

DICKINSON

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Agents and Dealers in Fine Art

19 East 66th Street
New York, NY 10021
Tel: (212) 772-8083
Fax: (212) 772-8186
simondickinson.com

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Contact: Michele Kalt
(212) 772-8083
michele@simondickinson.com

EXHIBITION ORGANIZED BY DICKINSON

RICHARD HAMILTON

(To be shown alongside a selection of British Art from the 1960s and 1970s)

NOVEMBER 11 - DECEMBER 15, 2006

NEW YORK - An exhibition that includes major works from the period 1954 to 1983 by Richard Hamilton (b. 1922) will be on view at Dickinson, 19 East 66th Street, New York from November 11 to December 15, 2006. This is the first time since a retrospective in 1973 at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York that many works from such a wide ranging time period have been exhibited in the United States. A fully illustrated catalogue with an essay contributed by Richard Cork and a foreword by John Richardson accompanies the exhibition. Richard Cork is a senior art critic at The Times (London), and is the award-winning author of numerous books on modern art. John Richardson, Picasso's biographer and renowned art historian, is the author of numerous articles and books and a contributor to The New York Review of Books and Vanity Fair.

Born in London in 1922, Richard Hamilton is recognized internationally as a forerunner or founder of Pop Art. In a 1957 letter to Alison and Peter Smithson, the famous British architects who were also central figures in the avant-garde cultural scene in 1950s London, he famously defined the term "Pop" as 'popular, transient, expendable, low cost, mass produced, young, witty, sexy, gimmicky, glamorous and big business'. But while Hamilton's fame is tied closely with Pop Art, his work falls into a category all its own, exhibiting

preoccupations that are far deeper and wider than the concept “Pop” can begin to suggest. Hamilton has described his paintings as being ‘of and about our society’. Hamilton’s vision and art engages with a vast array of subjects, from lyrical landscape to space exploration, from architecture and design to eroticism, and from great art of the past to contemporary moral issues. His art translates a modern sensibility into a visual style, making him one of the most significant post-war artists in the world today, continuously re-defining the boundaries in his work as a painter, product designer, printmaker and thinker.

A continuous thread is social and political concern. His works address issues such as the artifice of fashion, personal relationships, modern design, the isolation of media idols, civil liberty, the experience of modern warfare, national health care, etc. His concern with analysis, wit and process ran counter to the prevailing fashion in the 1950s and 60s for the more emotional style of Abstract Expressionism. The work of Jasper Johns (of which Hamilton was unaware until well into his Pop period) provides an interesting American parallel in terms of the major shift in focus on the role of process in art. Significantly, both Johns and Hamilton were younger friends and admirers of Marcel Duchamp. It is Hamilton’s predilection for the posing and solving of specific problems as well as his overriding concern with the integration of popular culture and everyday direct visual experience with fine art that constitutes the essential unity of his body of work.



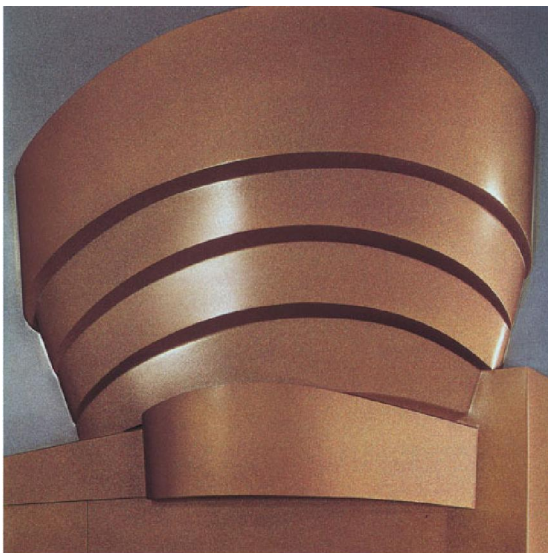
Trainsition III, 1954

The earliest of Hamilton’s works in the exhibition is his seminal early work of 1954, Trainsition III. The title, a pun on “Train sit I on”, is a study of motion perspective and represents Hamilton’s recurring preoccupation with complexity, movement and flux, themes previously explored by Duchamp, an acknowledged influence on the artist. The subject also evokes the sense of the increasingly accelerating and technically sophisticated pace of life of the 1950s. Also reflected is Hamilton’s primary concern: the integration of art with everyday direct visual experience. The Tate Gallery, London owns another work from this series of four, Trainsition IV.

