

The silk screen process of printmaking is a comparatively recent innovation, which was originally developed for commercial printing purposes.

Basically, the principles are those of a stencil whereby a silhouette or outline of the image to be reproduced is applied to the screen.

The method then is to lay color over the screen so that it penetrates only those parts which have not previously been masked or blanked out.

Originally the screens were made of fairly fine silk, but nowadays fine weave synthetic fabrics are in common use.

As a result the word "silk" has all but disappeared in describing the process — now, quite simply referred to as 'screen printing'.

Masks or stencils can be produced in a number of ways, but are usually either paper or made by applying an impervious substance such as lacquer or glue directly onto the screen.

By using successive masks on the same screen, it is possible to produce multi-color prints.

In recent years the technique has been greatly developed as a method of making limited runs or 'editions' of artist produced prints.

One of the important considerations of screen printing for the artist is that essentially it is a contact printmaking process, that is, the artist manually controls the medium, it is literally hands on.

The printmaker, using a hand held applicator, lays in color in a predetermined sequence.

By applying pressure, the ink or paint is dragged across the surface of the screen, leaving a block of solid color in its wake.

Screen printing at its finest

Very subtle variations can occur from one print to another, removing it from the more mechanical processes of print making such as lithography and etching.

Each print constitutes an original work of art.

The prints of David Turner currently on exhibition at Deakin University Gallery (Pakington Street), are fine examples of traditional screen printing processes.

There are 35 prints on show, which have been selected from works produced between 1978 and 1986.

Turner largely employs the hand-cut paper stencil method of masking his screen and has produced prints with as many as 15 color separations.

In the early series of 'Cigar Boxes and Smokes', Turner has taken advantage of the suitability of the medium to hard-edge forms.

Deriving imagery from the commercially printed labels on cigar boxes has resulted in a colorful series of geometric patterns and stylised forms.

The 'Delicatessen' series of 1982 transcend the rigidity of the earlier works.

Here familiar objects such as 'Chops', 'Sausages', 'Chinese Ducks' and 'Hanging Salami', take on their natural forms.

Turner, in this series, has lent a realism to his subject which is seldom achieved in the

essentially flat process of screen printing.

Again in the latest series 'Confectionary' objects are represented in a naturalistic manner.

'Lemon and Almond Cake', 'Dollar Five Chocolate Santas', take on the appearance of a display from a shopkeeper's window.

This retrospective exhibition allows Turner's consistency in his skilful handling of the medium to be fully appreciated.

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ARTS DIARY

Geelong Art Gallery: Survey Seven Four contemporary Geelong artists: Warwick Armstrong, Robert Hollingworth, Mahgo Smith Armstrong, Patricia Semmler Milward-Bason.

Balmoral Art Galleries: Ken Willes, Carole Louis Milton, Richard Chan, Pro Hart. Until July 20.

Pirra Arts Centre: Through the Looking Glass and other Creatures. Handpainted mirrors by Isabel Sweetapple and ceramic sculptures by Pamela Irving.

Works Gallery, Moorabool Street. Aboriginal bark paintings.

Deakin University Gallery, David Turner screen prints.



DAVID TURNER

Prints 1978 - 1986

Illusion and Allusion



Deakin University
Visual Arts Gallery
Mill Campus Pakington St
Newtown

from 7 p.m. Fri. 27th June - 19th July 1986

Curators: William Croft
Wendy Ratawa

Consultants: Rodick Carmichael
Raymond Purdey

DAVID TURNER

BIOGRAPHY

Born England 1946

Arrived in Australia 1958

Studies:

Trained Secondary Teachers Certificate (Art and Craft)
majoring in sculpture, Melbourne State College

Diploma of Arts, majoring in painting, Gordon Institute
of Technology, Geelong

Currently Head, Creative Studies Programs, Gordon
Technical College, Geelong

Exhibitions:

- 1969-72 Represented Corio 5-Star Whisky prize
- 1972 Hawthorn City Art Gallery, Melbourne*
- 1972 Geelong Art Gallery, Geelong *
- 1974 Upper Street Gallery, London U.K.*
- 1975 Group Show, Bartoni International Gallery,
Melbourne
- 1975 Bartoni International Gallery, Melbourne*
- 1976 Rex Irwin Gallery, Sydney*
- 1977 Russell Davis Gallery, Melbourne*
- 1978 Old Bank Gallery, Ballarat
- 1980 Survey Exhibition, Geelong Art Gallery
- 1980 Old Bank Gallery, Ballarat*
- 1981 Impression Modern Print Gallery, Melbourne*
- 1982 Spring Hill Gallery, Brisbane*
- 1983 Field Workshop, Melbourne*
- 1984 Works Gallery, Geelong*
- 1985 Geelong Performing Arts Centre, Geelong*
- 1985 Queenscliff Fine Arts Gallery, Queenscliff
- 1985 Commissioned, Print Council of Australia

