

Claire Wayne

Visual artist June Claire Wayne was born on March 7, 1918 in Chicago, Illinois. She was raised as June Claire Kline by her divorced mother, Dorothy Alice Kline, a traveling saleswoman in the corset business. At age fifteen, June dropped out of high school, wanting to become an artist. Avoiding the last names of both her parents, she used her first and middle names, June Claire, for her first solo exhibition in 1935 in Chicago, followed in 1936, by a second one at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City. By 1938, June Claire was on the WPA Easel Project in Chicago and had become a regular in a cutting-edge culture of writers, actors, artists, and scientists, some of whom were becoming world famous (Richard Wright, James T. Farrell, Saul Bellow, Nelson Algren, Irene Rice-Pereira and many others).

Circa 1939, she moved to New York, working as a designer of costume jewelry in the garment industry while continuing to paint at night and on weekends. In mid-1941, she married an Air Force Flight Surgeon and substituted his name, Wayne, for Claire. From then on her identity remained June Wayne even though that marriage did not endure. When Pearl Harbor was attacked, she left New York for Los Angeles, intending to work in the aircraft industry. To that end, she became certified in Production Illustration at Cal Tech/Art Center School but a job opened in radio writing at WGN in Chicago which she took, scripting several programs a day of music continuity and interviews with war heroes and movie stars on War Bond shows. Nonetheless production illustration was infiltrating her aesthetic imagination resulting in signature works of optical art ("The Tunnel" and the Kafka series) starting in the mid 1940s. As for the WGN experience, it honed her literary talent and eventually she would write influential essays on artist's rights, art criticism, and feminism.

When WWII ended, June Wayne returned to Los Angeles to stay and became an integral part of the California art scene. She took up lithography at Lynton Kistler's facility, meanwhile painting and exhibiting intensively. By 1957, she also had become a familiar artist in Paris, collaborating with Marcel Durassier, the great master printer with whom, in 1958, she did a livre d'artiste on the love sonnets of John Donne. In 1959, W. MacNeil Lowry of the Ford Foundation suggested to Wayne that she write a plan to revitalize the art of lithography which was floundering in the USA. The result was the Tamarind Lithography Workshop (named for her street) which opened in 1960; Wayne as its director and the Ford Foundation as its financial support. By the late 1960s, Tamarind had become an international force in the printmaking arts so Wayne transformed the Workshop into a permanent format as the TAMARIND INSTITUTE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO where it thrives to this day. Her own lithographs are widely recognized as masterpieces of the medium.

In 1970, Wayne turned to designing tapestries in France. In them as in the rest of her art, she expressed her avant-garde linkage of art and science to issues of the times. In many media, optics, the genetic code, stellar winds, magnetic fields, tsunamis and temblors appeared in her work, often linked to metaphors for the human condition such as the lemmings series, fables, justice and love. On a feminist level, her *The Dorothy Series* (twenty multi-color lithos that she described as a documentary film in twenty freeze frames) includes her much praised video which together with the suite, recently shown in Tokyo.

Sects In The City is the first political artwork ever made by June Wayne who, in principle, avoided topical content in her art until now. *Sects* makes you aware of the burgeoning of faith-based religious groups within five miles of her Tamarind Avenue studio in Hollywood. Some sects are well-established in expensive churches, temples and mosques; others are itinerant parishes in bungalows, store fronts, abandoned movie theatres, trucks and station wagons.

June Wayne's art is represented in many museum collections in the USA and abroad. She has received dozens of awards as well as honorary doctorates. She also is a Visiting Professor of Research at the Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper but she still spends much of the year at her Tamarind Avenue studio in Hollywood, California. *THE ART OF EVERYTHING*, a catalog raisonné of her art (1935 to the present day) was just published by Rutgers University Press. The book is authored by Robert P. Conway with essays by Arthur Danto and Judith K. Brodsky.

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