

The definition of M.A.D.ness

I am interested in how certain small acts of resistance can change the course of history, and other acts seem to have no impact at all - I am also interested in how these acts are remembered, forgotten, overlooked or hidden.

I have chosen four of my paintings, each one painted in acrylic inside a discarded beer bottle top, to illustrate paradoxical definitions of 'revolution' within a military and Cold War context.

The two portraits show individuals who made relatively minor but deeply significant, conscious acts of subversion. Their individual actions, by stepping out of line, encouraged or allowed the freedom and safety of strangers at their own immediate, personal risk. One soldier was thrust into the media spotlight and struggled for the rest of his life. One soldier was kept undercover and his life-saving actions remained secret for decades.

In contrast, the two paintings of nuclear bombs show how life-changing, life-ending, acts can somehow fail to stop ideological wheels turning. One image shows the bombing of Nagasaki, the second of two devastating acts of war against largely civilian targets. One nuclear bomb, before another: One city, followed by another.

The other image shows a nuclear bomb test in peace time, a reminder that the shock of the A-bomb did not last long before governments returned to the cycle, repeating the same nuclear threats. The efficiency to kill could still be improved, the weapon's progress could keep moving forward, the wheel just kept on turning.

(left to right) 1. First British Nuclear Bomb Test, Monte Bello, 3rd Oct. 1952, 2. Conrad Sturman Berlin Soldier, 3. Stanislaw Petrow, 4. Nagasaki August 9th, 1945

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