* One Man Exhibitions

Represented:

Morwell Art Gallery
Albury Art Gallery
National Gallery, Sydney
Kelvin Grove CAE, Brisbane
Gordon Technical College, Geelong
Private Collections

SCREENPRINTS

1. Smokes	1980	19. Hanging Salami	1982
2. Danneman	1978	20. Prices in Red	1982
3. Los Statos	1978	21. Chops	1982
4. Romeo Y Juliet	1978	22. Legs	1982
5. Ramon Allones	1978	23. Hard Rain Juke	1984
6. H. Upman	1978	24. Play it Loud	1984
7. Baronet-De Buen Gusto	1980	25. Solid Gold	1984
8. Gitanes	1980	26. Brain Space Juke	1985
9. Camel Delux	1980	27. Golden Juke	1984
10. Gudang Garam	1980	28. King of Rhythm	1984
11. Baronet-Primera Calidad	1980	29. Rock-ola	1983
12. Gauloises	1980	30. Nougat	1986
13. La Paz	1980	31. Dollar Fives	1983
14. Huifkar	1980	32. Lemon & Almond Cake	1986
15. Tabacalera	1980	33. Chocolate Gnomes	1985
16. Sausages	1982	34. Chocolate Liqueur Angels	1985
17. Cheap Meat	1982	35. Chocolate Santas	1985
18. Chinese Ducks	1982	All prints on 275 gsm Velin Arche 1015 x 755	



Hanging Salami Cat. No 19

The Autographic Process

Rodick Carmichael

There are many ways of making Prints for, as the name implies, it is a process of transferring any medium or material from one surface onto another. At its most utilitarian level of concept it is one answer to an old problem; how to reproduce images. Before Gutenberg invented movable type printers already existed. He didn't invent the process of making a block, applying ink to it and then transferring the ink onto a sheet of paper. Each transfer could be repeated ad infinitum and this constituted a Print-run. The limitation of that process was that it was suitable for visual images - illustrations - but not for texts. By breaking down the single block into bits each of which bore a single letter, any page of text could be assembled, ie. composed printed off and the deconstructed to be re-constituted into a new text when required. A typewriter is a form of printing press and a typed letter is a print.

A print can be made with any object. Its essential characteristic is that it is an impression of another surface captured in paint or ink, for that matter in blood, sweat or tears!

The three major types of printmaking employed by artists are etching, lithography and serigraphy. In etching the drawn image is etched with acid into a metal plate, the surface is clean and the ink is transferred from the acid-etched lines by great pressure by a press onto the paper. This process is most sympathetic to Line drawing.

Lithography is based on the resistance of grease to water. The image is drawn or brushed onto a special kind of stone and the surface contact between the inked surface and the paper also requires a press to ensure a good contact print.

Serigraphy or Silk Screen printing employs a fine cloth, stretched tight - originally silk but rarely ever now - which has been prepared so that parts of it are impervious. When this screen of cloth is laid over the paper ink or paint is drawn across it with hand pressure pushing the paint through the open parts of the screen and transferring their image onto the paper. This process is particularly well suited to masses or shapes of solid colour and has to a large extent superseded the lithograph for that reason.

All three systems can be used in conjunction with the photographic processes of image retention and transfer.

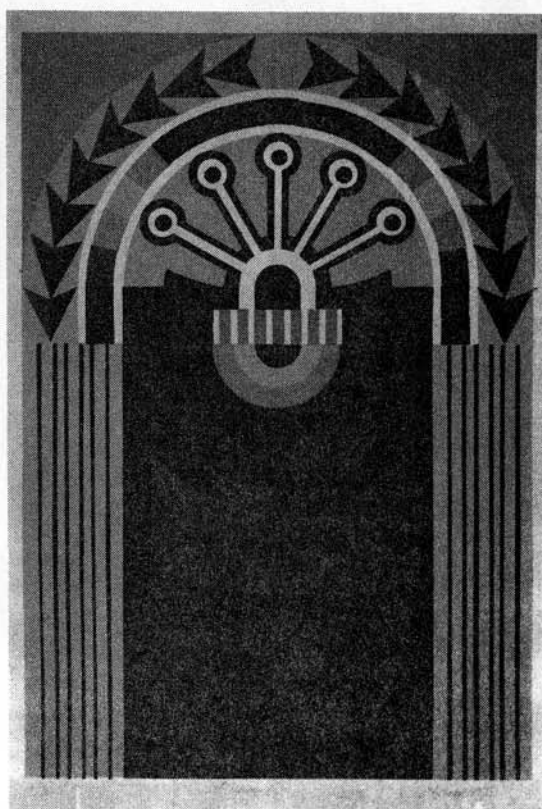
It must be understood in considering the artist's use of these autographic media that the Print itself comprises the work of Art.

