

## HORST JANSSEN (1929-1995)

Horst Janssen is one of the most distinguished and prolific German artists of his time. Though he worked in a variety of mediums, such as oil painting watercolor and ink, his lithographs are his most memorable contribution. These prints reference both German Expressionism and traditional print making techniques of the Northern Renaissance. Though Janssen was a skillful printmaker, it was his unique imagination that gave this body of work its unsettling and extraordinary edge. Each print is masterfully crafted, yet simultaneously evokes vulnerability and mystery.

Horst Janssen's life was marked by numerous marriages, outspoken opinions, alcoholism, and a selfless dedication to the art of printmaking. He was a pupil of Paul Wunderlich, from whom he learned etching. His art was influenced earlier by Edward Munch and later by 'art brut' and Jean Dubuffet. He was also aware of Japanese prints and eastern print making processes. Asian subjects are often directly referenced in his imagery. However, his compositions offer a more subtle reference to eastern aesthetics.

Janssen's work is known and celebrated internationally. He has been exhibited in many museums around the world, including: the Rembrandt House Museum, the Netherlands, the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Harvard University, Massachusetts, The Albertina, Vienna, the Museum of Modern Art in Kamakura, Japan, The Munch Museum in Oslo, Norway, The Albertinum, Dresden, The Odakyu Grand Gallery, Tokyo Japan, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Leipzig. Horst Janssen's work is found in many public and private collections throughout the world, including the MOMA and the Tate. Horst Janssen was awarded a number of prizes and awards, one of the more important being first prize for graphic art at the Venice Biennale in 1968.

In 200 the Horst Janssen Museum opened in Oldenburg. This museum houses a permanent collection of his work. Also, his work is on permanent display in a separate room at The Hamburg Art Museum . Horst Janssen's body of art has been continuously referenced and celebrated even after his death in 1995. Janssen holds a peculiar place in art history, while he never resorted to the abstraction other modernists were espousing, his brand of realism was in way an imitation of the observable world. The visible world was always the point of departure for his work. Although his work is largely figurative, he never imitated the truth. His work transcends the standards of traditionalism. The reality in his landscapes is always distorted and dramatized. His self-portraits are extremely turbulent paranoid auto-depictions He is a master of the numerous possibilities of expression offered to him by the technique of etching, playing with all of them.

