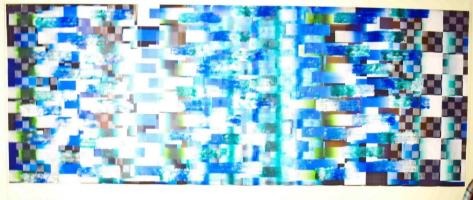
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Dark into light

"ILLUSIONS OF LIGHT"

John Spears finds deep visions in color and depth

Duncan LaPlante

John Spears has been oducing art since the d-seventies since his ne at Stanford University here he first got involved the silkscreen process, here he first got involved the silkscreen process, t the current show at New ppe Arts is not a retro-sective by any means. All the work in this own, with one exception, s been produced within last 15 years. Overall, ears' process is conears' process is con-

challenge us to rethink what the medium has to offer. Spears acknowledges a few influences in his work that one might find immediately evident: Josef Albers and Mark Rothko among others. Painters and other artists have always pushed the limits of their respective crafts, and in a manner of speaking they honor those who have preceded them. Spears may be laying the Spears may be laying the groundwork for emerging

institutional installations, for these large pieces could be customized for the work. There are several stretched screens with an acetate cover in which the desired

Photographs by Gordon Nieburg

desired images are cut out, there-by allowing the inks to penetrate to the canvas beneath. Once the initial inks and paint have died layer upon layer. have dried, layer upon layer

layer upon layer is applied until the desired effect is achieved. There may be up to 10 layers in all, which is why some of these images take months to complete to complete

Spears has sined the coined the term, "spectrum printing" which simply means freezing the paint as it goes into the canvas. There is no one else working like this. It is worth noting that Spears' work is not digital. We are presented here with light sen-sitive creations hat are authenti

that are authenti-cally handmade. cally handmade. In spite of the large, spectacular pieces within this exhibit, there are some that stand out, not for their grandiose (when lit up) appearance but for their painterly qualities, "Drip Glass II" has a delicate touch to it and when alight-ed brings on deeper visions

ed brings on deeper visions into the inks and depth. "Glass Bars" is somewhat larger, worked with cool colors, it spans the horize ns the horizon-

tal and illuminates with the LED lights but not in UV. Two of the larger pieces, "Building Blocks" and "Soft Pastel, Stained Glass"

"Soft Pastel, Stained Glass" reflect the success of repetition, although they do vary slightly upon closer scrutiny. Another piece, "Hidden Chaos," recalls a rather odd road map of sorts, but with a closer look reveals yet more recognizable

with a closer look reveals yet more recognizable patterns. It is a rather complex experiment into our visual wonder. In a way, this may be the perfect pandemic exhibit. Viewers are limited and each is provided with both an LED light as well as a UV light, both of which serve to illuminate the meticulous application

UV light, both of which serve to illuminate the meticulous application of light illuminating inks within the prints. This is clearly not simply graphic or topographic art. It is technically flexible and artistically versatile in its process; these are all hand-cut screens with no digital embellishment. This is not just a painterly device or visual trick; this is a move forward to exploring what may become an alternative vision into what printing might become in our future. Although some may not readily find an emotional connection to the work (no landscapes here) but on the other hand, there is much that is familiar here; the use of paint, the repeating patterns, and so on, but one shouldn't expect the often seen.

Rather, they open a window into the blend and experimentation of what the combination of new

experimentation of what the combination of new materials and new visions might have in store. One might not immediately form an emotional con-



"Purple Gold Metallic Color Field" with Michelle Kott of New Hope Arts.

Sweatshirts by John Spears.

nection but certainly there are those who shall. The show was put to-gether by Rita Gekht who must have had a hell of a must have had a hell of a time selecting the work from the vast multiplicity of options. Installing this exhibit required not just a good eye, but a spacial awareness to lay out such avisually diverse show. Christina Wohl Ramirez assisted with the instal-lation as did Kevin Bol-ger who also handled the

lation as did Kevin Bol-ger who also handled the lighting. Studio assistant Scott Reamer, also pro-duced the video, which can be found on You-Tube or through a link on John Spears website. In spite of our cur-rent milleu, this is a safe exhibit to view person-

ally. People can readily approach the art and are free to meander as they wish. Look longer, play with the lights and imagine the possibilities and the vision that went into creating these silkscreens. We may not often encounter work such as this. Should one choose to ponder the mathematics associated with this exhibition one's head might explode; so just enjoy the images, the light within the work, and the quiet space in which to view it. The New Hope Arts gallery is on the corner of Bridge and Stockton streets in New Hope Borough. Bucks County resident Duncan LaPlante writes on the arts and humantities.

the arts and humanities.



ohn Spears surrounded by his "Illusions of Light" at New Hope

tent with most of those orking in silkscreen (or the modern parlance, igraphs), but Spears taken what had been a atively straightforward occdure to another level. (It's difficult to look at see pieces and see just a ese pieces and see just a Several innovative hniques have made this ow unique in its approach orinting and, in a

be a part of everyone's environment. For now how-ever, this innovation has

artists yet to be recognized.

As art continues to embrace technology, the creative spirit seems to have no limits. At some point in the future, one might envision that the use of lights in this manner may be a part of everyone's

its limits for one's home, but is certainly viable for

licia and Pete Stevenson view "Revisiting Beyond" by John Spears.