Eduardo Paolozzi: General Dynamic F.U.N.
Thesis Exhibition Proposal
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Scottish artist Eduardo Paolozzi, one of the pioneers of British Pop Art, has been known primarily for his sculptures and his collages of the 1950s; less appreciated is his talent as a print maker. Beginning in the 1960s, the print became a major medium of expression for Paolozzi. Alongside his contemporaries, Richard Hamilton and John McHale, Eduardo Paolozzi was one of the first to exploit the possibilities of commercial-style silk screen printing in the English art world.

Exhibition Pieces

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee art collection includes an important series of Paolozzi’s prints from 1970: the unbound portfolio titled General Dynamic F.U.N. The series comprises 50 silk screen prints and photolithographs, (each is 15 x 10 inches). For my MA Thesis Exhibition, I propose to exhibit these 50 prints with several related images, and write a scholarly catalog essay, which will place these prints in the context of Paolozzi’s career, and in the context of the changing face of Pop Art after the 1960’s. Paolozzi, a Pop Artist before the advent of Andy Warhol and company in America, drew his subject matter and materials from glossy magazines, popular science journals and the world of mass production. In 1965, Paolozzi set out to create a definitive statement on “modern man and his dilemma”¹ from his diverse collection of twentieth-century ephemera. The first volume of this project, printed in 1967, was Moonstrip Empire News, in which Paolozzi combined images

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and fragments of ready-made text pulled from articles and magazine clippings. Sources ranged from classical literature to advertising slogans. The sequel to this early endeavor was General Dynamic F.U.N., a collection which was, in contrast, predominantly pictorial. While there were similarities in the means of presentation, General Dynamic F.U.N., focused more forcefully than the 1967 series on the absurdities of commercially produced material. In the 1970 series, Paolozzi offered odd, seemingly irrational pairings of banal images. F.U.N. demonstrated the ‘unreality of the image generated by mechanical means,’ which Paolozzi considered to be the ‘new reality,’ and which he believed had yet to make ‘serious inroads’ on the established world of art.² This exhibition will focus on a detailed examination of his prints within this series, helping to further explain Paolozzi’s role as a “consummate colorist, draftsman, designer and programmer,”³ in the crucial period around 1970, when Pop Art elided into Postmodernism.

Exhibition Catalogue

Paolozzi’s focus in F.U.N., and much of the rest of his production, is the dialectic between man and machine. Growing up in Edinburg, the son of Italian immigrants, Paolozzi has pointed to his early love of “American grotesque”⁴ – the kitsch culture that permeated war-ravaged Europe from the United States after 1945 – as a primary influence. Because of this, Paolozzi has been called the “father of

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² Christopher Finch in Eduardo Paolozzi: a print retrospective. (Berkeley: University Art Museum, University of California, 1968) pp. 29
³ Forward to Eduardo Paolozzi: a print retrospective. (Berkeley: University Art Museum, University of California, 1968)
British Pop Art\textsuperscript{5} – a movement which began a decade before its American counterpart, and with an entirely different tone. Paolozzi's involvement with Richard Hamilton, John McHale and the Independent Group during the 1950s has perpetuated this reputation. His links to other art and artists is, however, more varied. His seemingly random assortment of images reflects his interest in the photomontage techniques of Surrealism and Dada, both movements that he had exposure to while working in Paris from 1947-49.

*General Dynamic F.U.N.* can also be viewed as an embodiment of reoccurring themes within the artist’s oeuvre. The themes and subjects Paolozzi treats in his sculptural works can be seen reflected in this series. The jagged, industrial elements and patterns are represented in both paper and chrome. Paolozzi's writings further explore the machine's ubiquitous role in our lives, the feelings that we are inextricably linked and dependent on these industrial commodities. His screen prints also demonstrate a creative dependence on contemporary printing technology. Screen printing allowed Paolozzi to expand upon his earlier commercial interests, revisiting and revising earlier ideas he’d already explored through collage. These transformations have involved the assistance of artisans and technicians; *General Dynamic F.U.N.* was printed at the Alecto Studios in London by Lyndon Haywood. Haywood was one of two technicians with whom Paolozzi maintained a close working relationship.

I hope to provide viewers with a better understanding of Paolozzi’s prints through the careful scrutiny of this largely neglected series. I will provide detailed formal analysis on the selected images.

\textsuperscript{5} Miles, pp.7
and examine this series, not only as it applies to the social and cultural atmosphere of the time, but also
how it fits into Paolozzi’s collaborative efforts and personal progression as an artist. While further
exploring his undeniable influence on British Pop Art, I will also demonstrate the important influence of
the Surrealists and his early experiences in Paris. Lastly, I hope to pinpoint reoccurring themes in the
artist’s oeuvre — among these, the relationship between art and applied science, American Culture,
technology — as seen within General Dynamic F.U.N.

Selected Bibliography

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