



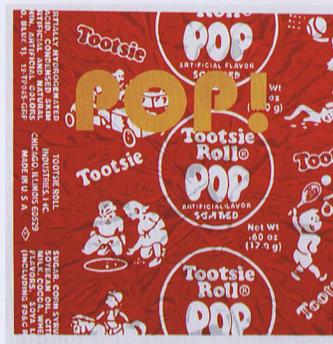
Lamont Gallery Exhibition Archive

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POP paradise

Works by artists
Dave Lefner,
Kelly Reemtsen and
Robert Townsend



Wednesday, January 16 – Saturday, March 2, 2013

Lamont Gallery, Phillips Exeter Academy

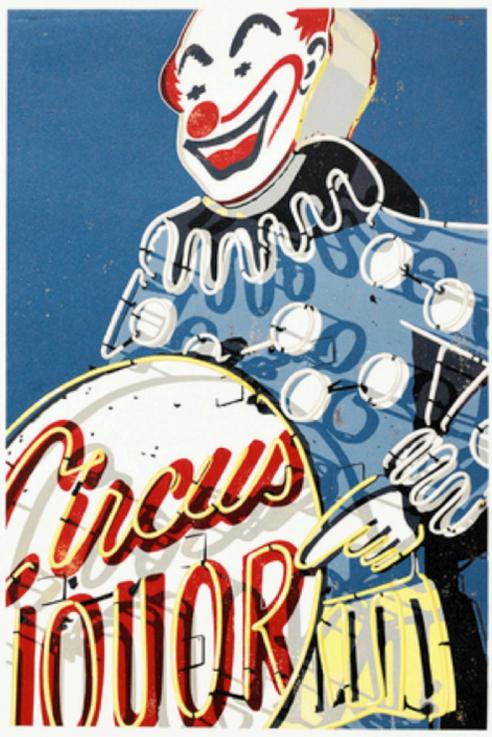
Pop Paradise: Works by Dave Lefner, Kelly Reemtsen and Robert Townsend
January 16 to March 2, 2013



Dave Lefner, *Rialto*, 2008 Woodcut reduction, Edition 2/6

Pop Paradise: Works by Dave Lefner, Kelly Reemtsen and Robert Townsend, is an exhibition of works by three California artists who explore themes of nostalgia, optimism, and the sweet selectivity of memory in dynamic paintings and printmaking. This exhibition will include 33 works of reduction prints, oil on panel, watercolor and archival prints.

Lefner is an artist intent on capturing the quickly changing face of the urban landscape through his colorful reduction linocut prints. As a college student, he discovered printmaking. After graduating from California State University, Lefner began to focus his creative energies on linocut print; he discovered reduction linocuts after studying a linoleum block series created by Pablo Picasso in the 1950s. The source of his work came to him while driving from “The Valley” into Hollywood: “The urban landscape will always be my muse. . . . There were these old mom-and-pop liquor stores in the valley. People drive by every day and no one pays attention, but there would be this great neon sign, a little rusted and broken-down, but it still casts



Dave Lefner, *Circus Liquors*, 2011
Woodcut reduction, Edition 1/5

these amazing shadows at certain times of the day,” he says. Lefner has exhibited at the LA Art Show, the Museum of Neon Art and Skidmore Contemporary Art.

Reemtsen’s paintings explore the paradoxical state of being female in a post-feminist contemporary society. Her iconic image is of a woman clothed in the era of Eisenhower and Kennedy administration party dresses. Often, the woman holds a tool usually associated with masculinity. In other works, a woman appears to be falling through space. Reemtsen describes these figures as “falling out of love and/or falling short of expectations.” Each woman with a tool—usually for a home improvement project—offers the impression of “taking care of business.” Women painted with tools are also perceived as symbols of feminine empowerment. Reemtsen’s immaculately dressed subjects are viewed as heroines, receiving their guests after finishing yard work and cleaning the house. Her signature style of brightly colored dresses and opulent jewelry connote optimism and youthfulness.

Reemtsen describes her work as images of feminine independence and empowerment: “My work is about girl power that depicts grace and beauty. This is all said in the sweetest and most sincere voice. I do not see it as a feminist statement and it is not about housewives. It is about the modern girl feeling empowered, looking great and getting ‘the job’ or her job done. The tools are used to show strength and to represent using and doing whatever it takes to be extraordinary,” she says.

Reemtsen studied painting at Otis-Parsons in Los Angeles, and fashion design, fine art and painting at California State University Long Beach. Her works have been exhibited at Skidmore Contemporary Art, David Klein Gallery, The Armory Show Modern in New York, Art Platform—Los Angeles and ArtAspen.



Kelly Reemtsen, *Failure to Engage*, 2011 Oil on panel

Townsend's work captures the vivid Americana of the past. "More than anything, I think my work is about vernacular culture. It is concerned with ordinary domestic and functional objects or themes . . . I seem to be concerned with expressing a generally American and specifically Southern California voice. As for the Californian—the elements are the weather, car culture, surf culture and the general lack of historical reference," he says. Self-described as a pop realist, Townsend's paintings present exhilarating, exploded-view renderings in oil and watercolor, with a nostalgic view offered without firsthand experience. The works ably discuss the intersection of memory and imagination through well-considered distillation and playfully deceptive use of scale.

Townsend's work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions at Sue Greenwood Fine Art, Skidmore Contemporary Art, Michael Hollis Fine Art, the LA Art Show and Long Beach Arts, National Open.



Robert Townsend, *Blue Impala with Sprinkles*, 2009 Watercolor on paper

Lamont Gallery Director Lauren O'Neal says, "**Pop Paradise** will offer a much-needed infusion of color and vitality to the New England winter, and we are thrilled to be showcasing the work of Dave Lefner, Kelly Reemtsen and Robert Townsend. The exhibition will inspire visitors to reflect on their own memories of everyday culture from times past, from the first color television and first party dress, to much-loved childhood trips to the candy store."

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