



John Walker (1939 -)

Nationality

British

Education

1955-60: Birmingham College of Art

1960-61: British School in Rome

1961–63: Académie de la Grande Chaumière, Paris



Taught

1982: Dean, Victoria College of the Arts, Melbourne

Royal College in London

Yale University

1992: Boston University's Graduate Program in Painting and Sculpture

Background

Walker was a Gregory Fellow at Leeds University (1967-1969), after which he was awarded a Harkness Fellowship and visited the United States. He also received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1981. In 1972 he represented Britain in the Venice Biennale.

The artist has had solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in NY; The Phillips Collection in DC; The Tate Gallery, London; The Hayward Gallery in London; The Kunstverein, Hamburg; The Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia; and others.

He was an artist-in-residence at Oxford University (1977–79), and at Monash University, Melbourne (1980).

The artist

Walker recounts a formative experience: "As a young man, I had gone to Amsterdam to look at Van Gogh, actually. I saw the Rembrandts, including the painting that is still the most important painting to me — 'The Jewish Bride.' It just touched me so. It is truly one of the great romantic paintings in the world. I came out from the Rembrandt painting, and then I went to the Stedelijk. I'd been trained at that point just in figurative art. For the four years previously, I'd been in a life room. And I saw this painting, a white square on a white square. I didn't know what it was, but I got the same emotional take that I got from the Rembrandt. It blew me away, took me off balance. I turned away, came back. I had no way of dealing with it intellectually. I'd never been faced with avant-garde art. I didn't do anything about it. But several years later, I read that Malevich, when asked what his ambition was for painting, said it was to imbue the square with feeling. Well, that's what Rembrandt did. So the connection was immediate. Then I didn't have this problem of why I liked Rembrandt and why I liked certain contemporary art, why I grew to like Jackson Pollock. That is what they were doing: they were imbuing the square with feeling. I'd never read that, never heard of that, but it seemed to be right on."



Juggernaut



Walker's print relates to a set of paintings entitled *Juggernaut* that began in 1973. These paintings collaged sections of metallic-looking canvas on a massive scale. Chalk-dust and gel added atmospherics while conspicuous handling (developed in his immediately previous blackboard pieces) played with the sense of shape. Each of Walker's two silk-screened images is a section of the ground plane projected forward by means of drawn edges whereas, in the paintings, shapes are more conspicuously placed against the ground (although there is still clearly much figure ground juggling). Walker's practice of plastic automatism emerged out of a serial procedure. When he came to work with the layout of his *Juggernauts*, a double image involved additional screening in different colours, marks and surfaces. This extended improvisation to a print-medium associated in the 1960's with either the manipulation of given media imagery or else highly formal abstraction. A series of five small linocuts, published the same year in an edition of ten, also derived from the *Juggernaut* paintings. (Three are illustrated in *John Walker Prints*, Arts Council, 1975, cat.39-41.)

Metadata

Accession number:	N013
Artist:	John Walker
Artwork type:	screenprint
Material:	screen ink on paper
Measurements:	1041 x 1575 cm
Technique:	seriography
Date:	1974
Rights owner:	the artist
Rights status:	UK HE use only
Institution:	Council for National Academic Awards/University of London