

ART



Wassily Kandinsky's 1911 color woodcut on paper, "Zwei Reiter Vor Rot (Two Riders Against Red Background)," is part of the "Modern Multiples" show on display through May 23 at UC Davis.

Multiple choice

Reproductions earn a special place in art collections

By Victoria Dalkey

BEE ART CORRESPONDENT

A rare etching by Marcel Duchamp, a selection of photolithographic reproductions of Franz Marc's "Postcards to Prince Jussuf" and an image of a Campbell's tomato soup can by Andy Warhol silk-screened on a shopping bag are among the diverse artworks included in "Modern Multiples: Selections From the Fine Arts Collection" at the Richard L. Nelson Gallery on the University of California, Davis, campus.

"Multiple" is a term that came into the art lexicon in the 1960s during the Pop Art era to describe works produced in editions, particularly ones like Warhol's shopping bag and some of Claes Oldenberg's soft sculptures. Prints, of course, are the original multiples, with a history reaching back for centuries to Durer's engravings and Rembrandt's etchings.

But in our time, at least by the lights of this show, the term also applies to commercially reproduced images, such as an offset photolitho by the Guerrilla Girls that asks the cheeky question, "Do Women Have To Be Naked To Get Into the Met. Museum?" and Cary S. Liebowitz's coffee mugs printed with droll observations on the politics of the contemporary

art world.

While some of the multiples in the show expand the meaning of the term in interesting ways (Richard Artschwager's painted wooden blips claim a corner of the gallery), the most satisfying works in the show are traditional prints. Covering a wide array of printmaking media, they range from Henri Matisse's charming, small lithograph of fruit rendered with a few simple lines to Robert Colescott's ambitiously scaled three-panel print "Pontchartrain," a tour de force on sex, race and violence in American culture that includes such etching techniques as color sugar lift and spit bite aquatint, soft ground etching and drypoint.

There are a number of small but fascinating prints by early modern European and American masters on view. In addition to Duchamp's mechanical abstraction, the exhibition includes an emotively colored Wassily Kandinsky woodcut of riders on horseback, a jaunty lithograph of an explosion in a classical interior by Giorgio de Chirico, and a delicate Arthur B. Davies drypoint of a frieze of cubist figures. The photolithographs of Franz Marc's works convey the in-

► MULTIPLES, page 18

Multiples

►Continued from page 17

tense saturated color he used and the delicacy of touch in his winsome watercolor bestiary, but one wishes they were true originals rather than an interesting (and probably rare) example of color reproduction.

As might be expected, a number of works by California artists are on view. They range from Bruce Conner's collage-like surrealist etching made of images from kitschy 19th century prints to Ed Ruscha's lithograph of a starry sky with constellations forming the words "Excuse Me, I Didn't Mean to Interrupt."

Former and current UC Davis faculty members are also well represented, with Robin Hill's rich and beautiful cyanotype of crumpled tape on deep blue grounds and Roy De Forest's raw color lithograph of a red dog and a hanging man standing out.

The exhibition also offers an in-depth look at works by Leonard Baskin and Nathan Oliveira, each represented by several prints. Baskin's woodcuts of male figures and Oliveira's abstracted nocturnes speak to the dark side of the human condition.

Ranging from "Everyman" to "The Angel of Death," Baskin's bold images strip the human figure down to something resembling a nervous system made raw by anxiety and fear. Oliveira's selections from the suite of lithographs titled "To Edgar Allan Poe" are deep upwellings from the subconscious that remind one in their somber richness and imaginative force of Goya's etchings.

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Modern Multiples: Selections from the Fine Arts Collection

Where: Richard L. Nelson Gallery and the Fine Arts Collection, Art Building, Room 124, University of California, Davis.

When: 11-5 p.m. Mondays-Fridays, 2-5 p.m. Sundays, through May 23.

Information: (530) 752-0522.

Clarence Major Paintings, Nina Else Ceramic Sculptures, Richard Downs Monoprints

Where: Exploding Head Gallery, 924 12th St.

When: 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Mondays-Fridays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays, through May 3.

Information: (916) 442-8424.