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DULUTH--Because they are easily and rather inexpensively duplicated, art prints have been called the most democratic and socially influential form of art in man's history.

In the current 113-work exhibition in UMD's Tweed gallery, 2531 East Seventh street, viewers may find many evidences confirming that statement. Regular gallery hours are 1 to 5 p.m. daily except Mondays.

On loan from the IBM department of arts and sciences, the exhibition, entitled "Three Centuries of Printmaking in America," offers not only an opportunity to study technical and artistic development of prints but also social, political and moral developments in America over a 300-year span.

A print by William Charles, "John Bull Making Another Batch of Ships," derides Britain's futile efforts to stem the tide of the American onslaught in the war of 1812.

William Bennett's "City of Washington," depicts the capital following the Revolution. Bass Otis' "Mill Scene" provides bucolic relief from war and violence.

Among 19th century works are Mielatz's "In the Bowery," a portrayal of New York's Broadway of that day; Maurer's "Preparing for Market," a rural subject, and Paimer's "American Farm Scene."

World War commentary is found in Stephen Csoka's forlorn "Fatherless," a work describing a mother and her son in a war-torn landscape, and George Grosz's "Street Corner," a glimpse of a seething city corner whose distraught denizens include a legless, blind veteran.

Among the works is one of the first historical prints in America and the first American lithographs produced on American stone.

According to Tweed Curator Orazio Fumagalli, the exhibition is one of the finest efforts made to bring together a representative group of prints illustrating the historical development of three major classes of print making--intaglio, relief and planographic.

Few significant artists in the medium have been omitted as America's enduring contribution to the vast history of prints is dramatically shown, Fumagalli notes.

John Taylor Arms, president-emeritus of the Society of American Etchers, Gravers, Lithographers and Woodcutters, has commented:

"The exhibition offers an unusual opportunity to trace the spiritual and technical development of graphic art in our country from the first hesitant beginnings . . . to its full flowering today, when the American school is probably, for vigor and variety of approach, second to none in the world."