

# SAM LEE | GALLERY

**Visual Art Source**  
**November 26, 2010**

## **This Week's Recommendation**

**Darren Hostetter at Sam Lee Gallery**  
**By G. James Daichendt**



"Clusterfubar 1" 2010, acrylic on aircraft aluminum, 12 x 12 inches

The work of Darren Hostetter is a specialized humor akin to Mel Brook's handling of the Spanish Inquisition as an aquatic song and dance number (from his film "History of the World, Part I"). Military helicopters pirouette in mid-air against a serene pink background. Intricately painted machines built for war, defy gravity and are temporarily suspended from reality. We see more examples as fighter jets connect to create snowflake patterns. Designer logos decorate the exterior of suicide vests and bombs function as computer circuitry to provoke both funny and serious commentaries on how America is characterized by much of the world. A dark and entertaining ploy that humor seems apt to address.

The issues of importance for Hostetter range from social politics to terrorism. How these issues arise in one painting is up for debate and is indicative of the show's title, "Clusterfubar," an acronym (fubar stands for "fucked up beyond all recognition") used to characterize the current socio-political environment. The highly detailed works are painted on an aluminum normally used for building aircrafts. While the images draw the viewer in, it's the juxtaposition of concepts that creates a conceptual mess. Dangerous and symbolically aggressive images are transformed into designed scenarios that appear ridiculous. In this way, Hostetter's work is ironically reminiscent of the dark comedy, Stanley Kubrick's "Dr. Strangelove," where the officers are reminded that "... you can't fight in here ... This is the War Room".