

kim ondaatje: screen printing



youth printmaking at Station Gallery

facts:

Silk printing is based on the use of stencil printing which dates back to the 15th and 16th centuries in the Mediterranean, China and Japan.

Celebrity artist Andy Warhol is one of the most famous silk screen artists. He created silk screens of celebrities and household items from the 1950's to the 1970's.

feature work from our Permanent Collection

One of Canada's pioneers of contemporary art, Kim Ondaatje was instrumental in the development of socio-economic support for Canadian artists, creating the foundation CARFAC (Canadian Artists' Representation/ Le Front des Artistes Canadiens) in 1967 with fellow artist's Jack Chambers and Tony Urquhart. Kim works in many different media, including printmaking, painting, photography and film. The artist's work concentrates on the ever-shifting moods of both inside and outside spaces, ranging from a focus on the intimacy and serenity of the home to powerful and sometimes disquieting presence of natural and man-made landscapes. Most well-known for her large-scale representational paintings, Kim is also a celebrated and award-winning printmaker, utilizing techniques such as screen-printing to build upon the stream-lined concepts she focuses on in her painting.

"...everybody, underneath, can be creative..."

Kim Ondaatje

Process: What is Screen Printing?

The process for screen-printing, also called serigraphy, is deceptively simple. The process utilizes a screen made of tightly woven fabric stretched over a frame, onto which the printmaker transfers the design by creating a stencil. This stencil can be made in a variety of ways; one can draw and paint directly their screen or use photographic methods. Once the stencil is transferred onto the screen, the artist is ready to print. The screen is placed stencil-side down over a support for the image, usually paper. Ink is placed on top of the screen, and is pulled across the surface of the screen, pushing through the stencil and transferring the image onto the paper. The artist will often create an image using several different stencils, creating pieces full of depth and vitality.

station gallery

kim ondaatje: screen printing

feature work

The Blue Bedroom is a piece from Kim Ondaatje's second important series, *House on Piccadilly Hill* (1967-1970), which features both screen-prints and paintings. Focusing on the intimacy of the everyday, the series is composed of various images of the interior of the century-old house her family renovated and inhabited in London, Ontario. While quiet and sparse, the deliberate use of colour, shape, and pattern in works such as *The Blue Room* recalls hints towards geometric abstraction, speaking to the influence of earlier generations of Canadian painters and placing Kim firmly within the historical continuum of Canadian art. In an interview with Brendan Blom, Kim said she found that viewers in Soviet Bloc countries were much more in tune with the vaguely satirical message she was trying to get across. They were more attentive to the emotional impact of the work, showing no real life in her prints; a subtle criticism of the decorative and materialistic lifestyle of so many North Americans.



The Blue Bedroom
1969
serigraph on paper
15.25 x 12 in
Gift of the artist 1977

curriculum questions

Where did you look first in the artwork? Why does the blue stand out most?(notice the different lines around the edges of the blue carpet, notice the bright colour of the blue)

Why do you think the artist wanted to draw attention to the inside of the room?

What shapes are created in the artwork? Can you find a shape that is different from most of the other shapes?

curriculum link

Grade 3, Principle of Design Focus : Variety (from The Ontario Curriculum for The Arts 2009)

Variety: slight variations on a major theme; strong contrasts (e.g., use of different lines, shapes, values, and colours to create interest [bright or light colour values, dark colour values])