

# 'Side-Show' by Peter Blake

27 November 2014 - 10 January 2015

- Peter Blake curates an exhibition of his seminal 'Side-Show' series of wood-engravings showcasing his nostalgia for circus imagery, popular entertainment and the ephemera of modern life,
- The work is displayed for the first time together with photographs, proofs, studies and drawings from Blake's personal archive highlighting the inspiration, process and genesis of the work,
- Exhibition marks the launch of a new wood etching by Blake based on the image of a wrestler.



'Tattooed Man Proof number 6'

Paul Stolper Gallery is pleased to announce 'Side-Show', an in-depth exploration of one of Peter Blake's most iconic portfolios, consisting of five wood-engravings titled 'Tattooed Man', 'Bearded Lady', 'Midget', 'Fat Boy' and 'Giant' made between 1974 – 1978. The seminal series, examples of which are held in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Metropolitan, New York; the British Council, London and British Museum, London, is displayed for the first time alongside photographs, proofs, studies and drawings from Blake's personal archive.

In Blake's hands, postcards, magazines, posters and record sleeves become legitimate source material for making art and he collects them with the same avid passion as a fan or enthusiast.

Speaking of his nostalgia for circus imagery and popular entertainment, Blake comments, "*There's a whole background to it, but really it's a class thing, a working class thing. When I was a kid these were my interests – the fairgrounds, circuses, rock'n'roll. So, at a certain point in making art, when I had to make a decision about what to do, I thought, "be autobiographical". Well, it wasn't that conscious... but the work became very autobiographical and about popular culture, and that's what became Pop art. And it's still there. I still go to circuses when I can, and concerts.*"



'Giant Proof number 4'

The prints in the exhibition display Blake's extraordinary refinement of the medium of wood engraving; inscribed using a fine-pointed burin into a hard end-grain wood block. Blake studied wood-engraving as a student, but is largely self-taught. The engravings of Eric Ravilious, Edward Bawden, Paul Nash and Claire Leighton amongst others influenced Blake to produce his first two prints, 'Tiny T.N.T. Tantrum The Pocket Prince' in 1973 and 'A Souvenir of the Bath Festival' in 1974.

## About Peter Blake

Peter Blake was born in 1932 in Dartford, Kent. He studied at Gravesend Technical College and School of Art from 1946 to 1951, and from 1953 at the Royal College of Art, London, where he was awarded a First-Class Diploma in 1956. He then travelled through Europe for a year on a Leverhulme Research Award to study the popular and folk art that had already served him as a source of inspiration. In 1961 he was awarded the John Moores Junior Art Award for his work 'Self Portrait with Badges' (1961). Blake became a Royal Academician in 1981, a CBE in 1983 and in 2002 received a knighthood for his services to art. Retrospectives of his work were held at the Tate in 1983 and Tate Liverpool in 2008. The artist lives and works in London.

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