

Katherine Bradford, “Fear of Waves”

ART CONTEMPORARY ART

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Courtesy Canada
Katherine Bradford, Fear of Waves, 2015

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While swimming may represent the urge to indulge our inner fish, the swimmers in Katherine Bradford's latest paintings are usually incidental to color—rendered, at times, as smears of pigment—yet they retain their integrity. Tender, awkward and generally enjoying themselves, they frolic leisurely in the oceans, pools and tubs.

In *Floaters* (2015), the water distorts two elongated bodies, stretching them under a black, star-filled sky. *Swim Team Miami* (2015) presents a more theatrical spectacle of figures diving into a pink miasma, like synchronized swimmers in an old Esther Williams film. In several paintings, water becomes capped with foam, a frothy force threatening to overwhelm, as in *Fear of Waves* (2015), in which comically menacing white brush marks creep across an aqua expanse toward beachgoers on the sand who seem content to succumb to the power of nature.

Channeling Florine Stettheimer via Mark Rothko, Bradford combines frivolity with the sublime, creating scenarios in which people lose themselves in play while still being aware of the vastness of the universe and the fragility of life.

POSTED: SUNDAY JANUARY 10 2016