



The Brant Foundation
ART STUDY CENTER

THE BRANT FOUNDATION ART STUDY CENTER PRESENTS
ROB PRUITT 50TH BIRTHDAY BASH
MAY 10– SEPTEMBER 2015

“I’m having a show at The Brant Foundation Art Study Center - and it’s my 50th birthday! I feel a certain warmth at the thought of these two events coinciding this May. The invitation to show my work in the beautiful converted barn on The Brant Foundation property is so appealing to me as I’ve admired Peter’s collecting since my days as a wee art handler at the Sonnabend Gallery where I remember Peter coming into look at the latest Koonses. Since then, his collection has grown to include the work of friends whom I admire greatly, and I’ve been happy and proud to be able to say that some of my own works have entered that company... But I digress. What I really want to say is that I’m excited by the opportunity to present my work in a space that is not another anonymous white cube. One might look through the Study Center’s windows and see the family’s horses in the surrounding fields. Just across the street sits a house where Brant kids do homework and holidays are celebrated. It’s not a typical institution but a thoughtful succession of rooms with a palpable connection to a real family. These rooms have already begun to develop their own legacy through the shows that have come before me, and they reflect the connoisseurship of a family I’ve grown quite fond of.

The show will begin in the Fireplace Room - the most domestic and homey of the spaces at the Study Center. It features a stone fireplace and warm, Venetian plaster walls that I’ll be lining with a selection of *Glitter Panda* paintings (the body of work I’m perhaps best known for) spanning the past 15 years of my practice. A medium-sized fountain of bottled Evian water in cartons will sit in the center of the room. Bamboo plants will flank the windows and fill out the corners, complementing the environments depicted in the paintings.

The second room one passes through is a smaller antechamber that will hold three oil paintings of Marilyn Monroe. Their thick, built up surfaces sit atop mass-produced digital prints from Ikea. They have been painted and repainted for over a year to the point of being both lush and crusty at the same time. I love the idea of showing this project at the Brant Foundation as Peter began his collecting with Andy Warhol some 30 years ago. Although my image of Monroe differs from his, the copyright-accessible image that was procured by Ikea in order to produce their \$45 panels conveys a similarly iconic essence.

In the next space, viewers will find themselves amidst splashy and exuberant revisitations of abstract expressionism that I painted in 2006. They’re all rendered in bright reds and pinks on a ground of silver foil, making the splashes and paint strokes appear as if they’re frozen in time and floating in midair rather than being anchored to the picture plane itself. These paintings surround a grand sculpture made of meager materials: blue jeans and poured cement. The legs of the jeans are set into a Busby Berkeley-esque choreography of kicking legs, at once conjuring modern gym culture and those time-frozen ruins of ancient Herculaneum.

A staircase then descends into the largest room that features ceilings twice as high as the previous spaces. Here, one encounters a chapel of gradient face paintings - my contemplation of that contemporary language of instant communication known as the emoji. I set forth to make these paintings five years ago with the desire to elicit an emotional response from the viewer using the simplest possible means: color symbolism and reductive but expressive line. That combination of a simple, scrawled “smiley face” over a moody, blushing color field works surprisingly well - to convey my own mood swings, at least!



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The last, and perhaps most important, room of the show - one where I was really able to involve the Brant family in the exhibition - is my latest version of *Rob Pruitt's Flea Market*, a project I've produced with regularity since 1999. One aspect of the project that I've always enjoyed is the way an assembly of items becomes a form of self-portraiture. We can learn a lot about a person (or in this case, a family) through a collection of items that were perhaps at one point lovingly used, neglected, or ultimately replaced. This time we're hosting the *Brant Family Flea Market*, with all proceeds going to the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College. Each family member will be doing a bit of spring cleaning, clearing out their closets and decluttering their lives, so visitors/shoppers will have the chance to play the role of both private detective and bargain hunter. The items offered for sale will highlight the family's varied passions for world travel, country living, collecting, and sport. Additionally, the lively atmosphere of the flea market will be accompanied by walls lined with a selection of my *Exquisite Self Portraits*.

Finally, upon leaving the Study Center, at the information desk you'll see what I consider to be the epilogue of the show: a newly revised "102 Art Ideas You Can Do Yourself", my "recipe book" that deconstructs and instructs the making of conceptual art projects. Take home a copy and give it a try. You might find that I'm no better than you (except for the fact that I have a show at The Brant Foundation Art Study Center... and you don't!)."

- Rob Pruitt

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Rob Pruitt was born in Washington, DC, and studied at the Corcoran College of Art and Design in Washington, DC, and Parsons School of Design in New York. His work has been included in numerous museum exhibitions including a 2013 mid-career retrospective at the Aspen Art Museum, a solo exhibition at Dallas Contemporary (2011), Freiburg Kunstverein (2012); Le Consortium, Dijon (2002); and group shows such as "Empire State" at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome (2012), "Pop Life" at Tate Modern (2009), and "Mapping the Studio" at Punta Della Dogana/Palazzo Grassi, Venice (2009). In 2009, he debuted the "Rob Pruitt's Art Awards," at the Guggenheim Museum, an award show for the art world fashioned after the Oscars. In 2011, he was commissioned by the Public Art Fund to install "The Andy Monument," a highly polished chrome sculpture of Andy Warhol (replete with shopping bags) in New York's Union Square near the site of Warhol's Factory. An exhibition at Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit is scheduled for May 2015. He lives and works in New York.

The Brant Foundation Art Study Center has a mission to promote education and appreciation of contemporary art and design, by making works available to institutions and individuals for scholarly study and examination. The Brant Foundation Art Study Center presents long-term exhibitions, curated primarily from the collection. The collection is remarkable in that scores of artists are represented in depth, including works from the earliest period of their practice through their most recent works. Currently, The Brant Foundation, Inc., established in 1996, lends works to more than a dozen exhibitions per year. The Brant Foundation Art Study Center, is located at 941 North Street, Greenwich, Connecticut, and is open Monday through Friday by appointment only. To schedule an appointment, please email: info@brantfoundation.org.

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