

EYE ON EUROPE: PRINTS, BOOKS & MULTIPLES/1960 TO NOW IS THE FIRST MUSEUM EXHIBITION TO TRACE THE RECENT HISTORY OF PRINTED ART IN EUROPE

Exhibition Explores a Highly Significant but Lesser Known Facet of Contemporary Art

Eye on Europe: Prints, Books & Multiples/1960 to Now

The International Council Gallery, sixth floor

The Paul J. Sachs Prints and Illustrated Books Galleries, second floor

October 15, 2006–January 1, 2007

New York, October 10, 2006—The Museum of Modern Art presents *Eye on Europe: Prints, Books & Multiples/1960 to Now*, an exhibition that identifies major developments in the mediums of prints, books, and multiples in Europe over the past 45 years. The exhibition begins with the explosion of the Pop art screenprint in the early 1960s, and the introduction of artist's books and multiples in that decade. It then proceeds to recent years and highlights strategies embraced by European artists working now, with their subversive approaches to the poster, reinterpretations of the traditional woodcut, and renewed fascination with wallpaper. *Eye on Europe* is the first major museum exhibition to explore this highly significant but lesser-known facet of contemporary art.

Eye on Europe: Prints, Books & Multiples/1960 to Now—comprising over 350 prints, books, and multiples by 118 European artists, collectives, and journals—draws work from both domestic and international collections, and includes many new MoMA acquisitions on view for the first time. The exhibition is organized by Deborah Wye, The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Chief Curator, and Wendy Weitman, Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, The Museum of Modern Art. *Eye on Europe* is on view in The International Council Gallery, sixth floor, and The Paul J. Sachs Prints and Illustrated Books Galleries, second floor, including adjacent public areas, from October 15, 2006, through January 1, 2007.

As Ms. Wye explains, "This exhibition focuses attention on artistic developments in Europe since the 1960s, highlighting a change in sensibility at that time and demonstrating ways in which the mediums of prints, books, and multiples enriched this artistic discourse."

Ms. Weitman continues, "With a long and distinguished tradition of printmaking to reflect upon and respond to, European artists' innovative approaches to the artistic ideas of this dynamic period challenge preconceptions about printed and editioned art in particular, and contemporary art overall."

The 1960s in Europe marked a turning point in contemporary art that was distinguished by a challenge to the dominance of gestural abstract painting and by the rise of alternative art practices, including a variety of accessible, multiple art forms that fostered new distribution

systems. Artists across national boundaries turned to popular culture for fresh subject matter and approaches, as seen in Richard Hamilton's screenprint *Release* (1972), based on a newspaper photograph depicting his art dealer and The Rolling Stones singer Mick Jagger. Many artists were also attracted to new mediums that allowed for greater interaction with a broad public—as with the mass-produced *Art & Project Bulletin*, an artist-designed flyer distributed free by mail from a gallery in Amsterdam; French artist Daniel Buren's striped posters mounted on walls in the street outside his gallery exhibition; the artist's books that documented performance-based activities, such as British artist Richard Long's walks in nature; and Czech artist Milan Knizak's inventive multiples in the Fluxus mode.

The exhibition looks at vanguard European artists of this period and presents concentrations of prints, books, and multiples by Marcel Broodthaers, Joseph Beuys, Hanne Darboven, Bridget Riley, and Dieter Roth, among others, showcasing bodies of work rarely shown in the United States. It continues up to the present, following contemporary artists who have enriched these mediums, including Martin Kippenberger, with his outrageous self-promotional posters, and Damien Hirst, Peter Kogler, and Sarah Lucas, with wallpaper projects that exemplify the creative thinking generated by this populist printed format. Other artists, such as Christiane Baumgartner and Jean-Charles Blais, have redefined traditional printmaking mediums like woodcut and lithography by creating works of enormous scale or introducing digital applications.

Six thematic sections highlight dominant areas of investigation in *Eye on Europe*. **Mass Mediums** examines the rise of commercial techniques like screenprint and offset. **Language** concentrates on words, text, and symbolic codes, as well as artist's books and ephemera. **Confrontations** focuses on radical approaches to content and materials, and on work influenced by the political upheaval of the 1960s. **Expressionist Impulse** considers art that responds to primal forces, with an emphasis on woodcut and etching. **Recent Projects** looks at present-day themes such as the subversion of the poster, cartoon imagery, ironic abstraction, and dystopic nature. **British Focus** reflects the outpouring of printed art in Britain since the 1990s, including work from a dynamic group known as the Young British Artists (YBAs)—this section will occupy its own gallery on MoMA's second floor.

Mass Mediums

In the 1960s, artists embraced the mediums of screenprint and offset, techniques usually found in mass media and advertising. This phenomenon manifested itself in both hard-edged abstraction and photo-based imagery by such artists as Daniel Buren, Richard Hamilton, Eduardo Paolozzi, Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter, and Bridget Riley.

