

Arturo Herrera



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A young boy and a dwarf give this book its title, but at first glance, it's hard to make out anything like them in Arturo Herrera's collages. Only a closer look will reveal the telling details in the work's rich texture: the bellows of an accordion, a dwarf's cap. Are these pictures representational or abstract? According to Herrera, "The challenge is, how can an image so recognizable, like a dwarf, have another meaning that I impose on it? Is it possible? Can I make something so clear ambiguous? Can I uproot it?" He can: The

ambiguity of his collages slows down the gaze so that the figurative and the abstract cease to be simple opposites. And the repeated motif gives the eye free rein to study the method and virtuosity of Herrera's take on abstraction. This recent series of 74 large-format collage works on paper is based on two comic figures: an old dwarf and a young boy who plays accordion. The "front views" come from a children's coloring book, and Herrera commissioned an illustrator to draw "back views" of the figures. These are blown up, colored in and then layered with complex collage structures until the images almost disappear beneath the vivid surface abstraction.

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目录:

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