

Andrew Edlin GALLERY

Anthony Dominguez

Born 1960, Fort Worth, TX; died 2014, near New York, NY

Dominguez was the son of a successful commercial artist in Fort Worth, Texas. He immersed himself in art from an early age and later took university art courses, but never earned a degree. While in his twenties he moved to New York. At the end of the 1980s, Dominguez abandoned his East Village apartment, tossed his possessions and art materials into a dumpster, and spent the rest of his life as a homeless wanderer.

Dominguez never stopped making art and left a substantial body of distinctive work, all made from scavenged materials. Early pieces include small, black-fabric discs whose uniquely stylized imagery is imprinted with custom-made stencils and bleach applied with hypodermic syringes. Exposure to a receptive audience propelled Dominguez into a more ambitious mode. He started creating larger, rectangular-format paintings that didn't rely on stenciled imagery, although they retained the stark, white-on-black palette. He also began to expand his thematic focus, centered on his philosophy of radical freedom.

Around 2006, Dominguez made a hundred-and-eighty-degree turn to painting in black on white canvas—a change that highlighted his work's graphic punch. He subsequently switched the combination back and forth—white-on-black, black-on-white—depending on the materials at hand. Second was a new addition to his palette—red, the color of blood and, by association, the heart. Third was the emergence of overtly Christian iconography, imagery, and song lyrics. Crosses and stylized portraits of Jesus repeatedly appear in his late paintings—a development perhaps rooted in his Roman Catholic upbringing, but also reflecting his interest in early Christian mysticism.

In 2013 he returned to Fort Worth to see his beloved Aunt Celia, who was very ill and died before the year was out. He stayed into 2014 to take care of family business, then headed back to New York, stopping about twenty-five miles short of the city. In a thinly populated part of New Jersey, his body was found in a wooded area, where he'd evidently hanged himself from a railroad trestle. Significantly, it was Holy Saturday, commemorating the interval between Jesus's Crucifixion and the Resurrection.