

# Paul Landacre

WOOD ENGRAVINGS



CATHERINE BURNS FINE ART  
MODERN MASTER PRINTS & DRAWINGS

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CATHERINE BURNS FINE ART  
P.O. BOX 5855  
BERKELEY, CA 94705  
(510) 654-7910  
INFO@CATHERINEBURNS.COM



Cover Illustration:

*The Press*, 1934

Wien 155 iv/iv. Wood engraving on wove japanese paper, full margins. Edition of 60, printed by the artist. Signed, titled, and numbered 5/60 in pencil.

This almost-abstract composition depicts the 19th-century Washington hand press that Landacre found abandoned and lovingly restored to use as his personal press.

8 ¼ x 8 ¼ in; 21 x 21cm.

NFS

## NOTES

1. The authenticity of all works of art in this catalogue is guaranteed.
2. Prints and drawings are in good condition with margins unless otherwise noted. Measurements are given in inches and centimeters, height before width. Intaglio prints are measured to the platemark; lithographs and woodcuts are measured to the maximum dimensions of the composition.
3. Prints will be sent on approval to institutions and individuals known to me or to those supplying references. Firm orders take priority. Items not purchased should be returned within ten days by first class registered post.
4. Shipping charges are additional.

## PAUL LANDACRE (1893-1963)

Paul Landacre was a virtuoso wood engraver with a singular technique and a modern, precisionist approach. During his lifetime, he was considered by art critics and artists, such as Rockwell Kent, as the finest American wood engraver of his time, and this view endures today. Enchanted by southern California landscape, flora and fauna, the artist is most renowned for depicting the rolling hills, deserts, beaches, and dramatic fires and storms around Los Angeles.

Born in 1893 in Columbus, Ohio, Landacre attended Ohio State University, where he was an aspiring athlete and botanist. Hit by a debilitating illness, he moved to southern California in 1916 to convalesce and pursue a less strenuous profession. Several years later, he attended classes at the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles. He taught himself the exacting technique of wood engraving, which was experiencing an international revival of interest as an artistic medium but was not a subject taught in L.A. art schools. His first important exhibition was held in Los Angeles in 1930 at the Zeitlin bookstore, which represented him and his estate for fifty years and introduced him to a wide circle of local artists, actors, intellectuals, and literary talents.

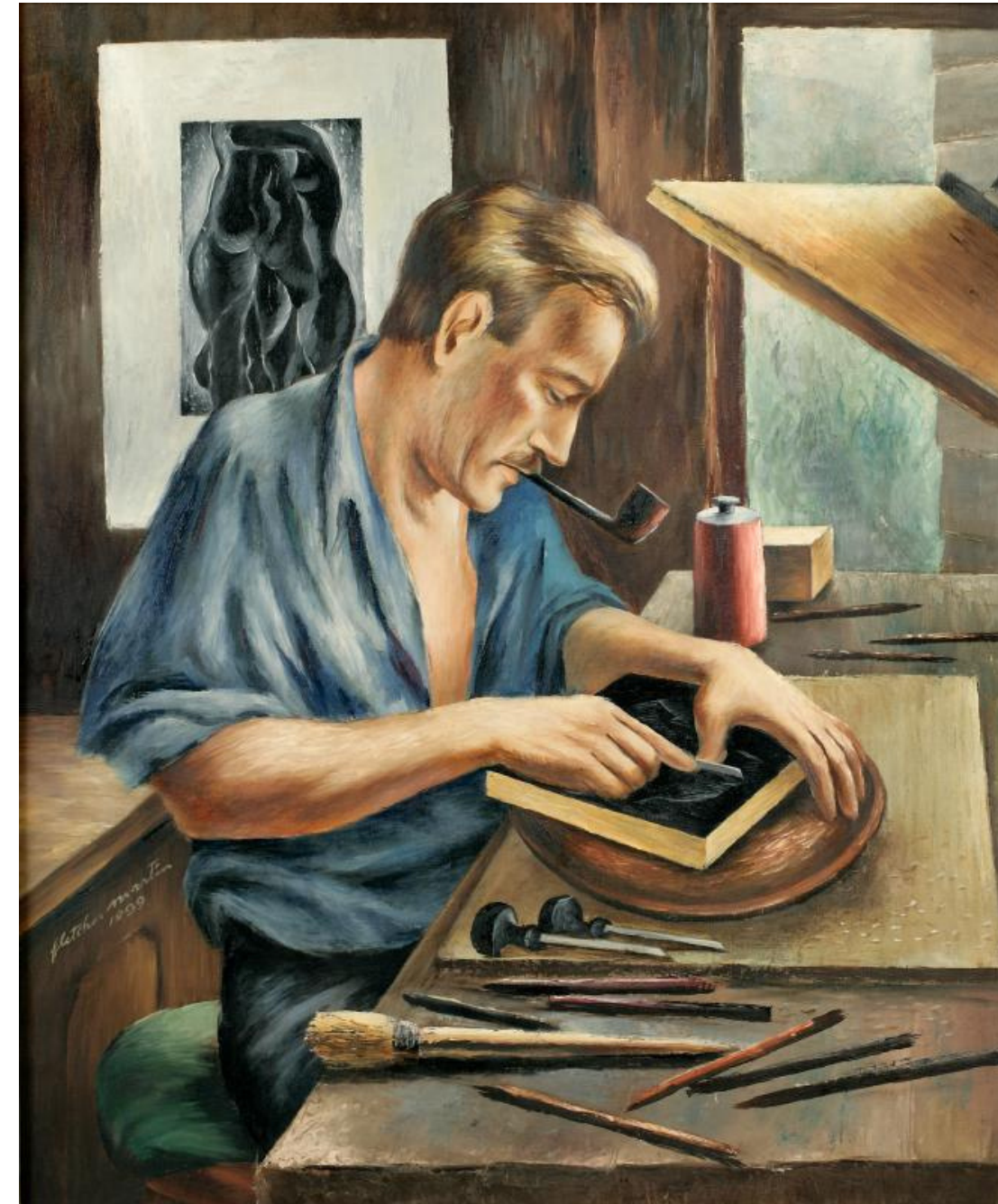
The artist's early wood engravings were composed with sweeping, parallel lines to describe the sensuous curves of a hillside or a nude figure. By the early to mid-1930s, he had refined his technique to a highly personal method of precise, meticulous cutting and fine crosshatching. Progressing even further beyond traditional woodcutting methods and towards greater abstraction, he used a multitude of different strokes of the burin to create sinuous lines and subtle textures and patterns. The striking clarity and beauty of his compositions, which contrast brilliant whites with velvety deep blacks, endowed his prints with a modernity that was unusual in other American or European wood engravings of the period.

