

# MORE THAN PRETTY

## TOM PAIEMENT'S ENTROPY AFTERMATH A, B, C, X



*Entropy Aftermath 5621, mixed media.*

Paiement explained that his "compulsion was related to the finding of the tin ceiling and bolting it on a panel." But, when he flipped the ceiling tile over, "a warrior figure emerged." A year and a half later the results were three 6'x6' panels known as the "Entropy Trilogy," as well as a series of abstract portraits of soldiers. The soldiers, which employ the tin ceiling remnants as medium, were exhibited by Greenhut Galleries as "Entropy Aftermath." This exhibit also included what Paiement refers to as "tribute pieces," which feature vases of flowers. The flowers suggest the poppies we associate with Memorial Day and therefore with veterans. Paiement was highly praised by Portland Museum of Art curator Susan Danly for being "one of the few artists who has gone out on a limb and attempted to tackle these issues, particularly in Maine, where we like our work pretty and not troubling."

I visited Paiement's studio this past April to preview his upcoming exhibit at Greenhut Galleries titled "Entropy Aftermath A, B, C, X." Flowers are the primary subject of his current work. Paiement explained that the flower

Greenhut Galleries • 146 Middle Street  
Portland, Maine  
June 3 through 26

The career of mechanical engineer turned painter, turned printmaker Tom Paiement took yet another turn in July 2006, thanks to the remodeling of a pub located below his studio in Bath, Maine. It was then that he found a pile of cast-off tin ceiling tiles and was immediately intrigued.

"represents the delicate, fragile, beautiful aspects of our experience," while the metal he uses in the construction of some flowers represents the "ongoing duality" within each of us. Paiement considers this new work a continuation of his other series, only executed with a "softer approach" rather than "the 2x4 over the head approach." Paiement explained, "This new work is still about the yin, yang, push, pull of subject matter versus materials." Leaned against and hanging on the walls of his studio, the new work is vibrant, colorful and powerful in its own right. Although this latest group of work isn't as politically charged, some of the pieces still allude to social issues, such as "Entropy Aftermath 4519," with its strikingly beautiful flowers set against images of garbage.

Paiement's mechanical engineering background is evident in the detail and craftsmanship of each piece, some of which use aircraft grade safety wire to intricately fasten welding rod or bamboo to plywood bases.



*Entropy Aftermath 7189, mixed media.*

Peggy Greenhut Golden has been a fan of Paiement since she first saw his artwork in 1998. Golden explained that she was attracted to his unpredictable use of color, and especially to his mark making, which is definitely influenced by his printmaking background and translates into interesting surfaces.

Indeed, the work is extremely tactile. I fought the urge to disregard my museum studies education and touch everything. Throughout our interview, Paiement often knelt down, rearranging pieces of wood or paper on an unfinished piece, as if working on a puzzle. Paiement modestly explained "in many ways these are all very simple," and consist of a "shape here, shape there." But don't be fooled. Nothing about Paiement's work is simple. Each piece is a testament to the endless possibilities of materials — even used tin ceiling tiles — in the hands of a creative visionary.

Elena Sarni