The Museum of Modern Art

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IMPRESSIONS BY MODERN ARTISTS

IMPRESSIONS, an exhibition of 11 printed works in which the images are created from impressions of the human body, is on view at The Museum of Modern Art from September 30 through November 15. Represented in the exhibition are Bernard Cohen, Jim Dine, Jasper Johns, Robert Morris, Pablo Picasso, George Segal, Joel Shapiro, Antoni Tàpies, and Hann Trier--a small selection of artists who have used this technique. The exhibition is directed by Riva Castleman, Director, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books.

The prints in the exhibition are by artists who, for various reasons, have used impressions from their own and other persons' bodies. Picasso's small hand, which fills the lower quarter of a single plate upon which are etched three illustrations for a book, is the equivalent of the artist's classic statement, "I made it." Jasper Johns' Skin with O'Hara Poem is a gestural self-portrait in which his own representation is extended and transformed by the act of imprinting. Unlike the impressions in the cement sidewalk of Graumann's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, auto-imprints may function in areas far beyond mere identification. The feet in Antoni Tàpies' print are his own and those of his friends executing the Catalan national dance, Sardana. The phenomenon of the blue-jeans culture is dramatically conveyed in George Segal's monumental aquatint. Often the content of the print is most relevant to the physical impression alone. Joel Shapiro's Thumbprints and Robert Morris' Blind Time (a lithograph of the hand-touches made by a blind woman in response to the artist's directions) concentrate upon repetition, heightening awareness of the method used to create the image.

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"The 'touch' of an artist is an abstract term that refers to a highly personal quality in a work of art," comments Riva Castleman. "Often enough, however, real traces of the hand of the artist are left, unintentionally, on a drawing, a canvas, or in the margins of a print. The intentional use of 'touch' focuses attention upon that sense and joins the viewer with the artist in a common human experience."

The Museum of Modern Art's exhibition program is made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency whose funds are recommended by the Governor and appropriated by the State Legislature.