

## **Tom D'Angelo, *Easton Irregular* Art Profile, July 2012**

Our Garage Space Gallery does triple duty: it's Tom D'Angelo's and Minni Santilli's garage, Tom's studio, and a gallery. Their car looks forlorn, a crowd will descend on N. Sitgreaves Street and it will be parked outside once again. Tom installs the artwork and Minni curates the shows; a dedicated audience is coming out to see the work and socialize. The Easton scene is growing: the night of the "Big Think" opening, four other art events occurred nearby. Minnie and Tom are getting proposals from local and regional artists and they're enjoying regular sales.

"The Big Think" (June 9-beginning of July) features along with Tom, Matt Nixon, Dan Danneker, Rich Cahill and Zac Potterfield (whose work, unfortunately, I was unable to review for this article).

Matt Nixon satirizes political and social themes in a mock calm neutral palette. Grey, black or white images of a combat soldier or girls making out are sparsely punctuated by red hearts or drops of blood; I gather that his social criticism is resigned but not entirely beaten and there's some hope left. "Danger", Dan Danneker mixes paint and caustic solvents on wooden surfaces, conjuring crude images that dwell side by side with abstraction. The chemicals biting into the wood yield unexpected, lush results. A tattoo artist by trade, Rich Cahill draws clear, strong lines onto built 3-D surfaces and found figure sculptures. He dreams of organizing primitive, outdoor spectacles. (Rich, google Hermann Nitsch!)

The day I visited Tom's studio, I noticed that two of Dan Danneker's paintings were leaning on a worktable, charging the studio atmosphere with Dan's influence. Tom welcomes the sway of other artists, his art thrives in a social setting. Tom's an expert putterer with scores of surfaces and multiple projects running simultaneously. He attributes much of his working style to Robert Melee--a good name for someone who works with chance--a New Jersey multimedia artist he apprenticed with 2004-2006. Tom graduated with a B.A. in Fine Art from Monmouth University in 2004. He assisted Bob Mataranglo with "Broadway Mural" in Long Branch, NJ in 2007. In Bethlehem, he had a solo show in 2010 at the Loose Threads Boutique and in 2011 he showed in the "NoShows Collective" at the Blue Sky Café. In 2012, he participated in shows at Connexions Gallery and won Second Best in Plaid at the annual "Plaid Show" at the Gallery at St. John's Church. Currently, he is managing the "WE" collaborative show for Connexions Gallery and the art aspect of the "3rd Street Campaign" for the City of Easton.

Tom splatters paint on surfaces and boxes made from found wood. A Process artist keenly attuned to chance, he builds complex pathways for paint to dribble down or fall from, all for the joy of building a "painting machine" and because he's curious to see the result. His mysterious pairs of drip-painted boxes hide private, interior space behind a clamorous surface. At the same time they make me remember youth and music blaring from candle-splattered stereo speakers, the pieces themselves are quiet.

Friends give him pieces of wood, or he'll find an old shelf plank somewhere, and everything gets a welcome-to-my-world sanding. Then, he might add an image by using the "white glue process" that involves gluing an image from a magazine or newspaper face down, letting it dry and sanding off the paper so the image remains. Sometimes Tom paints a plaid grid, which frees him to control and experiment with color layers, or he draws biomorphic shapes or spots of color, but direct painting and drawing are secondary to open collaboration with friends, chance and gravity.

—Elizabeth Johnson