The Woodcut Bathrobe

Jim Dine



Date : 1975
Woodcut and lithograph on Natsume 4007 paper
36 x 24 in.
Artist’s Proof (A.P.)
Pencil signed, dated, and numbered

Artist bio

Jim Dine was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1935. He studied at the University of Cincinnati, the Boston Museum School, and in 1957 he received a bachelor of fine arts degree from Ohio University. After graduation, he moved to New York City and became involved with a circle of artists including Robert Rauschenberg, Claes Oldenburg, and Roy Lichtenstein, all of whose work moved away from Abstract Expressionism toward Pop art.

In 1962 Dine's work was included, along with Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, Ed Ruscha, Wayne Thiebaud and many more, in the historically important and ground-breaking New Painting of Common Objects, curated by Walter Hoppsat the Norton Simon Museum. This exhibition is historically considered one of the first "Pop Art" exhibitions in America. These artists started a movement which shocked America and the art world. The Pop Art movement fundamentally altered the nature of modern art.

Often associated with the Pop art movement, Jim Dine features everyday objects and imagery in his paintings, drawings, and prints. His works focuses on certain subject matter, bathrobes and hearts amongst them. However, unlike many Pop artists, he focuses on the autobiographical and emotive connotations of his motifs.

Dine began painting bathrobes in 1964; some of them were titled or subtitled "self-portrait". The bathrobe became a motif in his repertoire which he has returned to on many occasions, in prints as well as paintings. Though he claimed never to wear a bathrobe, nonetheless these are all, in a way, portraits and self-portraits. The bathrobe is a motif that Dine has been using over the years in countless printed works to depict mostly himself, but also his wife and people around him. This subject came to him as source of inspiration after coming across an image of a man's dressing gown in a newspaper advertisement.

Dine is inspired by the power of simple images to be both familiar and symbolic. His repetitions of subjects like bathrobes or hearts are easily understood by the viewer, while at the same time suggesting deeper layers of meaning. His repeated use of this simple forms explores how meaning can be created in ways akin to the contemporary development of Conceptual art. By singling out one shape and returning to it repeatedly, Dine suggests to the viewer that it has significance to be discovered, that there is something that demands our attention and our consideration.

An accomplished printmaker, Dine remains one the most famous American artists of today. His work is part of numerous public collections all over the world. He still lives and works in New York City.