

The Kenneth E. Tyler Collection Technique in Focus: Nancy Graves' *Synecdoche*

This Technique in Focus we're sharing behind the scenes insight from 'Workshop: The Kenneth Tyler Collection' about Nancy Graves' first foray into intaglio printing at Tyler Graphics in 1977, where she produced the *Synecdoche* series.

National Gallery Staff
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Nancy Graves colouring her intaglio print edition 'Muin' with oil stick crayon, Tyler Graphics Ltd. artist's studio, Bedford Village, New York, July 1977. Photographer: Kenneth Tyler

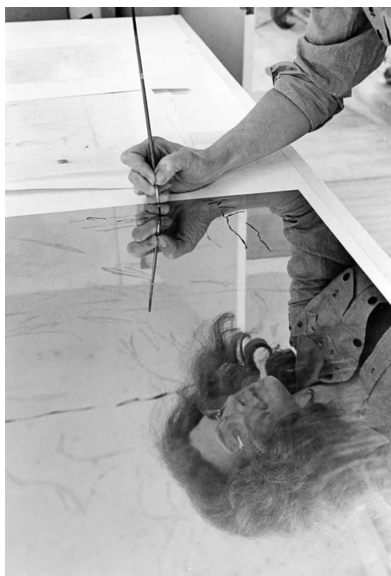
Already a well-established sculptor and painter, and having worked in lithography and screenprint at other print workshops, intaglio was a new technique for the artist and one to which she would later return. The willingness of Tyler and his team to experiment appealed to Graves. Of Tyler Graves said, 'The key to Ken is that he likes a challenge. When he knows what you want, he'll go out and climb the mountain for you.'^{1,2}

Reflecting on the processes involved in the creation of the six works in the *Synecdoche* series, Graves remarked, 'Aquatint, drypoint, and engraving are compatible with the

etching process and I think served to make these prints richer spatially. The pastel added yet another visual plane to the prints; I added it by hand so that even though the prints were multiples, each has a colored gesture unlike, but complementary to, the abstraction in the print.³



Nancy Graves drawing on 'Ngetal' proof at Tyler Graphics Ltd., Bedford Village, New York, 1977, gift of Kenneth Tyler 2002, photographer: Kenneth Tyler



Nancy Graves working on a copper plate for one of her intaglio prints, Tyler Graphics Ltd. artist's studio, Bedford Village, New York, 1977. Photographer: Barbara Jean Crutchfield



Nancy Graves and Kenneth Tyler, Tyler Graphics Ltd. artist's studio, Bedford Village, New York, 1977. Photographer: Lindsay Green. Nancy

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Nancy Graves, *Calibrate*, 1981, National Gallery of Australia, Kamberri/Canberra, Purchased 1985.
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The project also marked a first for Rodney Konopaki, who had recently joined the TGL team as head of the etching department. He remembers Graves as a keen collaborator:

‘The first project that I was completely in charge of was with Nancy Graves and we started with the beautiful and delicate print, *Saille*. Nancy’s prints will always be special to me, as they are the first ones where I was actually doing what I was going to do into the future. It was on this project that I began to learn how to do it. Nancy had made a few prints prior to this, her first visit to TGL and we were really learning together. She was easy going and a sweetheart to work with and there was no one better to collaborate with as I was starting out.’⁴



Nancy Graves mixes inks while Rodney Konopaki wipes copper intaglio plate in preparation for printing an impression, Tyler Graphics Ltd. workshop, Bedford Village, New York, 1977. Photographer: Douglas Abdelnour.



Rodney Konopaki comparing with Nancy Graves one of her newly printed proofs to the intaglioplate, Tyler Graphics Ltd. workshop, Bedford Village, New York, 1977. Photographer: Barbara Jean Crutchfield.

1. Kenneth Tyler and cited in Pat Gilmour (ed), *Innovation in collaborative printmaking: Kenneth Tyler 1963–1992*, Yokohoma Museum of Art, Yokohoma, Japan, 1992, p 56.
2. Emilie Owens, ‘Nancy Graves’ in *Workshop: The Kenneth Tyler Collection*, National Gallery of Australia, 2015, p.93.
3. Nancy Graves, cited in Thomas Pradon, *Nancy Graves: Excavations in print, a catalogue raisonnées*, Harry N Abrams Inc, New York, 1996, p. 19. (Cited in *Workshop*, 2015, p.93.)
4. Rodney Konopaki , interview by Emilie Owens in *Workshop*, 2015, pp.272-273