

ARTFORUM

“Seuls quelques fragments de nous toucheront quelques fragments d’autrui”

GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC | PARIS | MARAIS

7 rue Debelleye

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Befitting the author of the show’s title—a poem by Marilyn Monroe (who knew?!)—this survey of contemporary collage is stylish and star-studded. And like Monroe, who struggled to be taken seriously in spite of her sex appeal, this exhibition’s intelligent curatorial conceit is nearly outshone by its own dazzling design.

Aspects of the installation, which commingles work by thirty-six artists made across a wide range of media over the past two decades, are downright deco. John Armleder’s red jellyfish mural (*Semaeostomeae VII*, 2005) suggests patterned wallpaper opposite Walead Beshty’s gleaming “Copper Remnants,” 2011, which are displayed on low pedestals like a central coffee table. Adding to the living room vibe, Jonathan Monk’s *Mantelpiece Piece*, 1997, is a minimalist white shelf domesticated by a clutter of postcards. But it is precisely these juxtapositions—which reveal the exhibition itself to be a kind of environmental pastiche of literal and metaphorical cut-and-pastes—that make a convincing argument for an expanded definition of collage as a practice, a theoretical concept, and possibly even a lifestyle.

Collages by Barbara Breitenfellner, Gabriel Kuri, Richard Prince, and Cerith Wyn Evans attest to the traditional technique’s vitality, but the less obvious inclusions inspire more interesting conceptual discussion. Typically, Tom Burr’s Plexiglas mirror and plywood room divider (*Experiment IV*, 2009) and Mathieu Mercier’s digital print of flowers beside Pantone cards (*Pantone 71, 3M-15M*, 2012) would be classified as sculpture and photography, respectively.

Linking them to collage, however, broadens the umbrella term and activates a descriptive vocabulary that favors process and experience over materials. Thus, Mercier’s work—found objects composed and scanned directly on a flatbed scanner—is a digitally collaged assemblage. And Burr’s structure, which reflects fragmented images of the gallery, the viewer, and the surrounding artworks, is a mutable ambient collage in three dimensions.

— Mara Hoberman



Mathieu Mercier, *Pantone 71, 3M-15M*, 2012, impression on Baryté paper, 61 x 43”.

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