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## Bóm: How Art Can Disrupt, Destroy, or Riorient

Anita Tan



*D. Dominick Lombardi, Tattooed Tokyo #1, 2008. Acrylic on canvas, 24 x 18 inches.*

*Upon entering the group show Bóm at Galeria Janet Kurnatowski, the works of nine extraordinary artists reminded me of a poem that Robert Bly wrote in 1967. A line from the poem reads, "We could make a whole plain white with skulls in the moonlight!" It is poignant in depicting the horror and dysfunction of post-Vietnam. Bóm conveys a similar leitmotif by showing how art can indeed "disrupt, reorient, or destroy." Curated by D. Dominick Lombardi, the artists of the show demonstrate the word "bomb" through the use*

of a diverse array of materials, and probe the new life forms and strange permutations that arise from the dysfunction. Bóm includes Gudjon Bjarnason, Rodney Dickson, Rieko Fujinami, David Isenhour, Elizabeth Joblin, D. Dominick Lombardi, Fumiyo Osawa, Ed Smith, and Michael Zansky.

A large brown teddy bear lays on its back on the floor of the gallery with a giant cone-shaped steel helmet over its head. As is evident in this piece, Zansky, its creator, imbues his work with a darkly sardonic sense of humor. Here he merges a representation of childhood with a symbol of control, the steel helmet—with the helmet over its head, the teddy bear is a fragile mind that has blindly succumbed to a thought-controlling brain center, or what is known, to Zansky, as a bomb. Also on the floor is Bjarnson's Regressive Regression, nine metal pieces from a series of 100 that were literally exploded by the artist. Each piece of steel has taken on its own unique shape and form, marking them as "mutations that have overcome destruction." In using the harsh material of steel, Bjarnson's work dramatically illustrates the physical destruction, relentless nature, and uncertainty of war.

In contrast, the works of Ed Smith and Elizabeth Joblin offer a softer rendering of destruction through the use of finer materials and minimal imagery. Working on canvas with acrylic, Joblin paints images that are bursting with hues of reds, oranges, and yellows. Her work, Pop (Dub), mimics the act of explosion and refers to our daily intake of film and commercial media in a simplified composition that focuses on colors, textures, and shapes. She says, "When I create works, I do so as a way to transcend the reality that surrounds me, and transform it into something pleasing that the viewers would want to discover on their own." Smith's Blue Pile depicts a macabre heap of skulls, laying on the ground, a few pieces of ash rising from it. Working on paper, Smith's use of blue and gray tones, as well as the skull imagery in his prints, draws upon the dejection that dysfunction brings.

Another artist, Fujinami, depicts the hopelessness of lost souls through her use of Fresco Secco and ink. Gray, blue, and purple tones are blended together to create faces that fade into the plaster. These muted faces reference lost souls frozen in the ruins of a war zone.

David Eisenhour depicts a more "Disneyfied" and comical image of the word "bomb," using minimal aesthetic and suggestions of pop abstraction. In his work, Resolve Revolution, two realistic fists stick out of a pink post explosion dust cloud made from Polysio foam and cast plastic. Another artist, Fumiyo Osawa, presents the viewer with an eerie and somewhat darkly comical image in the work Babystroller, which shows a plastic toy baby tucked neatly in a stroller with two big white rifles attached to each side.

Rodney Dickson illustrates civil disorder with a more direct approach as "soldiers and army tanks blast their way through glossy fields" of clear cellophane tape. With an upbringing during troubled years of war chaos and a culminated interest in Vietnam and Cambodia, Dickson's work brings to attention the hypocrisy of war and the aftermath of conflict. Last but not least, Lombardi destroys and paints like a graffiti artist, causing confusion and disarray. His Tattooed Warriors, a work that shows overlapping bold colors, characters, and tattoo imagery, is reflective of the futile act of war.

As curator and artist, D. Dominick Lombardi has brought together artists who not only provoke our fear of bombs and violence, but also bring about awareness to new and stronger life forms that may emerge from the rubble.