

Red Light: A Reimagined Curation of David Salle's Beautiful, Vivid, Self-contained

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We were given the assignment to reimagine David Salle's exhibition titled, *Beautiful, Vivid, Self-contained*. Our exhibition is called *Red Light* and it features four pieces, starting with a traditional bronze sculpture from the Renaissance, Giambologna's *Astronomy* (1570's). The rest of the pieces were chosen with the intention of decentering the long-established art history by deconstructing this traditional image we have of art. Our three other pieces, Walter Price's *Discomfort* (2022), Nicole Wittenberg's *Silver Light* (2021), and the centerpiece, Robert Colescott's *Untitled* (1967), all break away from this traditional sense of art. We showcase these untraditional artists to replace this traditional image with a new modern image where we represent the underrepresented identities and cultures.

We decided to conduct our curation in the fourth-floor conference room. Three of four walls in this room are windows, with the longest wall featuring candlelight, a stained glass window of reddish and yellows. These windows not only allow you to view the Highline, which many people pass on throughout the day, but also provide for wonderful natural lighting. The *Astronomy* (1570's) sculpture is one of the older pieces in David Salle's exhibition while Price's *Discomfort* (2022) was made just last year.



Giambologna, *Astronomy*, early 1570s. Bronze, 20 x 5 in (50.8 x 12.7 cm).

Giambologna, a Mannerist sculptor of *Astronomy* (1570's) would be placed in the middle around

where the large conference table is located. We would remove the desks and prop the sculpture on a white pedestal approximately three feet tall. We present *Astronomy* (1570's) as a piece that can be interpreted as ironic. This piece depicts a white woman standing in a rather empowering pose, which showcases a sense of irony due to the fact a man is attempting to portray what a "proper" woman looks like. This portrayal of the women is a very common example of how art history centered itself around the point of view of white men & society. The woman's pose is seen as one of power and discomfort.



Nicole Wittenberg, *Silver Light*, 2021. Oil on linen, 11 1/2 x 15 1/2 in (29.21 x 39.37 cm).

The first non-traditional artist is Wittenberg, a twenty-first century American female artist of her painting *Silver Light* (2021) would be placed on the wall on top of the cabinet, facing the windows. Nicole Wittenburg once said, "she wants to make paintings that hit all at once."¹ The traditional art we see in many museums across the world often centers themselves around white society, more specifically the perspective or lens of white men. By including Wittenburg, we offer a new perspective of a women who takes her art and uses it to leave an impact on her audience. In this piece, Wittenberg makes sure to convey a feeling of eeriness through dark colors and grim atmosphere. The painting's location also ties into the feeling of the piece. The location allows for the natural light of the environment to juxtapose the

¹ *Nicole Wittenberg in "Nowhere but Here" at Colby College, Maine (July 15, 2013)*, 1.

dark cool-colored painting on the wall. This natural lighting from the sun and light bouncing off the windows reveal parts of *Silver Light* (2021) that would have remained hidden if the lighting was dimmer. The act of revealing and uncovering is used to further communicate the intent of the painting to the audience.



Walter Price, *Discomfort*, 2022. Acrylic and gesso, 40 x 40 (101.6 x 101.6cm).

Price, an African American postwar and Contemporary artist of *Discomfort* (2022) would be placed on the back wall that currently faces the conference room table. This piece is meant to represent the feeling of discomfort which ties into our theme of deconstructing tradition. Its significance comes from the fact that the piece is done with the color red with hints of purple and bordered with a yellowish-green color. The top half and center of the painting is covered in a shimmer that is captivating when it hits the eye. The shimmer contrasts the darker pieces such as *Silver Light* and *Astronomy*. Red is

often associated with anger, love, courage, and passion which are strong feelings that contrast with the uncomfortable feeling in this painting. The use of dramatic color in this piece is a



Robert Colescott, Untitled, 2001. Acrylic on Linen, 78 ¾ x 59 x 1.5inches (200.03 x 149.86 x 3.81cm).

Our last artist is Colescott, a neo expressionist era African American artist of Untitled, would be placed on the back wall of our exhibit, perpendicular to the wall of windows. Colescott has created many untitled works of art. The piece incorporates bright fluid colors which juxtaposes against the contained, strict elements of the Astronomy sculpture. This piece pays tribute to Colescott and his heavy interest in expressionist paintings and how he used them to explore Black History, as well as how he dealt with his own personal experiences with his black identity. Despite his death in 2009, his works are still remembered and displayed in museums like the Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Museum of Visual Arts and more.

Bibliography

Nicole Wittenberg, "*Nowhere but Here*" at Colby College, Maine, 1, July 15, 2013.