

Avery to Warhol Self-Guided Tour

What's in a Name? Untitled Artworks – Examine the strategy and open-ended possibilities of giving an artwork a non-title



Lois Lane
American, b.1948
Untitled, 1985
Lithograph on Fusuma paper
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James E. Gibson

What are some of the details you notice when you look at this artwork? Notice the two central figures. How do they make you feel? How would you describe the way the artist has represented them?

Lois Lane includes fans, birds, plants, and animals that are seemingly out of place. They are often presented against a flat and neutral background as seen here. While the title does not offer much help as to what is happening in this artwork, can you construct your own

interpretation?

Lane said, “When I was in school in Philadelphia I found an old Japanese book in the library that interested me because the wry stylized images seemed to relate to things going on in art and then again, not. They propelled me into thinking about images. I didn’t want to work abstractly — it wasn’t that I didn’t like other things that were abstract — but I couldn’t find a means of working that way; for me, there was no meaning in it.”

Stylized art does not try to mimic reality; objects are still recognizable but more emphasis is placed on colors, lines, and shapes. How does Lane stylize the figures in this artwork?

Many of Lane’s artworks are untitled. If you could give it your own title, what would it be? Do you view this artwork differently now? Why or why not?

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Willem de Kooning
American, born The Netherlands, 1904-1997
Untitled (*Heart Graham 25*), 1970
Lithograph on Suzuki paper
Gift of the Carter Hopkins Family

Look closely at this artwork; what do you see? Why do you think the artist omitted color? How do the shades of black, white, and grey and the various shapes relate to each other?

Willem de Kooning came to the United States in 1926. He worked as a house painter, then as a commercial artist in New York, before becoming immersed in the NY art world. De Kooning was a significant part of the New York School, a group of artist also known as Abstract Expressionists. These

artists reimagined the process of painting. They dissolved the relationship between foreground and background and used paint to create emotive, abstract gestures. What emotional response does this piece elicit?

In early 1970, the year of this lithograph, the artist visited Japan. After this trip, more graphic elements such as shape, lines, and forms showing visual relationships and emphasis appear in his paintings. In some artworks he employs flat applications of paint similar to Japanese calligraphy as opposed to a more painterly approach of thick paint and clearly visible brushstrokes. His prints seem to reflect the influence of Japanese ink drawing in the use of open space and off-centered composition. What do you think the artist's purpose was in creating this specific work? Imagine this piece with color; how would that change your impression? Finally, why do you think he had no need to name or identify this work?

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Lowell Nesbitt
American, 1933-1993
Untitled, 1974
Lithograph, 1/XXV
Gift of William H. Gleason in
honor of J. Carey Gleason

What did you notice first when you looked at this artwork? Look closer; what else can you see? Are you looking more closely at this object because there is no title?

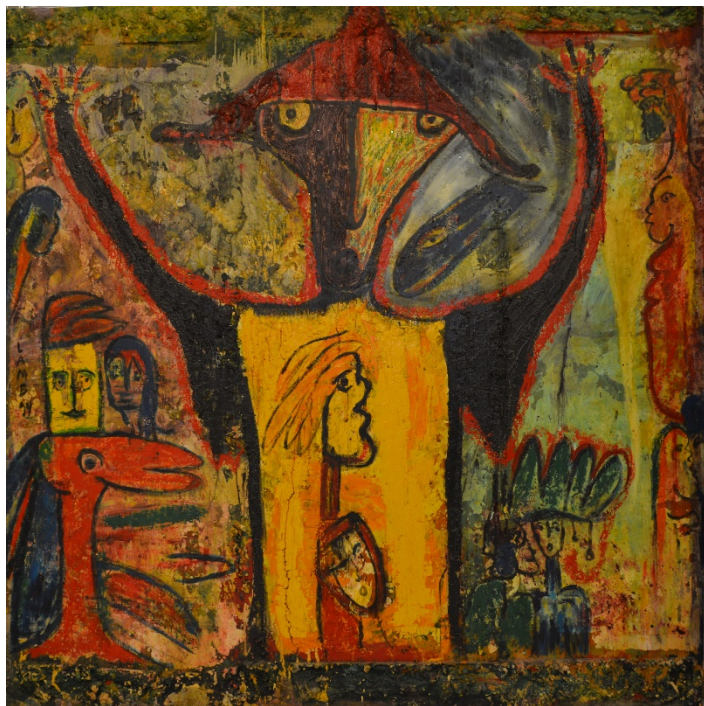
Lowell Nesbitt chose not to title this print. A title opens the door to an artist's intention and expression; without words to guide our thoughts we must create interpretations of our own. What do you think is lurking within this artist's creative mind? What seems to inspire him? Could there be other meanings beside the obvious? Where do you see ambiguity? Most of Nesbitt's paintings, prints, and drawings are titled. Why would Nesbitt choose not to title this particular lithograph?

Nesbitt was classified as a Photorealist, however he fought against inclusion in this group of artists who produced meticulously detailed flat imagery based on photography. Nesbitt wanted to be known for diversity of technique and subject matter. He began as an abstract artist, later turning to realism. Where do you discern abstraction in this print? Nesbitt often worked on large substrates and is best known for his large scale studies of flowers. How would this piece "read" if it was enlarged even bigger?

If you were in the market for an original artwork would you consider buying an untitled work? Or would you prefer to purchase a work with a descriptive title?

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Matt Lamb
American, 1932-2012
Untitled, 1994
Mixed media on wood
Gift of Virginia Miller Galleries

As you look at this monumental work of art (8' x 8'), what do you first see? Was it one of the figures, a section of color, the texture...? Did you notice a focal point or were you directed 'all over' the canvas by the colors and artist's technique?

With this large-scale work, Lamb intends to immerse the viewer in a total experience and to accept the mysteriousness of it. His undulating spirits and wavy forms are both sophisticated, primitive, and disturbing. What might be the significance of the different spirits? What feelings are you experiencing? The texture is created by Lamb's thick, rough brushstrokes and proprietary process he called "the Dip." He spreads a chemical mixture of corrosive, mutually repellant materials over the wood panel. As they dry over a period of months or years, these materials pool into lustrous, craggy surfaces. How would you describe the texture of the artwork?

Lamb's exuberant colors are said to seize the viewer with freewheeling, joyous movement to represent the innocent child in each of us who is alive with creativity and energy. Follow the color red throughout the work...describe the movement you sense. How do the red and the black outlines create movement? Where do your eyes stop to rest?

Matt Lamb once said, "You are many different people...with all these different masks...Who am I now?" Where do you see yourself in this work? Why might this work be untitled?