In London, Hamilton (British, b. 1922) and Paolozzi (British, 1924–2005) made Pop art collages of photographic images lifted from magazines, wrapping paper, and comic books. Hamilton's first screenprint, *Adonis in Y Fronts* (1963), is a collage of clippings from the popular

press, while each print in Paolozzi's illustrated book *As is When* (1965), displays an amalgam of found printed imagery drawn from the artist's voluminous scrapbooks.

In Germany, offset lithography and its ability to cheaply reproduce images in large editions appealed to artists Richter (German, b. 1932) and Polke (German, b. 1941). Newspaper photographs that were enlarged and manipulated to emphasize the artificiality of their dot patterning appear in Richter's *Elisabeth II* (1966) and in Polke's *Girlfriends I* (1967). Polke later enhanced his own photography in the series *Cologne Beggars* (1972), ultimately produced in offset. Buren (French, b. 1938) created posters for an exhibition held annually from 1969 to 1974 at the Wide White Space gallery in Antwerp. These offset works were mailed out as exhibition announcements, pasted in the streets, and installed on the walls of the gallery.

Language

Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, coinciding with the rise of Conceptual art, language re-emerged as a potent tool for artists that still resonates today. This section explores works that use words, texts, and symbolic codes, such as those by Marcel Broodthaers and Joan Brossa, as well as artist's journals, books, and ephemera by Christian Boltanski, Hanne Darboven, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Richard Long, and A. R. Penck.

Broodthaers (Belgian, 1924–1976) and Brossa (Spanish, 1919–1998), both poets, began making visual art that incorporated text. Broodthaers's book *Pense-Bête* (1964) consists of a volume of his own poetry covered with collaged additions obscuring the text. Brossa's lithographs *Rails* and *Convoy* (both 1989) are pictorial puzzles that incorporate typographic fonts. Penck (German, b. 1939) devised pictographic symbols he called "Standart," which he employed for prints, books, and even record jackets for jazz recordings.

New formats arose during this Conceptual period as artists explored alternatives to conventional painting and sculpture. Darboven (German, b. 1941) worked with artist's books and journals, among other formats, including her page-project for *Studio International*, (July–August, 1970), tracking the passage of time with numbers, dates, musical scores, and cursive writing. Exhibition catalogues were reinterpreted as artist's books as seen in the inventive series *Kassettenkatalog* issued by the Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, beginning in 1967 with Joseph Beuys's (German, 1921–1986) cardboard box containing a felt object and an essay.

The *Art & Project Bulletin*, a flyer distributed free by mail from 1968 to 1989, was an original page-art project and served as an exhibition announcement for the Art & Project Gallery in Amsterdam. Continuing in this vein today is the free, artist-designed broadsheet *Point d'ironie*, published by fashion designer agnès b, which was begun in 1997 under the editorship of curator Hans-Ulrich Obrist and Boltanski (French, b. 1944) and is issued about six times per year in editions between 100,000 and 300,000. Over 40 artists have designed editions to date.

Confrontations

This section focuses on radical approaches to content and materials as seen in the work of Arman, Robert Filliou, Joseph Beuys, Christo, Dieter Roth, and Niki de Saint Phalle, as well as work influenced by the political upheaval of the 1960s. During the Paris protests of May 1968, the anonymous French poster brigade Atelier Populaire created dozens of political works such as *La Lutte Continue*, which they plastered on the streets in response to each day's events. Numerous other artists from Wolf Vostell to the Spanish collective Equipo Crónica reflected the turmoil of the period with potent political images.

The emergence and proliferation of the multiple—a small-scale, three-dimensional object issued in editions with wide distribution potential—arose with work issued by Daniel Spoerri's pioneering venture Edition MAT. Among many others, Edition MAT published numerous works by the Paris-based collective known as Nouveaux Réalistes (French, founded 1960), which included Arman (American, b. France, 1928–2005) and Christo (American, b. Bulgaria, 1935). Arman's *Full-Up* (1960) consists of a sealed sardine can filled with trash and an invitation to his exhibition at Galerie Iris Clert in Paris in 1960, which was mailed out to guests. Christo applied his signature plastic packaging to everyday items, such as a German magazine, in *Wrapped Der Spiegel* (1963), and a bouquet of flowers, in *Wrapped Roses* (1968).

Beuys and Roth (Swiss, b. Germany, 1930–1998) were pioneers of printed and editioned works. Beuys used printed art to disseminate his ideas for social change, as with *Democracy is Merry* (1973), which pictures Beuys being escorted out of the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf after a sit-in protesting his dismissal as professor. He made over 600 multiples, such as the oversized *Felt Suit* (1970), which can be related to his wartime plane crash in Crimea and his rescue by Tartars, who wrapped him in fat and felt to nurture him back to health.

