



BRAINARD  
1967

Joe Brainard

October 19 - November 30, 2024

CHRIS SHARP

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Chris Sharp Gallery is honored to present the first solo exhibition of the late great Joe Brainard in Los Angeles.

Joe Brainard (1941-1994) was an artist and writer closely associated with the New York School of poetry. Considered to be one of the early progenitors of American pop, Brainard casually refused to commit to a single, identifiable artistic style or mode of making. Instead, his restless inventiveness saw him work in everything from assemblage to painting to drawing and collage, as well as set design. Themes included popular culture, religious imagery (the madonna), still life, portraits and gay iconography. With great humor, levity, and panache he considered American consumerism, high and low culture and the social mores of his time as well as his own homosexuality, while often insisting on a certain intimacy of scale and address. As a writer, Brainard was primarily known for his celebrated memoir "I Remember" (1975) which is revered by writers, poets and artists alike. He collaborated with numerous peers and poets including John Ashbery, Frank O'Hara, Ron Padgett, Ted Berrigan, and his life partner Kenward Elmslie, among many others.

Although significant in his lifetime, his influence has only continued to grow after his untimely passing of AIDS-related complications in 1994, and his work continues to capture the imagination of many contemporary practitioners and cultural producers. In 2001, Constance Lewallen organized a retrospective which originated at the Berkeley Art Museum and traveled to MoMA PS1, New York. More recently, the artistic director of Loewe, Jonathan Anderson based the brands A/W 2021 collection on Brainard's work. Meanwhile recent publications, such as John Yau's *Joe Brainard: The Art of the Personal* (Rizzoli, Electa, 2022) continue to critically examine and reflect on the life, work and legacy of Brainard.

Consisting of a selection of 20 works produced between 1966 and 1977, the exhibition presents a broad overview of Brainard's two-dimensional practice as an artist. The selection features paintings on paper, a cut out, drawings, and numerous examples of his most prolific medium, collage. Using materials and imagery from his every-day, lived experience, the works, thanks in part to their small scale, strike an almost diaristic tone, coming off as frank, immediate and revelatory. For those unfamiliar with Brainard, the grouping represents a precious opportunity to discover his work, and for those who are familiar, a great opportunity to see rarely exhibited pieces.

At a moment when metrics of success like the (collapsing) market and right-think no longer seem to guarantee art historical relevance or longevity, Brainard's rebellious and charming whimsy, commitment to the idiosyncratic and anti-careerism read as incredibly refreshing and prescient. His legacy seems, at the very least, to argue for the primacy of the personal over the general, privileging affect, intimacy and invention over bombastic demonstrations of rectitude and political grandstanding. It is almost as if he deliberately belongs to an art history, writ with a lower case *a* and *b*, which is symbolically located in a spiritual speakeasy, and where the illicit stuff of art is still miraculously served.

The exhibition is organized with the generous support of Tibor de Nagy, New York and the artist's estate.

*Joe Brainard's work has been included in a number of gallery and museum exhibition across the United States such as MoMA P.S.1 and the Berkeley Art Museum. His work are also included in many notable private and public collections including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of America Art, the Colby College Art Museum and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. In addition to his many visual art accomplishments, Brainard achieved notoriety for his 1970 Angel Hair publication I Remember, as well as many other publications, leading to The Library of America to publish The Collected Writings of Joe Brainard in 2012.*



Untitled (Muscle Man), 1971

Mixed media collage

7 x 5 1/2 in

17.8 x 14 cm



Man with Top Hat and Dominoes, 1972

Gouache, graphite on paper

21 x 17 1/2 in

53.3 x 44.5 cm



Untitled (Cheese), 1975

Watercolor on paper

12 x 9 in

30.5 x 22.9 cm



Madonna with Snake, 1966

Mixed media on paper

20 1/2 x 15 1/2 in

52.1 x 39.4 cm



Untitled (Rainbow), 1975

Mixed media collage on paperboard

13 1/2 x 10 1/2 in

34.3 x 26.7 cm



Untitled, 1977  
Mixed media collage on paper  
14 x 10 1/2 in  
35.6 x 26.7 cm



Untitled (Window with a Crescent Moon), 1975  
Watercolor and collage  
7 x 5 in  
17.8 x 12.7 cm



Ballet Theatre, 1975  
Mixed media  
5 1/2 x 4 1/2 in  
14 x 11.4 cm



Untitled (Eight of Diamonds), 1976  
Collage  
9 1/2 x 7 3/4 in  
24.1 x 19.7 cm



Tulips and Oranges, 1967-68  
Gouache on paper  
24 x 18 in  
61 x 45.7 cm



Untitled (I love you), 1977

Collage

14 x 11 in

35.6 x 27.9 cm



On the Town, 1976

Collage

7 x 5 in

17.8 x 12.7 cm



Untitled (Open Door), 1972

Mixed media on paper

13 1/2 x 10 1/2 in

34.3 x 26.7 cm



Untitled (Grass), 1966

Gouache on paper

13 3/4 x 10 1/2 in

34.9 x 26.7 cm



Untitled (reclining figure), 1972

Conte crayon and gouache on paper

12 x 9 in

30.5 x 22.9 cm



Untitled, 1967  
Saltine strip on black construction paper  
9 3/8 x 7 1/4 in  
23.8 x 18.4 cm



Untitled (Guest Check with Butterfly), 1975  
Mixed media collage  
6 x 4 in  
15.2 x 10.2 cm



Untitled (Self-Portrait), 1975  
Mixed media on paper  
13 1/2 x 9 in  
34.3 x 22.9 cm