



In Postcard-Sized Homages, a Painter Remembers “Degenerate” Art Destroyed by the Nazis

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Paintings by Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Max Ernst, Paul Klee, and Joan Miró were just a few of the thousands that went up in flames under the Nazi regime. Spanish-born artist Martí Cormand pays homage to these lost works in “Postcards to AZ,” a new series of small oil paintings and graphite drawings.

Cormand’s project, part of which went on display at NADA New York last month, takes its “AZ” from Adolf Ziegler, Hitler’s favorite painter. Ziegler was also infamously assigned the task of identifying and confiscating “degenerate” art from museums and collections throughout the Third Reich.

“Postcards,” meanwhile, refers to Cormand’s small-format style. At an upcoming show at Josée Bienvenu in New York, these paintings and drawings are installed in a gift shop–style grid, with two larger-scale works displayed along the back wall. Both larger works—one an oil painting, the other a drawing—were inspired by specific artworks seized and presumably destroyed by Nazi authorities in the late 1930s: Piet Mondrian’s *Farbige Aufteilung* (1929) and Jean Metzinger’s *En Canot* (1913).

Cormand used archival photographs to recreate the scale, colors, and technique of Mondrian’s original work. But not all of his new pieces are so explicitly linked to specific works. He often sources from images he finds on the internet, then experiments with the effects of light, shadow, and density. Some of his postcards seem vaguely familiar, while others remain mysterious, more like meditations on the past or relics of a bygone era.

There’s something bittersweet about these quiet images. They’re celebrations of great artworks, but also symbols of mourning for that which can not be recovered. In considering such a sweeping loss, we’re reminded, as viewers, of how material art is and how easily it can be obliterated.

“Martí Cormand: Postcards to AZ” is on view at Josée Bienvenu, New York, Jun. 7–Jul. 22, 2016.