Landacre's sales of wood engravings were supplemented by commercial work in book illustration, but the Depression years created financial hardships. A small group of generous friends organized the Paul Landacre Association, and subscribers paid \$100 per year to receive a new Landacre print each month. During a three-year period, these collectors received such treasures as *The Press*, *Counterpoint*, *The Shell*, and *Hill*.



Landacre intended the editions of many of his early prints to be 50 or 60, and occasionally, when there was popular demand for a particular print, he began a second edition. But due to the demanding task of printing, his editions were usually incomplete; moreover, he customarily signed his prints only upon sale. Impressions remaining in his studio after his untimely death in 1963, sometimes unsigned, bear an estate stamp of a petrel cipher and on the verso, a stamp of Origins of Art, the gallery that inventoried the estate. Apart from a few larger published editions, he pulled all of his wood engravings on a 19th-century Washington Hand Press, which he restored after it was found in an abandoned newspaper office. He preferred a soft, fibrous, white, or thin beige Japanese paper, which better absorbed the thick black ink.

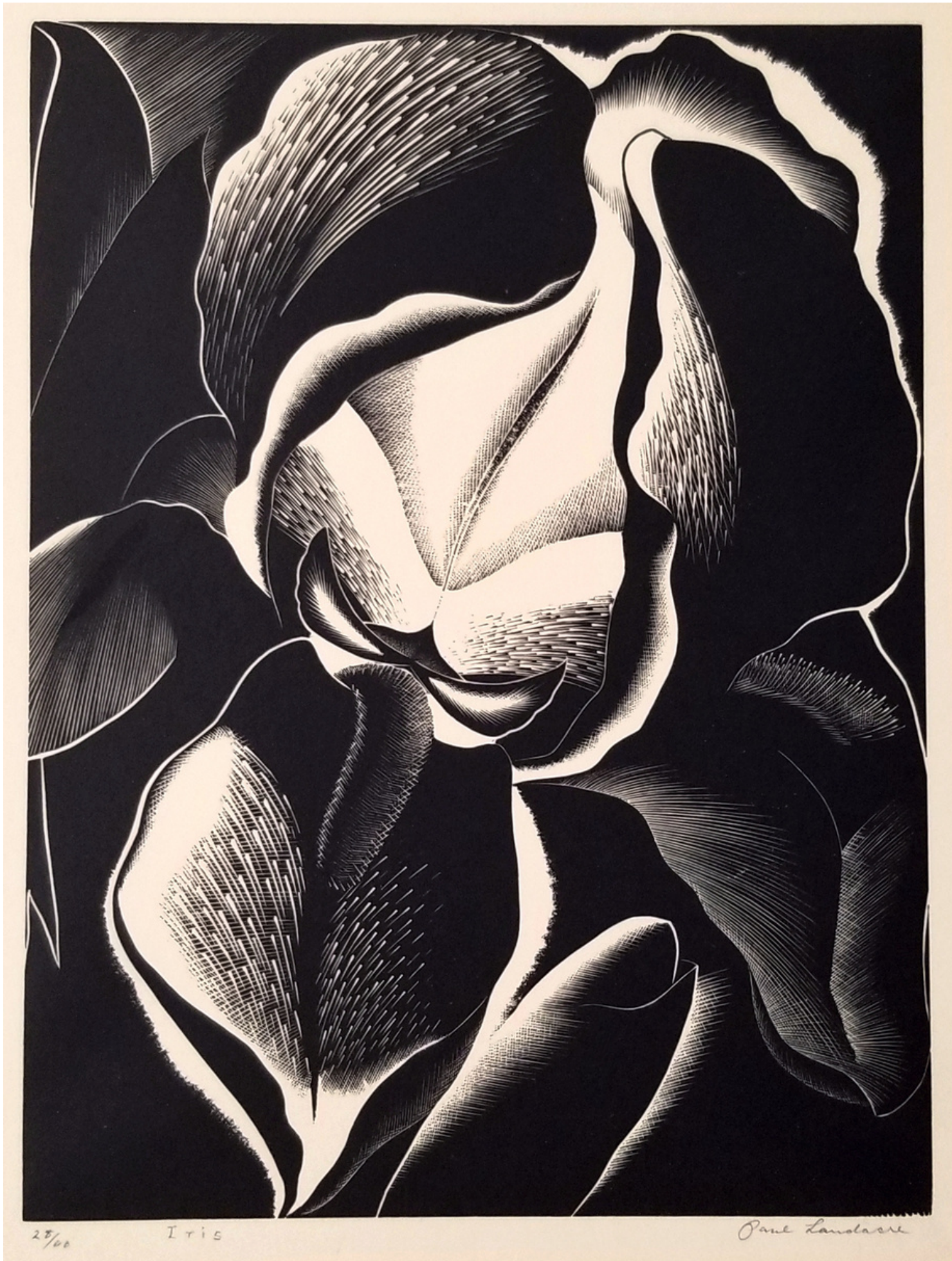
Landacre's prints are represented in the collections of most major museums, including the Smithsonian American Art Museum, New York Museum of Modern Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the Achenbach Foundation of Graphic Arts. Anthony Lehman's biography, entitled *Paul Landacre: A Life and a Legacy*, was published in 1983. A catalogue raisonné of his prints will be available in 2024.



*Paul Landacre*, by Fletcher Martin (1939)

Oil on canvas  
30 × 25 in.