Exhibited as the centerpiece of his first Tate Gallery retrospective in 1970, Hamilton's *Fashion Plate* series is regarded as one of the artist's most significant and influential creations of the 1960s. One of the *Fashion Plates* included in Dickinson's exhibition, Cosmetic Study IV - produced in 1969 as part of a series of twelve - is an important example of the artist's overriding concern with the assimilation of popular culture into fine art. In this series Hamilton combines high art with the materials and forms of mass commercial culture, drawing on the popular fashion and cosmetics magazines of the day. Each plate is comprised of a single head of a fashion model, placed in the context of the photographic "fashion shoot", with elements taken from any number of separate heads and bodies. Thus, the artist is merging disparate ingredients into new wholes, creating a sense of unity and discrepancy at once. The alteration of the human form is a central theme of Hamilton's oeuvre.



Fashion-plate (Cosmetic study IV), 1969



The Solomon R Guggenheim (Metalflake), 1965-6

works in a series of six. In this series a single centralized image executed in a heavy relief of fiberglass, acrylic and, in this instance, Metalflake, shows Hamilton's interest in process –

Another highlight of the exhibition is The Solomon R Guggenheim (Metalflake) of 1965-66. During the period 1964 to 1967 Hamilton approached subject matter in terms of categories: i.e. still-life, landscape, self-portrait, buildings, etc. His interest lay in whether a successful work could be based on a new building – one conceived as a work of high art in itself, an aim related to his previous use of Braun appliances in his 1965 Still-life. Hamilton executed his Guggenheim Museum

both aesthetic and technical – with the relief echoing the design and construction. Hamilton said ‘it was an attempt to mirror the whole activity of architecture in the confines of a 4 feet square panel.’ Although the form of each relief is the same there is considerable variation of treatment in the finish, which was applied with an airgun. All six treatments disembodied the building’s dramatic 3-dimensional form by transposing it into a skin of color and texture with independent associations and effects. The Solomon R Guggenheim (Metalflake) is the most pictorial of all the reliefs and is the only one that isolates the building from its background, sprayed with “Sky Blue’ Metalflake, a brand of automobile finish which refers back to Hamilton’s car-styling interests. Others from this series are owned by The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Tate Gallery, London and the Louisiana Museum of Art in Denmark.

The artist’s over-riding concern with the assimilation of popular culture and technological advancement into fine art is exemplified in his seminal, sound-emitting 1973-79 work, Lux 50 – functioning prototype, which is another highlight of the exhibition. This combination of a fully functioning amplifier with an object-painting is Hamilton’s response to a commission from the Lux Corporation, Osaka, to commemorate their 50th anniversary. In Hamilton’s own words, ‘The proposal was that I



Lux 50 - functioning prototype, 1973-79

might clad one of their production amplifiers in some “Pop” sculptural treatment.’ Hamilton himself provided the general specification for the Hi-Fi, drawing on his experience as a draughtsman in the EMI factory between 1942 to 1945, and also designed the control panel. Lux 50 achieves full functionality and thus serves to achieve the artist’s ultimate objective: to straddle the boundaries between product design and fine art. The work compels the viewer to ask ‘What exactly am I looking at?’

Richard Hamilton’s widely exhibited works are in numerous public and private collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C., the

Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Tate Gallery, London, The British Council, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Kunstmuseum, Winterthur, the Cultural Foundation Against Apartheid, Paris, the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humelbaek, IVAM, Valencia, the Swindon Museum + Art Gallery, the National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, the City Art Gallery, Birmingham, the Neues Museum, Nurnburg, the McMaster Museum of Art, Ontario, the Staatliche Museen, Kassel, the Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt and the Ho-Am Art Museum, Seoul.



Joe Tilson
A-Z Box of Friends and Family, 1963

Alongside this exhibition Dickinson will be showing a group of paintings by key British artists from the 1960s and 1970s, including Peter Blake, Patrick Caulfield, Bridget Riley, and Joe Tilson.

About Dickinson:

Dickinson was established in 1993 as a discreet alternative to buying and selling at public auction. We specialize in negotiating sales on a commission basis of important Old Master, British, Nineteenth Century, Impressionist, Modern, Post-War and Contemporary art. As well as dealing in fine art, our range of services includes advice on

the purchase and sale of paintings and works of art at auction, appraisals and valuations, and curatorial services. In addition to the gallery in New York, Dickinson has offices in London, Paris and Berlin.

For further information and photographic material, please contact:

Michele Kalt
Dickinson Roundell Inc.
tel: (212) 772-8083 fax: (212) 772-8186 e-mail: michele@simondickinson.com