

## Two new Tang exhibitions explore the lively intersection of mass culture, art and technology

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. —Marilyn Monroe and Mr. Peanut, civil rights protesters, fashion shots, robots, national monuments, cartoon characters, and gleaming vintage American automobiles are among the wealth of images mixed and matched (in prints, collages, photographs, film, and sculpture) in two exhibitions on view this summer at The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College. *Eduardo Paolozzi: General Dynamic F.U.N.* will be shown in the museum's Winter Gallery from May 30 through Aug. 30, and *Amazement Park: Stan, Sara and Johannes VanDerBeek* will be on view in the Tang's mezzanine gallery from June 6, 2009 to April 25, 2010.

*Eduardo Paolozzi: General Dynamic F.U.N.* features the British Pop artist's 1965–70 print series from the Tang collection, in an exhibition curated by Michelle Paquette, a 2008 graduate of the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program at Skidmore. In the *General Dynamic F.U.N.* prints, popular-culture imagery is hijacked and transformed into what Paquette notes are "metaphors for human nature and modern culture." By overlapping and juxtaposing numerous images, from celebrities and brand-name consumer items to robots and soldiers in battle, Paolozzi created what Paquette describes as "a domino effect of disparate images piling up and tumbling through the modern psyche." In the neon pink, orange, and yellow print *An Empire of Silly Statistics...A Fake War for Public Relations*, portraits of Liz Taylor and Ricky Nelson and a gaggle of cartoon figures are placed alongside striped blocks and boxes.

Born the son of Italian immigrants in 1924, Paolozzi was raised in Scotland and knighted in 1989 by Queen Elizabeth II. A sculptor, collagist, printmaker, and filmmaker, he pioneered the use of industrial silkscreen methods in fine art and played a central role in the development of British Pop Art. In his 2005 obituary, the British *Times* noted that he "tempered the solemnity of his art with humour and with a voracious appetite for the ephemera of popular culture."

Projected films, photography, collage, and sculpture by Stan VanDerBeek (1927–1984), his daughter Sara (b. 1976), and son Johannes (b. 1982) will be on display in the yearlong, monthly rotating exhibition *Amazement Park: Stan, Sara and Johannes VanDerBeek*. Part experimental laboratory and part studio space, the exhibition will grow, mutate, and morph with each reinstallation as new ideas arise. As the Tang's Malloy Curator Ian Berry explained, "The changing nature of the project mirrors the spirit of many of the works, which reveal common interests in re-combination, collage, ephemeral materials, and architectural forms and spaces."

Filmmaker, collagist, painter, and poet Stan VanDerBeek created works that often combine social critique with a surrealist imagination. He is recognized particularly for his animated films from the late 1950s and 60s, such as *Breathdeath* (1964), whose witty visual combinations include a foot coming out of Richard Nixon's mouth, a couple dining elegantly within a bombed ruin, and a bloody newspaper whose headlines trumpet the success of the hydrogen bomb. VanDerBeek also explored the capacity of emerging technologies to alter everyday communication and global relationships, during artist residencies at M.I.T. (1969-70) and the International Communications Agency at NASA (1979), among others.

Sharing their father's collagist impulse, Sara and Johannes VanDerBeek combine cultural ephemera in telling juxtapositions. *Amazement Park* will include a series of works by Sara VanDerBeek that critic Anne Ellegood described in *Artforum* magazine as "socially aware yet somehow sweetly personal"; the finished pieces are photographs of fragile tabletop assemblages built from images found in yard sales, flea markets, and her father's archive, and simple objects such as tree branches, buttons, string, cloth, and bits of mirror and crystals. Works on display by her brother will include sculpture, collage, and pieces that straddle the intersection between the two, including *Ruins* (2007), an approximately 9-by-17-foot wall sculpture whose rock-like surface is constructed of glued-together and ground-down pages from *Time*, *Life*, and *National Geographic* magazines.

The two VanDerBeeks recently began organizing and conserving their father's archive, leading to a 2008 exhibition of his work at their New York gallery Guild & Greyshkul. Sara has said that the process strengthened their knowledge of Stan VanDerBeek's work and influenced their own practices. Notably, it also revealed to both artists many previously unrecognized similarities between their own work and their father's, similarities that Tang curator Berry and the artists hope will emerge throughout the course of *Amazement Park* to create what Berry describes as "a complex picture of influence and experimentation."

The Tang Museum is open Tuesday–Thursday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday until 7 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m., and closed Mondays and major holidays. For more information, call 518-580-8080 or go to <http://tang.skidmore.edu/>.