



TOM WESSELMANN (1931-2004)

Bedroom Breast

(TW-56)

Signed verso, "Tom Wesselmann"

oil on cut-out aluminum

80 x 76 x 10 in.

203.2 x 193.04 x 25.4 cm

2004

15869

PROVENANCE:

Private Collection, Texas

EXHIBITION:

Rome, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, *Tom Wesselman*, June 8 - September 18, 2005

LITERATURE:

Exhibition Catalogue, *Tom Wesselman*, Rome, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, June 8 - September 18, 2005

Tom Wesselmann was a leader of the Pop Art movement. He is best remembered for large-scale works, including his Great American Nude series, in which Wesselmann combined sensual imagery with everyday objects depicted in bold and vibrant colors. As he developed in his practice, Wesselmann grew beyond the traditional canvas format and began creating shaped canvases and aluminum cut-outs that often functioned as sculptural drawings. Continuing his interest in playing with scale, Wesselmann began focusing more closely on the body parts that make up his nudes. He created his Mouth series and his Bedroom series in which particular elements, rather than the entire sitter, become the focus.

Bedroom Breast (2004) combines these techniques, using vivid hues painted on cut-out aluminum. The work was a special commission for a private collector's residence, and the idea of a bedroom breast piece in oil on 3-D cut-out aluminum was one Wesselmann had been working with for many years prior to this work's creation. The current owner of the piece believed in Wesselmann's vision and loved the idea of bringing the subject to his home.

It's one of, if not the last, piece Wesselmann completed before he passed away. The present work is the only piece of its kind - there has never been an oil on aluminum in 3D at this scale or of this iconography.

Tom Wesselmann was born in Cincinnati Ohio on February 23 1931. He attended college from 1945-1951, first at the Hiram College in Ohio and then the University of Cincinnati, where he majored in psychology. He was drafted during the Korean War in 1952, and it was during this time that Wesselmann did his first cartoons. After he was discharged and had finished in degree in psychology, Wesselmann began to study drawing at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. He sold his first cartoon strips to two magazines, 1000 Jokes and True.

In 1956, he was accepted to Cooper Union in New York and he continued his studies there. It was while he was studying in New York, specifically on a trip to the MoMA that Wesselmann became inspired by Robert Motherwell and Willem de Kooning. In 1958, a landscape painting trip to Cooper Union's Green Camp in New Jersey brought him to the realization that he could make his career in painting, rather than cartooning.

After graduation, Wesselmann became one of the founding members of the Judson Gallery, along with Marc Ratliff and Jim Dine. Wesselmann also began to teach art at a public school in Brooklyn and later at the High School of Art and Design.

In 1961, Wesselmann began the series that would bring him to the attention of the art world, Great American Nude. After a dream concerning the phrase "red, white and blue", Wesselmann decided to limit himself to a palette of only those colors (including colors like gold and khaki that are associated with patriotic motifs). This series incorporated representational images along the same patriotic theme, including American landscape photographs and portraits of the founding fathers. Wesselmann often collaged these images from magazines and discarded posters which required him to work in a much larger format than he was used to. As his works became larger and larger he approached advertisers directly to acquire billboards. Wesselmann's first solo show was held in 1961 at Tanager Gallery. In 1962, Richard Bellamy gave him a one man exhibition at the Green Gallery.

In 1962, Wesselmann participated in the group exhibition "New Realists" at the Sidney Janis Gallery and kicked off his international career. In that same year his first pieces with the title of Still Life, came about. In these works, Wesselmann concentrated on the juxtaposition of different elements, i.e. a cigarette ad next to a painted apple. He found excitement in the clashing of different realities and who they feed off of one another. In 1963 he married his wife and fellow student at Cooper Union, Claire Selley, who was also his most important model. In that same year he began the series Bathtub Collages. In 1964 came Bedroom Paintings, along with Seascapes and Smoker, which he continued on into the 1980s. In 1980 he published a written study on his own work under the pseudonym Slim Stealingworth. In 1983, the first of his Metal Works series were produced, which were based on his sketches and drawings.

Wesselmann's health was deteriorating due to hear disease and on December 17th 2004 Wesselmann died following heart surgery.

Because of his choice of trivial objects, their monumentalisation and subsequent reduction to stereotypes, combined with his use of bright color, Wesselmann is considered one of the founders of American pop art. Wesselmann was never very comfortable with this inclusion in the pop art group. He felt that he made aesthetic use of everyday objects rather than a criticism of them as consumer objects. He felt that the term "pop" overemphasized the materials used and that his intentions were not that of other pop artists.

The information and material herein represents Gallery's best efforts and understanding of the current history and scholarship with respect to the provenance of the Work(s) of Art described and is not part of any warranty.















TOM WESSELMANN
"BEDROOM BREAST"
2004
OIL ON CUT-OUT ALUMINUM
81 X 77 INCHES

INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS

• HANDLE PAINTING WITH CLEAN HANDS ON EDGES OR BRACKETS ON BACK DO NOT USE WHITE GLOVES DO NOT TOUCH PAINTED SURFACE
• PAINTING HANGS FLUSH TO CLEAN WHITE WALL ON HANGING BRACKET (ATTACHED IN CRATE. PAINTING MUST BE REMOVED FROM CRATE FIRST THEN REMOVE BRACKET.
• MARK THE POSITION ON THE WALL WHERE THE CENTER OF THE TOP EDGE OF PAINTING WILL BE. THE BOTTOM EDGE OF BRACKET IS INSTALLED 26 INCHES BELOW THIS POINT. LOCATE STUDS IN WALL ~~WHERE~~ ~~THE~~ ~~ATTEMPT~~ ~~TO~~ ~~POSITION~~ ~~BRACKET~~ ~~SO~~ ~~ATLEAST~~ ~~ONE~~ ~~SCREW~~ ~~IS~~ ~~IN~~ ~~STUD.~~ BRACKET IS FIRMLY SECURED TO WALL IN PAINTING SO IT IS VITAL THAT IT IS FIRMLY SECURED TO WALL WITH LONG SCREWS AND ANCHORS. USE ALL SCREW HOLES. RAUGHLY CENTER BRACKET AND LEVEL IT CAREFULLY WITH A LEVEL. PAINTING SLIDES A LITTLE ON BRACKET FOR EXACT POSITIONING. 2 OR 3 PERSONS NEEDED TO LIFT PAINTING ONTO BRACKET. BE SURE PAINTING RESTS FIRMLY BAR IN BRACKET. BEFORE LETTING GO. WHEN RECRATING, REMEMBER TO RETURN BRACKET TO CRATE FIRST.

INSTALLATION QUESTIONS CALL WESSELMANN STUDIO:
(812) 228-3930

