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## Emotion and Fantasy Are My Favorite Subject Matter

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Drawing, 12 by 16 inches. Carlos Llerena Aguirre, 1982.

# Emotion and Fantasy Are My Favorite Subject Matter

*Carlos Llerena Aguirre*



Photo by Vera A. Lentz

Carlos Llerena Aguirre is a Visiting Adjunct Professor at the College of Visual and Performing Arts, Syracuse University. He was educated in Lima, Peru, and received additional art

training at the Ringling School of Art, Florida, and the School of Visual Arts in New York. He was recently awarded a master's degree from Hunter College. Professor Aguirre has exhibited widely in the United States and regularly contributes illustrations to the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Harper's*, and other major publications. His most recent book is *Talking Bones* (1978).

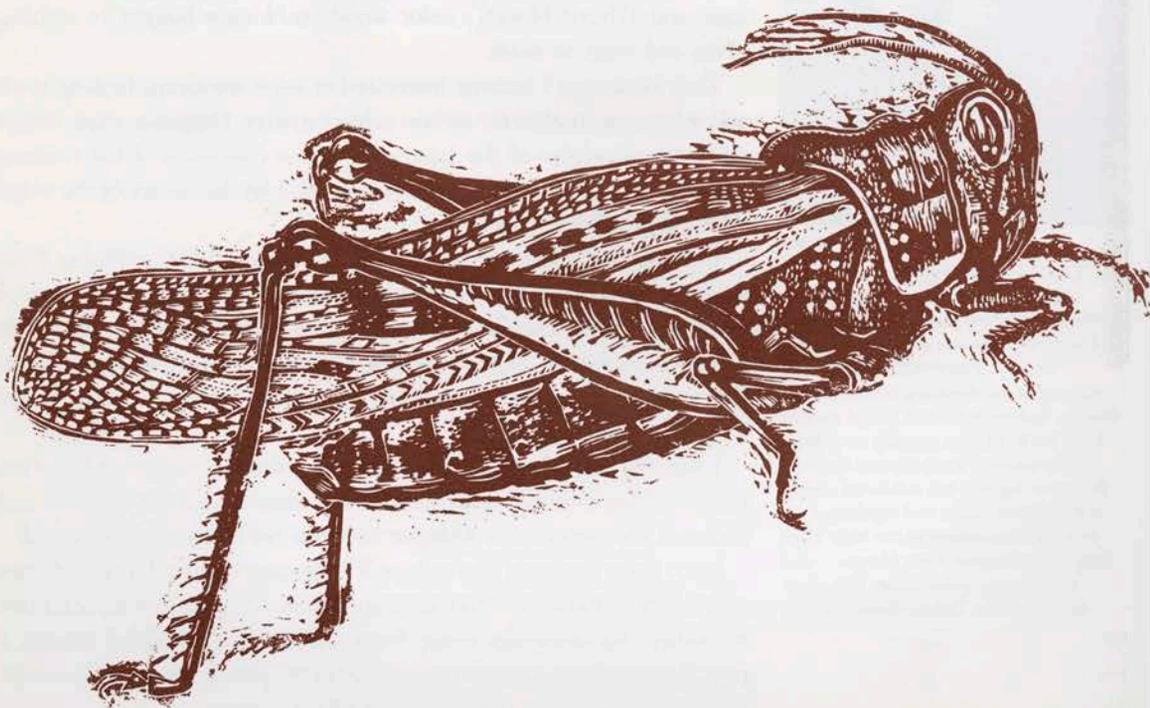
I had a neoimpressionist education. Painting and drawing were my only love, and I thought printing was too rough and lacking in fine detail. It was only when I visited Europe in 1975 that I realized the full potential of the printed image. There was something magical about seeing Rembrandt's house—the preparatory brush drawings, the engraving tools, the handmade press, the innumerable trial proofs. I was also inspired by Heinrich Kley's drawings, Max Klinger's engravings, and Edvard Munch's color woodcuts. I soon bought an etching press and went to work.

