

Oldenburg foils expectations



Above: Installation view (pedestal): "Geometric Mouse - Scale C" and (hanging): "Soft Screw as Balloon, Ascending"
Left: "Soft Screw as Building", 1976, One-color lithograph

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The small, jaunty show of Pop great Claes Oldenburg's prints and sculptural multiples at Barbara Krakow Gallery smartly homes in on one motif in his work - screws - while embracing the breadth of his vocabulary.

The screw lithographs from 1976, at more than 5 feet tall, are big prints for that era. Oldenburg was contemplating monumental sculptures of screws - one, "Screwarch," ultimately went up in Rotterdam. These, made with breezy lines that feel nearly animated, catalog some of his ideas. In "Arched Soft Screw as Building," the entrance is at the slot on the ground; the screw bends back like a gymnast.

The sculptures range from "Geometric Mouse - Scale C," perhaps an ironic riff on Mickey, made of flat aluminum plates with hinged ears, tongue, and eyelids, to "Miniature Soft Drum Set," unplayable snare drums made from slouchy canvas. With his materials and designs, Oldenburg - still active at 86 - foils our expectations about ordinary objects, and always prompts laughter.

Claes Oldenburg:
Large-Scale Prints and Small-Scale Multiples
At: Barbara Krakow Gallery,
10 Newbury St.,
through June 6th.
617-262-4490,
barbarakrakowgallery.com

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