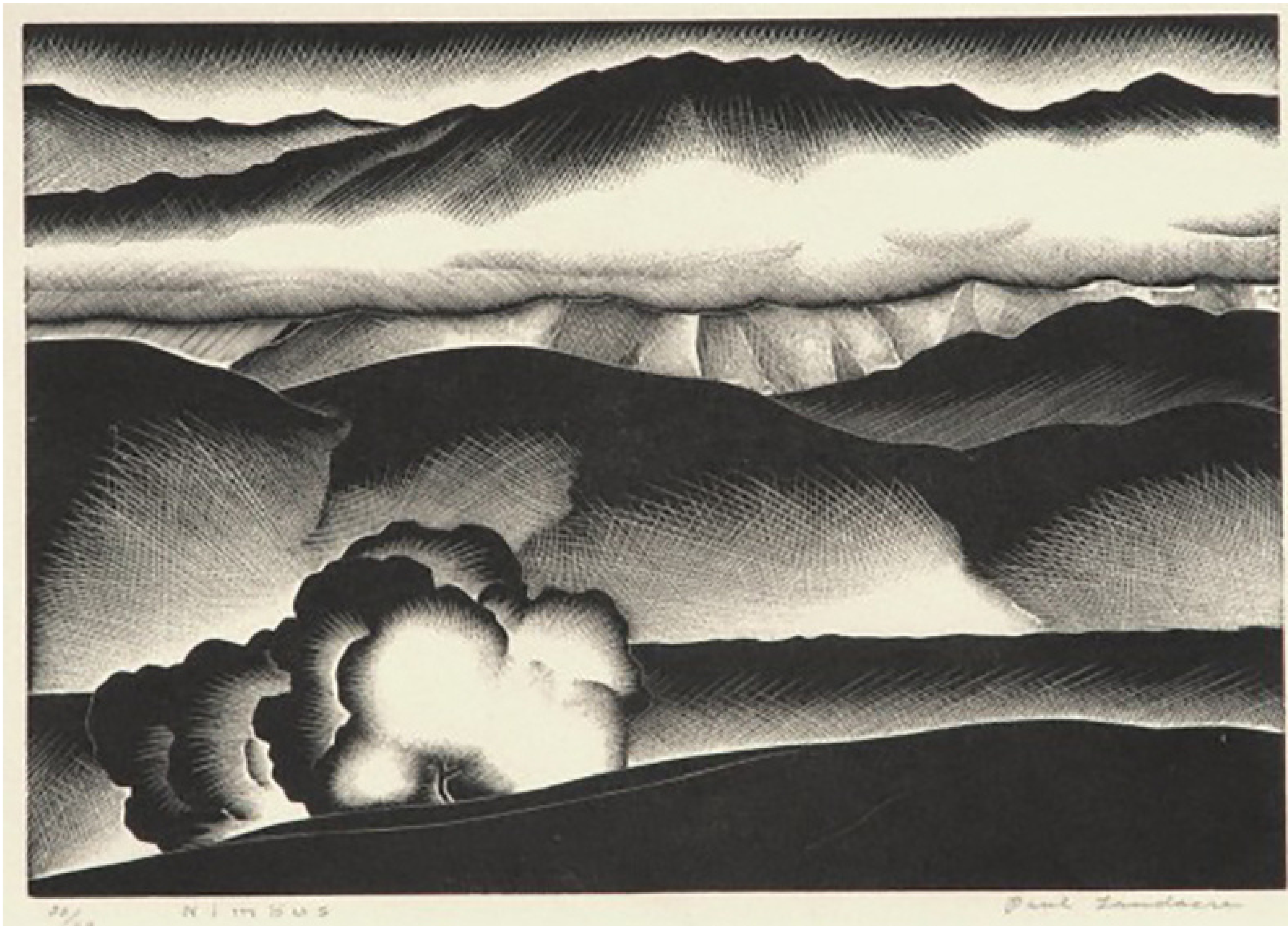


## *Iris*, 1934

Zeitlin & Ver Brugge 38; Wien 150. Wood engraving on wove paper with full margins. One of only 34 signed impressions (the total edition was 60). Rare. Signed, titled, and numbered 28/60 in pencil. Excellent condition. 8 x 6 inches | 20.3 x 15.2 cm

Similar signed original impressions of "Iris" are included in the collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art and The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens.





## Nimbus, 1934

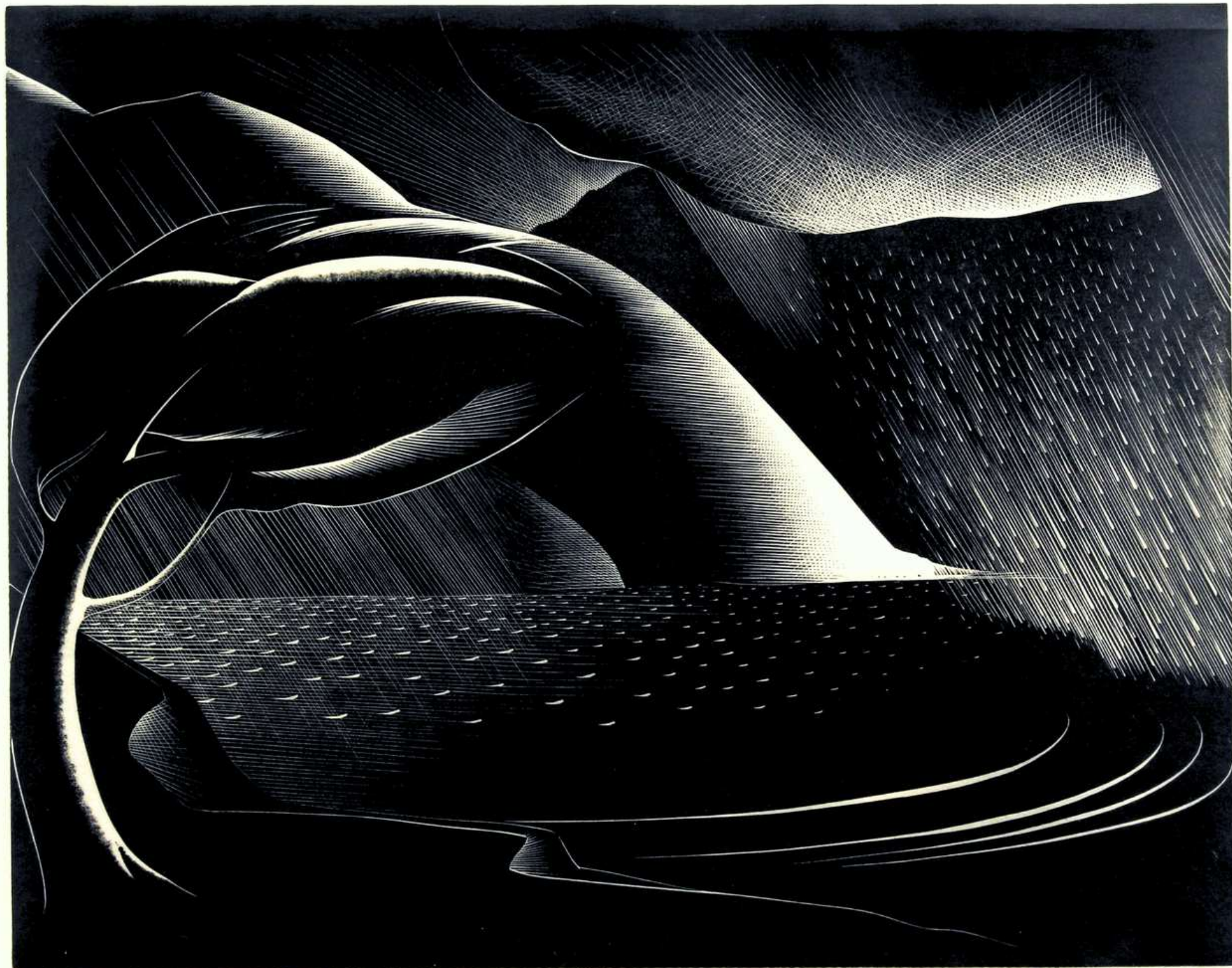
Wien 149. Wood engraving on laid Japanese paper, full margins.

