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# ARTS+ CULTURE

## 10

NEW ARTICLES

## Show Up: Orna Feinstein

 CASEY GREGORY FEBRUARY 5, 2015

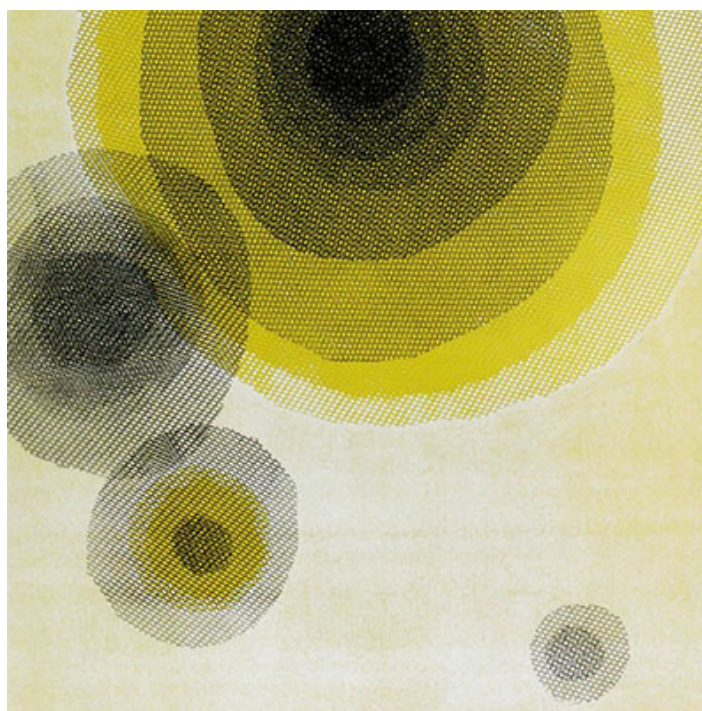
IMAGE: Orna Feinstein, *Ring Series #338* (DETAIL), 2010. Monoprint on archival paper, 24 x 20 inches. Courtesy Anya Tish Gallery and the artist.

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“In the beginning, fifteen and half years ago, I started with printmaking.” Orna Feinstein tells me with a smile, but also a sense of gravity. She is showing me around her



Bellaire studio, located in an anonymous strip of rentable offices tucked away from the road. She describes her work in evolutionary terms, which is apt because she draws heavily from repetition found in nature, particularly the “linear patterns found when a tree is sliced horizontally or vertically. I began as a scientist,” she mentions, referring to her background in biology while standing over an unfinished work that looks like a series of slick, scaled-up laboratory slides, printed with repeated cell-like patterns in vivid yellow. These are no landscapes. For Orna Feinstein, her fascination seems to be in how these natural patterns are created in the first place, and so our conversation tends towards systems rather than aesthetic wonder.

