

# Petzel

Ashton Cooper, “‘Pictures’ Artist Troy Brauntuch Comes Into Focus With New Petzel Show,” *Blouin Artinfo*, June 10, 2013.

## BLOUIN ARTINFO

### "Pictures" Artist Troy Brauntuch Comes Into Focus With New Petzel Show

by Ashton Cooper



Troy Brauntuch, installation view, Petzel, New York, 2013. Courtesy the artist and Petzel, New York.

If 2009's survey at the Metropolitan Museum wasn't enough of an indication that art of the so-called "Pictures Generation" has been thoroughly institutionalized, this summer's Jack Goldstein retrospective at the Jewish Museum — not to mention Sherrie Levine at the Whitney and Cindy Sherman at MoMA in 2011 and 2012 — has made it abundantly clear. Douglas Crimp's 1977 essay "Pictures" is now standard reading, and many of the artists associated with the group — Sherman, Levine, Richard Prince — have entered the ranks of the best-known names in both classrooms and auction houses. Yet, despite all the hype, Troy Brauntuch, one of the five artists in Crimp's original essay and associated exhibition at Artists Space, still hasn't reached the behemoth status of many of his mega-watt peers.

Brauntuch's most recent show at Petzel Gallery, on view now, is populated by understated works of black cotton stretched over canvas, onto which the artist draws murky photographic images in ochre brown. The seemingly banal individual subjects — an evening gown, a state trooper, a horse — take some time to float into clarity on the dark surfaces of the canvases. Petzel artist

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liason Kat Parker, who worked closely with Brauntuch on the show, believes the subdued quality of his work has contributed to it being less well regarded than that of his "Pictures" contemporaries. "I think that he is more overlooked because his paintings are a bit more quiet, in a way," Parker says. "His work requires some patience. It's not bombastic, its not overly pop-y. Versus someone like Cindy Sherman or Jack Goldstein, he's utilizing images in a very different way than those artists are."



Troy Brauntuch's "Red Statue," 2013 /  
Courtesy the artist and Petzel, New York

Brauntuch's canvasses require a bit of sustained viewing. He is interested in the associations and narratives that an image can conjure in the viewer, rather than any meaning the image itself might hold. "So it's much more about conversation and looking at something and finding it, as opposed to specifically saying what that thing is," Brauntuch explained to ARTINFO. He uses images from magazines, newspapers, and some he takes himself, and erases what is recognizable or familiar about them by transcribing them with crayon or pigment onto dark cotton canvasses. Although obscured, his source material often derives from what Crimp called "loaded" images. An anonymous horse is actually the racehorse

Barboro who was on track to be the Triple Crown winner before he was injured and euthanized. A large three-panel work of a man in a wide-brimmed hat stepping out of a car is actually a Texas state trooper zeroing in on a prison escapee.

Brauntuch approaches appropriation quite differently than an artist like Richard Prince. For Brauntuch, manipulating the appropriated image himself is very important. "I started making things from my hand because I really found things that were photographic or appropriated that way were sort of too ordinary. I thought they were too familiar, too pop culture," he says. "I started making objects myself, because there was more control over the image, and not revealing how it was done or how it got there." The work lingers in a ghostly state between photography and painting, existing as neither medium.

Although in the wake of the Met's "Pictures Generation" show, Brauntuch says he is tired of talking about his work in relation to the group, he maintains that Crimp's essay captured a critical theory that is still at the heart of his work. "I'm not in any way going, 'Oh, I've separated myself from that, I don't believe that, it wasn't important,'" he explains. "In fact, I think a lot of the stuff I do is still connected to that language."

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Brauntuch is currently based in Austin, where he has been teaching at the University of Texas since 2004. The decision to leave New York for Austin was purposeful, he says. “I really came down to teach here and have a change of life. I love New York, but I’d never think about living there again.” Despite his departure from the New York art world, Parker believes Brauntuch is on the brink of gaining more recognition for his nearly 40-year career. “From my personal perspective I believe that he has been poised for some time and has deserved it for some time,” she says.

As for the future, Brauntuch plans to show sculpture at his next show, a solo exhibition at the Dallas Contemporary in January 2014. While there are not currently plans for a Brauntuch retrospective, the artist is certainly open to the idea. “Yeah, that’d be nice,” he said with a good-natured laugh. “Help me out. Make this sound good.”

<http://cn-tmp.artinfo.com/news/story/911681/pictures-artist-troy-brauntuch-comes-into-focus-with-new>