First edition of 60 (the second edition was never completed). Very rare.

Signed, titled and numbered 22/60 in pencil.

5 1/4 x 7 1/2 in.





32/60

S t o r m

Gene Landacre

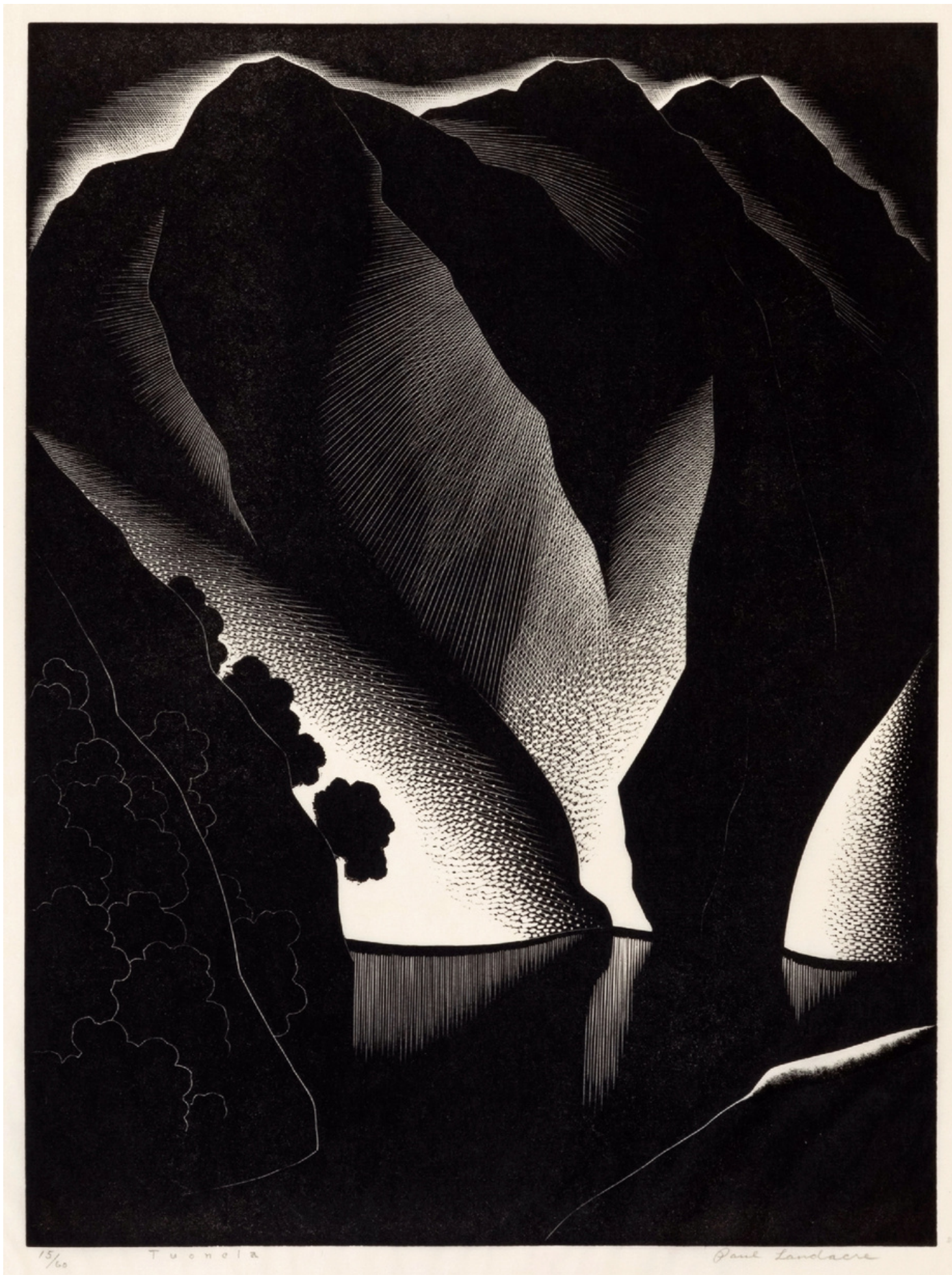
## Storm, 1934

Wien 156. Wood engraving on laid Japanese paper, full margins. First edition of 60 (there were also 31 in a second edition). Rare. Signed, titled, and numbered 7/60 in pencil. 8 x 10 1/4 inches | 20.32 x 26.04 cm

This rare wood engraving is in fine condition apart from a pale sign of an earlier mat. Hilary Roberts wrote that what makes Landacre's work so appealing is the balance between his exacting perfection of line on the one hand and the unrestrained exhilaration in his forms on the other.

Storm is one of Landacre's best and most sought-after prints. He was interested in dramatic weather and *Storm* reflects his move towards greater abstraction than his earlier, more traditional California landscapes. He has taken the artistic liberty to combine various natural elements: rain, clouds, a lake, a windblown tree, and a mountain ridge. He has continued the beautiful curve of the tree with the sunlit ridge of a mountain, a diagonal which extends to the upper left of the composition. With this landscape, Landacre was not trying to reproduce a specific location, and instead, he reduced the composition to organic, sinuous forms, which are sensitively rendered with his meticulous woodcutting technique.



