

26 Questions for Protean Painter Joe Bradley

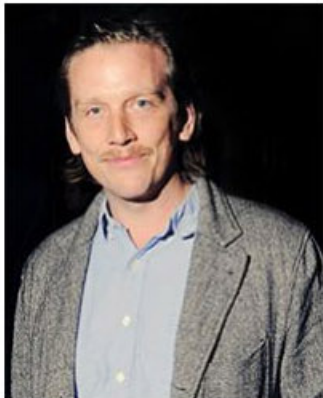


Courtesy of Gavin Brown's enterprise

Installation view of Joe Bradley's "Lotus Beaters" at Gavin Brown's enterprise

by ARTINFO

Published: June 11, 2013



Name: Joe Bradley

Age: 38

Occupation:
Artist

Joe Bradley — Photo: Nicholas Hunt
/PatrickMcMullan.com

City/Neighborhood (e.g. Greenpoint, Brooklyn; Montmartre, Paris): Clinton Hill, Brooklyn

You're known for working outside the confines of a specific esthetic. It's often said that your different series' could be the works of several different artists. Is there a particular body of work, or a show, that stands out as a personal favorite?

I like the new one.

Your current show at Gavin Brown, "Lotus Beaters," includes both large scale, layered, labor-intensive paintings and smaller, minimalist drawings. You've said before that you suffer over your paintings, and that drawings come more naturally. Do the drawings inform the paintings, or vice versa, or do you see those two parts of your practice as essentially separate?

Sometimes the two overlap, or the drawings might feed into the paintings. Sometimes they have nothing to do with one another. Drawing is quick and easy, so I tend to try things out on paper that I might not go through the trouble of painting.

Many of the paintings in "Lotus Beaters" are on different canvases that have been stitched together; how do these particular pieces evolve? Do they begin as one canvas and spread outward, or do you set out to make multi-canvas works?

The first one was a fluke. I had two paintings hanging next to each other on the wall, and I thought they would look good as one piece, so I had them sewn together. At some point I bought an industrial machine so I could play around with the process a little more. It's become an important tool. I can change the scale of a painting on the fly. If one corner doesn't work, I can remove it and replace it with something else.

Prices for your work continue to skyrocket. Last month, three different pieces sold at auction well above their pre-sale estimates with one piece setting a new auction record for your work. Do you follow the market, and how does that information affect your practice, if at all?

I do keep an eye on it. It's strange and a little unnerving. I don't think it has any real affect on what I do in studio though.

What project are you working on now?

I'm taking a break from painting. I'm moving out of the city in a couple of weeks, so that's my project at the moment.

What's the last show that you saw?

Gedi Sibony at Greene Naftali.

What's the last show that surprised you? Why?

The Koons show at Gagosian. I was converted.

Describe a typical day in your life as an artist.

I wake up around 6 or 7, sometimes I'll make it to studio by 9, sometimes I'll have coffee with my wife and punch in at 11. I sit down and take a look at yesterday's work, shuffle things around, maybe do a little drawing, read, make a few phone calls, tidy up. Sometimes someone will come by for a visit. I tend to paint towards the end of the day, if at all. Not a lot happens in an afternoon.

Do you make a living off your art?

Yes.

What's the most indispensable item in your studio?

The couch.

Where are you finding ideas for your work these days?

Other people's paintings, comic books, children's books.

Do you collect anything?

Books and records. If anyone is sitting on a copy of "Nommo" by Milford Graves and Don Pullen, let's make a deal...

What is your karaoke song?

Bette Midler's "The Rose."

What's the last artwork you purchased?

A group of drawings by Tuli Kupferberg.

What's the first artwork you ever sold?

It was a small painting of a lighthouse I made while at school. I sold it to a fellow student for \$50.

What's the weirdest thing you ever saw happen in a museum or gallery?

One time I saw Sting looking at a Robert Ryman painting.

What's your art-world pet peeve?

I don't spend enough time there to get peeved.

What's your favorite post-gallery watering hole or restaurant?

Connie O's.

Do you have a gallery/museum-going routine?

No.

What's the last great book you read?

"My Life as a Man" by Philip Roth.

What work of art do you wish you owned?

"The Green Rug" by Philip Guston.

What would you do to get it?

Scrimp and save?

What international art destination do you most want to visit?

Easter Island.

What under-appreciated artist, gallery, or work do you think people should know about?

Brian Belott.

Who's your favorite living artist?

John Wesley.

What are your hobbies?

I don't think I have any.