

J P E O P L E

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A FANTASTICAL JOURNEY THROUGH UTOPIAN AMERICA



Jamie Treadwell in his studio

Jamie Treadwell

Based in Philadelphia (and the coast of Maine during the summer) painter Jamie Treadwell's work gives the impression of gypsy-like carnival communities isolated from others, prepared to travel, re-settle, and re-create their own versions of utopia. Taking inspiration from the culture of rural America, various time periods, and fantasy art, his work is dressed in vivid colours that challenge perception and blur the lines of reality. An ice hockey player during college, Jamie found himself living two different lives but was ultimately drawn to the arts.

JT: I live in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. I was raised in the suburbs outside the city and went to graduate school in Philly; it made sense to stay there. I enjoy the urban lifestyle, the active art scene, the proximity to NYC which is only a two hour trip, and it is a great place to work and live at a reasonable cost.

I was always interested in art. From an early age I had a knack for drawing. I could copy anything. I loved drawing, and I started to take it seriously at an early age... to the point that I set up an Art Sale on my front lawn... I made 4 dollars. Regardless of my low profit margin, I knew I was going to be an artist.

Painting on wood panels hung vertically along a wall so he can lean his body weight against the surface to stabilize his hand, and utilizing rulers and T-squares to assist with straight edges and measuring distance, Jamie can make highly detailed work.

JT: I hang a variety of visuals (mostly print-outs) around the painting I am working on. Some images indirectly influence the painting, whereas other images are purposefully used. Through trial and error the painting eventually comes together somewhat like the methods of collage. I like to think of the finished painting as a well-oiled working machine where every part fits just right. It takes a lot of tinkering to get there, but I think it is worth it in the end.

At the moment I am working on smaller scale paintings so that I can quickly plow through ideas. I recently began painting these quintessential snow covered mountain landscapes. Within the

landscapes are intensely colored decorated geometrical forms that could possibly be used for habitat and/or transportation. I am also working on a large painting which I started two years ago. Somehow it has evolved into a colossal layered wedding-like cake with stripes of bright colors and tacky murals that inhabit people or an entire community. I am not completely sure where it will end up, although I love the uncertainty. I think I am obsessed with this idea of isolated communal living.

Large paintings are a time commitment, and can paralyze ideas. Working small helps to experiment and grow without worry. I work very fast in the beginning where I rough out subject matter from sketches I made previously.

A keen experimenter with subject matter Jamie's work often plays with strong cultural associations to challenge the viewers perceptions.

JT: I realize most of my paintings are loaded with imagery, but I feel the need to add more things and relationships to my paintings. I find it important to sometimes work out of my comfort zone every so often to keep things fresh and exciting. Take the landscape for example. The landscape is used in various genres of art: traditional landscape art, wildlife art, fantasy art, airbrush art. Each genre can be associated with various cultures, classes, income, etc. Will a viewer dismiss the subject matter or love it for all the right and wrong reasons? Landscape art is just another element I am experimenting with, and another relationship to the many that already exist in each painting,

probably to the point of overstimulation. I just finished a painting where I used a peaceful, serene sunset. If it was just a sunset, it wouldn't work for me, however, there is something embarrassingly beautiful about all forms of sunset art. For me, the subject matter I choose is a love / hate relationship.

Inspired by odd constructions ordinary people make for utilitarian purposes, temporary living structures such as mobile homes, caravans and RV's Jamie is interested in the internal American drive of what represents freedom.

JT: I feel that we as Americans identify freedom with travel. I believe that the American culture has deep gypsy roots or identifies with the gypsy philosophy of travel and movement at free will. I am intrigued by my social surroundings ranging from small neighborhood cultural identities to grander differences among rural, urban, and suburban life. I really like to combine unrelated imagery, patterns, and color that appear to live in a world of harmony. Usually, vivid cheerful colors masquerade or obscure the realities within my paintings.

Often spending weeks or months adding, editing, and experimenting with the painting until the concept feels right Jamie then slows the process down and laboriously finishes the painting to a high detailed resolution.

JT: My initial approach to painting reminds me of an old television program Who's Line is it Anyway? where the host asks the audience to help create a scenario incorporating several non-related elements.

For example a recent skit I watched incorporates superheroes, fruits and vegetables, and a frizzy hair crisis. The actors are then supposed to work with these suggestions and instantly create a comedy sketch. What I love about this show is the energy and freedom from improvising, pure reaction, and quick wit. I try to create this same atmosphere in the studio, it helps me to keep things fresh and the paintings begin to evolve in directions I have not yet ventured. I suppose it could be similar to traveling without a destination. When I begin a painting I usually try to create a strange situation. For example, in a recent painting titled This Place Does Not Exist I began with a camper lodged in a tree made of color planks which appears to be growing out of another camper. Where it goes from there I am not sure. I view my paintings as a sculpture assemblage of found objects (this may be why I am a fan of Marcel Duchamp). I often think of myself documenting sculptures made from an eccentric kooky hermit living deep in the woods. Funny thing is that I look at my paintings as sculptures. At times I ask myself: "Why not make these as colossal sculptures." Maybe someday I will - I love sculpture.

What would you like to do that you are not doing at the moment?

Time travel.

What stops you from doing it?

Lack of Technology.

What is beautiful?

I think that artists are trained to look at the unbeautiful and see it as form, shape and color which eventually becomes beautiful. That being said I find beautiful elements all over. On the other side of the coin you can't go wrong with clouds. Dramatic dark thunderous clouds are the most beautiful thing to me.

What is ugly?

Plastic awnings, aluminum siding. Doilies, knick knacks, oversized eyeglasses... however, I sometimes like them on certain people like Sally Jesse Raphael and certain dictators.

