

The Armory Show
5 - 8 March 2020
Pier 90, Booth N1

RAQUE FORD: NEW Works on Paper
+ from the ARCHIVES of ROBERT BLACKBURN: MELVIN EDWARDS



The Armory Show: Pier 90, Booth N1
5 – 8 MARCH 2020

**NEW Works on Paper by Raque Ford
and from the archives: Melvin Edwards**

EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop is pleased to participate in The Armory Show 2020, two-person presentation of NEW Works on Paper by Raque Ford and from the archives of Robert Blackburn: Melvin Edwards.

In the 1960s, Melvin Edwards pushed through the impassioned, dichotomy of abstraction versus figurative art with his *Lynch Fragments*, prominent sculptural wall works, now on permanent view at The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Edwards remarked that sculpture, "... seemed to me a more direct way to deal with the inner subject. Sculpture allowed me to put in, in a more natural way, things that people were saying you weren't supposed to put in art, like race and politics. It allowed me to think more literally in those ways but have it come out in the work abstractly." ¹

In his assemblages of welded chains and railroad spikes, everyday materials become abstracted form. Yet Edwards is less concerned with formalism and art for art's sake than he is with the political and cultural history imbued in those materials.

Edwards's interest producing abstract compositions with found material laid the groundwork for artist Raque Ford. Ford laser cuts shapes onto acrylic sheets; shapes can be computer-generated clip art to handwritten text-as-image. References are a mash-up of early to contemporary U.S. popular culture, from films and music to personal notes and proses.

Ford expands on Edwards's interest in the readymade and found objects, by combining personal with digital, revealing the artist's hand yet remaining sensitive to a material's origins.



Melvin Edwards *Harlem #4* c.1977, Etching, 22.25 x 30 in.

at the printshop

When Edwards moved to New York City in 1967, he began experimenting with rendering three-dimensional forms on a two-dimensional plane--something that could only happen at Robert Blackburn's printshop. Blackburn, who, like Edwards, was an African American abstract artist, created a space to support and encourage abstraction. From the archives, EFA will present Edwards's prints that feature his use of airbrush on industrial objects, i.e. chains and grates., as a stencil to experiment with large scale etchings, in how they are made, and even how they are inked.

AA: WHAT PRINTMAKING WORKSHOPS HAVE YOU WORKED AT? ANY RECOLLECTIONS?

ME: I have worked at Bob Blackburn's Printmaking Workshop in New York City. Bob Blackburn — and you can quote me on this — well, if Bob Blackburn is standing at the door of the Printmaking Workshop and a dog walks by and pauses, Bob will get him in the shop and convince him to make a print. And if the dog stays for a while, Bob Blackburn will convince him to become a printmaker for life! Such is the love, the commitment this man has for printmaking. Bill Major's studio on 7th Avenue in the 1960s was an important place where you could meet Norman Lewis, Romare Bearden and others.

² Melvin Edwards interview with Alejandro Anreus.

As an artist-in-resident in 2018, Ford experimented with the acrylic sheets as drypoint to draw into, further as stencils to paint watercolor or relief-rolled with saturated colored ink. Last year, we invited Ford to publish a suite of unique prints with Master Printer, Justin Sanz. She expanded her process by incorporating new printmaking techniques that utilize multiple layers of overlapping acrylic sheets. The prints combine intaglio inked drypoint lines, transparent relief rolls of lithographic ink, and airbrushed watercolor monotype techniques.

from the archives

Works by dozens of renowned artists are represented in the archive; Ed Clark, Mildred Thompson, Benny Andrews, Elizabeth Catlett, Al Loving, and Mavis Pusey, among many others. Without Blackburn's profound commitment to the longevity of community printmaking, and the efforts of dedicated volunteers, the shop would not exist today. This important presentation of new and historical work is in honor of Robert Blackburn, his continued legacy, and the importance of community-driven spaces.

