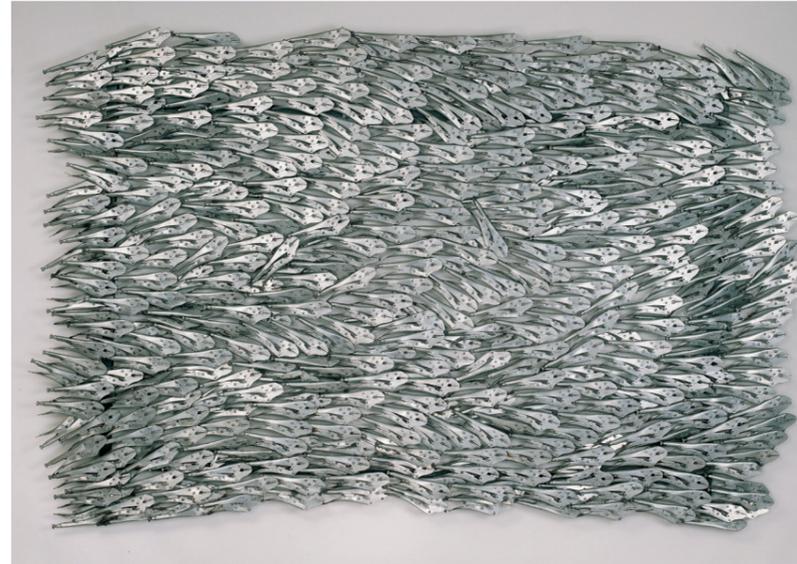


[A tool is a]n inanimate object that one uses or modifies in some way to cause a change in the environment, thereby facilitating ones achievement of a target goal.

— Marc D. Hauser

Among the low-priced, factory-produced goods, none is so appealing to the sense as the ordinary hand-tool. Hence the hardware store is a kind of offbeat museum show for the man who responds to clear “undesigned” forms.

— Walker Evans



Exhibition organized by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC and featuring works from International Arts & Artists' Hechinger Collection

FURTHER READING

Pete Hamill and John Hechinger, *Tools as Art: The Hechinger Collection* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Graphic design by Kimberley Nichols & Patricia Pohlman, Dickinson College Office of Publications

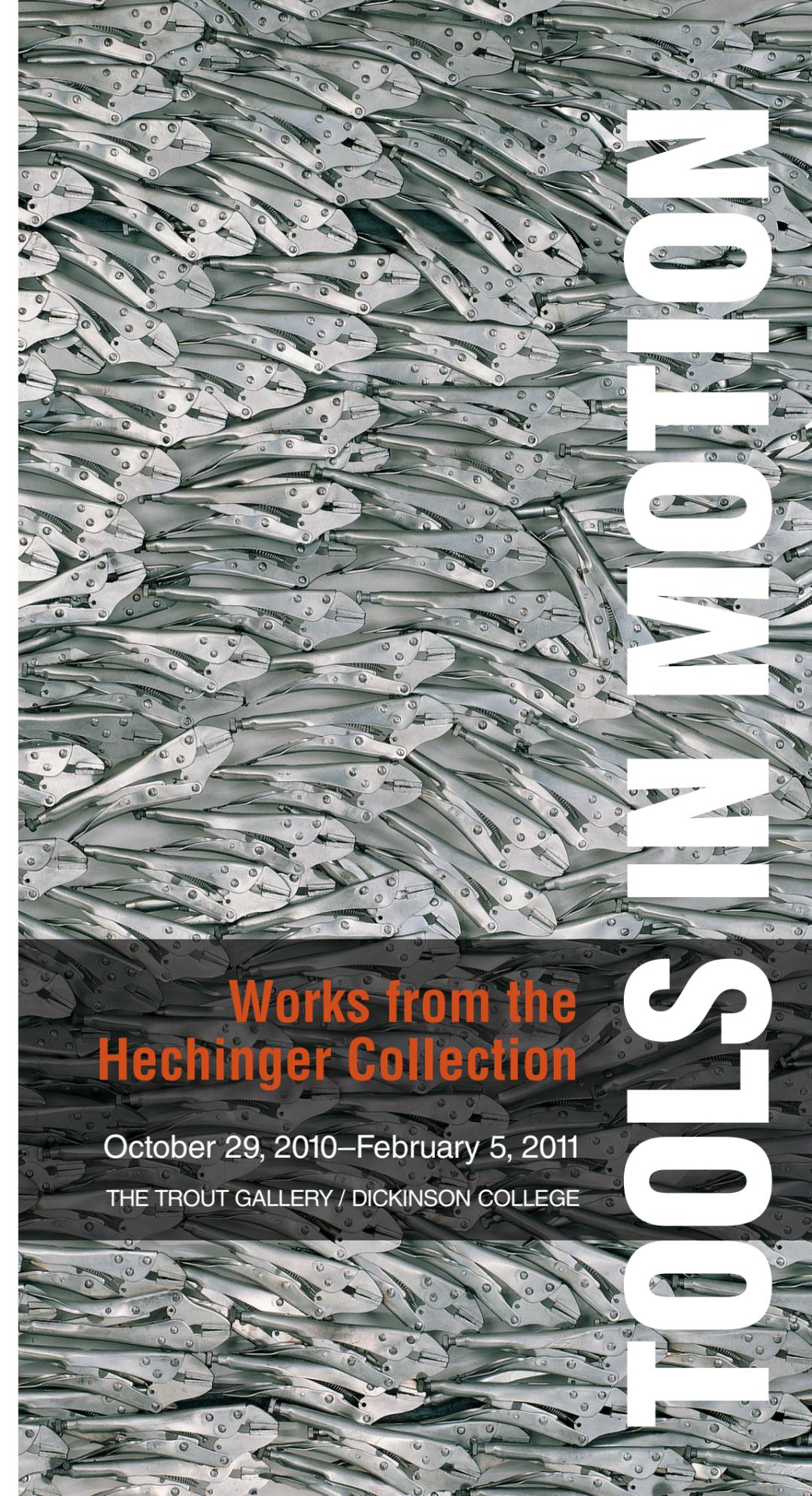
Cover and above: Armand P. Arman, *School of Fishes*, 1982, vise grips, steel