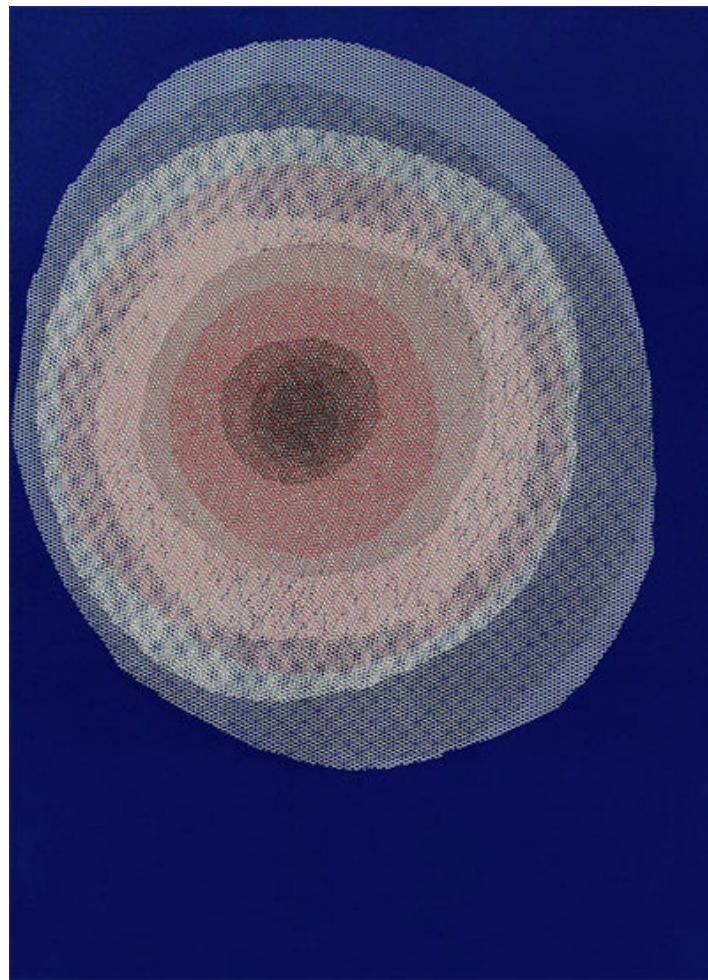


Orna Feinstein, *Ring Series #374*, 2014. Monprint on archival paper. 44 x 30 inches.  
Courtesy the artist and Anya Tish Gallery.

For Feinstein, ‘natural selection’ occurs when she reaches a “fork in the road,” and chooses to follow one set of techniques or ideas over another. Our discussion takes place the day before her retrospective opens at the [Davis Gallery in Austin](#) and a couple of weeks prior to a solo show at [Houston’s Anya Tish Gallery](#), Feb. 20 – March 21. In advance of her major traveling exhibition, which will reach five major Texas cities, the artist has been excavating older works, following these “forks” back to a point of origination. “I took a class in printmaking at the Glassell school. I was resistant, but within a very short time...” here she sighs wistfully, remembering the moment she found the process that spawned the hundreds of works around us: Clinging to the walls, propped against doorways or stacked deep on tables and flat files.

At a certain point though, “Printmaking just wasn’t enough,” particularly because Feinstein had a desire to create a dynamic, almost vibrating image by adding a third dimension. “I was after movement,” she says as she pulls out a monoprint layered with gossamer fabric punctuated with circular holes. Another body of work consists of printed pieces of plexiglass, heat-formed into dome-like shapes, or stacked to create the illusion of a three-dimensional form. Like monolithic South American “geometrists” Cruz-Diaz and Soto, the “movement” to which Feinstein refers is not

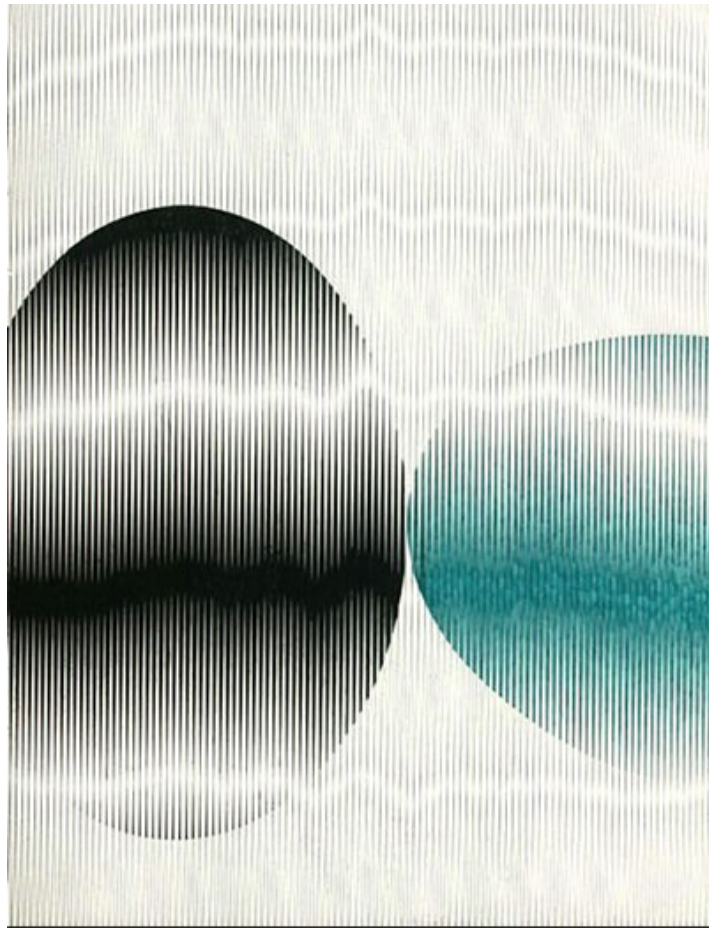
kinesis, but one achieved in the eye of the viewer. The piece is different from every angle, and the contrasting colors cause retinal fatigue, creating the illusion of vibration. She shows me some finely wrought pen-and-ink versions, laughing that sometimes working on those can “make you dizzy.” Unlike the South American stalwarts of geometry and op-art, Feinstein’s work maintains this sense of humor, with layered fabrics sometimes hinting at fashion or pop culture. Her latest installation, intended for the Artefiera in Bologna, Italy, is constructed entirely of vinyl wristbands (a la “Livestrong”) tied together with plastic zip-ties. It gives the impression of a net draped over various armatures, and I can’t help but imagine this net draped over thousands of wrists.



