

HIDDEN WORLDS SUTROW



HIDDEN WORLDS

D. DOMINICK LOMBARDI

Curator: David Gibson

March 30 - April 28

Hours: Monday - Thursday 3 - 6 PM, Sunday 2 - 5 PM



CENTRAL GALLERY

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Front and back cover image:

Urchin #10, 2009, sand, acrylic medium and objects, 19" X 10" X 9"

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Hidden Worlds

D. Dominick Lombardi's sandy surfaced scamps reveal all and hide nothing. They are, after all, sculptures intended to be viewed in the round. From every vantage point their smooth plastic innards make themselves known, while their crusty skin serves as a foil to the panoply of detritus.

Lombardi's materials are the message of this dicey figurative work. It's all texture, color, and gestural hi-jinks at first glance. At once, Lombardi's figures draw us in with their formal delights, charm us with their familiar plastic leftovers, disarm us with their rounded limbs and cherubic grins and then, without warning, it is as if these scamps slide up and whisper in our ear that perhaps we just may be fiddling while Rome burns / (or / is buried in an insurmountable mountain of consumer cast-offs).

Anne LaPrade Seuthe
Director
Hampden and Central Galleries
Fine Arts Center
University of Massachusetts



Urchin #4, 2009
sand, acrylic medium and objects,
17" X 9" X 7"

Secured debris creates a structurally sound base.



Later, a mixture of sand and acrylic medium is applied.



Urchin #1, 2008, sand, acrylic medium and objects, 15" X 10" X 8"

The Urchin Series

David Gibson, Curator

The small but resonant works that comprise D. Dominick Lombardi's exhibition "Hidden Worlds," in which both sculpture and drawing/collages depict his eponymous Urchins, define an essential relationship between culture, the power of metaphor, and the notion of innocence. Human behavior links nature to culture, and from this dichotomy emerges further conflicts, such as that between modern and postmodern values.

Culture is that tangle of influences which emerges from within us while seeming to approach us from without. Culture, in many ways, defines us, both as an individual pattern of behavior and as a structure of social order. Terry Eagleton, in his book *The Idea of Culture* (2000), describes the essential quandary which accompanies any attempt to compare one with the other. Though it is fashionable these days, he states, to see nature as a derivative of culture, culture, etymologically speaking, is a concept derived from nature. We can take this to mean natural nature or human nature, as both represent a seething cauldron of mixed instincts, none of which we yet understand fully.

Lombardi's Urchins formally describe the cultural innards of human nature in his sculptures, while in his drawing/collages they enact a similar scenario as his cipherlike urchins are attacked by viral agents with heads of people taken straight from the daily news: actors, politicians, etc. The Urchins as Sculptures are noble, poignant, and Apollonian, representing stoical monuments that reveal secret inner lives consisting of books and toys from an outmoded and obsolescent past.



Urchin #7, 2009
sand, acrylic medium
and objects
17.5" X 12" X 8.5"



Urchin #12, 2009, sand, acrylic medium and objects, 26" X 14" x 16"



Urchin #11, 2009, sand, acrylic medium and objects, 23" X 9" X 9"

The objects themselves are the only color in the works, and they reveal as much about how we build our nature— accruing types of knowledge, and mythically playing out modes of experience. The Urchins as Drawings/ Collages are Dionysian, taking on a much more dramatic role in and of themselves, they are given white eyes with no pupils, and are given clothing and props, to suggest that they belong to a marginalized community of onlookers or victims within the larger sphere of culture. Their gestures and poses are marked by deeply psychological expressions of trepidation and terror. They are the only active figures in a landscape that is filled to obscurity with flowing, spectral trails that have as heads the appearance of various figures in media and daily life which, in any one particular decade, symbolized versions of human nature, either good, bad, or indifferent. The urchins themselves are an everyman figure, lost in a world of populist reference which is too vast and too aggressively filling up his attention span. The world of culture is supposedly a sphere of influence meant to be positive, but when placed in the wrong hands, it can operate like a gun— not protect, but damage us. Too much culture, especially when it is immediately overrunning the bounds of individuality and at the same time reaching a tipping point of contemporary relevance, ceases to be culture, and becomes nature.

Lombardi gives us a reference point for this feeling of being lost. We have gone through one door into a hidden world of symbols and come out another door into a real one, with the urchin remaining within us.



Urchin #8 (detail), 2009, sand, acrylic medium and objects, 16" X 12" X 9"



Urchin #16, 2009, graphite, gesso and collage on wood, 16" X 12"



Urchin #19, 2010
graphite, gesso and
collage on wood
32.75" X 15.75"

SUBTLOW NEIGHBORS

