

‘Untitled/Re-assembled’

Intersections of form and content:

Studio Process, Collage and the Graphic Archive

Graphic Works by Alex Williamson

‘Collages are scattergun, random, associative. But they are also curated controlled, and generative..... They remind us that the how off everyday seeing is just as important as the what. Not least they draw our attention to the seams.’ From Marina Benjamin / *Insomnia*

‘Archives are not objective: they are expressions of current interests and preferences. They are endowed with a specific order which is then superseded. This means archives are dynamic places whose ordering systems and contents are under continual reconstruction. They are edited and re-assembled, put into new configurations..’ edited from *‘Dissonances of the Archive / Unboxing Photographs’* (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin 2018)

‘Where we have spoken openly we have actually said nothing. But where we have written something in code and in pictures, we have concealed the truth...’ – Seth Price, *Dispersion*

The exhibition brings together a retrospective selection of both speculative and commissioned works taken from my practice as an image maker and illustrator over the past 20 years. While the works displayed are predominantly from editorial, design or advertising based commissions, equal weight is given to the display of sketches and works in progress.

The images are generated using collage and print techniques, working with both digital and analogue processes. Initially elements and textures are created by playing loosely with materials, exploring layers of drawing and print or reprographic processes. These hand-rendered elements are then scanned and combined digitally with found graphic ephemera or other, often photographic, imagery.

The exhibition reflects on this working method by highlighting the processes employed in production: the intention in each individual work is to generate concepts and narrative ideas by exploring, through collage, the collisions and intersections between different graphic elements: shape, mark and photographic image. The show’s curation reflects and develops this collage based approach, replicating it at a larger scale across the gallery space exploring creative intersections between the different images.

The images are printed digitally in A3/A2/A1 formats (reflecting the materials and printed contexts of the original work) and have been assembled in the space as a series of juxtaposed ‘posters’ with the aim of exploring and developing the experiential possibilities of illustration by creating new dialogues between images, forms and editorial ideas in an immersive gallery space.

This assembling of the work references Schwitter’s Merz principle of ‘equal evaluation’ of the components in a collage, placing speculative sketches and process pieces next to ‘final’ artworks, exploring how this ‘graphic equivalence’ might be applied across different visual outputs and themes. The approach is intended to be ‘non-precious’, reflecting the spirit and loose, associative nature of the working method, and to challenge the way the works are

viewed collectively as part of a process as well as how they can be seen outside of their individual, 'real world' destinations as mass printed, often disposable, entities.

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