

Los Angeles Times

From small pieces, impressive images

By Christopher Knight, Times Staff Writer

British sculptor David Mach has been using mass-produced objects to make figurative sculptures for more than 20 years. His best work creates a sharp resonance between the chosen material and the figurative form.

Mach's show at Forum Gallery includes a terrific bear's head, mounted on the wall like a hunting trophy, assembled from thousands of colorfully tipped wooden safety matches that together imply the potential for sudden, devastating violence. Though much smaller, this modest but exciting art-bomb blows away a larger-than-life pair of standing nudes cleverly and inexplicably built from wire coat hangers. Some riff on the nakedness of Adam and Eve, perhaps?

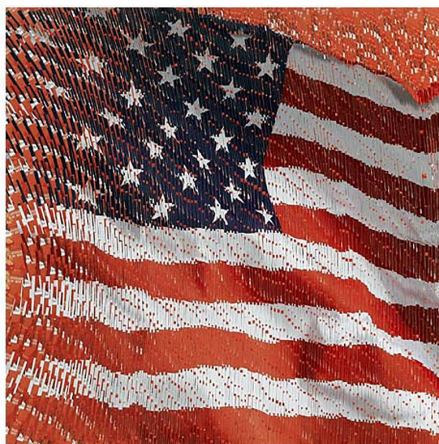
The remaining seven works are 6-foot-square postcard collages. Some are jokey, like a portrait of Elvis Presley – the King – built from thousands of scissored pictures of Queen Elizabeth II, in a goofy display of the bond across the pond. "Starstruck" is the Statue of Liberty's crowned head, composed of Carol Channing's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Others are more sober. A grinning golden Buddha is slyly made from glittering pictures of Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills.

The standout, though, is a robust, rippling American flag put together from thousands of pictures of Pamela Anderson in her signature red "Baywatch" swimsuit. The cards have square holes in them, like old IBM punch-cards or Florida voting ballots. Titled "Tour of Duty," it's a winningly vulgar Betty Grable pinup for our current flag-waving time of war.



Brown Bear, 2003
wooden safety matches
17 x 16 x 16 inches



Tour of Duty, 2007
postcards on plywood boards
72 x 72 inches



Straight Up (Coathanger Man), 2004
wire coathangers
115 x 40 x 33 inches