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JAMPA DORJE

Existential angst in Ellensburg

Buddhist monk explores humanity through junk art

ANNA ROSE
staff writer

Is it beautiful, or is it just junk on a board?

Jampa Dorje says, "Both." Dorje embraces entropy in his art — or rather, "anti-art" — using found objects to create assemblages; three-dimensional mosaics that spark curiosity, confusion, and, he hopes, self-reflection.

"Each piece has its compositional element, of course. I pay attention to form, line, and

texture," he said. His found objects range from shards of glass and wood to dead batteries and guitar strings. Bonus points if they've been exposed to the elements.

"But the meaning is in the junk," he said. "It's about the relationship between randomness and order."

Dorje said his art expresses the unity of contradictory elements in the mind.

"Everyone feels angst about existence," he laughed. "We're just fragments finding their place, just like this junk on the board."



ANNA ROSE / DAILY RECORD
Jampa Dorje shares a knowing look with himself in the reflection of one of his art pieces. Dorje makes assemblage art out of found items some may consider "junk."

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YAB YUM

Difference & Repetition

JAMPA DORJE

D Press 2023 Ellensburg



Art/ from A1

He cited Dadaism as a major influence, a modern art movement that posed the question, "Can anything be art?"

Dorje recalled a particularly significant piece of Dadaist work by Marcel Duchamp in 1915, when he simply hung a snow shovel from the ceiling and titled it "In Advance of the Broken Arm." The exhibit still hangs today in the Museum of Modern Art.

"Honestly, anything can be art in the right context," Dorje said.

But his inspiration goes deeper than snow shovels; Dorje has lived a life as varied as the elements of his artwork.

He was a Berkeley, Calif. street poet in the 1960s, part of the Beat scene with Alan Ginsberg and Gary Snyder. He lived for a while in a wilderness cabin in Alaska, printing chapbooks on a hand press.

Then he found himself a cowboy

on a cattle ranch in Badger Pocket, a tree planter on the slopes of Mount St. Helens post-eruption, and the longtime proprietor of Four Winds Bookstore and Cafe in Ellensburg.

Dorje is also a Buddhist monk; he spent four years in Tibet on a solitary retreat.

"I had two hours each day devoted entirely to making art," he recalled. "I spent it writing and painting."

Alongside the assemblage pieces, the Palace Gallery in Ellensburg displayed some of the watercolors he created during that time in a November exhibit titled "Yab-Yum, Repetition & Difference."

"They were painted on notebook pages," Dorje noted. "Now that they've been blown up, you can see the lines. But I think the lines just add another element."

Dorje blended Dadaism with Buddhism in his paintings to illustrate "harmonious dichotomy."

Yab-yum ("father-mother") is a common symbol in Tibetan Buddhist art. It represents the union of

wisdom and compassion, depicted as a male deity in union with his female consort through the ideas of coalescence.

In Buddhism, the masculine form is active, representing compassion and skillful means, and the feminine form is passive and represents wisdom; both are necessary to enlightenment.

Dorje's paintings portray this concept through bright colors, strong imagery, and just a splash of his trademark chaos.

Art historian Lu Auz calls his series a "visual and spiritual exploration of human experience, our struggles, and the ultimate quest for inner harmony."

Dorje just calls it "ironic sincerity."

"If you can't have fun with your religion, you're doing it wrong," he said. "I'm a playful artist. What is beauty? Anything you want it to be. What does it all mean? Who knows. It's always good to have controversy in art."



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PALACE GALLERY

"Chengall" by Jampa Dorje. Dorje painted this with watercolors on notebook paper during his four-year Buddhist solitary retreat in Tibet.



The Palace Gallery Art Show, November 2023

Title: YAB YUM: REPITITION AND DIFFERENCE

Yab Yum Series: 12 x 18" inkjet prints of paintings \$150 each

Funk art assemblages – mixed media - \$500 each
In Advance of Entropy #1 (2 x 2') mixed media
In Advance of Entropy #2 (2 x 2') mixed media
In Advance of Entropy #3 (2 x 2') mixed media
Composition with Mirror 5 x 12" mixed media
Composition with Linoleum Blocks 2 x 3' mixed media
Composition with Chain 2 x 3' mixed media
Quentin's Venus 2 x 2' mixed media
Comes with Battery (co-artist: Kama) 2 x 2'

Collages \$100 each
Pizzagate 5 x 7" paper collage
Insurrection 4.5 x 7" paper collage
Barbieheimer 4 x 6" paper collage
Emptiness 2 (with book, *An Emptiness Set*) no item
Just the Facts 7 x 12" mixed media collage



Special thanks to Karl Schwiesow for hanging and promoting my show, to David Lanegan for helping move the artworks, to Preston McNeil for the video, and to all who contributed found objects for the assemblages.



