

Cherry and Martin

Brian Bress: Under Performing

January 7 – February 25, 2012

The title of Brian Bress's second solo exhibition at the gallery, *Under Performing*, suggests multiple interpretations. By it, does Bress mean to imply that he is not up to the task he has set for himself? That failure is an unavoidable part of artistic expression? Or is he simply describing a working method, one in which everything invariably occurs under something else, be it a set of assumptions, the mask of a performer, his or her costume, or just the quiet eye of the video camera that runs silently in Bress's studio. Uncertainty on the part of both viewer and artist is a core element of Bress's work. It contributes to the pathos—and the humor—driving the questioning of the artwork's overarching structure, revealing new meanings and new emotions.

Under Performing features a full-length video, *Creative Ideas for Every Season* (2010), and eight new video portraits. In these pieces the viewer is asked to think about the structure of language and the picture plane's inherent assumptions about space as constructed in painting as well as theater. For the video portrait, *Infinite Man (Britt)* (2012), both costume and mask are painted entirely in oil paint. Bress adopts the means and methods of portrait painting, rejecting the canvas for the flat field of the video monitor. If the historical purpose of the genre has been to capture the essence of the sitter, Bress's attention to the minute details of the sitter's outer accouterments suggest a belief that our context and our trappings in some sense define us. Beads and feathers, bulbous noses and eyes are all part of physiognomies presented by Bress in these works, revealing a cross-section of individuals and the narratives that unite them.

Bress received his MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles and BFA from Rhode Island School of Design. The New Museum, New York, will feature his video *Status Report* (2009) from January 18 - March 25, 2012. In the past two years, Bress has exhibited his work at the Museum of Contemporary Art (North Miami, FL); the Institute of Contemporary Art (Philadelphia, PA); Arthouse (Austin, TX); the Parrish Art Museum (South Hampton, NY); the University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum (Tampa, FL) and at the Salt Lake Art Center, Salt Lake City, Utah. His video *Under Cover* (2007) was included in the landmark exhibition *California Video* (2008) at the Getty Museum, Los Angeles, and the accompanying catalog, *California Video: Artists and Histories*, and his work has been reviewed in such publications as *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Artforum* and *Frieze*.



Still from *Cowboy (Brian Led by Peter Kirby)*, 2012

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Infinite Man (Britt), 2012

High definition single-channel video (color),
high definition monitor and player, wall
mount, framed
10 min., 40 sec., loop

Infinite Man (Britt) is inspired by the found image: in this case, a painted portrait of an unknown man. For the backdrop, Bress painted the portrait of the unknown man in a repeating pattern. In front of the repeating image, a wearer/performer (Britt) kneels on a slowly rotating 2 x 2 foot mechanical turntable. She can see nothing from inside the pitch-dark costume. She attempts to maintain perfect stillness on the rotating platform.



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Cowboy (Brian led by Peter Kirby),
2012

High definition single-channel video (color),
high definition monitor and player, wall
mount, framed
30 min., 19 sec., loop

What began as a simple, two-dimensional sketch of a cowboy on graph paper evolved into a three-dimensional cowboy costume worn by a wearer/performer. The costume is replete with 10-gallon hat and Western wear. The cowboy stands in front of a gridded background. The cowboy attempts to make a drawing. The sponginess of the foam and rubber outfit impair his visibility and movements.



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Janus, 2012

High definition single-channel video (color),
high definition monitor and player, wall
mount, framed

16 min., 57 sec., loop

Janus, the ancient Roman god of beginnings and transitions, is usually depicted with a two-headed face looking in opposite directions: one face looking to the past; the other looking to the future. Bress's Janus is based on a collage constructed by the artist on a found photo of two lovers in the water of a shallow river. The wearer/performer's costume is inspired by the bits of paper that made up the original collage and they slowly rotate in front of the background, revealing two "faces" – one on each side of the costume.



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Pair (Justin, Cara), 2012

High definition dual-channel video (color),
two high definition monitors and players,
wall mount, framed
10 min., 19 sec., loop

The only dual channel video in the show, *Pair (Justin, Cara)*, presents a couple whose relationship is unclear, but whom acknowledge each other from the confines of their respective monitors and endure similar weather phenomena.