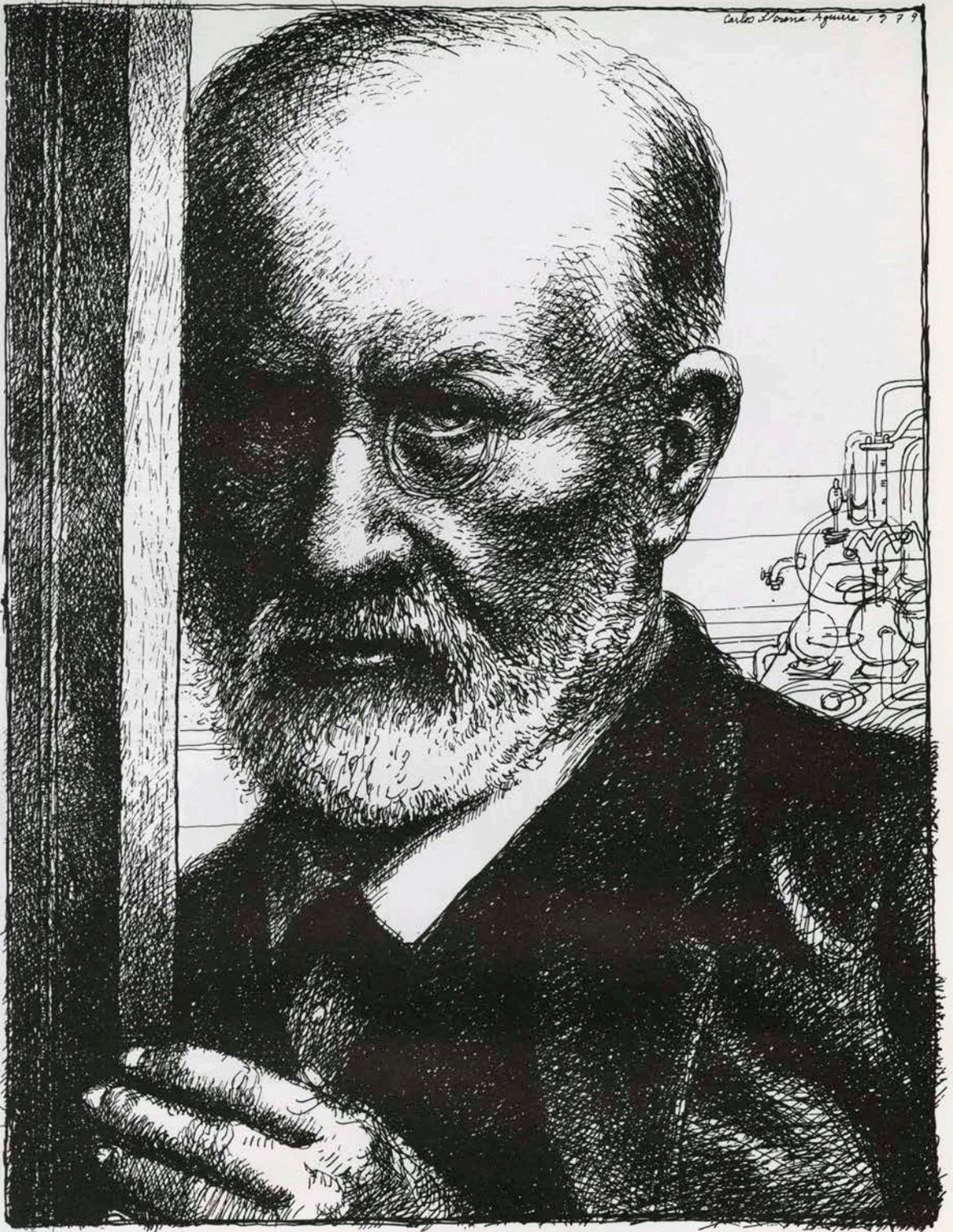
That same year I became interested in color woodcuts, finding black and white too somber for certain subject matter. I began to experiment with the principles of the Japanese *ukiyo-e* ("pictures of the floating world"). Zen philosophy was very helpful; I let the nature of the wood flow along with my own.

Emotion and fantasy are my favorite subject matter, whether I am working on my own or on assignment for a publication. The emotional content is more significant for me than technical ability, which is simply the means to express an idea. I do not believe in perfect editions. Every print is unique, not only in color combination but also in the feeling of time and space.

I use my work as an instrument of communication. Publication allows millions to view a print within a short time of its creation and becomes the means of a dialogue between the artist and the world.

Since I was fourteen I have kept a daily visual journal. I record lines and colors, fantasies and passions, and my honest and intense reactions to reality. My drawings come from within, like a waking dream, a psychic experience that remains linked to the physical world. This is the source of my art and the beginning of every picture.