It is not reproduction of an Art work.

Indeed the area in which the Print and its forms and images are created, the metal plate, the litho stone and the silk screen will be scrapped after use as the means to the desired end. It is clear then a great deal of foresight and considered planning must take place prior to the Print being made. In many cases the artist does not make the Prints but passes the work over to an expert printmaker.

Why then should a Print be regarded as a work of Art? We are accustomed to prizing the uniqueness of Paintings and Sculptures. We expect these Art works to display the whole process of their creation from blank canvas to unstructured material to finished structured form and for each work to be like no other.

In the case for Print there is the intent of the Artist to make an Art work in this manner utilising the unique properties of transfer printing. Paint or ink put on paper in this fashion has its own qualities and as a consequence its own language. There is no expectation of spontaneity and there is a point where transfer printing with its limitations cannot be transgressed without moving back into the field of direct intervention in the work. There are processes such as Monoprints which are specifically and paradoxically single prints i.e. using the Transfer process for reasons other than reproducibility in numbers but they also emphasise the rule viz. Prints from the same source look the same.



The same but different. Each Print is the result of the series of actions of transfer but each set of printing actions are different and thus each Print is subtly different from all others in the set. The artist then sees the Print as the product of the Printing event.

While a majority of Prints tend towards figuration artists have been unable to resist the paradox of making repeatable the unrepeatable gestural mark. Print-makers are most often painters or sculptors although their employment of print media need not necessarily be directly connected with their work in other areas, i.e. they are not making Prints of their paintings.

David Turner is one of Australia's leading Artist/Print-makers. In that sense he prepares and makes his prints himself. This distinction is an important one since such an artist approaches the possibilities of the medium of Print in a more involved manner than an artist whose work is printed for him or her.

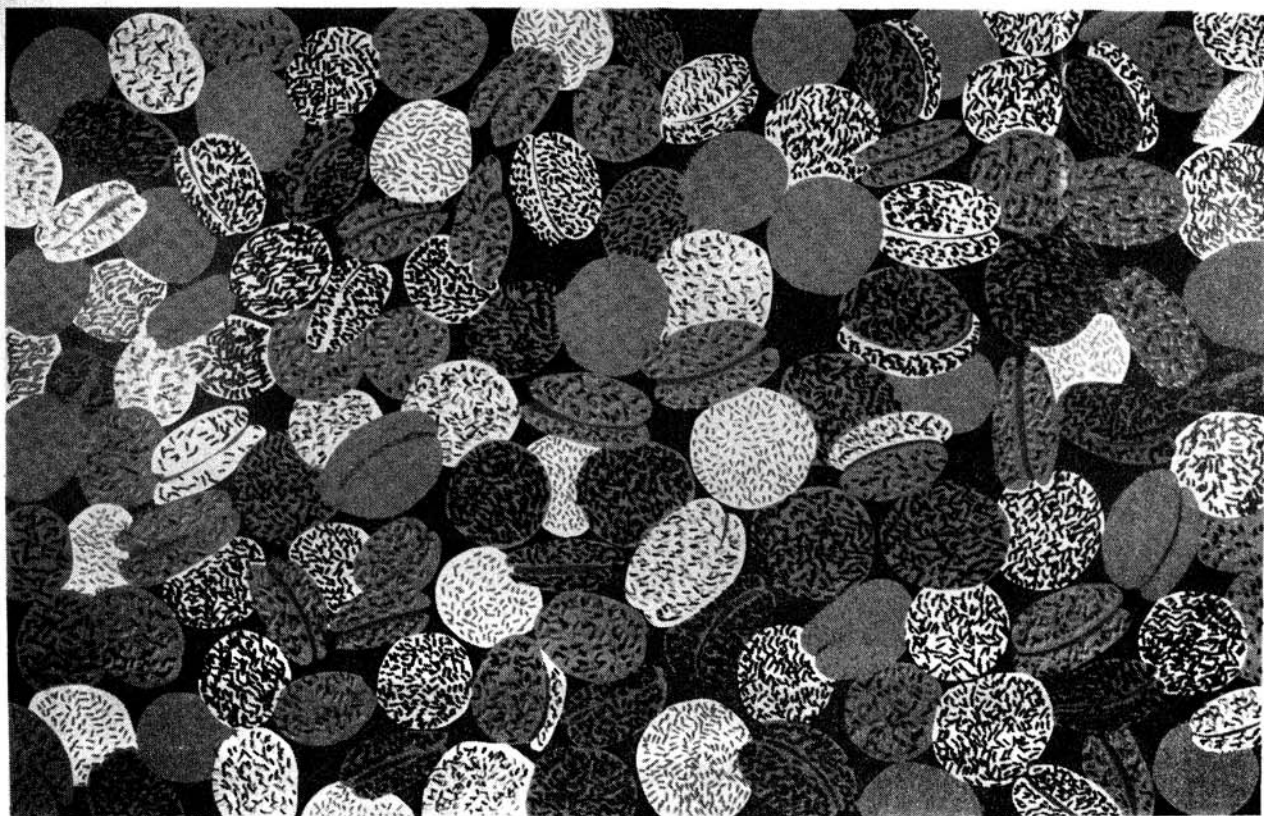
The main subject of his work is the language of Print itself. This is emphasised by his obsession with printed material. Few of us have the opportunity to look at the boxes in which exotic cigars are packed. David Turner has made the extraordinary forms and designs of these boxes the context of his prints. It is significant that this oblique approach to mirrored reality has already occurred in the printed material that he explores. Many of the cigar designs have themselves other images