Brochure text: Phillip Earenfight

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NOI TOW N S T O O L S

Works from the Hechinger Collection

October 29, 2010–February 5, 2011

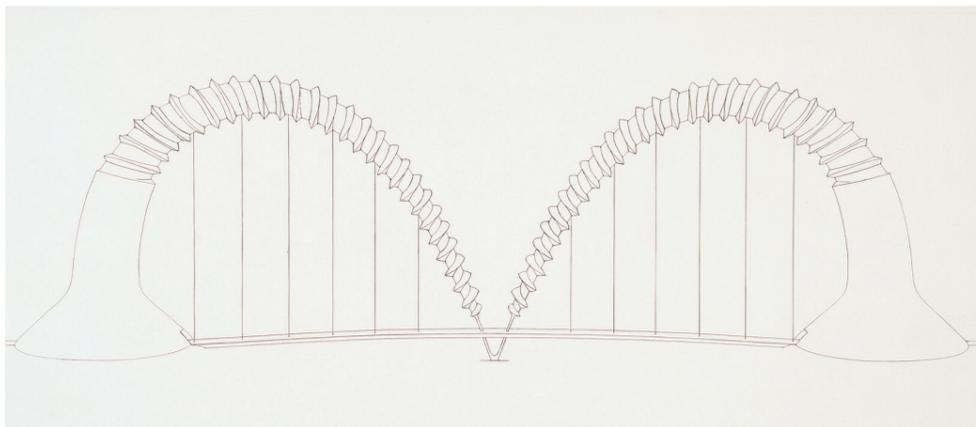
THE TROUT GALLERY / DICKINSON COLLEGE

TOOLS IN MOTION

The primate order includes the only species on earth that makes tools to perform specific tasks. But of the primates, *Homo sapiens* are perhaps the only tool-makers who appreciate tools not only for their utility, but also for their aesthetic value. Indeed, Jim Dine's inspired drawings of a pipe-wrench or a band of marching claw hammers cause one to fundamentally re-evaluate the tools themselves, to say nothing about the subject of contemporary art. To this end, *Tools in Motion* brings together a clever selection of art that incorporates everyday tools and hardware. The works in *Tools in Motion* demonstrate how tools take on a life—even a personality—when thoughtfully isolated from their original function, combined with other objects, or presented in conjunction with like works. Drawn from the Hechinger Collection, many of the works in this exhibition are directly associated with or descend from the forms and ideas pioneered in Pop Art, and toy with these elements in a lighthearted, playful way.

