

Press release
Zurich, July 2016

Bryan Cyril Thurston – WHO CAN TURN SKIES BACK AND BEGIN AGAIN

17 August – 16 October 2016

Opening: Tuesday, 16 August 2016, at 6 p.m.

*This exhibition is being held by the Department of Prints and Drawings in acknowledgment of the generous gift received from architect and artist Bryan Cyril Thurston (*1933). Set alongside the strictly neo-classical architecture of Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841), Thurston's multi-faceted and lyrical works provide a fascinating contrast. In addition to his personal sketchbooks and architectural plans for real and imaginary building, the presentation also includes watercolours, collages and etchings from our own collection.*

In an era of ever increasing urban sprawl, the question of architectural quality takes on an added urgency. Today, when the stars of the architectural scene are creating sculptural landmarks, when the boundaries of architecture are being pushed to the limit, and when building itself is often far removed from its former emphasis on materials and craftsmanship, sustainable concepts have become anything but obsolete. For without the vitality of a compelling vision, architectural ideas amount to little more than pencil marks on tracing paper. Can the designs live up to reality?

One who embarked on a quest to find answers to these burning issues is Bryan Cyril Thurston (*1933). This British-born architect has been living in Switzerland since 1955. After training as a master architect under Eduard Neuenchwander, Thurston went freelance in the 1970s and undertook numerous projects, including the former School of Social Services on Waffenzplatz in Zurich and the Rütli ZH Vocational College, as well as housing and places of worship. Thurston's tendency to think out of the box continues to this day, as evidenced by his many innovative designs ranging from the completion of Corbusier's planned church in Firminy to a cabin for Obama and even an urban masterplan for the Swiss town of Biasca. His alternative proposals for existing or already approved buildings, such as the Bundeshaus in Bern or the Kunsthaus Zürich extension, are a frequent source of controversy.

Thurston's artistic output is as widely varied as his architectural oeuvre. Inspired by the famous British painter and printmaker Stanley William Hayter (1901-1988) and his legendary Paris studio ATELIER 17, Thurston has created countless works on paper. Following in the footsteps of the master artist he admires, Thurston's prints are a constant exploration of new and experimental forms of expression. Techniques are combined, alienated and enhanced. Throughout his life, this impassioned printmaker has continued to pursue the delicate aspects of watercolours, collages and plans as well. All of his works are permeated by music, with a divinely lyrical touch. It is no coincidence that the title he has chosen for his exhibition is taken from the libretto of *Peter Grimes* by the English composer Benjamin Britten (1913-1976).

For further information and visual material, please contact:
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The Department of Prints and Drawings is part of the ETH Library.