

Katherine Bradford

*American Odyssey*

16. 3. – 19. 5. 2024

Press talk: March 15, 2024, 10 am

Opening: March 15, 2024, 6 pm

HALLE FÜR KUNST Steiermark  
Burgring 2, 8010 Graz (AT)

Catalog JRP/Editions, Geneva

Curator:

Sandro Droschl

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HALLE FÜR KUNST Steiermark is delighted to host Katherine Bradford's first comprehensive institutional exhibition in Europe. Bradford is conceived as one of the most important positions of contemporary American painting. The show will present fifteen crucial works of the last decade from collections in New York, as well as a cycle of twenty-three new paintings, which the artist produced especially for the exhibition. In her striking works over many decades, Bradford has been developing a very personal ongoing story about painting, which she tells and retells with ever new variations. In recent years, she has taken this to an unprecedented level in terms of the interplay of form, color, and light with "her" mysteriously present bodies. The presentations of these strange, present and self-determined bodies in their highly expressive positions – standing, sitting, lying or suspended, – leads to an astounding focus on something very essential. Even after such a long and eventful *American Odyssey*, the artist remains positive about humanity – and she invites us to share the sentiment. Her art stands for a vibrant and yet inherently critical humanism which it is good to see in complex times such as ours.

Painting remains *the* medium of art, and of its crises. It remains the medium best suited to identify the cyclical development of interest in art and the developments of the art business and markets. Interestingly, in the past decade a prominent number of mainly US-American women artists has come to the fore of a new interest in painting, gradually taking over from their mainly male colleagues who for so long dominated the scene. A conspicuous number of these women artists, who are also important to Bradford, came only in recent years to enjoy the recognition they have today – including Judith Bernstein, Mary Heilmann, Rebecca Morris or Amy Sillman. Some of these artists were able to witness their own international recognition only in part, while the artists Lee Lozano, Joyce Pensato, Rose Wylie and also Maria Lassnig, whose New York period was key for her painting, were no longer able to experience it. Their influence is also evident in the work of a younger generation of artists like Ana Benaroya, Katherine Bernhardt, Nicole Eisenman and Christine De Miguel.

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Press download: <https://halle-fuer-kunst.at/en/press/katherine-bradford-american-odyssey/>

Among this influential group of artists coming mainly from New York and Los Angeles, Katherine Bradford stands out, having made a breakthrough with her own very personal approach in the USA in recent years, and now also internationally – at the age of 81. Those connections have also been fundamental to Bradford's own *American Odyssey*: consequent to the move from Maine to New York City, she became part of an artist community. Her nowadays' casual and self-confident works were preceded by a very personal search and positioning in the field of painting. Initially working abstractly, she gradually found her way to the figurative; from superheroes to swimmers and larger-than-life bodies made up of color fields. Bradford is interested in communities and their interactions, without however neglecting the individual and the personal. She advocates diversity and the overcoming of traditional borders of race, class, and gender. The bodies she paints are all similarly ubiquitous templates into which viewers can project themselves. Narratives are very evident but also interrupted, resisting to become too explicit, remaining allusive and ultimately mysterious. Movement and space are key, but strangely restricted to the painting and the canvas. The artist creates an idiosyncratic admixture of figuration and abstraction that lies in a reduction of the depicted motifs, while nonetheless – or rather thus – grasping the essence. Paint is not so much a liquid as a substance. In technical terms, some time ago Bradford moved from oils to acrylics, supporting her particular attention to color and bodies and emphasizing painterly skills in executing the line, surface and shading. Finally, Bradford's use of light is special, as she makes her figures shine out.

Painting can do all this if the painter can. Katherine Bradford doesn't just do it, she does it day after day.

The exhibition is accompanied by a program of events and education, and a comprehensive publication by JRP/Editions, Geneva.

## Program

### *Artist Talk and Exhibition Tour*

March 16, 2024, 11 am

Katherine Bradford talks to Sandro Droschl about her work and gives a tour through the exhibition.

All events: [halle-fuer-kunst.at](http://halle-fuer-kunst.at)

Katherine Bradford (\*1942 New York, lives in Brooklyn and Maine)

Solo (selection): kaufmann repetto, Milan (2024, 2021), Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokio (2024, 2022), Kunsthalle Emden (2024), Frye Art Museum, Seattle (2023), CANADA, New York (2023, 2021, 2018, 2016), Campoli Presti, Paris/London (2023, 2021, 2019), Kunstmuseum Schloss Derneburg (2023), Portland Museum of Art (2022), Matthew Brown, Los Angeles (2022, with Sedrick Chisom), Hall Art Foundation, Reading, Vermont (2021), Carpenter Center for Visual Art, Harvard University, Cambridge (2021), Adams and Ollman, Portland (2020, 2018, 2016, 2014), Galerie Haverkamp Leistscheider, Berlin (2018, 2017), Galleria Monica De Cardenas, Milan (2017), Sperone Westwater, New York (2017), The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (2017)

Shows (selection): Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2023), Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland (2023, 2021), Kunsthau Nürnberg (2023), Anton Kern Gallery, New York (2023, 2022), Le Consortium, Dijon (2022), Bowdoin College Museum, Brunswick (2022, 2019, 2004), Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam/New York (2021, 2019), RISD Museum, Brown University, Providence (2021), Transcend, Alabama Contemporary Art Center, Mobile (2021), Pace Gallery, New York (2019), Prospect 4, U.S. Biennial, New Orleans (2017)

Her works are amongst others in the collections of Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Brooklyn Museum, Dallas Museum of Art, Menil Collection, Houston and the Portland Museum of Art.

We would like to thank kaufmann repetto, Milan/New York, CANADA, New York and Katherine Bradford for their generous and kind support of the exhibition.

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**Katherine Bradford**  
*Couple No Shirts, 2018*

Acrylic on canvas  
152 × 121.9 cm  
Courtesy of CANADA New York and  
Katherine Bradford; Jerry Speyer,  
New York



**Katherine Bradford**  
*Stripe Twins, 2019*

Acrylic on canvas  
152 × 121.9 cm  
Courtesy of CANADA New York and  
Katherine Bradford; Susan & Michael  
Hort, New York



**Katherine Bradford**  
*Superheroes, 2020*

Acrylic on canvas  
172.7 × 203.2 cm  
Courtesy of CANADA New York and  
Katherine Bradford; Murphy & Nancy  
Mladenoff, New York



**Katherine Bradford**  
*Water Lady, 2018*

Acrylic on canvas  
203.2 × 172.7 cm  
Courtesy of CANADA New York and  
Katherine Bradford; Susan & Michael  
Hort, New York



**Katherine Bradford**  
*Writers, 2019*

Acrylic on canvas  
203.2 × 172.7 cm  
Courtesy of CANADA New York and  
Katherine Bradford; Beth Rudin De  
Woody, New York



**Katherine Bradford**  
*Man in Tub with Legs, 2018*

Acrylic on canvas  
152.4 × 182.9 cm  
Courtesy of CANADA New York and  
Katherine Bradford; Susan & Michael  
Hort, New York

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