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Two photos by Megan Pickerel-Winer Headlight Children performing



Karl Schwiesow & Christa Ames



Preston McNeil

THE PALACE GALLERY

PRESENTS

YAB YUM

DIFFERENCE & REPETITION

ART BY JAMPA DORJE

November 3rd thru the 25th

First Friday Artwalk: November 3rd at 5pm

The Headlight Children perform at 6:00 pm

OPEN SATURDAYS in November 12-4pm

210 West 4th Avenue, Suite x, Ellensburg

VAJRASATTVA-VAJRAGARVI YAB YUM

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

as related to a series of Tantric Paintings

I have created eleven prints based on small Vajrasattva-Vajragarvi yab-yum paintings that I did during my four-year solitary retreat in the San Juan Mountains in Colorado at the Tara Mandala Retreat Center. I painted each yab-yum in the styles of well-known western artists: Matisse, Braque, Dali, Chagall, Picasso, Tobey, Blake, Rouault, and Diebenkorn. Each framed print is 18 x24 inches.

Yab-yum (literally, "father-mother") is a common symbol in the Tibetan Buddhist art of India, Bhutan, Nepal, and Tibet. Yab-yum is generally understood to represent the primordial (or mystical) union of wisdom and compassion, depicted as a male deity in union with his female consort through the ideas of interpenetration or coalescence. In Buddhism the masculine form is active, representing the compassion and skillful means (*upaya*), and the feminine form is passive and represents wisdom (*prajna*), both of which are necessary to enlightenment. United, the figures symbolize the union necessary to overcome the veils of *Maya*, the false duality of subject and object. These figures are frequently worked in the shape of statues or reliefs or are painted on hangings called *thangkas*. This profound meditational deity practice is the most powerful healing and purification method in Vajrayana Buddhism. Vajrasattva is the esoteric aspect of the bodhisattva Samantabhadra (see Tibetan thangka on wall) and is commonly associated with the student practitioner who, through the master's teachings, attains an ever-enriching subtle and rarefied grounding in their esoteric practice.

(Extracted from *Wikipedia*)



KAMA & Steve Held

Main room



Side room



Pizzagate



Barbieheimer



Insurrection



Emptiness 2

AN ART HISTORIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Jampa Dorje's *Yab-Yum* series is a visual and spiritual exploration of human experience, our struggles, and the ultimate quest for inner harmony. Dorje contemplates the transient nature of existence and the continuous cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, beautifully encapsulated in the sacred Yab-Yum symbolism of the divine union of masculine and feminine energies. Dorje's *In Advance of Entropy* series explores similar themes of harmony and transience through the techniques of assemblage and abstraction. Dorje breathes life into the broken tiles, guitar strings, and found objects that tell a story of resilience and regeneration. The act of carefully selecting, arranging, and fusing these disparate elements subtly suggests the Yab-Yum tradition. These two series serve as mirrors reflecting the human condition, the fragile beauty of our existence, and the eternal search for balance and meaning within the chaos of life. Through figuration and abstraction, Dorje seeks to guide viewers on a spiritual and emotional journey. Dorje invites viewers to immerse themselves in the intricate dance between form and formlessness, order and chaos, mindfulness, and entropy.

—Dr. Lu Auz, The Metal Museum



Vajrasattva—Vajragarvi



Samantabhadra and Samantabhadri



Quentin's Venus



Composition with Lino Blocks

The Palace Gallery
210 W. 4th Avenue, Suite X, 2nd floor
Ellensburg, WA, 98926
Hours: First Fridays 5-7pm
Saturdays 12am-4pm
or by appointment
www.thepalacegallery.com

