

July 29, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

Barbara Hollander, SAMA-Altoona Coordinator

(814) 946-4464

Travis Mearns, Public Relations Coordinator

(724) 238-6015

## **SAMA-ALTOONA TO DEBUT MUSEUM'S COLLECTION OF LEONARD BASKIN WORKS**

Altoona – The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Altoona is pleased to announce the opening of its latest exhibition, *Paper and Fire: Prints by Leonard Baskin*. Opening August 14, the exhibition celebrates the renowned printmaker with nearly 60 works drawn from the Museum's permanent collection. *Paper and Fire: Prints by Leonard Baskin* will remain on view through January 16, 2016.

Baskin helped to revitalize figurative art following the heyday of Abstract Expressionism in the 1950s. In the humanist spirit of the Renaissance, Baskin's art emphasizes the perennial strength and suffering of mankind. Large and innovative woodcuts such as *Man of Peace* cemented the artist's reputation as a printmaker, though he was also a gifted sculptor and draughtsman. With its angular and expressionistic quality, *Man of Peace* hearkens back to medieval woodcuts, yet the imagery of barbed wire and scarred, half-clothed figure is evocative of twentieth-century atrocities. Joining *Man of Peace* in the exhibition will be a collection of Native American-themed prints from the mid-1970s, several *Moby Dick* prints (1970), and several late 1960s etchings from the series, *Laus Pictorum: Portraits of Nineteenth Century Artists*. Also on view will be a series of Biblical prints from *The Five Scrolls*, which is among the Museum's newest holdings.

Baskin studied art in New York City and at the Yale School of Fine Arts. Starting out as a sculptor, he turned to printmaking after pursuing additional study in Paris and Florence during the early 1950s. After his return, Baskin settled in Massachusetts, where he taught first in Worcester and then for many years at Smith College in Northampton. He exhibited his work widely, and during the height of his career in the 1960s and 1970s, he received numerous awards and prizes. Baskin's work is today held in many public collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art and the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

"It is with great joy that SAMA presents *Paper and Fire: Prints by Leonard Baskin*," said SAMA-Altoona Coordinator Barbara Hollander. "Baskin was an intense artist in terms of his technique and, oftentimes, subject matter. One might say he had a

fiery spirit or temperament. With the works on view in this exhibition, Baskin's art points to the continuous struggle of mankind, but it also emphasizes man's strength.

"Many of the works were purchased in 2014 through our Board of Trustees in recognition of the Altoona Museum's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary. SAMA-Altoona is certainly a fitting venue then for us to debut to the public our entire collection of Baskin works."

The Museum will celebrate the exhibition with a Wicked Wednesday program from 6 to 8 p.m. on August 19. The program will feature light supper, libations, and live music. Cost is \$25 per person. Please call the Museum at (814) 946-4464 for reservations.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Altoona is located in the Brett Building at 1210 Eleventh Avenue. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday. The Museum is a handicapped-accessible facility and is open to the public free of charge. Parking is available in the garage across the street or in metered spots in the lot at the rear of the building. For more information, call the Museum or visit [www.sama-art.org](http://www.sama-art.org).