

Galleria Napolinobilissima and  
Rosenfeld Porcini

Press Release

*Leonardo Drew*

22 September – 19 November 2011

Private View: 21 September  
Galleria Napolinobilissima  
Piazza Vittoria 6  
80123 Naples, Italy



Number 13i, 2009, Mixed media, 66 x 66 x 5 cm

**Galleria Napolinobilissima are proud to present the first commercial solo exhibition in Italy of acclaimed American artist Leonardo Drew.**

Drew was brought up in the poor and desolate surroundings of the projects in Bridgeport, Connecticut, where all of the views from the family apartment overlooked the Municipal dump. There amongst the detritus of modern urban decay he was to find the source material and inspiration for his future formally abstract compositions.

Engaging with the cyclical nature of existence, Drew creates works that meditate upon, and in turn celebrate, the transience of the human condition. These meticulously arranged works are also subtly loaded with cultural and social commentary. To date, widely held interpretations of Drew's work center on the artist's African-American identity. His use of such evocative materials as bales of raw cotton, rope, and canvas bags like those of cotton pickers evoke black life under slavery; rusted debris found on city streets connotes urban degeneration. Yet Drew does not like to limit the possibilities of his work by imposing a personal explanation: 'I hope when I am no longer here these pieces will stand out as statements on black historical memory which demanded attention: not in a direct way, but in a way that allows everyone to participate and react'.

Drew builds these seemingly 'found' and mundane urban extracts into compositions which resonate with a poetic beauty, romantic in their state of ruin. His works are created to appear as if comprised of the decaying detritus of the every day, celebrating the cycle of life, death, demise and in turn re-growth. There is an undeniable physicality and energy of production and his works contain a dynamism that is rivaled by few.

While the materials and context easily lend themselves to such readings, the artist's systematic gridding and complex layering of found objects reference both

Minimalism and Abstract Expressionism, engaging a larger discourse of contemporary art theory.

"The grid is my basis of sanity. Otherwise it would just be noise. I mean, these things are loud, but if you know what to listen for, they'll speak to you."

Considering the emotional impact and cultural significance of Leonardo Drew's work it is no surprise that it is to be found in the most prestigious private collections and major museums around the world. Drew's impressive pieces are featured in The Metropolitan Museum of Art (NYC), The Guggenheim Museum (NYC and Bilbao), St. Louis Museum, The Harvard University Art Museum, McNay Art Museum, The Hirshhorn Museum and The Tate.

Private collections include the Barbara Toll Collection, the Rubell Collection, the Hort Family Collection, the Linda Pace Foundation and the Frankel Collection to name but a few. Leonardo Drew has been documented in numerous publications such as 'New Directions in American Drawing' (Columbus Museum) and 'Legacies: Contemporary Artists Reflect on Slavery' (The New York Historical Society) alongside several features on the NY Times and Houston Chronicle.

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Opening Times: 10.30-13.30 / 16.30-20.30, Mon-Sat