

An aerial photograph of a desert landscape, showing a winding road and rocky terrain. The word "PAPER" is overlaid in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters at the top of the image.

PAPER

SOUTHWEST

SANDY BLEIFER

PAPER: SOUTHWEST

The Forces of Nature

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PAPER: Southwest
The Forces of Nature

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PAPER: Southwest
The Forces of Nature

The several Southwest series express the recognition that the landscape of various regions embody infinite combinations of basic rock formations and colorations and, as such, share the nature of the printed multiple as individualized by printing and after-treatments. Subjecting the prints to the forces of nature and chemical and mechanical degradation mimics the forces of nature on the landscape.

Book Design and Editing by Debbie Zeitman

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SOUTHWEST

Constructed Silkscreens

During several camping trips to parts of the American Southwest, I observed that in a given locale there are pervasive similarities of colors, shapes, and textures due to common geological origins, such as the basic common soil type and the landscape being subjected to localized natural forces that affect its appearance (wind, water, chemicals, temperature, and the movement of the earth's crust). The silkscreen medium lends itself to expressing the commonalities of a landscape by multiple printings through the same screen using the same colors. I express this common matrix by printing the horizontal strata of the landscape using the "split fountain" technique.

But within a given region there is a range of coloration, surface textures, and shapes. I employed art processes to the basic printed image, comparable to those that act on the landscape, in order to produce variables within multiples: crushing and wrinkling the paper like mountain ranges are subjected to tectonic forces, soaking the paper and exposing it to the sun for several months mimicking the action of the elements on landscapes. By dripping chemicals, such as paint thinner and acetone, I simulate how lime leaches out to dissolve rock and discolor it. In scrubbing these chemicals into the ink, I expose under layers. My scraping and gouging the surface and using a rotary sander replicates how wind drives sand across rock. Finally, marking the prints with charcoal and chalk, I utilize the same natural materials that mark the landscape.

Once the printed page has undergone the process of individualization, further variation is achieved by cutting, tearing, layering, and composing results in a range of unique works.

SANDY BLEIFER

Lake Powell I

December 1982

Edition: 12

Paper: Stonehenge

Among the most striking elements at Lake Powell are the dark lines dripping down the face of the rock resembling abstract paintings. Moisture and rain bring forward chemicals deep within the rock, and wind-driven sand wears away the surface to expose under layers. I replicated the exposure of those deeper layers and the leaching of chemicals by printing layer upon layer of colors and bringing them to the surface of the print via abrasion (sanding) and chemical treatments (acetone/paint thinner). By crushing the papers before attacking them with these treatments, the projections and folds became more vulnerable to the effects of these processes representing how the most exposed areas of a landscape are impacted.

This series includes a wide range of compositions because at Lake Powell there are several different types of formations reflecting the different stages of erosion. Freely tearing and reassembling the printed and treated sheets of paper was more like garment construction and sculpture than the production of multiples.

The diagonal edges as well as the straight sides of the end pages provide perspective clues for a 3-dimensional reading of the shapes and as a foil to the torn edges. There is a deckle edge toward the bottom of every composition to indicate where the water line meets the rock. This establishes the ground line that must be parallel to the floor when mounting the piece.



Lake Powell I, 1/12
74" W x 34-1/2" H



Lake Powell I, 2/12

90" W x 20" H



Lake Powell I, 3/12
76-1/2" W x 29-1/2" H



Lake Powell I, 4/12
72-1/2" W x 29-1/2" H



Lake Powell I, 5/12
76" W x 30-1/2" H



Lake Powell I, 6/12
70" W x 29" H



Lake Powell I, 7/12

70" W x 24-1/2" H



Lake Powell I, 8/12

62" W x 26" H



Lake Powell I, 9/12
62" W x 33" H



Lake Powell I, 10/12
61" W x 24" H



Lake Powell I, 11/12
51-1/4" W x 24-1/2" H



Lake Powell I, 12/12
52-1/4" W x 25-1/2" H

Powell II

April 1983

Edition: 14

Paper: English Exeter 100% rag, buffered, neutral ph

The sources of imagery for Powell II represent an older section of Lake Powell where the water table is much lower than it once was as evidenced by a wide band of lighter colors above the current water line. I expressed the unique coloration of this area in the printed "split fountain" blend of inks. To force the ink to be printed unevenly, I "bruised" the surface of the paper with scotch tape before printing. Aging the prints on the roof of my garage where they were subject to heavy rains and sun for 3 months further degraded them. While still wet, they were scraped with florists' pin holders to rough up the surface and produce horizontal striations. These pieces, despite the destructive techniques visited on them, are testimony to the strength and durability of paper, and by implication, to the resilience of mankind.

This edition was torn and assembled to conform to consistent outer dimensions. Like Lake Powell I, there is a lower deckle edge representing the water line and the pieces should be hung with this lower edge parallel to the floor.



