Gallery Exhibition: 'Strange Little Books'

A installation exhibition by children's author and illustrator Jamison Odone.

July 13, 2013 - August 16

Opening reception: Saturday, July 20, 5-7pm

Artist talk: Thursday, August 1, 6-8pm

Regular gallery hours: Thurs. 4pm-8pm, Fri. through Sun. 12pm-5pm

The Mercurial Gallery
11 Library Place
Danbury, Connecticut

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'Strange Little Books,' an installation exhibition by children's author and illustrator Jamison Odone, opens at the Mercurial Gallery in downtown Danbury, Connecticut on Saturday, July 13. A reception will be held at the gallery on Saturday, July 20 from 5 to 7pm, and an artist talk with Odone will be held on Thursday, August 1 from 4 to 6pm. Odone's newest book, Mole Had Everything, will be available at the gallery throughout the exhibit.

Mole Had Everything is the focus of this exhibition; Odone will be fixing original illustrations from the book to the gallery walls, and with the aid of yarn, will connect life-size characters and objects from the book with his original illustrations. The main theme of the book is materialism: Mole is a creature who feels completely content with his “one bed, one pillow, one shelf for books, one cup for tea,” until an encounter with his friend Beaver leads him to believe that his simple pleasures are not enough. Mole then embarks on an obsessive hunt to acquire, ultimately realizing that his quest to have has taken hold of his life.

In 'Strange Little Books,' Odone will recreate Mole's overabundance of stuff in an salon-style installation. He will also be displaying a mobile-style series of "Dante trading cards," simple ink drawings created with words from the third book in The Divine Comedy, Dante Alighieri's Inferno. The original Dante cards will be for sale, and limited edition giclee prints of Odone's Mole Had Everything illustrations will be available for order.

"There is no rhyme or reason here [with the trading cards]," Odone says. "I wanted to make something modest to reflect on something so important and epic. I do this quite often as a way to unwind but not waste my time by simply relaxing."
When using color in his work, Odone's illustrations are born from a warm, muted color palette with watercolor, pen, and ink. His characters and landscapes are often tinged with a bit of darkness, and he credits Edward Gorey, William Blake, Albrecht Dürer, and the late Maurice Sendak, who was a close friend of Odone's, as his most prominent artistic influences. As a writer and storyteller, he leans more towards Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm than Jan and Stan Berenstain.

Odone, a husband and a father of two boys, is a Rhode Island native who now splits his time between Ridgefield, Connecticut and Frostberg, Maryland, where he teaches advanced illustration in Frostberg State University's BFA program. His first book, Honey Badgers, was published in 2007 when Odone was 26. Mole Had Everything, his fourth release, was published in May of 2012.

"Children's books have been the only medium that I have ever fully thrived in," he says. "I think it's because I can completely develop all the actions, situations and feelings that occur in a world, created by me. I cannot create a single piece of art and feel fulfilled. I have to create a project or it is worth nothing to me.

"When I write I think of pictures to draw. When I read, I think of pictures to draw. When I draw, I think of the words that will make my drawing help to tell a story.

"When I'm not doing any of these things--I fidget."

'Strange Little Books' opens at The Mercurial Gallery for regular hours on Saturday, July 13, 2013, and an opening reception will be held on Saturday, July 20 from 5 to 7pm. 'Strange Little Books' will be on display through August 16.

The Mercurial Gallery is located at 11 Library Place in Danbury, Connecticut. Regular gallery hours are Thursday from 4pm to 8pm and Friday through Sunday 12 to 5pm.

Parking is available directly across the street from the gallery in the Charles A. Bardo Parking Garage. Main Street parking is free on Sundays and after 5:30pm.

For more information, call The Mercurial at (203)744-9179, email info@themercurialgallery.com, or visit themercurialgallery.com. Visit Jamison Odone's website at jamisonodone.wordpress.com.