

Nature Pops!

July 12 - September 05, 2016

Glyndor Gallery



Artists: Polly Apfelbaum, Roberley Bell, Justin Berry, JoAnne Carson, Kira Nam Greene, Laurie Hogin, Vandana Jain, Portia Munson, Emilio Perez, Amy Pryor and Shinique Smith.

A half-century after the emergence of Pop art as a revolutionary response to new norms of consumerism, Nature Pops!, Wave Hill's summer 2016 exhibition, brings together work by artists who calibrate this movement in contemporary terms. Continuing to re-evaluate popular culture, particularly the increasing mediation of our experience by technology, artists question whether we can still have an authentic experience—even in the natural world. Interpreting nature and the environment through a populist lens, Nature Pops! includes recent work that is especially relevant in an age of digital overload and environmental crisis. Presenting the show at Wave Hill, a stunning garden and cultural center located in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, adds particular depth and dimension to the discussion.

Nature Pops! affirms the fascination that the aesthetics of pop culture—the culture of everyday—still has for artists, but offers nuanced perspectives, sometimes subversive, sometimes playful. Cartoons and comics were accessible media that Pop artists elevated to fine-art status in the 1960s and '70s. Today, contemporary artists like Polly Apfelbaum and JoAnne Carson are creating cartoon interpretations of the natural world. Apfelbaum's vivid, abstract works have always had a relationship to Pop art. Her exuberant woodblock prints of abstract flowers are a riot of color that share kinship with Andy Warhol's screen prints, as well as with textile prints and graphic designs used in consumer items. The anthropomorphic flowers in Carson's paintings resemble comic-book characters transported into a modernist landscape. In sometimes sinister-looking settings, the plants appear to come alive with expressive petals and animated limbs. Laurie Hogin depicts hybridized and essentially altered flora and fauna in the illustrational style of a field guide. While seemingly whimsical, the neon-colored avian and earthbound creatures in her paintings are a disquieting warning of the consequences of centuries of

chemical and industrial waste seeping into our ecosystems at the smallest, cellular level. The living substance of the natural world is becoming irreversibly modified by the practices that support consumer culture.



Laurie Hogin, Alert Response of Reptilian Species in a Forest Glen near a Culvert, 2014. Oil on linen, 33" x 44". Courtesy of the artist and Littlejohn Contemporary, New York, NY.

Artists like Kira Nam Greene and Vandana Jain are continuing a dialogue with advertising imagery and brand identity, a burgeoning interest during the Pop art era that has since become even more prevalent. Greene explores the ethical and ecological aspects of modern food consumption by juxtaposing mass-produced food and organic, homemade products. She cleverly subverts the marketing messages of famous brands by placing their slogans out of context among textile patterns, which themselves are stylized representations of fruits and flowers. Jain, as well, has been working with corporate logos in her installations and mixed-media work, examining the impact of advertising imagery and consumer culture on our lifestyle. In her art, Jain contrasts the handmade with the manufactured and the individual with the conglomerate to question systems of commercial production.



Kira Nam Greene, Mello Jello, 2016. Watercolor, gouache and colored pencil on paper mounted on panel, 45”x 30”. Courtesy of the artist.

Amy Pryor is also concerned with packaging and consumerism, employing upcycling to create artwork out of consumer debris. This method of using found, commercial products in art was used by early Pop artists, but current artists like Pryor, Portia Munson and Shinique Smith are updating the message to address environmental concerns.

In Pryor’s case, her collages are constructed from cardboard packages, shopping flyers and other materials. Built up with slogans, price tags and barcodes, these semi-abstract landscapes are a reflection on the interdependence of urban and natural environments and the consequences of our throw-away culture. Troubled by the vast quantity of plastic debris that is produced by human civilization, Munson has been collecting discarded pieces and using it as material for her art. For this exhibition, Munson is creating a site-specific installation of blue detritus that appears to flow into the space from outside Glyndor Gallery, invading the formerly domestic space with a river of plastic waste. Also upcycling material in her work, Smith constructs vibrant assemblages from castoff clothing, fabric and kitsch objects in an exploration of the cyclical nature of the material world. Preoccupied with the

metaphysical intersections among people, objects and the universe, she draws inspiration from mainstream fashion and music, as well as calligraphy and Eastern religions.

Several artists in the exhibition are exploring contemporary culture's emphasis on technology, specifically digital rendering and video-gaming. The increasingly immersive consumption of such media spills over into how we experience the natural world. Roberley Bell investigates the ways in which we construct nature in the 21st century. Her Blob sculptures were inspired by computer rendering software used in contemporary architecture to design furniture and buildings that evoke organic forms and yet are entirely simulated. Justin Berry's landscape photographs are stitched together from screenshots of the backgrounds of virtual-reality war games. As it becomes more common for millennials to experience the landscape and flora and fauna in a virtual reality, these simulations change the way young people relate to the natural environment. Creating hand-cut stencil drawings on screen-print images taken by the Hubble Space Telescope, Emilio Perez's monotypes evoke graffiti writing, pulp fiction and poster art brought to the realm of science fiction. His floating forms resemble enigmatic celestial bodies, reminding us how vast and infinite the universe is and how small our grasp of it.



Justin Berry, Public Collection, 2016. Archival inkjet print on Baryta paper, 22 1/2" x 22 1/2". Courtesy of the artist.

Read the press release for the show [here](#).

Join us Sunday, July 17, for a [Summer Exhibitions Reception](#), and for an [Artist and Curator Talk](#) on Saturday, August 6.

Pictured at top:

Polly Apfelbaum, Love Alley 4, 2012. Woodblock print on Hiromi handmade paper. 32" x 68". Printed and published by Durham Press. Image courtesy of Durham Press and the artist.

ARTISTS



Polly Apfelbaum



Roberley Bell



Justin Berry



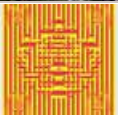
JoAnne Carson



Kira Nam Greene



Laurie Hogin



Vandana Jain



Portia Munson



Emilio Perez



Amy Pryor



Shinique Smith

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