Powell II, 1/14
60" W x 30" H



Powell II, 2/14
60" W x 30" H



Powell II, 3/14
60" W x 30" H



Powell II, 4/14
60" W x 30" H



Powell II, 5/14
60" W x 30" H



Powell II, 6/14

60" W x 30" H



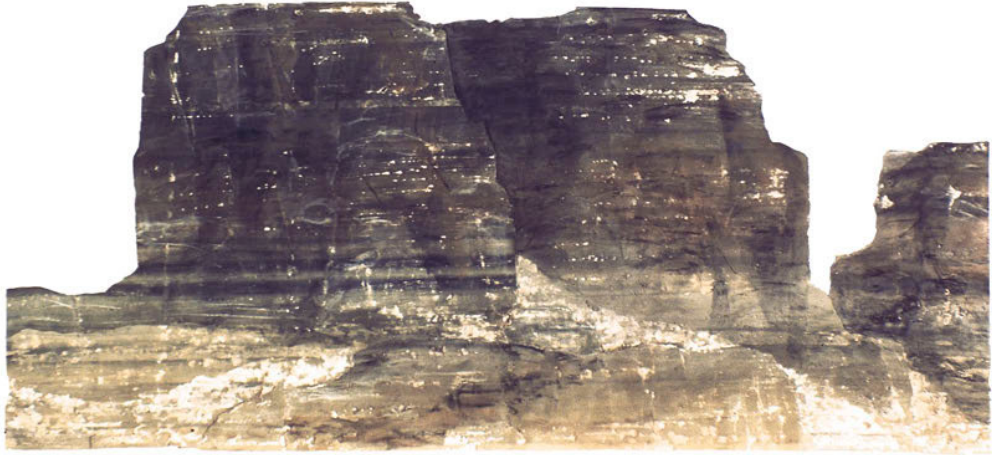
Powell II, 7/14
60" W x 30" H



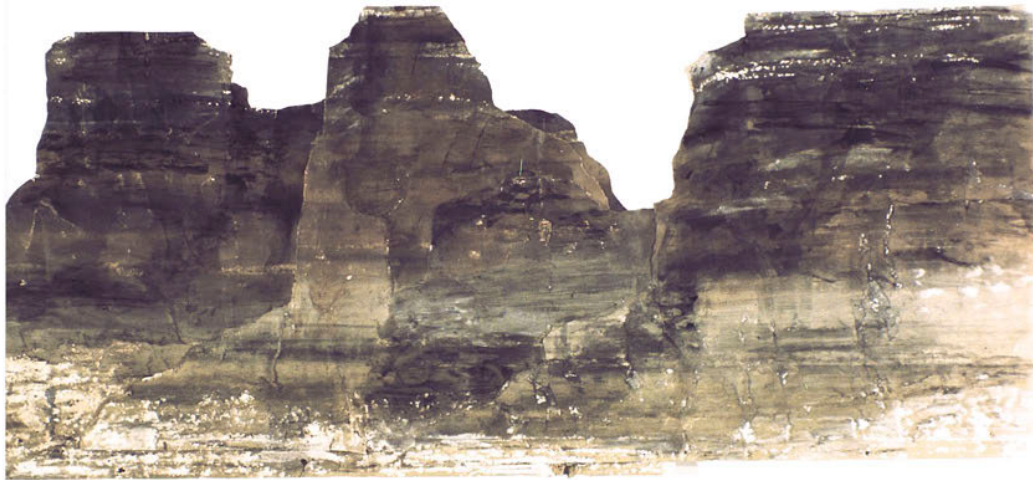
Powell II, 8/14
60" W x 30" H



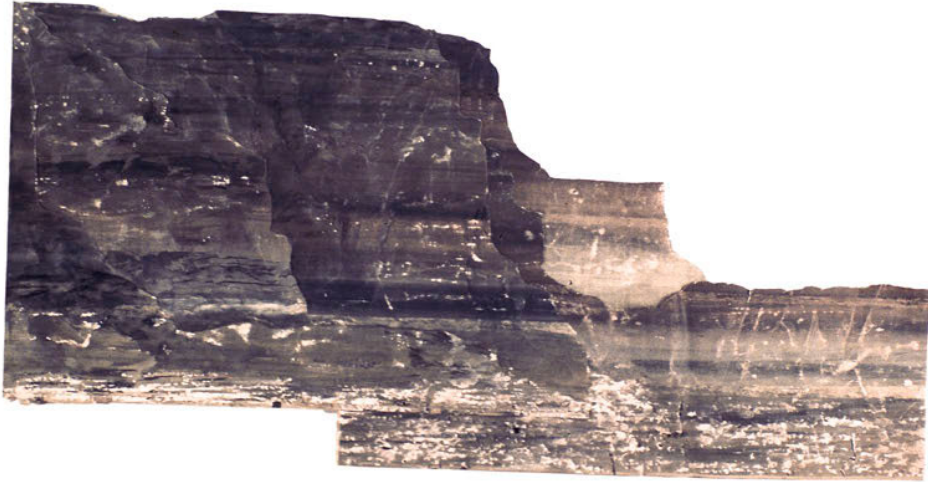
Powell II, 9/14
60" W x 30" H



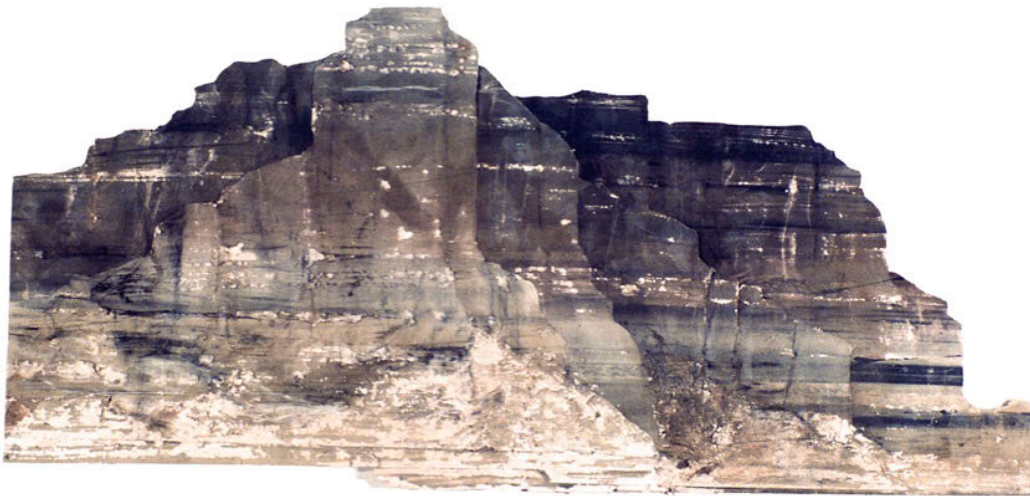
Powell II, 10/14
60" W x 30" H



Powell II, 11/14
60" W x 30" H



Powell II, 12/14
60" W x 30" H



Powell II, 13/14
60" W x 30" H



Powell II, 14/14
60" W x 30" H

Powell Fragments

February 1984

Edition: 16

Paper: English Exeter 100% rag, buffered, neutral ph

Capitalizing on the paper's demonstrated strength, this edition was produced using the leftover papers from Powell II and utilized many of the techniques of that series. Some of the papers were treated/distressed, left unprinted, and then incorporated into the finished compositions as counterpoints to the printed pages thereby setting up a comparison between paper and landscape.

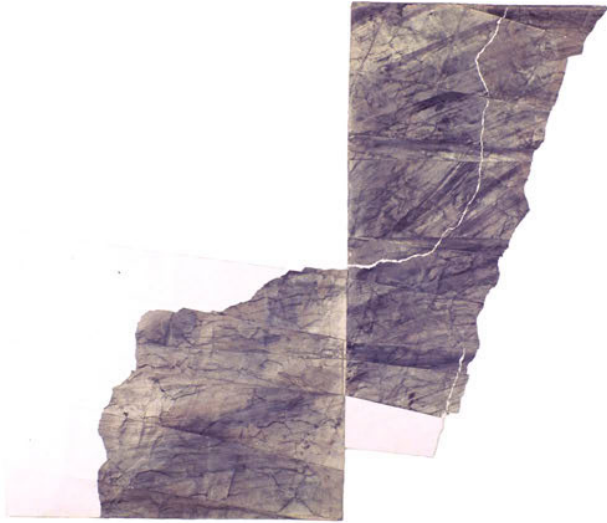
Much of ancient art and artifacts come to us in fragmentary condition, so it is commonly understood that the fragment is only part of and signifier for a larger whole. Rather than being recognizable as landscapes these fragments stand alone as expressing the surface beauty and inherent strength of the Southwestern landscape. There are 2 fragments in each piece, joined at the center, suggesting that the landscape formation extends beyond the edges in either direction.



