

Jasper Johns Numerals Series

Jasper Johns: Numbers

February 1 - April 18, 2004, The Los Angeles County Museum of Art

"I like to repeat an image in another medium to observe the play between the two: the image and the medium. In a sense, one does the same thing two ways and can observe differences and samenesses--the stress the image takes in different media."

--Jasper Johns, 1979

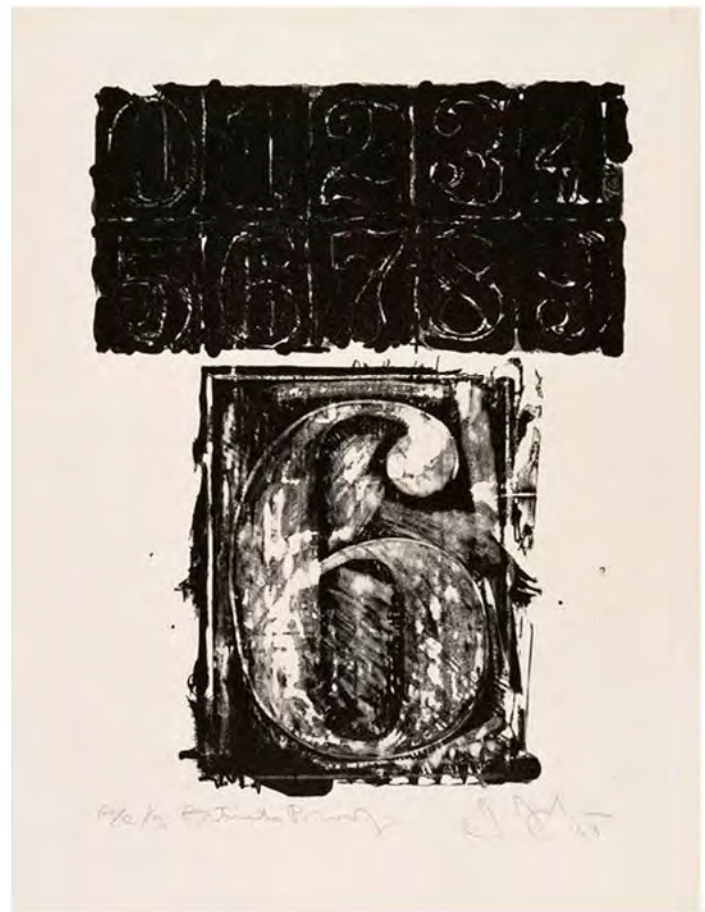
In the mid 1950s Jasper Johns, one of America's foremost artists, began painting flags, targets, alphabets, maps, and numbers at a time when abstract painting was still at the forefront of the New York art world. His choice of these symbols as a primary subject for his work is one of the most famous chapters in postwar art history.

Beginning in the mid-1950s, Jasper Johns formulated a pointedly non-introspective style that examined the limitations of representation -- he wanted to reveal the ways in which an art object contains and expresses meaning. By re-presenting wholly public, relatively prosaic symbols that are not usually the subject of high art--for instance, flags, numbers, letters, and targets -- Johns challenged the viewer to see something new, to question accepted conventions of representation, and to look with an inquisitive, rather than a complacent eye.

Johns's *Numbers* have had a profound impact on subsequent art because they address basic questions about perception and the nature of representation itself. Johns developed their form from commercial stencils, and the use of such "found" shapes -- ones that are predetermined and widely recognizable -- challenges the way the viewer looks at works of art by transforming the ordinary into richly worked visual objects. The exhibition depicts how the artist treats a similar theme in subtle variations using a variety of media. *Jasper Johns: Numbers* demonstrates how the artist develops his ideas in various painting media and expands these ideas with drawing and printmaking to create a cycle of works whose form and execution inform one another across the decades of the artist's career. Johns's transformation of everyday symbols into art objects reflects his interest in the nature of language and perception, and his technical finesse and virtuosity result in pieces of stunning beauty and visual presence.

<http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/4aa/4aa273.htm>

<http://collectionsonline.lacma.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record&id=155325&type=101>





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