

Bradford J. Salamon, *Clare #5*, oil on panel, 2010



BY ROBERTA CARASSO

THE BODY AND SOUL OF ART

his composition becomes angular, revealing the subjects' state of tension and imbalance. When his people are deep in thought, he bathes them in softly glowing colors and radiant light. In Salamon's art, there is always a sense of hopefulness, even though we don't know what the person is thinking or whether there is resolution. But there is always a wholesomeness conveyed through the use of color, composition, light and dark, and believable positioning of each figure. No less important is that Salamon's portraits have a spontaneous quality, as if the sitter is also speaking to the viewer in a three-way conversation.

The soul of Salamon's portraits reveal honest moments of profound human emotion that transcend each setting — a young man and woman who discover that *Love is Complicated*, a teenager deep in thought in *Day Dreaming* or a mother and her young child enjoying a bedtime snuggle in *The Next Generation*. Each portrait is a reflective moment charged with a range of emotions — uncertainty, anxiety, contentment, or enormous love. These are subjects artists throughout generations have chosen as they portray the hopes, joys and

fears we all experience. In this exhibition, Salamon, a virtuoso modern painter, gives us a passionate series of soulful art.

Sherry Karver finds her subjects in public settings. She is drawn to vast urban spaces where crowds of people congregate — large train stations, busy shopping areas or packed city streets. By placing the individual in enormous crowds, Karver shows that each person is unique, worthy of being singled out from the masses. Her people remain anonymous; thus, the stories she writes on each painting are fabricated as she speculates on their individual lives in a poignant, often humorous, down-to-earth manner.

For this exhibition, two new concepts have evolved, expanding the soul of Karver's art — that each human being continually moves within time or space and in the very same time and space as others move. Karver has been drawn to the art of the great surrealist Yves Tanguy. A key element is Tanguy's unique use of space — realism in the foreground and abstraction in the background. Karver pays homage to Tanguy by applying his surreal sense of 20th-century space to her 21st-century cosmopolitan settings.

Karver snaps photographs on the streets of busy cities — New York, Chicago or San Francisco. After manipulating the image on her computer, meticulously arranging parts of one shot with one another, she arrives at a desired composition. She writes her own story about one or two of the people and then overlays the story on the black-and-white image. The final composition is enlarged and printed on archival paper. Now the work begins and Karver does her magic. She paints the image freely with lusciously colored oil paints, then coats the painting with resin to give the image strength and durability. The deep, rich gloss allows the viewer to see her own reflection on the shiny surface, making it seem as if the viewer is part of the painting. Lastly, in preparing the body of the art, the image is mounted on a wood panel.

While we relish a Karver painting, its movement, the ways she describes people, and the energy it conveys, we also savor the soul of her art, how she conceives an original expression of mobility using static art media — photography and painting — to depict the eternal human life forever passing through time and space.



Consider that each work of art has a body and a soul. The body is what we see initially — like meeting someone for the first time — its physical appearance, the mood it evokes, its subject matter, and unique features that first capture our attention. Both Bradford J. Salamon's and Sherry Karver's art are born from their insightful approach — conveying, as closely as possible, the human drama through painterly means. Each artist probes the inherent depth of their subjects and portrays them in ways that make them so vividly real that the effects remain with us even when the art is no longer visible.

The body of Salamon's oil on canvas portraits is an exercise in painting techniques, color combinations, uses of space, iconography, and the small details the artist incorporates into each image. Because Salamon is a master of details, his paintings contain far more than we can possibly see at first glance. When he shows the human inner struggle,

Bradford J. Salamon, *Whistler's Daughter*, oil on panel, 2010



Sherry Karver, *Homage to Tanguy*, photo images, oil, text and resin on wood panel, 2010

SEE IT

■ BRADFORD SALAMON ::

Through May 13 at JoAnne Artman Gallery, 326 N. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach
949.510.5481 :: joanneartmangallery.com
:: bradfordjsalomon.com

■ SHERRY KARVER ::

Through June 10 at Sue Greenwood Fine Art, 330 N. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach
949.494.0669 :: suegreenwoodfineart.com