

Further Work in Painting: A Project



Abstract

The first section of this project narrative is a 'Statement of Plans' from my application for a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship. I was named a Fellow for 2010 and I have requested a leave of absence from Fordham for the spring semester 2011 to begin my project. I'm applying for a Faculty Fellowship for the Fall 2011 semester to provide enough time to fully complete this project.

A STATEMENT OF PLANS

My work has always sought to simultaneously bring together elements of imagistic pictorialism and distinctly non-referential abstract construction. It is essential that there is no trace of strategic self consciousness in bringing together these disparate elements. I aim for an artificial yet credible naturalism in which the painting or drawing feels comfortably familiar while delivering the unexpected recognition of the unseen.

I have always felt that a painting is an appropriate arena for elaboration, complexity and detail. A painting can be made big enough (regardless of its actual physical size) to hold the whole world. Yet at the same time, I've always regarded a drawing as only big enough to sustain the presence of one single image, one single event, one single idea. For years this has proven to be a highly productive distinction resulting in a body of work divided by method and materials yet united in pursuit of the same revelatory recognition and familiarity.

With my recent series of numerous small paintings I feel as if I have started to bring together the substance and grand scale (actual or psychic) of painting and

the intense focus on a single event so familiar to my practice of drawing. I am eager to pursue a series of large paintings that follow the new guidelines of scale and configuration that I am devising with the smaller works on canvas. I intend also to continue working on several series of small paintings, probably forty to fifty canvases per group. I have also started to bring new ideas of color into my current paintings and I am very eager to develop these ideas further. I am currently investigating some approaches to color relationships that derive from more monochromatic spectrums with fewer but more intense and less familiar oppositions and juxtapositions. I am intrigued with redefining dramatic color events that do not depend so much on red, yellow and blue.

Essential to this plan is continued work on several series of drawings. A group of fifteen to twenty drawings will typically take three weeks or more to complete. I would hope to be able to produce two or three series of drawing in addition to the work in painting I plan to accomplish.

This past summer I started preparatory drawings and studies for some of the larger scale paintings in addition to organizing my studio to accommodate the increased scale of the new work. I am expecting to be completely engaged full time in this new body of work for the entire 2011 calendar year. I also fully expect to be continuing with this body of work for several years after 2011. I have been in discussion with Knoedler Gallery in New York City about an exhibition that would coincide with my work on this project. No date has been set but I expect we will agree on the show occurring during the fall of 2011.

I anticipate that there will be other exhibitions and critical reviews that will result from the paintings and drawings that I produce during this year of full time work in the studio.

Background

I have participated in the art world in New York for the past three decades and I feel that in that time I have contributed to the ongoing discourse about the relationship between

abstraction and figuration in painting through exhibitions of my work and inclusion of my paintings and works on paper in numerous collections, both public and private. My work has evolved out of a sustained effort to synthesize a sophisticated post-Formalist abstraction with the invented anecdotal image centered figuration that has characterized much of regional American painting since the 1960's. I feel that my recent work has reached a level of maturity that it has enhanced relevance in the total spectrum of issues that concern the community of artists, critics and curators working in the field of contemporary visual art.

Contribution

For serious and substantial work in the visual arts to have relevance in the field and in the academic arena it needs to be available for consideration and review through exhibitions or other forms of public exposure. The potential of critical response through exhibition and review in journals is an essential element of the successful completion of any work of art. From the earliest planning stages of this project, I was working towards a plan for exhibition. In addition to the planned show at Knoedler, I would hope to have a subsequent exhibition of drawings and smaller paintings at Lesley Heller Workspace in New York, a gallery where I have exhibited recently. I am also exploring the possibility of publishing a catalog or small monograph in conjunction with one or several of the anticipated exhibitions of work from this project.

Additionally, I am applying for residencies in 2011 at both Yaddo in Saratoga Springs, New York and the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire. Both institutions offer residencies to artists, writers and composers for extended periods of time to pursue their work without distractions. I have been the recipient of five residency fellowship grants at Yaddo, most recently in 2008.

I am considering working on several reduction relief prints in conjunction with the other work I am planning. These would be printed and published by The Grenfell Press in New York. I have been making limited edition prints at Grenfell since 1983. I am planning on proposing an additional printmaking project in lithography to the Tamarind Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Tamarind is an institution founded fifty years

ago in Los Angeles that was largely responsible for reviving the techniques of fine art lithography. It is currently affiliated with the University of New Mexico and it has a active program of publishing editions of prints by artists of national and international stature. I have been invited twice to Tamarind for residencies as a visiting artist and I have published seven editions of color and maniere noir lithographs in collaboration with the Tamrind master printer, Bill Lagatutta.

Conclusion

The opportunity to be in the studio and paint for a full year at this point in my career will have significant benefit in terms of my being able to produce a substantial body of work and also in the subsequent exhibitions and other professional activities that would proceed from this intense period of uninterrupted concentration. The timing of a Fellowship now would coincide with progressions in my work over the past several years during which I have brought together technical and intellectual elements that have been developing over a period of more than forty years into what I consider an articulate and mature style. Evidence of successful research in the Visual Arts is usually manifest in exhibition activity, critical reviews and related professional accomplishments. I feel that the professional activities that will result from a full Fellowship year will have a positive influence on the research climate within the fields of visual and performing arts at Fordham.

Concerning the expected outcomes stated in my abstract it should be noted that I am continuing and expanding on a body of work that I have been working on developing over a period of many years. In addition, I have an ongoing and active exhibition record and my work is included in many collections, both public and private.

There is an bibliography of critical reviews included in my cv. I will be glad to provide digital images in jpg format of recent work on request, either on a disk or electronically.