

(Early July 1963)
don't really sure

Dear Stu,

It's a pity but the excitement of today has worn off a little and even though it's very late I take pen in hand to let you know what I've done. I've printed the finest etching that I have ever done and of all things it's of that old lady with the plate in her hand.

I had no idea how it was going to turn out when I plopped it into the acid, but when I inked it and printed it, I was flabbergasted. I was so excited I couldn't talk or do anything and I just wanted to laugh or scream or something. (Mind you it was the first proof) I took it in to Mr. Blackburn and he went absolutely apeshit over it. There was a real gleam of pride and joy in his face. He kind of choked up. Then he said it. "This is one of the finest prints I've ever seen come out of this school in years" He craved it. He said "I'm glad it came from my class and I'm glad it was done under my teaching." It wasn't. I literally whiped it out one morning while I was waiting for Ronald to come over. It is the distillation of much observation of the great Itchess. This print is free, strong, brutal in its charismuro and truthful. Blackburn, you know is one of this country's great etchers or rather printmakers and to have a compliment given by him is a real compliment.

He's made an appointment with me on Friday so that he may privately and personally criticize it. He pointed out a couple of areas today that needed a little work, but nothing serious. He said "Don't touch it, Don't do a thing to it until Friday because he wasn't quite sure of his criticism. Things like this" he said "take a lot of time and thought

when a print reaches this level of this one."

Stu, I hope I haven't built it up too much but I know you'll love this one as I do. I only hope it isn't beginner's luck and in a couple of days when I pull my next one (on which I'm really slaving) then I shall know. I think I have a feel for prints more so than almost all people. You have it, I know. Anyway I have a hundred ideas right now but not the quick drawing skill I need. So I say plunge right on in and don't hesitate to ruin one if it will bring me closer to my goal. This is hard. Let simplicity, truth, straightforwardness, and above all compassion be your guides. Only etching can show me the world as it is beneath ^{the} color of its ~~own~~ exterior. That's how I feel and though the paint splatters in our midst would attack me for that, I know I'm right. There is truth and reason in the exterior of things for they are the signs of the interior of things. I can philosophize on this for hours, but I'm not going to. I'm only going to work hard and let my work speak for me. It will be enough for me just to do that. I won't send you this etching until it is finished.

Yesterday Ronald and his family and I went to New York City, and we spent several hours in the Met. Saw all the Egyptian stuff and now I can see why you were so impressed. So was I. Ronald had to take some paintings up there for his scholarship competition. Thursday we're going again to pick them up and I'll go through the New York Historical Society. That's all for now. Perhaps when I write again I'll have done another good print.

Stu