

Flash Art

LOS ANGELES

SLATER BRADLEY

BLUM & POE

Slater Bradley's show stopper is a funny short video called *The Abandonments*, which recreates Gene Kelly's performance of *Singin' in the Rain* — including tap dancing

— at an abandoned insane asylum on Roosevelt Island off Manhattan.

Throughout the piece an animated rain cloud shadows our protagonist like a cartoon thought bubble with its own mind. The darkening force is a comic mirror of the dandy's sunny disposition — feinting right, feinting left, 'pissing down rain' when the Kelly-double emerges from a port-a-potty. Blackwell Island, formerly known as Roosevelt Island, was filmed by Thomas Edison traveling down the East River a century ago. In a projection by that name, Bradley takes Edison's film and superimposes his own footage of the derelict island upside down. The cityscapes act like a visual zipper opening time and space. Bradley's choice of stock, an obsolete Kodachrome Super 8, emphasizes the fissure and the stitch. Twinning something as fleeting as light is a poetic move for Bradley, whose past works have referenced 'the double' through an overdetermined conceit of his 'splitting image' "Benjamin Brock." Bradley's signature gold-marker C-prints play out that mythic self/other struggle with Brock in other parts of the gallery, like in a 'bipolar nebula' or portraits we alternately read as Echo or Narcissus. Forty contact prints of the Bradley/Brock doppelgangers posing multiply our associations of the boy-in-love-with-himself. But then a winsome mid-19th century piano with child-like drawings of suiciding killer whales carved into its ivory keys draws our attention from the center of the gallery, waiting for a score by Max Seigel, Bradley's talented collaborator in *The Abandonments*, to bring it back to life. Seen together, the smug triumph of the gilt portraits are just the other side of Roosevelt's dim pathos.

Carrie Paterson

R E V I E W S



SLATER BRADLEY, *Europa*, 2007. Gold marker on C-print, 40 x 76 cm. Courtesy Blum & Poe, Los Angeles. Photo: Joshua White.