

Julie Baumgardner, “Influential, Late-’70s Paintings, Revisited,” *T Magazine*, November 3, 2015.

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Influential, Late-’70s Paintings, Revisited

By JULIE BAUMGARDNER NOV. 3, 2015



Troy Brauntuch, “White Statue,” 1976.
Credit courtesy Petzel Gallery

“You’re in, you’re out, you’re up, you’re down,” the painter Troy Brauntuch says, with his trademark disarming self-deprecation. “Privately, one always goes on.” Nearly 40 years ago, Brauntuch had a flash of big-shot fame: he was one of five artists (alongside Jack Goldstein, Sherrie Levine, Robert Longo and Philip Smith) included in the influential 1977 group show “Pictures,” curated at Artists Space by Douglas Crimp. The show came to represent the brewing movement of image-based artists — those who “had a broader perspective of how we read images, and really entered the picture again, and what that means,” Brauntuch says. “Pictures” operated as a bellwether, in stark contrast to then-fashionable Minimalism and abstraction. “We came out of a time when ‘art’ was not what we were doing, which is why we were doing what we were doing.” His years in New York in the late ’70s and 1980s were spent running up the ladder alongside his friends, like Cindy Sherman, Matt Mullican, David Salle, Goldstein and Longo, whose careers exploded onto the superstar level.

He counted Richard Prince and Dike Blair among his golfing buddies, too. “We played religiously,” Brauntuch says. “We also played in a poker game for decades.”

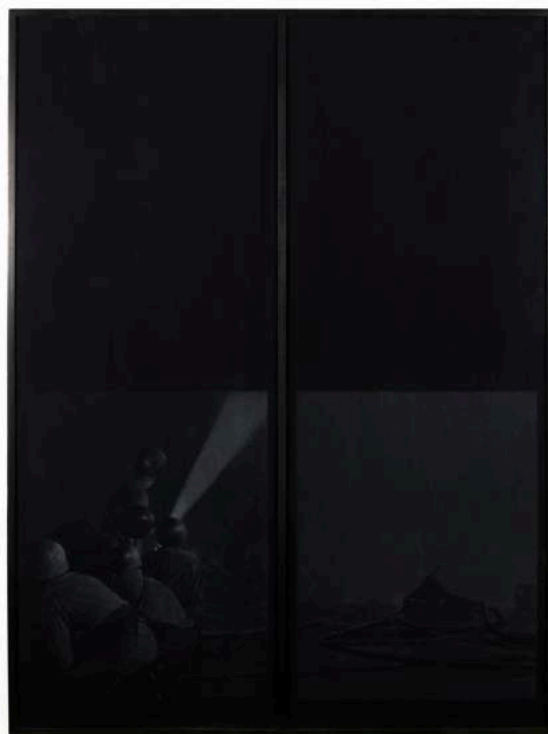
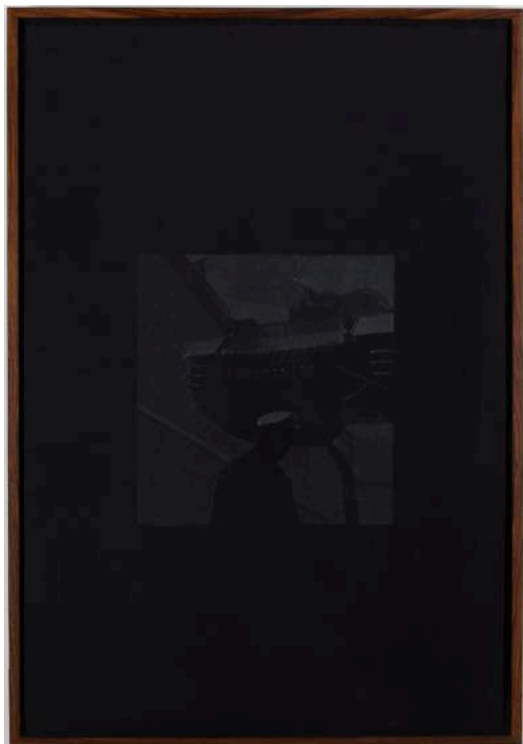
And then, in 1998, Brauntuch left. “It was rather cleansing, to realize there was a world outside New York City,” he exclaims — even if forsaking the city meant sacrificing the blue-chip name recognition some of his peers have come to enjoy. You could call Brauntuch an underdog — plenty in the art world are inclined to do just that. But since leaving, he’s kept busy: alongside his faculty position at the University of Texas at Austin, he’s been exhibited at MoMA, the Whitney, the Tate Modern, and the Metropolitan Museum (most recently in 2009 for its own “Pictures Generation 1974 – 1984” show). And all along, the painter has been producing subtle, dark canvases of mundane or even horrifying subjects, recognizable only from a step or two back. Whether it’s his girlfriend’s coat or Third Reich scenarios, “it’s pretty removed from its original context,” he says. “I create a narrative, a space to operate in,” he continues, comparing

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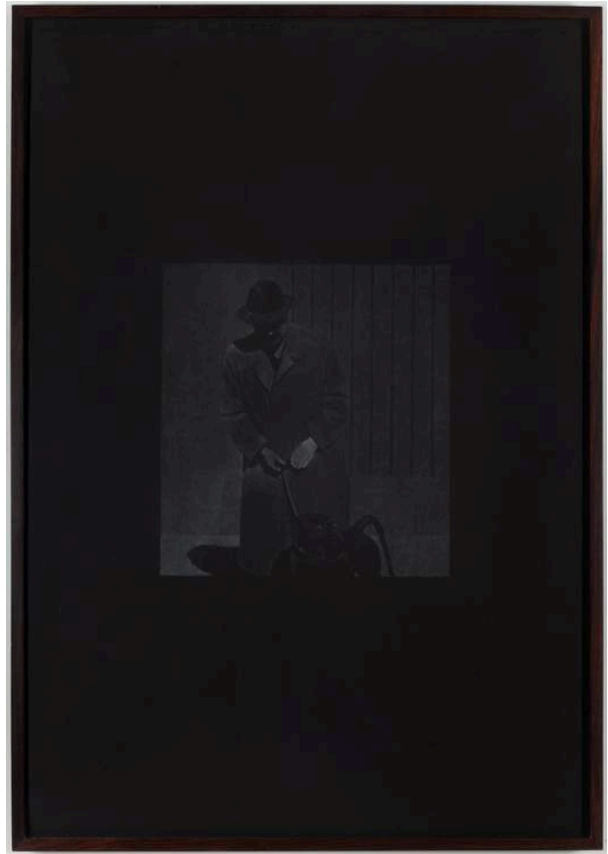
his solo shows to movies. "The works read into each other — every exhibition since 1975 has been that." Sure, Brauntuch says, "I keep finding a reason to not do it any longer" — but his tone belies the sentiment.

Tomorrow, Petzel unveils a show of Brauntuch's paintings created from 1977 – 1982 in the gallery's newly minted uptown outpost, close to the homes of many of his major collectors. Longo, Larry Gagosian and Jerry Speyer all own Brauntuch's works — and in fact, their personal holdings are what have been loaned for the small 12-piece show. "You know, it's really strange, because I haven't seen these works in 35 or 40 years," he says. "It's sort of like children, coming back and going, 'Ooh, that's you?'"



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<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/03/t-magazine/troy-brauntuch-petzel-gallery.html>