

DAVID SALLE

Portraits, Flowers, and Wire

This solo show by the American artist David Salle (b. Oklahoma, 1952) presents a selection of works primarily focused on the genre of the portrait. In oil paintings, monoprints, and lithographs, his representation of people as keenly observed individuals lies at the core of these compositions created over the last seven years. They show his mastery of figurative language, here offered with an element of refinement, such that we could say that they are simplified in comparison with the images associated with the artist up until now.

David Salle's style is characterized by the richness of its pictorial vocabulary, with elements that are both abstract and figurative, a language made up of many layers and visual references drawing on, among other things, popular culture and art history by way of design and advertising. He reflects on the artistic medium itself as well as the artist's identity through his combination and juxtaposition of visual elements, manipulating the painting's surface to maximize pictorial expression, and to accentuate visual rhythms. The artist refers to this type of large - scale composition as "visual musicality".

The strong erotic charge of some of his works has often been stressed; in the past his work has featured depictions of the female body posed at rest and in motion. For Salle, however, this aspect of his art is no more than "being an adult in the world", and is largely a pretext for painting in an expressive manner that suggests the possibility of a narrative, without, however, one ever unfolding. His concern for the basic formal values of painting can also be seen in his way of foregrounding the way that light and shadow fall on skin, and on the specificity of gesture. This insistence on the expressive capability of value pattern (light and shadow) is especially crucial to this recent series of portraits, in which male as well as female subjects are represented. Salle strives for, and achieves in these works, a sense of immediacy and directness. These portraits - primarily of friends, neighbors, and fellow artists, have a freshness and apparent ease of execution that speaks to our time.

The first exhibition dedicated to his work at a Spanish institution took place back in 1988 at the Fundación Caja de Pensiones in Madrid. Later in 2000, a retrospective that had originated at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam arrived at the Guggenheim in Bilbao. A more recent highlight was the 2016 exhibition organized by CAC Malaga, titled *Inspired by True-Life Events*.

Salle's work is found in many public collections in both Europe and America, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, MoMA and Guggenheim in New York, the National Gallery in Washington, the Tate Gallery in London, the Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, the Albertina in Vienna, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Musée National d'Art Moderne in Paris and the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid.

For further information or for images, please contact us.