¹ from Alexander Gray Associates website: [Melvin Edwards - Artists](#)

² [Melvin Edwards: The Prints of a Sculptor](#). Catalogue and exhibition at the Jersey City Museum - A conversation with Alejandro Anreus

Raque Ford (b. 1986) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She received her BFA from Pratt Institute and her MFA from Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts. Recent solo exhibitions include *con•fi•dence* at Williamson and Knight, Portland (2017), *Carolyn at Shoot the Lobster*, New York (2017), and *It's All About Me, Forget About You* at Species, Atlanta (2017), *6 Obsessions* at 321 Gallery, NY and forthcoming Martos Gallery. Ford's works have been presented in group shows at Sculpture Center, NY, 321 Gallery, NY, Galerie Division, Montreal, AA-LA Gallery, Los Angeles and currently at Greene Naftali, NY (2020). In 2016 she received the New York Community Trust Van Lier Residency at ISCP, New York and was an Artist-in-Residence at S1, Portland in 2016. In 2018, Raque Ford was a SIP Fellow at the EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop. She is represented by Martos Gallery, New York City.

Melvin Edwards (b.1937) is a pioneer in the history of contemporary African American art and sculpture. Born in Houston, Texas, he began his artistic career at the University of Southern California (USC), Los Angeles, CA, where he met and was mentored by the Hungarian painter Francis de Erdely. In 1965, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, CA organized his first solo exhibition, which launched his professional career. Edwards moved to New York City in 1967, shortly after his arrival, his work was exhibited at The Studio Museum in Harlem; in 1970, he became the first African American sculptor to have a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Edwards is represented by Alexander Gray Associates.

The Print Archives contain thousands of works by many of the artists who printed with Robert Blackburn and/or at The Printmaking Workshop from the 1940s until the present. Blackburn was extremely welcoming, generous, never imposed any aesthetic guidelines, and encouraged experimentation by non-printmakers in lithography, intaglio, relief, photo processes, and artists' books. As such, The Print Archives thus contain one of the most unique and diverse records of printmaking in the United States, and reflects the various communities with which Blackburn participated.

In 2006 The Library of Congress acquired a core selection of 2,044 works by 1,311 artists from The Printmaking Workshop, including the largest selection of Blackburn's own work represented in any institution. Still, it is estimated that at least 10,000 prints remain in the Archive while new works are added each day. EFA RBPMW endeavors to place another set from The Print Archive with a New York institution.

* * *

Robert Blackburn (b. 1920-2003) acquired his own lithography press in 1947 and ran it as a collaborative printmaking atelier for 24 years, until 1971, when he incorporated "The Printmaking

EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop

Workshop” as the not-for-profit organization. Thirty-two years later in 2002, as he began to suffer from health issues, Blackburn closed The Printmaking Workshop. Blackburn passed away in 2003. The Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop re-opened in 2005 as a program of the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, to continue to make space for diverse artists to experiment in the graphic arts, in the spirit of Robert Blackburn.

The Print Archives are overseen by a partnership between the Trust for Robert Blackburn (for Blackburn’s own work and any work created prior to the 1971 incorporation) and EFA-RBPMW.

Special thanks to Melvin Edwards, Raque Ford, Page Benkowski from Alexander Gray Associates, Ebony L. Haynes from Martos Gallery, Deborah Cullen, and intern, Hanna Stebbins.



Artist, Raque Ford working with EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, Master Printer Justin Sanz



Top:
Master Printer, Justin Sanz inking
handdrawn drypoint on laser cut acrylic sheet

