

# John Koerner

(Canadian, 1913 - 2014)



*The Lighthouse (134), 2012*  
etching, ed. 50  
image: 7" x 5.25"  
paper: 11" x 9.25"

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Born in 1913, Koerner grew up on the outskirts of Prague in a family that controlled a major lumber business. After studying law and art in Prague and Paris, his family began to suspect their business would not be immune from the rising threat from Adolf Hitler in the late 1930s, so the family bought a mill in New Westminster. He began painting full time in 1950, while teaching art, first at the Vancouver School of Art and then UBC. His legacy is the extraordinary measure of artwork he created over his lifetime, collections which adorn galleries around the world, including The Vancouver Art Gallery, Tate Gallery in London and the National Gallery in Ottawa. The last of his exhibitions was a 60 Year Retrospective at the Elliott Louis Gallery in Vancouver and included works from his Pacific Gateway series. In the series, Koerner explored the multiple meanings of the word Pacific as both peaceful and a body of water and of the gateway as a symbol of stepping out of this world into another reality. The paintings have a contemplative, meditative quality to them, much like the artist himself. Of his work entitled Lotus, he once said: "The idea is that the lotus unfolds in a small pond — that's the same as a person's soul."

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Etching is an example of intaglio. Intaglio derives its name from the Italian intagliare, meaning to incise. Copper or zinc plates have a waxy ground applied to them, and an incising tool called a scribe is used to penetrate the ground. The plate is immersed in an acid bath, where the acid bites into the incised lines to emphasize them. When the plate is ready for inking, the ground is removed and the entire plate is covered in ink. The plate is then wiped clean on the surface and printed on damp paper, where the paper is forced into the etched lines and picks up the remaining ink, resulting in an image.

For more information on this work, or any of the prints from the AFK Editions, please contact:

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604-903-3798

[afkinfo@sd44.ca](mailto:afkinfo@sd44.ca)



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