 48, she made *Color Motion*, her first editioned print. *Color Motion* appears to have been almost mechanically created, with an impeccable black-and-white design that creates a dizzying illusion of warping movement. The work represented a radical departure for Andrade, who until then was known primarily as a painter of Surrealist-inspired landscapes and, later, for brightly colored abstractions. In the early 1960s, she had begun to move away from the biomorphic masses which populated her paintings in favor of geometric constructions. Along the way, Andrade abandoned many of her signature artistic elements; expressionistic brushstrokes disappeared, colors became flat and unmodulated and lines became precise and mechanical. At that moment, she, along with such artists as Richard Anuszkiewicz, Bridget Riley and Victor Vasarely, discovered Op Art.

In 1965, Op Art exploded onto the scene, and numerous national exhibitions showcased the movement - Andrade's work was included in three major exhibitions dedicated to Op. Andrade appreciated the open spirit of Op and its ability to communicate with a broad audience. This democratic impulse and Op's capacity for widespread transmission are perhaps part of what attracted Andrade to printmaking in the first place. Andrade did not rely on lithography or etching, which were more traditional processes, for her first prints; rather, she gravitated toward the more recently developed practice of screenprinting produced in commercial shops whose characteristic flatness and crisp, fine lines made the medium the perfect choice for her designs.

While Andrade embraced the democratic spirit of Op, also saw it as much more than a series of optical exercises. She began to make Op work as a result of her teaching experiences at the Philadelphia College of Art (now University of the Arts), where she joined the drawing and design faculty in 1959. In order to engage her students, she designed assignments to subtly link theoretical and practical lessons, offering them “immediately applicable concepts and skills.” In both her teaching and her artwork, she strived to create a universal vocabulary appropriate for critical inquiry into how artists explore color and perception. Andrade was intrigued by a broad range of subjects, in particular contemporary discussions of science and architecture. References to science and other intellectual endeavors repeatedly appear in works that could be mistaken for purely formal exercises.

Throughout her long career, Andrade showed an insatiable interest in a wide range of subjects, coinciding with dramatic shifts in her practice. Andrade, whose commitment to being an educator and designer rivaled her studio practice, constantly pushed herself to take on new processes and philosophies. Her printed works, while endlessly entertaining from a purely optical standpoint, capture the keen and generous intellect that drove her practice in the classroom and studio, connected, rather than distinct, sites of creativity.

Color Motion: Edna Andrade Prints will be on view September 14 – November 17, 2012. The opening reception is Thursday, September 13 from 5:30-7:30pm, with a gallery talk by the curator at 5:30pm.

The exhibition and publication are made possible by special project support from the Estate of Edna Wright Andrade.

The Print Center supports printmaking and photography as vital contemporary arts and encourages the appreciation of the printed image in all its forms. The Print Center presents a variety of programs for the public including exhibitions; The Print Center Gallery Store, which offers the largest and most diverse selection of contemporary prints in Philadelphia; the longest running annual international competition for prints and photographs in the country; and an extensive series of education programs and special events.

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