

David Opdyke

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Born in Niskayuna, New York, 1969. Lives and works in Brooklyn.

David Opdyke casts a critical eye on contemporary political and corporate strategies of disseminating information, economic imperialism, cultural globalization, and the ever-increasing power of American consumerism. Although he has long been interested in what he perceives to be distinctly American attitudes towards a variety of issues, including ownership and private property, Opdyke's work has taken a more explicitly political direction over the last several years, a move prompted by his growing alarm at the state of the political climate in the United States and its international reverberations.

Opdyke's recent works have dealt with some of the issues that had many Americans up in arms in this past election year: dependence on foreign oil, the greed of corporations and their complicity in some of the excesses in the war on terror, the relentless "logo-ing" and branding of the United States, the increasing autonomy of the military, and the fruitless search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. He continues to address American attitudes with works that question the nature of patriotism and the ways in which the average citizen is not absolved of all responsibility for corporate and governmental abuses of power. His sculptures -- of an asphalt Mobius strip painted to look like a highway and mounted with tiny, Matchbox cars, for example, or an aircraft carrier converted into a floating shopping center and aptly dubbed *USS Mall* (2003), complete with ample parking and spacious stores -- comically confront the spectacle of American militarism and consumerism. Opdyke's sculptures are successful in part because he has an uncanny ability to deploy his remarkable technical skill and vibrant, visual sense of humor in the service of political critique. He inserts jokes and puns into his sculptures in a way that prevents them from becoming visual tirades; they are multivalent, open to interpretation. His works are often intricate constructions, built up meticulously from myriad small parts, like the work of the most obsessive hobby model-makers or train enthusiasts. Although his materials often seem to derive from children's toys, including Matchbox cars, Monopoly game properties, and model kits, Opdyke's intricately detailed, labor intensive, visually compelling sculptures and installations embody a searing condemnation of a country gone awry: they are anything but child's play.

Sarah Suzuki

Selected Exhibitions:

- 2004 *Aldrich Emerging Artist Award Exhibition*. The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut (solo).
American Paradigms: David Opdyke and Lane Twitchell. Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Open House: Working in Brooklyn. Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, New York.
- 2003 *Comic Release*. Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
Loose Ends. Roebling Hall, Brooklyn, New York.

Top left: *USS Mall*, sculpture, 2003

Middle left: detail

Right: detail

Bottom left: *Defense Development*, sculpture, 2004



