

WHITNEY BEDFORD

Lives and works in Los Angeles

EDUCATION

- 2003 MFA, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
- 1999 Fulbright Visiting Artist under Professor Wolfgang Petrick, Hochschule der Kuenste, Berlin, Germany
- 1998 B.A., Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI
- 1996 Pont-Aven School of Art, Pont-Aven, France
Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh, Scotland
- 1993 Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA), Baltimore, MD

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2011 Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, Los Angeles, CA
- 2010 "Whitney Bedford (here and there)", Starkwhite, Auckland, New Zealand
- 2009 Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, Los Angeles, CA
- 2008 "Whitney Bedford", Art:Concept, Paris, France
- 2007 "Whitney Bedford: The Escape Artist Series", Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles, CA
- 2006 Art:Concept, Paris, France
- 2005 D'Amelio Terras, New York, NY
Cherrydelosreyes, Los Angeles, CA
- 2004 Art:Concept, Paris, France
- 2000 "Whitney Bedford", Hotel de Ville, Biot, France
- 1999 "Whitney Bedford", Fulbright-Kommission, Berlin, Germany
- 1998 "Whitney Bedford", BEB Gallery, Providence, RI
- 1997 "Whitney Bedford", Sokolofska #124 Space, Prague, Czech Republic

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2011 "Everything Must Go", A Project with Ceramica Suro Guadalajara, Mexico, organized by Jose Noe Suro and Eduardo Sarabia, New York, NY
- 2010 "Five from L.A.", Galerie Lelong, New York, NY
"Bagna Cauda", Gallerie Art Concept, Paris, France
"Houdini: Art and Magic, 1919-1949", the Jewish Museum, New York, NY, traveling to:
Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, CA
Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco, CA
Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Madison, WI

- 2009 "The Gleaners: Works from the Sarah and Jim Taylor Collection", Myhren Gallery, University of Denver, CO
- 2009 "This Is Killing Me", Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, MA
- 2008 Carlier Gebauer, Berlin, Germany
- 2007 "X - Snow Falls in the Mountains", St Paul St Gallery, University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand,
curated by Jan Bryant
- "Poker", Galleria Monica de Cardenas, Milan, Italy
- 2006 "Melancholy in Contemporary Art", Sommer Contemporary Art, Tel-Aviv, Israel
"Step Into Liquid", Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, CO
- "Peindre des images", Galerie de l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Quimper, France
- 2005 "CUT", Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, Los Angeles, CA
"Evidence", Inman Gallery, Houston, TX
"The Third Peak", Art:Concept, Paris, France
"Rogue Wave", LA Louver, Venice, CA
"Wunderkammer 2", Nina Menocal, Mexico City, D.F., Mexico
"Sad Songs", University Galleries, Illinois State University, Normal, IL
"Project Room: A Show Without Works", curated by Daniele Perra, Spazio Lima, Milan, Italy
- 2004 "summer group show", cherrydelosreyes, Los Angeles, CA
"Carpet Bag and Cozyspace", Healing Arts Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
"Rimbaud", Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium
- 2003 Black Dragon Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Track 16 Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
"MFA Exhibitions Show #1", UCLA New Wight Gallery/Kinross, Los Angeles, CA
- 1998 "New England Connection", Lanning Gallery, Columbus, OH
"Woods-Gerry Invitational Exhibition", Woods-Gerry Gallery, Providence, RI
- 1997 "Inagurative Show", Space 1026 Space, Philadelphia, PA
- 1996 L'Ecole Nouveau de Pont-Aven (The New Pont-Aven School Painters)", Hotel de Ville, Pont-Aven,
France
"Salon de Refuses", Gallerie M, Pont-Aven, France
- 1995 "Common Threads", Rites and Reasons Gallery, Providence, RI

