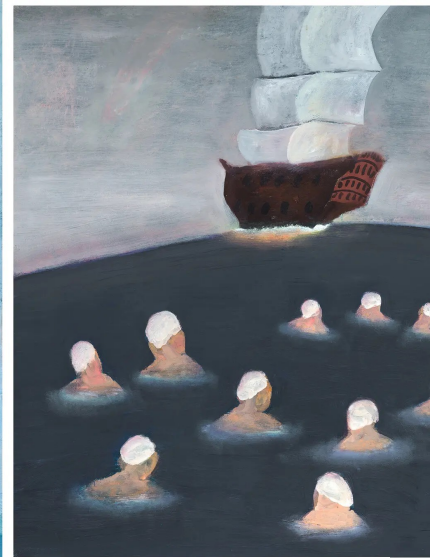


T The New York Times Style Magazine

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Floating Figures by Katherine Bradford

The paintings of Katherine Bradford offer themselves like scenes from a dream, vivid and immediate even as their meaning remains mysterious. Fluorescent nude men ring a pool suspended among the stars. Disembodied legs wearing dress shoes encroach on a green-haired woman's personal space. A group of sea swimmers gaze out at lightning on the horizon. "Sometimes I do a painting," says Bradford, who splits her time between Brooklyn and coastal Maine, "and then I make it darker, and then darker and then darker. It's because I like the mystery. I like things that happen at night." Bradford



From left: Katherine Bradford's "Woman Flying" (1999) and "Mother Ship" (2006).

Credit...

© Katherine Bradford. Left: courtesy of Luc Demers. Right: courtesy of Stephen Petegorsky Photography

has been painting since the 1970s, but her turn to figuration in the '90s serves as the starting point for the first solo survey of her work, now at the Portland Museum of Art in Maine. Across more than 40 paintings, the show traces her technical evolution — from single subjects to ensembles, from oils to acrylics — as she returns to what she calls her "bag of tricks": swimmers, caped superheroes, floating horizontal bodies. The artist is drawn to these avatars of fear and uncertainty, she says, because "it's the opposite of those old stately portraits of royalty, where they're supposed to look invincible. I like to do people who are slightly falling apart." *"Flying Woman: The Paintings of Katherine Bradford"* is on view through Sept. 11, portlandmuseum.org.