

off the wall gallery

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PETER MARS

Inspired by wallpaper, candy wrappers, billboards and match packs, this influential American Pop Artist enters his third decade of art creation. Mars' colorful, quirky artworks disrupt predictable interpretation, and transform the ordinary things we see every day into entirely new experiences that tickle the senses, and delight the child inside.

Using the joy and nostalgia found in everyday objects, Peter Mars explores popular culture, the passage of time, and the icons that each period adopts as its own. His works form a running commentary on global popular culture.

Much of Mars' work reflects the American pop culture of his childhood in the 1960s and 70s, notably the idealized American family, comic book figures, television and space age inventions.

"I loved TV shows like Lost in Space, and Fireball XL-5. I particularly liked the robot on Lost in Space, and wanted my own robot like that. I remember how thrilled I was when President Kennedy came on TV and promised us that soon we would each have our own personal robot and how we were going to have robots to walk the dog and everything! I couldn't wait to grow up so I could start to work with my robot. When that didn't happen, I was sad."

Born in Portland, Oregon in 1959, Peter Mars began a lifetime of collecting... matchbooks, comic books, baseball cards, arrowheads, coins, and old porcelain signs. In each one of these items Mars finds a beauty. And small treasures that tell the story of American popular culture. His collection now forms a sort of library of images and colors, many drawn from vintage advertising material. Pop bottles, vintage toys, and old catalogues, litter the shelves of his studio and home.

Employing silkscreen as his medium of choice, Mars engages his subject matter in a way that lets images speak their own language. In juxtaposition, they agree or disagree, emphasize or interrupt, as if in animated conversation. The result is a textured, and complex commentary, wry and always more than the sum of its parts.

"Right away I loved the feeling of working with silk and ink and that sense of excitement never seems to

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fade. I love the high spinning sound you hear when you pull the ink across the silk. But most of all, I love that final breathtaking moment when you lift the screen from the canvas and the image appears, as if by magic!"

"If you look at the collaborations between Warhol and Basquiat, you will understand what my art is about. In the mid-to-late 80s, with the death of those two leaders, I felt this was my place. Like the trail of breadcrumbs left by the advance party, these previous explorers had ventured just so far into the unexplained wilderness and the next generation of Pop Artists would need to start from where they left off. Pop culture continued to explode in a thousand new directions and I was coming up right behind this and I told myself to start at the end of their trail. This was and is Pop Art. My goal was to simply carry on with the troops. And continue to march into unknown territory. As with any venture or quest... you have to be fearless in order to accomplish great things."