



Malcolm Morley Examined

January 10, 2013

by Pat Rogers

DISPATCH - JAN 10, 2013 (10:00 p.m.)

WATER MILL, NY-

The opportunity to see an expansive exhibition of works by Malcolm Morley is rapidly coming to a close. "Malcolm Morley: Paper and Process" opened with the new Parrish Art Museum on Nov 10, 2012. The exhibition closes on Jan 13, 2013. On Friday night, Morley will be on hand to discuss his work and his relationship to paper at the museum. "Malcolm Morley: Paper and Process" was the inaugural exhibition in the museum's temporary gallery space.



"Kites Over Miami" by Malcolm Morley, 2006. Watercolor on paper. Collection Charles Antoine van Campenhout and Richard Keating, Paris. Courtesy Parrish Art Museum.

Morley has had numerous shows in Europe and in North America and has participated in many international exhibitions, including Documenta 5 and 6. Morley was the first artist awarded the Turner Prize for British artists. Morley's work can be found in museum collections worldwide. He has maintained a house and studio in Brookhaven in Suffolk County on Long Island since 1983.

Initially drawn to Abstract Expressionism, Morley was working representationally by 1967 and became associated with the Photorealists. That said, Morley prefers the term Superrealism to describe his art.

"My interest," he has said, "was on a much bigger issue than so called 'copying,' and I would always cringe when 'copying' would come up because I always thought of [my work] as an interpretation, of translating the thing into a painterly invention."



"Pictures from the Azores" by Malcolm Morley, 1994. Oil on canvas, with wax encaustic airplane, 29 x 35 x 14 inches. Collection Monica and Richard Segal, Rye, NY. Courtesy Parrish

Art Museum.

Throughout his career, Morley's muse has been existing images pulled from sources as disparate as newspapers, glossy magazines, his own watercolors and paper models that he fabricates himself. Images appear and then reappear in his work, surfacing in different contexts, almost defying the viewer to center on the subject of the work, according to the Parrish Art Museum.

As a result, Morley has never been known for a signature style.

He explains, "As soon as something I do is accepted and successful, I have to change it. You only really succeed by taking risks, and the artist who's interesting has to invent them."



"Beach Scene (Antigua)" by Malcolm Morley, 1986. Watercolor on paper, 22 3/4 x 30 1/4 inches. Private Collection, NY. Courtesy Parrish Art Museum.

"Malcolm Morley: Paper and Process" puts on view three decades of Morley's exploration with paper. The show also includes pieces that have been rarely exhibited. Diverse images are liberally paired in the exhibition. These include beach scenes, the artist's beloved border collie, knights in armor, WWII flying aces and sports stars.

Morley's fascination with extreme sports and the machinery that allows for the action to happen are evident in the exhibition.

"I decided that this was contemporary mythology, and the sports stars were the heroes," Morley said. "To be a hero, you have to take a risk, so of course the best ones are those that risk their lives—NASCAR drivers and people like that."



"Flight of Icarus" by Malcolm Morley, 1995. Mixed Media, 80 x 113 x 92 inches. Collection Timothy Egert. Courtesy Parrish Art Museum.



“The Viking” by Malcolm Morley, 2009. Oil and linen with paper attachments and metal, 44 x 48 x 12 3/4 inches. Collection of the artist. Courtesy Parrish Art Museum.

One of the most prominent pieces in the exhibition is “*Ring of Fire*” (2009), a life-size, freestanding sculpture of a Motocross rider. The artwork is composed of heavyweight watercolor paper placed on an armature of plastic plumbing pipe. The “mud” on the piece is a mixture of paint and papier mâché flung with a toilet brush.

“You can do a lot of things with paper,” Morley has said, “and I always think of sculpture as something in two dimensions that’s folded.”



“*Ring of Fire*” by Malcolm Morley, 2009. Mixed media, 113 x 77 1/2 x 87 inches. Courtesy the artist and Sperone Westwater, NY. Courtesy Parrish Art Museum.

BASIC FACTS: “Malcolm Morley: Paper and Process” remains on view through Jan 13 at the Parrish Art Museum, 279 Montauk Highway, Water Mill, NY 11976. Morley will give a talk on Friday at 6 p.m. Advance reservations are strongly encouraged as space is limited. The exhibition was organized by Alicia G. Longwell, Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Chief Curator, Art and Education, of the Parrish Art Museum. parrishart.org

Malcolm Morley was born in London in 1931. He attended the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts and the Royal College of Art before moving to New York in 1958. His work is held in many private collections and has been exhibited around the world. This includes a survey of his watercolors at Tate Gallery (Liverpool, England), a one-artist show at the Musée national d’art moderne (Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris) and a retrospective at The Hayward Gallery (London, England).

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