

BO BARTLETT



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May 14th – June 19th, 2021

WEBER FINE ART



Bo Bartlett
The Age of Discovery, 2020



INTRODUCTION

by Matthew Jeffery Abrams

There is, one could say, a modern tradition of Southern absurdity. Bo Bartlett knows this. He paints strange, beautiful, disquieting scenes. Visions, really. They are delicate and austere. They are also humorous and bizarre. And nearly all of his new works seem to inhabit a shared world: a sort of nameless, indistinguishable, dreamscape America. The vibe is old-timey, innocent, and small-town.

You can see his Georgian roots in the faces that he paints, always so dignified and upright, and in the rich and luminous colors that seem to depict sky. In many works, we confront a person or persons who are staring right back at us. Like actors soliloquizing, these figures seem very much to desire an audience, and to address it directly. Bartlett's works possess a unique sense of Southern theater.

Matthew Jeffery Abrams, "Bo Bartlett: A Magnolia Melancholy," in *Bo Bartlett*, exhibition catalogue (New York: Miles McEnery Gallery, 2021) 3.

THE MIDWAY

Midway along this tether we stop to wave, hesitantly. Balance is precarious. The bicyclist must keep moving forward to stay upright. Our wheels move only along old ruts. The tightrope walker gestures like the Hoppers taking a bow. We are entertainers, the clowns and I, fools in a sideshow. Above the Chattahoochee Valley Fair, the Million Dollar Midway, above the jugglers, the carney rides and barkers, the protagonist finds a middle way. Finds his balance and transcends.

– Bo Bartlett

The Midway, 2020
Oil on panel
48 × 60 inches
121.9 × 152.4 cm
Signed, titled, and dated: "Bo, The Midway, I G N, 2020" (verso)



THE FITTING

"Isn't it fitting that you'd be in your mother's dress. Tighter around your belly because of the life that swirls inside you, standing patiently as Aggie adjusts your hem. The wall behind you... angel wings. Southern light eight minutes from the sun streaking across Alabama through red clay haze, through the slit in the curtain, falling on the floor. Forever on the threshold."

– Bo Bartlett

The Fitting, 2021
Oil on panel
32 × 43 1/8 inches
81.3 × 109.5 cm
Signed: "Bo" (verso)



FAIRGROUND

Above the fairground a barker leaves his post. A silent escape.
The wisteria grows along the River. The dove coos. The future
is as uncertain as the past.

– Bo Bartlett

Fairground, 2020
Oil on panel
48 × 66 inches
121.9 × 167.6 cm
Signed and dated: "Bo, 2020, I G N, Bartlett" (verso)



STUDY FOR THE THIN VEIL

The Thin Veil is a charming group portrait of four young adults. Their eyes are closed, and yet all of them insistently address the viewer. We meet their false gazes with our own, and we are left to wonder: What's behind this hypnosis? Who are these young people—banded together and yet so alone? Why the collective slumber, and why those strange foil caps?

– Matthew Jeffery Abrams

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Study for The Thin Veil, 2020
Oil on hot press arches paper over panel
23 3/4 × 35 3/4 inches
60.3 × 90.8 cm
Signed: "Bo I G N" (verso)



WOUNDED HEALER

Wounded Healer, 2014
Oil on panel
30 × 30 inches
76.2 × 76.2 cm



THE ISOLATIONIST

The Isolationist, 2016
Oil on panel
18 × 18 inches
45.7 × 45.7 cm
Signed, dated and titled: "Bo Bartlett, The Isolationist", 2016 (verso)



LOVE IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

Love In The Time Of Pandemic, 2020
Oil on panel
24 × 32 inches
60.96 × 81.28 cm
Signed and dated: "Bo, I G N, 2020" (verso)



DEUX EX MACHINA

Unexpectedly, the plot suddenly turns, all is resolved, and magically, we have a happy ending. "God in the Machine". Our chariot awaits.

– Bo Bartlett

Deux Ex Machina, 2020
Oil on panel
24 × 48 inches
60.96 × 121.92 cm
Signed and dated: "Bo 2020 I G N" (verso)



THE AGE OF DISCOVERY

Crystalline, a zeppelin floats above the clouds. Large and weightless. A journey beyond the known. A whale, a silver bullet, a thought, a blimp, precarious and uncertain. Surely we can guide this airship to its undetermined port.

