

CULTURECATCH

The Well-Bred Hybrid



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D. DOMINICK LOMBARDI, CCWS-25 (2018), MIXED MEDIA, 21" X 14" X 12"

Cross Contamination with Stickers

Albright College in Reading, PA

October 27 through December 8, 2022

Cross contamination is usually a bad thing; having to do with bacteria transferred from one substance or object to another, with harmful effects.

In the case of D. Dominick Lombardi's exhibition title, it can refer to his lifelong rejection of the High Modernist position that art forms like painting and sculpture should be pure of contaminants from other forms or, worse yet, from "lower" forms of art. Instead he has embraced the notion that artistic expression is renewed and extended through outside influence and interaction. He needs the combined power and reach of both "high" and "low" forms to address his concerns.

In their 1990 MOMA exhibition and catalog, titled *High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture*, Kirk Varnedoe and Adam Gopnik addressed the historic effort to keep separate and distinct such activities as advertising, comics and graffiti from the lofty realms of high art.

With their exhibition they told a very different story, one of mutual interplay and interaction between these different levels of culture in modern society. They traced the ways in which this dialogue between "high" and "low" allowed artists to redefine "the relationship between the private imagination and the shared energies of public communication."

In Lombardi's collage and assemblage works vigorous formal mixing mobilizes the artistic fuel necessary to investigate a big ticket item -- no less than what used to be referred to as "the human condition."



D. DOMINICK LOMBARDI, CCWS 99 (2020), ACRYLIC, INK AND CHARCOAL ON PAPER ON CANVAS, 24" X 38"

What is it that we are? How do we build a self and determine our actions and beliefs?

What access do we have to the reality of our environment -- both internal and external?

Mining the collective unconscious, he layers discordant imagery such as figure drawings, themselves efforts at "high art," with floating signifiers from the nether world of dreams, racing thoughts and hallucinations. Set against activated paint backgrounds, these elements interact in a sort of parallel play, inciting each other and sparking the proverbial Surrealist jump in order to reveal the uncanny within the familiar.

In addition to formal contamination the title also points to the literal poisoning of our environment through pollution, of our bodies through transgenic foods and our minds through apocalyptic pressures. Just as Picasso's figural

distortions evoked the horrors of war in his painting *Guernica*, an early and formative influence, Lombardi's anatomical grotesqueries and mutations reflect our absurd flirtation with global destruction.



D. DOMINICK LOMBARDI, CCWS 92 (DETAIL) (2020), ACRYLIC, INK AND CHARCOAL ON PAPER ON CANVAS, 40" X 36"

His tragicomic hybrids wander hyperspace like cyborgs, surrounded by their indecipherable thought bubbles -- ad hoc survivors of a consumer society with nothing left to consume. This seriously bad news is leavened with humor and wit. Against the failed state of humanity he offers the high octane capacity of his protagonists to reinvent themselves from its toxic residue. Their resilience and ingenuity exemplify essential attributes, found in short supply today, that will

be crucial for human survival and renewal. – *Mr. Carreiro is an artist, writer, and independent curator, who teaches at Hunter College and is based in New York City.*

An exhibition of works of D. Dominick Lombardi from the *Cross Contamination with Stickers* series will be featured at the Freedman Gallery at Albright College in Reading, PA, from October 27 through December 8, 2022. For more information please call (610) 921-7541 or email gallery@albright.edu