

Leo Kesting Gallery

Brian Leo



Brian Leo is an artist who exhibits clusters of small paintings which address culture, politics and American identity. The cavalcade of tiny images exhibited en masse, show events of deep cultural significance flanked by bizarre meditations on moments of Leo's personal experience.

Each tiny piece, in turn, contradicts itself; episodes rank with chaos and suffering explode off the canvas in bubblegum garage-pop tones. His use of bright colors and whimsical humor provide a flashlight and sense of hope, which makes this often dark content seem less so.

Brian Leo has exhibited in Tokyo, Chicago, Miami, Los Angeles, and galleries throughout N.Y.C. and Brooklyn.

Brian has been written about and received critical acclaim from the July 29th 2007 issue of The New York Times, the Brooklyn Rail Armory Review from April 2006, and in the South Korean National Times August 2008.

Brian holds a B.F.A. from Rutgers/ Mason Gross School of Arts

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April 2006

BROOKLYN RAIL

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ARTS, POLITICS AND CULTURE

All's Fair

by James Kalm

An abbreviated commentary on the Armory Show, SCOPE, the LA Art Fair, PULSE, DIVA and Fountain

Walking the three blocks from the Armory Show to SCOPE, many visitors paused for a gander at the "Fountain" show. Highlights included Tom Broadbent's wacky travel cases, Sean Hemmerle's photos of war-torn Iraq, and Kate Vance's miniature waterways at Front Room. Next door at Capla Kesting, small funky paintings by Brian Leo and a large hanging piece by Anthony Zito caught my eye, as did the collages by Greg Lamarche and the "Goldmine Shit House" boys at McCaig-Welles.



Brian Leo Installation

The New York Times

Summer's Seven-Day Week



Robert Caplin for The New York Times

By [SETH KUGEL](#)

Published: July 29, 2007

The back wall is covered with bright, fancifully wacky paintings by Brian Leo, who calls himself a garage pop surrealist. (If you open the nearly hidden door to the left, you'll find a tiny room filled with even more of his work).



Get 'em Cheap at Fountain Art Fair

Thu Dec 04, 2008 at 11:01:25 AM

Brian Leo said his installation of canvases engulfing an entire wall and choking with a barrage of pop cultural references was "working within the paradigm of contradiction" and inspired by "9/11, cloning, Bird Flu, Hurricane Katrina and distractions of masturbation."

Leo's 350 canvases on display were drenched in toxic neon colors and ranged from \$150 to \$5,000 in price.

-- Carlos Saurez De Jesus
Category: **Art Basel**

Art Comments

Tuesday, December 09, 2008

Fountain Art Fair - Miami Art Basel 2008

Fountain Art Fair
by Don Porcella

Brian Leo, an artist in the Fountain Art Fair originally from New Jersey blew me away!!!! I love the way that color unifies his art so that he has more variety and flexibility with what he decides to paint. What I like most about Brian's art is the creativity he shows in every piece. No two paintings are exactly alike but collectively they represent only the tip of Brian's creative genius. I love a lot of the individual paintings and the majority of them seem to be on canvas. He had a buzz about his installation. The artist, Brian Leo, in front of skeleton transformer? (I think that's what he called it). He has great reasons for making each painting and each idea is creative, different and fresh





Fountain Art Fair

Thursday February 22 2007

Marcel Duchamp's upturned urinal [Fountain](#) serves as the namesake for this alternative art fair set up across the Westside Highway and just south of the [Armory Show](#). A majority of the galleries hail from Brooklyn and share a preference for an informal style that thumbs its nose at the moneyed Chelsea scene. The Yum Yum Factory, a secretive group organized by [Greg Haberny](#), presents an ironic, slapdash installation incorporating a collage of pop-culture objects; [Steven Gagnon](#), a self-representing artist, presents a new video of his conversations with cabbies, inside an actual taxi; and [Capla Kesting](#)'s Brian Leo shows a small, deliberately messy painting of Kim Jong-il kissing what appear to be Angelina Jolie's lips. (HGM)

ARTslant

Leo Kesting Gallery Presents:
Brian Leo - Truck Bomb -
Dam Stuhltrager - Mark Andreas
April 10 - 27, 2008
Opening Reception: Thur April 10, 7-10 pm
812 Washington St (at Gansevoort) NY, NY 10014

After Party at Level V : hosted by Adele Balderston

In this latest collection of works titled Truck Bomb, Brian Leo completes his series of paintings revolving around the morbid, yet feasible prediction of President Bush declaring Martial Law to postpone the elections of 2008 with a pseudo-terrorist attack.

