



## ***Todd Bartel***

### ***Family Tree, 2017***

Engraving collage, xerographic print on 20<sup>th</sup> century book end page (monoprint, edition of 1) 14.625”h x 11”w, framed dimensions: 20”h x 16.25” x 1.25”d

Opening bid: \$250.00.

#### Artist's Statement

Family Tree - Time expressed Through Biological lineage

Family Tree emanates from a two-fold homage to specific bodies of work created by two, twentieth century artists: Max Ernst's invention of the engraving collage genre in 1920, and, a multi-technological process developed by Michael Oatman (Troy, NY) in 1983, who in turn, expanded and contemporized Ernst's contribution.

Today, it is particularly easy to come upon reproductions of steel, copper and wood engravings from the late eighteenth through twentieth centuries respectively. Thanks to the publisher, Dover Publications, dictionaries, encyclopedias and a host of other publishers, an ever-growing universe of royalty free, copyright free engraving reproductions are available at exceptionally low costs; and, select volumes of individuated collections make it easy for artists to find types and styles of images at will. Easily copied and manipulated by scanners and photocopiers, engravings are a choice imagery for many contemporary artists. One reason engravings lend themselves to the production of collages is that they are easily cut, copied and manipulated. The trademark thin black lines are easy to see and likewise the edges or outlines of forms and spaces are easily found. Determining edges is a major challenge for

most cutting projects—be they analog or digital—and when the material of choice is an engraving, that problem is almost always removed due to the nature of high contrast line art. Additionally, when well-cut engravings are layered on top of one another, they can appear seamless despite their composite production. The later fact is particularly useful when a finished engraving collage is reproduced, because the reproduction process eradicates the residue of the collage process and renders it invisible; it reduces the aggregate work to what can be thought of as an uncollage.<sup>1</sup> As the work in *One Hundred Engraving Collages (After Ernst)* attests, uncollages call into question issues of authorship and with such ambiguity, marvelous questions and delicious confusion come to light in the minds of the viewers of engraving collages.

<sup>1</sup> The term *uncollage* is a term the author coined in the late 1990s to describe a collage process that completely undoes any residue of the pasting process and appears to be a seamless or otherwise collage-less image. It was first introduced in print in the accompanying essay to the *Bo Joseph—Attempts at a Unified Theory* exhibition, part one of the *History as Medium* exhibition series (2010-11).

**Artist Biography:** Todd Bartel’s work assumes the forms of painting, drawing and sculpture in a collage and assemblage format. His work investigates the interconnected histories of collage and landscape and the roles of nature and natural resources in Western culture. He received a BFA from Rhode Island School of Design in 1985 concluding his studies at RISD’s European Honors Program in Rome, between 1984-1985. In 1990, he was a recipient of the Jacob K. Javits Fellowship (U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.). He earned an MFA in Painting from Carnegie Mellon University in 1993. Bartel was awarded a Connecticut Council on the Arts Fellowship Grant in 2000 in support of the continuation of his related series entitled, “Terra Reverentia” and “Garden Studies.” Bartel has taught drawing, painting and sculpture at Brown University, Manhattanville College and Carnegie Mellon University, Vermont College MFA in Visual Art, New Hampshire Art Institute MFA in Visual Art among others. He has been a guest critic at Rhode Island School of Design, a visiting critic at Vermont College (since 1999) and New Hampshire Art Institute since 2014. Bartel has lectured at the Alfred University, Western Connecticut State University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Montclair State University, Chatham College among others. His work has been exhibited nationally in venues that include Palo Alto Art Center (Palo Alto, CA), Katonah Museum (Katonah, NY),

Brockton Art Museum (Brockton, MA), The Rhode Island Foundation (Providence, RI), Zieher Smith (New York, NY), Mills Gallery (Boston, MA), Iona College (New Rochelle, NY). He is the founder and Gallery Director at the Cambridge School of Weston's Thompson Gallery, a gallery dedicated to thematic inquiry, including such exhibition series as *Sublime Climate*, *Collage at 100* and *Kiss the Ground, Nowhere Everywhere, and With Eyes Open*. A seasoned teacher since 1986, Bartel currently teaches drawing, painting, collage, assemblage, conceptual art and installation art at The Cambridge School of Weston.

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