

Unsung heroes of the printmaking world at De Anza exhibit

By Cathy Curtis
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CUPERTINO — "I have to do my own work, so that I don't get pushy and start telling the artist what to do."

So says David Kelso, who spends his days at a fine arts press, helping artists to make print editions from their designs or drawings. Master printers at the Bay Area's many commercial workshops are the unsung heroes of the printmaking world. Their guidance assures artists of producing true colors, subtle variations in ink densities and precise registration of the images.

Many of these printers are artists in their own right, a pursuit that allows them the total control they don't have in their fine arts press jobs. Taking an innovative approach to the subject of printmaking — currently highlighted all over the Bay Area in conjunction with "World Print Four" at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art — director Jan Rindfleisch has assembled works of art by 19 printers at the Euphrat Gallery, De Anza College. "Printers as Artists" includes

stick figure (himself) who adds such whimsical touches as an airplane whooshing off the vase and gaudy "Greek" ornamental trim ("Portrait of an Artist Painting a Plane" and "Fume Prohibe"). He extends the joke with a repainted clay pot and "fragment," decorated with stick figures, planes and footprints.

Hidekatsu Takada (a printer at Crown Point Press, Oakland) introduces a note of pristine elegance with his work in hand-colored etching and aquatint. His subject matter is ultra-ordinary — a piece of masking tape, a cigarette, a flashlight, a pocketknife. But he adds a personal perspective in the way he centers his small image on the paper and presents each object in neatly contrasting views (the top and bottom of the knife case; the lit end and base of the flashlight).

Lee Altman (a Palo Alto resident who has been a collaborative printer with several noted artists) found a source of inspiration in the bubble chamber photographs produced by the Stanford Linear Accelerator. His untitled monotypes contain black arcs, whorls, ovals and broken "y" shapes on dappled backgrounds.

In contrast, Stephen Thomas located the symbol-

ism for his "Alchemmicals" series in a philosophy book printed in 1550. The Berkeley-based printer who makes intaglio editions for artists and has worked at Crown Point Press, used tiny astrological images, human figures and lettering from "Rosarium Philosophorum" to compose his ten delicately colored, mystical etchings.

Glenn Brill, a master printer at Tamarind Institute, New Mexico and Trillum Graphics Fine Art Workshop in San Francisco, created a cheerful medley of pattern on pattern with his printed, woven and painted piece, "Native Groogle."

Other work in the show includes Anne Hirsh's fine furry-black monotypes of moles and mice and prints by Timothy Berry, Erb Bigelow, Jennifer Cole, Gary Denmark, Norman DeValliere, Donald Farnsworth, Scott Greene, Katie Kahn, David Kelso, Ikuru Kuwahara and Jeanne Mullen.

The Euphrat Gallery is open 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesdays Wednesdays and Thursdays; 7 to 9 p.m. on Wednesdays; and 1 to 4 p.m. on Sundays. "Printers as Artists" remains on view through Thursday.

David James Sibbit, a young artist who has worked for Editions Press in San Francisco, Don Farnsworth Fine Art Press and Magnolia Editions (both in Oakland), takes an irreverent approach to his subject, a Greek vase. First, he made a lithograph of the vase with a swipe of red above it. Then he created a series of monoprints by painting additional elements on top of the lithographic plate and making a single print of each version.

In the monoprints, Sibbit introduces a humorous

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