

REVIEWS

Joe Bradley

Le Consortium / Dijon

With consecutive hits at New York's spring auctions and an exhibition at Le Consortium in Dijon, Joe Bradley has flattened the cultural discontinuities between the financial cluster and one of *Condé Nast Traveler's* top French countryside destinations. The show, curated by Éric Troncy, encompasses almost a decade of Joe Bradley's work, from his first "modular" constructions that he started in 2006 to his latest spasmodic compositions he labels as "cave paintings." Contrary to some other artists whose evolution seems to follow a linear and transparent scenario, Joe Bradley has constructed his career on versatile grounds, oscillating between canonical forms rooted in minimal art, neglected pop iconographies and proto-urban lexicons. The show is introduced with a large corpus of small drawings that suggest primitive representations of human bodies.

Drawn directly on post-its, cardboard and other found materials, their anti-academic formalism responds to the "Schmagoo Paintings," a series named in reference to the 1950s slang term for heroin. Realized on untreated canvases, their surfaces are saturated with mainstream peripheral symbolism inspired by toilets drawings, Tuli Kupferberg's DIY cartoons and LA lowbrow visual culture. This revival of US disowned cultural typologies is re-emphasized throughout the "cave painting" series. Wrinkled fabrics are patched together and saturated with slabs of vivid colors, compulsive gestures and cracks. Yet the lubricious references that pop out of their compositions create a distance from a purely expressionist orthodoxy. Instead, low-grade evocations of diner food or sex ground this series within a regressive rhetoric. This anti-puritan agenda is also pursued by the "modular painting" series. Akin to David Novros or the minimalist compositions of Louis Cane, Joe Bradley has realized pixelated humanoids through the arrangement of large pantone-like monochromes. Ultimately his work explores a distant horizon elaborated on gestural dramaturgy, deteriorated parking, duty-free lingerie and something that looks like an oxidized ashtray.

by Charles Teyssou



Joe Bradley
Installation view at Le Consortium, Dijon (2014)
Courtesy of the Artist and Le Consortium, Dijon
Photography by André Morin