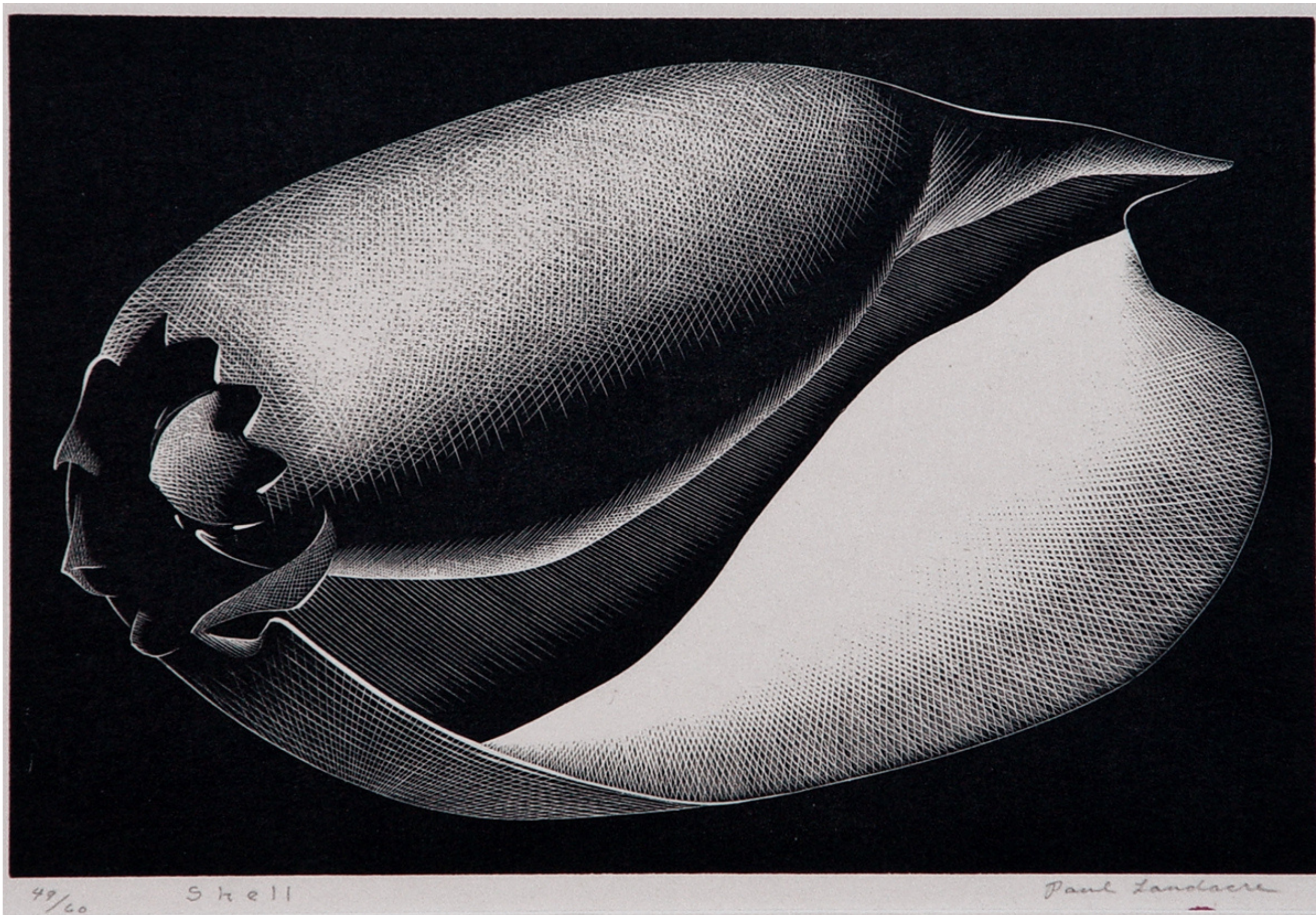


## Tuonela, 1934

Wien 152. Wood engraving on laid Japanese Kitakata paper, full margins. First edition of 60 (there were 60 in the first edition and only 17 in the second edition). The first block broke early in the edition and the second block has a simpler, more refined composition. Signed, titled, and numbered 15/60 in pencil.

10 1/4 x 7 1/2 inches | 26 x 19.1 cm





## Shell, 1935

Wien 160 iii/iii. Wood engraving printed on wove japanese paper, full margins. One of 54 in the rare first edition (there were also 10 signed and 12 unsigned impressions in a second edition). Rare. Signed, titled and numbered in pencil. 4 5/8 x 7 7/8 in.; 11.75 x 20 cm.

Shell is an exceptional example of Landacre's technical virtuosity in wood engraving. The organic, sensual forms and dramatic contrast of dark and light attest to the mutual influence of the photographer Edward Weston and the painter Henrietta Shore, all three part of an artistic and literary circle in Los Angeles in the 1930s.





## Sultry Day, 1935

Wien 170 i/ii. Wood engraving on laid Japanese paper, full margins. From the rare signed first edition of 60 (there were also 7 signed and 8 unsigned impressions before the unsigned published edition of ca. 200). Signed, titled and numbered in pencil.

8 x 6 in.; 20.3 x 15.2 cm.

Sultry Day features Margaret and Smoky, the artist's wife and their Maltese cat, relaxing in the seclusion of their rustic hillside home and garden. (Wien)





## Sultry Day, 1935

Edition of ca. 200-225 published by the American Artists Group, New York, 1937. Wien 170 ii/ii. Wood engraving on wove paper with partial watermark, full margins. With the four-page presentation folio  
8 x 6 in.; 20.3 x 15.2 cm.



## Graphite drawing

Image: 20.1 x 15.4 (7 7/8 x 6), sheet: 30.3 x 22.9 (12 x 9) (cream smooth wove paper).  
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Courtesy of Jake Milgram Wien, Paul Landacre: California Hills and Beyond. A Catalogue Raisonné of the Prints, Drawings, and Paintings (forthcoming).





## Coachella Valley, 1936

Wein 180. Wood engraving on wove paper, watermarked JAPAN with full margins. Signed, titled, and numbered II 25/150 in pencil.

