

## GALLERY GLIMPSES

This selected listing of museum and gallery exhibitions in the Tampa Bay area runs every other week. Occasionally, shows of statewide importance are included. Selections are made by Tribune art critic Joanné Milani and are limited by the space available.

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### SHOWS REVIEWED

■ **L.C. ARMSTRONG: MAKING AND UNMAKING** — How do you understand words? Do you hear them, feel them, see them or smell them? Do they burn you, poke you or spill over you?

In this small but provocative show, New York-based artist L.C. Armstrong prods you to look at words and paintings as active objects — not as intangible substitutes for “the real things.”

“Autumn in New York” is not a painting in the old-fashioned sense. In it, Armstrong uses smoke, paint spills and bullets. Can these unorthodox markings have as much impact and meaning as words or the conventional gestures of abstract paintings? (In this case, the work looks like an Ashile Gorky painting under guerrilla attack.)

In this case, yes. There is an act of aggression going on here amid the lyrical fall colors. Thanks to Armstrong, you are seeing it directly.

“Seeing” is not the operative word in her four silvery panels covered in Braille. The titles translate the Braille: Each panel contains the names of 10 exotic colors (chartreuse, cinnabar and sap green, for example).

In four other panels, she used ignited bomb fuses to trace lines of poetry by Sylvia Plath and William Carlos Williams. The words, which are illegible, are burned into the enamel and resin panel.

In case you don't get the point, check out “Dream Machine.” Instead of a bed of nails, Armstrong gives us a motorized bed with pointed, silver pencils.

Ah, the power of the written word! Who ever thought little markings could hurt so much?; through Aug. 26.

*USF Contemporary Art Museum, 4202 E. Fowler Ave., Tampa; Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, 1-4 p.m.; free admission; (813) 974-2842*