

## Catching up with Rick Finn



Rick Finn hails from northern Ohio and studied at The Cleveland Institute of Art and the Toledo Museum of Art. Fortunately, he eventually made his way to Cincinnati where he has become an active member of the art community and Tiger Lily Press. Known for his mastery of complex printmaking processes, Rick reflects on his experiences with Tiger Lily...

“I first encountered Tiger Lily Press in 1993. I moved to Cincinnati in 1988 and hadn’t made a print since I lived here so I was anxious to get back into it. I remember seeing a small ad in a local paper advertising the studio and I quickly joined. At that time, the studio was located in Mt. Adams (in the Mt. Adams Elementary School building owned by the Art Academy of Cincinnati) and occupied one large room. Unfortunately, I didn’t have much time to work in the studio and eventually drifted away after just one year. Ten years later, I decided to rejoin TLP but it was nowhere to be found...no phone number, address or website. I assumed it had closed. As I was starting my search to set up my own studio, I ran into Barb Young who was a TLP member back in the 90’s. Luckily she informed me TLP was still open and she just happened to have current director Elaine Zumeta’s phone number on her!

I joined again in 2004 after meeting with Elaine at the studio and getting a tour. I hadn’t been a member for very long when I attended my first annual members meeting. Elaine, Theresa Kuhr and Cara Bardes were the directors at the time and during that first meeting Cara announced she was leaving. Shortly after that, Elaine and Theresa asked me if I would like to be a co-director with them.

Of course, as a brand new member, I was flattered. Then Elaine told me they were only asking me because they needed a man around the studio to do all the heavy work!

It was a joke, but it set the fun tone for the years ahead working alongside Theresa and Elaine.

Initially most of my duties were studio related, keeping supplies stocked and organized as well as doing Saturday Open Studio every other week. One of my goals was to help TLP have more of a presence online so others could find the studio more easily than I did. In 2007, member Carla Trujillo set up a blog for TLP and I took over those duties after her initial post. It was a great way to get studio and member news out to members with my almost weekly postings. In 2008, I worked with Fred Martens of Martens Art to update the original one page website and, in 2010 I set up the TLP Facebook page. I ran that page for several years before passing the torch to several other members.

I somehow became the unofficial photographer during my tenure. I tried to attend every TLP event with my trusty (real) camera. Last year, prior to the TLP 40th anniversary exhibition, I finally organized all of those photos. They ended up on multiple discs and were handed off to TLP for the archives. I believe there were somewhere around 1500 photos total.

Prior to the 2011 move to the Schoolhouse building at Dunham, I learned that we would not be allowed to have nitric acid for etching there. Since I, and a few other members, were etchers this was going to be a problem if we couldn't continue etching. I quickly researched the safer saline-sulfate etch, bought supplies and experimented with it one weekend. It worked better than I expected and I was able to give a one day demo on the process before it was fully adopted in the new space.

One of the most fun (and challenging) projects I worked on was being the coordinator of two of the TLP fundraiser calendars, 2007 and 2009. I distinctly recall hand tearing every individual sheet of paper for both years! Luckily the process has been streamlined since those days.

I served one year on the board in 2013, and left that position in the beginning of 2014. The summer of 2014 was the year I finally was able to get my own studio space. I set up home at Brazee Street Studios and began to purchase a press and other equipment.

My involvement with TLP had dwindled a bit with my new studio space, but in 2015/16 I was asked to be the Working Artist. I was happy to have the opportunity and decided to make time to try new processes. One of those new processes was teaching myself how to create suminagashi marbled paper. During my residency, I did a workshop on suminagashi as well as a demo on mokuhanga woodblock printing.

I left my Brazee Street studio space in 2018 and opted to move all of my equipment into my two bedroom apartment. That meant a major downsizing at home before the move so I would have room for everything. Best decision I have made in years: no more driving somewhere to make a print!

Even though I have generally focused on etching for years, this past year or so I've been teaching myself alternative photo etching techniques. Polymer photogravure and gum bichromate printing have been in the forefront of my practice. I'm not "there" yet but making slow progress in my skills and understanding of these techniques.

Without the resources of TLP and its members, it wouldn't have been possible for me to re-ignite my passion for printmaking. It's heartening to know that Tiger Lily Press has endured for over 40 years and will continue to survive thanks to a dedicated group of local printmakers.

Even though my current involvement with TLP is minimal, I still occasionally participate in member print shows, the annual print sale and bi-annual calendar fundraising event. One thing for sure is that I've met an amazing group of printmakers over the years, many of whom will remain lifelong friends."

*November, 2020*  
*Theresa Gates-Kuhr*