as their content. Like Russian dolls each reality contains another imagined reality within it.

This emphasis on the way that we perceive the World through already created models which are cultural in origins and learned by experience, not by 'seeing' but by learning what to see and how to see it, is an important aspect of Turner's Art. All the subjects of his silk-screened prints are Artifacts.

The series of prints in this show are five in number and while each is distinct the Subjects have in common the fact that they have already been made into Cultural artifacts.

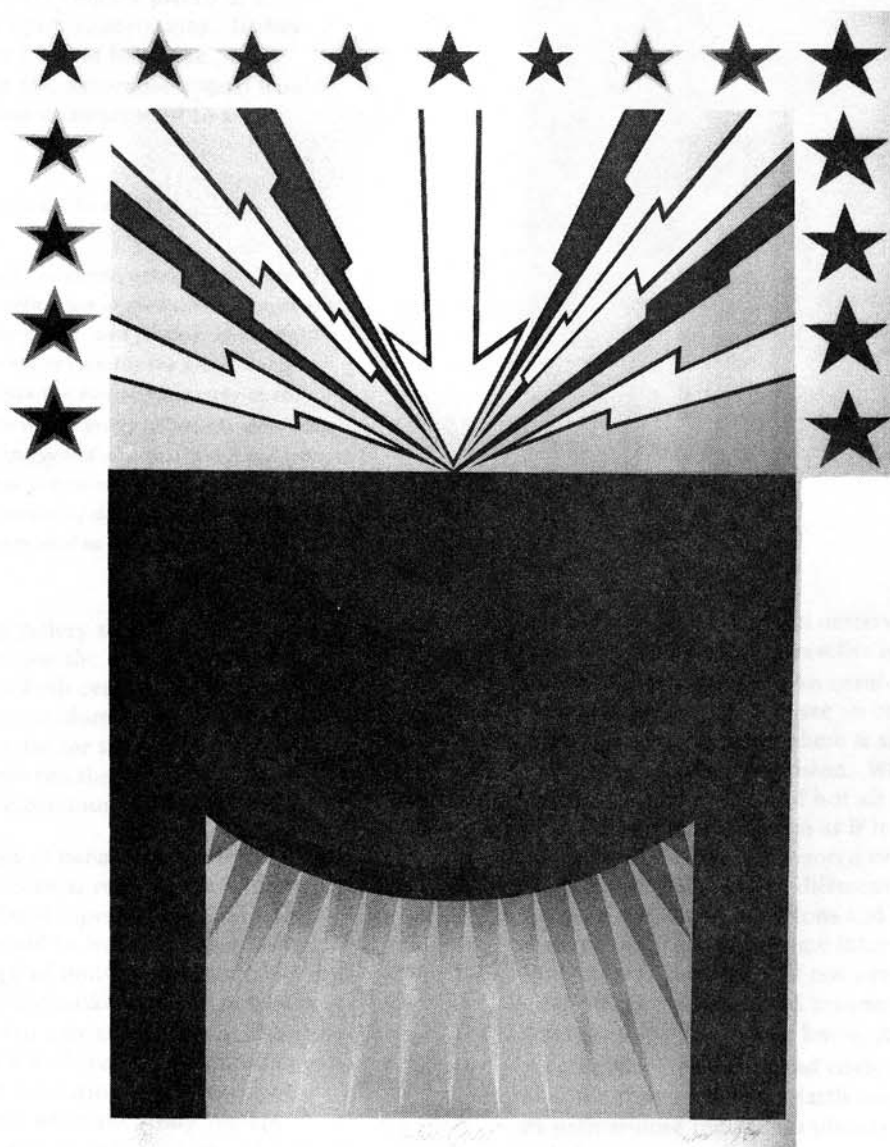
The cigar box labels fall into two distinct types and each type enables Turner to refer his consequent print back to important strands of 20th century painting. These hard-edge colour field non-figurative paintings de-emphasised expressionism and were essentially urban in context. Their colour and clearly defined and formalised shapes fitted edge to edge emphasising the flat reality of the picture's plane. Print is also emphatically and characteristically flat. It allows Turner to explore and reveal the illusionistic aspects of spacial representation as formal effects and this is particularly well explored in the third series after cigar boxes and cigarette packets. The Deli and the Butcher Shop.



