From Barbizon to LSU
Exposure of dye transfer film to fluorescent light and the developing of film are first steps in making cliche-verre.

Mrs. Durieu uses cutting tools and fingers to create a design on dye transfer film. Emulsion can be worked as long as it is wet.
From Barbizon to LSU

By GIL WEBRE

At Louisiana State University, modern science has added a new dimension to an all-but-forgotten, century-old art form called the cliche-verre.

Three years ago, Mrs. Caroline Durieux, fine arts professor at LSU, became interested in the cliche-verre method of graphic art reproduction, developed by the Barbizon school of French artists in the 1860s.

Mrs. Durieux first teamed with Dr. Glen Nance, then an associate professor of chemistry at the university. When he left the campus, she turned to help Dr. John F. Christman, LSU biochemist who is a photographer by avocation.

The French artists who developed the cliche-verre method created negatives by scratching out a design on a glass plate that had been given a cost of black paint or by drawing on clear glass with black oil paint. The glass bearing the design then was placed in contact with a sheet of sensitized photographic paper. The glass-covered paper was exposed to light, then developed. The resulting image was a cliche-verre print.

In those days, photography was in its infancy; materials and methods had little uniformity. Thus, the cliche-verre prints varied greatly in quality.

"The art," says Mrs. Durieux, "was in advance of the science needed to perfect it."

Now, A CENTURY LATER, photography has reached a state where the first, hundredth and thousandth prints can have the same qualities if identical papers and chemicals are used. But while photography was advancing, the graphic art form which could make use of it lay dormant, nearly forgotten.

"I saw my first original cliches-verres at the Boston public library in 1957," says Mrs. Durieux. "Several were creations of Jean-Baptist Corot. Although crude, they aroused my interest in the process, and when I returned to LSU I began to study material on cliches-verres."

Because of the work done at LSU by Mrs. Durieux and her associates, cliches-verres now can be produced not only in black and white, as was done a century ago, but also in a combination of colors. The color cliches-verres are made by a dye-transfer process in which film, not glass plates, is used to obtain the original design.

Dr. Christman explains the colored cliche-verre method:

"Mrs. Durieux and I make no negative. We make a positive. First we overexpose and develop a 1x17-inch sheet of dye transfer film, thereby turning its emulsion dark.

"With the film still moist and the emulsion loose, Mrs. Durieux starts to work. Using her fingers and cutting tools, she works the emulsion into a preconceived design, cutting emulsion away, tinting it in one area, thickening it in another.

"When she gets the design she's after, she lets the film dry. The emulsion hardens, making the design permanent.

"This is the positive from which we print. To print, we first swell the emulsion in warm water so it will hold dye, then dip it into a constant-heat dye bath. Afterwards, we press it on fixed photographic paper.

"When the positive film is lifted from the paper, it leaves what the results of our printing will be. We know what dyes various portions of the treated film emulsion will pick up.

Exposure and manipulation of the emulsion results in several surface areas. They include: heavy reticulation (marked by large bubbly formations); light reticulation (marked by small bubbly formations); veils (thinned emulsion), and folds (thickened emulsion).

"If the dye bath contains equal amounts of cyan (blue), magenta (reddish purple) and yellow dyes, we know that this will be the order of pickup: heavy reticulation, yellow over cyan, cyan over magenta; light reticulation, cyan over yellow, yellow over magenta; veils, magenta over cyan, cyan over yellow; folds, cyan over magenta and yellow equally.

"Because of these different pickups, the cliche-verre will have many different tones, even though dipped into only one dye bath. If we change proportions in the dye bath, the pick-ups are altered and the tones varied.

"IT IS POSSIBLE to use several different dye baths on the positive, and use various combinations of dyes. By keeping accurate records, we can reproduce every cliche-verre we have ever made.

"Since color cliches-verres do not entail development, it's possible to overprint in color a black-and-white made with an etched or painted glass negative. It is also possible to superimpose three to four color cliches-verres on one sheet of paper."

At the present time, the color cliche-verre method of graphic reproduction is in its infancy. But it is receiving recognition. The Smithsonian Institute recently purchased an LSU cliche-verre, and several have been sold to private collectors.

