

## Bradley Wood and John Holland at Angell Gallery

In the first exhibition after his residency in Ireland, Bradley Wood continues to explore ideas of wealth and abundance in his large scale, vibrant paintings. The works are captivating; dramatic brush strokes are not shy of bright colours, fantastical imagery and bold scenery. All of Wood's paintings exude a similar feeling of luxury, where his subjects lounge in elaborate environments composed of rich colour, texture and imagery.



Bradley Wood, *The Gardens*, 2018, oil on canvas, 89" x 65"

In the exhibition, titled *The Spoils*, it is apparent that Wood has ambivalent feelings about the grandiose environments he creates. In *The Gardens*, many exotic birds perch in a bright green room, while in *Wisteria Manor*, the extensive use of embellishments and dramatic lighting goes over the top. People always wish for abundance, but Wood poses the question if is there such thing as too much. However, as a viewer, one does not complain as the plenitude of animals, patterns, colour, furniture and more, allow the artist to demonstrate his talent many times over.



Bradley Wood, *Wisteria Manor*, 2018, oil on canvas, 84" x 65"

Littered in Wood's paintings are lounging, *blasé* figures. Their elongated limbs accentuate their leisure, while their plain facial expressions suggest an indifference to the grandeur around them. The facial expression found on Wood's figures can be compared to the "public, outward, blasé," found in Edouard Manet's 1882, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergere*. Identified by British Art Historian and writer, T.J. Clark, similar expressions of boredom and indifference were explored in various art forms at the turn of modernity, when ideas such as mass consumerism began. The *blasé* attitude seems appropriate for Wood's subjects who are underwhelmed by affluence.



Bradley Wood, St. Tropez, 2018, oil on canvas, 66" x 110"

Wood's attention to social environment could be easily related to important 20th Century German Expressionists like Ludwig Kirschner and George Grosz who depicted the social milieu of their time. Wood, however, doesn't openly criticize the lifestyle of his models but focuses more on the use of colour and form in order to create beautiful paintings, inviting the viewers to immerse themselves in.



John Holland, *Vivid Warm*, 2018, acrylic and Plexiglass on panel, 24 " x 24"

John Holland's exhibition, *The Mirror of the Machine* is on view in Angell Gallery's project space. Holland obscures images of individuals by placing the photographs between wet paint and Plexiglass, to explore the construction of online identities. In this show, Holland uses physical layers (paint and plexi) as an analogy for the fabrication of digital personas. Holland uses his materials in a similar way as online users filter their presence, commenting on another kind of social environment.

Carolyn Peralta

Images are courtesy of Angell Gallery.

\*Exhibition information: March 2 – 31, 2018, Angell Gallery, 1444 Dupont St., Unit 15, Toronto.  
Gallery hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 12 – 5 pm.