The works draw attention to everyday tools in ways that awaken our appreciation for them on an iconic, dare one say, sacred level. (If the behavior displayed in hardware stores is any measure, one can surely speak of tools as possessing an array of shamanistic powers.) In this exhibition, inanimate objects such as a bunch of vise grip pliers—when carefully arranged—appear remarkably like a school of fish. Or wood screws, when conceived as gigantic architectural forms, become the basis for a lively, animated bridge design. The collection was compiled by John Hechinger, who headed a hardware and building materials chain established by his father in 1911. When the Hechinger Company moved to new headquarters in 1978, John was disappointed by the interior spaces:

The building seemed to rebuke the fantasies that a hardware store inspires. For anyone whose passion is to work with his or her hands, a good hardware store is a spur to the imagination and a source of irresistible delights.



Claes Oldenburg, *Screw Arch Bridge*, 1980, etching.



Jim Dine, *Tool Box 3*, 1966, serigraph.

To return the company to the spirit of tools and tool-making, Hechinger contacted Ivan Chermayeff, a friend and designer, to create photographic prints of tools carried in the company's hardware stores. With these photographs as well as an edition of Jim Dine's *Tool Box* prints—which Hechinger already owned—he set off to build a corporate art collection that focused on the tools of the family business. The resulting collection of more than 400 works are much more than office art; they celebrate human ingenuity and creativity.

The works also remind one that artists, who were long regarded as craftsmen, use tools to create art. Brushes, hammers, nails, saws, and paint are as much the tools of an artist as a carpenter. Indeed, an artist's studio is a workshop in the most literal sense, and no small number of artists, like the rest of us, stand in the aisles of hardware stores sorting through bins and shelves, looking for the right tool to complete the project at hand. Indeed, the first artists were no different than their primate relatives—both fashioned sticks to perform a specific task. But rather than fishing termites from a mound, primitive artists were painting on the walls of caves.

Exhibition Checklist

All works courtesy International Arts & Artists

ARMAND P. ARMAN

School of Fishes, 1982, vise grips, steel

MARK BLUMENSTEIN

Barney Wiggle, 1991, metal

RICHARD BRONK

Ship of Tools, 1992, wood, metal

IVAN CHERMAYEFF

Untitled, 1978, silver gelatin on polyester film

Untitled, 1978, silver gelatin on polyester film

STAN DANN

Hand Tools, 1988, mixed media, wood

JIM DINE

Tool Box 1, 1966, serigraph

Tool Box 2, 1966, serigraph

Tool Box 3, 1966, serigraph

Tool Box 4, 1966, serigraph

Tool Box 5, 1966, serigraph

Tool Box 6, 1966, serigraph

Tool Box 7, 1966, serigraph

Tool Box 8, 1966, serigraph

Tool Box 9, 1966, serigraph

Tool Box 10, 1966, serigraph

RON ENGLISH

The Reconstruction, 1992, oil on canvas

HANS GODO FRABEL

Faucet (In the Middle of the Night), 1979, glass

COLIN GRAY

House and Home, 1988, mixed media, metal tools

GINTS GRINBERGS

Handtool, 1996, steel, wood

STEPHEN HANSEN

Man on a Limb, 1985, papier-mâché, wood

COLIN IVES

The Tools We Carry, 1996, shovels, soil, digital monitors

CHUCK JOHNSON

Red Still Life, 1989, oil on canvas

MARIA JOSEPHY

Prometheus, 1980, mixed media

MARILYN KEATING and DEBORAH SACHS

Two Carpenters, 1989, wood, paint

PATRICK KIRWIN

Hammers Inside, 1991, oil on canvas

JACOB LAWRENCE

Builder's Three, 1991, lithograph

JIM MCCULLOUGH

Diorama, 1983, mixed media

MARTE NEWCOMBE

March 94, 1994, digital pigment print

Nightrider, 1994, digital pigment print

Geshrotate, 1994, digital pigment print

Cathedral, 1994, digital pigment print

CLAES OLDENBURG

Screw Arch Bridge, 1980, etching, aquatint

MARIA PORGES

Table Saw, 1983, ceramic

MICHAEL RAMUS

Needle Nose, 1989, cardboard, plywood, pigment

EDGAR SOBERON

The Kiss, 1989, pastel on paper

Dancing Scissors, 1989, pastel on paper

LINDA THERN-SMITH

Phoenix, 1987, hammers, chair rockers

SILAS WEST

Climbing Man, 1895, tin, paint

BILL WILSON

Pliers and Nails, 1989, wood, paint

PHYLLIS YES

Untitled, 1980, acrylic, saw