



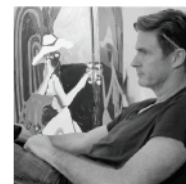
Montcalm, 2017, 36" x 36"  
Oil on canvas

EMBOSS MAGAZINE ISSUE N°9 THE BODY

# Bradley Wood

"Bradley Wood's bold figurative paintings proffer tantalizing mysteries and provoke reflection on the times we live in. Enigmatic individuals lounge languidly amidst highly decorative surroundings in these "domestic fictions" examining the human condition. The subject matter stems from Wood's sub-conscious memories of San Francisco during the height of the dot.com era and subsequent crash; living in New York pre- and post-recession; and now living in the Trump era.

Wood is drawn to the whimsy and absurdity of opulence in the present day, and how that can be illustrated through thick, rich, luscious oils, and a painterliness that hovers between form and disintegration. While his paint application is quite different, Wood arrived at this idea through his interest in 18th-century Rococo artists, such as Fragonard. Wood also peppers his paintings with dashes of early Modernist references – the richly patterned interiors of Matisse, a Fauvist colour palette, and the swirling brushwork of Chaim Soutine. Yet, his cast of characters is soundly rooted in contemporary life."



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ISSUE N°9: THE BODY EMBOSS MAGAZINE



**Biography:** Born in Regina, Canada, Bradley holds a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. He studied art and design at Art Center, Switzerland and Installation at CalArts in California. In 2016, Bradley had his second successful solo show with Angell Gallery, Toronto. That same year, his work was featured in "Human Condition", an acclaimed site-specific exhibition in an abandoned hospital in LA. In addition to solo presentations, he was a Pulse Prize Nominee at Pulse Art in NYC and Miami. In 2017, Bradley was awarded the Moth Art prize, had solos at VOLTA, NY, and Art Central, Hong Kong.

*How did you get your start as a creative artist?*

Growing up in remote towns in Canada, I really didn't have exposure to art – especially not as a potential career. In my teens I discovered Graphic Design and ended up studying in Switzerland, which literally opened my world and exposed me to other forms of creative expression. I worked as a Graphic Designer for a while, but soon after, I ended up exploring who I was as an artist – studying Installation Art at CalArts, then later painting at RISD. I totally fell in love with oils there, and really learned how to embrace my style. I was never really the creative that could produce things flawlessly. But the moment I began to really embrace all the imperfections, that's when things started to happen for me. The first gallery that took notice and gave me a start as a professional painter was Parts Gallery in Toronto. I will be forever grateful.

*What attracts you to themes surrounding the body and figural representation?*

Body language in my work is a big part of the narrative, really communicating the dynamic going on in the painting.

*How does the way you depict the body speak to broader themes within your work?*

A lot of times, in multi-figured scenes, while the people are together, they are not really engaged with one another, rather they are in their own world. You can be with people and really not be emotionally connected, whether that's in a room or on social media.

*How has your work affected the way you see your own body? Or inversely, how has your body image/self-perception informed your work?*

It's likely not a coincidence that as I get older, my figures tend to be sunk deeper in their chairs.

*What attracts you to your medium/media?*

It's just very pleasurable and sensual for me to apply luscious, buttery oils on a canvas. I like that the thick paint can be used to communicate the attraction of wealth and luxury but also repulsion of its excess.

While I always have an idea of what I'm trying to create, every painting is filled with surprises

and discovery – of colour, in the brush stroke, in the dynamics within the setting. That's the most enjoyable part of the process for me.

*What inspires and motivates you as an artist? Do other artists influence your work?*

It's a mixture, really. A dash of competitiveness, simmered with a generous helping of anxiety and a sprinkling of ambition on top.

Boredom can also lead to inspiration. It can fuel creativity. I learned that early on in my life as an only child latch-key kid.

As for the actual work, I draw inspiration from many places – real life, film, interior design, fashion, even what's happening in the news. As for painters who inspire me, I always come back to Pierre Bonnard or Mamma Anderson.

*What is the best part about being an artist?*

The huge privilege of being able to work on a project I'm passionate about all day long in the solitude of my studio.



Abington Park, 2017, 48" x 35". Oil on linen.

*Did you do any research prior to creating this series?*

I compile a ton of references, which I'll print out in black and white or just look over at on the laptop from across the room. It's much like the process of a filmmaker assembling his stories. I try to distance myself from the reference so it becomes more about what happens with the paint and not a literal interpretation. I really enjoy that time before I even pick up a paintbrush, when I'm composing a series of narratives, and contemplating what could be happening before and after each scene.

*Where do you create your work?*

I've moved in and out of a lot studios in New York City, Brooklyn and Queens. Now I'm about an hour north in an old warehouse studio in Portchester, NY. I wasn't sure how I would feel about being so far from the city at first, but I've come to really appreciate it – there's more space and light and it's just calmer here.

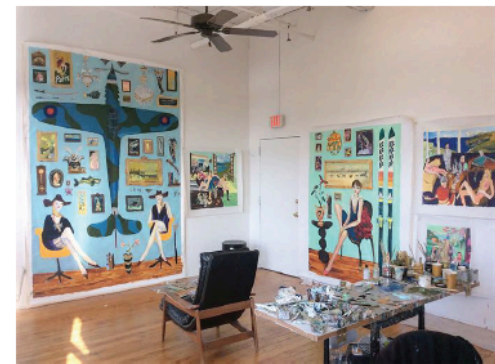
This whole area where I live actually had a huge effect on my work – especially coming from artists' communities in the city. It was a completely different crowd, filled with bankers, CEOs, lawyers and diplomats. It was a bit like living in a modern day F. Scott Fitzgerald story, as I started making my work imagining what these people were up to in their big homes.

*Are you involved in any upcoming events/shows?*

Angell Gallery will also be exhibiting some other new pieces of mine at Art Toronto, alongside work from a fantastic group of artists I really admire. Nov. 27-30. I am also starting to work on a solo show for March 2018 at the gallery. (AngellGallery.com)

*What song is your current obsession or what music do you listen to when you're creating your art?*

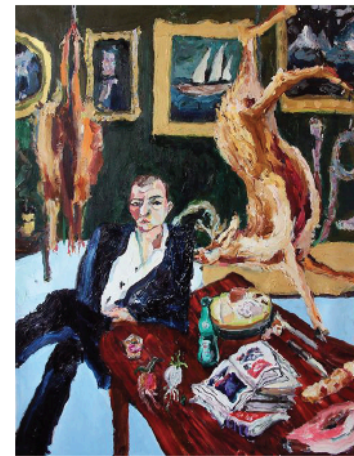
I usually listen to music while I'm working, but I'm actually a bit obsessed with silence right now. I'm at a retreat in the Irish countryside as a part of the Moth Art Prize, and I'm loving the solitude. Though, I quickly discovered it's never truly silent. Various different local birds, chickens, dogs, the rain on the roof, the wind in the trees and cows all chime in. At times I have imagined it all as a symphony.



Usually, I listen to Glen Gould in the morning. Puts my head into the right frame of mind. Afternoons I need to change it up and keep things interesting with Pedro's Broadcasting Basement. (laurentgamier.com/PBB.html)

*Do you have a favourite quote?*

"Never ruin a good painting with the truth."  
—Henri Matisse



Ludo's Table, 2017, 60"x48". Oil on canvas.



Manafatu, 2017, 60"x48". Oil on canvas.





West Egg, 2014, 62"x45", Oil on canvas.  
Imagined scene of what my wealthy neighbours are up to.