

# WPB MAGAZINE

## Domenic Esposito: A Spoon Full of Sugar

*Esposito has produced a disturbing albeit thought-provoking series of imagery into his art. His new series figuratively and intellectually requires the viewer to engage in a purposeful and convincing vibe that transmits depression and loneliness and sends a strong message.*



Artworks from the new exhibit at The Box Gallery by artist and social activist, Domenic Esposito  
(Photo Pedro Penalver, WPB Magazine)

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Coincidentally, the artist's hometown is the official site for the first political theatre, as resourceful anti-taxation without representation patriots disguised as Native Americans tossed chests of tea into the Boston Harbor in the most famous protest that changed the course of American history. Artists have been inspired by this inventive act of de facto performance art for decades, Esposito joins a distinguished lineage of artists as serious activists who utilize their work to inform and engage.

For hundreds of years, artists have taken up the torch of visual dissent and banners of information supporting a worthy cause. Perhaps the most extraordinary and powerful image of protest is Pablo Picasso's painting "Guernica," which depicts death and desperation during the infamous massacre of a Basque village in 1937

and has since become a representation of every city ever bombed. It also is a lasting political statement against fascism.

Artists also were active with protest art during the Vietnam War, which saw Andy Warhol as a contributor to an anti-Nixon campaign. Most recently, we have seen a remarkable output of creative energy from artists with humanitarian or environmental commentary, especially during the last four desperate years. For example, Shepard Fairey began as a street artist and became internationally known for his activist posters, billboards, and collaged paintings, which are now highly collectible with increasing value and critical acclaim. Even the bull and the bear bronzes on Wall Street have become sculpture-as-communicator of different sides of opinion. (No bullshit please!) Jenny Holzer has covered entire buildings at night with projected notices viewed by millions that highlighted injustice in brief sentences. Dread Scott is a young contemporary African American artist who constructs black flags that display an embroidered message such as “A man was lynched by police yesterday,” which is the essence of compelling, noteworthy messaging and the principle behind the Black Lives Matter movement that we all are human beings. That we all feel the same pain and loss. And these artworks actually succeeded and certainly served their original purpose.

As an artist and an activist, Domenic Esposito has joined a distinguished crew with his own inventive brand and has dedicated his career to examining the serious issues of depression, loneliness, mental illness, and addiction, all of which have been exacerbated and laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic.



*Artist Domenic Esposito speaks during the set up of the new exhibit at The Box Gallery (Photo Pedro Penalver, WPB Magazine)*

*He achieved national attention through the massive opioid spoon sculptures he placed on the doorsteps of those he deemed to be major contributors to the opioid crisis. He founded the Opioid Spoon Project to serve as*

*the voice of truth, solutions, and as a platform for constructive social change and legal accountability for the opioid epidemic and its deadly and destructive effects on people from all walks of life.*

*Esposito fits perfectly into the 'artist as dedicated communicator' role and as a craftsman whose work became his life as a steadfast soldier of honorable propaganda in the best of terms that makes the earth a better place for its citizens.*



*Esposito stands next to a Big Spoon sculpture on exhibit at The Box Gallery (Photo Pedro Penalver, WPB Magazine)*

*There are many artists who share Esposito's commitment to public service announcements initially scribbled on public walls; paint-spraying crusaders who leave a confrontational visual memo.*

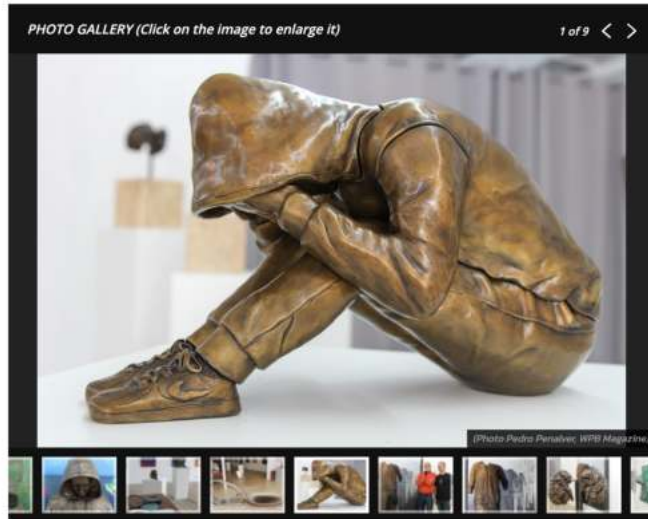
*Esposito left his own statement in the form of an opioid spoon at the doors of its manufacturers. Someone was watching. Banksy is a nighthawk that can connect directly with passersby through his often outlandish stenciled profiles of impactful reality, such as two London bobbies kissing or a peaceful bouquet of flowers flung into the air by a young girl, substituting a bomb being*

*thrown. Keith Haring's quick cartoonish comments made his pop style accessible not only as a legitimate art form but as a political declaration of gay awareness during the AIDS epidemic. Things finally started to change for women artists in the late '70s when the Guerrilla Girls were dressed head to toe in rubber masks and very hairy costumes as they "invaded" public art openings, which launched a memorable campaign of megaphone pronouncements that regularly and openly scolded galleries and museums for the lack of women in their facilities. And it worked. Not overnight. But they are recognized as the pioneers for pushing forward sexual equality in the art world.*

*Esposito's new series figuratively and intellectually requires the viewer to engage in a purposeful and convincing vibe that transmits depression and loneliness and sends a strong message, that like the activist artists before him, challenges our perceptions and awakens our renewed sensitivity to a frightening "new normal."*

*His landmark achievement on display is “Opioid Spoon,” an 800 lb. cast metal form in the re-arranged shape of a drug user’s adapted kitchen utensil that became a deadly weapon. It is a remarkable stinging twist on an innocent common object that has become iconic. The spoon sculptures left on the doorsteps of opioid manufacturers, I assume, left an unforgettable cast reminder that is now justifiably being sued for billions of dollars. The impetus for these ultimate paybacks was not only the terrifying number of victims but the activists,*

*like Domenic, who certainly played a part in exposing the cause and effect of spoonfed drug abuse.*



*Esposito has produced a disturbing albeit thought-provoking series of imagery into his art, which is an inventive way to provoke understanding and sympathy from the public on the subject of opioid dependence and death.*

*“Silence is no longer an option,” stated Jane Fonda during her recent Golden Globes humanitarian and activist award ceremony. “We artists are a community of determined*

*storytellers,” and that’s precisely the role Esposito has taken on in his life and with his engaging art.*

*In this noteworthy, socially conscious exhibition, Domenic Esposito takes on the challenge of artmaking with a cause, following an honorable tradition that tries to persuade people to honestly listen and finally pay attention. And, judging by this show, it’s working.*

*Esposito’s new series titled “Blank Slate” represents the artist’s reflections upon current times and the era of fear, depression, and loneliness experienced in the “new normal.” Esposito explores the isolation of those living with mental illness and those suffering from substance abuse whose challenges have been exacerbated and laid bare.*

*The Blank Slate Art Exhibition opened with a reception on March 6th and is happening through March 29. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 11 to 6 p.m. or by appointment. The Box Gallery is at 811 Belvedere Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33405.*