Describe your typical day.

Wake up early, 6 or 7 am. Coffee, jog, breakfast, emails, paint, lunch, paint, emails, paint, dinner, tv, sleep.

Describe a perfect moment?

The moment after a shower.

What was the best thing you ever did?

School.

What do you like to

spend money on?

Traveling.

You could live without?

Complaining.

You have to have?

Financial security, I'm not the romantic bohemian artist.

What kind of people do you find interesting?

Children's objective viewpoints. Anyone with a wide variety of interests.

What are you wearing right now?

Brown shorts and a gray tee-shirt.

Imagine a day in the mind of someone else. Who would you be?

I always thought it to be interesting if I could live one day as my cat: Prettykitty. What goes on in her head? How does she make decisions? What is a priority to her and what is not important? These things perplex me.

Any special events you are going to show up during the next couple a months?

Nothing major... some summer travel and studio time.

Five albums you love

Devotchka "How It Ends"
Fleetwood Mac
New order "Movement"
Two Door Cinema Club
Passion Pit

Four books / zines you like?

Frieze
Elephant Magazine
Beautiful Decay Magazine

High Fructose Magazine

Three websites you have bookmarked:

www.heatheramsdale.com / www.ryanbrowning.com / www.olafbreuning.tumblr.com

Two movies that impress you?

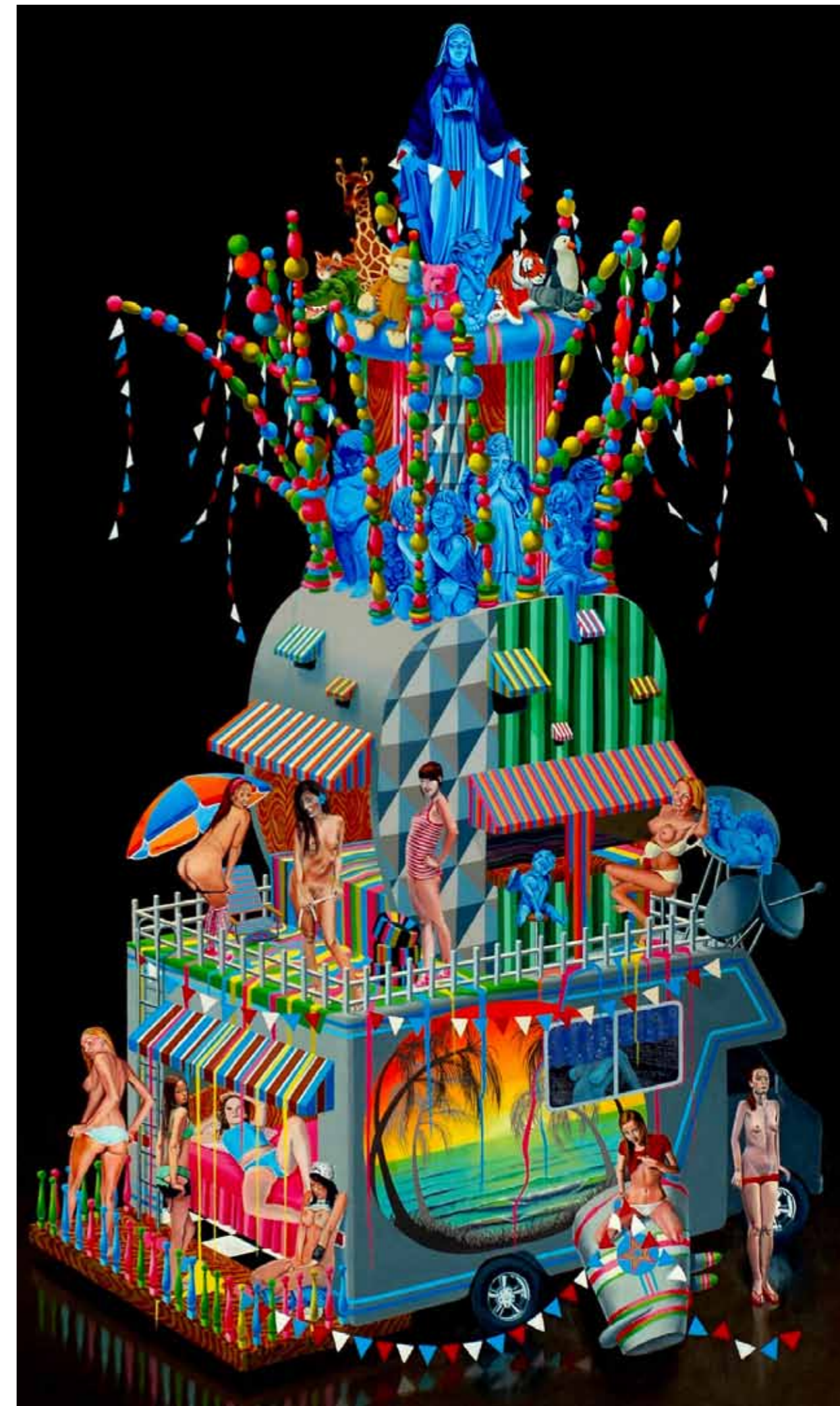
Little Miss Sunshine
The Outsiders

Your favourite artist, designer or photographer:

Ryan Trecartin

What / who are your influences?

John Currin
Jeff Koons
Marcel Duchamp
Sarah Braman (thanks to my sculptor girlfriend)
Isolated hermits that live deep in the woods
Rural low income areas
Matthias Weischer
Russian Constructivists
Quaker work ethic
Trashy Television
My circle of friends



This place does not exist

The Wind Will Carry Me and Soon I Will Be Free

God Gold and Guns





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