The carcasses of dead animals are dissected. The choice cuts, each the mirror of its adjacent rib with sliced muscle section adhering lie in perfectly matched sets. The precise linked order of the sausages disguises the continuity of the gut that contains the meaty content. The reconstituted continental sausage, smoky and equipped for hanging ready for slicing into equal parts. The ironic references to the process of the Creative Art involved in Print-making are apparent and subsumed by the flat realism of the surface of the paper trapped behind the glass screen.

The confection series, the most recent, uses the forms of the ubiquitous sugary materials of cakes and sweets contrived to express formally their non-utilitarianism.

This essential infantilism and indulgence strikes a surprising note of social comment but Turner controls his own view by the sheer accuracy of his observation. Each type of sweet has its own form and speaks its own language and here their message becomes but one part of the Print itself, subservient to the dictates of the language employed.



Solid Gold Cat. No 25

Illusion and Allusion

William Croft

David Turner's prints are made to be viewed. They are part of a private investigation into printed language and imaged reality. Exhibiting them can be considered to be an extension of the Artist's experience.

In *Actuality and Artiface* (DUP 1984)

Jeff Nuttall comments '... it is in a physical geographical, political, architectural, economic and cultural situation which changes the way in which the work is perceived.'

Turner's prints are Objects placed in a situation that raises expectations. If they were shown in a 'decor boutique', their domestic scale and decorative appeal would be the dominant qualities used to assess them.

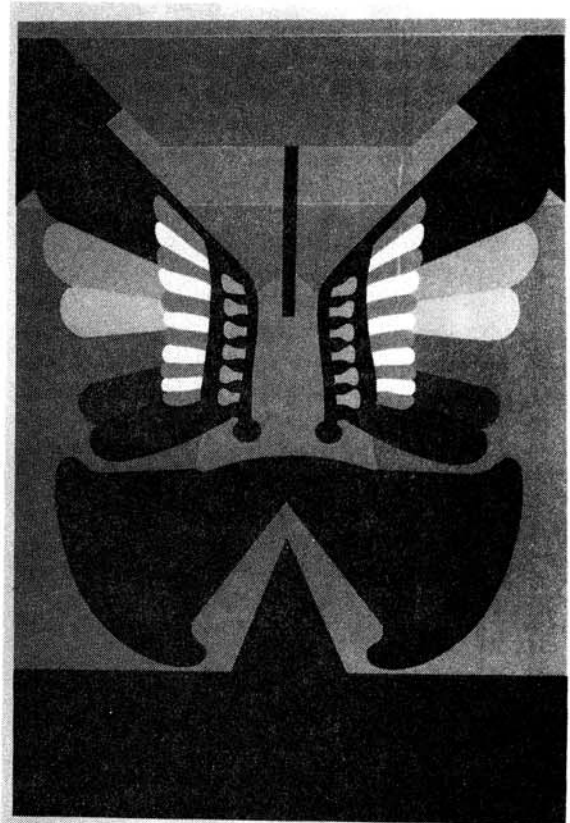
Jeff Nuttall goes on to assert:-

'And so one could continue, assessing the case of any building, publication or area where images are displayed, one at a time, and finding, in nearly every case, that the reason for the image being there is to enhance the power, the status or the wealth of the person or group of people who made the places of display; and also to express the ideas and ideals of that person or people, celebrating and advocating the merits of democracy, free trade, multiracial society, and so on.'

In a university gallery situation, the expectation is that the images seen have a relationship to 20th century art ideas. The intention being to illuminate and expand the Visual Arts course for students and provide interaction between the school, practising artists, and the community.

