

Intaglio: Below the Surface

drypoints by **Phil Epp** of Newton
etchings by **Michael Jilg** of Hays



Statement by Phil Epp

I am strongly imprinted into the open spaces of the Great Plains. I grew up in a sparse area and am comfortable with emptiness in the landscape. I want to portray that part of me. . . to convey to whoever looks at my paintings and prints the magnificence of that open space. I place icons of the West like horses, cowboys, the moon, in contrast to the space - just one or two icons and the remainder is empty space.

About Michael Jilg's Etchings

Obscure, experimental, and daring best describe Jilg's etchings – especially those incorporating the figure. His explorative approach combines a variety of etching techniques to create visual and emotional impact. He takes the traditional nude and gives her a mind and attitude. His women, modern and challenging, reject submission and evoke emotion, demanding attention. His landscapes, many sourced from his European travels, are complex and alluring.

Design is at the forefront of his works and characterizes Jilg's strong, thoughtful arrangement of composition. Fascinated with the power of negative space, he uses shaped plates to incorporate space beyond the print, a technique which engages the viewer. Dark, often sinister, themes juxtapose images of contentment, seduction, pleasure, challenge, and unbarred anger. While casual viewers may be satisfied with the artist's beautifully executed figures and forms, closer observation yields unexpected discovery. Multilayered, mysterious symbols evoke varied interpretations, creating moods and feelings parallel to Jilg's contradicting themes of light and dark. Jilg desires an emotional reaction from viewers, compelling them to consider individual roles in society and humankind's fallibility. In his intense etchings, every dimension of design is considered and manipulated by the artist to reveal powerful, prophetic emotions; some forbidden and uncomfortable, some welcomed, all blatantly honest.

Phil Epp Biography

Phil Epp was born in York, Nebraska, in 1946 and raised on a rural Nebraska crop/cattle farm. He was awarded the Kansas Governors Artist award in 1985. His works have been shown at galleries in New Mexico, Chicago, Kansas City and New York. A number of his monumental public works have been awarded honors, including 8 wonders of Kansas Art in 2009 and Water Tower of the Year in 2010, and he has completed three large paintings for Arrowhead Stadium, home of the Kansas City Chiefs. In 2009, Phil was selected as a U.S. cultural ambassador to Kazakhstan with the U.S. Department of States' Art in Embassies program. His work has been displayed in American Embassies in Latvia, Africa and Fiji. Among his awards, he received the Best of Show award at the 2010 Panhandle Plains Invitational in Canyon, Texas. His recent induction into the Cowboy Artists of America is a monumental yet humbling honor and challenge. Epp's studio is based east of Newton, Kansas, and he continues to travel, photograph and paint wide-open western vistas.

Michael Jilg Biography

Native Kansas painter and printmaker, Michael Florian Jilg (aka "Mick"), often acknowledges his affection for Kansas and its inextricable ties to his life. He received a BA and MA from Fort Hays State University and an MFA from Wichita State University. Since completing his academic work, Jilg invested himself in his art and in educating others. He began teaching at Fort Hays State in 1981 and retired a decade ago. He and his wife, Joyce, have also traveled throughout the world, but Kansas remains his home. He states, "Cultural areas have tempted me, but I remain loyal to my western Kansas studio. From this vantage point, east coast, west coast, and European influences can be equally observed." Jilg has participated in over 200 exhibitions throughout his career and has works in museums throughout the United States, England and Asia.