6 x 12 3/16 inches | 15.2 x 31 cm



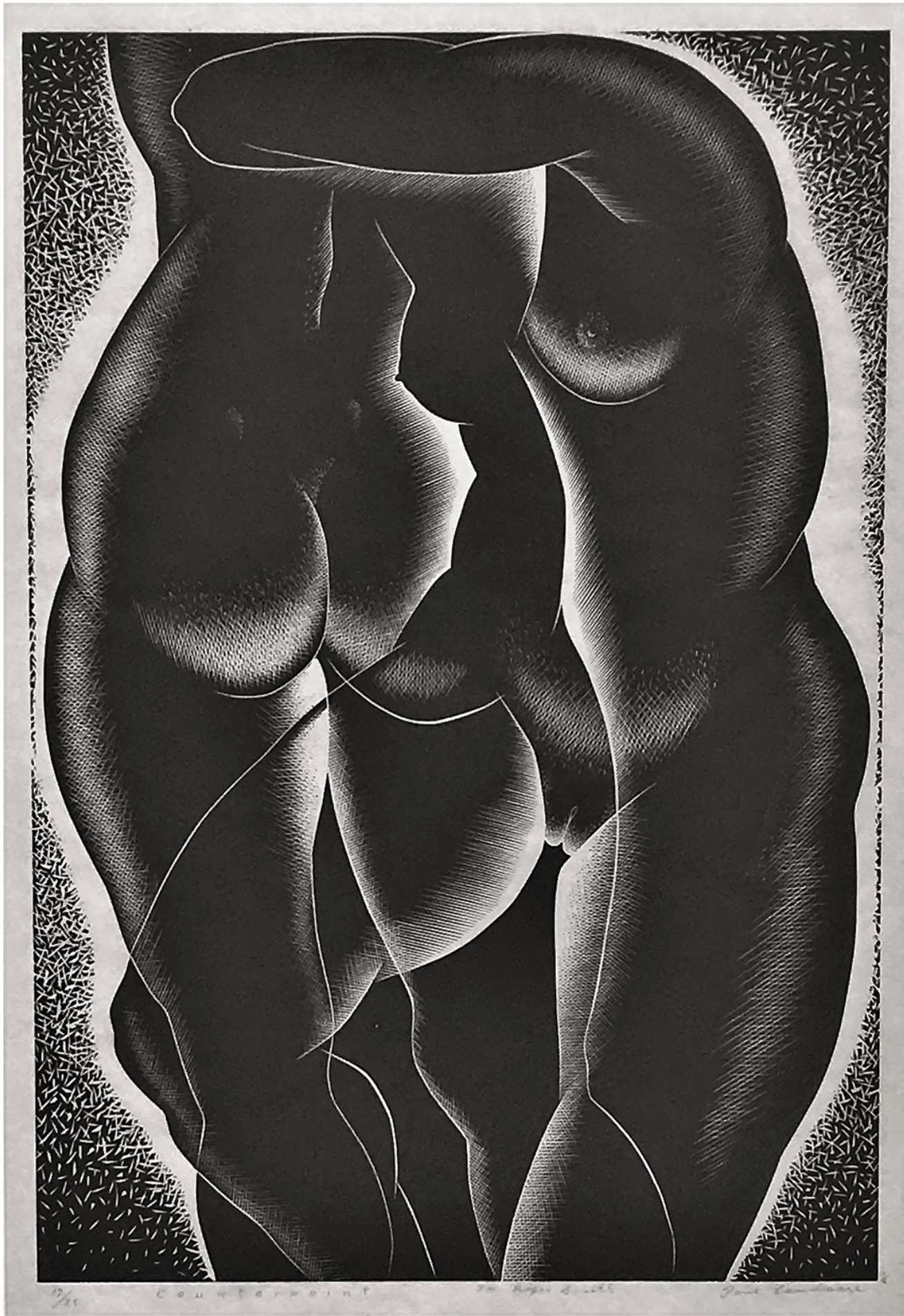


## *Death of a Forest, 1937*

Wien 204 i/iii, before additional highlights were added to the foreground and sky. Wood engraving on wove japanese paper, full margins. First trial proof printed by the artist, before the edition of 60. Rare. Titled lower left and annotated "Trial I" by the artist and the original artist's stamp verso.

8 1/4 x 11 inches | 20.96 x 27.94 cm



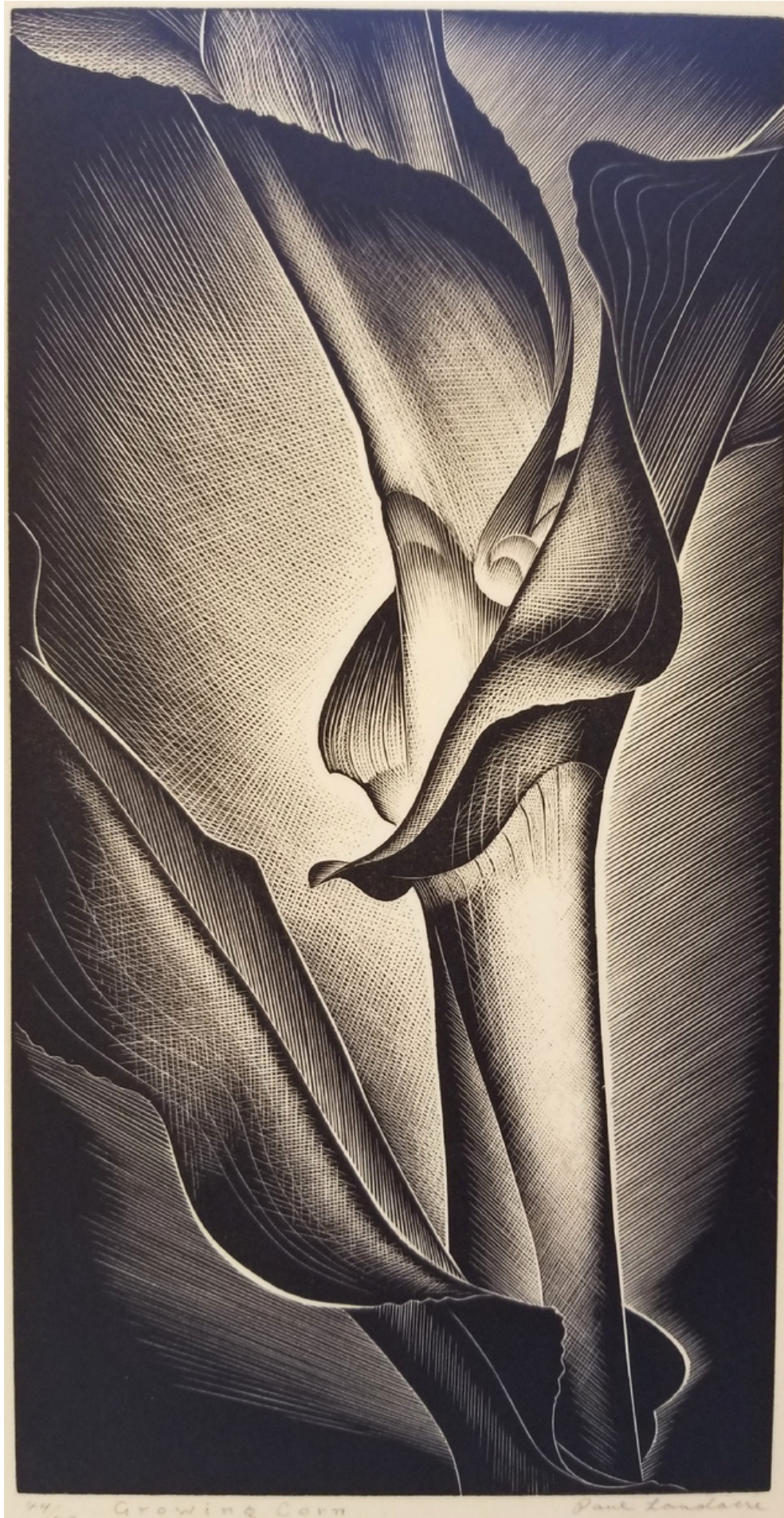


## *Counterpoint, 1938*

Wien 216 iii/iv, before the initials PL added. Wood engraving on laid Japanese paper, full margins. One of 24 signed impressions in the first edition (there were also 21 in a second edition and 8 signed and 7 unsigned in a third edition). Very rare. Signed, titled, numbered 25/25, and inscribed "For my wife" in pencil. Inscribed in the lower right margin "For ML". Origins of Art stamp verso.