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Fancy Dress Ball (Brian), 2012

High definition single-channel video (color),
high definition monitor and player, wall
mount, framed
4 min., 40 sec., loop

The specific imagery for *Fancy Dress Ball (Brian)* comes from dazzle camouflage, Art Deco pottery and 20th-Century abstraction. The movement and sensation of the wearer/performer, however, is intended to mimic the wonder of the ocean floor, the hide-and-seek of predators and prey hiding and revealing themselves to one another.



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Beadman (Parker), 2012

High definition single-channel video (color),
high definition monitor and player and wall
mount, framed

1 min., 6 sec., loop

The only character from *Creative Ideas for Every Season* to be represented in a monitor portrait, *Beadman (Parker)*, presents the hypnotic, slow motion bouncing of Parker completely enclosed in beads.



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Creative Ideas for Every Season, 2010

High definition video, color, sound

19 min., 58 sec.

Based loosely on the road trip movie genre, the lead character takes the viewer – and a number of other characters, all played by Bress – on a metaphorical journey. Using the appropriated writings of Agnes Martin, the characters investigate the pitfalls, difficulties, and absurdities in the pursuit of the creative process.



Brian Bress

Biography

EDUCATION

- 2007 Skowhegan School of Painting and Drawing, Skowhegan, MA
2006 MFA, Painting & Drawing, University of California, Los Angeles
1998 BFA, Film/Animation/Video, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2012
Under Performing, **Cherry and Martin**, Los Angeles, CA (forthcoming)
- 2011
Creative Ideas for Every Season, **Salt Lake Art Center**, Salt Lake City, UT
Creative Ideas for Every Season, **Wignall Museum of Contemporary Art**, Rancho Cucamonga, CA
- 2009
The Royal Box, **Cherry and Martin**, Los Angeles, CA
- 2007
Project Room, **Zach Feuer Gallery**, New York, NY
Pardon Me, **Angstrom Gallery**, Los Angeles, CA
- 2006
Sometimes You Are Just A Hat, **RC Art Gallery**, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
- 2003
Brian Bress: New Drawings, **Open-End Gallery**, Chicago, IL

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2011
Future Present: Five Artists, Five Weeks, **Arthouse at the Jones Center**, Austin, TX
Stagecraft, curated by David Norr, **University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum**, Tampa, FL
Object Orientation: Bodies and/as Things, **Cerritos College Art Gallery**, Norwalk, CA
Staff Curated Video Show, **LAX Art**, Los Angeles, CA
- 2010
Underground Pop, **Parrish Art Museum**, South Hampton, NY (catalog)
cut/PASTE: Collage as Methodology in Contemporary Video, **POST**, Los Angeles, CA
do I know you, **Inman Gallery**, Houston, TX
The Mystic's Circle, **Human Resources**, Los Angeles, CA
Portugal Arte, Lisbon, Portugal
In The Eyes of Lions, **533 Gallery**, Los Angeles, CA
Video Art; Replay, **Institute of Contemporary Art**, Philadelphia, PA
- 2009
"Now that I'm by myself," she says, "I'm not by myself, which is good" **DiverseWorks**, Houston, TX
COMMUNE, **Black and White Gallery**, New York, NY
FIRST SHOW, **Cherry and Martin**, Los Angeles, CA
LA Woman, **Hanes Art Gallery**, Wake Forest University, Winston Salem, NC
- 2008
Young Curators, New Ideas, **Bond Street Gallery**, Brooklyn, NY

Free Love Gods, **Pulliam Deffenbaugh Gallery**, Portland, OR
Party Favors, **Bonelli Contemporary**, Los Angeles, CA
Against The Grain, **Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions**, Los Angeles, CA
California Video: Artists and Histories, **Getty Museum**, Los Angeles, CA
Living Room Paintings, **Bucket Rider Gallery**, Chicago, IL

