

JASKI GALLERY

AMSTERDAM



On the River

etching

2006

45 x 60 cm

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Jan Montyn

While self-taught artist Jan Montyn became well-known for his graphics, he was also a prolific painter and drew a great deal. In 1959 he decided to focus mainly on etchings as he saw this as his best medium of expression. Drawings and sketches were important to him, his sketchbooks functioning almost like notes in a diary. Often his etchings reflect an assimilation or a review of them.

In terms of style Montyn's work defies categorization. He started out working in a very traditional and figurative way but in the early Sixties developed a stylised, often abstract figural language replete with personal signs and symbols. He was attracted to printing not so much as a duplicating technique, but rather as a medium to achieve a personal style and idiom. His first experimental etchings were monochrome, but gradually colour became an essential part of his work. Colour, form, line and content fused into an abstract figural language.

Montyn worked on zinc, deploying a mix of etching techniques including dry point, aquatint and burin. Self-invented was his method of printing several zinc plates on one large plate. Montyn always printed his pictures himself, in limited editions. The main theme of his work is the landscape as a projection of human emotion. Montyn meditates on landscape, as it were. His feeling of unity with the landscape and the earth is reflected in his use of umber pigment which to him symbolised the earth and everything connected with it.

Travels to distant lands, particularly South-East Asia, were a fruitful source of inspiration. Jan Montyn died in 2015 in Amsterdam.