

For his second solo show at CANADA, Mr. Bradley presents "Schmagoo Paintings". Drawn with grease pencil on white canvas, the boldness of the "one shot" method is undermined by the absurdity of the subject matter: scrawls and doodles that move in and out of figuration. The paintings are direct in their handling and their conceptual derivation. They are a waste of time to try to understand and a pleasure to pursue. For the past two and half years, Mr. Bradley has reconstituted monochromatic painting into a kind of composite building block. By combining stacks of brightly colored panels Mr. Bradley made paintings that were simultaneously abstract and figurative, that both quote high Modernist painting and banana splits.

In the Schmagoo Paintings, Mr. Bradley extends this project by using doodles as both Modernist talisman and pop cultural touchstone. These paintings draw on the paradox between the modernist impulse towards a raw source of art in the "primitive" and the seamless presentation of a resolved art object. The Schmagoo Paintings are comparable to both Jean Dubuffet's use of the art of the insane as a road map to authenticity and Robert Crumb's sketch books full of aggressively comic and self aware thought bombs. Mr. Bradley uses own version of "children's art" as source material, months of collected envelopes and receipts full of his Picasso quotes and automatic writing. The Schmagoo Paintings are a compression of Mr. Bradley's endless and playful self-examination and a celebration of his immersion in popular culture. These works are full of playful tweaks to our collective art piety, iconoclastic and dark like the late figuration of Philip Guston. The image could be a light bulb or a stick man but the result is a strange psychological presence. Who would think a badly drawn tennis racket could hold a spiritual presence?

"I came across the word "Schmagoo" in a book about New York City drug culture in the 1960's, it was (is?) used as a slang for Heroin. This struck me as kind of funny, that a narcotic as deep and dark as Smack could end up with such a goofy nic name. Sounds like a Jewish super hero or something. The word stuck with me, and I began to think of "Schmagoo" as short hand for some sort of Cosmic Substance... Primordial Muck. The stuff that gave birth to everything. Base matter. The Bardo. In approaching this body of work, I have been thinking of Painting as a metaphor for the original creative act. The Word made Flesh. The transmutation of Schmagoo into Alchemical Gold."
-J.B.

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