

Teachers' Notes

The Love Machine, 1970

Michael Rothenstein (1908-1993)

Metal relief plate, 66.5 x 72.5 cm

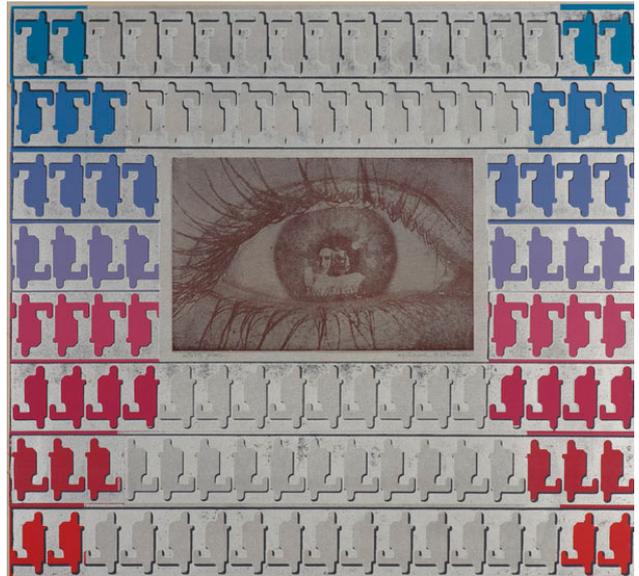
Content and Ideas

What can you see?

An eye in the centre

Reflections of what seems to be the photographer in the eye

Identical, man-made shapes repeated around the outside



Look at the man-made shapes – are they of anything in particular?

They are not of anything in particular, however, they might suggest a marching figure. Rothenstein used found metal stampings (possibly from a skip)

Look at the eye closely; do you think it is a drawing or a photograph?

It was originally a photograph of the Prince of Wales, taken from *The Sunday Times*. In order to transfer it to paper, it went through a process involving copper engraving

Compare the eye with the rest of the picture

The eye is an organic shape and the rest of the print appears man-made. There is a great contrast between these 2 elements.

This picture is called 'The Love Machine'. Have you got any idea why it has this name?

Form and Composition

Describe the composition

There are 2 rectangular shapes

The rectangle with the eye is much smaller in comparison to the outside rectangle

Use a variety of words to describe the shapes of the metal stampings

e.g. hard, active, angular

Are the metal stampings always arranged in the same way?

No – they are sometimes upside down and back to front

Now, look at the eye and use words to describe this image

e.g. black and white, grainy, poor quality (newsprint), matte

Describe the colours in the rest of the picture

e.g. bright, cheerful, zingy

What textures can you see in this work and what would it feel like, if you touched it?

Textures are shiny, metallic, cold versus soft, warm, grainy
It has a strong physical presence and it seems that one could predict how it might feel if one touched it; however this is an illusion.

Materials and Techniques

What technique is used?

It is a print, made on an industrial quality, thick paper called Filter paper

Is it possible to tell that it is a print from the digital image you are looking at?

No it is not possible; discuss that looking at digital images can sometimes be deceptive, particularly when it comes to scale and understanding the quality of the surface.

Do parts of the work look like they are 3-d?

Yes; the metal stampings have been made to look 3-d by the printing process, which has been done in layers

How is the metallic colour achieved?

With printing inks

From what you have learned so far, are you able to imagine whether the technique that was used was straightforward or complex and experimental?

It was very complex and extremely experimental.

Rothenstein worked with a skilled printer called Shelley Rose and together they pushed the boundaries of what had been done before and brought new life to British printmaking.

They took many risks and used techniques that had never been used before.

This print involved very careful registering of the paper as there were many different layers and the paper had to be laid down in exactly the same position.

The coloured area on the metal stampings was created using stencils and a roller.

About the Artist

Michael Rothenstein, 1908-1993, was born in London and was the son of distinguished artist, William Rothenstein. He was a painter and printmaker; but his greatest contribution was to revitalise British printmaking, particularly in the period after the Second World War. He brought a lively and experimental approach that was new at the time.