Turner's images of banal objects would have at one time been seen as reactionary, in the same way that the Dada movement placed images where they would be least expected. Now, images of 'Legs' of mutton, confectionary and cigar-boxes do not strike any new nerves. Their allusions to past artworks give them an appearance of non-threatening familiarity as in the Pop Art exhibition in the National Gallery last year when the Andy Warhol 'Brillo Boxes' incited only studied and curious interest.

The transfiguration whereby objects appear before our eyes is Illusion. This appearance may not appear to be illusory. They may seem to our brain to have substance. To be indistinguishable from 'real' perceived objects. A good example is a mirage, a well



Gauloises Cat. No12

documented occurrence in deserts. In this phenomenon the desert traveller is convinced that he can actually 'see' an oasis on the horizon. In fact, he does see an oasis. The mirage can only occur if there is an oasis in the distance beyond his vision. What is occurring is that a layer of hot air acts as a mirror and the oasis is seen as if it was near at hand. It is in fact a mirrored or projected image. The brain cannot differentiate between one set of radiations and another if they are carrying the same information. But we can consciously, if not perceptually, differentiate in a reasoned manner between what we see and what we know, just as we perceive the Sun to rise and circle the earth while confident that the Earth continues in its path around the Sun as planets are known to behave.

In the case of Pop Art the illusions are accepted willingly by the spectator as an aspect of representational Art. Since we are familiar with this type of painting we accept its illusions of reality, of its depictions, as truthful, though they are contrived to fool the eye. The interesting aspect of Pop Art is that rather

than directly confront the 'real' world of landscape and built structure it employed instead already created images. These images were an inherent part of the constructed world of commerce and free enterprise. As

M. McLuhan argues in 'The Medium is the Message', the true purpose of all advertising is homogeneity of opinion, taste and values and consequently the 'messages' of advertising are concentrated most densely in cities. While they appear in all parts of the Media their common characteristic is brevity, simplicity and direct associative complexity. Thus a complex message is reduced gradually over a period of time to a single image and within the language of printing uses flat areas of colour and line etc. pressed onto a surface.

These ideograms can become so refined and can work at such a subliminal level that they merely blink at the consumers to function. They can become such a familiar facet of our lives that they assume equality as Icons with more familiar ones such as the Cross.

In all of David Turner's prints the significance is in the imaged reality. In order to fully appreciate the many layers of meaning attached to any one print, for example Choc. Santas, a great deal of prior knowledge and experience is necessary. Merely to relate the title to the image needs a knowledge of Christianity, Xmas, Santa, gift-giving, childhood, sweets for the young, shopping and so on. Allied to this mundane level it is an advantage to appreciate the means in which such degraded imagery operated in a commercial society.

If a viewer was deprived of all this Information the print would be as mystifying as primitive artifacts were to people raised in European Traditions of the Eighteenth Century. It would be categorised as an 'artificial curiosity' appreciated for its colours, shapes or the accurate registration of the printing.

'The term' esse in interpretate 'asserts that meanings can be ascribed to objects through interpretation on the part of the viewer''

'...Interpretation is not new in painting. Early paintings of Christian Martyrs undergoing horrendous deaths relied for their impact on their contemporary

audience of shared beliefs and knowledge in the significance of the deaths. Allegory is without meaning unless there is a shared set of assumptions and a knowledge of what is being Alluded to. "

(Actuality and Artifice, p.7) (Carmichael)

Some of Turner's images are seemingly non-depictive abstract geometric shapes as in the 'Juke Box' series. When a title is attached, 'Golden Juke' for example the allusions come into play. Juke box decoration panels, pop music, American mass production etc. form the background to the perception of the piece.

'The word' abstract 'then is often deceptive when applied loosely to non-depictive painting. In the first instance painting is visible, material, concrete in its very nature, and in the second place much non-depictive painting, far from being abstract, delights in precisely this fact. "

(Actuality and Artifice, p. 85) (Nuttall)

P. 84'Mark Rothko insisted on the importance of his subject matter because his empty oscillations of colour were an attempt at depiction, the depiction of the spiritual or at any rate the extraterrestrial, that which could not be seen except in Rothko's depiction. Realising that that which is visible cannot be truly abstract any more than paint can be flesh, Rothko came as near as he could to the depiction of the abstract, exploring the very periphery of visibility.'

Central to Turner's method of work is his concern, similar to a number of 20th century artists such as Paolozzi, Johns, Rivers and Lichtenstein, '...not to tell a story nor to illustrate an attitude concerning the depicted object, but to emphasis that the shape of the human being, cabbage, chair or whatever, was there as material for the building of the painting-object, not for the light it might throw on the object to which it referred ' (Nuttall)

Food Glorious Food

Wendy Ratawa

Through the process of screen printing the artist David Turner uses a meticulous layering of colour upon colour with up to fifteen screens to build up an image that a person, exposed to urban consumer artifacts, *categorizes* as the shapes of chops, legs of lamb, cakes and so on. Also he or she may read through these perceived subject/signs to see shapes, interacting colours and rhythms. While acknowledging the latter, I will concern myself with former - the associative and allusive factors of the images - although control over the medium, and fascination for colour, are obviously Turner's consuming concerns.