Orna Feinstein, *Ring Series #398*, 2014. Monoprint on archival paper, 30 x 22 inches.  
Courtesy Anya Tish Gallery and the artist.

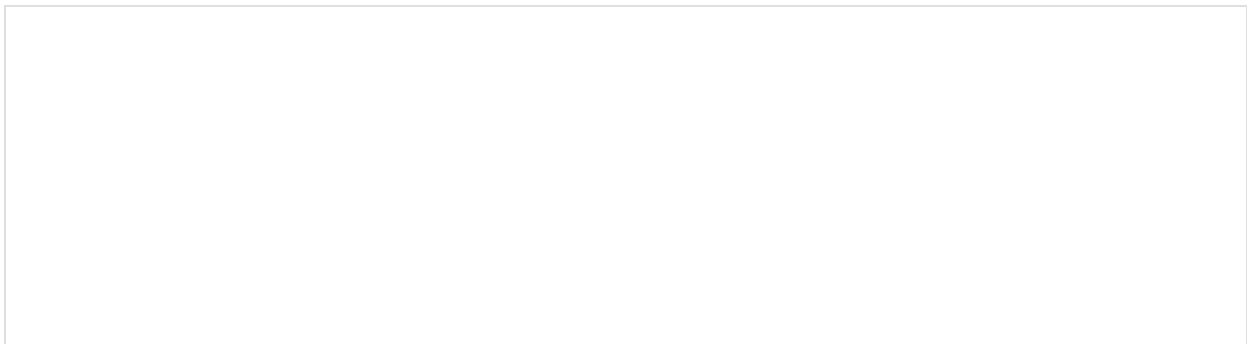
The primary goal of printmaking has always been the creation of “multiples,” especially the creation of an edition of identical images. But Feinstein’s “multiples” are cell-like particles that accumulate to create a larger body. The agar in her petri dish is the printing press, but the finished works are remarkably diverse. Her conception of “multiple” has almost nothing to do with the easy replication of a single image; it’s about setting up formal parameters for a piece of work and then stepping back as it takes over. “I love materials,” she says, looking around at the textures and colors of her own personal universe.

—CASEY GREGORY



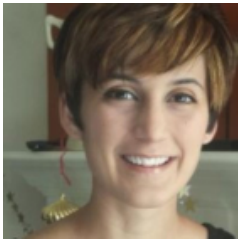
Orna Feinstein, *Seeds and Seductions #12*, 2012. 30 x 22". Courtesy Davis Gallery Austin and the artist.

POSTED IN: ART AUSTIN HOUSTON SHOW UP



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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