



through. Eventually I was asked to leave Pratt because I made prints that were too big.

Liliana: We said, “We are artists, not printmakers. The important thing is not the technique but whether that technique is consistent with what we want to say.”

Lyle: The manifesto you wrote in 1965 was very interesting because it is about printmaking as a medium. You wanted to be “printmakers conditioned but not destroyed by our techniques.” It’s not about politics at all, though most accounts make the Workshop seem very political.

Luis: It depends on how you define politics. We shifted the definition of printmaking from contact of a plate with pieces of paper or media to the act of making an edition. At some point I said that sending a rocket to the moon was a manifestation of edition-making, where each time you set up the conditions and let the serial process take over to get a repeatable result. That was opposed to the idea of the original, the one of a kind, and that was a political statement. It’s not the narrative content of politics we were interested in but a changed society.

Lyle: Yet as I look at the work, I detect very different currents going on in this group.

Luis: We had contradictory aims. One was to make it in the market, and the other was to create a utopian society. A symptom of that was our mail exhibits. We were not aware of Ray Johnson, although we later became neighbors and friends. We were Latin Americans, we were printmakers. We were aware of being segregated from the mainstream. One way of breaking that was making our own venue. And the cheapest, easiest venue was the mail. So we created our envelope gallery and mailed it to our audience. We were making a market and at the same time disputing ownership, disputing preciousness. Some pieces were mailed to names from telephone books, some pieces were to friends, whom we hoped would pass them on, some pieces were stuck in bathrooms and elevators. It was very chaotic.

Opposite: Luis Camnitzer and Liliana Porter, poster, offset print (21 x 15 in.), 1966. From the Liliana Porter Collection. Courtesy Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas

Above right: Jorge de la Vega, from the triptych *Try, Try Again*, aquatint and etching (11 1/2 x 12 3/4 in.), 1967. From the Liliana Porter Collection. Courtesy Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas

Lyle: It also disputed the notion of a gallery that has walls and that controls an audience. Is that what was behind the FANDSO [Free Assemblage Nonfunctional Disposable Serial Object]?

Luis: No, we talked amongst ourselves. What were the conditions we wanted to accomplish? We wanted to create an object that fulfills such and such needs. So we worked with words and reshuffled some things to get the idea of the FANDSO. Above all, it had to be serial, and serial for us meant both making a formal series as well as an editioned series so that neither form nor object were unique.



Lyle: Who were you printing for during that period?

Luis: Friends like Leon Polk Smith, José Luis Cuevas, and the op artist Francis Celentano. With Celentano, we used masking tape as an etching resist to achieve hard edges. More professionally, artists of the Bonino Gallery, like Marcelo Bonevardi and Ronald Mallory. And then Dalí. His whole thing of signing empty sheets of paper started with us.

Liliana: Luis had met Dalí when we were at Pratt, and at one point Dalí wanted help for a project, but nobody in the shop understood him. So they called Luis in to translate.

Luis: We became sort of friends. Mostly he wanted me to translate scientific material for him, but one day he called and asked me to make four plates and editions for a publisher. So we did the plates and proofs, but there was a problem. Dalí was leaving in a