Powell Fragments, 1/16
43" W x 40" H



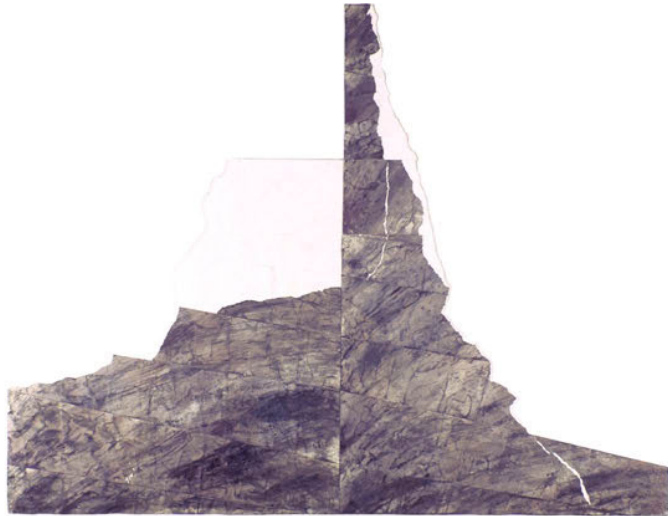
Powell Fragments, 2/16
52" W x 40" H



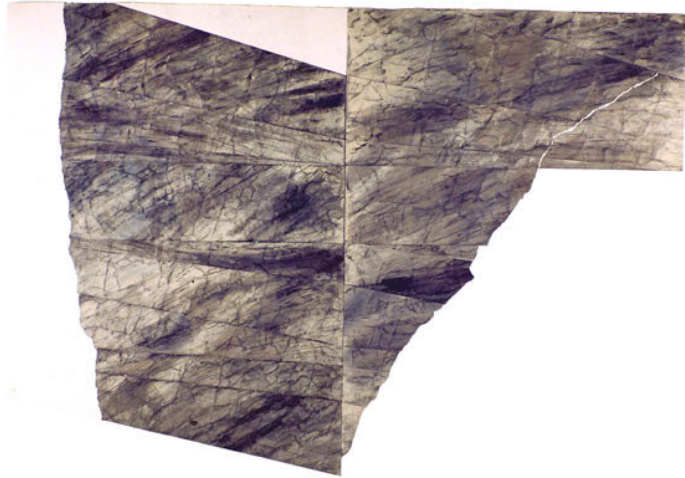
Powell Fragments, 3/16
46" W x 40" H



Powell Fragments, 4/16
52" W x 40" H



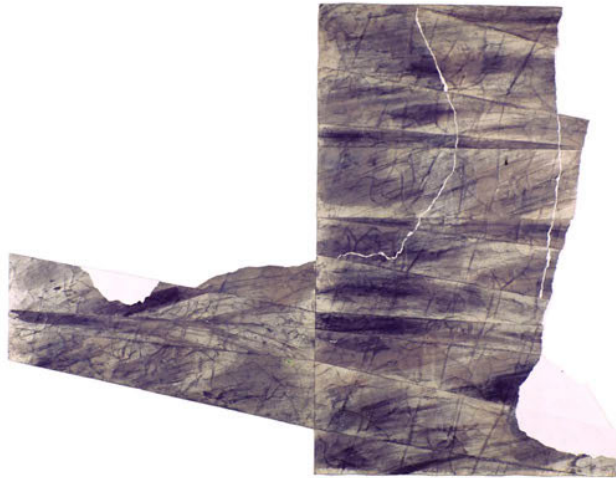
Powell Fragments, 5/16
50" W x 40" H



Powell Fragments, 6/16
52" W x 36" H



Powell Fragments, 7/16
42" W x 40" H



Powell Fragments, 8/16
52" W x 40" H



Powell Fragments, 9/16
52" W x 40" H



Powell Fragments, 10/16
50" W x 36" H



Powell Fragments, 11/16
35" W x 40" H



Powell Fragments, 12/16
52" W x 40" H



Powell Fragments, 13/16
36" W x 40" H



Powell Fragments, 14/16
36" W x 39" H



Powell Fragments, 15/16
46-1/2" W x 40" H



Powell Fragments, 16/16
48-1/2" W x 40" H

Canyon De Chelley

February 1980

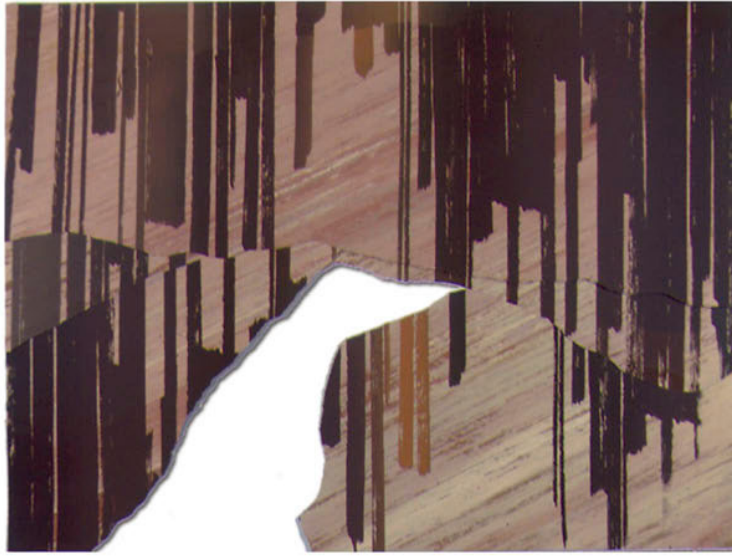
Edition: 22

Paper: 80# 100% rag Art Print

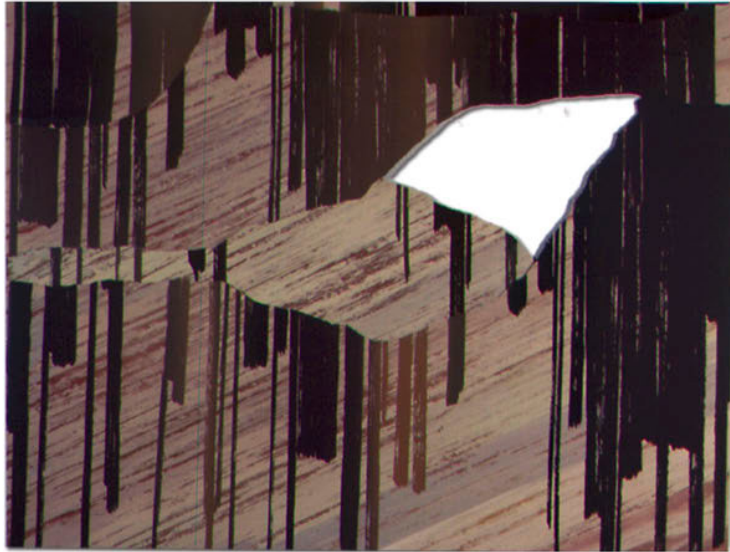
The rock formation and geological processes evident at Canyon de Chelley are quite similar to those at Lake Powell: the leaching of lime in long stripes and the way the limestone rock face flakes off in arches. The painterly drips were incorporated into the printing process in this series. The print screen and template were larger