



Hartt, Cordova, Barrow: Three from Threewalls

By Michael Ferut

David Hartt, *Courier* (2013)

Photogravure, 19 x 22 inches. Edition of 10. Printed with the assistance of Anchor Graphics, Chicago. Published by Threewalls, Chicago. \$1,000.

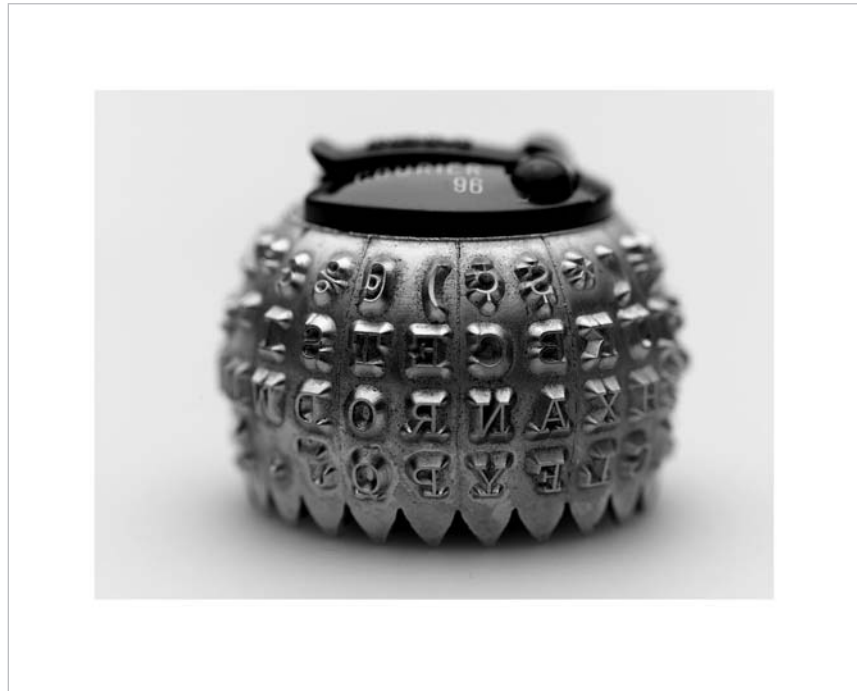
William Cordova, “It may assume different shapes at different times” —Bhagat Singh (last letter from prison, 1930) (2013)

Monoprint and collage on found paper, approximately 7 x 10 inches. Varied edition of 10. Printed by the artist. Published by Threewalls, Chicago. \$1,000.

Daniel Barrow, *Charla and the Ape and the Ape and Charla* (2013)

Screenprint on balsa wood. Approximately 5 x 7 1/2 x 9 inches (constructed). Edition of 10. Printed by the artist. Published by Threewalls, Chicago. \$600.

Like a growing number of arts organizations, Chicago nonprofit Threewalls has begun publishing editions and multiples using a community-supported art (CSA) model. Inspired by community-supported agriculture programs, a number of CSA programs have formed across the United States in the hope of strengthening relationships between local artists and collectors. Many CSAs operate by preselling limited edition projects by local artists at a special subscribers' price. Subscribers (sometimes called “shareholders”) sign on to purchase a certain number of works per year, and artists agree to provide as many works—whether editions or unique works from a series—as there are subscribers. Threewalls' CSA functions slightly differently, as works can be purchased individually or as grouped subscriptions. For *Decagon*,¹ a portfolio featuring David Hartt, William Cordova and Daniel Barrow, directors Shannon Stratton and Abigail Satinsky carefully selected the artists but did not give them a theme, requirements or technical support. While Threewalls' past CSA series have not featured many prints, Hartt, Cordova and Barrow all used print techniques to



David Hartt, *Courier* (2013).