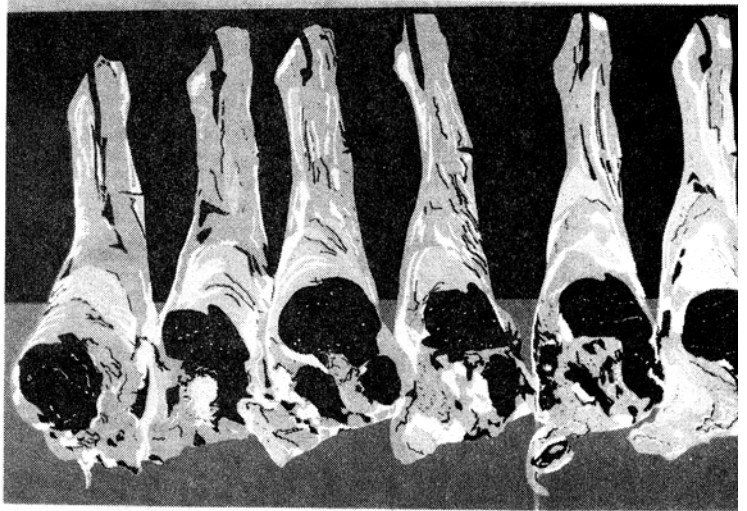
The anthropologist Mary Douglas writes:

'In a chaos of shifting impressions, each of us constructs a stable world in which objects have recognisable shapes, are located in depth, and have permanence. In perceiving we are building, taking some cues and rejecting others. The most acceptable cues are those which fit most easily into the pattern that is being built up. Ambiguous ones tend to be treated as if they harmonised with the rest of the pattern. Discordant ones tend to be rejected.'

(Douglas, 1966, 36)

This thesis, on pollution and danger, is relevant when we consider the de-sanguinised meat in one of Turner's series, because the artist chooses NOT to see the meat as material for a vegetarian's disgust or as rawness as in a Francis Bacon painting. 'Legs' (Catalogue No.) has beautifully sculpted articles, not meat oozing blood or dripping fat or offal. Contact with corpses and death is relegated to a back room. In a Geelong Price Right butcher shop, meat in the window is covered neatly with plastic with little reference to the butchering process as killing which takes place on the same premises. Douglas writes of our dirt avoidance, *'as not just a matter of hygiene, and aesthetics, but as ordering and classifying in our society.'* Dirt is Matter out of place. David Turner deliberately uses only the de-sanguinized sanitized meat images because they allow him to use the integral language of the screen and stencil with *planned* precision rather than *accidental* blobs, smears and splodges of paint that another artist may choose to use in another medium such as painting.

In the study of British urban vulgarity, Common Factors, Vulgar Factions, there is a description of meat as:



