

The Grammar of Ornament



# The Grammar of Ornament

Shepard Mary Ryan  
Fairey Judge McGinness

January 18–March 17, 2018  
Joy Pratt Markham Gallery

Cynthia Nourse Thompson  
CURATOR

David Charles Chioffi  
CO-CURATOR

Shepard Fairey

*Lotus Target Black*

Three-color relief on handmade paper  
35.0 x 25.50 inches  
Edition 35 of 35  
2012

©SHEPARD FAIREY. IMAGE COURTESY OF  
THE ARTIST AND PACE PRINTS.



Ryan McGinness

*Untitled* [BH24IN.1]

Silkscreen on wood panel

24.0 inches in diameter; 1.50 inches deep

Edition 5 of 7

2007

©RYAN MCGINNESS. IMAGE COURTESY OF  
THE ARTIST AND PACE PRINTS.





¶ The interactions of art and design are ever expanding: technology and formation; artifact and narrative; and audience and arena. This diverse union of physical expression and semiotic theory forms a foundation to [re]consider the manner to which ornament, in all of its iterations, creates visual languages. The architect Owen Jones [1809–1874] in his 1854 tome *The Grammar of Ornament* states in PROPOSITION FIVE: THAT WHICH IS BEAUTIFUL IS TRUE; THAT WHICH IS TRUE IS BEAUTIFUL. In these simply, yet resounding 12-words, there could be no greater declaration of intent. ❁ The artists Shepard Fairey, Mary Judge and Ryan McGinness embrace and equally expand Jones’ propositions in their contemporary interplay of form and color. Such impressions, as if being viewed through the rotating lens of a vibrant and fluid kaleidoscope, seek topical questioning of intent and the truthfulness of pattern as an armature. ❁ As artifacts of metal, wood and pigment, the various plates of the Wm. H. Page Wood Type Co., illustrate the dimensional multiplicity of pattern and contextual language of 1874 in their 100-page *Specimens of Chromatic Wood Type, Borders, Etc.*— as presented for the discernment of the color printer which “has taken years of time to prepare and perfect.” ❁ As a design theorist, Owen Jones solidified in his monograph’s preface a shared conclusion now collectively imparted and confirmed: “That the modifications and developments which have taken place from one style to another have been caused by a sudden throwing off of some fixed trammel, which set thought free for a time, till the new idea, like the old, became again fixed, to give birth in its turn to fresh inventions.” ❁

Cynthia Nourse Thompson  
CURATOR

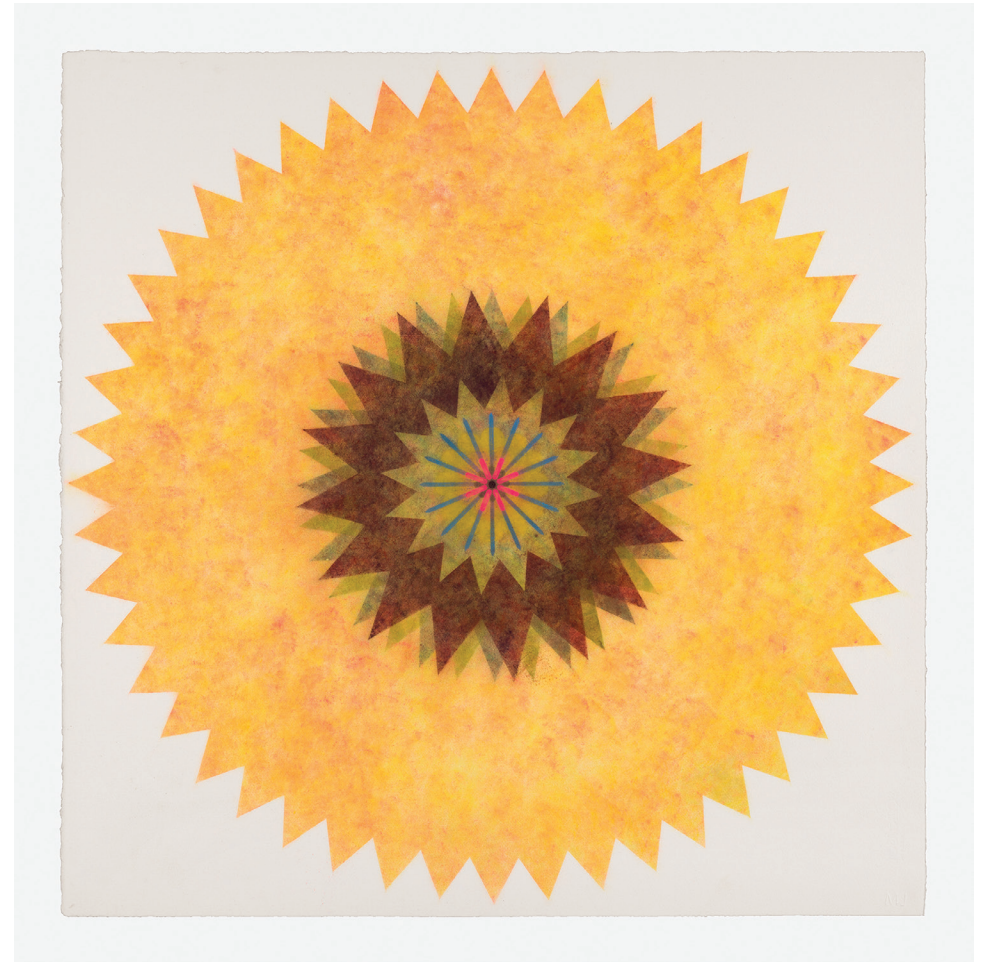
David Charles Chioffi  
CO-CURATOR

Mary Judge

*Pop Flower 48*

Powdered pigment on paper  
34.25 x 34.25 inches [framed]  
2017

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE ARTIST  
AND KENISE BARNES FINE ART.



Wm. H. Page & Co. Greenville, Ct.: The Co.

*To Color Printers*

A facsimile plate from *Specimens of Chromatic Wood Type, Borders, Etc., Wm. H. Page & Co. Greenville, Ct.: The Co.*

1874

Pigment print on smooth lithographic paper with archival inks.  
18.0 x 24.0 inches

An original copy is held in the Rochester Institute of Technology's Cary Graphic Arts Collection, Rochester, New York, from which a digital scan was produced by Griffin Kettler.

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE CARY GRAPHIC ARTS COLLECTION.

The presentation of these plates are in association with AIGA Northwest Arkansas.

