



D. Dominick Lombardi, *Tattooed Tokyo #4*, 2008, acrylic on unprimed canvas, 24 x 30"

Nostalgia for the Present

Recent Work of D. Dominick Lombardi at Artlexis in New York

by Stanford Kay

D. Dominick Lombardi's recent show at Artlexis in Brooklyn, *Toyota vs. Godzilla*, is a bit of a departure. After ten years of working on the *Post Apocalyptic Tattoo* series in which our deformed descendents inhabit a world where physical beauty is in the eye of the beholder, even if the eye is not quite lodged in the skull as it should be. These future denizens carry on bravely in their severely damaged world and their tattoo portraits are how we come to know them. This conception of a possible future has propelled Lombardi to create hundreds of graphics, drawings, sculptures, and paintings on both canvas and Plexiglas.

The new collection of works consists of eight small paintings on canvas, two Giclée digital prints and

three *Urchin* sculptures that are the more evolved offspring (artistically) of his signature *Beachcomber* character, a horribly deformed but recognizably human figure who has found his form in both paintings and sculptures. The urchins are much cuter and are made of a sand and polymer mixture over an armature of plastic toys and post-industrial flotsam, some of which is actually culled from beaches. The plastic objects emerge proudly from the back of the figures. Possibly the handiwork of future beachgoers, these sand sculptures seem to be a nostalgic reference to a past where children were merely orphaned by the unraveling of our world and genetic mutation had yet to manifest itself in the population. These figures are adorable

and crafted lovingly. Set on low white pedestals and each standing on a flea market tome, like *Fun with String* or similar books for children, they are both creepy and endearing. The book bases add another level both figuratively and literally to each work.

The new paintings are also a step forward. In this iteration, his paintings are contemporary scenes tattooed with the future. The underpaintings reflect Lombardi's recent trip to Japan and Korea and the night scenes of noodle shops and street life are softly rendered in acrylic washes and then emblazoned with a hard-edged tattoo image. The contrast is welcome and enlivening. The contemporary Japanese urban landscape gives Lombardi a healthy perspective on his own time. This pre-*Blade Runner* world grounds us in the present and the tattoos place us in his imagined future, looking back at this merely out-of-balance society. There is compassion in these works as in much of what Lombardi does. The soft palette of both these paintings and the prints convey the sensitivity of the man. These are not harsh indictments, but nostalgic reflections on the dysfunctional present, which is not nearly as grotesque as he imagines the future is going to be.



D. Dominick Lombardi, *Urchin #3*, 2008, 2009, sand, acrylic medium and objects, 19" X 10" X 8"