Bottom left:
Raque Ford airbrushing watercolor on inked
acrylic sheet

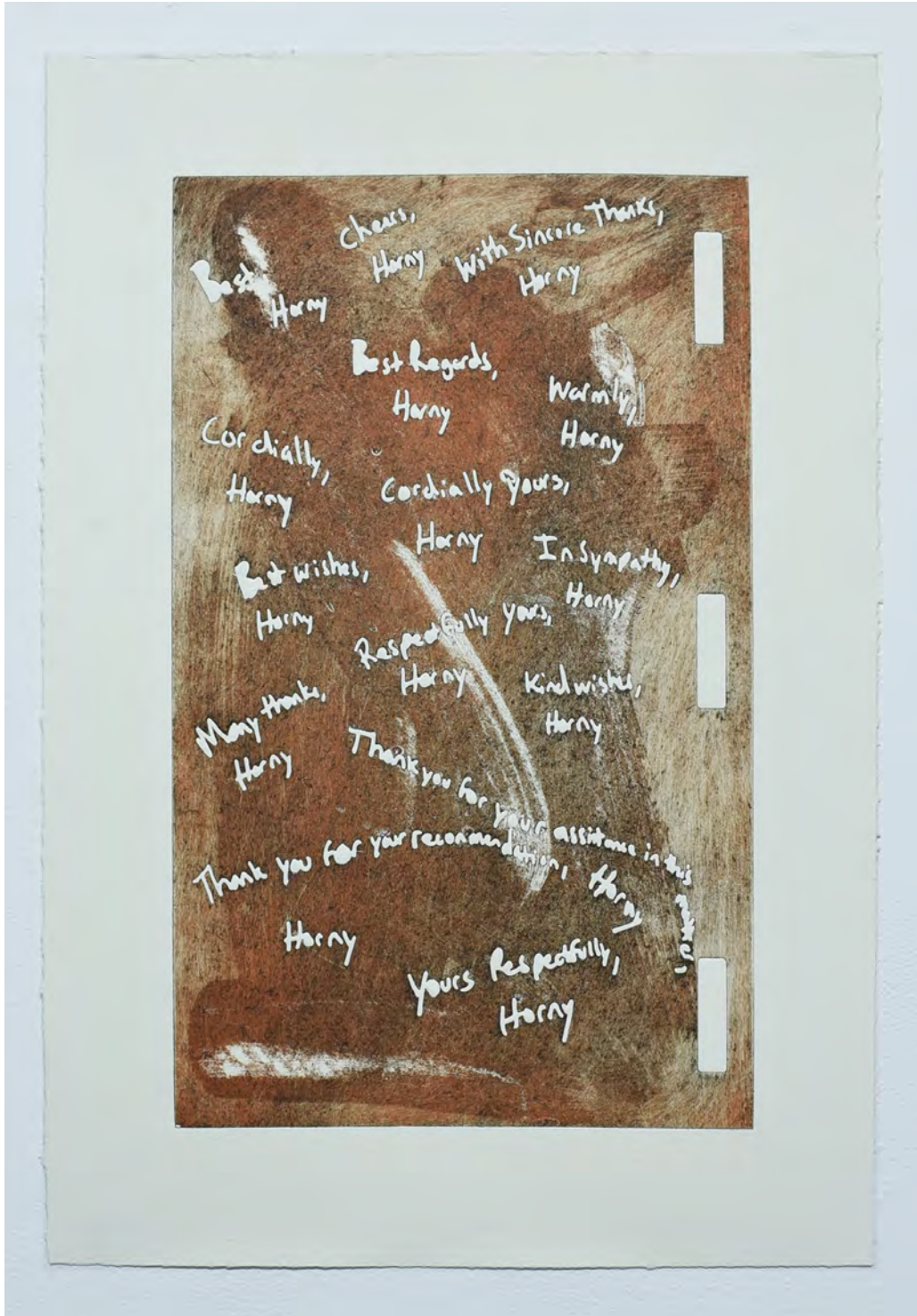


RAQUE FORD

Hate Flower 2020

Oil and watercolor on paper, 19.75 x 14.5 inches

\$1,600



RAQUE FORD

Cordially Yours, 2020

Oil on paper, 21 x 14.25 inches

\$1,600





RAQUE FORD

Pink flower green peace working really hard, 2020

Oil and watercolor on paper, 29.5 x 21.5 inches

\$2,000



RAQUE FORD

Leaving a mark that destroys, 2020

Oil and watercolor on paper, 29.75 x 21.25 inches

\$2,000



RAQUE FORD

Pouncy Masterb-ate, 2020

Oil and watercolor on paper, 29.75 x 21.5 inches

\$2,000



RAQUE FORD

Don't look at my story, 2020

Oil and watercolor on paper, 29.5 x 21.5 inches

\$2,000



RAQUE FORD

Broken green peace, 2020

Oil and watercolor on paper, 29.5 x 21.25 inches

\$2,000



RAQUE FORD

Green peace working really hard the wrong way, 2020

Oil and watercolor on paper, 29.75 x 21.25 inches

\$2,000









RAQUE FORD

Dear Devil, I don't want to be good if loving you is wrong I sold my soul ... 2016

