

Nuts & Bolts

AT THE HEART OF BUILDING A HOME BY DAMARIS COLHOUN



THE SPECIALIST **PRINTMAKER**

When Jean-Paul Russell hears the term “original print” his hackles rise. “In the industry of posters and limited editions, the word ‘original’ is easy to bastardize,” the master printmaker says. “What most of them make are reproductions.” Russell has earned the right to be prickly. As founder and president of Durham Press, a 19-year-old print publishing house in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, Russell has collaborated with well-established painters, sculptors, and even poets, teaching them the possibilities of printmaking. Russell—who worked with Andy Warhol in the mid 1980s—invites artists to stay at the bucolic Durham Press compound, and devise works specifically for printing. “We give them access to techniques like etching, hydraulic presses, woodblocks, and screen printing,” he says. “The prints we make with them are truly original works.”

WATER MUSIC Russell’s work with Ray Charles White has been particularly successful. White, a photographer who worked at Warhol’s *Interview* magazine, teamed up with Russell for help on an ongoing photo series called *Surface Tension*. Using a process similar to silk-screening, Russell transfers White’s images of the surfaces of bodies of water onto an aluminum substrate. (An example: “Eye on the World,” page 120). Aluminum reflects light in a way that canvas and paper do not, enhancing the aquatic shimmer that White captures. “It’s really a perfect marriage of material and subject,” Russell says. White, in turn, tips his hat to the unique facilities at Durham Press and to his friend, saying, “Jean-Paul shook up my vision of photography.” durhampress.com. [White’s prints will be exhibited at Senior & Shopmaker Gallery, NYC, from November 8 to January 5. 212-213-6767.]

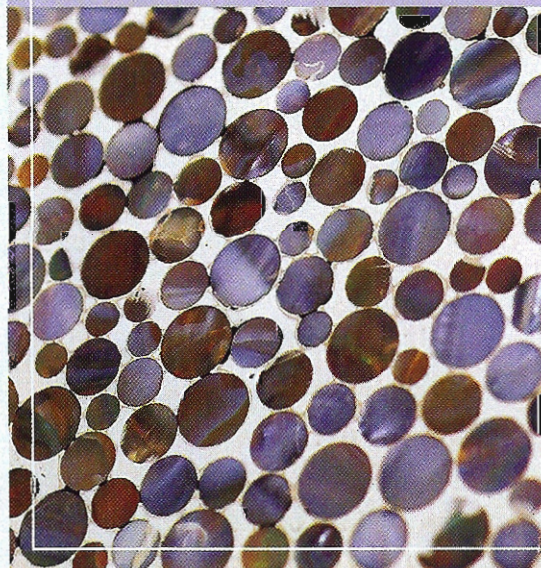
A Printmaker Russell, right, and photographer White confer at Durham Press.

LACQUER NOTES

Some 25 years ago, when architect Richard Meier wanted a lacquer finish placed on a pair of chairs for his New York City apartment (“Prince of the City,” page 100), he sent them to John Martin. The founder of Martin’s Chair of New Holland, Pennsylvania, sprayed a layer of black lacquer on the chairs, allowed it to dry, then repeated the process nine more times, painstakingly sanding and rubbing the chairs between coats. In the end, Martin had created a hard, glossy finish that was, he says, as “thick and deep as the one on a piano.”

SAP AND SOLVENTS Traditional Asian lacquers are made from materials as diverse as tree saps and the secretions of the lac insect (from which the words *lacquer* and *shellac* derive). The 20th century saw the appearance of quick-drying lacquers made of synthetic resins mixed with solvents. Because those lacquers are highly flammable and contain volatile toxins, water-based lacquers are being developed. Martin believes that “for environmental reasons” these lacquers may become the industry standard.

OLD SCHOOL True lacquerwork is available from firms such as Robin Reigi, a New York architectural materials maker. It offers wooden wall and surfacing panels made to order by artisans in open-air factories in Vietnam. Each panel is coated in 19 layers of tree-sourced lacquer inlaid with exotica such as crushed duck eggshells or broken abalone shells (below). martinschair.com. robin-reigi.com.



DEN RITTER; COURTESY OF ROBIN REIGI (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT)