

Seeing spots: Damien Hirst exhibit coming to downtown

by JENESSA KENWAY

In his typical, over-the-top style, iconoclastic British artist **Damien Hirst** unleashed a barrage of colored spots upon the world a couple of years ago, exhibiting over 300 spot paintings simultaneously at Gagosian galleries across the globe. And ever since, the art world has been seeing spots as the works circulate through art galleries and art fairs.

Recently, a gaggle of 40 woodcut "spots" have made their way to **MCQ Fine Art Advisory** here in Las Vegas. The exhibit opens on Preview Thursday, Jan. 31, and will show until April 26. After noticing the "Spots" at **Art Basel** in Switzerland, gallerist **Michele Quinn** arranged for an exhibit. The bold-colored spots make for bright, minimalist eye-candy, and are said to be the artist's "attempt to ... lay color down and be in control of it rather than it controlling him." The woodcut printing process ensures each work is unique, and the images range from solitary dots resolutely occupying a paper surface to different colored dots all in a row. Titles like "Picrotoxin" and "Carbonyl Iron" lends the impression of chemicals squeezed from an eyedropper onto a microscope plate for examination, infusing the viewing experience with alchemical imaginings.

"They have much more rich color and texture in person," Quinn says. "It will be fun to see them all up at once. It's more impactful to see them as a group."

Whether we find them to be "silly abstractions," as did art critic Robert Hughes, or enjoy the Pantone Skittle mania, the Spot works are among the most well-known Hirst works to date.

And speaking of spots, Las Vegas is feeling like quite the blue-chip art spot lately. In a matter of weeks you'll be able to view a Damien Hirst exhibit and then turn the car around to check out **Andy Warhol** at the **Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art**. Considering Hirst's cavalier, controversial style and Warhol-esque factory studio make him a new incarnation of the pop art icon, it seems like kismet to have both artists exhibiting in Las Vegas at the same time.

Monday-Friday, noon-5 p.m. or by appointment; Michele C. Quinn Fine Art Advisory, 620 South 7th St., www.mcqfineart.com/home.cfm.