

NEW PRINTS
Spring 2008
Selected by Jane Hammond

Essay by Jane Hammond

Printmaking was invented to reproduce and distribute forms of communication. And indeed, in this show we have a little Frank Gehry “drawing” that, because it is done on a plate, can be seen and had by thirty-five people at the same time. More recently, in the internet age, the means and ends of both reproduction and communication have braided together. Artists are accessing and combining reproduced images in a reproductive medium to unique ends.

In the beginning years of my own acquaintance with printmaking, mediums like lithography and etching strove to create the nuanced effects of drawing—to mime the look of a unique and therefore more “authentic” communication. Now, I notice a great deal of serigraphy—the medium purists once disdained as being “too commercial.” It turns out there is room for innovation in the commercial realm too, and the silkscreener’s ability to reproduce and endlessly play with already reproduced, even ubiquitous, imagery is a creative act as well. I’m thinking of Romeo Alaeff’s *Smells like Napalm*, 2007.

Printmaking still is a reproductive act, but with reproduction in its millions of constantly morphing forms steadily becoming the new originality—this is not feeling like a drawback anymore. “Welcome to the world of prints” is on its way to becoming “Let prints welcome you to the world”.

Jane Hammond
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