

AUSTIN BUCKINGHAM

ART AND ARCHITECTURE: The Elemental

Exhibition Title: Art and Architecture: the Elemental

Single Sentence: The exhibition is inspired by the intersection of art and architecture, a result of the Modernism art movements emerging from World War 1 and World War II.

EXHIBITION STATEMENT

Several years ago, I recognized that my knowledge of World War I, World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War was scant. These wars informed the life experience of my great-grandparents (the Lost Generation), grandparents (the Greatest Generation), parents (the Silent Generation), and my generation (the Baby Boomers). I read the histories from various perspectives, the personal stories, the politics of war, the military machinery, and the global trauma that was unleashed. It is estimated that 130 million people died, in total, during these 20th century wars and the interwar years between WWI and WW II. The wars coincided with the industrial age, mechanization, urbanization, the creation of the United Nations and the growing military industrial complex.

During and following these wars, there was a profound cultural shift revealed in visual art, literature, music, fashion and architecture. These events ushered in mass communication, mass production, film, cultural exchange and women entering the labor force; all of which was heavily influenced by the rapid social, political, and technological changes of the era. Modernism was a broad cultural, artistic, and intellectual movement that was characterized by a self-conscious break from traditional forms and a focus on innovation and experimentation. Modernism adopted new fragmented perspectives and a 'truth to materials' which often present as abstract art. Modernism was the umbrella name for a number of smaller art movements: Constructivism, Bauhaus, De Stijl, Neoplasticism, Concretism and Brutalism.

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The through line in these art movements that I found of particular interest and that ultimately inspired the exhibition, is the intersection of art and architecture. Many artists of the Modernist era were also architects, dabbled in architecture, or were inspired by architecture.

This exhibition titled '**Art and Architecture: the Elemental**' represents my exploration of this theme through the lens of the artistic movements that comprise the Modernism art movement. Of specific focus is *Brutalist Architecture* which emerged at a time of urgent need for large-scale, affordable residential architecture. Post World War II, Europe's major cities were heavily bomb-damaged. The need to clear urban slums and a desire to improve the lot of the common citizen, inspired large-scale rehousing projects across much of the continent. With the scale of its designs and emphasis on cheap building materials, *Brutalism* became the style of choice for many of these projects and public buildings. *Brutalism's* most famous stylistic motif was the use of raw concrete (French "*béton brut*") for exterior surfaces, leaving evidence of the construction process, such as the holes and seam lines left by the setting of liquid concrete, visible on the outside of buildings. For *Brutalist architects* this approach rejected ornamentation, with an emphasis on structural honesty, a truth to the textural qualities of materials, and to the labor of construction that epitomized their socially engaged, ethics-driven approach to their work. *Brutalism* emphasized the physical properties and brash abundance of its building materials, drawing attention to the weight, density, and mass of concrete, steel, and stone.

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SUMMARY

Austin Buckingham, inspired by the book 'Living in a Modern Way, California Design 1930-1965, explores design in art. Large scale polytych and individual works interrogate color, line and form to present a mid-century modern aesthetic.

ARTIST STATEMENT

MA: THE SPACE IN BETWEEN

The Japanese concept of *Ma* (間) is a philosophical concept of the space between the edges, between the beginning and end, the space in between, literally meaning *gap*, *space*, or *pause*. I am interested in not only creating the art object which are comprised of line, color and form, but also presenting the negative spaces where we wander and rest.

THE PROCESS - MONOTYPE

A monotype is a form of printmaking using an etching press just like the one used by other printmaking disciplines. However, as distinguished from the other printmaking disciplines, the resultant monotype is unique and original, in the sense that a painting is unique and original. Mono(type) means one. There are no editions, copies or reproductions. All art mediums have limitations of one sort or another. Monotype printmaking generally provides a very graphic depiction of shapes. Most monotype printmakers find ways to augment the artwork with various techniques and processes; such as combining printmaking with chine-colle, collage, painting, watercolor, photography and other printmaking disciplines into a single print. Because creating line is a particular challenge to monotype printmaking, I like to use charcoal, india ink and graphite to draw directly onto the paper. I also use techniques such as diluting the ink with mineral spirits and burnt plate oil, scratching or smudging ink, and using stamps to create shapes. The resultant Monotype is a singular creation that can not be reproduced.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

I am retired from an environmental science career. I am a self-taught black and white film photographer and a world traveler. These experiences have informed my art practice. In 2017, I studied printmaking at the Art Student League in Denver, CO with master printmakers Mark Lunning, Joe Higgins and Patrica Branstead.

After several years of learning the craft of printmaking, I moved to California fulfilling a decades long desire to live in the north bay area. I reside in western Sonoma County where the environment of river, sea, year-round outdoor swimming and the uniquely California modern aesthetic have powerfully impacted my art practice. I am particularly

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drawn to the aesthetics of Mid-Century Modern and Modern Abstract for its clean line, reduced forms and limited color palette.

BIO/RESUME

I studied geology as an undergraduate. I think primarily because I can see the results of geologic processes out there on the land due the effects of wind and water. This had great appeal to me. I could know something by looking at it.

I obtained a Bachelor of Science at the University of South Florida. After undergraduate, I went west to take field geology in Wyoming. I moved to Colorado, working for the USGS doing field work in the Mohave dessert. Years later, while working full-time in oil and gas exploration, and eventually for the State of Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, I obtained a Master of Environmental Science and Engineering, and a Professional Degree in Hydrogeology from the Colorado School of Mines. I finished my career as a project manager for the Summitville Mine Superfund Site in southwest Colorado.

Somewhere, along the way during these years, I picked up a camera. The camera became a means to investigate the world, literally. Every year, I traveled to some third world country.

Feeling stalled our with my photography practice, I took a printmaking class at the Art Student League Denver from a printmaker whose work I admired and bought more than 20 years before. Within a year of that first printmaking class, I started exhibiting and selling my work.

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AFFILIATIONS and EXHIBITIONS

Artist Member since 2020 Gallery Route One, Point Reyes Station, California
Artist Member since 2020 California Society of Printmakers
Art Student League Denver since 2018
Colorado Photographic Arts Center since 2004

Art Festivals

Cherry Creek Arts Festival, Denver, CO
Summer Art Market, Denver, CO
Beverly Hills Art Festival, Beverly Hills, CA
Mill Valley Fall Arts Festival, Mill Valley, CA
Rotary Club Saratoga Fine Arts Festival, Saratoga, CA
Los Altos Arts and Wine Festival, Los Altos, CA
Palo Alto Festival of the Arts, Palo Alto, CA
San Carlos Art and Wine Faire, San Carlos, CA
Sun Valley Art Festival, Ketchum, ID
Art in the High Desert, Bend, OR
Art on the Pearl, Portland, WA

Exhibitions

Falkirk Cultural Museum (Juried), San Rafael, CA
O'Hanlon Center for Arts (Juried), Mill Valley, CA
Marin Society of Artists (Juried), Novato, CA
Solstice Gallery (Solo), Mill Valley, CA
Gallery Route One (Solo, Juried and Member Exhibitions), Pt. Reyes, CA
Sebastopol Center for the Arts (Juried), Sebastopol, CA
Niza Knolls Gallery (4 Person Exhibition), Denver, CO
Robert Anderson Gallery (Juried) Denver, CO
Colorado Photographic Arts Center (Juried), Denver, CO

Studied Printmaking

Art Student League Denver, Colorado with Master Printmakers Mark Lunning, Joe Higgins and Patricia Branstead

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