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By Sharon Mizota

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Punk and Minimalism aren't usually mentioned in the same breath. Punk overloads the senses with chaos and fury, while Minimalism short-circuits them in almost the opposite way, with the stolidity of sheer presence.

Yet both movements emerged within a few years of each other: Minimalism in the late 1960s, and punk in the '70s. For all its bluster, punk is perhaps just a more angry kind of minimalism, stripping everything down to its barest, rawest form.



“Interruption,” an elegant group show curated by Kim Light at Michael Kohn Gallery makes this point, although perhaps unintentionally; it purports to be about gaps in established modes of perception (which actually might amount to the same thing). Interestingly, it is not a historical exhibition, except for the art of Bruce Conner, which serves as a kind of touchstone for the works of the other 12 artists, all of which were created this year.

Conner, who passed away in 2008, was something of a punk, but certainly not a Minimalist. He did, however, astutely question the boundaries of any given medium and the parameters of art itself. His works in this show — a rough, 1997 collage that refers to the San Francisco punk club

Mabuhay Gardens, and a photograph of a large “X” graphic on a 1970s TV screen — convey a certain nihilistic abandon.

They are surrounded by comparatively restrained works by the likes of Gedi Sibony, Valeska Soares and Owen Kydd. Kydd’s video of a black plastic bag whose edges flicker in the breeze every now and then is unsettling not only because at first it looks like a still photograph, but also because it resembles a body bag.

Minimalism also turns sinister in an untitled painting by Dan Shaw-Town. Featuring a single red spray paint mark surrounded by a bleed of paler brushstrokes on a slick white panel, it’s both a gestural abstraction and a bloody mouth. Quieter still are the off-kilter grid paintings of Andrew Sutherland, whose incomplete black scaffolds look like desperate duct tape cover-ups.

And then there are Andrea Longacre-White’s photographs of crumpled and torn black-and-white images. It’s impossible to identify the original subjects, although there are hints of portraiture, which makes the damaged surfaces seem doubly violent.

It’s hard to say whether these spare works would read as “punk” without the presence of the more feisty Conner pieces. Perhaps they would just be enigmatic abstractions. But what emerges in “Interruption” is the same thing that unites punk and Minimalism: a recognition that sometimes you have to strip it down to see it all anew.

Michael Kohn Gallery, 8071 Beverly Blvd., (323) 658-8088, through Aug. 25. Closed Sunday and Monday. www.kohngallery.com

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