than the paper, making it possible to shift the printing position of each piece of paper. The shapes of the tears and the layering of prints resemble the flaking off of the limestone rock surfaces. Each print in the edition is different due to the way pieces were torn and reassembled, and each frames a portion out of endless compositional possibilities within the landscape. 40 sheets of paper were printed on both sides, torn, and reassembled into 22 final compositions. Almost all torn portions were recycled among other prints in the edition just as the landscape itself contains all its component parts. In addition to the common printed matrix and common outer dimensions of the edition, each print has some portion of open area.



Canyon De Chelly, 1/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H



Canyon De Chelley, 2/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H

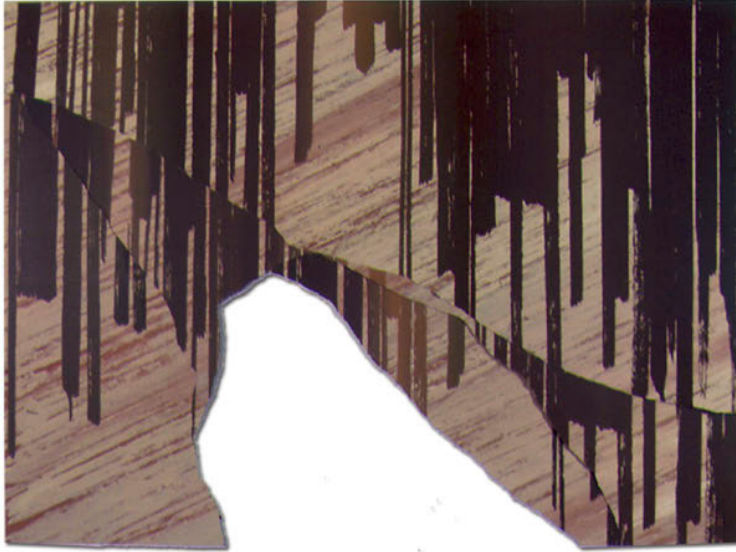


Canyon De Chelley, 3/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H

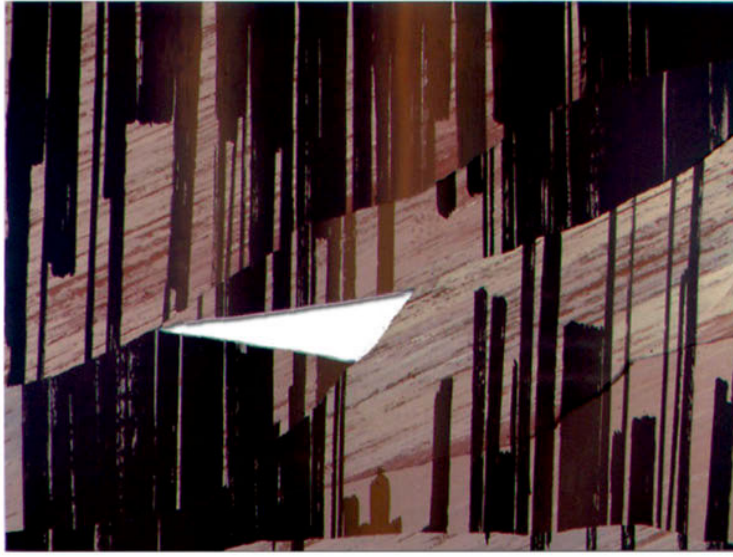


Canyon De Chelley, 4/22

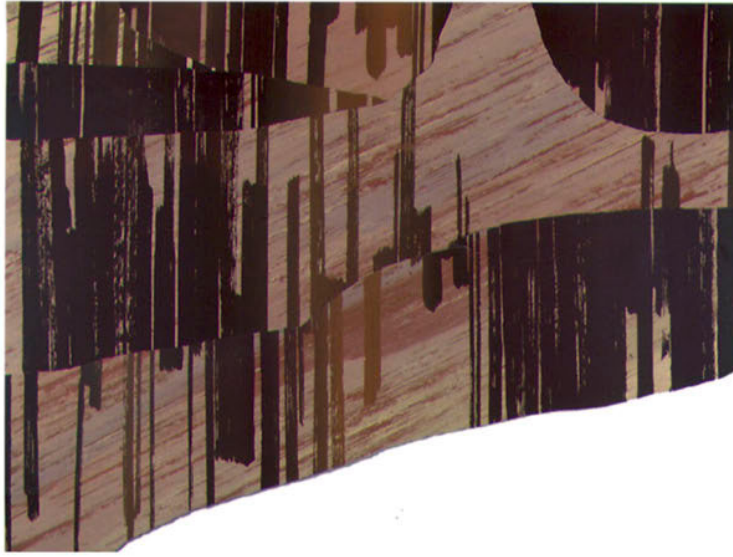
39"W x 28-1/2"H



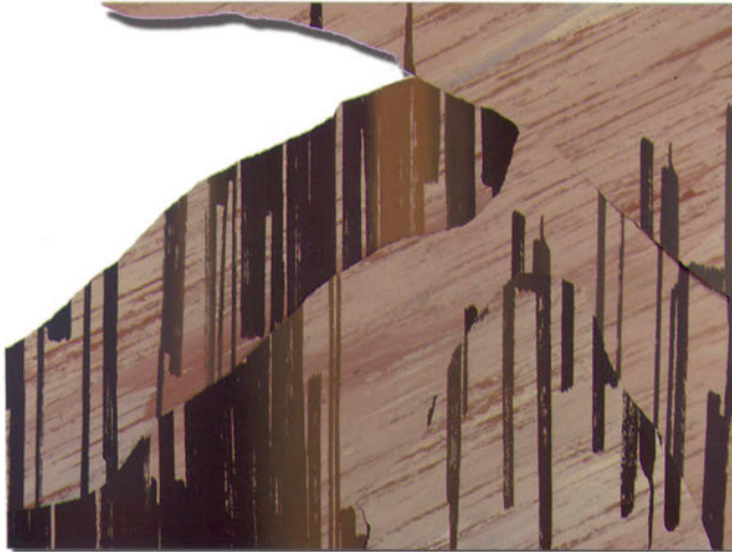
Canyon De Chelley, 5/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H