YAB YUM

REPETITION & DIFFERENCE

Jampa Dorje

November 3rd-24th, 2023
opening reception 5pm Nov. 4



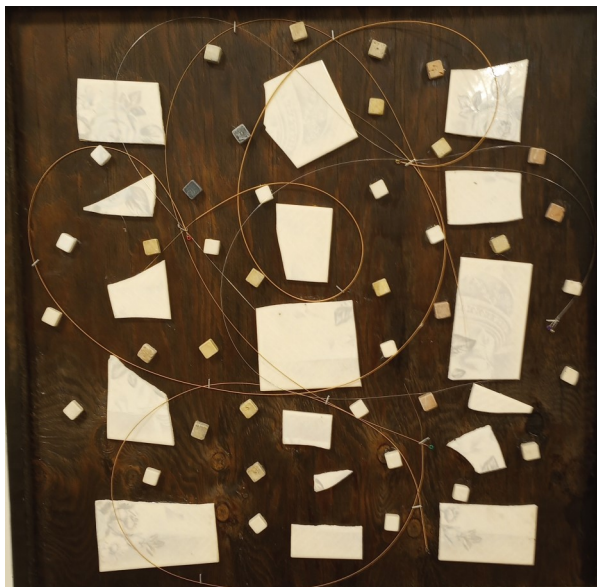
Composition with Mirror



Just the Facts



In Advance of Entropy 1



In Advance of Entropy 2



Yab Yum—Chegall



Yab Yum—Braque



In Advance of Entropy 3



Comes with a Battery



Yab Yum—Matisse



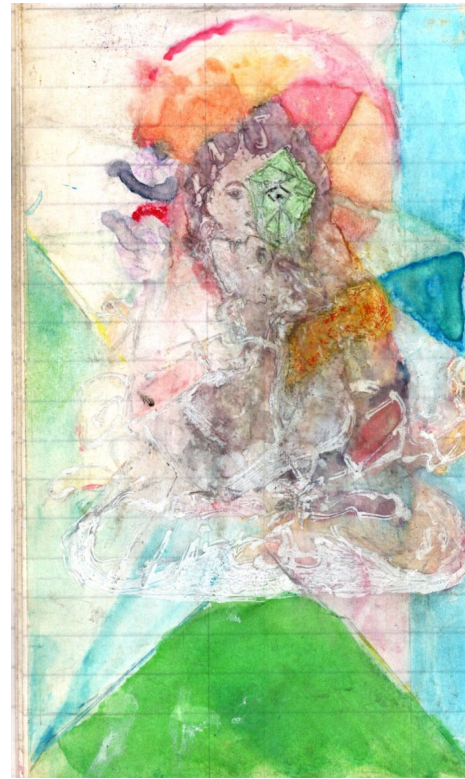
Yab Yum—Picasso



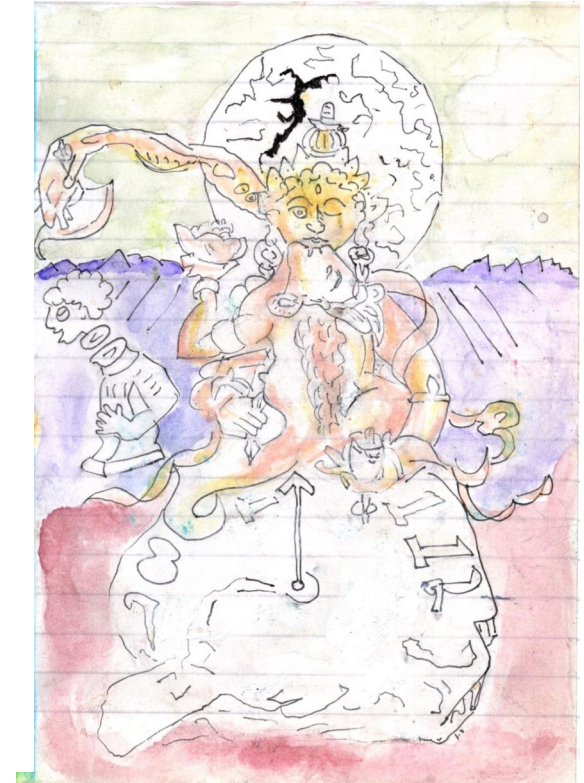
Yab Yum—Blake



Yab Yum—Klee



Yab Yum—DiebenKorn



Yab Yum—Dali



Yab Yum—Rouault



Yab Yum—Miro



Yab Yum—Tobey



Composition with Plate



Re: Art Proposal

2 messages

Karl Schwiesow <thepalacegallery@outlook.com>
To: Jampa Dorje <richardleedenner@gmail.com>

Tue, Sep 26, 2023 at 5:51 PM

Hello Jampa,

I hope this message finds you well, and we are really excited to host you this November 3rd - 25th at The Palace Gallery!

I am writing to check in and see how things are with you and if you need anything to help you in preparation for your show! I also have a couple questions for you below.

Well, I can't remember if I had sent the Exhibition Agreement document or not to you. Anyway, it is attached. You can sign and send it back digitally or just get it to me in person sometime before the Exhibit. I have also included an inventory sheet and gallery floor map with measurements and such to help you visualize the space. You are welcome to line up a time to come in a see and discuss the gallery space in person with me if you like.

✓ I have your artists' statement and inventory you sent before. Wonderful!

✓ Do you wish to sell any of your work? If so, please send a price list along? Do you have a title for your exhibit?

I remember you were interested in having some kind of performance during the opening? I think that would be fabulous! I would like to have more information about how that will go, just so I can prepare as well.

When is a convenient time and method for you drop off your work? Our window is the week of Oct 30- Nov 2.

I hope this all makes sense, I am looking forward to hearing from you! Let me know if you have any questions or concerns or anything at all!

Kindly,
Karl

Karl Schwiesow
The Palace Gallery
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