

John Bauer BSOD

Conversation with Stephen W. Childs Part Two

Moto Okawa, November 20, 2015



The mixture of traditional painting and printing techniques John Bauer employs results in an illusionary painterly surface that engages viewers with its forms and keeps them guessing as to their origin. In this second portion of the conversation between the Los Angeles artists and Azusa Pacific University gallery director Stephen W. Childs, Bauer discusses his process of mark makings as well as what those marks ultimately mean to the willing viewers.

Stephen W. Childs: Describe your use, or lack-there-of, of mark making.

John Bauer: I love Abstract Expressionist painting. There is something very powerful about the direct human gesture or mark. However, the meaning of that type of gesture are bankrupt. I'm indebted to the direct gesture, but also a prisoner of our time and history, which is one of mediation, Photoshop and other technological advances across all disciplines. I do paint directly on the canvas with brushes, rollers and knives, but most of the marks and images are screenprinted.

Moto Okawa: I can feel the dynamic and gestural movement in your marks, whether painted or printed. How important is the rhythm in your work?

JB: I would say rhythm is important. The composition has to be anchored to something. A

lot of times I use an X or these overlapping grids that the gestures interrupt. [Jackson] Pollock has rhythm, Brice Marden...

MO: Standing inside the gallery and surrounded by your paintings, my mind is transported into a meditative state. Is there such an intent on your part?

JB: My intent is to engage the viewer. Whether it's conceptually or visually or some combination, I feel that the paintings are generous if you're looking. That might be challenging or thought provoking. I don't think of my work as meditative, because I'm not that type of person. I have some room to grow. But I'm not going to take that experience away from you.

SC: I would add that standing inside the gallery I feel as if I'm submerged under ocean water. How intentional is that, especially with one of the paintings titled "Surf Combat?"

JB: Well, surfing is a big influence on my life. It's all I did as a teenager. I worked for a shop, had Rusty shaping boards for me that I would hand paint. The ocean is a living thing and anyone who spends time in and around it knows what I mean. Growing up with this constant influence definitely has an impact. Plus I've been thinking more of fluidity in relationship to paint. Using more transparent fluid color.

MO: What are you working on now?

JB: My house. I'm re-plastering it. It's a ton of work. But seriously, there's a print project in the works with a publisher named *Twyla* that will debut in Miami during *Basel*. I'm experimenting with some new paintings where I'm trying to add more color, but I'm not sure how or where it's heading. I might not achieve what I'm going after, so maybe I'll go back to black and silver, or blue...

John Bauer's *BSOD* was on view at Duke Gallery in Azusa Pacific University.

REF: <http://www.betterlucktomorrow.gallery/conversation-with-john-bauer-and-stephen-w-childs-part-two/>