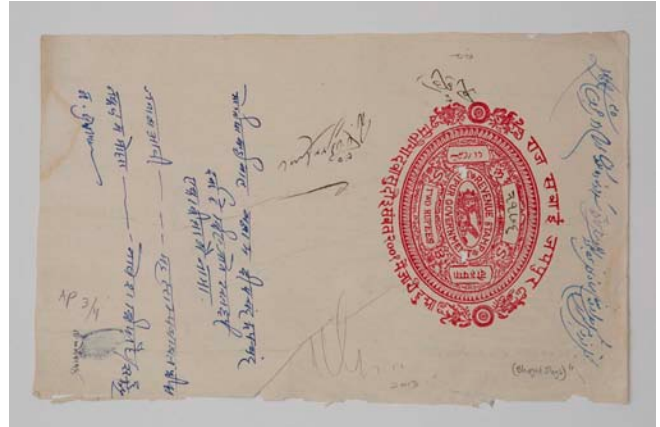
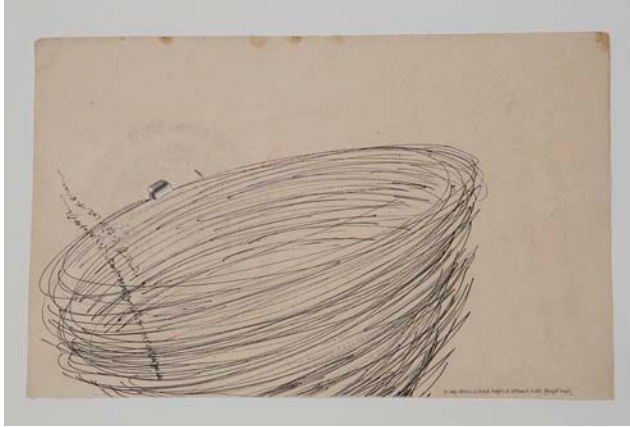
achieve beautiful and unexpected results.

Hartt's photogravure *Courier* (2013) is the largest and most dynamic work in the set: a nearly two-foot-square close-up of an IBM Selectric type element, an object barely larger than a ping-pong ball. The photograph's shallow focus gives the typeball a voluminous presence, and the gravure captures the photograph's gradients as well as the subtle imperfections of the mechanical object. Introduced in 1961, the popular machine was the first typewriter with interchangeable fonts. It used mechanical binary coding to tilt and rotate the typeball and print the desired letter or symbol. Hartt chose to depict a Courier typeball because of its pervasive use. The font has become associated with bureaucracy, as it was the State Department's official font from the 1960s until 2004, and today is the default font for many computer coding interfaces. As a result, Courier is often seen as impersonal and anonymous, but Hartt's gravure is soft and warm, emphasizing the

physical presence of the typeball.

Cordova's “It may assume different shapes at different times” —Bhagat Singh (last letter from prison, 1930) (2013) also examines objects of bureaucratic communication. On the back side of torn, stained and crinkled Indian governmental documents, Cordova monoprinted a whirlwind of fine black lines. He then attached a photograph of an old-fashioned microphone, turning the tornado of lines into an endless electrical cord. The print was inspired by Indian socialist revolutionary Bhagat Singh's final correspondence before being hung at age 23 for his involvement in the murder of a British official. His execution transformed Singh into a symbol of resistance among Indian youth. Cordova's monoprints reflect on how the actions—or the paperwork—of a regime may be reinterpreted and redirected.

Barrow's *Charla and the Ape and the Ape and Charla* (2013) is a screenprint on perforated balsa wood meant to be assembled into two toy-plane-like structures. One



William Cordova, “It may assume different shapes at different times”—Bhagat Singh (last letter from prison, 1930) (2013).
Left: front side. Right: back side.

fusilage features a cartoonish manic ape, the other a somber woman—both with disproportionate features grotesquely segmented and intertwined. Because only one side of the wood is printed, my inner child was slightly disappointed when I turned the objects around only to find bare wood. Despite their whimsical elements, these are not meant to be toys. Their subject is the 2009 mauling of Chandra Nash by Travis, a chimpanzee who had appeared on American televi-

sion shows and commercials. The attack resulted in a media frenzy, a hand and face transplant for Nash, and Travis’s death. Barrow’s dark, uncomfortable humor in *Charla and the Ape* is intensified by the interactive element of the edition. The acts of breaking the print apart and transforming it into a sculpture can be seen as a process similar to Nash’s disfigurement and reconstructive surgery.

These editions show Threewalls’ growth as a publisher, and the potential

for future projects that reinvigorate the task of creating editions and multiples with refreshing approaches. ■

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Notes:

1. Threewalls also offers customers the option of purchasing Decagon with another portfolio (not covered in this review); www.three-walls.org.



Daniel Barrow, *Charla and the Ape and the Ape and Charla* (2013).