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D A V I D S A L L E

Pinturas y obras sobre papel, 1981-1999

Paintings and Works on Paper, 1981-1999

Introducción / *Introduction*
Walter Hopps

Texto / *Text*
Molly Nesbit

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INTRODUCTION

Walter Hopps

By 1980, a new generation of artists in the United States of America was receiving national and international attention. Such artists included Jean-Michel Basquiat, Eric Fischl, Keith Haring, Jeff Koons, Barbara Kruger, Robert Longo, Richard Prince, David Salle, Julian Schnabel and Cindy Sherman, among others. These artists tend to divide into two realms: the expressionists which include Fischl, Basquiat and Schnabel, and those who appropriate pre-existing images or artifacts such as Robert Longo, Cindy Sherman, Haim Steinbach and David Salle.

In the context of twentieth-century art, I view David Salle as an imagist. Imagist art is one of the three essential modes of art from this century: realist, modernist and imagist. Examples of these modes in the United States at mid-century would include the art of Edward Hopper (realist), Jackson Pollock (modernist) and Joseph Cornell (imagist).

Central to imagist art is the use of a diverse set of recognizable images that are not deployed to create a scene in the real world. Such art can include a mix of totally invented beings or situations (as in surrealist art) or in our time can possess the disjunctive images that a painter such as James Rosenquist assembles in a single painting. David Salle in his art has probably extended the visual boundaries of what can be combined in a single artwork beyond any of his peers. Often a wide variety of appropriated and invented images are utilized. His images are drawn from a range of fine-art sources, both modern and historical, such as the rendering of a Giacometti sculpture or a Marsden Hartley painting. Additionally, images from advertising or the popular arts as well as contemporary design have been incorporated.

Virtually unique to Salle is his use of *style* as central to the subject of his art. He will invoke many forms (that is, expressionist, abstract modernist, realist) and often with a set of different styles within an individual painting. The artist's manner of composition by 1980 involved the use of joined panels; varying techniques of depicting figures on different grounds, at times overlaying paintings and watercolors with a second, third or greater number of representational subjects depicted in outline.

From time to time, Salle has attached furniture or objects to a work, such as tables and chairs. By the end of the 1980s, his combination of visual elements in a single painting had reached complex proportions. In *Pressed-in Sturges* (1988), there are at least twelve different paintings overlaid and juxtaposed.

Salle has worked with high accomplishment in the widest variety of mediums: painting, drawing, printmaking, photography, sculpture, set design and filmmaking. Not since Man Ray has any artist in the United States worked in such a wide variety of media.

In his work, beyond the images appropriated from art, vernacular culture and design, he has made the nature of style essential to content. This exhibition puts forth a concise survey of Salle's endeavors since 1981—including recent, as yet unseen works—that embody all the important characteristics of his art and exemplify his accomplishments.

Portada / Cover: *Indian Figure with Pear*, 1997, cat. 24

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