

SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

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Tony Lewis creates and destroys in new AAM show

By PATRICK FORT • JUL 7, 2016



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The book, “Life’s Little Instruction Book”, is a strong point of motivation for Tony Lewis. It’s also a strong area of contention. Lewis found the book in his mother’s bathroom.

“It was kind of like, ‘oh this is a thing my mom does. She goes to thrift shops and buys these books that are teacher quotation books or books about how to be a better person,’ which is exactly what this book is,” he said.

Lewis found out that the book was a bit darker than it seemed — marketed towards a very specific type of person. One with money. One of a certain social status. The book was written for a college-bound son, and says things like, “don’t major in minor things,” and “never deprive someone of hope; it might be all they have.” Lewis said he felt that it was a very helpful book, but at the same time, very confrontational. He took the words from the book, and translated it to his art.

“If there is any aggression in here, it’s nowhere near the aggression that’s in that book already,” he said. “I think it’s just trying to match up to it.”

Lewis takes the phrases from the book and recreates them on the wall. This time, at the Aspen Art Museum, it’s made from nails and rubber bands smeared in graphite. It’s a balance of two opposing forces — creation and destruction.

Another piece is a crumpled pile of paper that takes up a large portion of the floor in one gallery space. At first glance, it just seems to be torn and ripped paper, but it actually has been drawn on.

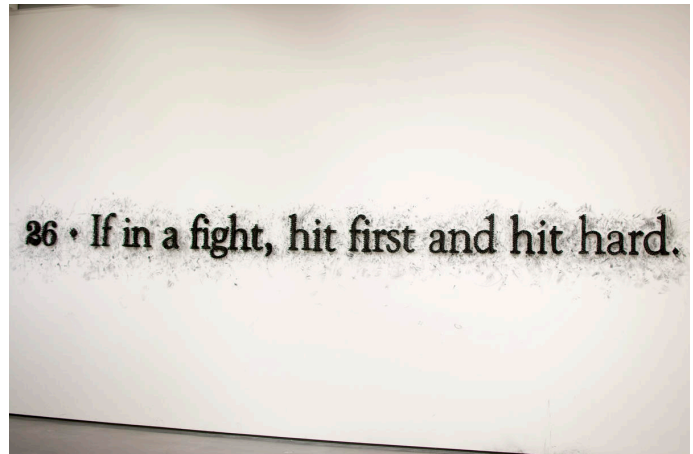
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Large pieces of paper are spread across the floor. Lewis and other people draw and spread graphite all over the paper. It's then lifted up, folded, ripped and abused however he chooses, and basically dropped on the floor.

"It kind of begins with a contradictory relationship to the text," Lewis said. "The source of the book is kind of something I believe in, but also something that I think doesn't have any particular merit."

Lewis' work is being featured in the exhibition, "The Revolution Will Not Be Gray". It aims to talk about revolution and protests through a gray lens: one that isn't black and white. The title poses the question of rebellion. Balancing two opposing forces, much like the way Lewis balances his creation and destruction.



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