

San Francisco Chronicle

NOVEMBER 1, 2012

Visual arts

Jim Gaylord: Inspired by images overlooked and uncomprehended

By Kimberly Chun

For many, the words “Skipping Over Damaged Area” are simply an annoying fact of life when it comes to watching DVDs. But for Brooklyn artist Jim Gaylord, the phrase — also the title of his current exhibition at Gregory Lind Gallery — sums up his current series of abstract paintings and collages, the result of his search for imagery on those shiny plastic disks.

Don’t get Gaylord wrong: He’s not exactly replicating screen grabs of money shots from “The Hunger Games” or “The Dark Knight Rises,” though his interest was initially piqued by movie billboards and the splashy spectacle of high-impact death scenes.

“I just go through dozens of DVDs all the time and look for what I think of as abstractions,” he explains from his studio. “The naked eye doesn’t catch them. I started slowing down places on DVDs, in-between spaces when there’s lots of motion or things are moving around.”

“With the phrase ‘Skipping Over Damaged Area,’ you’re skipping over these things, and they fly by. There’s the idea of something over-

Opens Thursday (Nov. 1.) Through Dec. 22, 11 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Gregory Lind Gallery, 49 Geary St., S.F. (415) 296-9661. www.gregorylindgallery.com.

looked or skipped because it isn’t understood,” he continues. “I feel like these images are beyond the comprehension of the mind — you think you know what you’re seeing, but you don’t.”

Works by the artist, who earned his MFA at UC Berkeley, riff off that idea of lost, and found, images, and toy with the ungainly, abstract creations that emerge from the destroyed. Gouache on paper works like “Can’t Undo” layer multiple source images in an almost three-dimensional tangle.

“In a sense, they are realistic, because I’m choosing film stills where you can’t tell what’s happening — they are abstract because of cinematography or camera pans,” Gaylord says of his process-based method. “I take several of these and layer them together in Photoshop, so they blend together like a double exposure, and then I print those



Gregory Lind Gallery

Gaylord literally burned with creativity for “Victory Lap” in gouache and soot, taking a flame to the paper.

out and make a painting out of them.”

“Victory Lap,” gouache and soot on cutout paper, saw him playing with fire. “I was just literally taking a match to the paper,” the artist says. “I was thinking about ways of manipulating the paper that I hadn’t before, and what would happen when I did this. It’s related to light’s effects on the original source material. So much of film is about light and the residue and

artifacts of light.”

Other works, like the oil-on-canvas “Welkin,” had their surfaces scraped, much like scratched DVDs.

“I like the idea of the surface of a DVD (that) is damaged or altered or scratched, and when I’m doing a painting, I’m altering the surface of a painting, and it could be damaged in some people’s eyes,” says Gaylord, who turned to his palette knife instead of a brush to apply “Welkin’s” color.

“For this show, it was the first time I started to do things to the surface of the canvas, like scraping or scratching. It’s definitely a more formal way of thinking about the concept, and I like the idea of being more vigorous with the surface.”

Of course, there’s considerable irony in the fact that Gaylord — who holds a bachelor’s degree in film from the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, and once made stop-motion ani-

mation — is also skipping through a medium that will likely not recover from the damage done to its market by streaming video.

“I like what you’re suggesting about the disappearance of physical media,” he says.

“One day, DVDs may be obsolete. Hopefully, paintings won’t be.”

Kimberly Chun is a freelance writer. E-mail: 96hours@sfrchronicle.com Twitter: @kimberlychun