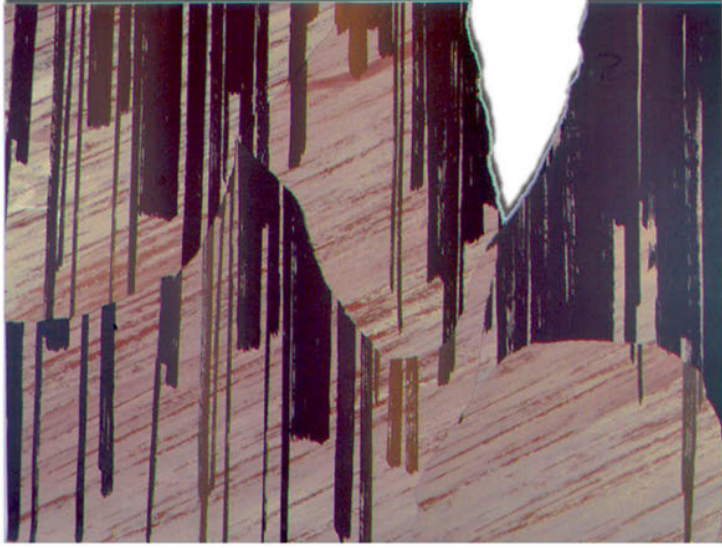
Canyon De Chelley, 6/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H