Roth experimented with “pressings” and “squashings” of food between plastic sheets, fascinated by the decay and metamorphosis that transforms them over time. *Big Sunset* (1968, published 1970) consists of sausage “printed” on a card in a plastic cover. His artist's books were similarly iconoclastic—with *Literature Sausage* (1968) Roth shredded books, added spices and lard, and stuffed the contents into sausage casings.

Expressionist Impulse

The Neo-Expressionist movement of the 1970s and 1980s inspired renewed interest in art that explores primal forces—life, death, identity, and anxiety—and a return to painting. This engendered a new focus on traditional printmaking techniques. This section highlights prints by Georg Baselitz, Anselm Kiefer, Hermann Nitsch, and Arnulf Rainer, who chose the tactile and aggressive mediums of woodcut and etching to enhance their humanistic themes.

Baselitz (German, b. 1938) makes figurative imagery in woodcut, linoleum cut, and etching, often recarving and reprinting his blocks, as with *Woman at the Window* (1979). Kiefer's (German, b. 1945) work is frequently based on themes of memory, history, and myth. His

monumental woodcut *Ways of Worldly Wisdom: Arminius's Battle* (1978) depicts cultural figures from German history, while *Der Rhein* (1983), a book of woodcuts, addresses the national symbol of the Rhine river.

A Surrealist approach by artists such as Rainer (Austrian, b. 1929) and Nitsch (Austrian, b. 1938) was realized in irrational, grotesque responses to primal forces. Rainer's visceral markings in part reflect his early experiences of war in Austria, and his recent works, such as *Blue Nest* (1997), embody the aggressive emotion of his gestures. Nitsch, a cofounder of the controversial Viennese Actionism movement, conceived the Orgies Mystery Theater in 1957, where performers were splattered with blood and animal entrails. Similarly, his print *O.M. Theater* (1991), displays a labyrinthine architectural plan printed over a gestural smearing of pigs' blood.

Recent Projects

Focusing on the 1990s to the present, this section explores themes such as the subversion of the poster, ironic abstraction, cartoon imagery, dystopic nature (natural forms gone awry), and photographic interventions through the work of John Armleder, Christiane Baumgartner, Martin Kippenberger, Olafur Eliasson, Damien Hirst, IRWIN, Peter Kogler, Leonid Tishkov, and Rosemarie Trockel, among others.

Offering a twist on the medium of the poster, Kippenberger's (German, 1953–1997) self-promotional posters frequently featured his self-portrait in marketing his artmaking, his curating, and his rock band. He made five portfolios of posters, including *Courage to Print* (1989–90).

Several artists in the exhibition reinterpret abstract art with an ironic sensibility. Hirst's (British, b. 1965) etchings in the portfolio *In a Spin, the Action of the World on Things* (2002), which resemble the incised markings on an LP record, were made with a spinning machine designed by the artist. Eliasson's (Icelandic, b. Denmark, 1967) *The Colour Spectrum Series* (2005) presents a rainbow of 48 saturated prints in photogravure. Armleder's (Swiss, b. 1948) *Supernova* (2003), a portfolio of lithographs, shows dizzying Op-art spirals that can be installed horizontally or vertically, alone or in groupings.

Dystopic nature is a subject that can provoke discomfort. Kogler (Austrian, b. 1959) offers wallpaper, *Untitled* (1992), covered in a repeating network of oversized, computer-generated ants. Tishkov's (Russian, b. 1953) book *Dabroids* (1997) animates the whimsical adventures of a surrealist human foot depicted in the language of cartoons.

Blurring boundaries among mediums, Baumgartner (German, b. 1967) integrates aspects of photography and video with the medium of woodcut. Her fourteen-foot-long woodcut *Transall* (2002–4) features an image of a military airplane clipped from a newspaper and enlarged to monumental proportions. It is constructed from horizontal lines that mimic the motion lines in her video work.

British Focus

Two periods in particular—the 1960s and the 1990s—generated bursts of creativity in the fields of prints, books, and multiples in Britain. This section focuses on the resurgence of vanguard art there in the past 15 years and the recent outpouring of printed art by the generation often referred to as the Young British Artists (YBAs). Among the artists featured in this section are Jake and Dinos Chapman, Damien Hirst, Langlands & Bell, Sarah Lucas, Julian Opie, Paul Noble, Simon Patterson, and Rachel Whiteread, as well as some of their predecessors, represented by Lucian Freud, David Hockney, and Gilbert & George.

