

Binghamton University

The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB)

Research Days Posters 2022

Division of Research

2022

Color and Abstraction: Peter Bradley's Resistance Against "Black Art" Through Curation and Painting

Sherry Weng

Binghamton University--SUNY

Follow this and additional works at: https://orb.binghamton.edu/research_days_posters_2022

Recommended Citation

Weng, Sherry, "Color and Abstraction: Peter Bradley's Resistance Against "Black Art" Through Curation and Painting" (2022). *Research Days Posters 2022*. 133.

https://orb.binghamton.edu/research_days_posters_2022/133

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Division of Research at The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in Research Days Posters 2022 by an authorized administrator of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact ORB@binghamton.edu.

Color and Abstraction: Peter Bradley's Resistance Against "Black Art" Through Curation and Painting

The Politics

The Black Arts Movement

- 1960s & early 1970s: post civil rights era & height of Black Power Movement
- black art was praised in so far as:
 - it depicted the black struggle
 - it was seen to serve the fight for black liberation
 - however, black **abstract** artists were criticized for creating work that was viewed as having no social-political significance

Contemporary Black Artists in America

- The Whitney Museum's fall 1968 exhibit, "The 1930's: Painting and Sculpture in America" faced protest due to the absence of African American artists in the show
- In response, they created an exhibition of African American artists' work, "Contemporary Black Artists in America" in 1971
- aimed to showcase "Black experience" & the "black modernist's political capacity"
- despite that, the curator, Robert Doty, was white
 - Resistance from black artists
- twenty-four artists withdrew because
 - the museum refused to hire black curators or co-curators; and
 - the curator invited artists whose only similarity was their race, boxing black artists into a "marked" category



Peter Bradley's Response

The DeLuxe Show



John de Menil

- art collector and supporter of civil rights activists
- supported black artist and curator, Peter Bradley, in the curation of a modern art exhibit that didn't simply tokenize black artists

The DeLuxe Show (1971)

- was opened in a black neighborhood of Houston as the first racially integrated art exhibition in the US
- even though the show was in the ghetto, effort was made to create a beautiful contemporary exhibition space
- Bradley defied idea of "black shows and white shows" and promoted good black artists as simply "good artists"

Bradley as an Artist

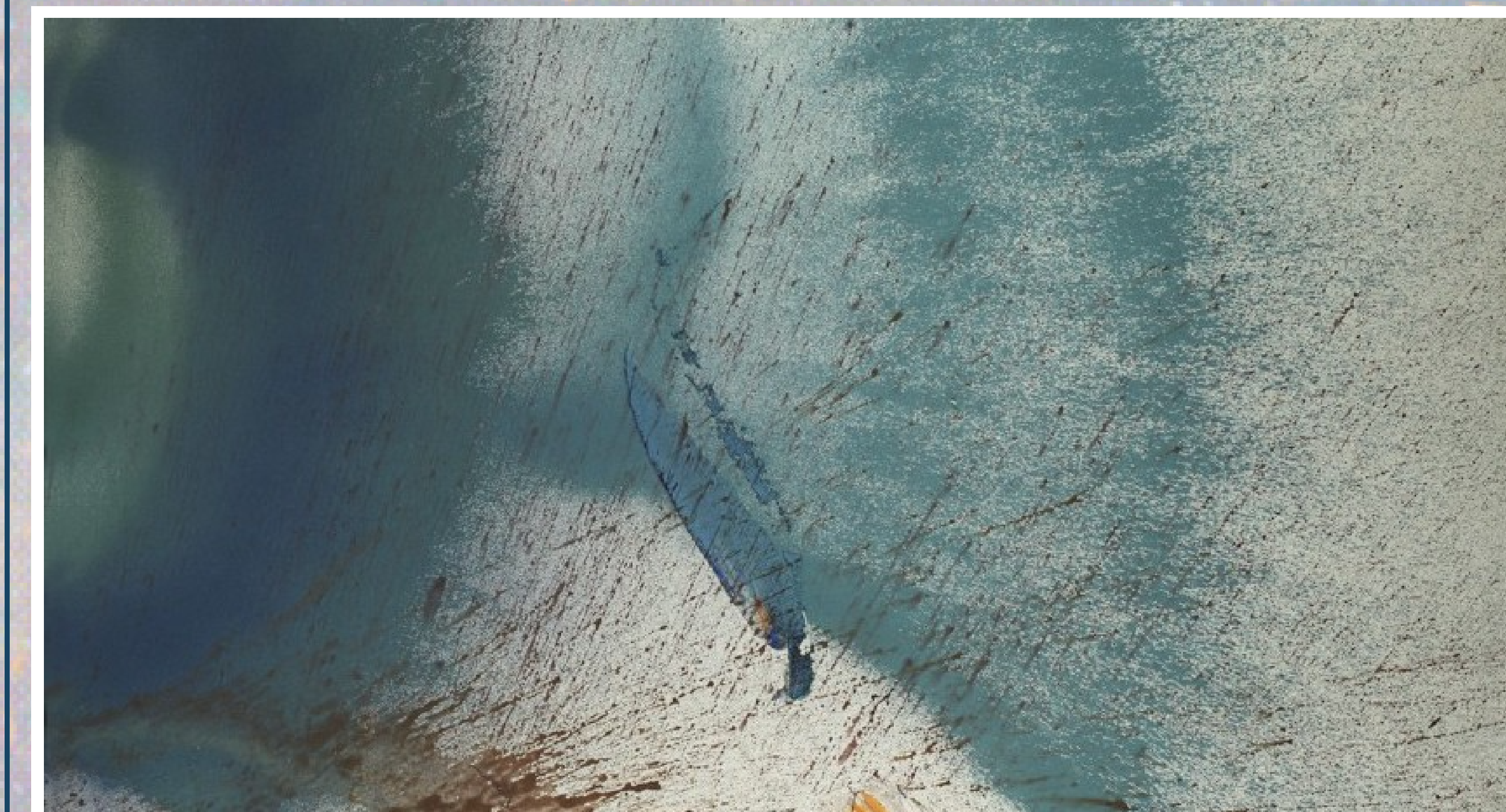
Color Field & Abstract Expressionist Painter



Bradley refused to submit to pressure for black artists to create figurative art directed towards the expression of the Black struggle

He adopted a nonrepresentational style

- abstraction
- color field painting (focus on "the interaction of colors upon the canvas" rather than representation or emotional expression)



Bradley, Peter. Linne II. (1974). Aquatec on canvas. 34 1/2 x 63 in. Binghamton University Art Museum, Bocour Collection.

References →

