

BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY

Dina Wind's *Art of THIS Century*

"Any attempt on my part to say something about it, to attempt explanation of the inexplicable, could only destroy it." - Jackson Pollock 1947

"There is something imminent in the work, but the circle is only completed by the viewer." - Anish Kapoor, 2009

A conversation about art with Dina Wind would inevitably lead to a discussion about abstraction and, as she put it, "the tradition of abstraction [leading her] forward."

When considering abstraction, on the one hand, you could talk about an artist like Pollock who thought he was a pure force of nature, in control of the whole of the artwork and all its complex details. On the other hand, you could talk about an artist like John Chamberlain who worked with found objects (car parts) to create additional meanings. While Life Magazine was perhaps mocking Pollock when they asked, "Is he the greatest living painter in the United States?" it's funny that in the late 1950's many people claimed Chamberlain's work was not art at all. When you take car parts and do what Chamberlain did in a gallery space, it might appear easy, facile, or a joke. However, I suspect that it is the harder thing to do, to work with the found object and somehow make that cumbersome thing lyrical and exciting.



John Chamberlain, *S*, 1959, metal, 17" x 22" x 13"

The collection I co-curate, The West Collection, is interested in contemporary artists' redefinition of the art object and the casual viewers' experience with the work. Enter Dina Wind. In 2006, Dina showed a large installation of her *Black Islands* at Nexus space in Philadelphia. The works were composed of found car bumpers and rubber material, with liquid rubber splattered across all of the elements in a painterly fashion. The three roiling rafts floated on the wood floor and loosely resembled islands. When I visited the exhibition, Dina escorted me up four stairs to a viewing platform in the corner of the gallery. She explained how the floor pieces were beginning to function correctly the higher we stepped, and I started thinking about some of my favorite artists: Lee Bontecou, Conrad Marca-Relli and Sal Scarpitta (also in the West Collection). These artists "bandaged" their work with the found materials of burlap mail bags, clothing, even underwear, that eventually were poured over in paint or resin. Dina's islands forced me into the darkness of war wreckage, the horizons of the sculptures were sharp, thrashing forms that created a dynamic contrast against the white box gallery.

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Dina Wind, 2006, *Black Islands*, painted steel, rubber sheeting and liquid rubber, 32" x 204" x 204" (shown at Nexus, Philadelphia)



Dina Wind, 2006, *Black Islands*, (shown at the West Collection at SEI, Oaks, PA in 2007)

The Wests acquired one of the three sculptures from the *Black Island* series that year. Soon after, in 2007, we exhibited the work in a large atrium space on SEI's corporate campus. From the second story of the SEI space the work functioned even better. Experiencing the work from that height called to mind looking out the window of the airplane to see industrial pools or coal tailings - tough, brutal elements made beautiful by a certain perspective. On formal levels I saw a connection between the black and silver wire works of Lee Bontecou and the black and silver surfaces in Wind's *Black Island*.

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Recently, at our warehouse annex space, we installed the complete *Black Islands* installation, which the Wind family generously gifted to the West Collection after Dina's unfortunate passing in 2014. Something clicked for me when we unpacked Dina's work next to two young Philadelphia-based artists Alex Lukas and Tim Portlock, whose works describe crumbling infrastructure and environmental chaos. Dina's concepts were in clear conversation with the other works, even though the aesthetic was entirely different. At this moment, the Wind works offered a complete circle where everything was related, everything was worthy of consideration and inclusion, everything dirty could be beautiful, and everything sharp and torn was flowing like brushstroke.

Lee Stoetzel
The West Collection
Oaks, PA
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(Jackson Pollock, about his painting 'She wolf'; as quoted in Abstract Expressionism, David Anfam, Thames and Hudson Ltd London, 1990, p. 87)

(Anish Kapoor, in a conversation with John Tusa on BBC Radio 3, 2009)