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2011 Ollman, Leah, "Whitney Bedford at Susanne Vielmetter", Los Angeles Times, December 8
Wappler, Margaret, "On Shifting Landscapes", Los Angeles Times, November 9
Simpson, Ashley W., "Diving Into the Wreck", Interview Magazine, November
Goodrich, John, "Five From L.A.", City Arts, January 26
- 2009 Uchill, Rebecca, "This is Killing Me", Art Papers, November/December
Nys Dambrot, Shana, "July 2009 Artist Profile: Whitney Bedford", art ltd. Magazine, July
Miles, Christopher, "Whitney Bedford at Susanne Vielmetter", LA Weekly, July 1
Clotheir, Peter, "Art Rounds", The Buddha Diaries.com, June 29
Tran, Khanh T.L., "Memo Pad: A Portrait of the Artist", Women's Wear Daily, Vol. 197, Iss. 49,
p. 12, March 9
- 2007 Freeman, Tommy, "Reviews", Artweek, December/January

- Bedford, Christopher, "Whitney Bedford at Cherry and Martin", Art In America, Vol. 95, Iss. 11, p. 168, December
- Sonia Campagnola, "Live from Los Angeles" in Flash Art, n° 257, pp. 100-103, November-December
- Mizota, Sharon, "Whitney Bedford at Cherry and Martin", Art Ltd., November, p. 17
- Wilder, Matthew, "Critic's Pick", Artforum, October
- Myers, Holly, "Gallery World: Making a Scene", Los Angeles Times, October 17
- Brooks, Amra, "Must See Art", LA Weekly, October 10
- Knight, Christopher, "Around the Galleris", Los Angeles Times, October 5
- Wilder Matthew, "Whitney Bedford", Artforum, October
- 2006 Mendelsohn, Meredith, "The New Romantics", ARTnews, February, pg. 123
- 2005 Freeman, Tommy, Art Review, December
- Baldessari, John, "100 Future Greats: Whitney Bedford", Art Review, December
- "News & Features, Art Basel Miami: They're a Steal!", ARTINFO, December
- Ollman, Leah, "The Raw Power of Full Color", Los Angeles Times, September 14
- "LA Louver Catches Rogue Wave," Santa Monica Mirror, June 29
- Bennou, Kassiani, "The risk of Art: Yorgos Tsiibiridis Collection", Ozon, July/August
- Rogue Wave '05, exhibition catalog, LA Louvre, Venice, CA
- 2004 "Fertiles Textiles", Jalouse, November
- Brochard, Yves, "Mixed Paint: A Survey of Contemporary Painters", Flash Art, November
- Dagan, Philippe, "Le allusions fantomatiques de Whitney Bedford", Le Monde, October
- Brochard, Yves, "Whitney Bedford", Louise, September 11- November 6
- Selbach, Gerard, "Whitney Bedford", paris-art.com, September
- Bedford, Whitney, "Self Portrait", Tema Celeste, May/June, pg. 84-85
- 2000 Search for Art, catalog sponsored by Mandarina Duck
- 1999 "Whitney Bedford, An Artist in Berlin", Connections
- 1996 New England Connection, Lanning Gallery

AWARDS / HONORS

- 2001 UCLA Hammer Museum Drawing Biennial Winner, Los Angeles, CA
- 2000-03 UCLA D'Arcy Hayman Award, Los Angeles, CA
- 1998-00 Fulbright Graduate Fellowship, Hochschule der Kuenste, Berlin, Germany
- 1998-99 Karl-Hoffer Gesellschaft Atelier, Kuenstler Werkstatt Bahnhof Westend, Berlin, Germany
- 1997 Peggy Guggenheim Collection Studentship, Venice, Italy

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Collection Carlos et Rosa de la Cruz

The Saatchi Gallery, London

Francois Pinault

Collection Ginette Moulin / Guillaume Houzé, Paris

Eric Decelle, Bruxelles

Jumex Collection













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july 2009 artist profile **whitney bedford**



Whitney Bedford has been studying painting for decades, despite being just in her mid-30s. She was born in Baltimore, and was already accomplished at the easel before heading to the unlikely (for a painter) choice of RISD for her undergraduate degree, where her first job was printing Andre the Giant stickers for fellow RISD alum Shepard Fairey. She graduated in 1998, a few terms behind Laura Owens.

