

The Collage Aesthetic

Joan Schulze is best known as a quilt-maker; but the quilts she makes function physically like collages, the collages she realizes depend heavily on fabric, and her prints, too, embrace both the formal balances and discontinuities of collage while radiating quilt-like sensuality. Schulze is dedicated less to a particular discipline than to a particular sensibility, the “collage aesthetic” that mirrors the disjunctive quality of modern life and seeks to determine coherence and harmony within such disjunction.

The presence of photographic imagery in her quilts, fabric patterns in her prints, and painterly passages in her collages all attest to Schulze’s unified approach to these disparate media. Each medium provides inimitable scale and texture, a unique physical content, but Schulze finds all equally appropriate to her overarching style. This is no mere demonstration clearly of virtuosity; it is an ongoing display of discretion, a constant matching of medium to material, content to context, that finds Schulze experimenting constantly with both element and medium, matching one to the other or, conversely, deriving one from the other.

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