



Jeff Zilm and Kevin Todora present a darkly droll, anarchistic mash-up of images, sounds and texts at TCU's Fort Worth Contemporary Arts.

Art Review: In Fort Worth, Two Artists Collaborate, Frustrate, and Antagonize

Zilm and Todora present a darkly droll, anarchistic mash-up of images, sounds and texts at TCU's Fort Worth Contemporary Arts. Presupposing contemporary art world savvy, the exhibit blatantly obscures intention while providing an abundance of information.

Todora's digital prints on foam core, vandalized with plastic and paint, are coupled with Zilm's choppy, declarative sentences aligned on paper or canvas ("hit. hit. kick. destroy. hit. kick. kick. kill. loot.") suggesting an exhibit redolent with angst. Further confounding the intent are light-boxes containing unknown objects, a series of chopped 8mm film stills neatly stacked on the floor, and a video projection featuring a shifting character with esoteric cartoon bubbles set to a jarringly loud computerized 'boing' every few seconds.

Viewing *Gaffes and Informations* is like reading "Infinite Jest" or deciphering Sigur Ros lyrics: the show needs a user's manual. Luckily, Gallery Director Christina Rees hosted an artist talk with the gentle, quirky Zilm and Todora. As the artists expounded on topics brought up by Rees, the exhibit could be seen as the site of personal experimentations and conversation, allowing the audience access to the concepts and actions that informed the work.



For instance: Zilm's textual narratives, blunt and minimal, are derived from 'video game cheats' found on the Internet. A 'cheat' is a set of instructions allowing the player to achieve a goal in the most efficient way possible, the concise text of the 'cheat' mirroring the purpose. Zilm takes a niche audience's local, digital dialect and presenting it as if it is

understandable or reasonable – like cockney slang for gamers. His pieces embrace these new linguistic structures, removing context and presenting a minimal, brutal form of poetry as imagery.

Todora's works offer a similar re-contextualization as a print Michele Bachman on *Newsweek* is drizzled with red, white, and blue plastic goo: the advertised image becomes substrate for mock nationalistic vandalism, desecrating the image as a path to a more personalized and sculptural art form. Todora also displays a series of five hamburger prints cut to expose a red-pink circle, at once a pun and also reminiscent of Baldessari, the images further reference photographic iconoclasm.

Presenting niche dialects as common knowledge, the exhibit disrupts normative gallery viewing, intellectually and visually, while remaining somehow humorous and self-deprecating despite the violent overtones. It's primary success, however, is the lack of transparency: the exhibit does not pander to the audience. Simultaneously alienating and a call to arms, *Gaffes and Informations* provides a challenge needed to foster a healthy, experimental arts scene.