


TOUCHSTONEGALLERY

SINCE 1976

901 New York Avenue NW Washington DC 20001 • Wed-Fri 11-6 Sat-Sun 12-5 • 202-347-3787
www.touchstonegallery.com • info@touchstonegallery.com

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beg borrow + steal: works on cardboard

dana brotman

Opening Reception: Friday October 6, 6-8:30pm

Director Jim Jarmusch wrote, “Nothing is original. Steal from anywhere that resonates with inspiration or fuels your imagination ... Authenticity is invaluable, originality is nonexistent.” In Dana Brotman’s latest show *beg borrow + steal: works on cardboard* at Touchstone Gallery, her paintings crackle with authenticity even when their origins lie elsewhere.



Some of Brotman’s paintings are begged from her imagination; the portrait of the woman in *Woman with Hat*, ridged and mottled by the ribs of the cardboard on which it is painted, and staring, as Brotman’s people often do, in that space between near and far, outward and inward, contentment and preoccupation. Some are borrowed from people she has met; *Ana*, a portrait of a Barcelonan gallery owner whose scarf is flattened into clumps of avocado green and who sits, surrealistically, against a wall of bold red. Some are stolen from photos; a 2-by-2-inch Aretha Franklin framed into a triangle by a Klimt-like yellow veil. And some are stolen from other artists’ work, such as *Boy*, where Brotman removes the boy from Picasso’s *Family of Saltimbanques*, and places him, with his little suit of blueberry and rust, on a scraped-on yellow backdrop (she often paints with a scouring pad) as if it were a piece of a graffitied stucco.

Brotman uses materials in the show intended to capture the confluence of material finiteness and the ephemeral, both what merely glances our awareness, flitting in and out of our lives, and what is sublime and permanent and universal. These pieces (including miniature works on iPhone® boxes, portraits on flattened-out cereal boxes and the leaves of Amazon packaging as well as larger pieces on the sides of furniture boxes, some enclosed within thrift store frames re-fashioned with garish orange and fluorescent red) play with borders and with depth. Some spill over to the sides of the box, some are edged by ripped pieces of hastily cut cardboard that echo the curls of the subject’s hair, others she painted over another artist’s discarded paintings.

In these works, the past and present, the now and then are constantly merging and intertwining. Brotman makes use of materials not noticed, discarded, innocuous, unwanted on which to stage her portraits of men and women who, whether real or imagined, testify to the profundity of everyday life.

For more information, please contact Touchstone Gallery Director Ksenia Grishkova at 202-347-2787 or info@touchstonegallery.com

Image: woman with a hat by dana brotman