A tradition of figurative work includes Hockney's (British, b. 1937) portfolio of etchings, *A Rake's Progress* (1963), a narrative suite about the artist's first trip to New York, as well as a series of etchings by Jake Chapman (British, b. 1966) and Dinos Chapman (British, b. 1962), *Exquisite Corpse* (2000), which depicts images of surreal, often grotesque figures rendered in obsessive detail. Freud's (German, b. 1922) figurative etchings, *Large Head* (1993) and *Woman with an Arm Tattoo* (1996), emphasize his sitters' bold, curving silhouettes. Figurative work by Opie (British, b. 1958) reinterprets Pop sensibilities of the 1960s in computer-generated imagery, as in his wallpaper *Elena, schoolgirl (with lotus blossom)* (2002).

Many contemporary British artists have incorporated the concept of mapping into their work. The team Langlands & Bell (British, founded 1978) offers an aviation map, *Air Routes of the World (Day & Night)* (2001). Noble (British, b. 1963) uses a gridded storyboard for nightmarish urban plans in his wallpaper *nobnest zed* (2002). Patterson (British, b. 1967) presents *Cosmic Wallpaper* (2002), a map of stellar constellations woven with a history of the 1970s British heavy metal band Deep Purple. Whiteread's (British, b. 1963) *Untitled (Nets)* (2002) comprises sheets of metal made into a lace pattern with an industrial etching process and matted as if they were actual prints.

Finally, contemporary provocateurs make art with sly humor and about taboo subjects. Collaborators Gilbert & George (British, b. 1942/3) made a series of note cards, *The Pink Elephants* (1973), about drinking and debauchery. Lucas's (British, b. 1962) wallpaper *Tits in Space* (2000) depicts mounds of cigarettes that look like pairs of breasts. Hirst designed *Pharmacy Wallpaper* (1998), patterned with rows of pills and bottles, for his restaurant Pharmacy.

PROGRAMS:

Two **Brown Bag Lunch Lectures** about *Eye on Europe* will be offered by Sarah Suzuki, The Sue and Eugene Mercy, Jr. Assistant Curator of Prints and Illustrated Books, The Museum of Modern Art. They will take place Monday, November 27, and Thursday, November 30, from 12:30 to 1:15 p.m. in The Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Education and Research Building. Sign language interpretation is provided on November 30. Tickets (\$5; members, students, and seniors \$3) can be purchased in the Cullman Building lobby, at the Museum lobby information desk, and at the Film and Media desk. Tickets are also available online at www.moma.org/thinkmodern. See separate press release for more information.

PUBLICATION:

The exhibition is accompanied by a major, illustrated publication, *Eye on Europe: Prints, Books & Multiples/1960 to Now*. The first synthetic analysis of this fertile period in European printmaking, the book is arranged in chapters that correspond to the six sections of the exhibition, with accompanying essays by the curators. A chronology of the period, as well as biographies of the artists and publishers, are included. The volume also features two artists' projects, a set of stickers by Antoni Muntadas and an insert by Leonid Tishkov. The books are distributed through Distributed Art Publishers (D.A.P.) in the United States and through Thames & Hudson internationally. 9 1/2 x 11 inches; 324 pages, 350 color illustrations. Hardcover: \$65.00. Available in October 2006 at the MoMA Stores. See separate press release for more information.

MoMA AUDIO:

Artists including Peter Kogler, Christiane Baumgartner, Richard Hamilton, two artists from the IRWIN collective: Miran Mohar and Borut Vogelnik, and curators Deborah Wye and Wendy Weitman discuss the diverse ideas and processes behind many contemporary European prints, multiples, and books in the exhibition. MoMA Audio is offered free of charge, courtesy of Bloomberg, and is also available for download at www.moma.org/audio and on the MoMA Audio podcast on iTunes. See separate press release for more information.

EXHIBITION WEB SITE:

The accompanying Web site, www.moma.org/eyeoneurope, features a broad selection of works from the exhibition and expands on the themes of the exhibition with information about the artists and publishers, including audio interviews with several of the artists. Programming and design of the site are by For Office Use Only (FOUO). See separate press release for more information.

EXHIBITION EXTENDS BEYOND MoMA'S GALLERIES:

MoMA presents several special additions based on works in the exhibition. These include a special admission ticket designed by artist Peter Kogler printed with large computer-generated ants; a paper shopping bag designed by David Shrigley for the MoMA Stores, as well as a vinyl tote bag in the same pattern available in MoMA Stores for \$25; and an installation at Rockefeller Center, wrapping columns on the concourse level with Sarah Lucas's wallpaper. See separate press release for more information.

SPONSORSHIP:

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No. 94

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Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m. Closed Tuesday

Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs)

Target Free Friday Nights 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Film Admission:

\$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)

Subway:

E or V train to Fifth Avenue/53rd Street

Bus:

On Fifth Avenue, take the M1, M2, M3, M4, or M5 to 53rd Street. On Sixth Avenue, take the M5, M6, or M7 to 53rd Street. Or take the M57 and M50 crosstown buses on 57th and 50th Streets.

The public may call 212/708-9400 for detailed Museum information. Visit us online at www.moma.org.