



Jim Dine - It's All About Heart

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by Pat Rogers

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ROSLYN, NY

Jim Dine's art received a serious look at the Nassau County Museum of Art. Dine's sculpture, paintings and lithographs occupied the bulk of the museum in order to portray how his heart theme carries through his Venuses, tools and carpentry, and all things Pinocchio.

"Sculpture / Jim Dine / Pinocchio" was exhibited at the Nassau County Museum of Art from March 31 to July 8, 2012.

The exhibition was installed to accentuate Dine's different muses. Artwork depicting hearts, Venuses, and tools of the gardening and carpentry variety were placed on first floor. Lithographs and sculpture from Dine's new Pinocchio works were located on the second floor.

Two sculptures were installed outside to bridge the museum exhibition with its sprawling outdoor sculpture gardens. This includes "The Mountains in the Distance," 1987-88. The bronze sculpture depicts the Venus de Milo form on its side. The vertical figure is abstracted and evokes a landscape.

The heart is a favorite figure for Dine. He's created an enormous body of work using the shape for the works that aren't as simple as the well-known shape. Dine uses the heart form as a landscape to explore emotion.

"It's interesting how one image has so much depth, form and variation," said Karl Willers, the director for the Nassau County Museum of Art. "The focus is largely on the details and that's one of the reasons why his work is exciting. There's an endless reworking in the form and surfaces."



"Ex Voto" by Jim Dine, 2002. Bronze, Approximately 66 x 161-1/2 x 46-1.2 inches overall, installation dimensions variable. Photo by: Kerry Ryan McFate. Courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York.

The venus is a recurring theme in Dine's work, said Willers. Dine's interest in the Venus figure began in the seventies after buying a Venus de Milo statuette in a supply shop in Paris. He was interested in the object because of its connection to Greek-Roman history.

"I have this reverence for the ancient world," Dine said in an interview published in the exhibition catalogue. "I mean the Greco-Roman society.... I have this need to connect with the past in my way, and also I'm devoted to the ideal of woman, as a figure of enchantment."

"So that when I went to the art supply store...and got a Venus de Milo figure, it was not with the idea of celebrating kitsch. I was not responding to it as an object of Pop Art, or popular culture. I saw it as a timeless classical figure which held the memory of its magnificence even in its reduced size...I was painting still lifes in the late 1970s, and I would include it, the plaster cast. But then I knocked the head off of it and made it mine."



"Primary Ladies" by Jim Dine, 2008.
Painted bronze, 63 x 72 x 33 inches.
Photo by: Kerry Ryan McFate,
Courtesy The Pace Gallery. © Artists
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The Pinocchio series consists of 40 lithographs. They were published as illustrations to a translation of Carlo Collodi's "The Adventures of Pinocchio." The Disney cartoon from the 1940 was based on the book. Both versions depict the wooden marionette's attempts to become a real boy.

The new translation concludes with a dedication by Dine to the hero of the classic tale:

"His poor burned feet, his misguided judgment, his vanity about his temporary donkey ears all add up to the real sum of his parts. In the end it is his great heart that holds me."

The book is on display and is a "real page turner," according to Willers. The book aligns closer with Grimm's fairy tales and their dark depiction of life. There are 36 chapters and 40 lithographs.

"It's a beautiful series," said Willers. "The interest for Dine is the heart and the emotions that drive Pinocchio. He makes mistakes and there are misjudgments on his part. There's excitement in the adventures....Dine is attracted to the heart that drives Pinocchio to keep trying to become a real boy."



"Pinocchio (Portfolio)" by Jim Dine,
2006. Portfolio of 44 lithographs.
Paper: 22 x 17 1/2 inches each.
Portfolio wood box: 24 x 19 1/2 x 3
inches. Printed by Woolworth

Publishing. Published by Gerhard Steidl. Photo courtesy Pace Prints. © Artists Rights Society, ARS NY.



“White Gloves, 4 Wheels” by Jim Dine, 2007. Oil-based enamel and charcoal on wood, 81-1/2 x 58-1/4 x 24 inches, Photo by: G. R. Christmas. Courtesy The Pace Gallery, New York.

The exhibition also included two films showing Dine at work. Dine is typically aligned with pop art because of his attraction to objects like the heart, worn and used gardening and carpentry tools and the Venus statue object. Dine’s work also falls within abstract expressionism. He also stays true to his graphic artist roots, said Willers.

BASIC FACTS: “Sculpture / Jim Dine / Pinocchio” was exhibited at the Nassau County Museum of Art from March 31 to July 8, 2012. The museum is located at One Museum Drive (just off Northern Boulevard, Route 25A), Roslyn Harbor, NY.

The museum is set on 145 acres of the former Frick Estate. Its sculpture garden has over 40 works installed to interact with the natural environment. <http://nassaumuseum.org>

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