

## San Jose: Prints by Bruce Conner are subject of Institute of Contemporary Art show - San Jose Mercury News

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POSTED: 02/04/2015 06:03:53 PM PST | UPDATED: 8 DAYS AGO

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When Bruce Conner moved to San Francisco in 1957, the boundary-pushing artist knew he wasn't in his native Kansas anymore. The Beat Generation was in full flower in Fog City at the time, with poets like Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac making the case for nonconformity. Connor, whose own provocative work often highlighted the harshness of societal norms, fully embraced this stimulating environment.

In a career that lasted almost 60 years--he died in 2008 at age 74--Conner gained fame for his assemblages of found objects, paintings and drawings. He was also a filmmaker, sculptor, photographer and printmaker. It is this last discipline that will be on view when the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art hosts "Bruce Conner: Somebody Else's Prints" from Feb. 7 to May 16 at the institute, 560 S. First St., San Jose.

The exhibition will feature about 100 works, from early etchings and lithographs from Conner's pre-teen days, all the way to inkjet prints made with Photoshop in 2003 in Oakland.

In between are significant series such as Conner's work with Tamarind Lithography Workshop in Los Angeles during the mid-1960s, and all three volumes of "The Dennis Hopper One Man Show."

Hopper, of course, is the actor (and fellow Kansan) whose characters often challenged authority in films like "Rebel Without a Cause" and "Easy Rider." The two men were longtime friends and collaborators; the one-man show consists of etchings based on engraving collages.

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"Somebody Else's Prints" is organized by the Ulrich Museum of Art at Wichita State University, which has many of Conner's works in its collection. The show's name refers to Conner's habit of giving credit for his creative output to others.

Sometimes those receiving attribution would be celebrities, other times they were simply made-up personas. It was his way of asking questions about authenticity and permanence.

Besides the prints, the ICA event will showcase rare ephemera from the archives of the Conner Family Trust. One example: photographic slides used by Conner when he was with a group that performed experimental light shows for iconic '60s rock groups like Big Brother and the Holding Company and the Grateful Dead.

There will be an opening reception for "Somebody Else's Prints" 6 to 8 p.m. Feb. 13 at the ICA. In addition, two in-depth discussions about Conner's work and the cultural landscape that influenced him will take place 7 p.m. Feb. 26 and April 16. Admission is \$5 for ICA members, \$10 for non-members and free for students. More information: [sjica.org](http://sjica.org).