Canyon De Chelley, 7/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H

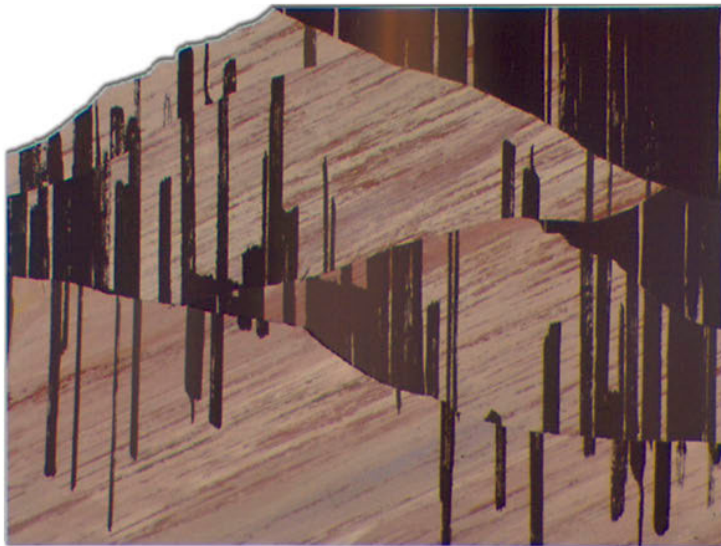


Canyon De Chelley, 8/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H

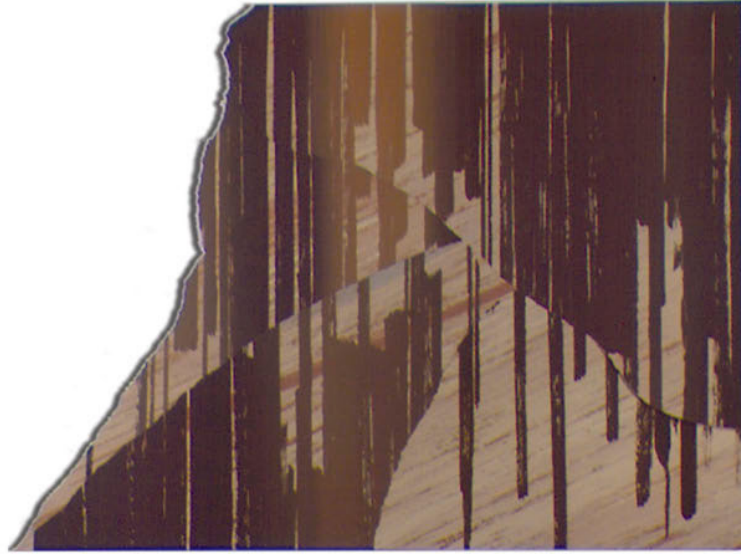


Canyon De Chelley, 9/22

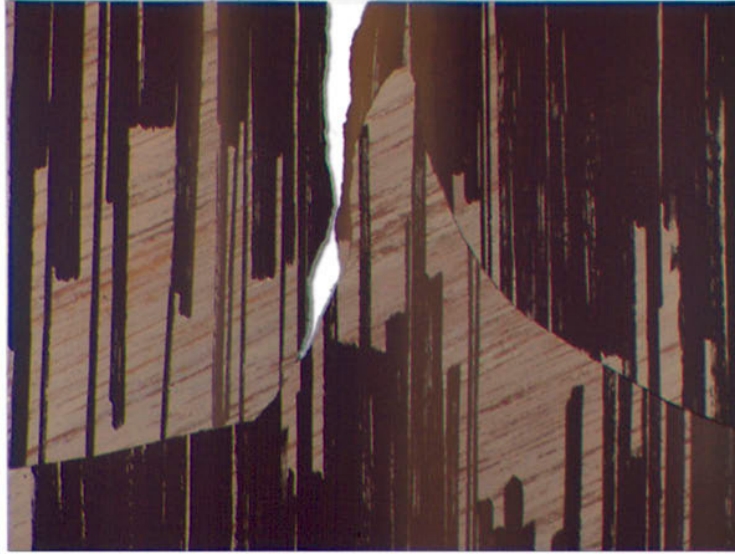
39"W x 28-1/2"H



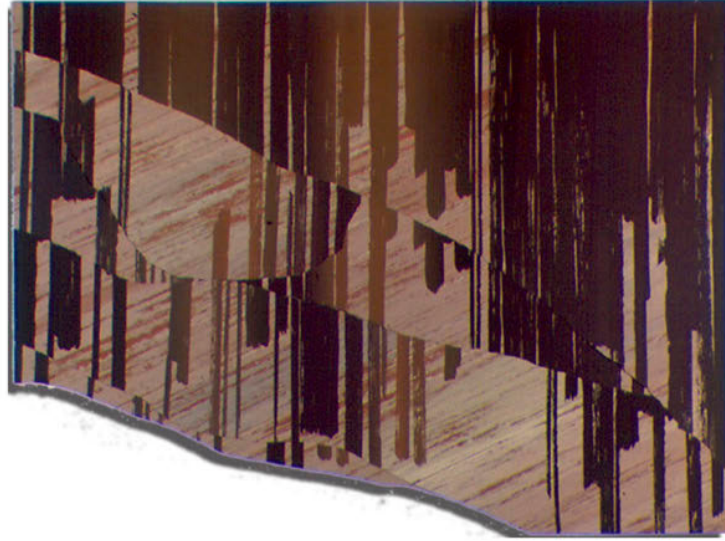
Canyon De Chelley, 10/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H



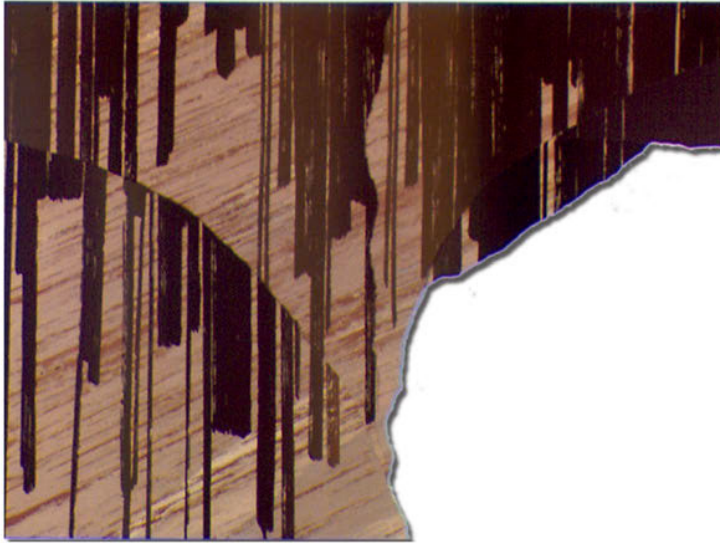
Canyon De Chelley, 11/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H



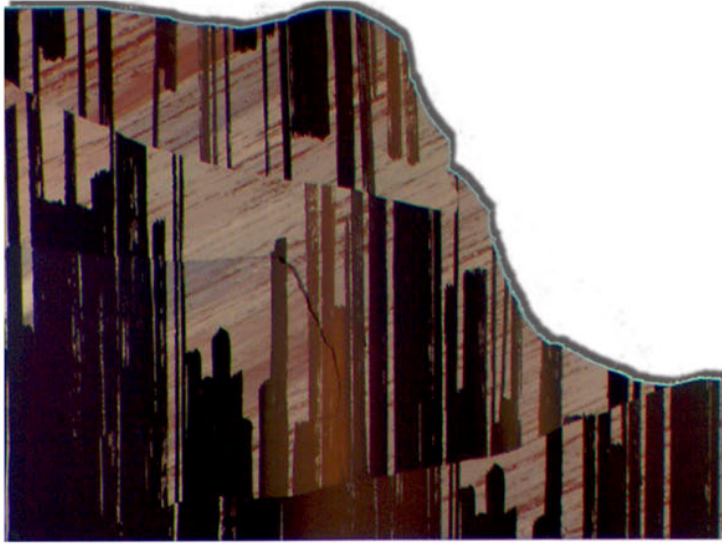
Canyon De Chelley, 12/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H