12 x 8 1/4 in; 30.5 x 21 cm.





## *Growing Corn, 1938*

Wien 209 ii/ii. Wood engraving on wove japanese paper, full margins.

Rare first edition of 60 (according to Wien, there were 59 signed impressions in the first edition and 7 in the second).

8 3/4 x 4 1/2 in.

## Charcoal drawing

Cream wove paper watermarked *Reliable* removed from sketchbook along perforated left edge.

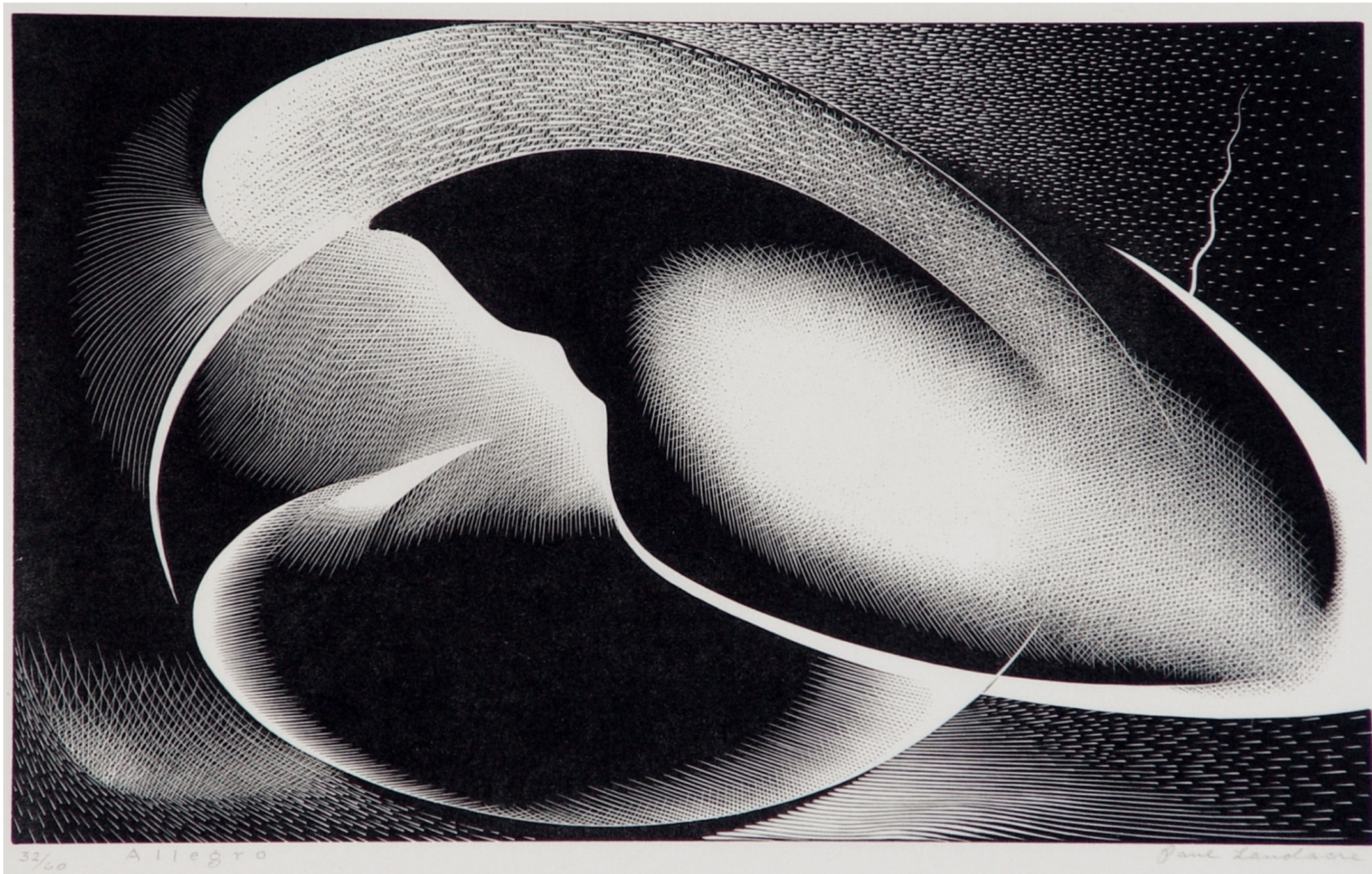
Sheet: 25.2 x 19.9 (9 15/16 x 7 7/16)

NFS

Courtesy of Jake Milgram Wien, *Paul Landacre: California Hills and Beyond. A Catalogue Raisonné of the Prints, Drawings, and Paintings* (forthcoming).







## *Allegro*, 1938

Wien 215. Wood engraving on wove japanese paper, full margins.

Edition of 60 (but only 45 were printed). Very rare.

Signed, titled and numbered 32/60 in pencil.

