



Above, left and right: D. Dominick Lombardi, *Urchin #6*, 2009. Sand, acrylic medium, and objects, 14 x 9.5 x 8.5 in.

sculpture

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D. Dominick Lombardi Central Galleries

According to D. Dominick Lombardi, his "Urchin" series constitutes "a metaphor for the marginalized: scamps, rascals, and lone souls fighting against the insanely powerful dominance of global society." His

rebellious reading appears to be social rather than economic, or perhaps a combination of the two. Good art is often at least slightly defiant—perhaps alienated artists should be included on Lombardi's list of the disenfranchised—for it not only implies but also embodies a new way of looking at things. Lombardi's mixed-media sculptures, usually one to two feet in height, look both forward and back. They have two different sides to them: a cast-sand, figural front and a back filled with found objects, including buttons, plastic combs, dolls, and electrical plates, among other detritus.

Lombardi's recent show, "Hidden World" (curated by David Gibson), offered 12 "Urchins." Exquisitely assembled, these works demand close attention. Their focus on the visual shows that there is an alternative to the monstrous materialism that has more or less taken over the world. This alternative consists of a steady regard for the processes of creativity, maintained despite a widespread lack of interest in, and even contempt for, the imagination. Lombardi's message is clear, and imperialism is a major culprit. The cute and plump *Urchin #6* (2009), for example, sits on a book titled *From Colony to World Power: A History of the United States*. Spin the work around, and the fleshy figure turns out to be a skeleton of plastic parts behind its façade, an assemblage of green comb, small plastic trinket, pink bear, and unidentifiable green machine part. The sculpture is only a shell whose interior is composed of junk. Despite Lombardi's brave assertion that these works signify rebellion, the inner workings of his urchins are simply stuff—materials that mean nothing and are easily thrown away.

Lombardi's stated symbolism is undermined by the figures' constitution, which depends on meaningless objects to the point of absurdity. Sometimes these are easily under-

stood items, such as the red plastic heart animating *Urchin #4* (2009), who looks upward, poetically, toward the sky. Yet the two-faced nature of Lombardi's creations exposes a fatal disconnect between the inner and outer urchin—one that can be found in most of us—between the unfulfilled human being and the satisfied consumer filled with cheap and hopeless goods. Lombardi's rebels against cultural homogeneity are themselves less than complete, which is a statement of their less-than-achieved humanity, wrecked as it is in a sea of useless objects.

—Jonathan Goodman