EDITION REVIEW

Jane Kent: Blue, Pink and See-through

By Elleree Erdos

Blue Nose (2013), *Pink Eye* (2013)
Screenprint in nine colors (*Blue Nose*) and in 14 colors (*Pink Eye*), 67 x 47 cm each. Edition of 35 each. Printed and published by Aspinwall Editions, New York. $850 each.

In her first project with Aspinwall Editions, Jane Kent carefully calibrates color and shape to reveal the illusionistic capacity of screenprint. *Pink Eye* and *Blue Nose* illustrate an almost architectural approach to printmaking, with images constructed layer-by-layer and cutouts overlapping with diagrammatic scrupulousness. The image is as spontaneous as it is constructed, with soft- and hard-edged forms colliding and knocked askew in a perfect storm of abstract harmony.

Kent's shapes are the crisply manufactured forms of everyday cardboard boxes (the repeated scalloped edge that frames the white field is an approximation of the serrated metal strip used for tearing off a piece of Reynolds Wrap). The artist first used these shapes in *Skating* (2011), a livre d'artiste with a short story by Richard Ford [see *Art in Print* July–Aug 2011], and she has continued to use them as what she calls "bland forms"— simple building blocks for a new image. The vocabulary of the flattened shapes, derived from formerly three-dimensional objects, highlights the interplay between three dimensions and two, between construction and the deconstructed. Depth is further addressed as Kent builds the overlapping layers from multiple passes of translucent ink, so that even within the black forms in *Pink Eye*, the faint outlines of previous layers can be traced.

Blue Nose is the bolder of the two images, printed in nine high-contrast colors using matte, water-based inks. The deep cobalt blue is printed twice, producing a rich field on which to build visual relationships. A sequence of whites, varying in opacity and tone, are layered next, creating an ethereal translucency that

Jane Kent, **Blue Nose** (2013).

toys with our perception of positive and negative space.

Within one of the sharp-edged rectangles, a painterly wash of light blue blends with the cobalt watercolor. These seemingly spontaneous, soft strokes are the product of a complex process: ink

wash was painted on Mylar to create a photographic positive, then exposed three times with different timings to accommodate the different densities in the wash. There are thus three types of painterly mark on the screen, which was printed three times with different values

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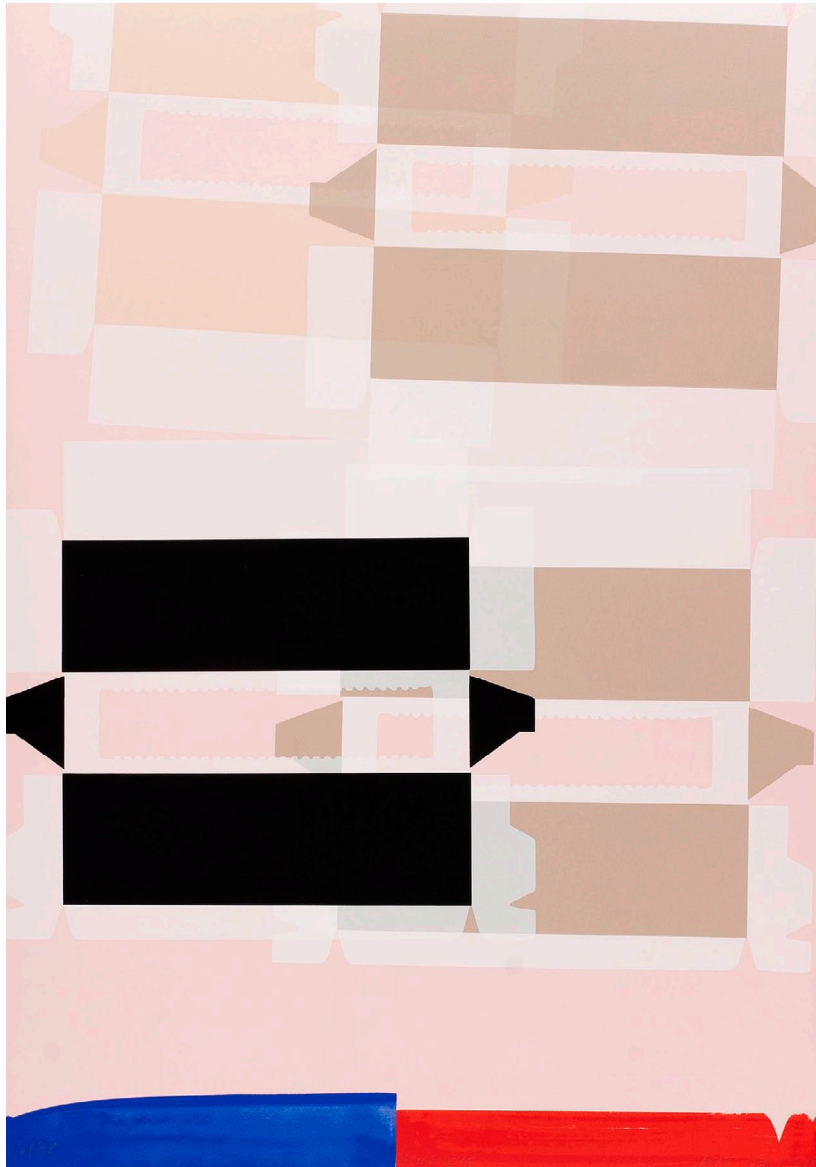
Jane Kent, **Pink Eye** (2013).

of the blue. Thus, the original mark was essentially color separated, registered and printed layer by layer, then ultimately restored to wholeness when all three layers were printed, one on top of the other.

In *Pink Eye*, Kent plays with color and depth in 14 screenprinted layers of subtle translucent color. White printed over brown produces gray, and beige over pink turns a soft peach. The restrained tonal variation once again distorts positive and negative space, suggesting an illusory depth. The complex process that produced painterly blue strokes in *Blue Nose* was employed to make the red and blue strips at the bottom of *Pink Eye*—vibrant echoes of the forms above them, set apart by their brilliant hues. These vivid forms draw attention to the periphery and suggest a larger field beyond the paper's edge. The field of possibilities that Kent investigates systematically, through a limited palette and a set vocabulary of shapes, appears to be limitless. ∎

Elleree Erdos is a New York-based writer and print scholar.