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William Christenberry: Vintage Kodak Brownies
Robin Rose: Distortion, Delay & Sustain
Donald Baechler: Flower Studies
January 23 - March 13, 2010

Washington DC -- Hemphill Fine Arts will open three exhibitions on Saturday, January 23, 2010 with a public reception from 6:30 – 8:30 pm. The exhibitions remain on view through Saturday, March 13, 2010.

William Christenberry: Vintage Kodak Brownies



At the center of William Christenberry’s working process is the Kodak Brownie Holiday camera. How could a seemingly amateur camera from the 1950s, made of plastic for casual consumer use, be so significant to the work of a master artist? Initially Christenberry used the camera to capture the landscape and deteriorating architecture of his southern homeland as inspiration for his paintings. As his career progressed the diminutive photographs produced by the Brownie camera became his most essential and succinct artistic statement. Christenberry’s Brownies are the point from which his oeuvre of sculptures, wall constructions and large format photographs springs. Commensurate with the simple nature of the Brownie camera, Christenberry had his film developed and printed as any other amateur might. He simply dropped the film off for drugstore processing – no professional film development or special darkroom techniques like dodging and burning. The Brownies’ everyday qualities are an important part of their charm and meaning.

The exhibition at Hemphill is comprised of extremely rare vintage Brownie prints. All are the first print made by the artist after processing the film. Editions of the photographs were often made years after these prints were created. These Brownies possess the physical characteristics representative of the time in which they were made and inherent to the magic of their origins. Collectors and curators have long recognized the importance of the vintage print – a print made at the time that the artist exposed the film. Vintage prints are a photographer’s most sought after work. This is the first exhibition of vintage work by William Christenberry. The exhibition provides a unique and unparalleled opportunity to appreciate the wonder as well as the rarity of Christenberry’s vintage brownies.

Robin Rose: Distortion, Delay & Sustain



The pastiche of postmodern art most often produces little more than pretense. Over time, the more serious the artist seems, the sillier postmodernism appears. *Distortion, Delay & Sustain* continues the themes displayed in Robin Rose’s recent exhibition at the American University Museum, a side project to his better-known encaustic painting. Utilizing certain postmodern collage and installation strategies, Rose employs humor and playfulness, graciously avoiding any pretense. This does not mean his effort is any less serious.

Working with various pieces of musical equipment such as guitar distortion effects pedals, a drum kick pedal and speaker cones, Rose reveals and revels in the meta-symbols and meta-myths that have sprung from late 20th Century popular music culture. Each piece strives to produce a kind of mental feedback by placing before us rearrangements of the guitar hero’s magical tools. Through this reassembled hardware of the rock star gods, Rose arrives at a relevant cultural statement. Rose says, “Beyond popular utility there is popular mysticism.” The exhibition is an opportunity for you to tune in, flick your Bic, and light up your cell phone for a different kind of encore.

Donald Baechler: Flower Studies



Donald Baechler has always said, “I’m an abstract artist before anything else.” This statement might surprise those familiar with the artist’s repertoire of images such as ice cream cones, horses, and roses. Yet, Baechler’s paintings and prints are more concerned with the juxtaposition of opposing formalist qualities than with subject matter. His works incorporate deliberate and unintentional gestures, textured and flat surfaces, color and black and white palettes.

In Baechler’s recent black and white flower prints, the flower becomes the vehicle through which Baechler explores texture, line, color, form, and balance. The results are complex and engaging compositions that beckon the viewer to look beyond a recognizable symbol and consider the process of art-making.

Image Credit (top to bottom):

William Christenberry, Corn Sign with Storm Cloud, Near Greensboro, Alabama, 1977, vintage kodak print, 3 1/2" x 5"

Robin Rose, No Hook No SONG, 2009-2010, 15" Hartley-Luth high fidelity loudspeaker, hand tied fly fishing flies, electromagnetic field

Donald Baechler, Flower Study I, 2009, 8-color screenprint with flocking, 32" x 32", Ed. 75

GALLERY HOURS

Tuesday - Saturday, 10 AM to 5 PM and by appointment.

IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE FOR REPRODUCTION.

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