

# PEYTON WRIGHT

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## Clinton Adams

(American Painter and Print-maker, 1918-2002)

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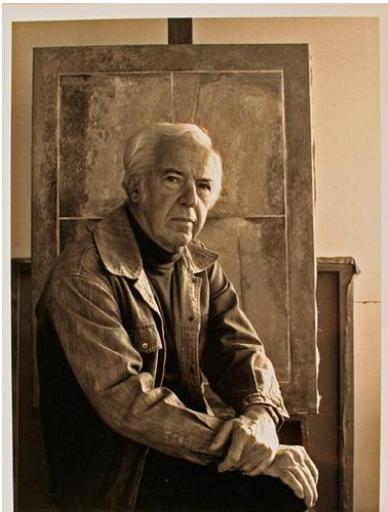


Photo courtesy of the Clinton Adams Estate

Clinton Adams was born in Glendale, California, in 1918, and began his career as an artist and teacher at the University of California, Los Angeles. He received his Bachelor of Education and Masters degrees there before going on to teach in the art department from 1946 to 1954. While at UCLA, Adams formed relationships with many of the pioneers of California Modernism, including Stanton Macdonald-Wright, Lorser Feitelson, John McLaughlin, and others. From there, he went on to head the art departments at the Universities of Kentucky and Florida, before moving to Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1961. He was the Dean of Fine Arts at the University of New Mexico from 1961 to 1976. He continued to live in Albuquerque until his death in 2002.

Adams began his artistic career primarily as a painter. However, while at UCLA, Adams met the Los Angeles printer Lynton Kistler, who introduced Adams to print-making and lithography. Kistler also introduced Adams to the lithographer

June Wayne who, in 1960, founded the Tamarind Lithography Workshop in Los Angeles, a workshop devoted to the exploration of the medium of print-making and to the training of master lithographers. In 1970, the Tamarind Workshop moved to the University of New Mexico and became the Tamarind Institute, where Adams became its director. He directed the Institute until 1985.

Adams was a scholar, as well as an artist and teacher. From 1974 to 1990, he founded and edited the Tamarind Papers, a scholarly journal devoted to historical, critical and technical articles on prints and print-making. He contributed extensively to other journals, such as *Print Quarterly*, and authored numerous authoritative books on the subject of print-making, including *American Lithographers: 1900-1960: The Artists and their Printers*; *Crayonstone: The Life and Work of Bolton Brown*; and *The Tamarind Book of Lithography: Art and Techniques*.

Adams' work has been exhibited in more than 60 solo exhibitions and many public collections, including the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Brooklyn Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Los Angeles County Museum of American Art. His numerous honors include his election to the National Academy of Design in 1987, the Southern Graphic Council's Printmaker-Emeritus Award in 1998, and the Governor's Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Arts of New Mexico in 1985.

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Adams' early work is strongly cubist in style, with a particular focus on architectural form and structure. This architectural sensibility is also prominent in his later work, along with the use of "vibrant and translucent colors, reminiscent of the sparkling California and Mediterranean climes and brilliant light of New Mexico that he loved", according to Tobey Moss, a long-time friend of Adams. Van Deren Coke, founding director of the UNM Art Museum observed that Adams' works "are not a string of individual pictures, but the collective results of a growing confidence in his ability to make his hand follow his mind...a unity of pared-down forms and delicate tone shifts, a sense of movement across the plane of his pictures and into the space beyond. The choice of adjacent colors...the sure but not static interlocking of forms...[evoke] a sense of joyous vitality...His paintings open doors to the pleasures of simplicity and enhance our powers of imagination".