

# M+B

## BLOUINARTINFO

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“There’s meaning in putting one color next to another color, or one shape next to another shape, and seeing how that relates to the background,” said Daniel Gordon, at the recent opening of his exhibit, *Lemons*, showing at onestar press in Paris, until December 31.

That meaning — whether personal, or difficult to adequately pinpoint — hits you all at once, through the powerful sensory experience that comes with viewing Gordon’s painterly photographs. The American artist’s work includes photographs of still lifes and portraits, rendered out of sculpted, cut, crumpled and pasted paper, that is often printed itself with imagery found online. The resulting subjects, whether fish, fruit, plants, flowers or vases oscillate between appearing flat, three dimensional, and something somehow between the two, in their own realm. But in addition to his

play with form and perspective through the hybridization of analog and digital technology — he uses a darkroom and 8X10 large-format camera, as well as Photoshop — combined with hand-made sculptures and collage, Gordon is a master colorist. Pattern and shadow in juxtaposed, intense pigment, are as central here as the vegetables in the foreground. With Gordon, a recognizably comforting subject, such as a bowl of lemons beside a house plant and strawberries, not only takes on a life and enticingly strange reality of its own, but boldly reaches out to grab our full attention.

“When I was a student, there was such a big emphasis on concept, that I spent a lot of time in my head instead of working ideas out through making,” said Gordon, born in 1980. “Over the years, this top down approach has reversed, and now I would say that I do most of my best ‘thinking’ through the act of making pictures. In many ways I have come to understand that form and color are my tools for describing the thing I want to say ... It took a while to be OK with that fact. In many ways for me, form is everything, and I continue working until the form becomes the content.”

Gordon, who has an MFA from the Yale School of Art, is getting recognition for his unique approach. He’s had work shown in group exhibitions at the Getty Museum, Los Angeles (2018), MoMA P.S. 1 in Queens (2010), and the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2009), to name a few.

The artist uses a large-format camera to photograph compositions in his studio, allowing him to capture multiple angles of the same subject at once. By tilting the lens and shifting the film plane on the camera, “you have a picture that doesn’t represent reality. It’s fabricated. It would be as if you’re looking straight ahead, but you’re also looking over there at the same time, which is impossible,” said Gordon. “I think a lot of what I have done is about that translation from a photograph, or from a thing, to a photograph of a thing, and how you turn that photograph into a kind of surreal thing that doesn’t really exist.”

Asked why he was drawn to this medium, Gordon explained that his attraction to photography began in his late teens. “I remember seeing a Henri Cartier-Bresson picture and thinking, how did he do that? That’s not real. And I wanted to know how he did that.” Some other artists that have influenced him include Henri Matisse, Chaim Soutine, Cindy Sherman and Claes Oldenburg.

The show includes six works framed by site-specific murals, which use Photoshop to create enlarged images that are visibly pixelized upon closer inspection. This year, onestar also released a limited edition Camera Artists portfolio of Gordon’s work, titled “Spaces, Faces, Tables and Legs,” including 14 original signed photographs, accompanied by an artist book, on view upon request. It references the artist’s previous portfolio titled, “Intermissions.”

Gordon said he aims to create larger installations with pictures, murals and sculpture in future, while noting his recent work has included more portraiture. “For about five years I had exclusively been making still-life photographs, and abstractions derived from those pictures. I am now beginning to revisit portraiture. I like working within these known genres because I don’t have to explain what the thing I am making is, but I can hopefully say something about the particular time we are living in through the way I make the pictures.”