2007

Rear/View, **Freight + Volume**, New York, NY
Stalemate, **LeRoy Neiman Gallery**, Columbia University School of Arts, New York, NY
Brian Bress & Ruby Stiler, **Sunday L.E.S. Gallery**, New York, NY
Trudi, **Rental Gallery**, New York, NY
Machine Imaginaire, **Lisa Boyle Gallery**, Chicago, IL
Distinctive Messengers, Curated by Simon Watson and Craig Hensala, **House of Campari**, Los Angeles, CA
Big Secret Cache, **Angstrom Gallery**, Los Angeles, CA
Beyond Image, **Armory Center for the Arts**, Pasadena, CA
Kairos!, **Kantor / Feuer Gallery**, Los Angeles, CA

2006

Landslide: Works by Emerging California Artists, **Addison/Ripley Fine Art**, Washington, DC
Naïve Set Theory, **Cirrus Gallery**, Los Angeles, CA
i know you, but you don't know me, **Fette's Gallery**, Culver City, CA
Greater LA MFA Exhibition and Screening, California State University, Long Beach, CA
One Shot 100x100, **LA><ART**, Culver City, CA
Chain Letter, **High Energy Constructs**, Los Angeles, CA
Supersonic 2006, **L.A. Municipal Art Gallery**, Los Angeles, CA
Ecolux: Art in the Light of Ecology, **Lightbox**, Los Angeles, CA
Just My Funny Way of Laughing, **South La Brea Gallery**, Los Angeles, CA
Soft-Boiled Wonderland, **I-5 Gallery**, Los Angeles, CA
Boat Show, **High Energy Constructs**, Los Angeles, CA
Rough Trade, **Michael Kohn Gallery**, Los Angeles, CA
The Latest Fiction, **Cirrus Gallery**, Los Angeles, CA
State of Emergence, LA Weekly Biennial, **Track 16**, Santa Monica, CA

2005

Untitled Play About Gravity by Krysten Cunningham, **Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions**, offsite performance, Los Angeles, CA
Character Traits, **I-5 Gallery**, Los Angeles, CA
Exhibition #9 - Some Romantic Landscape, **Champion Fine Arts**, Los Angeles, CA

2003

Anti-Spacesuit: The Dirty Future, **G1 Gallery**, Chicago, IL

2001

Fellows' Invitational, **Hudson D. Walker Gallery**, Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA

1999

Young Guns NYC Biennial, **The Art Directors Club of New York**, New York, NY

SELECTED SCREENINGS

2011

Optic Nerve XIII, *It's Been a Long Day*, **Museum of Contemporary Art**, Miami FL (Winning video)
Optic Nerve XIII, *Alone*, **Museum of Contemporary Art**, Miami FL
FAST-FORWARD II: A Screening of Contemporary Video Art, *It's Been a Long Day*, **Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum**, Santa Barbara, CA

The View from Out There: Southern California Video Art, Creative Ideas for Every Season, **The Outpost Artist Resource**, Ridgewood, NY

2009

The Young Pretenders, **Kate Werble Gallery**, New York, NY

2007

Mini Mini Max, Under Cover, **Appetite Gallery**, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Vertical Hold, The Portrait Room, **Ellensburg Film Festival**, Ellensburg, WA

The Imminent Failure Show, Over and Over, Hard Job, **UND#2 Art Fair**, Karlsruhe, Germany

Video Day SXSW, Portrait Room, Over and Over, World Report, Hard Job, Brainquest, **Okay Mountain Gallery**, Austin, TX

The Imminent Failure Show, Over and Over, Hard Job, **The Ice Factory**, Chicago, IL

DigitalForum, Portrait Room, Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena, CA

Neurotic Naturalism, Rock Cowboy, **Monkeytown**, Brooklyn, NY

2003

Prime Shorts -- The Best of 2003, **The Hideout and the Gene Siskel Film Center**, Chicago, IL

1998

Spike and Mike's Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation, Karate Dick Boys, La Jolla, CA

CURATED EXHIBITIONS

2008

From Panic to Power!, **Angstrom**, Los Angeles, CA

2004

Magic Show, **Hayworth Gallery**, Los Angeles, CA

2005

Dark Side of The Sun, **Wight Gallery**, UCLA

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Suarez de Jesus, Carlos. "Optic Nerve XIII: And the Winner Is..." *Miami New Times*, August 29, 2011.

