

Karin Broker

Received August 6, 2010

Born 1950, Philadelphia; lives in Houston and Magnolia



Figure 18. Karin Broker, *Fighting Pretty*, 2013
Conte and pencil on Formica, 84" x 60" x 3"
Courtesy of the artist and McClain Gallery, Houston
Photograph: Paul Hester

Q Your raw materials range from the mass-produced (antique tins, dress patterns, costume jewelry, and postage stamps) to the unique (personal letters, children's drawings, and salvaged paintings). What has the world gained, and what has it lost, by your appropriation and alteration of these materials? Are there limits to what you would alter?

A I've kept some interesting items out of the trash. Recycling is not new, but I think that I've tried to retain some of the sincerity of the pieces before they were lost to a somewhat newer generation. My letters, although they hold meaning for me, would also have been lost since I don't have any immediate heirs. Again, their meaning needed to be preserved or at least recycled.

My "limit" sensors are constantly working. I won't use anything (with one exception to date) that is plastic. I pretty much hate plastic and unless your art is into fire (i.e. melting), then reworking the stuff is pointless for me. If a piece I find in a shop, etc., stops me for a few seconds and makes a connection in my head, then it is never a matter of censorship. Censorship only occurs if it doesn't make a spark. I have used stupid stuff, mean stuff, ugly stuff, lovely stuff, and beautiful stuff. I do, however, see a lot of early tins with racial overtones and I wouldn't touch them.

Q Two milagro-studded assemblages in your Houston studio struck me by their placement: a house-like object mounted high in a corner near the entrance, and a baseball bat bolted to an interior doorway. What is the religious impulse in the materials and placement of these pieces?

A The piece in question by the door is titled *Dead Wood* (1988). It's placed extremely high so that I can't reach it and be tempted to sell it. It's too personal to sell. The baseball bat, titled *Ball Bat* (2006) is placed so that I could easily reach it, grab it, and hurt someone if necessary. Since I