



## **Silhouette: Capturing the Human Form in Contemporary Prints and Art Jewelry**

October 21, 2020 – July 3, 2021

Artists have long been concerned with representing the human form—either as portrait, anonymous figure, imagined being, or something in between. By definition, silhouette refers to either a particular type of portrait popularized in the nineteenth century comprised of the outline of a person or, more generically, the outline of a mass, body, or form. The tradition of silhouette portraits, in addition to the metal figures that adorn the surface of Mary Giles' works in the adjacent exhibition, serve as inspiration for this summary look at the human form in contemporary prints and art jewelry.

Both prints and jewelry can reflect the figure in two dimensions. Using different tools, media, and approaches, all of the artists represented in this exhibition investigate how to best use the human form as a compositional element, storytelling device, or representation of an idea. Unlike traditional silhouettes, some of the works included here are more detailed—a practice that adds qualities of character and personality.

Similarly, an artist's choice of material can shape impressions of what is being depicted. For example, consider how shifting from the colorful, textured figures represented in the jewelry of **Joyce Scott** to the flat, black and white prints of fragmented figures by **Michael Mazur** expands ideas about the human condition or the body as a conveyer of meaning.

### **Biographies and statements from select featured artists**

Spanish artist **Juan Genovés** (1930 – 2020) was a painter, printmaker, and sculptor who was part of several important mid-twentieth-century Spanish art movements including Los Siete (The Seven), Parpallós, and Hondo. Like many artists in Spain during the Franco era, Genovés was opposed to the fascist government. During that time, his work began to juxtapose the individual and the collective. His bold works of political realism often incorporate commercial images with a cinematic perspective, which is not surprising since one of his first jobs was creating handpainted movie posters. Educated at the Escuela de Bellas Artes de València, Spain, Genovés received—among other awards—an Honorable Mention at the 33rd Venice Biennale and the Gold Medal for Merit in the Arts by the Spanish Cultural Department in 2005. A political agitator for much of his life, Genovés used his art to advocate for freedom. His work can be found in museum collections around the world including the Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, València, Spain as well as the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum in New York, New York.

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Like Juan Genovés, artist **Michael Mazur** (1935 – 2009) worked in a variety of media, including printmaking, painting, and sculpture. Born in New York City, Mazur received his BA from Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts before earning his BFA and MFA from Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. Interested in both social issues and literature, two of his most notable print series depict the inmates of a mental asylum, and scenes from **Dante's *Inferno***. Already a multidisciplinary artist, Mazur also worked in a range of styles from realism to the abstract. He was awarded a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation grant, a John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Award, and an American Academy of Arts and Letters fellowship, all within a period of two years. In 1975, Mazur was invited to represent the US at the Venice Biennale, but declined for political reasons. He taught at the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island as well as Brandeis University and Harvard University in Boston, Massachusetts between 1961 and 1978. RAM's holdings of Mazur's work focuses on self-portrait prints, often with abstracted, fragmented figures.

Metalsmith **Christina Y. Smith** creates objects and wearables that address both personal and political issues through a feminist lens. By using silhouettes, Smith creates precious metal figures that are at once anonymous and archetypal, inviting the viewer into conversation with the work. Smith studied jewelry and metalsmithing at California State University, Fullerton and San Diego State University. A California native, she currently teaches three-dimensional design at Cal State, Fullerton while continuing to create her own studio work.

**Danielle Gori-Montanelli** graduated from Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, New York where she studied painting. After moving to New York City, she took up jewelry making, using traditional materials like silver and gold. Gori-Montanelli focuses on street scenes, portraits, and images taken from the urban landscape in which she lived. RAM's holdings include brooches, earrings, and neckpieces featuring subway riders, dog walkers, sunbathers, and the like. After moving to Florence, Italy with her husband in 2002, Gori-Montanelli began making wearables with designer felt that is available in Europe. Her work now, while still focusing on the everyday, is more concerned with mundane objects, like avocado toast, toys, vegetables, flowers, dessert, paintbrushes, and pencils—all rendered in bold colors from fiber. She currently resides in Vermont.