In 2003, she earned an MFA from UCLA, after first spending two years on a Fulbright studying architecture in Berlin, which she recalls as a "transformational city, full of optimism. And it's good to make work in an optimistic place." Local audiences first encountered her work in LA Louver's 2005 "Rogue Wave" show.

In keeping with her penchant for globetrotting, while she was headed to UCLA, Bedford also started spending lots of time in Rio de Janeiro. Then at a certain point, the disparate threads which she had been pursuing throughout her trans-global education began weaving themselves together in earnest. In Rio, her architect's heart fell in love with "the ghost of Le Corbusier" in the grand urban planning and choreography between the city and the sea. Her inner art historian became fascinated with devotional art and with shipwrecks, and with volcanic eruptions. A better ready-made metaphor than this last—the theme of her current exhibition at Susanne Vielmetter—can hardly be imagined. Like the shipwrecks and lonely icebergs, these powerful testaments to the beauty of Nature's destruction are rarely witnessed by human survivors, and make for rich psychological metaphors. Bedford readily admits that much of her practice has to do with working through events in her personal life; as these self-aware deconstructions advance to the public sphere, they cohere into suites that both illuminate and transcend her private inspirations.

Noting the prevalence of various art historical references in her paintings, she'll flash an infectious sideways grin and casually drop a remark like, "Oh yeah, there's *always* a little Géricault in there." Such influences and subjects persist in her work, even as she gives them her standard "dematerialization" treatment. "I take away form and replace it with emotion and palette," she explains, offering an upside-down color scheme where water is rendered in earth tones, and the sky and air have a toxic floridity. Her LA color sense is "artificial," all oranges and tawny gray, whereas in Brazil it was green, and in the South of France, blue, blue, blue. She works on panel partly because the wood has a symbolic resonance with her themes, and partly because she loves how it handles different kinds of paint.

Though she claims the work in the Vielmetter show is entirely intuitive, the scenes always hinge on a distinct horizon line and well-plotted economies of scale that render them legible. Her subject matter—swirling steam and smoke, expanses of water and air—is abstract already. In *Untitled (lovers)*, 2009 (oil and ink on panel, 60" x 84"), she hurls a fuchsia fireball and animates the scene with stark horizontal lighting launched by one water-mass at the other. *Untitled (black sun)*, 2009 (oil and ink on panel, 34" x 48") presents a luminous, shadow-tinged lavender sky, cupping the black disc of sun in a toxic yellow halo. Bedford's trademark slip of sunlight reflected at the horizon line, resting on the edge of the ocean, is a small but beckoning waver that activates the naturalism of entire volumes of space. Its appearance reminds the viewer that reality is being stripped of its form, the better to be symbolically explored and more truly represented—which, one can imagine Bedford asserting, is the point of art in the first place.

—SHANA NYS DAMBROT

Whitney Bedford's newest work can be seen at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, from May 30 - July 11, 2009.

"UNTITLED (BLACK SUN)"
2009
OIL AND INK ON PANEL
34" x 48"

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SUSANNE VIELMETTER LOS ANGELES PROJECTS



LA WEEKLY

Whitney Bedford at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects

By Christopher Miles

Published on July 01, 2009 at 4:07pm



Lovers (2009)

