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Woodcut
Synopsis

If there is, indeed, nothing lovelier than a tree, Connecticut-based artist Bryan Nash Gill shows us why. Creating large-scale relief prints from the cross sections of trees, the artist reveals the sublime power locked inside their arboreal rings. Gill creates patterns not only of great beauty but also year-by-year records of the life and times of fallen or damaged logs. He rescues the wood from the property surrounding his studio and neighboring land, extracts and prepares blocks of various species (including ash, maple, oak, spruce, and willow), then makes prints by carefully following and pressing the contours of rings and ridges until the intricate designs transfer from tree to paper. The results are colored, nuanced shapes—mesmerizing impressions of the structural integrity hidden inside each tree. These exquisitely detailed prints are collected and published here for the first time, with an introduction by esteemed nature writer Verlyn Klinkenborg and an interview with the artist describing his labor-intensive printmaking process. Also featured are Gill’s series of printed lumber and offcuts, such as burls, branches, knots, and scrubs. Woodcut will appeal to anybody who appreciates the grandeur and mystery of trees, as well as those who work with wood and marvel at the rich history embedded in its growth.

Book Information

Hardcover: 128 pages
Publisher: Princeton Architectural Press; 1st edition (May 2, 2012)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 1616890487
Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 0.8 x 9.5 inches
Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars Â· See all reviews (56 customer reviews)
Best Sellers Rank: #125,756 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #21 in Art & Photography > Other Media > Prints #74 in Art & Photography > Individual Artists > Artists’ Books #377 in Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > Themes

Customer Reviews

Here’s the trick: Read the other reviews that point out how this book could have been better, and get the point that this is a small book of very large prints, and be disappointed that it is not an "art" book for the coffee table. Instead, it's a $20 introduction to a fabulous line of art work I would never have found, or been able to afford, elsewise. Then, it becomes fascinating and wonderful, and full of
inspiration for finding more ideas in your own line of art than you could have imagined. Originals of
the author’s work are available for +- $4000.00. This is out of my range. Some of the art books I
want on my coffee table, perhaps printed in America, are now OOP and available in the used book
market for > $200. Your call on whether you would be able to buy Woodcut if it were printed in
America at the ideal size for its content. If you liked / already own One Tree, by Garry Olson & Peter
Toaig, you’ll love Woodcut. If you love Speck, by Peter Buchanan-Smith, you’ll love Woodcut. If you
own both of Bruce Hoadley’s books about wood, Woodcut will add more to your understanding of
this material. The book is what it is, a collection, probably not complete, of one artist’s fascination
with the most basic form of woodcut. Who’da thought there was that much to see, to know? I don’t
care what grows in Connecticut, particularly. (Not all that different from central NC, except we use
holly and juniper where they have yew.) Usefully, to me, the interview / explanation at the end of the
book provides a lot of detail about how the prints are made and how the artist works. Inventory
management is, to me, the most interesting part of many (non-painting) artists’ work; how do they
keep and manage the material that becomes their artwork? Gill shares.

The purchase of this book by me is really a testament to good writing, as I pre-ordered this book
after reading a glowing review of it in the NYT. I don’t ordinarily buy an art book without having first
seen it; however, the review coupled with the publisher (Princeton) made this a compelling choice.
I was so excited about its arrival that I even blurted out to a bookseller I know that I had just
purchased a fantastic new book title ‘Woodcut’ etc.; a brag that I reserve for my best
finds/sales. Upon opening the packaging, I was immediately disappointed by the small size of the
book (at the time of pre-ordering I didn’t see any size stated). Folks!!! This book is only
approximately 10” x 10” in size (and maybe 3/4” thick in approx. 120 pps.): A laughably small size
when you consider that some of the prints the author made were more than 4 FEET per side. As
such, you can imagine how small the actual reproductions are. In fact, only a single, solitary print
even spills onto a second page and it doesn’t fill it. The editors even went so far as to cram as many
as four reproductions on to a single page: Not excusable. The printing and binding of this book were
done in China. Once again, nobody who cares about producing an art book is going to send the job
to China for, her production skills are just not up to snuff at this time. Here’s why the points I have
just made about this book are critical. One of the things I had wished for in this book was that the
artist had taken on the task of reproducing a wide variety of tree species that occur around his
studio.

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Woodcut Art for All: The Color Woodcut in Vienna around 1900

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