

Galerie Daniel Templon

Paris

JIM DINE

ARTFORUM, October 2015

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GALERIE DANIEL TEMPLON

At eighty, Jim Dine still has a few tricks up his sleeve. Five recent sculptures featuring the artist's toolbox staples—hammers, wrenches, pliers, hooks, saws, C-clamps, and so on—include a material he has rarely worked with before: glass. Souvenirs of his family's hardware store as well as extensions of his own hands, Dine's tools have been an autobiographical motif since the 1960s, showing up in drawings, paintings, sculptures, prints, and photographs. Literally and figuratively breathing new life into his personal iconography, Dine's foray into glassblowing (a collaboration with James Mongrain, whose studio has previously produced work for the likes of Dale Chihuly and Kiki Smith) integrates airy baubles and pipes into dense thickets of melted, twisted, and painted metal. Each titled *City of Glass* (all 2014), the tabletop arrangements counterbalance Dine's signature heavy functional objects with unexpected fragile abstractions.

Some of the tools featured in the sculptures are found objects, unaltered except for slatherings of bright oil enamel. Others are elongated, warped, and similarly modified bronze casts. Interspersed on metal worktables and painted tropical shades of pink, blue, yellow, red, and green, implements both useful and fanciful explode beyond their tabletop supports, jutting precariously in all directions and orientations. Ropes dangle, wrenches stand upright on their handles, pliers balance impossibly on their noses, axes appear stopped in midstroke. Tempering this chaos with graceful fluidity, the glass elements (made at Mongrain's studio in the Seattle suburbs) were blown directly onto the metal sculptures. The hardened glass creates glistening transparent sheaths over sharp projectiles and fills negative spaces between and around objects with deceptively pillowy buffers. Showing off the range of possibilities offered by his newfound material, Dine experiments with various glasses and blowing techniques, using wild Murano-style patterns, subtle tints, and everything in between to produce corrugated tubes, bulbous vases, even an absurd glass hammer.

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Despite being called “cities,” these works appear more visceral than architectural. Evoking interior landscapes as opposed to skylines, the sculptures are presented on waist-high stainless-steel tables, as if about to undergo surgery or dissection. Crude versions of medical instruments, the tools appear to puncture and prod glass organs and entrails. A pitchfork whose red-and-blue-painted prongs are enveloped by a pale-blue glass lobe in *City of Glass #4* distressingly suggests a rib cage inside a lung. Other unnerving corporeal associations include various body parts, such as a hollow green face in *City of Glass #2* and a single reverently raised hand in *City of Glass #4*.

Complementing the sculptures, seven new drawings on paper and felt (all *Untitled*, 2015) reprise the same tools and show Dine playing with perspective, scale, and color in two dimensions. Less aggressive than the sculptures, the charcoal drawings are similarly energetic, characterized by brusque marks, turbulent smudges, and vigorous erasures that leave areas of the paper thin and ragged. In one drawing, Pinocchio, a recurring surrogate for the artist over the years, looks contemplatively at an assortment of clamps, hammers, clippers, and a wrench. As this double self-portrait suggests, Dine shows no signs of slowing down or looking back. On the contrary, he seems to be asking himself: What next?

—Mara Hoberman



Jim Dine, *City of Glass #3*, 2014, bronze, glass, stainless steel, found objects, lacquer, 77 × 45 × 56".