Whitney Bedford at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects

By Christopher Miles

You have to give yourself over to Whitney Bedford's paintings, which combine gestural brushwork with more discrete marks in what the exhibition checklist says is "ink" but appears to be some kind of marker pen, on panel. You have to be open to the possibility that within the clumsy, cartoonish and seemingly simple, you might be able to access the sublime, beautiful and complex. That's the opportunity upon which these lovely works deliver. A few, more drawn than painted, are more explicitly figurative and deal with Cleopatra at the moment of her reckoning, but the rest, more painted than drawn, are less specifically referential or representational than allusive. Bedford's paintings evoke Goya, which sounds grand anytime someone makes such a claim, and perhaps doubly so here given that most of Bedford's paintings are essentially mashes of smudges, daubs and dashes — more clearly akin to the works of late-modern painters like Philip Guston (in both his Abstract Expressionist and cartoonish phases), or Jules Olitski, who created something of a fusion of Ab Ex and Pop sensibilities. But they do in fact evoke Goya's plays of compositional turbulence, and atmosphere, and his working of point of view in relation to objects and the horizon to generate a sense of simultaneous placidness and trouble brewing. Bedford does a lot with a consciously limited vocabulary — mostly horizontal rectangles divided between ground plane and backdrop by low horizon lines, usually no more than a fifth of the way up from the bottom of the panel. She then drops in lumpy yet prickly forms — mounds of marks — either cut off at the bottom of the panel so as to foreground them; cut off by the horizon line so as to push them into the distance; or cut flat at the bottom so as to make them sit on the plane in middle space. But she tweaks them — in their relation to one another, in slight variations of shape, and in the variety of marks that comprise and orbit them — so as to achieve surprising variety, like a person giving a single word many meanings by means of inflection. Some suggest ships approaching (or sinking) in the open ocean (not surprising, as they often too are evocative of Turner); volcanoes, rocks or hillocks jutting from the land or seascape; bodies on a floor or bed; herds or hordes thundering in the distance; or explosions going off too close for comfort. Bedford succeeds at creating paintings that are pleasurable, humorous and even sweet, while also powerfully resonant.

Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects: 5795 West Washington Blvd., Culver City; Tues.-Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m., through July 11. (323) 933-2117 or www.vielmetter.com.

ART PAPERS

November/December 2009



THIS IS KILLING ME

NORTH ADAMS, MA

Whereas event-based and social practice works are often exhibited with materials documenting their production, few recent shows have taken the processes of solitary studio art practice as a topic, let alone a driving theme. *This is Killing Me* steps forward, a group exhibition focusing on the practice of the solo artist as producer (MASS MoCA, May 23, 2009–April 15, 2010). But fear not, this exhibition does not celebrate the triumph of creative authorship. On the contrary, it presents instances where artistic labor is a decidedly difficult, often anxiety-stricken enterprise. In the words of exhibition curator Diana Nawi, “Making work is a very bizarre thing.... You conceive of an idea alone, and execute it alone, and bring it into the public. It’s a very fraught experience.” The eight artists’ works on view enlist a variety of media, with effects ranging from humorous to fearful.

Sean Landers’ text-based paintings open the exhibition with self-exploratory dark humor. The 2007 work *LeGo My Ego* maps its own production through a set of overlaid flowcharts. In snippets of Landers’ thoughts, the work lays bare his rapid turns between confidence and inadequacy: the thought “You’ll be wicked happy about [the work]” connects with an arrow to “Yeah, and probably brag about it, inducing nausea in the reader.” Behind the uppermost layers of text, a broad-stroked statement is faintly discernable: “There’s a story in failure that’s as beautiful as the story of triumph, it’s a story I want.” Psychological excavations haunt other works in the show, including Whitney Bedford’s paintings of mangled hands and the dream journals that Shana Lutker kept between 2003–2004, where the merging of the quotidian and the fantastical is deeply relatable. While some dreams are recorded in detail, others are simply short and clear, as in the May 30, 2003 entry: “I had this huge installation. I was working on it. / There was a drive down a long road in a car, and I was met with many obstacles.” *House (1986–1996)* with *Art That I Dreamt That I Made*, 2005–2009, a maquette of Lutker’s childhood home filled with replicas of artworks from her dreams, accompany the journals. Obstacle returns as a theme in Marco Rios’ *Moving Equilibrium*, 2006, a video in which the artist competes with an enormous yellow level in a sport of his own design. The artist

Ruben Ochoa stands by as referee as Rios struggles to right the level before falling to the floor under its weight, defeated. On an arguably brighter note, Rios, whose sculpture of a blue demon *The Nightmare (Paxil Bay)*, 2008, refers to his own experiences with the antidepressant Paxil, good-humoredly tells me that he is less unhappy since he quit using the drug.