Canyon De Chelley, 13/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H



Canyon De Chelley, 14/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H

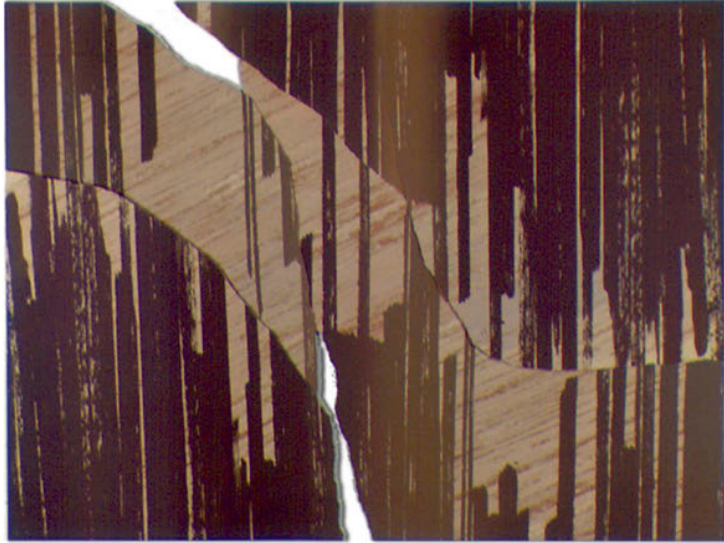


Canyon De Chelley, 15/22

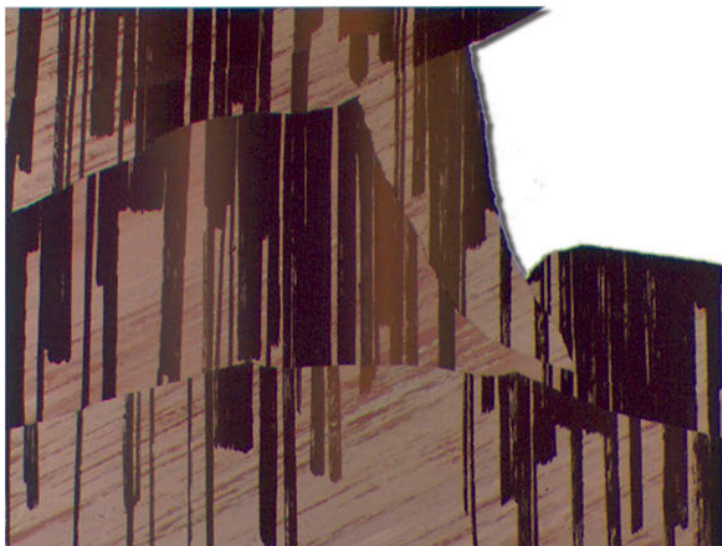
39"W x 28-1/2"H



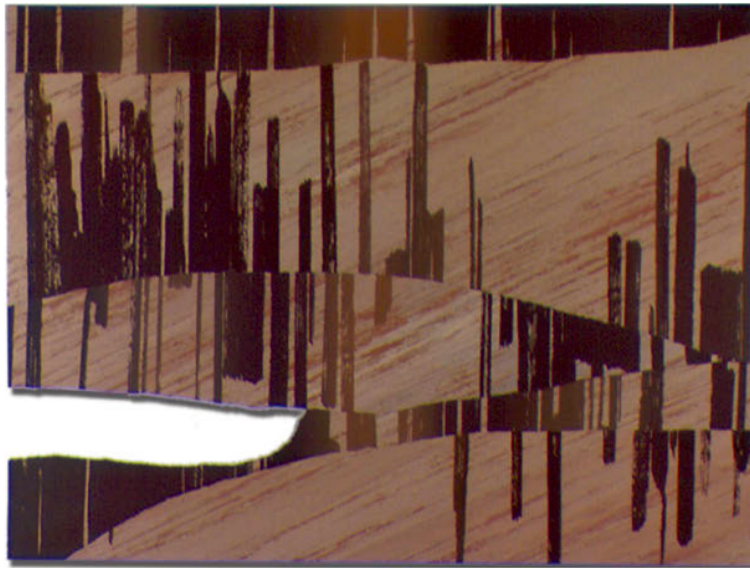
Canyon De Chelley, 16/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H



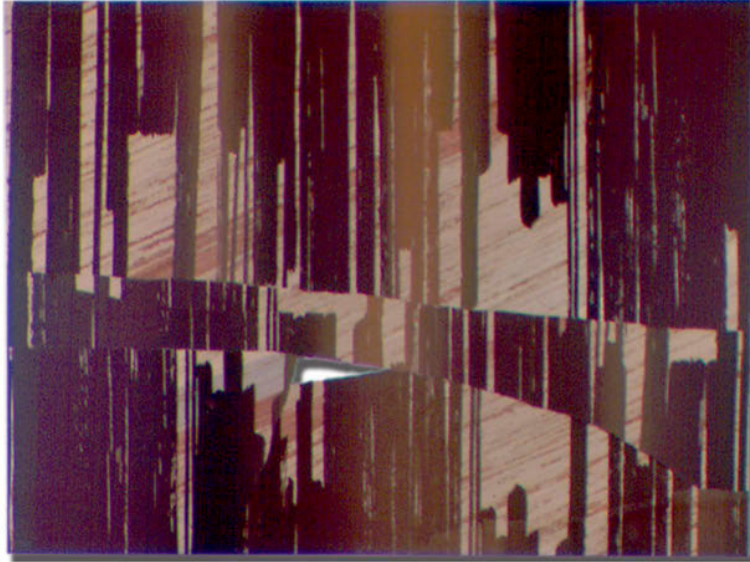
Canyon De Chelley, 17/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H



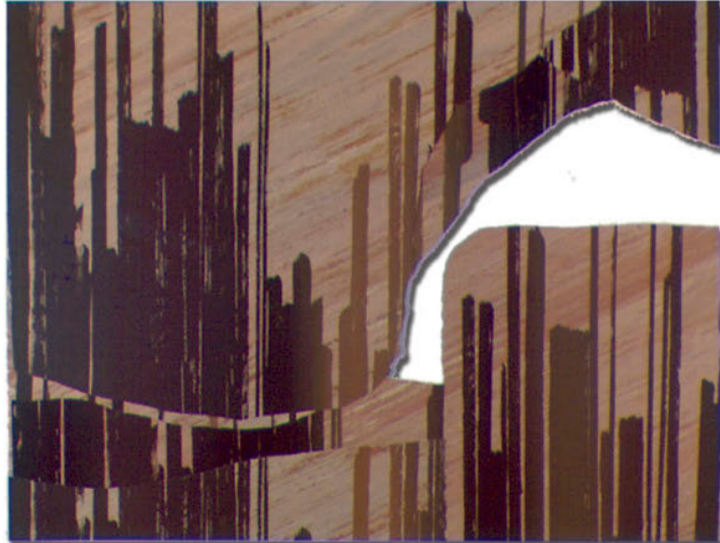
Canyon De Chelley, 18/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H



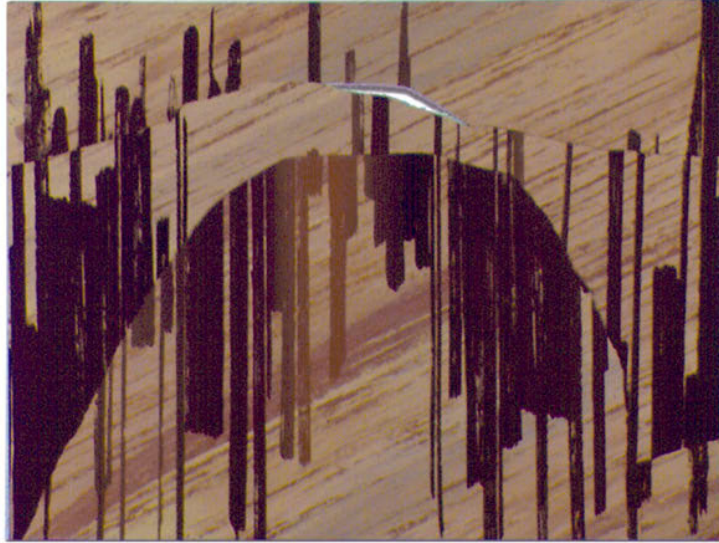
Canyon De Chelley, 19/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H