Both Dr. Christman and Mrs. Durieux hope the method will eventually receive recognition throughout the art world. But if it doesn't, they'll be satisfied with the feeling of accomplishment their creations give them.
The Cover: With a boost from science, a long-neglected form of graphic arts reproduction is being reborn in color at Louisiana State University.

The process, that of making color cliches-verres, was developed by Dr. John Christian and Mrs. Caroline Durieux, pictured at work in the former's laboratory. Their method was inspired by work done in the 1850s by glass-scratching, glass-painting artists of the Barbizon school.

Staff writer Gil Webre tells LSU's cliche-verre story on Pages 12-13. Staff photographer Phil Guirisco made the cover photo and the pictures illustrating the story.

THE GROWING UP that took place in midtown New Orleans during the first half of the 20th century is dramatically illustrated by the contrast in these two photos.

Both pictures were made looking towards the intersection of Baronne and Canal from the top floor of what is now the Maritime building, Carondelet and Common. (At the time of the upper photo, near the turn of the century, the Maritime building was the Hennen building.)

The dome-topped structure (1) is Jesuit church, 132 Baronne, viewed from the rear. Despite much similarity, the corresponding structure in the new photo is not the same building. The old church, opened in 1857, had to be closed in 1928 because of tremor damage suffered when piles were driven for the neighboring Pere Marquette building, says the Rev. William Ruggeri, S.J., pastor for the past seven years.

Finally condemned, the old edifice was razed and a new one was constructed on the same site and in the same Byzantine style. One noticeable difference, however, is the use of minarets at the front of the church.

All the residential structures in the right foreground of the old photo have been replaced by business property. (The building in the right foreground of the new photo is the Pere Marquette garage; beyond it is the Godechaux building.)

Beyond the church in the old picture is the Hotel Grunewald (2), which in the 1920s was remodeled, enlarged and reopened as The Roosevelt.

The latter, of course, is the building that towers in the left background of the new photo.

To the right of the Grunewald, the Chess, Checkers and Whist Club (3) stands on the Baronne and Canal site now occupied by Walgreen's drug store (not visible in new photo).

Facing the club on the other side of Canal is the old Maison Blanche building (4), replaced by the main unit of the present Maison Blanche structure in 1907.

The column-fronted building (5) next to the old MB building is the Grand Opera House, now replaced by the Kress building. Beyond the latter rises the Audubon Building-Miller-Wohl unit.

So many are the changes evidenced in these photos that it's only natural that one question should pop into mind: "How much will the scene change in the last half of the 20th century?"
to Gain a New Life

By DIANE FARRELL

Zina always has refrigerator full of her specialty, borsch. In kitchen of home on base, she feeds some to her husband, Lt. Col. Coleman Kuhn

remember the places and the dates connected with the nightmare, "I began my wandering then," she says, "stopping when someone would give me food or shelter." But her wandering had a purpose. She heard that Russia and Poland had signed a treaty and that a Polish army was being organized on Russian soil.

"Then, darling," she says, "I have one thought: join the army and get out of Russia."

Finally, in October, Zina reached Semipalatinsk, about 1500 miles east of Minak where part of the army was being organized. On Oct. 28, 1941, Zina joined that army.

"I was in entertainment group," she says. "They give us uniform, shirt and pants, too long. And shoes beg like clogs. But I am so happy. I know now, some day I get out of Russia. Also they put me in something I could do-singing, dancing, entertaining."

In March, 1942, Zina's group finally left Russia. The first stop was Pahliv, Iran, on the Caspian sea. "When we entered Russia, I nearly passed out," Zina says. "I see stands with all kinds of food, and they are said to be board or painted, it could not be real. What I want most of all are eggs. I buy up to a Persian peddler and ask him to sell me some, but I have no money.

"He ask me what I have to trade and I tell him all I have is my coat. It is a fine coat, but I want eggs bad. So I trade. I remember getting a pan and making an omelet out of the dozen eggs and frying and eating that delicious omelet by myself right there on the bench at Pahliv." Zina's entertainment group went with the army all over the Middle East, entertaining troops behind the lines in Lebanon, Palestine, Iraq, and Iran. "I sleep in many tents in the desert and have to get used to seeing tarantulas, scorpions, black widow."

