



ARTnews

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reviews

Dave Cole

Judi Rotenberg

Dave Cole is perhaps best known for *The Knitting Machine*, a 2005 installation that enlisted two giant construction vehicles to knit a larger-than-life American flag outside Mass MoCA. Continuing along those lines, the arresting recent works in this show, titled "All American," mingled nostalgic objects or materials commenting on national defense.

A Humvee clad in hand-knit neon orange and fluorescent green PVC-coated nylon was parked in front of the gallery. Inside, occupying the center of the exhibition space and apparently taking aim at the deepening militarization of American culture, was *Machine Gun Nest* (2008), an M60 on a tripod straddling a 1957 Radio Flyer wagon hitched to a child's tricycle. Smaller pieces included baby booties, rompers, and overalls knit from Kevlar, DuPont's lightweight bullet-stopping material. Cole's message is even more direct in *Baseball Study #6* (2008), in which a baseball and a hand grenade are mounted side by side.



Dave Cole, *Flags of the World Study #3*, 2007, 192-piece U.N. "Flags of the World" set, cut and resewn, 47" x 90".

Judi Rotenberg.

The overt political content brings to mind artists like Hans Haacke, but Cole's reliance on scale, humor, and visual analogies that use consumer products as raw material places his work squarely in the camp of Pop art.

The use of the flag as both motif and symbol reinforces the connection with this tradition. An American flag made from used bullets and fragments adorned one gallery. Elsewhere was *Flags of the World Study #3* (2007), a mockup for Cole's latest monumental avoids the simple gag in favor of something more ambivalent.

—Johanna Ruth Epstein