

ROBERT COTTINGHAM

Robert Cottingham is of a generation of 20th-century painters who, in finding themselves confronted with the 19th-century rival of painting—photography, successfully assimilated photography into their work. This movement in art became known as Photo Realism. Cottingham, Malcolm Morley, Robert Bechtle, John Clemente Clark, Richard McClean, Ralph Goings and John Kacere are among the luminaries of this international style.

Cottingham, like most Photo Realists, uses the photograph as a sketchbook of his visual imagery. However, he adds his very personal framed views of the New York City he grew up in and turns his visual reporting to re-code them into a visual language where letters, words and scraps of images penetrate beyond the eyes of the viewer and lodge in the mind and heart.

Cottingham is fascinated by the power of various combinations of lettering that appear as advertisements on the streets of our community. These familiar and seemingly ordinary symbols epitomize the brash, bold American way of life and free enterprise. He successfully employs compositional devices that add interest to his urban images. His concern for formalist abstraction encourages the viewer to focus on the play of light and the passage of time through his work as he records a sympathetic detachment to the phenomena of the 20th-century urban landscape.

Biographical Information

1935 Born in Brooklyn, New York

1963 B.F.A.; Pratt Institute; Brooklyn, New York

Selected Exhibitions

2005 Galerie Patrice Trigano; Paris, France
"Tandem Press—Robert Cottingham;" Barbara Krakow Gallery; Boston, Massachusetts

2004 "New Still Lives," Forum Gallery, New York

2001 "Still Lives;" Forum Gallery; Los Angeles, California

2000 "Still Lives;" Forum Gallery, New York

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Selected Exhibitions (continued)

- 1999 Works on Paper Gallery; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 1998 "Eyeing America: Robert Cottingham Prints;" National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; Washington, D.C.
- 1997 "Robert Cottingham—An American Alphabet;" Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art; Ridgefield, Connecticut
"Hollywood Stills: House Portraits by Robert Cottingham," Long Beach Museum of Art, California
- 1996 "Robert Cottingham—An American Alphabet," Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Alabama
- 1994 Harcourts Contemporary; San Francisco, California
"Robert Cottingham;" Triton Museum; Santa Clara, California
Takda Gallery; San Francisco, California
Struve Gallery; Chicago, Illinois
- 1993 Marisa del Re Gallery, New York
"Robert Cottingham—Rolling Stock Series, Paintings Drawings, Prints;" Central Connecticut State University; New Britain, Connecticut
- 1992 "Robert Cottingham—Rolling Stock Series;" Butler Institute of American Art; Youngstown, Ohio
- 1991 Harcourts Contemporary; San Francisco, California
- 1990 "Robert Cottingham—Rolling Stock Series," Marisa del Re Gallery, New York
"Three Universities Collect;" Indiana University Art Museum; Bloomington, Indiana
Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art; Ithaca, New York
Roger Ramsay Gallery; Chicago, Illinois
- 1989 Gimpel and Weitzenhiffer, New York
Barbara Fendrick Gallery; Washington, D.C.
National Invitational Drawing Exhibition; Emporia State University; Emporia, Kansas (traveling exhibition)
Muscarelle Museum of Art; Williamsburg, Massachusetts
"Trains and Planes: The Influence of Locomotion in American Painting," Sherry French Gallery, New York (traveling exhibition)

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Selected Exhibitions (continued)

- 1989 "Coming of Age: Twenty-One Years of Collecting by the Madison Arts Center;" Madison Arts Center; Madison, Wisconsin
- 1988 "Facing It: Selections from the Ross Turk Collection;" Midwest Museum of Art; Elkhart, Indiana
Davidson Art Center, Wesleyan University; Middletown, Connecticut
Center Gallery; Bucknell University; Lewisburg, Pennsylvania
- 1987 Union Station; Hartford, Connecticut
"In Defense of Sacred Lands;" The Marcus Gallery; Boston, Massachusetts
"Close Focus: Prints, Drawings and Photographs;" National Museum of Art, Smithsonian Institution; Washington, D.C.
- 1986 "The Detailed Image: Realism Here and Abroad;" Harcourts Contemporary; San Francisco, California
"Interiors and Exteriors: Contemporary Realist Prints;" Yale University Art Gallery; New Haven, Connecticut
"Hollywood: Legend and Reality;" National Museum of American History; Washington, D.C.
Springfield Art Museum, Missouri (traveling retrospective)