Berardini, Andrew. "Memoirs of Ourselves Watching TV: The Disconcertingly Real Works of Brian Bress," *Mousse*, issue 27, January 11, 2011, pp 78-85.

Hohmann, Silke. "Fraulein Wurst unter Palmen," *MONOPOL*, December 2, 2010.

Tarley, Phil. "Los Angeles Takes the Show," *Fabrik.com*, December 2010.

Berardini, Andrew. "Playing at Work: Interview with Brian Bress," *ARTslant*, November 2010. Landes, Jennifer. "Pop Goes the Underground," *The East Hampton Star*, September 23, 2010.

Johnson, Ken. "The Allure of the Homespun in the Maw of the Digital Age," *The New York Times*, September 2, 2010.

Parks, Steve. "No soup cans in this Pop Art," *Long Island Newsday*, August 11, 2010.

"Underground Pop" exhibition opens at Parrish Art Museum," *The East Hampton Press* and *The Southampton Press*, August 10, 2010.

"Underground Pop' New Exhibition at Parrish Art Museum," *Hamptons.com*, August 2, 2010.

Campagnola, Sonia. "Brian Bress," *FlashArt.com*, December 10, 2009.

Taubman, Lara. "Endless Summer," *artnet*, October 15, 2009.

Berardini, Andrew. "PICKS: Brian Bress," *Artforum.com*, October 1, 2009.

Pagel, David. "Brian Bress tells a story slowly and well," *Los Angeles Times*, September 25, 2009, p. D23.

Harvey, Doug. "Snips and Snails: Let The Fall Art Season Begin!," *LA Weekly*, September 10-16, 2009.

Krasinski, Jennifer. "Studio Visit: Behind the Scenes With Brian Bress," *ArtinAmerica.com*, September 9, 2009.

Berardini, Andrew. "Young L.A. Performers," *Style and the Family Tunes*, Issue 123, March 2009.

Bedford, Christopher. "Against the Grain," *Frieze*, issue 119, Nov-Dec 2008.

Ollman, Leah. "A Show's Artists in a State of Unrest," *Los Angeles Times*, August 8, 2008.

Standish, Maude. "Brian Bress," *Glitterati Magazine*, No. 3, Summer 2008, p.30.

Taft, Catherine. *California Video: Artists and Histories*, *Getty Publications*, May 2008, pp. 54-57.

Iverson, Tim. "Brian Bress," *UBER / Ten by Ten*, May 5, 2007.

Ollman, Leah. "Ambiguity is essence of 'Beyond Image,'" *Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 2007, p. E8.

Holte, Michael Ned. "Reviews: Los Angeles, Brian Bress," *Artforum*, March 2007, pp.325-326.

Roth, Charlene. "Naïve Set Theory: Brian Bress, Julie Lequin, Jennifer Sullivan and Ami Tallman' at Cirrus Gallery," *Artweek*, January-February 2007.

Dawson, Jessica. "A California 'Landslide' Cascades Into Addison/Ripley" *Washington Post*, December 23, 2006.

Kennon, Brian. "Television could be much better: Brian Bress," *NY Arts Magazine*, November–December 2006.

Russel, Christopher. "Kennon's Cannons, Labor of Love Begets Publishing House," *Artillery*, November 2006, p. 22.

Register, Craig. "Sometimes You Are Just A Hat," *RC News*, Fall 2006, p.13.

Myers, Holly. "The master and his followers," *Los Angeles Times*, March 31, 2006, p. E25.

Taft, Catherine. "Critics' Picks: Rough Trade," *Artforum.com*, May 2006.

Harvey, Doug. "State of Emergence, Undiscovered cracks in the art-world infrastructure: a catalog," *LA Weekly*, October 28, 2005, pp. 46-47.

Frank, Peter. "Magic Show: curated by Brian Bress," *Artcircles.org*, AC #3, Winter 2004-2005.

Camper, Fred. "Anti-Spacesuit: The Dirty Future," *Chicago Reader*, September 5, 2003, p. 33.

"Two Scenes From a Party", Cover image, *Chicago Review*, Volume 49, Number 1, Spring 2003.

Susman, Gary. "Spike and Mike's Sick and Twisted Festival of Animation," *Village Voice*, January 27, 1999.