



Untitled

Date

2010

Primary Maker

Tsherin Sherpa

Medium

Gouache, acrylic and gold leaf on museum board

Description

Tsherin Sherpa trained in traditional thangka painting beginning at a young age and worked as a professional thangka painter early in his career. His recent contemporary art practice integrates traditional aesthetic and symbolic principles with fantastical motifs and juxtapositions. In this work two bodhisattvas face each other wearing gas masks and stand in front of a skull filled with smaller colorful skulls. The work confronts the

disparities between notions of death in Tibetan Buddhism and Western cultures, since in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition death is not feared but accepted and attachment to the ego is seen as the ultimate obstacle to enlightenment. The bodhisattvas in Sherpa's work wear traditional ornaments and garb, but in contrast to a more conventional portrayal of these figures who have compassionately delayed their own enlightenment for humankind, here they appear as soldiers prepared for battle, with their muscles flexed and fists clenched. The work seems to ask what kinds of obstacles bodhisattvas must conquer in the modern age in order for humankind to attain enlightenment.

Dimensions

37 1/8 × 30 1/8 in.