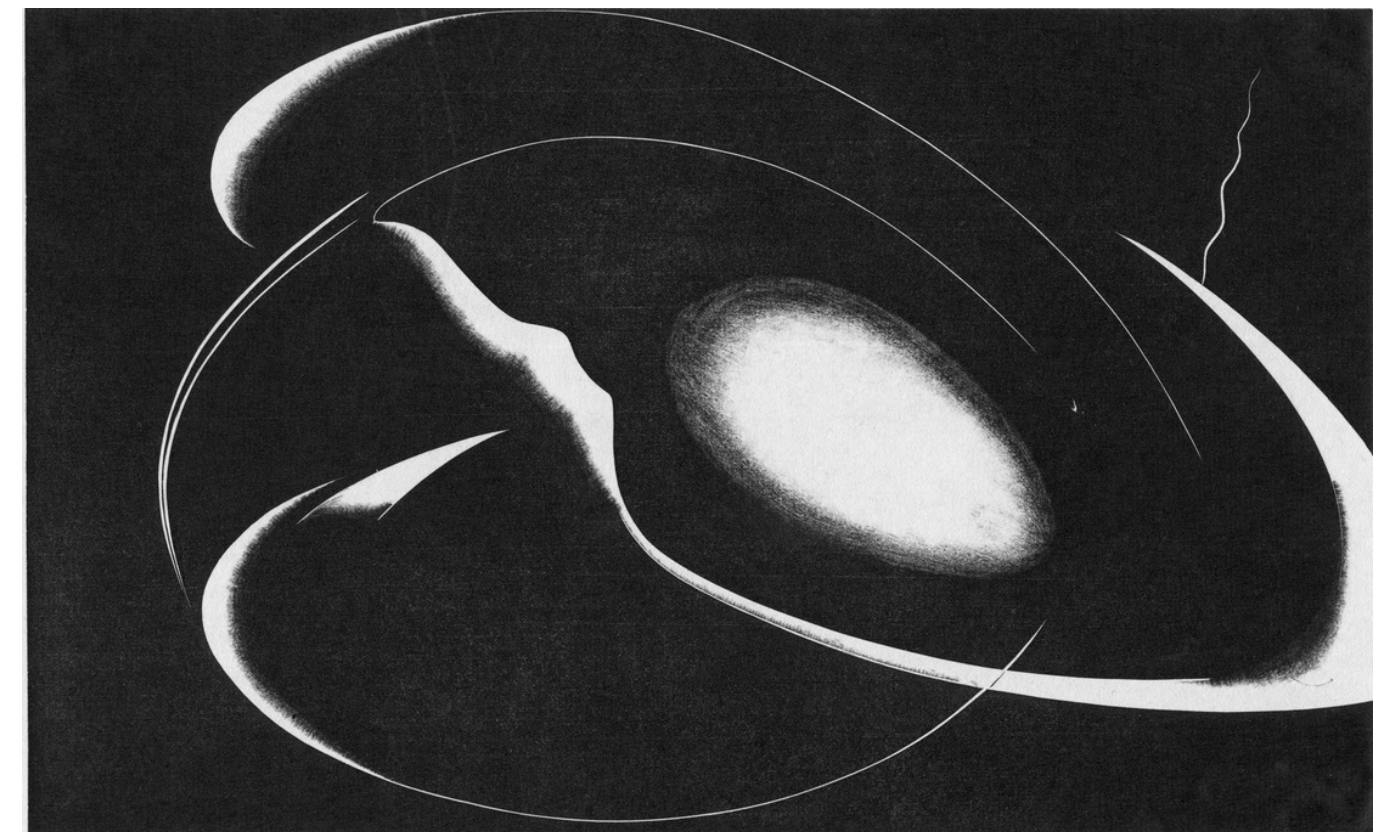
6 x 9 7/8 in. 6 x 9 7/8 in.

## Slate I

Sheets: 27 x 34.3 (10 5/8 x 13 1/2) thin beige Japanese laid paper.

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Courtesy Jake Milgram Wien, Paul Landacre: California Hills and Beyond. A Catalogue Raisonné of the Prints, Drawings, and Paintings (forthcoming).







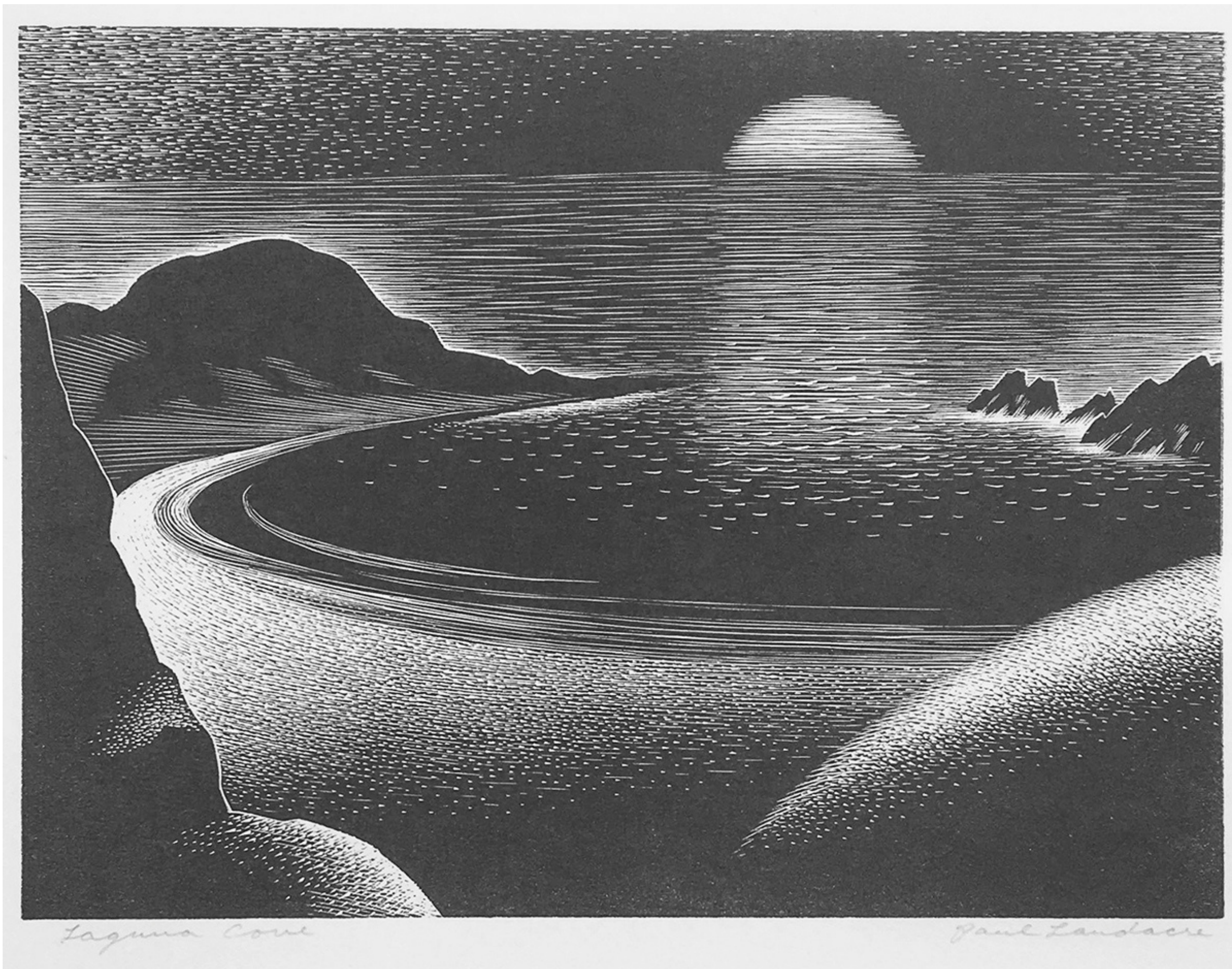
## *Yesterday, 1940*

Wien 237. Wood engraving on wove japanese paper, full margins. Edition of 60. Very rare.

Signed, titled and numbered 33/60 in pencil.

9 3/8 x 6 1/4 in.; 23.81 x 15.88 cm.





## *Laguna Cove, 1941*

Wien 247. Wood engraving on wove  
japanese paper.

Edition of 200 published for the Woodcut  
Society of Kansas City, 1941.

Signed and titled in pencil.

5 1/4 x 7 1/8 in.; 13.34 x 18.1 cm.