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Art **in** Print

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NEW EDITIONS FROM ALMOND TO WRIGHT • SANDOW BIRK • RASHID JOHNSON • SAYA WOOLFALK • AND MORE
ANNUAL ROUND-UP • MANET'S ONE AND ONLY JEANNE • B. WURTZ • BRODSKY CENTER'S NEW HOME • PRIX DE PRINT • NEWS

Art in Print



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In This Issue

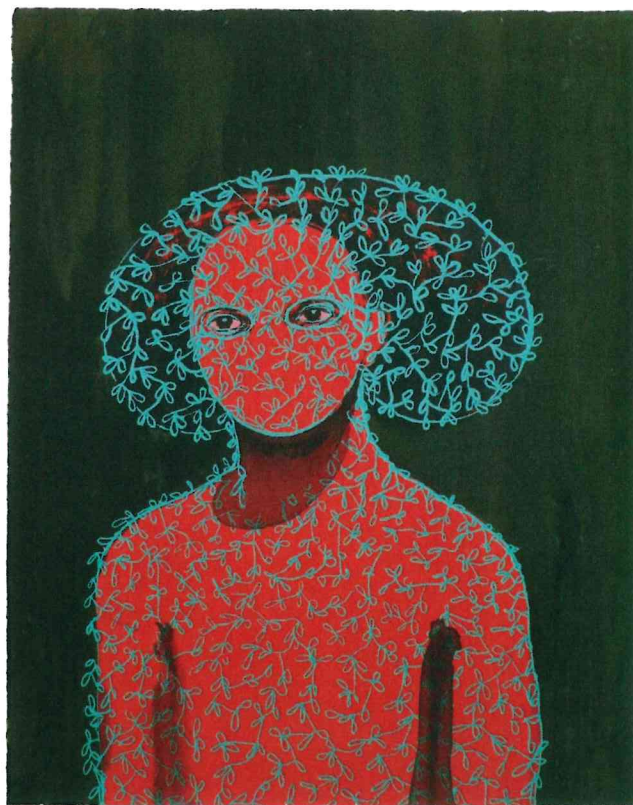
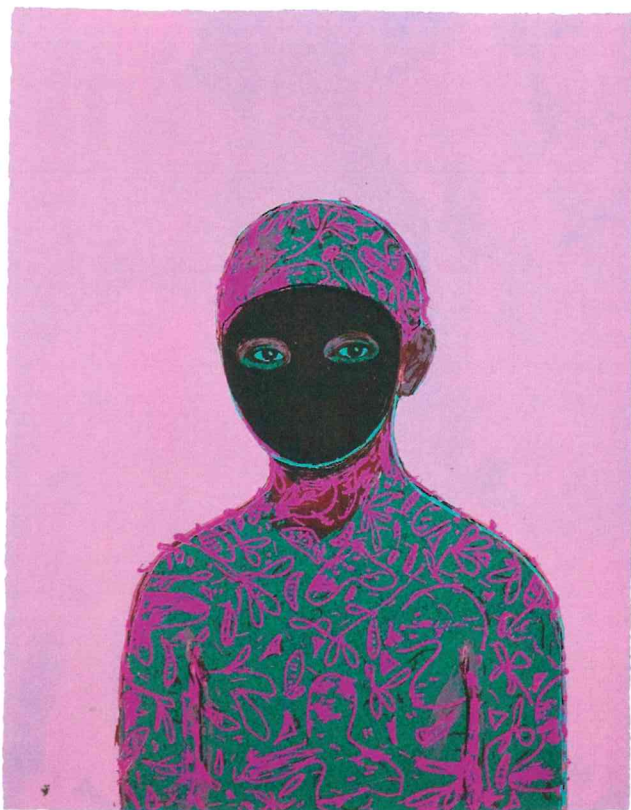
Susan Tallman <i>On Watching the Detectives</i>	2
New Editions 2019 <i>Reviews A-Z</i>	3
<i>New Editions Round-up:</i> <i>Eye to Eye in 2018</i>	31
Juliet Wilson-Bareau <i>Manet's One and Only Jeanne... and Guerard's Later Plate</i>	36
Exhibition Review Megan N. Liberty <i>To Home and Back Again:</i> <i>B. Wurtz at Metro Pictures</i>	42
Prix de Print, No. 34 Juried by Alex Massouras <i>The First Time, The Heart</i> <i>(First Pulse, 1854; First Flatline, 1870)</i> <i>(2018)</i> <i>by Dario Robleto</i>	44
Interview <i>The Brodsky Center</i> <i>Settles in at PAFA</i> Clint Jukkala and Paola Morsiani speak with Sarah Kirk Hanley	46
News of the Print World	48

