

## Italo Scanga 1932-2001

"I hate the idea of making universal statements," Italo Scanga said in 1981 when he made a group of etchings at Crown Point Press. "I am not concerned with space and light, because I don't know about those things. I am concerned with stories and people, biographies and history. We only have the common denominator, which is us. Perhaps from all the world's craziness, from the sense of anxiety and violence, a positive aspect could come out of it."

Italo Scanga died of a heart attack on July 27 in his studio in Pacific Beach, California. Everyone who knew him remembers his positive aspect to life. He was born in Calabria, Italy, and came to America when he was fifteen years old, after surviving hardship and poverty in World War II. His father was a trackman on the railroad, and Italo worked for five years in Detroit in an automobile assembly plant, then joined the U. S. Army. After serving, he used the G. I. Bill to attend Michigan State University and study sculpture. "I always wanted to be an artist; I couldn't do anything else," he said.

He is known for his assemblage work in sculpture, using found objects such as religious figurines, tree branches or musical instruments which he altered with hand-carving and bright-colored paint, and/or augmented with hand-made elements of glass or ceramic. He had one person shows at the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Oakland Museum, among others. He was also a legendary teacher, at first at the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia, and for the last twenty-five years at the University of California at San Diego.

Nancy Anello, Scanga's printer at Crown Point, remembers that he would cook lunches for everybody on the hot plate that we were using to keep the ink warm. "We'd be working away and wafting across our noses would come the aroma of roasting peppers," she wrote to me. "There would be fresh mozzarella, Italian bread, and red wine. The time spent eating didn't seem to be a break in the art process but rather an extension of it. With Italo, it felt like the making of art was not at all a separate process, but an inherent part of his way of life."

A scholarship fund has been established in his name at the University of California, San Diego. —KB



Italo Scanga, *Visiting with John Muir*, 1981. Color hard ground etching with aquatint. 42 x 30", edition 25.

### In the Crown Point Gallery:

**Brad Brown:** *Textbook Comic Devices*, **Gay Outlaw:** *Trial Patterns*,

**Laurie Reid:** *Fragile Geometry*, September 13 - November 10, 2001

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Visit **Crown Point** at the 11th annual International Fine Print Dealers Association fair, November 1 - 4, at the Seventh Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 67th St., Booth A16. Opening night is October 31.

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