Canyon De Chelley, 20/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H



Canyon De Chelley, 21/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H



Canyon De Chelley, 22/22
39"W x 28-1/2"H

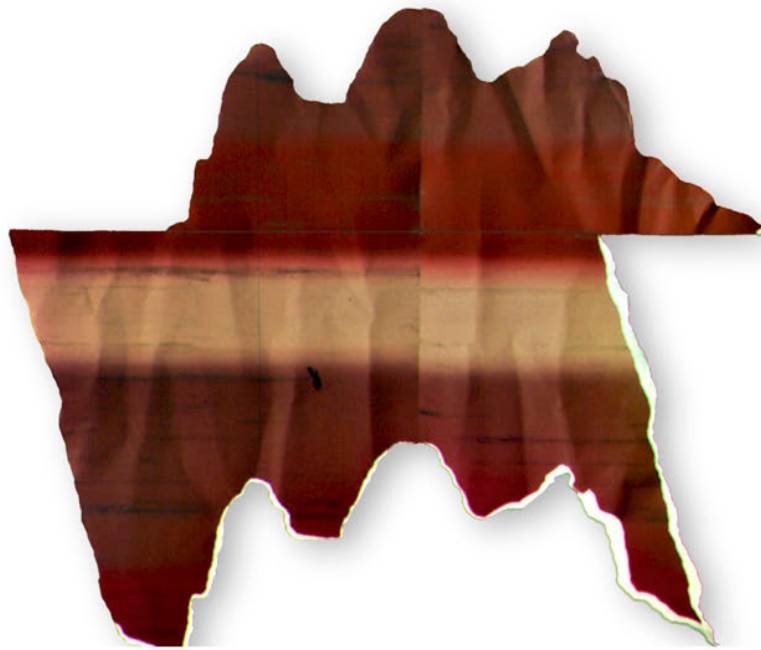
Sedona

December 1977

Edition: 19

Paper: Arches 88 silkscreen

Despite the similarity of colors in the Grand Canyon and Sedona areas, Sedona differs in that there is a "high water mark" all around the basin due to a particular point in time when deposits of silt were laid down from the lake that was once there. (Like a ring around a bath tub.) I emphasized this characteristic in printing the light color stripe that meets in the center of the print when the torn parts are recombined. Each print in the edition was created out of a single printed page torn into 4 parts and recombined, with the 4 outer corners of the paper all meeting in the center. All torn pieces were recycled within the image in such a way that the repeats of the torn shapes are not obvious. The outer edges are asymmetrical and offset so that the top portion is smaller than the heavier bottom pieces. In tearing the paper into 4 parts, 2 parts are, of necessity, "outer" tears (where no pulp is exposed) while the 2 pieces that are torn from them have "inner" tears (where the pulp is exposed). The outer tears at the top delineate earth from sky while the inner tears at the bottom suggest that this is just a "fragment" of a larger base. The top of the image is offset from the bottom suggesting plateaus in the landscape and lateral movement beyond the image. The diagonal sides suggest perspective lines and space. By crushing the print and creating an eccentric shape, this is more like sculpture or a bas-relief than a print.



Sedona, edition of 19
37" W x 33" H

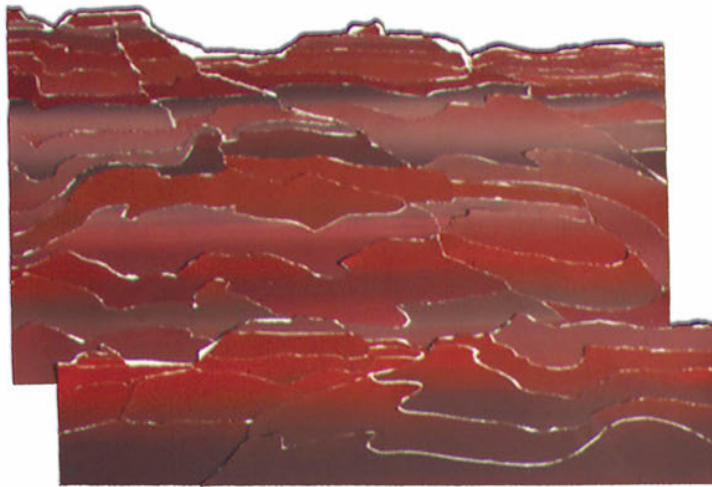
Grand Canyon

November 1977

Edition: 30

Paper: Arches 88 Silkscreen

This edition expresses observations of the subtle variation of tonalities that can never be adequately represented by simply printing blends of ink in the "split fountain" technique. First, both sides of each of the 30 sheets of paper were printed through an open screen with variegated shifting "split fountains" using five colors from orange to brown. Then, templates were developed for tearing 30 horizontal strips from each piece, which allowed for a piece of each printed page to be included in each final print. This representation of the random printed blends within every print approximates the subtle intricacy of coloration seen in the layers of strata at the Grand Canyon. The smaller piece that overlaps the bottom was torn off the top and flipped over and offset in order to add a sense of perspective and to suggest continuation of the forms beyond the piece itself.



Grand Canyon, edition of 30
32" W x 21" H

Grand Canyon II

January 1978

Edition: 1

Paper: Arches 88 Silkscreen

This piece is a panoramic vista of the Grand Canyon as opposed to a “framed section” of the area as represented by the Grand Canyon edition. That both ends of the piece taper off implies the continuation of the landscape. This 14-foot long collage is comprised of 20 individual 22”x 30” sheets of paper printed on both sides with blended “split fountains” in various combinations of the same colors of ink used in Grand Canyon and Sedona. This reflects the common geological matrix in these two areas. The coloration from light at the top to the more vibrant tones and rougher blends near the bottom depicts atmospheric perspective whereby parts viewed in the distance are lighter and less defined compared to closer formations. Likewise, the pieces closer up were torn at deeper angles and crushed more severely. Torn and recombined so that the beginning and end of each printed page is not apparent, all of the papers were reintegrated into the final image.



Grand Canyon II, edition of 20
14' W x 29-1/2" H



RESUME

Sandy Bleifer received her B.A. in Fine Arts at UCLA in 1962 and worked as an Artist in Residence for the Beverly Hills Schools as well as an art teacher, docent, and publisher of curriculum materials in the arts. Under the aegis of "Space", a seminal Los Angeles gallery under the direction of Edward Den Lau, she exhibited and sold her work from the early '70s through 1997 at many galleries and museums including the Downey Museum of Art, University of California, Berkeley, Loyola Marymount University, Mt. St. Mary's College, the Craft and Folk Art Museum, Riverside Art Museum, Chapman College, Palos Verdes Art Center and the art rental galleries of the Newport Harbor Art Museum, the San Francisco Museum of Art, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Her work is included in the collection of the Albuquerque Museum of Art, New Mexico, the Kitakamakura Museum, Japan and in many private and corporate collections including those of ARCO, IBM, Faberge, Neutrogena, and Security Pacific Bank. She is included in a recently published encyclopedia of Los Angeles artists before the 1980s, by Lyn Kienholz.

In 1975, the City of Los Angeles commissioned her to paint a mural on the Hayvenhurst underpass of the Ventura freeway. It can still be seen there and has been included in the definitive compendium of mural art in Los Angeles, Street Gallery by Robin J. Dunitz. Long a social activist, Bleifer concluded a six-year project to present her Hiroshima/Nagasaki Memorial Project to audiences in the U.S. and Japan in 1995. While becoming involved in the revitalization of the historic buildings and neighborhoods in downtown Los Angeles, she continued to evolve in new directions and is currently returning to painting in conjunction with collage and sculptural use of handmade papers.

