



INK & CLAY 45

Dave Lefner, Ink Juror

As a native-born Angeleno, artist Dave Lefner has always had a love for the city that surrounds him. From an early age, he embraced the sunny disposition of the Left Coast, as well as the California “car and motor inn” culture of mid-century optimism. In his work, he yearns for the day when the beauty of American design and craftsmanship was king. From his subject matter to his process, he pays his respects to a time gone by, but finds a way to re-invent its relevance in this contemporary world. His work reflects the beauty for the city that surrounds him, with a nostalgia for its aging, but unique storefronts, signage and architecture from all areas of Los Angeles including the Valley, glamorous Hollywood, and especially his current home in Downtown LA. For Lefner, the urban landscape, complete with its burnt-out, broken neon, faded and peeling movie posters and advertisements, the web of power-lines and telephone wires overhead, as well as the occasional graffiti piece, serve as the perfect inspiration for his detailed, very limited-edition, reduction linoleum block prints.

He received a BA in Art from California State University Northridge, where he discovered a love of typography and its many faces, the graphic prints of the German expressionists of the 1940s, and, his biggest inspiration, Picasso’s series of linocuts from the 1950s. For over twenty years since, Lefner has dedicated himself to preserving and perfecting what seems to be the dying artform of reduction block printing. Because of the immediacy of today’s world, this technique is being lost in the face of a digital age. But it is the mystery of this labor-intensive process that intrigues him most. There is no room for error as the piece slowly reveals itself through a series of carving/printing stages from a single block of linoleum. To him, the journey is definitely as important as the destination.

Lefner’s work has been exhibited in notable solo exhibitions including the *LA Redux: Reduction Linocuts* by Dave Lefner at the Pasadena Museum of California Art (PMCA), 2017-2018. His work is held in the *Prints & Drawings Permanent Collection* of Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and he has been featured on KCET’s *Artbound* episode titled *American Purgatory*.

