

# HAW/CONTEMPORARY

## **With *Mount*, Haw Contemporary opens big — and small**

Liz Cook, Pitch Magazine, October 9, 2013

For its first exhibition, Haw Contemporary — the gallery that has opened in the former Dolphin space, in the West Bottoms — looks at how new beginnings can be forged from the artifacts of the past. Curator Peregrine Honig says the selections she has lassoed for *Mount* embody the "romanticized Americana" that she observed during her travels from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to Kansas City. The works she has chosen stretch tonally from mordant critiques of Western iconography to deeply personal relics.

What strikes you first is just how varied in size these objects are. Honig has staged a miniature coin across from a 9-foot-by-12-foot *Guernica*. The latter, Donna Huanca's "Cuban Rebels (The Last Supper)," offers a nostalgic peek into Huanca's family, one that shows her father alongside Che Guevara during the revolution in Bolivia. Using a historical photograph as a source and her father's own clothing as her material, Huanca has assembled a detailed fabric depiction of rebels camped in front of a fire in the jungle. Slashes of felt, fleece and denim provide shading and visual texture in the enormous portrait. The men's faces dance in front of the fabric flames, their stoic expressions and sharp jawlines richly defined by the cloth collage.

That material focus continues in Sara Xenon's "Gilded Gloves," an intricate pair of boxing gloves crafted from copper, gold leaf and lace. Xenon transforms a symbol of strength and aggression into something fragile and delicate.

Throughout, the pieces at Haw elevate the mundane and ask us to consider familiar tropes as objects of beauty and contemplation. Adriane Herman's installation culls subjects from her own to-do lists and personal notes. Handwritten lines — "Meat/Bank," "Workout at 8:20" — are etched on square panels where glossy, monochromatic clay swirls on knotted wood. The high-contrast colors and clean, near-clinical presentation sound somewhat discordant notes against the layered harmonies of the rest of the show.

It's not the only tension here. Jack Daws' counterfeit penny perhaps best underscores the tension at the center of the exhibition. Daws' coin is almost indistinguishable from actual currency. Unlike an ordinary cent, however, his replica is crafted from 18-karat gold and then plated in copper to mask its value. In Daws' miniature work, the fake is more valuable than the real.

The same blurriness is at work in John Woods' kitschy collages of found objects. In "Handguns and Replica Relics," a busy combination of fossilized gun detritus drips with congealed Elmer's glue. Some of the guns bear labels of Western icons: "Buffalo Bill," "Gene Autry." Trapped under the cloudy sheen of glue, though, the real weapons and the toys can hardly be distinguished from one another. Telling them apart seems almost beside the point. As Daws and Huanca do elsewhere, Woods here bends our shared conceptions of history to challenge notions of authenticity.

Terry Allen's sheet-music suite of hand-printed lithographs, on the other hand, feel very much of the

moment. Maybe it's the mortgage-crisis lyrics that leap from the oversized sheaves of paper. Maybe it's the font's clean lines. But Allen's beautifully adorned scores shift classical Western tropes into a contemporary landscape of spot color and modern design. "Queenie's Song," a country ode to Allen's deceased dog, keeps the art understated. In lieu of color, a single bullet hole permeates the score — an indictment, perhaps, of the S.O.B. who shot the animal.

Other lithographs foreground the design: "Bottom of the World" fragments the musical staves to form an image of a red chair, outlined in a collage of quarter notes. The road-map rigidity of musical notation shatters, and ordered lines drift into playful brush strokes. This is music reimaged for the canvas, made looser as it becomes visual. (The music doesn't suffer from the treatment — Allen includes a vinyl recording of each song, and you can follow along with the score.)

Allen's images are a visual feast, surprising in their range and depth. Honig's exhibition as a whole is no less varied, combining the disorienting qualities of the historical and the hyperreal to examine icons and authenticity. Images of westward expansion and new frontiers seem at the heart of our collective history. Honig invites us to reconsider how these images are constructed — and to question how we preserve and chronicle our past.