## Reviews: New York

D. Dominick Lombardi

Lunarbase

The fantasy behind the "X-Men" comic-book characters is that they are genetic mutants who use freakish powers as forces for good. A similar post-apocalyptic utopianism animates the characters in D. Dominick Lombardi's paintings and drawings, an 8-year swath of which were collected here in his first New York solo show in 19 years. The sheer quantity of new material made it seem like both a debut and a retrospective.

Lombardi's characters resemble futuristic blobs with eyes and noses, but they also have a charming Mutt'n'Jeff old-school-comics feel to them. In part, that's because Lombardi hand-draws their lines, even though at first glance it may look as if a computer was involved.

In one painting, *Queen at First Light* (1999), a grotesque figure sits, hugging her knees. She has pustules along one side of her body; a small, dark shock of hair clings to her head. But the thick lines and pastel colors—the comics look— make her easy on the eye. Three hanging ovoid shapes behind her resemble modernist carpet designs, as well as mushroom clouds. Lombardi's consistent, patient exploration of the 1950s comic-book style leads to a welcome reflection
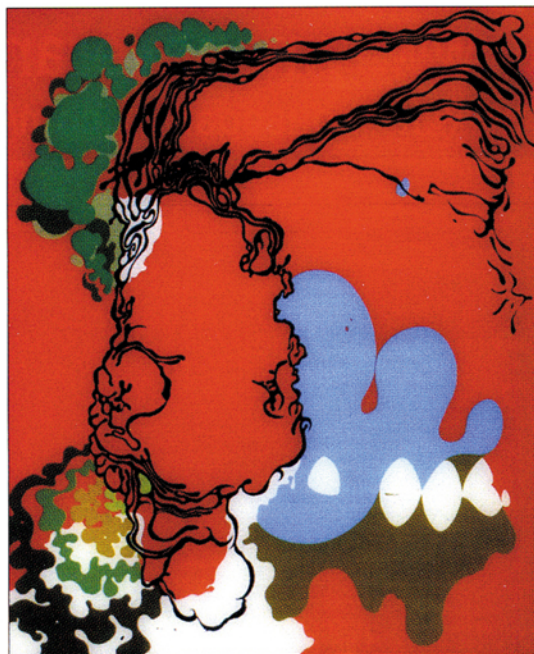
D. Dominick Lombardi, *Shrunken Head #1*, 2001, reverse-painted acrylic on Plexiglas, 24" x 20". Lunarbase.

on the esthetics of that period.

Lombardi sometimes paints on the back of Plexiglas, which results in a slickness that creates the illusion that the images have been spooled out of a computer. He has also made smooth, amorphous white sculptures suggesting a Noguchi–Roxy Paine hybrid. They, too, are deceptive, having been actually built up out of acrylic paint. Such formal tricks are as compelling as the idea that the portraits are self-affirmations for apocalypse survivors. Lombardi's odd creatures don't need the backstory: they stand on their own. —*Carly Berwick*

Se ed?

A Ne

Absolutely Fabulist: Artists Take on Fairy Tales

The Money Trail: Investigating the Getty

8.00CAN