

the made and the found, his mixed-media works generate an intense exchange between autobiography and communal memories. Their embedded associations accrue over time, while their fabrication mirrors the objects and figures both trapped and preserved in glass.

Tate's work employs a recurring personal iconography of glass hearts, flame finials, the cross, and inscribed text. The flame, for example, recalls his childhood experience of the Kennedy Memorial and has come to symbolize healing and memory. But this recent show abounded with surprising departures, including the use of concrete. Alluding to the saint martyred by arrows, *The Heart of St. Sebastian* is a dense mass of light-brown concrete inset with a darker concrete cross and bearing a bio-hazard sign, a symbol often seen on gay men as a tattoo of solidarity and pride. Its glass finial is red. And so the story unfolds of how Tate has come to terms with being HIV positive in a society repelled by illness and by HIV in particular. These ideas are further developed in *Frosted Reliquaryno. 1*, a cautionary tale of how people see a person through the distorting filter of illness. A red cross, the sign of being HIV positive, is achieved in two stages: the shape emerges from the clear glass areas of the frosted globes and then, the color derives from the encased doll stained with red transparent paint or "blood."

Another avenue of experimentation involves magnetism, which takes Tate's narrative to an archetypal level. *Sacred Cone of Magnetism* creates a wondrous metaphor for tapping into the healing power of nature and keeping it together in the face of stress and disease. The transparent glass cone, its finial clear and pure, contains iron filings that give the form an amber glow; but the real action occurs near the bottom where

jagged accumulations of filings reach down from the tip and up from the base, never quite meeting, held in check by the force fields of two unseen magnets. The mystery is only partially told through mathematical formulas inscribed on the cone. As with the hearts, healing is suggested through movement and change.

Chance and the darker forces are in play in *I Met the Devil at the Crossroads*, an allusion to the trickster in Southern folk magic, Hoodoo, and to Delta bluesman, Robert Johnson. Inside a glass orb, the steel hands of a hunched devil figure each cast a magnetic field to hold the iron filings in place as he tempts the artist, whose soul is represented by a small white Charlotte figure from the late 1800s. Charlotte figures were given to little girls as a warning against forgetting to wear a coat and freezing. The inscription gives a fictional account of Tate's Faustian encounter with Murray, the devil. The outcome in this case is inconclusive.

Guardians of the Past, Present and Future signals a new format of parallel vertical panels and introduces a German glass with the look of amber-colored ground sugar. When fired, it appears a bluish-purple-green depending on the thickness of the clear glass in front of it, thus simultaneously referencing sky and earth. The solemn suite presents the story of birth and death in the format of classical stelae. Each of the three panels is divided into three zones. In the heavenly zone, a hand grasps a virus that emanates energy to suggest seizing control of one's life. In the earth zone, plumb bobs—centering devices—hang from various symbols of regeneration, such as acorns, and point toward a standing male nude whose head projects rays of enlightenment. And in hell, devil's heads, tools, and other objects convey torment and toil.

Portrait of Process perhaps best distills the complexities of process and deliverance in "Caged by History" Nine square glass tiles forming a square grid record Tate's hand clutching talismanic objects. The healing hand and the artist's hand have merged, joining the physical with the spiritual, all cast in a pale, heavenly blue. Here, as throughout Tate's work, the question of whether we are destined for certain things or create our own outcome is posed over and over again. Tate assigns every object and figure a specific place and meaning in relation to their companions. In turn, we feel and see them through the glass as they suggest different quests and paths of inquiry.

— Sarah Tanguy

BOSTON

Heide Fasnacht

Bernard Toale Gallery

Well before 9/11, Heide Fasnacht was drawing and sculpting explosions and implosions—volcanoes, demolitions, airplane disasters—all manner of violent, ephemeral

events captured and solidified. Not all of these works, however, were catastrophic: like strobe photographer Doc Edgerton in two dimensions, Fasnacht immortalized in three dimensions such quotidian stuff as teacups breaking, coughs and sneezes, drips from the ceiling, and geysers erupting. Beginning with awesome draftsmanship, she moved on to experimentation with resins, Styrofoam, and expandable polyurethane foam, the stuff you squirt into cracks in order to fill and insulate them.

In 2000, she exhibited *Exploding Airplane*, a stupendously disturbing image given the terrorist aircraft bombings of previous decades. Fasnacht said that the work was based not on real imagery but on special effects from the movie *Air Force One*, a detail which does not take the edge off one whit. That same year she included *Blast*, her first explosion piece made from neoprene, in her show at the Worcester Art Museum. Then, just weeks before September 11, 2001, Fasnacht created a faux imploding

Heide Fasnacht, *Jump Zone*, 2005. Neoprene, tape, wire, and metal mesh, dimensions variable.

