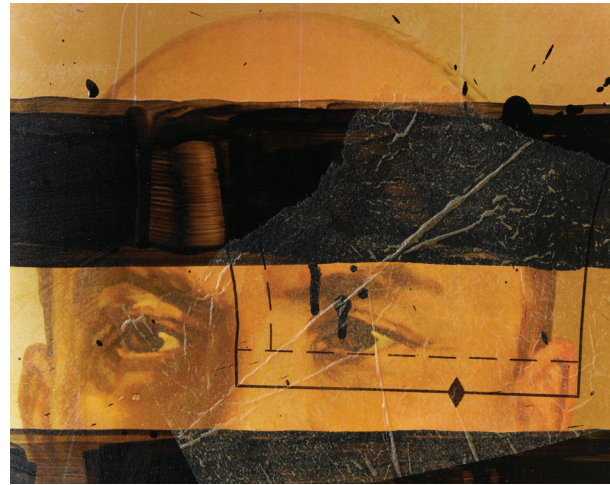


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Steven Campbell

The Tyranny of Small Things
25 October 2024 – 18 January 2025

OPENING RECEPTION
25 October 2024 from 5 to 7 PM



The Seed I Have Sown (Detail), 2024, Steven Campbell. Collage, paint on panel. 25 3/4 x 19 3/4 in.

(Santa Fe, NM) Master printer Steven Campbell guides us through a stygian underworld of social inquiry with cryptic found image collages, Delphic mixed media paintings, & somber sculptures.

(October 2024) For over thirty years, Steven Campbell has helped blue-chip artists and fledgling printmakers alike pull their artistic visions from the murky depths of their creative subconscious, first as a master fine art printer at Landfall Press, then at Black Rock Editions, and now as a lithography adjunct instructor at Santa Fe Community College. After nearly 30 years, Campbell's studio practice and artistic ethos are bubbling to the surface in *The Tyranny of Small Things*, an exhibition of found image collages, mixed media paintings, and sculptures. This demonstrative survey of Campbell's studio practice lays bare the artist's dark sense of humor; astute anthropological observations; Bay Area influences and mentors, such as Kenji Nanao; and 40-plus year career in the arts, where he has alternately, and sometimes concurrently, acted as artist, printer, and educator. **The exhibition opens with a reception at Zane Bennett Contemporary Art on October 25 from 5 to 7 PM in the largest room of the gallery's second floor.**

In *The Tyranny of Small Things*, historical reproductions of famous paintings collide with cynical advertising copy, family heirlooms become experiments in creative destruction, and figures renowned for their monumental brutality have the delicate facades of their visual legacy destroyed by painterly mark-making reminiscent of Nanao's monotypes. **"I don't think most people look at history,"** says Campbell, speaking on the political subtext of his works. **"I see an embrace of dictators, of character types and ideologies historically proven deficient."**

The cultural commentary about media, its consumption, and its surrounding cultural mythos in Campbell's work is not deliberately planned but stems from the artist's intuitive and playful composition process. **"Sometimes all it takes is opening a drawer of clippings and for a piece to fall a certain way,"** says Campbell, **"and the piece tells me what it needs."** In this way, chance plays an integral role in conveying the analytic bite of Campbell's works. For Campbell, the task is to remain receptive to possibilities and channel chance happenings into works that harmonize the minute and disparate details of our lives into compositions that make us question our relationship to aesthetics and the geopolitical systems that govern our lives.

"Campbell is a librarian of ideas from European history and modern America," says Spencer Linford, communications director at Zane Bennett Contemporary Art. "Campbell turns heaps of abandoned media, from historical prints to discarded ledgers, into visual patterns that communicate keen observations about shared beliefs, the institutions that govern our lives, and cultural ideas."

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For press or image inquiries, please contact Spencer Linford at spencer@zanebennettgallery.com.

Biography

Steven Campbell (b. 1956) grew up in Cupertino, CA, a suburb of San Jose. His natural obsession with art began early in life. As a child, he spent many hours painting and drawing with his father, who was his earliest art influence. In young adulthood, Campbell took his first lithography class at a local community college, where he studied under an irascible soul named Sal Peccararo, who learned printing in the old 1950s style, which dictated hot etches and a certain panic among the students. This hot and fast introduction to printmaking grew into a slow and burning love affair between Campbell and print publishing when instructor Martin Levine took over for Peccararo. Levine introduced Campbell to a wealth of information from Cal State Hayward, including materials from Kenji Nanao, a Tamarind Institute master printer and Campbell's soon-to-be mentor. Shortly after his meeting with Levine, Campbell left his community college to attend Cal State Hayward to pursue the craft of printmaking.

At Cal State Hayward, Campbell met Bay Area greats, such as Ray Saunders, Mich Kohn, Mel Ramos, and Nathan Oliviera. Seemingly overnight, Campbell went from a fledgling printmaker to an emerging print publishing professional rubbing elbows with the leading artistic voices of his generation—"It was a total immersion and demanded long hours," recalls Campbell.

After graduating from Hayward, Campbell moved to Chicago to attend the Art Institute for his MFA. Two short years for an MFA quickly became a 20-plus year stint when Campbell landed a job as a printer at Landfall Press, where he collaborated with some of the nation's top artists and worked with the best in the business. When Landfall Press relocated to New Mexico, Campbell followed. He has been in New Mexico ever since, helping artists realize their vision, quietly working on his studio practice, and most recently, teaching lithography at Santa Fe Community College. Campbell views his practice, and to a greater extent life, as a classroom. There is always something to learn and the best way to learn is to play. "Being in the arts is a lot like the old adage of being a shark—stop swimming and you die," Steven Campbell.

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