On the Cover: William Villalongo, detail of Palimpsest (2017–18), screenprint with laser-cut areas and intaglio collage elements. Printed and published by Graphicstudio Institute for Research in Art, University of South Florida, Tampa.

This Page: Enrique Chagoya, detail of Everyone is an Alienigeno (2018), color lithograph with collage. Printed and published by Shark's Ink, Lyons, CO.

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Left: Lisa Wright, *Magenta Silence* (2018). Right: Lisa Wright, *Sealed Silence* (2018).

Lisa Wright

Magenta Glaze (2018)
Sealed Silence (2018)

Two screenprints, 40 x 30 cm. Editions of 35 each. Printed and published by Advanced Graphics London. \$1,000 each.

Lisa Wright's bold and elegant images conjure a sense of childlike exploratory creation. Her figures inhabit the spaces and costumes of historical painting—she has cast them as *commedia dell'arte* characters such as Harlequin and Pierrot, set them in Rococo garden parties, or left them to wander through woods and streams.

Since 2016, much of Wright's work has consisted of portraits of children on the cusp of adolescence with overlays of lace-like ornamentation, similar to Shirin Neshat's and Lalla Essaydi's calligraphy-covered photographic portraits. Her embellishments recall the intricacy of baroque designs and her palette recalls the sultry colors of a Fragonard painting. In two recent screenprints with Advanced Graphics London, the figures are almost entirely subsumed by their adornments,

with the exception of their sloe-eyed gazes.

Magenta Glaze (2018) is one of very few works in Wright's oeuvre that features a solid background. An elaborate leaf design engulfs the subject's upper torso and crown, seemingly lifting the figure above the flat, pale lavender backdrop with relief-like intensity and endowing it with a regal or even ethereal quality. A brownish-purple mask covers the figure's face. Though the eyes remain visible, other discernible characteristics are obscured, leaving us to ponder the figure's identity.

In *Sealed Silence* (2018) another leafy pattern, this time in turquoise, covers a red figure. Again the flat oval face is concealed, apart from the eyes. The auburn crop of hair is perhaps a reference to Velazquez's 1653 portrait of the 14-year-old Infanta Maria Teresa of Spain, painted when the princess was about the same age as Wright's subjects. The shadows under her chin and between her torso and arms suggest dimensionality, as does the gray wash behind her. One's eye, however, is repeatedly drawn back to the mesmerizing interplay of turquoise line.

The whimsical ornamentation seems at odds with the figures' stoic reserve, suggesting both the playfulness of child-

hood and the awkwardness of adolescence. Exploring what she calls the "universal dialogue of childhood," Wright seeks to capture the fleeting moment of this transition.¹ There is a twist to Wright's work, an underlying tension that brings her dreamlike figures back to reality. While they evoke a certain youthful play, they also reflect an all-too-familiar desire to escape the uncomfortable brink of adolescence. ■

—Re'al Christian

Notes:

1. "Q+A with Painter, Lisa Wright," *Aesthetica*, 29 April 2016, www.aestheticamagazine.com/qa-painter-lisa-wright/.



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