A number of works in the exhibition refer to the challenges of pursuing art as a profession. Andrew Kuo, whose witty graphs and charts measure his candid responses to nearly everything, presents three such works here. *My Relationship to Art as of May 10, 2008 (Crooked-Mouth Face)*, 2008, is an exercise in semi-competitive career comparison, with a bar graph measuring “Twelve Artists That I Wish I Was (Solely Based On Their Stuff).” In the next room, Kalup Linzy, in drag as Katonya, also faces the struggles of finding gallery representation and career success in *Conversations with Churen V. As da Art World Might Turn*, 2006. Two of “Katonya’s” gouaches are also on view. Karl Haendel’s installation of works on paper integrates references to his relationship to other artists and his relationship to his father. Joe Zane filled a vitrine with books and periodicals championing his own fame, such as a self-produced Phaidon monograph. In an excerpt from this piece, Julia Scher explains that the interviewer manipulates the artist into making statements, to which Zane responds:

Zane: Yuck. Can’t you ever fight the interviewer? You can’t just say “No. No. No. No.”

Scher: Yeah. “Don’t ever publish....” And that’s the thing they publish.

Zane: How terrible. It makes the whole thing so painful. I don’t want to do this anymore.

Even if this monograph, a hallmark of career success, is imagined, Zane wants out. Selected from MASS MoCA’s storage and kept dusty, his vitrine was covered with audience graffiti: two weeks into the exhibition, “Fuck art!” read one inscription. This felt antagonistic. But is his art practice actually killing him? I asked Zane this question at the opening, where he laughed it off. His wife, the artist Julia Featheringill, chimed in. “No, it’s killing me!”

—Rebecca Uchill

ABOVE: Marco Rios, stills from *Moving Equilibrium*, 2006, DVD documentation of performance, 5:03 minutes [courtesy of the artist]

Interview

November, 2011

By Ashley W. Simpson



DIVING *into the* WRECK

For her upcoming solo exhibition at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, 35-year-old artist Whitney Bedford works with a long-fostered set of personal symbolism. "I'm a contemporary icon painter," explains the Baltimore native, "so I take fragments of old nautical paintings and transform them into graphs or grids." Bedford's icons—shipwrecks ("for when I'm on the brink of something"), icebergs ("when I'm lonely"), and now lightning ("because of the cruelty, the luminosity")—take form as richly colored oil paint- and ink-drenched large-scale compositions that almost swerve into abstraction. They'll be shown alongside an eyeball sculpture—modeled after Bedford's own eyes to symbolize a second set of eyes in the gallery—and a lightning-inspired scent made from whale bile and seaweed, which will suffuse the space. "I have a whole vocabulary of icons," says Bedford. "It can be embarrassing, because you can walk into my studio and see what's going on in my life." —AWS.

Los Angeles Times | ARTS

Margaret Wappler, November 9, 2011



FRANCINE ORR Los Angeles Times

NOMADIC: Whitney Bedford, shown at her Santa Monica studio, has been all over the world and says "travel is how I recharge." Her show of conceptual landscapes opens Saturday at Susanne Vielmetter.

On shifting landscapes

Whitney Bedford's tumultuous paintings draw from her life.

MARGARET WAPPLER

Metaphors and visual symbols play a big role in conceptual landscape painter Whitney Bedford's life. Take what happened in 2001. The daughter of an international businessman and a flight attendant, Bedford impulsively jumped on a plane to follow a man she had a crush on to Antarctica. When she arrived in Ushuaia, Argentina, the southernmost city in the world and a port to the South Pole, she discovered he wasn't there.

