

GAGOSIAN



NEW YORK – TOM WESSELMANN: “STANDING STILL-LIFES” AT GAGOSIAN THROUGH FEBRUARY 24TH, 2018

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Tom Wesselmann, Still Life #59 (1972), via Art Observed

Dwelling on a unique body of work in artist Tom Wesselmann’s expansive oeuvre, Gagosian Gallery in New York is currently presenting a series of the artist’s monumentally-scaled “Standing Still-Lifes,” a series of works that saw the artist explore past practices and themes in his work, while embracing a scattered, varied approach towards his own imagery. On view through the end of February, Wesselmann’s work in series presents a unique opportunity to dive deeper into the artist’s relentlessly innovative vision and interests in the language of American consumerism.



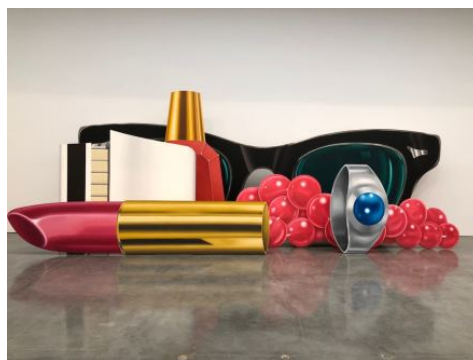
Tom Wesselmann, Still Life with Blue Jar and Smoking Cigarette (1981), via Art Observed

Drawing much of his early vocabulary and conceptual potency from his embrace of pop during the 1960's, Wesselmann was also a relentless collagist. His drawings of his wife and lifelong muse, Claire Selley—beginning in the 1950s when they met as students at Cooper Union—often took form as hybrid collages, using sketches and scraps of wallpaper alongside advertisements found in the New York City subway. This sense of haphazard accumulation, where found objects and images were pulled to create mixed media landscapes, were as much about their subjects as their objects, often commenting on the state of modern materialism in conjunction with man's place within it. Wesselmann also practiced this craft through assemblage paintings, which included functioning objects and gadgets that would change position and shape based on the viewer's perspective.



Tom Wesselmann, Still Life with Belt and Sneaker (1979-81), via Art Observed

Here, Wesselmann's "still-lives" turn towards a larger-scale, using the sheer size and impressive detail of Wesselmann's painterly ability to create dense arrangements of objects. Rather than merely incorporating objects into a space, Wesselmann's abilities as a painter turn the works into massive scenes and scenarios, moments drawn out of the everyday, or deliberately posed against easily read spatial logic, to create confounding and immersive arrangements of images. Immense belts twist around equally large shoes, each countered by repainted photographs and vases of flowers. The works, in their varied references to images and objects, seem pulled directly from Wesselmann's life, particularly when considering the sense of soft, realistic hues and meticulous approach to lighting that the artist was a master of.



Tom Wesselmann, Still Life #60 (1973), via Art Observed

It's worth noting that these pieces are assembled from individually-arranged canvases, each cut and painted then arranged in space to create the sense of a totality. Perhaps the best testament to Wesselmann's skill, these pieces seem pulled directly from a clutter of material in his own home, and equally, seem to have been pulled as a whole. As much as these works seek to reproduce their own images in careful detail, they equally seem to present scenes as a whole in a style and

technique that speak to themes of accumulation and consumption in subtle, nuanced ways. For as skilled as he was as a painter, Wesselmann was an equally gifted conceptual operator. Presented in grand scale here at Gagosian, his still-lives make that case quite well.



Tom Wesselmann, Bedroom Painting #32 (1976-78), via Art Observed