The Thames and Hudson Manual of Screen Printing by Tim Mara, and: *Screenprinting: History and Process* by Donald Saff and Deli Sacilotto, and: *The New Lithography: The Mylar Method Manifesto* by Mauro Giuffreda (review)

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The Thames and Hudson Manual of Screen Printing. Tim Mara. Thames & Hudson, London, 1979. 175 pp., illus. Paper. £3.95. **Screenprinting: History and Process.** Donald Saff and Deli Sacilotto. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, London, 1979. 158 pp., illus. Paper. £6.50. **The New Lithography: The Mylar Method Manifesto.** Mauro Giuffreda *et al.* Atelier North Star, Grafton, VT, U.S.A., 1980. 32 pp., illus. Paper. Reviewed by **Romas Viesulas***

This Thames and Hudson Manual is a well organized and handsomely designed book, prepared with the well known thoroughness of Thames and Hudson manuals. It is meant for a rather wide scope of users—from practising artists, art teachers and students, to modest levels of craftsmen. Starting with a brief history and introductory information about screen printing, the manual continues with workshop layout, its basic needs, tools and materials necessary for printing, and proceeds to more complex issues of the medium. This is done in great detail and in a good sequential order, beginning with simple manual stencils on screen and ending with highly technical advanced levels of screen printing—photographic stencils, muticolor printing problems and some less common uses of the screen.

Photographic methods, using light-sensitive materials that harden when exposed to ultra-violet light, are of particular interest here, as this segment of the medium is rapidly growing. Research into screen printing in the last two decades has led the process through a highly complex development, resulting in great expansion of the uses of the process, development of the new machinery, meshes, films, and inks. Much of that is described here and is done with remarkable clarity.

Information is abundant. For instance, just to mention some of the photographic methods would comprise quite a long list which would fascinate many average users of screen printing into trying out these methods: found objects, directly exposed to a light sensitised screen; hand-drawn, hand-printed or hand-cut positives on translucent surfaces; images on paraffin-soaked paper; uses of ortho or panchromatic films; autopositive film that results in a direct positive image; Autoscreen, creating automatic halftones; posterization or a photographic means for gradual reduction of the image in a tonal or multicolor printing; and a number of light-sensitive emulsions, directly applicable to the screen, popularly known as 'bichromates' or 'diazos'. Of course, there is a discussion of light sources, color registration, filters and a myriad of other useful information that a printer may need, although some of it may be of marginal interest to some printers: vacuum-forming, flocking (dusting a fresh print with a loose fiber), printing on textiles, ceramics, glass, containers or food. There are chapters on inks and papers, workshop practices and health hazards.

The information in this book is presented in a clear verbal and visual manner, often supplementing photographs with technical drawings. Color reproductions of contemporary prints show a refreshing choice and have detailed technical notes, explaining the process employed in them.

Although the manual deals with a complete scope of the medium, in its overall balance of information it tends to emphasize advanced levels of screen printing and may possibly be of greater interest to those with some knowledge of the medium. In some instances the rudimentary information could use more attention. For instance, the manual explains types and properties of different mesh materials in great detail and offers a thorough chapter on mechanical screen stretching devices—from simple roller bar to pneumatic stretching appliances—but explains screen stretching by hand all too briefly. Photographs here are not very informative and several drawings, so effectively used in other chapters, could have been of good use here. Mechanical devices will be used by some artists and most printers; however, at the beginner's level, only few will have access to more complex equipment and will have to prepare a screen by hand. The proper stretching of mesh is fundamental to the process at any level. It is true that this information seems so basic that many practitioners of the medium may find it redundant to dwell on. But then, people with advanced skills do not need manuals.

There is a good number of photographs, featuring equipment commercially available in the U.K. Besides the technical information and free advertisement for the manufacturers, it may be of limited help to those not having access to products of a particular brand. The manual has a list of suppliers, mostly in the U.K. and a brief, very limited glossary (it includes 'artwork' but does not have 'Autoscreen', as it has 'squeegee pull' but 'squeegee' itself is not on the list). But then, as if to compensate for that it has a most generous, excellent index for easy access to specific information.

All in all, this detailed and assuringly authoritative manual is a very welcome addition to the already existing literature on screen printing. It may prove to be a highly readable book even to those who may not practice, but may want to have information on contemporary screen printing.

Screenprinting: History and Process is an expanded and separately printed part of a larger book by Donald Saff and Deli Sacilotto, *Printmaking: History and Process* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York, 1978). It deals essentially with the same problems of screen printing as the Thames and Hudson manual, offering all necessary information about the medium, starting with rudimentary problems and ending with advanced developments in screen printing. There is a detailed discussion of the frame, screen characteristics, squeegee, and its properties; the usual, well known and some quite sophisticated stencil-making problems—manual and photographic. Papers, including handmade ones, have a separate informative chapter. In addition to all, this book has two new, very useful and detailed chapters, not included in the 1978 book. They are chapters on solvents, their uses and hazards and on screen printing on textiles. The latter would be of particular interest to the users of this manual, as it deals with the subject of fabric printing in a very comprehensive manner. Set-up and materials are explained here in great detail: fabrics (synthetic and natural), printing media (pastes, pigments, dyes), screenmaking, printing tables and registration systems, and other details are discussed. It is a substantial contribution to the field of fabric printing techniques. There is also a brief chapter about care of prints. In general, it is a very useful and informative book.

The Manual is amply illustrated. With full page color reproductions of contemporary screen prints it would be useful to have some technical information about them, as little can be learned by a reader just by seeing the reproductions. Technical drawings in the book, although they are sufficiently informative, in their quality are not up to the level of excellence of information that this book contains, and seems to be 'beginner-ish'. The chapter on history of screen printing is a rather brief historical survey (less than 2000 words) and is rightly called in the book Brief History of Screenprinting. To entitle the entire book as 'history and process', therefore, is a bit presumptuous. The book has a list of suppliers in the U.S.A., bibliography, glossary and a short index.

A translucent drafting film called Mylar (produced by DuPont de Nemours Co., U.S.A.) has been used for a number of years now in printmaking to create a drawn image on it, which is then photographically transferred to a metal plate or stone to produce etching or lithography prints. Eight artists and printers (Mauro Giufreda, Jamie Wyeth, Michael Knigin, Lowell Nesbitt, Ron Kleemann, Merv Corning, Burr Miller and Mel Hunter) have made a joint statement in this 32-page booklet—to declare the validity and importance of Mylar's use in lithography, which they call 'Mylar Method'. There is nothing unusual about the material, its method or about its use. So, why this solemn declaration or 'manifesto', as this publication is called? As is stated by the co-authors, they seem compelled to solemnly defend Mylar's use in printmaking against the doubts of some (Tamarind Institute of Lithography, Albuquerque, N.M., U.S.A.). This joint statement, fervent and sincere as it may be, seems to be of dubious necessity. There is no need in the arts to defend the validity of a certain material or method, as art can be produced by any means. Media or means may prove themselves, or fail in time with use. Whether they generate acceptance, rejection or indifference depends on the force of a creative act and not on declarations or manifesto.

Among some fervent statements and extollment of the Mylar Method, there is some valid information about the characteristics of the material and its potential uses. Portability of this lightweight material, for instance, as compared to other drawing surfaces in lithography—plates or stones—is rightly stressed. There are other rewarding characteristics—flexibility of the medium in making radical changes of the drawn image, stability and assured performance in the transfer of the image to the plate and its predictable development, precise color registration in multicolor printing. Finally, there is a new use suggested for glass, to draw the image on its ground surface, which is then photographically transferred to a plate or stone and printed.

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