"I was devastated," she said. A master's in fine arts candidate at UCLA at the time, she decided to stay for a couple of weeks and make the best of it. "I took flying lessons and used it as a metaphor for coming back up" from her emotional doldrums.

Now Bedford, 35, works out of photographer Uta Barth's former studio on the grounds of the Santa Monica Airport. But it's not aircraft that Bedford paints as much as shipwrecks, icebergs and lightning strikes, each one an active, often tumultuous, representation of her mood. Icebergs symbolize loneliness;

shipwrecks are upheavals in her emotional life. When she paints fireworks, it means she's in love.

A handful of the paintings focusing on lightning and accidents at sea, some as large as 8 feet by 12, will be on display beginning Saturday at Susanne Vielmetter, Bedford's second solo show with the Culver City gallery.

Drawing on her architectural training as an undergrad at Rhode Island School of Design, Bedford thinks of her paintings as grids first. She charts a meticulous seascape and ships with delicate, skeletal sails. But at some point before the painting is finished, she erases part of her work and fills it in with spontaneous, chaotic swoops of paint, a harrowing process that has the ability to make or break the piece.

"Conceptually, the paint is the destroyer," Bedford says, pointing at one of the stormier seascapes. "It sinks the image."

For Susanne Vielmetter, it was Bedford's risky process, as well as her balance of feminine and masculine aesthetics, that made her want to represent the young artist.

"Whitney's paintings don't have a specific feminist agenda," Vielmetter

said, "but there's an awareness of historical issues, and a handling of those issues in a highly idiosyncratic way that I like. She's playing with the male history of the ship, typically seen as homage to conquering new frontiers and wartime conflict."

And she's watched Bedford become more ambitious with scale in the last few years, making grander fields for the outbursts and disruptive brush strokes in her paintings.

"Whitney is an inheritor of the gestural brushwork of the abstract expressionists," artist John Baldessari wrote in *Art Review* in 2005. "She has a unique sense of color... I like the heroic romantic aura her work emanates."

Earlier in the year, Bedford traveled to New Zealand, Australia, Beirut and Jordan, among other places, often with friends in the dance-punk collective LCD Soundsystem. When she returned in the summer, she started making the bulk of the work for her new show.

"Travel is how I recharge," Bedford said. "I'm very nomadic that way. It's all about shifting my landscape."

margaret.wappler@latimes.com

Los Angeles Times

December 8, 2011

Art review: Whitney Bedford at Susanne Vielmetter



Whitney Bedford's hauntingly beautiful new works at Vielmetter draw from a strand of maritime painting tradition exemplified by J.M.W. Turner, incorporate a bit of the Gerhard Richter signature smear, and cast a loving backward glance at old engraved illustrations. They are temporal and stylistic hybrids that hold together spectacularly well.

Bedford has been painting shipwrecks for nearly 10 years and most of her recent works could loosely be categorized as such. Her real subject is the sublime — nature's fearsome, awesome power to evoke it and paint's exquisite potential to describe it, to become it. "Untitled (Yellow Swell)," among the smallest panels at just 18 by 24 inches, depicts a placid sea with electrifying intensity. The ocean is a thick slab of purple beneath an acid yellow sky; the stillness belies an atmospheric toxicity.

On the grand scale of the largest paintings (up to 8 by 12 feet), the L.A.-based Bedford keeps the horizon extremely low, texturing the roiling sea with dense black ink hatchmarks, dangling in the sky oddly languorous streaks of lightning, tilting ships in the tempest and staging a consistently tense friction between flat brown planes and luminous turquoise gestures, concrete gray and that buzzing, ozone-charged yellow.

A small group of glass vials and a vaporizer (made in collaboration with Dane Mitchell) are more esoteric, and less interesting, attempts at capturing a scent specific to the expanse and volatility of the sea. The paintings more than manage that visually, delivering both a jolt of immediacy and a lingering, time-release intrigue.

-- Leah Ollman