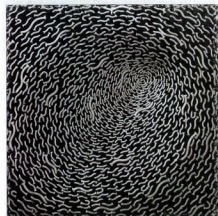


create swirling patterns. Lee Jaehyo further complicates the works—which sometimes take the form of flat rectangles meant to be hung on the wall like paintings or of rounded seat-like floor sculptures—by burning them. In this way, the silvery metal patterns stand out against black backgrounds of textured, charred wood. The industrial and the organic are not so much at odds as they are constantly acting upon each other.

Other works in the exhibition were made of tree branches of various sizes joined in bundles and then cut into geometric forms. In 0121-1110-1080713 (2008) chestnut wood was manipulated into a doughnut shape several feet across. With its exposed grain and deep cracks, the piece is a brutal but elegant harnessing of nature.

Lee Jaehyo is at his best, however, when he is most delicate. 0121-1110-1080213 (2008) is made up of thousands of fallen leaves that were rolled to form



Lee Jaehyo, 0121-1110-108112 2008, stainless-steel bolts, nails, and wood, 24" x 24" x 3", Albarnein.

cylinders, which were stacked to create a large rectangle made of many small circles. A library of scrolls came to mind, and with it the sense that this piece would crumble at the first touch.

—Pernilla Holmes

Fernand Léger

Malingue
Paris

This remarkable exhibition showcasing 15 major paintings by Fernand Léger highlighted several of the most important



Fernand Léger, *Le Grand Déjeuner*, 1921, oil on canvas, 25" x 36", Malingue.

stages in the artist's career between 1918 and 1944. Together, these works demonstrated how Léger made the idea of the machine itself into the subject of his painting. He used elements from all the major 20th-century art movements to

express the rhythm and vitality of modern life. The exhibition included important paintings from his mechanical period, such as *Dans l'usine* (In the Factory, 1918), a graceful, vibrant composition of cone, cylinder, and disk, in which a few lines suggest gears, tubes, and pistons, as well as highways, girders, and skyscrapers. In *La femme au miroir* (Woman with Mirror, 1920), the viewer glimpses only part of a woman's face, an oval integrated into the overall abstract pattern of layered shapes. Movement is expressed through a repetition of forms.

In his majestic 1921 masterpiece *Le Grand Déjeuner*, Léger incorporates stylized neoclassicism. Fleshy women, with heads of thick wavy black hair, lounge with a black dog in front of a little red table covered with food. In later works, influenced by Surrealism, unrelated objects come together in poetic combinations, as happens in the surprising *Marie l'acrobate* (Marie, the Acrobat, 1934), featuring a

woman, clouds, and geometric forms painted on a background of brilliant yellow.

The exhibition ended with a 1944 composition painted during Léger's exile in America. An abandoned farm near where he was living inspired this dynamic painting, with its heavy black contours and vivid hues of green, yellow, red, and blue. It not only

shows his embrace of industry but also anticipates American Pop art.

—Laurie Hurwitz

Min Wae Aung

art-urban
Lucerne, Switzerland

Min Wae Aung's paintings are studies in the contrast between the austerity of the subject matter—Burmese monks and monastery novices nearly always shown with their backs to the viewer—and the garishness of the artist's palette of hot pink, bloodred, fluorescent yellow. What results are idealized figures that are at once meditative and humorous, and devoid of earnestness.



Min Wae Aung, *Towards Monastery*, 2008, acrylic on canvas, 60" x 51", art-urban.

These fusions of East Asian Pop and Socialist Realism are highly stylized. The rippling folds of the monks' robes are depicted luxuriantly; the monks' bald pates are lit from the side so they seem to glow like half-moons; parasols float like pink planets; and figures walk across featureless, clay-colored grounds. This stripping away of context gives the impression that the monks are actors standing before green screens, waiting for their environments to be filled in at some later date.

Born in 1960, Aung studied landscape painting at the State School of Fine Art in Rangoon, and indeed these paintings seem closer to landscapes than to portraits. Because the figures are usually seen from the rear walking away, there is little of the viewer engagement characteristic of traditional portraiture. The sense of detachment, is accentuated in the titles: *Towards Monastery I*, *To Nuns' Rest House* (both 2008). Yet the precision of the depictions captures the imagination.

—Quinn Latimer

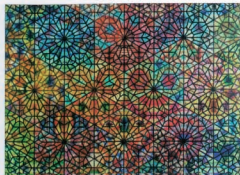
Philip Taaffe

Jablunka
Berlin

Inspired by the art of Islam, Philip Taaffe, in his latest series of paintings, juxtaposes abstract stencils often reminiscent of architectural design, such as the latticework found on buildings in Cairo and Damascus, with colorful, tie-dye-like backgrounds.

Taaffe's deft manipulation of appropriated Islamic imagery by turns honors and disregards the tradition from which it derives. Islamic pictorial design has a warm and devotional feel, resulting from the direct touch of the craftsman and the occasional accidents and variations.

But Taaffe eschews the painterly. Characteristically, the overlaid stencils and mechanically applied imagery had a slick, somewhat commercial feel to them. The edges of his interwoven black bars were, as always, crisp. And in one work, in which a bird of prey grasps a



Philip Taaffe, *Cairo Window II*, 2008, mixed media on canvas, 60" x 84", Jablunka.

snake, the mirroring of the image was too precise.

Taaffe has said that these paintings act as reference points on an inward journey, and if his aim was to demonstrate how he has internalized Islamic esthetics, he has hit the mark. It was as if he had extracted the bare codex of Islamic design. The dozen canvases suggested Taaffe had engaged with the tradition's imagery passionately, and he successfully captures, via mechanical means, the grand, cosmic scheme of Islamic ornament.

—Robert Rigney

'New York Drawings 1946-2007'

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Esteban Vicente
Sagvaya, Spain

This show of 117 works on paper was chosen from the much larger collection that Wynn Kramarsky has been assembling over the last half century. The selection was heavily weighted toward recent movements centered in New York—particularly, although far from ex-

clusively, Minimalism. This tight focus, rather than being a constraint, ultimately highlighted drawing's range of expressive potential.

Juxtapositions of works by some of the most influential contemporary artists, including Eva Hesse, Richard Serra, and Sol LeWitt, with drawings by many younger and less-familiar figures—Teo Gonzalez, Christine Hiebert, Annabel Daou—benefited all concerned.

Two of the most memorable works occupied opposite poles within the show's narrow parameters. John Cage's *River Rock and Smoke*, 4/13/90, #12 is a tall, narrow watercolor on paper that delicately conveys the abstraction within nature's vastness. At the other extreme, Jasper Johns's untitled 1991 ink-on-Mylar piece is brilliantly dense



Ed Ruscha, *Suspended Sheet Stained with Ivy*, 1973, gunpowder and ivy on paper, 14" x 22".

Museo de Arte Contemporáneo Esteban Vicente.

and even murky, with complex layering that seems to allude as much to consciousness as to the visual overload around us.

A particularly striking work amid this stellar lineup was Ed Ruscha's beautiful 1973 *Suspended Sheet Stained with Ivy*. Showing an almost blank sheet of paper, it is at once illusionistic and anti-illusionistic, and it constructs a sort of visual pun that wryly pays homage to Minimalist and Conceptual techniques. It also boasts one of the most bizarre sets of materials in the history of drawing: gunpowder and ivy on paper. By demonstrating how the intimate, tactile qualities of drawing can express various intellectual concerns, the drawing served as an emblem for the exhibition as a whole.

—George Stolz