

PEDER LUND

Joe Bradley

7 January – 11 February 2017

Peder Lund is pleased to announce an exhibition with the American artist Joe Bradley (1975-). At just 41, Bradley has shifted confidently through disparate styles and media: arranging monochrome paintings into Pac Man-like figures, scrawling primeval symbols on raw canvases, and painting large abstractions. More recently, he has included sculpture in his practice, presenting both figurative pieces in wood and bronze, and monumental, rectangular aluminium works in vibrant colours that can be shown both indoors and outdoors. Along the way, and across these expressions, Bradley has become one of the most closely watched artists of his generation.

Bradley was born in Kittery, Maine in 1975. After receiving his B.F.A. in painting at the Rhode Island School of Design in 1999, he moved to New York City. He continuously painted, and had his first solo show in Boston in 2002, where he exhibited landscape paintings. These were never straightforward landscapes, but sunsets and tropical scenes derived from found postcards that he would inject a bit of irony into, a cartoon-like feature that has remained in his work ever since. He quickly became a part of the New York art scene, and it did not take long before he was included in a number of solo and group exhibitions in the city.

In 2003, Bradley had turned to small, abstract paintings and painting-like objects, such as plastic stapled over wooden stretchers. This change in expression is only one of a number of changes that Bradley has made in his nearly twenty active years as an artist. He works in series, often working for a long time with particular ideas. This approach allows him to pursue ideas and then drop them once they cease to interest him. This has resulted in groups of works that over the years have offered a surprising diversity, but that always retain an unmistakable familiarity.

In Bradley's recent turn to sculpture, he has embraced two opposing expressions – figurative smaller sculptures displayed on pedestals, and monumental minimalist forms. The latter series came about as Bradley began to notice the signs fixed to the side of buildings in New York, or typically over shop fronts. He liked the way these signs looked and the way the two materials aluminium and Plexiglas kick against each other. He then had a cabinet maker create a rectangular work for him, reminiscent of a Donald Judd, a John McCracken or a Robert Smithson, with a chromatic kinship to Franz West's outdoor sculptures. Bradley shares these masters' fascination with materiality, but the rectangular sculptures are less interested in occupying their contemporary (and loaded) category of art than they are in bringing Bradley's drawings and paintings off the wall and into open space. When shown against an empty wall, the monochrome and bicoloured sculptures resemble a grand, three-dimensional painting, and give spatial presence to the artist's two-dimensional works, evoking Bradley's recent large-scale, vibrant abstract canvases, often including geometrical, empty sections.

At Peder Lund, Bradley will display a closed-form minimalist sculpture. The work calls to mind the artist's 'modular paintings', exhibited at the Whitney Biennial in 2008 – layers of acrylic on cheap pre-stretched Fredrix canvases, mounted to the wall so that they resemble experiments in Minimalism. The single-panelled monochrome paintings were stacked together to depict people, animals, places and objects, and communicate an overall sense of theatre and movement, and almost possess a personality. The sculpture on view shares the modular paintings' spatial presence. Although both series may seem to be operating in a light slap-dash mode, they in fact reflect a thoughtful attention to the history of art, and particularly the study of colour. They demonstrate the visual range achievable through presenting colours alone or juxtaposing them in infinite combinations. Like a monolith, the sculpture brings this painterly chromatic quality to ground level, facing the viewer directly while powerfully repressing the surrounding space.

Bradley's work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, including at ConTEMPorary, New York (2003); P.S.1 Contemporary Art, Long Island (2006); and Le Consortium, Dijon (2014). Recent group exhibitions include "EXPO 1: NEW YORK (curated by Klaus Biesenbach)", P.S.1 Contemporary Art, Long Island (2013); "The Inevitable Figuration", Centro per l'arte contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato (2013); "The Forever Now: Contemporary Paintings in an Atemporal World (curated by Laura Hoptman)", The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2014–15); and "New York Painting", Kunstmuseum Bonn (2015). Bradley's work was included in the Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2008). His work is included in public and private collections including The Saatchi Gallery, London; Hall Art Foundation, Reading; De La Cruz Collection, Miami; and Museum of Modern Art, New York. In the autumn of 2017, Bradley will have a major solo show at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo. His first comprehensive monograph accompanies this exhibition. Bradley currently lives and works in New York.