

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Slater Bradley
Charlatan
07 September through 07 October 2000

Team will open its 5th season on 26th Street with a solo exhibition made up of four video projections and two lightboxes by Slater Bradley. The show will open to the public on the 7th of September and will run through the 7th of October 2000. Team is located at 527 West 26th Street, cross streets Tenth and Eleventh Avenues, on the ground floor.

A tattooed woman sits on the ledge of a building contemplating a plunge to her death. A fashionable young actress addresses the penalties of art. A teenager carries flowers to lay outside the loft of a famous American crashed couple. A butterfly wrangler spends the morning roaming around his LA apartment. In the gallery's back space, two intensely bright light boxes glare at each other — three beaming, mid-Western girls stand outside a Burger King while, across the room, an image of overlapping curtains of fake butterflies completes Bradley's exhibition about pursuit and longing.

Bradley's notational ethnographies capture privileged moments from a series of lives, lived both independently and for the camera. His subject persons invite our gaze in a manner which straddles the gap between document and fiction. In certain works, the artist assumes the possibility of an objective observer, while in others, he utilizes fictive strategies which recognize the inherent narrativity of the moving image. It is this negotiation of opposing impulses that accounts for the freshness of Bradley's views. His work is real life and celebrity, artifice and actuality. These pieces are both cynical and romantic; nihilistic and hopeful, come close to what Jack Ellis, in *The Documentary Idea*, referred to as "the creation of a life-like art object."

Each of the videos on display runs either just under or over three minutes, including the looped work, *Female Gargoyle*, which functions as the show's centerpiece. The artist filmed a woman threatening suicide on the ledge of an East Village walk up. When editing the piece, the artist chose to remove establishing shots which provided crucial grounding information (e.g. police and firemen on a neighboring rooftop attempting to "talk her down"). Bradley also refrains from showing us the crowd, leaving the woman completely isolated. Above her image he inserted a gray band which carries upon it the text "Amateur Video." These two words stand as a didactic plate introducing the show's theme of the artist and his doppelganger: the visionary and the charlatan. The constant reminder — "Amateur Video" — illuminates the media's constant search for real life agony, as well as issues of authorship and of quality. Bradley's "star" seems to ride majestically over the exhibition; her mane of hair flipped back against the seemingly hostile sky.

Bradley's mock verité stylings reject the refinements of theatrical projection, embracing instead the jagged look of the digital projection. The artist switches decidedly between different modes of video making and creates work within the documentary mode, the fictional mode and within the differing aesthetics of the infomercial, the fast-breaking story, the local station look, or the high-tech effects of the decidedly low-tech Sci-Fi channel.

Bradley takes advantage of what Stephen Mamber identified as "crisis structure" — a real-life situation loaded with drama, possessing a beginning, a middle and an end — to endow his camera with a relative invisibility. As a girl sits on the roof ledge, as a girl approaches the front of a line of mourners, so are they glimpsed without their awareness of a camera. As a matter of fact, *JFK, JR.* — a work in which the artist pries into the privacy of a teenager outside Kennedy's Tribeca loft — formally shatters when the girl makes eye contact with Bradley's voyeuristic camera eye.

The harsh reality of Bradley's silent actuality pieces, taped at times of crises, are played against musically scored works such as the tele-ready *I Was Rooting for You (Butterfly Catcher at Home)* and the highly stylized *The Laurel Tree (Beach)*. The former is a docudrama-like piece that apes the genre of the human-interest story -- the primary televisual inheritance of the melodrama of Regan-era prime-time drama. The latter is a glamorous super-pastiche that assumes a sublime and moving form. Bradley pulled the work's text from Thomas Mann's 1903 short story Tonio Kroger. He then cast Chloë Sevigny

in the role of speaker, filming her on an isolated Long Island beach. The artist then pulled a famous theme from Georges Delerue's score for Godard's *Contempt*, to underscore his moving three-minute film. The Mann text, the work's "script," dwells on the severe effects of choosing to make art, and functions as a savage attack on the dilettante.

Bradley investigates — using his camera to get at something beneath the skin, something behind the artifice of moving through the world. It is this sense of query that allows us, as viewers, to join the camera's gaze in an attempt to see the truth at the center of his amateur videos. Videos that stand in dialogue with direct cinema, and not with MTV. These works, as formally accomplished as they are, concern themselves primarily with the emotional lyricism of the subject observed.

The artist, like his revered butterfly collector, fills the gallery with beautiful protagonists who can only be glimpsed, never understood. As the three women in the main gallery's projections engage and detach from each other and the viewer, one senses an almost unmediated immediacy. We are there with them, right now. Bradley's protagonists, whether directed or spontaneous, are trapped in a perpetual present tense, demanding an empathic response. The main gallery space has the feeling of both the intimate and the epic. The cold, expensive and largely impersonal nature of much recent video art is rejected for nothing short of an intense emotional catharsis.

This is Bradley's second solo exhibition at Team. Bradley has shown his work in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Irvine, as well as in Amsterdam, Washington D.C. and Tokyo. A concurrent one-person project show will open on the 17th of September at PS1. The UCLA graduate is 25 years old.

For further information and/or photographs please call 212.279.9219. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 11am to 6pm.