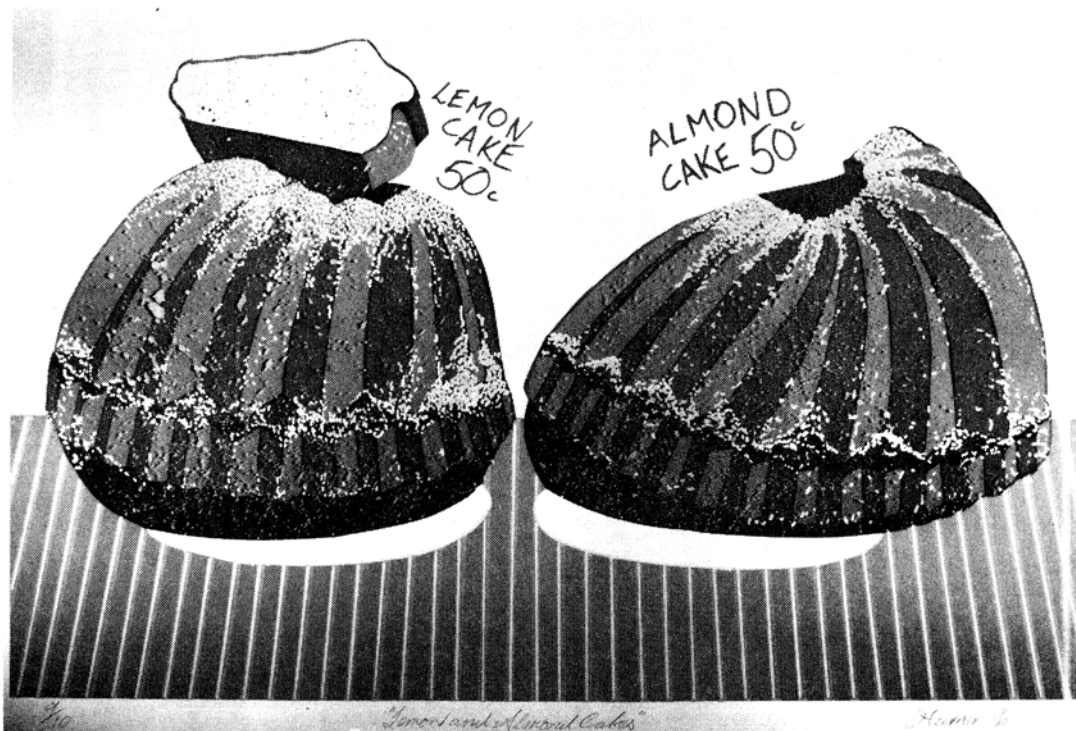
Legs Cat.No 22

'Wrapped and strung like Christo art works, they assume a form more akin to tree sections, the alternating rings of pale pink and white forming soft annular rings. The dissection is done in the back of the shop, furtively, like an eighteenth century anatomy lesson. It ceases to be animal, it becomes flesh.'

(Nuttall/Carmichael 1977, 88)

The death of the beast is designated as inappropriate and the pleasing shapes in the print are referral to protein. The scalpel is the instrument of dissection and sculpting, while the axe would express brutality. In the process of printmaking a scalpel is used in making the cut-out shapes for squeezing colour through. The separating, tidying, and purifying in a society which is so anxious about prophylaxis is very evident in Turner's prints referring to both the butcher shop and the delicatessen.

This negation of pollution is evident because the 'Legs of Lamb' do not ooze blood, 'Chinese Ducks' do not drip oil, Juke boxes do not get scratched nor do cigar-boxes have burn-marks. The factors operating in the reference material are from the shop window world as if one would stroll along Lonsdale and Russell streets in Melbourne and encounter a display of Greek confectionery, Chinese ducks and so on. Turner's brilliant colour mirrors the competing colours in the urban consumer world so that the prints resemble closely the artifacts he uses as a reference point. The use of colour as self-advertising in the Juke boxes series is like the 'Featurism' described by Robin Boyd



Lemon & Almond Cake Cat. No 32

but instead of crudity and brashness in prints such as 'Golden Juke' (Catalogue No. 27) the aesthetic qualities seem associated with good taste and excellence rather than the expected vulgarity.

The most recent series is based upon Confectionery, such as 'Lemon and Almond Cakes' (Catalogue No. 32) and 'Chocolate Santas' (Catalogue No. 35). Barthes writes of ornamental cookery and the glazing for beautification as 'a cookery which is based on coatings and alibis, and is for ever trying to extenuate and even to disguise the primary nature of foodstuffs.'

(Barthes, 1959, 78)

'Ornamentation proceeds in two contradictory ways - fleeing from nature thanks to a kind of frenzied baroque and trying to re-constitute it through an incongruous artifice.'

(Barthes 1959, 79)

Chocolate Santas are distant from nourishing food and the products are engineered by the chocolate-making process for a specific market. Whereas an attractive meat display is based upon sculpting, chocolate and cake-making use a modelling process. Eventually the ornament overwhelms the body of the product, i.e. the nutritious food.

'Cakes are almost pure Language. They appeal to the mind, the emotions, rather than to the

body. Their visual appearance is exaggerated to exorcise all subtleties...it becomes total ornament.'

(Nuttall/Carmichael, 1977, 82)

In Turner's print 'Lemon and Almond Cakes' (Catalogue No. 32) the qualities of icing and self display are in the language of the print, an excellent transference of the superficial decorative nature of confectionery.

Does an artist rely upon the aesthetic value of his primary reference points and their associative meanings such as meat, confectionery, cigar-boxes, juke boxes, etc., or is the aesthetic in the art work itself? Many inferior art products have relied exclusively upon the former expecting the referral subjects to be the functioning aesthetic. However:

'The functioning aesthetic is ultimately located in the paint.'

(Carmichael, 1986)

I would assert that both the iconic reference and the language of the artwork are of equal importance.

The immaculate presentation and perfect registration in David Turner's screen prints cannot be separated from the self-display factor of the objects. The recurring theme of oral and aural satisfaction is extended to a visual satisfaction in these regenerations of carefully chosen and designed artifacts and food products from our urban world.