Acrylic sheet and zip tips, 27 x 47 inches

\$5,000



RAQUE FORD

Dear Devil, I want to be alone, but I don't want to be lonely... 2016

Acrylic sheet and zip tips, 27 x 47 inches

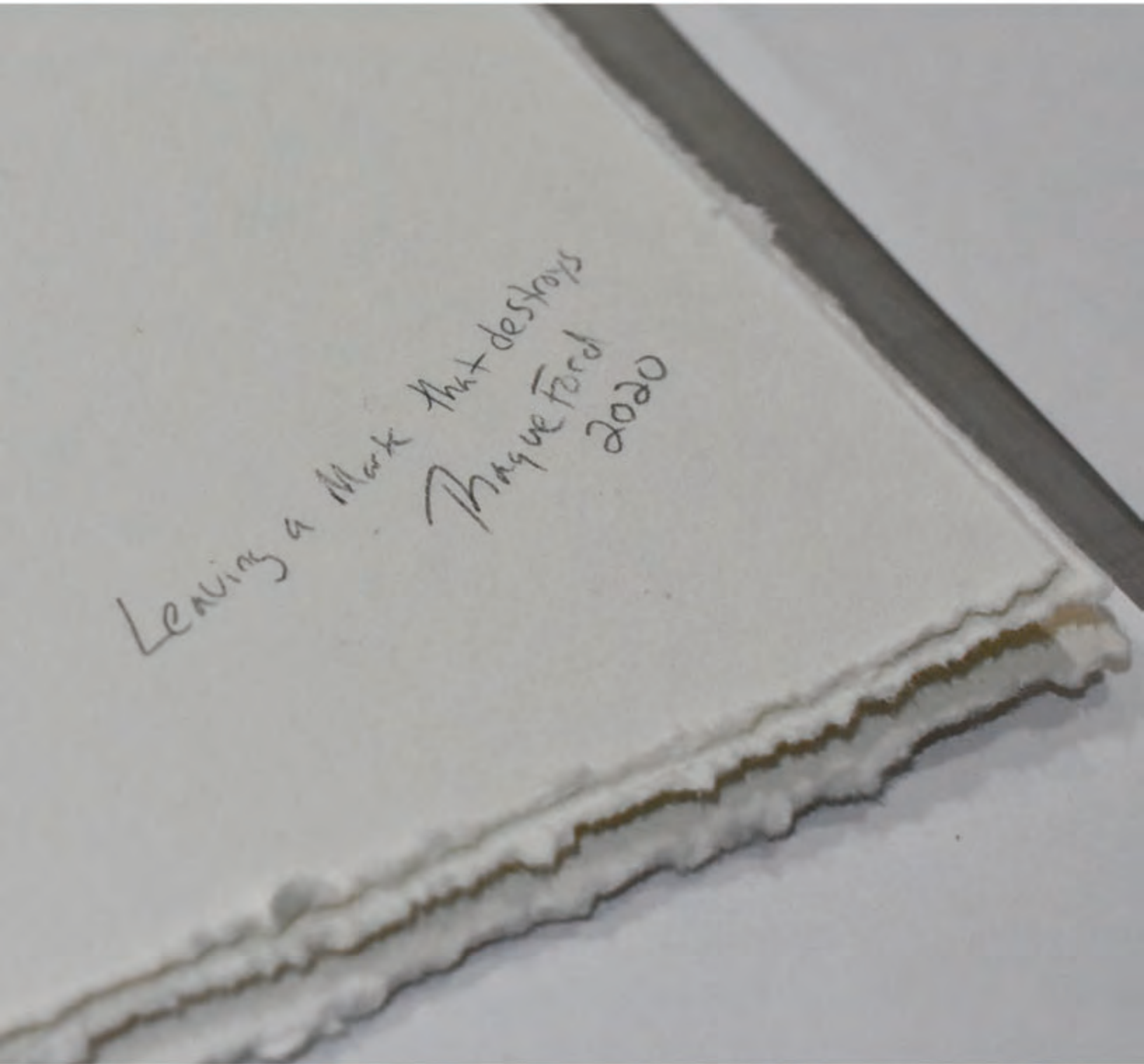
\$5,000



RAQUE FORD

Horny in the details love you, 2019

Acrylic and spray paint on polypropylene sheets and mirrored acrylic, 100 x 70.5 inches
\$10,000



For inquiries please contact
Essye Klempner
essye@efanyc.org
646-416-6226