

ORNA FEINSTEIN LAYER BY LAYER

Orna Feinstein loves a challenge. In her relatively short career as an artist (15 years) she has managed to move from modestly scaled one-dimensional monoprints on paper through two-dimensional layered works on paper and fabric on to three-dimensional works combining all of the above with printed Plexiglas often on a much larger scale – always utilizing the monoprinting process along the way, but now often including hand-coloring.

Her undergraduate studies in chemistry and biology in University in her native Israel have served as fodder for her imagery, and contact with the work of artists such as Yaacov Agam and Victor Vasarely in her formative years as inspiration.

But it is her inquisitive mind and her constant push to create something truly new that propels her forward to devise new means and methods and explore new imagery that makes her and her work truly unique.

For her current exhibition at the Museum of Geometric and Madi Art works that adhere to the guiding principles of the institution have dictated a tighter selection of work than those in the current traveling one-person exhibition, *Now and Zen: Fifteen Years of Contemporary Printmaking*. In this exhibition particular emphasis has been placed on the continuing exploration of the circle in her monoprints over the past five years. These forms derive from a long-standing consideration of the rings of trees and a more recent series of works based on Xylem (the complex system of circular tubes that transfer water and nutrients from the roots to the upper levels of plants and trees). As Orna has said her work is about what is seen with the naked eye, and what's seen with a microscope. About the balance between art and science, organic and geometric, feeling and thinking, color and black-and-white. "It's symbolic. It reflects my life."

One of the earliest works in the exhibition, *Arboriform #1*, 2011, 36" x 70" x 19," consists of a number of circles of various sizes attached to the wall at varying heights and angles, cut from clear Plexiglas and attached to the wall with hardware. The Plexiglas is printed with parallel black lines and the whole installation is lit from one side to cast shadows on the wall. The result is a biomorphic solid/shadow forte. The idea of this installation morphs into two later works: *Translucentree #3*, 2014, 3D monoprint on heat formed Plexiglas and fabric and *Translucentree #4* 2015, 3D monoprint on Plexiglas and paper mounted on a mirror. This is a prime example of Feinstein's ability to take an idea, refine and expand it and then reimagine it again.

Other examples of this process of progressive ideas are the series of works on Plexiglas printed in series and layered either horizontally or vertically to create a three dimensional object within a box. Works such as *Morel House*, 2011; *Trunk in a Box*, 2011; *Dendro Dynamics*, 2011; *Twisted*, 2012 and *Morel Log*, 2012 are

prime examples of the working and re-working of a concept through many permutations.

In the *Xylem* series color begins to be introduced on a regular basis with colored fabric added to the paper in the monoprints. With the *Tree Dynamics* of 2015 series the works add Plexiglas to the mix with laser cut paper. This series also adds printed lines to the Plexiglas on the surface that activates the entire monotype and creates a kinetic image that causes the image to shift as the viewer moves in front of the image. The result is also a Moiré effect - a visual perception that occurs when viewing a set of lines or dots that is superimposed on another set of lines or dots, where the sets differ in relative size, angle, or spacing.

Finally, the tour de force of the exhibition is *Translucenttrees*, printed this year - a site specific installation that fills the end space of one of the galleries with sheets of Plexiglas printed with circles of varying sizes created with the black lines of the previous monoprints floating in successive layers and creating all of the kinetic, Moiré and optical effects in a larger than life fitting climax to the exhibition. With this monumental work Feinstein has truly come "full circle" in the past five years.

Clint Willour
Curator, Galveston Arts Center