

Splash : Large Scale Prints Exhibition Essay

This exhibition explores modern screen print technique overlaid with the development of modernist 20th century aesthetic distinguished by the individual artist voice. This selection from the Turner Print Collection also demonstrates the range of technical delivery available with this technique.

The looser, more hand drawn delivery of David Salle is juxtaposed to the broad yet confined color areas seen in Patrick Caulfield's work, the "Jug " series. Aligned with Caulfield are Andy Warhol's "Soup Can" and Robert Motherwell's "Africa 1", iconic images floating in space that Salle fills with the immediacy of a graphic image demonstrating a different spatial construct while flattening the picture plane. Each of these artists is so distinctive so not to be confused and yet they demonstrate how diversity in aesthetics plays a part of modern art in the 20th century.

What Motherwell, Caulfield and Warhol share is asking the viewer to accept the nature and the representative iconography of the common object. How they make that object speak to a dialog that is bigger, or not past common experience? They rely on our joined experience, willingness to accept outside

our norms and acknowledgement our part of what will be art history. What we see are artists that use color to not only define space but what they want the viewer to see as image, content and space.

Scale and screen printing were determining factors in selection for this exhibition and what is shown is a group of artists who understand both. Since screen printing allows color to play a major role, the other concern was how those artistic compositional elements support the individual artistic vision? With Dali's "Lincoln in Dalivision" he worked from his painting "Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean-Homage to Rothko" to re-envision a painting with a new impact in its reworking for both lithographs and screen prints. The original painting needed 20 meters to see the buried face of Lincoln. Its small format squares are compiled to create a big image.

Shimomura and Garbutt share the narrative and the border of color typical of Japanese woodblock prints. Their personal addition to the genre is use of subject with its personal vision enlarged by the opportunity of scale afforded by screen printmaking.

Richard Hamilton's "Kent State" not only marries political immediacy with the use of photo process but also underscores the artist as a reflection of his or her society.

It is fortunate the Turner Print Collection allows for showing these relevant artists together as well as introducing artists we may be less familiar with.

Catherine Sullivan, Curator

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