– Bo Bartlett

The Age of Discovery, 2020
Oil on linen
41 1/8 × 66 inches
122.2 × 167.6 cm
Signed: "Bo BO I G N" (verso)



MIRIAM ON THE DAM

There is a moment—you know it when it happens—a numinous now, unfolding before us. We don't slow down to feel it. We're in our heads or on our phones. But, Miriam has it, she's got it, tapped in and channeling. The words flow in rhythm like the river unceasingly. Amongst the reeds the baby floats. All god's children. Draw out the child.

– Bo Bartlett

Miriam on the Dam, 2021
Oil on panel
24 × 48 1/8 inches
61 × 122.2 cm



EVERYBODY IS ALWAYS EVERYWHERE

Eliot whispers in my ear, "Don't you get it Dad. I'm right here. Everybody is always everywhere." We can't grok it. The thin veil. All time is right here. Everything is happening everywhere at once. Me. You. Everybody. Miriam walks along the road in real time.

– Bo Bartlett

Everybody is Always Everywhere, 2019
Oil on panel
31 7/8 × 44 1/4 inches
81 × 112.4 cm
Signed and titled: "Bo, Everybody is Always Everywhere I G N" (verso)



MELISSA SAINT-AMAND AS NINA GRACE

Our heroine pauses. The action swirls around her. A moment of stillness between now and tomorrow.

– Bo Bartlett

Melissa Saint-Amand as Nina Grace, 2021
Oil on panel
17 7/8 × 24 inches
45.4 × 61 cm



SARAH

Sarah, 2019
Oil on panel
23 × 23 inches
58.4 × 58.4 cm



BLUE

Blue, 2015
Oil on panel
24 × 24 inches
61 × 61 cm



PORTRAIT OF TONY

Portrait of Tony, 2020
Oil on panel
24 × 24 × 3 inches
61 × 61 × 7.6 cm



JEREMY

Jeremy, 2017
Oil on panel
22 × 22 inches
55.9 × 55.9 cm



CUCKOLD

Cuckold, 2016
Oil on panel
24 × 36 inches
61 × 91.4 cm
Signed, dated and titled: "Bo, 2016 Cuckold" (verso)



MELISSA FLOATING

Things don't stay fixed. We've gotta keep coming back to 'em. Nothing is settled. The second law of thermodynamics. Gravity. The cycle of birth, life, death, resurrection, ad infinitum. In dreams we float and become lucid. A trillion multiverses. She's not falling, she's flying.

– Bo Bartlett

Melissa Floating, 2019
Oil on linen on aluminum panel
16 1/2 × 20 5/8 inches
41.9 × 52.4 cm
Signed, stamped, dated and titled: "Melissa (Study for T D S F), Bo, 2019" (verso)



LIGHT MAN

Butch Anthony is an outsider artist from Seale Alabama. He made a spotlight and shined it in a field. "It don't signify nothin'... just shinin' for its own self." We are all tasked with our tasks, designated or self-imposed. Our little lights.. burdens or portals.

– Bo Bartlett

Light Man, 2020
Oil on panel
24 × 35 ¾ inches
61 × 90.8 cm
Signed: "Bo" (verso)



CROWD SCENE

A crowd has gathered on the edge of a dam to watch the action unfold. Folks of different ages, genders and races have gathered and are being held back by a police line. We, the viewers, are on the other side of the caution tape, which puts us directly in the scene and places us where the action is. The characters in the scene are experiencing something we may sometimes experience ourselves; they are in suspense over the latest drama that is unfolding, hoping for the best.

The central figure is the protagonist of the scene, a young woman in a floral patterned dress. She is lit with emotion, glowing in the late afternoon sunlight. There is an echo of the crowd in the James Ensor painting *Christ's Entry into Brussels* (1888). There is also an echo of the Sidney Goodman painting *Crowd Scene* (1977-79), which shows a crowd looking away from the viewer and observing something not shown. Here, the telephone poles suggest crucifixes, raising the question, "What is the crowd witnessing?"

