

LILIANA PORTER

**PRINT PUBLISHERS
SPOTLIGHT:
Graphic Studio featuring
Allan McCollum**

Barbara Krakow Gallery
10 Newbury Street
Boston

Through April 9

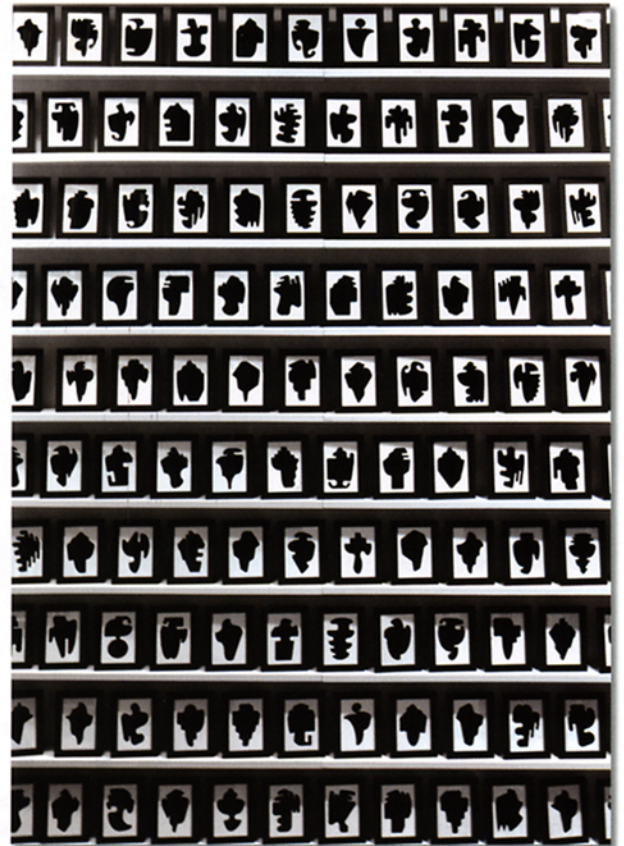
One gallery, two exhibits. Through April 9, Newbury Street's Barbara Krakow Gallery devotes its main room to installations and works on paper by Liliana Porter, while another space is dedicated to its Print Publishers Spotlight: Graphic Studio exhibition featuring puzzle piece-like monotypes and sculptures by Allan McCollum.

Some found object artists integrate their finds in ways that make them turn into something new, bending to the artist's will. Liliana Porter's found objects take over; they have ambition. Knowing of her ardor for found objects, Porter has had friends bring her items thinking "Oh, Liliana will love this for her next piece!" but despite these contributors' good intentions, Porter could never force an object into a role in her assemblage-heavy work.

This established Argentinean artist chooses objects for particular aesthetic or referential value and places them in a minimal and deliberate manner. So successfully does she express the emergent concept or wordplay that it appears she has done nothing at all - that the objects decided where they ended up, that they were made to be just where they are. In "To Do That," a small toy figure with a pickax attached to one large paper sheet leaves behind him a large tear - where he has presumably quarried through his backdrop. "Even her paintings are installation pieces,"

said gallery director Andrew Witkin. Porter's works on paper are not so much "on" paper as interactions with paper. This visual play interacts with the viewer's space, making for the kind of artistic world one might expect to find down the rabbit hole in Alice's Wonderland.

One looks like an elephant. One looks like a Celtic warrior with a ponytail and rounded shield in the crook of his arm. Allan McCollum's amorphous "shapes" take on purposeful contours the way clouds or inkblots take on roughhewn forms to the imaginative eye. McCollum has imagined many different "shapes," and even combines them on the computer to create new forms. How many of these figures could McCollum have possibly come up with? How about over 31 billion? This is the figure the artist calculated when trying to figure out the number of combinations his creations could take on. He calls this number "enough for every person in the world to have his own shape" - with some to spare - even if the



population explodes exponentially over the next 50 years.

144 Shapes by Allan McCollum

Though it is key that McCollum, not a computer, created the initial shapes, the artist's creative process has some interesting scientific and technological implications. Will human cloning ever take place? Even if exact genetic equals ever exist, one thing is for certain: each can have his own unique McCollum shape. McCollum fleshes out his designs in a number of fashions in the prints (144 4x6 monotypes appear at Barbara Krakow) and wooden sculptures that are the focus of this show.

Words and an image or two do these artists little justice. The conceptual inventions of Liliana Porter and Allan McCollum are an aesthetic and cerebral feast not to be missed during a walk down Newbury Street this spring.

Sarah E. Fagan



To Do That (detail) by Liliana Porter

BARBARA

KRAKOW GALLERY