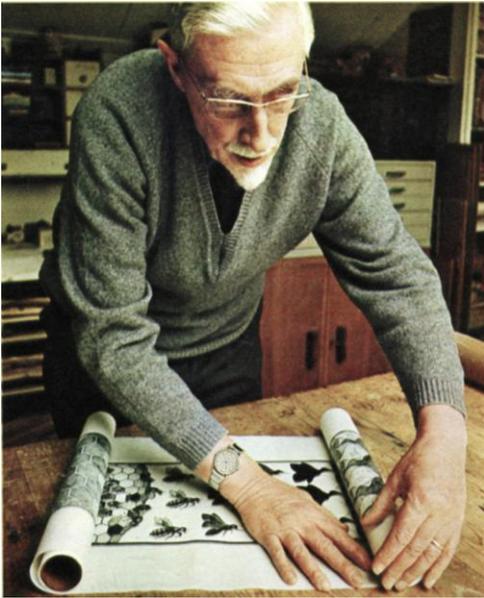


Artists' Market

EXTRAORDINARY ART & FRAMING



M. C. Escher (1898 – 1972)

“Those who wonder,” M. C. Escher once wrote, “discover that this is, in itself a wonder.” And indeed, we are confronted by wonders whenever we enter the world of his extraordinary artwork. His pictures frequently depict things that are at once ordinary and yet impossible to find in our everyday experiences. In Escher’s universe, creatures fit seamlessly together like a puzzle extending into infinity and space itself can be turned inside out to be seen from many directions simultaneously. Today, his artwork is some of the most recognizable in the world, and his original prints are among the most sought-after and valuable treasures in the art world.

Maurits Cornelis Escher was born in The Netherlands in 1898, the youngest son of an engineer. He was an indifferent student who especially disliked mathematics and barely graduated from high school. At the urging of his parents he pursued studies in architecture, but he soon gravitated to the arts and devoted the rest of his life to making lithographs and woodcuts. “I am a printmaker, heart and soul,” he said.

Escher moved to Italy as a young man and married Jetta Umiker, the Swiss daughter of an aristocrat. He had his first one-man shows in both Italy and Holland in 1924, and the Gemeentemuseum, the state museum of Holland, purchased 27 of his prints in 1933. The next year Escher won a prize for printmaking in Chicago and the Art Institute of Chicago became the first American museum to purchase his work. Escher returned to Holland in 1941 and focused on his passion for creating interlocking patterns of creatures inspired by Islamic tile designs he had seen at the 14th century Alhambra Palace in Spain. In 1961 the magazine *Scientific American* featured an Escher design on the cover, and that article about his artwork reached a wide audience of scientists, mathematicians, and other academics. A completely different kind of popularity was achieved in the late 1960’s when Escher’s extraordinary images appeared on day-glow posters in the avant-garde community, on posters in college rooms, and even on record album covers. Although for much of his life Escher worked in relative isolation in his home print-making studio, by the end of his life he had achieved international fame and prices for his original work sky-rocketed along with sale of books and reproductions of his prints. Escher created his last print, the masterpiece ‘Ringsnakes,’ in 1969, and died on March 27, 1972.

After his death Escher’s popularity continued to grow, and in 1998 a museum devoted to his work opened in the Hague. That same year a record-breaking exhibit of Escher’s art was featured at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. In 2003 Artists’ Market was instrumental in acquiring one of the largest collections of Escher’s work for a new museum, ‘Herakleidon: Experience in Visual Arts’ in Athens Greece.

Artists’ Market gallerist Jeffrey Price explains his own fascination with Escher’s art: “There is always more to Escher’s pictures than first meets the eye. His is an artist’s universe, one where our rational ideas may be suspended and yet logic prevails. Escher’s vision enables us to see the invisible patterns of nature and catch a glimpse of wonders that exist just beyond our grasp.”