– Bo Bartlett

Crowd Scene, 2020
Oil on linen
30 1/8 x 40 1/8 inches
76.5 x 101.9 cm
Signed and dated: "Bo, BARTLETT, I G N, 2020" (verso)

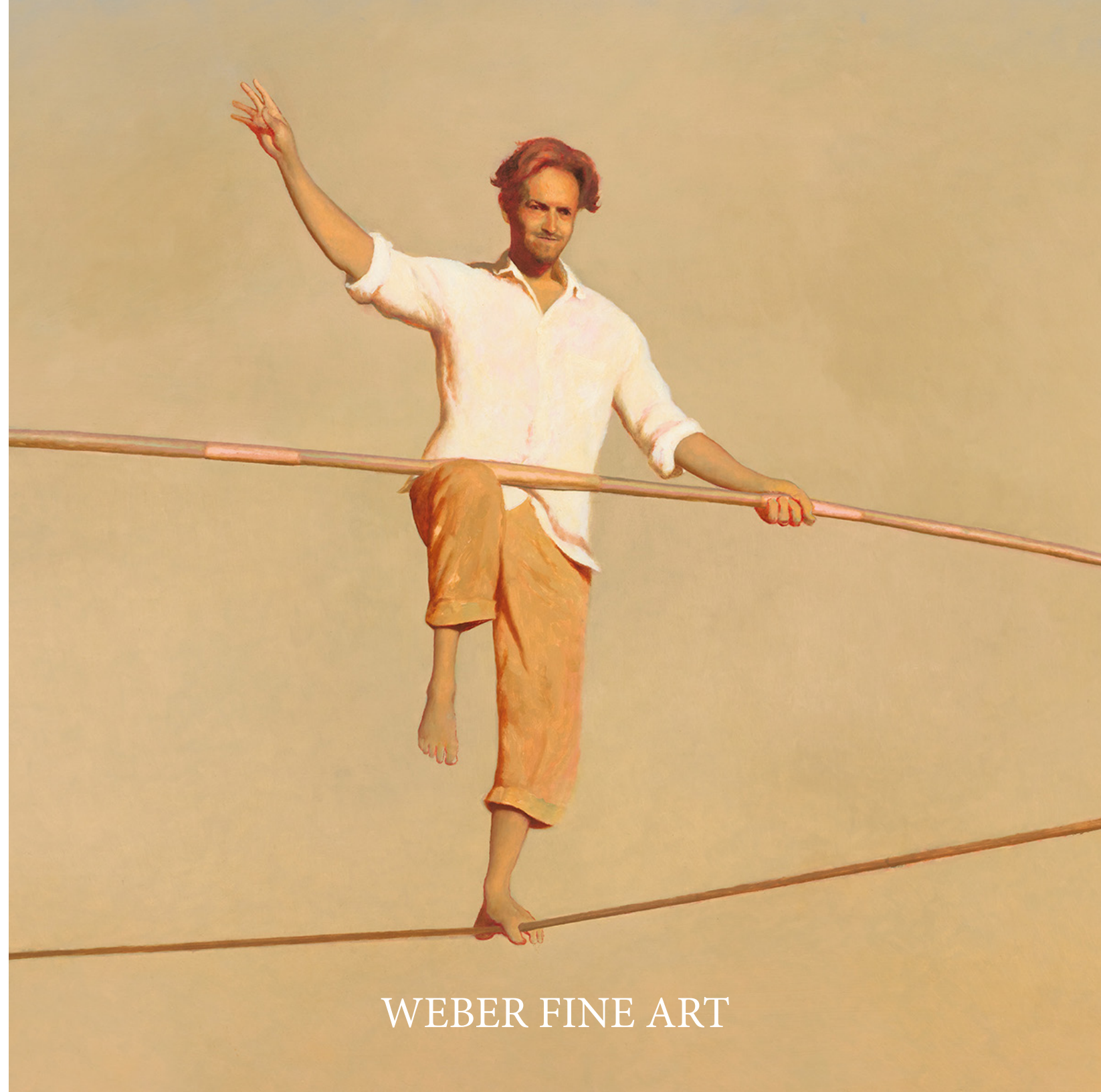


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