



Taryn McMahon
SupraEcology

WBg

William Busta Gallery
Cleveland Ohio



Cover:
SupraEcology (detail), 2014
 Silkscreen on polyester film,
 each banner 96 x 36 in.

Right, top:
Future Flower III, 2014
 Silkscreen and monotype on
 paper and cut polyester film;
 30 x 25 in.

Right:
Future Flower I, 2014
 Silkscreen and monotype on
 paper and cut polyester film;
 30 x 22 in.

Opposite:
SupraEcology III, 2014
 Silkscreen and monotype on
 paper and cut polyester film;
 30 x 30 in.



Taryn McMahon / The Shape of Things to Come

Taryn McMahon's layered monoprint and silkscreen images, framed and hanging in series along one wall at her solo show *SupraEcology*, at first seem repetitive or at least didactic, like selected illustrations taken from a book. A longer look, however, reveals just the opposite, as McMahon's dance-like combinations of botanical forms begin to speak about the passage of seasons, and unforeseeable permutations of the self; they describe a wildness that denies prescription or any logic other than the long, strangely woven reasonableness of evolution. Using mild shades of pink and green and blue, McMahon presents the shapes of half-imaginary plants, flowering as if in a daydream in interlocking, transparent manifestations of leaf, stem, flower, and bud. Echoing these window-like visions from across the room, another line of works is set out a couple of feet out from the opposite wall. These much larger, door-sized (96"/36") free-hanging works printed on polyester film move and shimmer slightly in the interior space, as if conjuring a summer breeze. Their colorful screen-printed shapes also are like imprints or shadows of half-real plants—swoops and arches that echo the fragile architecture of familiar field and garden formations.

The two modes of printing and presentation conduct a formal conversation across the empty gallery, which serves as a sort of fulcrum, balancing their uneven weights. The tightly pressed-together forms in McMahon's framed pictures, where the hard edges of screen-printed shapes in acrylic ink lie on top of the looser outlines of an oil-based monoprint, on close examination present a compressed sculptural terrain. They also extend across the upper and lower edges of the monoprint—one of McMahon's expressions here of the ebb and flow of substance and identity, in a world of porous or altogether fluid boundaries. The installation at Busta's claims, reorganizes, and blurs the geometry of the room there, unfolding the potential trapped in the artwork between two and three dimensions, reflected in the big, smoothly contemporary works on Mylar sheeting. In this context McMahon's see-through banners are like a secession, a movement independent of the here-and-now of the gallery. The sense of motion and traveling that she cultivates, through layering and installation strategies, is a theme that has both geographic and temporal implications.

A strain of naturalism found in art history has been one inspiration for McMahon in recent years, before and after she earned her 2011 MFA at the University of Iowa. The artist's formally complex, light-infused imaginings owe at least some of their life-force to her long-time interest in seventeenth-century engravings by the German-born artist Maria Sibylla Merian. Merian was an illustrator and pioneering student of nature whose closely observed studies of plants and insects were published in folio volumes along with



descriptions of conditions and life-cycles in an era when disciplines such as botany and entomology were in their infancy. Her engravings were collected during her lifetime by no less a figure than Peter the Great, and in recent decades her reputation and influence have enjoyed a much deserved revival of popular interest.

Temperamentally, McMahon is a futurist whose interest in historical illustration such as Merian's mixes dynamically with her own excitement about rapid changes found throughout the living world, due to environmental shifts and industrial scientific modification. And it is no accident that her techniques trace an explicit connection between printmaking as a mechanical, information-oriented technique, and the up-to-the-minute look of scientific imaging. "Every time probably thinks of itself as a turning point," she says. "But I think this is truly a pivotal era. I'm wondering [in my work] what the future might look like botanically. I'm not fearful..."

McMahon celebrates the transposition of physical forms and function, the moving or removing of edges and boundaries, the sharing of function that characterize humanity's developing relationship to the chemistry of genetic adaptation. That is, after all, what artists do and have always done—bend real things toward new imaginings.

—Douglas Max Utter

Taryn McMahon

Born 1984, Red Bank, NJ
Lives and works in Kent, OH

tarynmcmahon.com

Education

- 2011 MFA with honors, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA
2010 MA, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA
2006 BFA with honors, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
2005 Santa Reparata International School of Art, Florence, Italy

Selected Exhibitions

- 2014 *Raised from Seeds Sown in Spring* (solo), Lillian Boyer Gallery, Lexington Art League, Lexington, KY
Mark(ing) Time: Expanded Notions of Drawing, Dishman Art Museum, Beaumont, TX (catalogue)
East Coast Screenprint Biennial, Arts Center of the Capitol Region, Troy, NY (catalogue)
Armatures of Audubon: Contemporary Constructions and Ecologies, Kentucky School of Art, Louisville, KY
Coming from Afar: Prints from Across the United States and Abroad, Visual Art Center, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO
- 2013 *Shade Beneath Trees of My Own Planting* (solo), The Print Center, Philadelphia, PA
Gesturing Into Consciousness, Zoller Gallery, University Park, PA
Mid America Print Council Exhibition, McDonough Museum of Art, Youngstown, OH
- 2012 *Tracking Their Wondrous Transformation* (solo), Carroll Gallery, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA
Idea of the North, Islensk Grafik, Reykjavik, Iceland
Beyond Printmaking III, Landmark Arts, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX (catalogue)
- 2011 *Linking Collections, Building Connections: Work from the Hudson Valley Visual Art Collections Consortium*, Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, New Paltz, NY
Prints USA, Springfield Art Museum, Springfield, MO (catalogue)
Their Wondrous Transformation and Peculiar Nourishment (solo), Porch Gallery, Iowa City, IA

Selected Permanent Collections

Art in Embassies Program, Collection of the U.S. Embassy, Reykjavik, Iceland
C.N. Gorman Museum Special Collections, University of California, Davis, CA
Gippsland Centre for Art and Design, Monash University, Gippsland, Australia
Icelandic Printmakers' Association, Reykjavik, Iceland
Leifur Eiriksson Foundation, Charlottesville, VA
St. Lawrence University Special Collections, Canton, NY

Selected Grants, Fellowships, and Awards

- 2014 Creative Activity Support, University Research Council, Kent State University, Kent, OH
- 2014 Project Support, Lexington Art League, Lexington, KY
- 2013 *87th Annual International Competition: Printmaking & Photography Award*, The Print Center, Philadelphia, PA
- 2012 Artist Residency with fellowship, Anderson Ranch Arts Center, Snowmass Village, CO
- 2011 Artist Residency with fellowship, Anchor Graphics, Columbia College, Chicago, IL
- 2011 Southern Graphics Council International Graduate Fellowship Award, Statesboro, GA
- 2008–09 Leola Bergmann Graduate Fellowship, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA
- 2008 Geraldine R. Dodge Residency fellowship, Women's Studio Workshop, Rosendale, NY
- 2006–07 Artist Residency, John Talleur Print Studio, The Lawrence Arts Center, Lawrence, KS

Professional Experience

- 2014–present Assistant Professor, Kent State University, Kent, OH