

Germeister florian baudrexel romare bearden barton lindner janet malcolm wangechi mutu louise nevelson robert
heř wallace berman **the tiny picture show** joe brainard ohnigian john o'reilly howardena pindell javier piñon leon polk
leveland joseph cornell robert courtright rosalynd smith mac premo eric rhein dr franz roh henry rothman anne
ohn evans robert filliou marietta ganapin ilse getz ryan **December 10 – January 23 2016** kurt schwitters joseph
rrett faulkner chambless giobbi max greis al hansen stella maritta tapanainen lenore tawney john torreano jacques
rder marcel jean jess jerry jofen **PAVEL ZOUBOV** @GALLERY villeglé mark wagner tom wesselmann h.c. westermann hannah
kelly jiri kolář alfred leslie lance letscher richard wilke may wilson david wojnarowicz and others arman jean arp

Art in America

NEWS & FEATURES EXHIBITIONS MAGAZINE NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBE



REVIEWS OCT. 13, 2012

Katherine Bradford

NEW YORK,
at Edward Thorp

by Robert Berlind



ADVERTISEMENT

Katherine Bradford's latest paintings (all 2011 or '12) feature ships at sea and Superman aloft. Well, it's a *version* of Superman—not the one in DC Comics or the movies, perhaps, but the trademark "S," those primary colors and his flying about leave no doubt as to who he is. Rendered in loose, blobby shapes, a spiral or zigzag sometimes tracking his path, Bradford's Superman embodies a peculiar idea of flying, as he floats in air tentatively, even vulnerably, and certainly does not proceed "faster than a speeding bullet." The depictions are not cartoony and have none of the attitude or crisp design of Pop art. They evoke childhood without being ingratiating or sentimental. The deliberate naïveté of Bradford's paintings of Superman and of boats suggests not so much a child's notions as an adult's dreamy regressions.

In *Superman Responds, Night*, we look up at the figure, bent forward as though at the high point of a dive, and set against the rubbed, matte darks of an atmospheric sky marked with small bursts of color that we take for stars. A flattened red "Z" at the bottom may signify land or an earlier trajectory of flight. The 4-by-3-foot image is at once offhand and emblematic.

Bradford's way of working is predicated on a trust in possibilities beyond her conscious intentions or formal inclinations, and on a responsiveness to what shows up on the canvas. She builds her paint through funky accretions, scumbling, scraping, wiping down and in some cases layering white over bright colors as though to begin again. The evident revisions of surfaces and formal structures suggest that many of the paintings have been accomplished over long periods



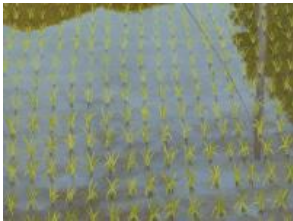
in the studio. I imagine the artist waiting, while working, for the image to assert itself, to dare her to recognize it and then back off.

Sargasso and *Midsummer Night* both evince numerous stages of development and a resulting complexity of texture. They were the richest, most luminous works in the exhibition. *Sargasso* and the other paintings of ships, some seen as if arriving, some in profile as if in transit, have a visionary character. They suggest some mythic backstory recalled from childhood or dreams. The exhilarating payoff of Bradford's cultivated spontaneity can be a distinctive power and beauty. Less successful paintings-I'd nominate *Lady Liberty* and *At Home*-rest too much on narrative particulars, limiting associations.

A group of small gouaches with collaged elements, 15 by 11 inches each, demonstrated the artist's assurance, powers of invention and finely tuned sense of scale. These images show Bradford's edgy exploratory impulse and deep feeling for her subjects in perfect sync.

Photo: Katherine Bradford: Superman Responds, Night, 2011, oil on canvas, 48 by 36 inches; at Edward Thorp.

Related Articles



NEWS

Robert Berling (1938-2015)

by Julia Wolkoff

Painter and longtime Art in America contributor Robert Berling died on December 17, 2015. He was 77. Throughout his 50-year career, Berling produced an expansive body of work, mostly... [READ MORE](#)



PREVIEWS

The Agenda: This Week in New York

by A.I.A. Editors

A.i.a. editors suggest a few of the myriad events taking place in New York this week: the launch of n+1's new issue, devoted to New Age topics; a screening of Todd Solondz's *Welcome to the...* [READ MORE](#)



NEWS

Vincent Fremont Named CEO of ARTnews, Ltd.

by A.I.A. Editors

Vincent Fremont, a cofounder of the Andy Warhol Foundation, has been named CEO of ARTnews Ltd., the parent company of this magazine. "This is an exciting new chapter for me," Fremont said... [READ MORE](#)



MAGAZINE

First Look: Jamian Juliano-Villani

by William S. Smith

Two disembodied cartoon eyes, bloodshot and bulging, float in the center of *Mixed Up Moods* (2014), a characteristically overstuffed painting by Jamian Juliano-Villani. The eyes could have... [READ MORE](#)

Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment.

 Subscribe  Add Disqus to your site Add Disqus Add

 Privacy



Current issue

Pop Manga, Arab Comics, Jack Kirby, Carroll Dunham

SUBSCRIBE

Newsletter

Receive insider information from the art world every week.

SUBSCRIBE