In 1943, Zina asked for and got a discharge because she was suffering from ulcers. "I joke with army when they let me out," she says. "I tell them, you not make me general, I quit."

OUT OF THE SERVICE, she faced another battle. How to make a living. "I was discharged in Palestine," she says. "The only thing I know how to do is entertain. So I sing in night clubs wherever I can get a job. I have no money for good costumes or good arrangements. Then Palestine is not rich country, not much work. But I exist."

After two years of struggle, Zina got a break, an offer to sing in a big night club in Beirut, Lebanon. The agent asks me if I have good costumes and arrangements." Zina says. "I want a chance so bad, I tell him yes. But really, my dresses are shabby. I have good arrangements to two French songs only.

"But I am lucky. When I arrive, I find I will not be able to start the job for weeks, because other entertainers in the show have been delayed. Yet they have to pay my salary. So use money for beautiful new dress and get some arrangements. I find people there like English songs. So I learn 'Jealousy.' I do not know what words mean, I sing like the parakeet. I remember so well my opening night in the Beirut night club, I add dancing to my act for the first time. I am a success."

Zina found out she could make a good living in Lebanon, much better than in Palestine. "I also make a lot of friends and have a successful social life. For the first time in a long time, I begin to live again."

However, in the summer of 1946, red tape threatened to end this good life. She found that she could not renew her Lebanon visa any longer and would have to return to Palestine permanently.

"They want to make me leave where I am earning a good living and going to a place where I have to struggle," Zina says. "I tell myself I will not let this happen. I must figure a way out."

"It is all very complicated. I am registered as a Polish refugee in Palestine. I cannot register in Lebanon because of this. I have a Lebanese visa which expires on June 11, so I must leave before then. I must also get back to Palestine on June 11 to renew my visa there."

"I find out that if I can discover some way to stay in Lebanon past June 11, then Palestine will not take me back. Lebanon will have to let me stay and I can register there as a Polish refugee and stay as long as I like. But how do I keep Lebanese officials from forcing me out before June 11—that is the question."

"Suddenly I get an idea. I figure they cannot move me if I am in a hospital sick, if I have been operated on. I get an appointment with a doctor at an American hospital. I complain of being nauseated, of having a bad pain in my side. I fake appendicitis. I symptoms very well. The doctor decides he better operate on me to be on the safe side. June 8 was the date of my operation. When the immigration men come around, the doctor tells them I cannot travel so soon after operation."

"I have only a little scar, not much to remind me. I tell my husband this story now and he call me 'phony baloney.' But I tell him sometimes to survive you have to be phony baloney."

ZINA STAYED in Lebanon until the spring of 1951. Then her name came up to the top of the long waiting list at the American embassy. Sponsored by an uncle, she obtained a visa to come to the United States. She became an American citizen in 1957. Most of the time she has been in the United States, Zina has lived in New York City.

"I have not done much professional performing since I came to this country," she says, "just benefit work mostly. But I did get to meet and associate with many artists." (Among her friends are the violinist Isaac Stern and President Johnson.)


Zina is active in Lake Charles civic affairs, working in support of the Civic Symphony, Community Concerts, Art Associates and Visiting Artist group. She still sings, mostly at officers' club shows.

Last fall, she began teaching Russian free of charge to interested Lake Charles citizens. Her group of approximately 20 met twice a month for two and a half hours. It included housewives, businessmen and students. She plans to resume classes in a few weeks.

Today Zina tells of her past life with little reluctance. "I think it illustrates a good point—how lucky are the Americans who have not had their homes and their whole way of life disappear. This is a truly wonderful country, all Americans—you, me, everybody—should be willing to make sacrifices for it."

But Zina feels it is useless to look backwards. This summer that fact was brought home to her dramatically. Her friends, the Isaac Sterns, made a trip to Europe. They visited Zina's home town to see if they could find any traces of her family.

"They go to Vilnyus (that is what Wilno is now called). They go where I tell them our house was. It is still standing, but not it is a government building. They ask people if they know anyone by my family name, Zowalt. This was once a very prominent name in the area. But no one had ever heard of it. It was just like someone took an eraser and wiped it out. Just like my family, like my girlhood, had never existed."