

RC₂ GALLERY

ROBERT MARS

Chronicling a fascination with 1950s and '60s iconography, Robert Mars has produced a body of artwork that celebrates the commonplace objects and icons of an America long past in a thoroughly modern and exquisitely constructed manner.

His eye for a distinct facet of American history is impeccable, and his ability to manipulate both the color and wordplay of vintage printed material has earned him reference with the likes of Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg, and Richard Diebenkorn, among other masters from the School of Pop. By taking inspiration from the Golden Age of American popular culture and celebrating figures of the 1950s and '60s, Mars' artwork chronicles an evolving relationship with celebrity. Through the application of a rich color palette and tongue-in-cheek attitude, Mars' paintings evoke a vintage quality of design and pay homage to the idealized age of growth and hopefulness that was prevalent in the United States at the end of World War II—a time before the Internet and mobile technology, where visual information was not constantly blasted to millions, and there was no such thing as instant digital celebrities, where instead people lived with the myth of the unique, untouchable and unforgettable personalities of Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, James Dean, Audrey Hepburn, Elvis Presley, and many others.

By merging his own concept of personal idols with those of mainstream culture, Mars is able to focus his work on a deeper analysis of the Golden Age of Americana. His early work focuses on many of the architectural and mechanical forms of the '50s and '60s, where muscle cars, motels, kitschy logos and hulking monuments to the “modern” feeling of the time reigned supreme. More recently, however, Mars' artwork has shifted toward the culture of celebrity, and he is strikingly attuned to the fact that these instantly recognizable and larger than life personalities continue to resonate not only with contemporary American culture but with a worldwide market.

In 2014, after serious reflection upon his artistic thought, his process, wanting to explore traditionalism from another angle, and through influence from his wife, Mars began to delve deeper into American culture by focusing on folk art and contemporary American quiltmakers. By combining vintage wallpapers with quilt patterns Mars was able to further differentiate himself from the scores of artists using similar iconic themes. Mars is credited as being the first to incorporate quilt patterns and a folk art sensibility into a pop art aesthetic creating his own genre of folk-laced pop.

A graduate of Parsons School of Design in New York, Mars often references his decades as a graphic designer in his work. He begins the creative process by preparing his surface with multiple layers of vintage magazine paper in

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order to define the edges and delineate the background planes of color. He then alternates layers of paint and vintage paper ephemera, sanding away portions of the layers as he works, revealing the desired portions of underpainting with the overall intention to provide the viewer with a muted window into America's past.

Robert Mars' artwork is exhibited worldwide including museum collections in Munich, Tokyo, Amsterdam, London, Boston, New York, Los Angeles, Laguna Beach, Paris, Aspen and Naples. His artwork was selected for the Absolut Vodka Blank campaign alongside Damien Hirst, and his largest-sized piece to date was acquired by Philip Morris/Altria for their corporate headquarters in Virginia. In 2015 Mars was chosen for the cover of Neiman Marcus' May Book, while Coca-Cola purchased several existing works and ordered commissions for a world tour celebrating the 100-year anniversary of their trademark bottle shape, in which his artwork was spotlighted. In 2016, Mars was a featured artist for a custom high-end wallpaper and tile series with Kari Whitman Interiors.

Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2016 *The Golden Age*, Mead Carney Fine Art; Porto Montenegro, Montenegro
 Days Were Golden, Evansville Museum; Evansville, Indiana
- 2015 *Boys Are Back in Town*, JoAnne Artman Gallery; Laguna Beach, California
- 2014 *A Love Supreme*, The Harvey B. Gantt Center; Charlotte, North Carolina
 Mars Attacks, JoAnne Artman Gallery; Laguna Beach, California
 A Love Supreme, DTR Modern, New York
 A Love Affair, DTR Modern; Washington, D.C.
- 2012 *Captivated*, Coral Springs Museum Of Art; Coral Springs, Florida
 Stars and Starlets, DTR Modern, New York
- 2011 *American Idols*, Galerie Bartoux; Honfleur, France
 American Art, Museum Gallery of Modern Art; Sofia, Bulgaria
- 2010 *Lost and Found*, Gallery Brown; Los Angeles, California
 Chronicles of America, DTR Modern; Boston, Massachusetts

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Selected Solo Exhibitions (continued)

- 2009 *Ruins and Relics*, Peter Blake Gallery; Laguna Beach, California
 Notes from the Road, Hubert Gallery, New York
 Diamonds and Rust, Art Department Gallery; Atlanta, Georgia
- 2008 *Beauty in Hindsight*, Guest Room Gallery; Portland, Oregon
 Fading Trails, Hubert Gallery, New York
 Viva Lost Vegas, Peter Blake Gallery; Laguna Beach, California
- 2007 *Gas, Food, Lodging*; Kidder Smith Gallery; Boston, Massachusetts

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2017 *Iconic Patterns*, Laura Rathe Fine Art; Dallas, Texas
 Lonesome Crowded West, with Stephen Wilson, exhibit by aberson;
 Tulsa, Oklahoma
- 2016 *Fifteen Minutes*, Cornell Art Museum; Delray Beach, Florida
 Effervescence, Coca-Cola Museum; Atlanta, Georgia
- 2015 *Robert Mars and Matt Devine*, DTR Modern; Boston, Massachusetts
- 2014 *The Art of Cinema*, DTR Modern; Boston, Massachusetts
- 2013 *TedxPDX*, Portland Art Museum; Portland, Oregon
- 2006 *BraveArt 06*; Vancouver, British Columbia
- 2005 *Commons*, Basefield Projects; Melbourne, Australia
 Fifty 24 SF Gallery; San Francisco, California
- 2004 Modart; Munich, Germany
- 2003 *From the Ground Up*, New Bedford Art Museum; New Bedford,
 Massachusetts
 What is Compound, Rocket Gallery; Tokyo, Japan

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Selected Group Exhibitions (continued)

2003 *Into the Void*, Compound Gallery; Portland, Oregon
Modart; Munich, Germany

Corporate and Private Collections

Ronald McDonald House
John Joseph and Nancy Hanright
Emir Bahadir/BHDR
Benjamin Fernández/Minart Museum
National Art Museum of Sport; Indianapolis, Indiana
Evansville Museum; Evansville, Indiana
Coca-Cola
Andruw Jones/Atlanta Braves
IT Cosmetics
Neiman Marcus
Philip Morris/ Altria
Coral Springs Museum Of Art; Coral Springs, Florida
Monopol Hotel, St. Moritz
Bank of America
Wells Fargo
Absolut Vodka
Oceania Cruise Lines
Microsoft
adidas US
International Museum of Collage, Assemblage, and Construction; Santa Fe,
New Mexico
PRPS
Jeff and Des Schaller
Scott and Jane Maxwell
Maria Contomina
ESPN X Games Division
Nike Communications
New Bedford Art Museum; New Bedford, Massachusetts
Wade Ehrlich Design
Cherner Auto Group

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Corporate and Private Collections (continued)

United Legwear

Edward Belbruno

Elyse Walker

Jim Albaugh

Wes Engram/New York Mets

Rob Manfred/MLB Commissioner

Bob Bowman/MLB President