Truck Bomb, a formation of canvases stretching over 12 feet tall to create the recognizable icon of Optimus Prime a nostalgic child hold toy from the Transformers, which symbolizes innocence for those of the artist's generation. "The selection of Optimus Prime, a character designed in Japan and manufactured in China, speaks of the art world's current bandwagon perspective of Art from Asia. It parallels strong international criticism of China with its exports of toxic materials discovered in food, toys, electronics and its political thought towards Tibet and religious persecution," explains the artist Brian Leo.

Often working within a dialog of contradiction, Brian Leo, a 31 year old artist and first generation American of Korean and Italian descent says, "Optimus has a strong sense of justice and righteousness, and has dedicated himself to the protection of all life, particularly the inhabitants of the U.S.A.; he will battle his foes with unyielding resolve to uphold this belief. However the irony of this character comes from the slave shops he is manufactured in and the direct opposition his morals entail towards the oppressive government in which he was born."

Along with this centerpiece, the artist will also exhibit clusters of small paintings which address culture, politics and American identity. The cavalcade of tiny images exhibited en masse, show events of deep cultural significance flanked by bizarre meditations on moments of Leo's personal experience. Each tiny piece, in turn, contradicts itself; episodes rank with chaos and suffering explode off the canvas in bubblegum garage-pop tones. His use of bright colors and whimsical humor provide a flashlight and sense of hope, which makes this often dark content seem less so.

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Thursday, August 7, 2008

작품 저변엔 언제나 한인 자부심

전시작품 100여점 매진 한국계 화가 브라이언 리오 씨



한국계 혼혈인 신진 미술가 브라이언 리오씨가 맨하탄 소호의 스튜디오에서 자신의 작품들을 소개하고 있다.

“제 작품들이 뉴욕시에서 소수계로 사는 한인들에게 작은 힘이 됐으면 좋겠습니다.”

지난 6월 맨하탄 소호에서 열렸던 한 젊은 화가의 전시회에는 전시작품 100여점이 모두 팔려나갔다. 화제의 주인공은 한국계 화가 브라이언 리오(32)씨.

한인 이효선씨와 이탈리아인 세르지오 리오씨 사이에서 태어난 한

국계 혼혈인인 리오씨는 1999년 뉴저지 럿거스 대학을 졸업했고 주로 사회성 있는 작품들을 많이 그려왔다. 지금은 그의 그림에 열광하는 팬들도 늘어나 7월에는 후원가의 도움으로 맨하탄 소호에 자신의 이름을 딴 ‘리오 캐스팅(Leo Kesting)’이란 갤러리까지 열게 됐다.

사회성 있는 그림을 그리게 된

것은 조류독감이 한창유행인 5년 전 자신의 뿌리를 찾아 고국을 처음 방문했던 것이 계기가 됐다.

리오씨는 “아시아에서 시작된 조류독감으로 당시 서양인들 사이에서는 동양인에 대한 배타성이 도를 넘어 인종차별로 치달고 있었다”며 “비행기 안에서 몇몇 백인은 아시아인 외모를 지닌 나를 피하고 심지어는 인종차별적 발언도 서슴지 않

았다”고 밝혔다.

그날 생전 처음으로 인종차별을 경험한 리오는 인종차별을 주제로 하는 그림을 그리기 시작했고 꾸준한 작품 활동과 전시회를 통해 ‘조류 독감’, ‘9·11테러’, 미국 영화 배우들의 인종차별적 발언을 주제로 한 ‘스타들의 죽음’ 등 미국 사회의 인종차별과 문화적 배타주의를 꼬집는 내용의 그림을 선보여 뉴욕 화단의 관심을 받았다. 뉴욕 타임스 2007년 7월29일자 문화면과 브루클린 레이(Brooklyn Rai) 및 여러 지역신문들이 그의 작품을 호평했다.

그는 “나의 그림은 한국과 미국에 살면서 행복한 일, 슬픈 일 등, 한국을 보는 자신의 시각, 혹은 자기 자신을 보는 시각의 고통스러운 변화 과정을 형상화한 것이지만 그 모든 아픔과 고뇌의 저변에는 코리아나 아메리칸이라는 자부심이 자리하고 있다”고 힘주어 말했다.

이어 “한국인과 미국인의 중간에 놓인 것 같아 늘 정체성을 고민하게 되지만 이민사회에서 곳곳이 생활하는 한인들을 볼 때면 언제나 자랑스럽고 뭔가 도움이 되는 일을 하고 싶다”며 한인사회에 대한 관심을 밝혔다. 리오씨의 그림은 인터넷 웹사이트(www.brianleo.com)을 통해서도 감상할 수 있다.

<구재관 기자>