Facing page, above: "Isaac Stern," woodcut, 19 by 17 inches. Carlos Llerena Aguirre, 1980.

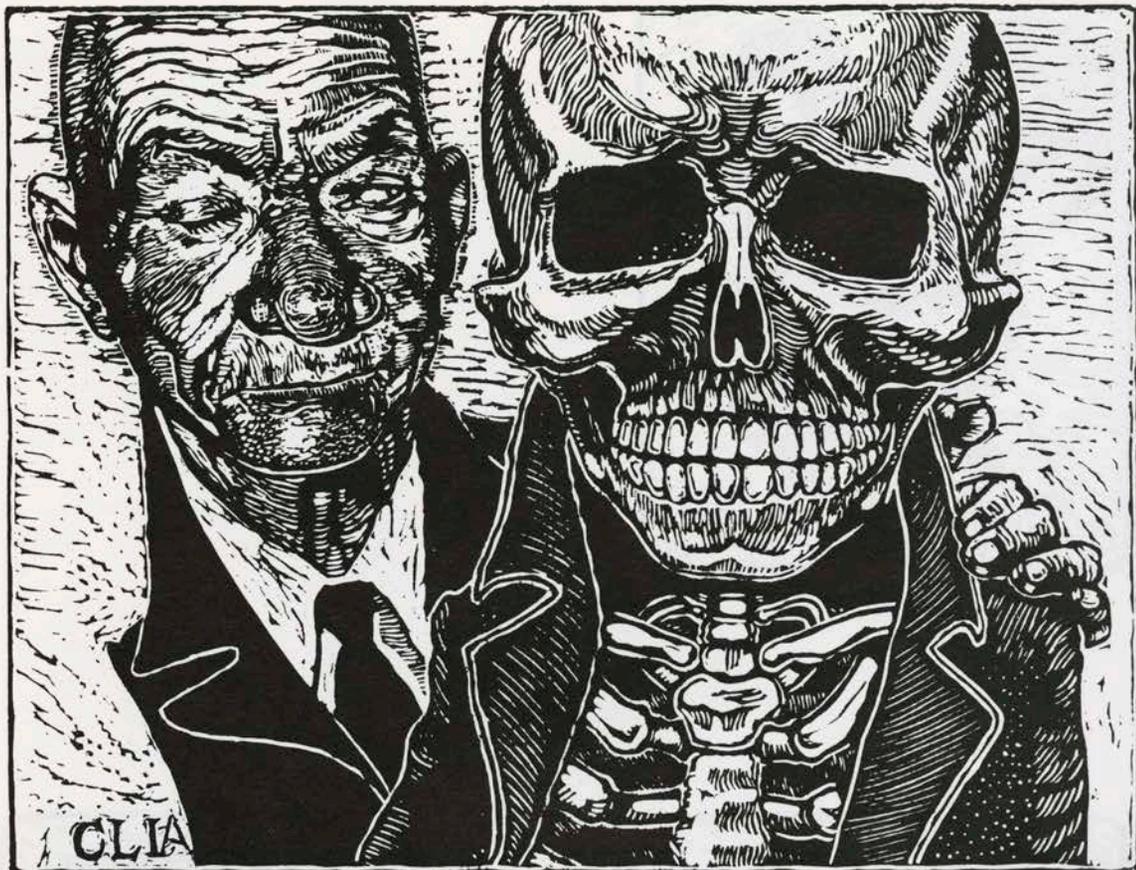
Facing page, below: Woodcut for the *New York Times*. Carlos Llerena Aguirre, 1982.

Above: Drawing for *Science* '80. Carlos Llerena Aguirre, 1980.



Above: Woodcut for the *New York Times*. Carlos Llerena Aguirre, 1975.  
Facing page: Two woodcuts for the *Village Voice*. Carlos Llerena Aguirre, 1976.





Above: Woodcut for *Ms.* magazine.  
Carlos Llerena Aguirre, 1975.

Right: Engraving. Carlos Llerena Aguirre, 1971.

Facing page, above: Woodcut for *Psychology Today*.  
Carlos Llerena Aguirre, 1980.

Facing page, below: Woodcut for the *New York Times*.  
Carlos Llerena Aguirre, 1978.



