

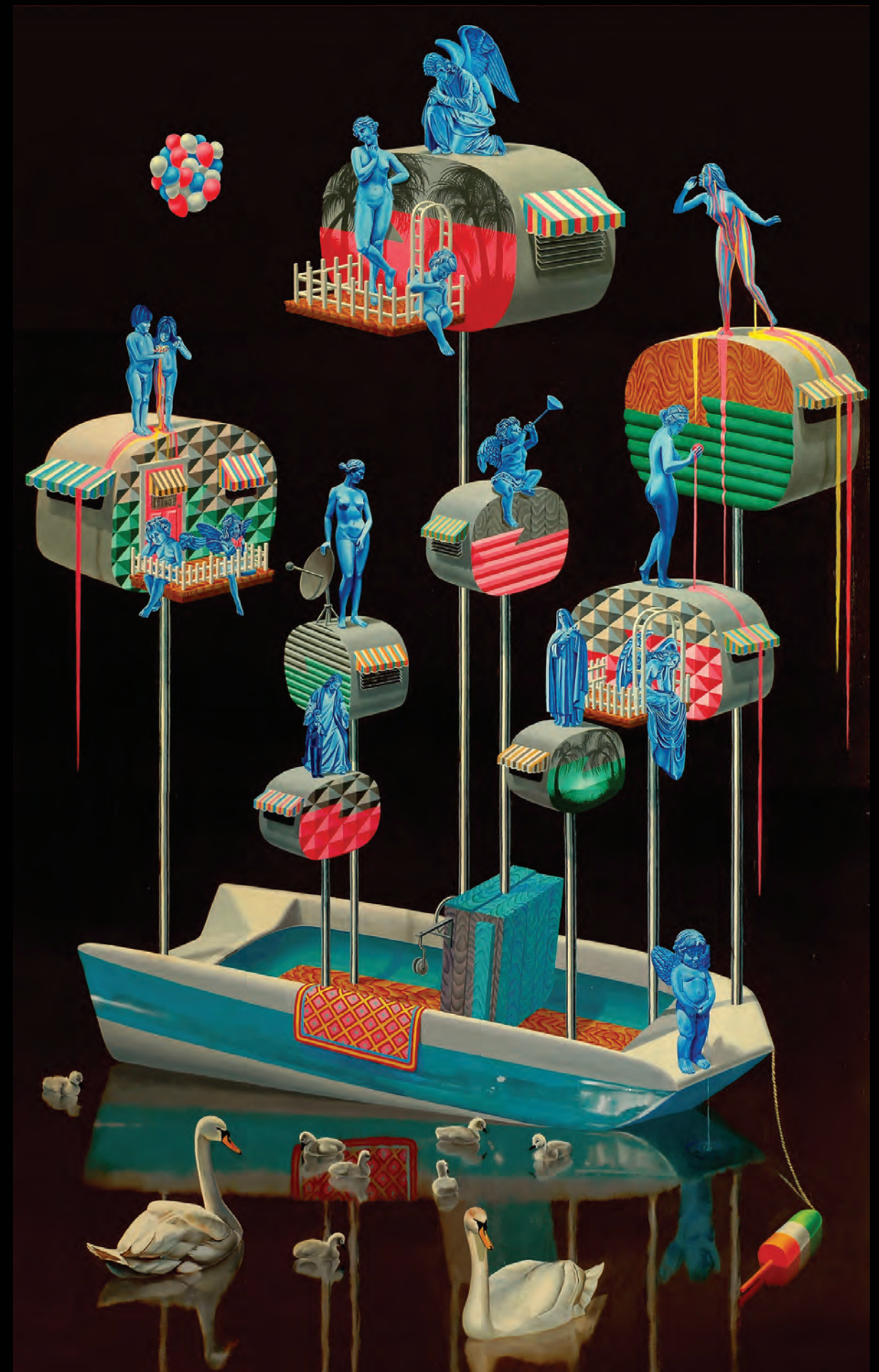
# Jaime Brett Treadwell

bluecanvas.com/jt04  
Philadelphia, PA, USA

Jaime Brett Treadwell was born and raised in a suburb of Philadelphia. He completed his formal art education at the State University of New York at Cortland, and went on to earn his MFA from the University of Pennsylvania in 2002. Treadwell's work has been exhibited throughout the United States and abroad, including New York, Miami, Boston, South Korea, Vancouver, Philadelphia, Dallas, and Chicago. Publications and reviews include *Juxtapoz* books, *JPeople* magazine, *Who's Jack* magazine, *New American Paintings*, *Direct Art* magazine, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and the *Miami New Times*. Treadwell lives and works in Philadelphia, where he is a full-time assistant professor of art at Delaware County Community College.



**Guns and Religion**  
Oil on panel  
152 x 122 cm



**Jeff Koons Lives Here**  
Oil on panel  
76 x 122 cm



*It is difficult not to see your work as a commentary on contemporary American kitsch. Would you say your work is explicitly about this or are there other themes at play?*

American kitsch is definitely a consistent major theme throughout my work. I use American kitsch as a vehicle to touch on various themes. My work tends to become visually overstimulating, incorporating multiple elements such as religion, high art, low art, historical art, contemporary art, ideal beauty, sex, sexuality, gender roles, and social identity, among other things. I like to dig around these issues and playfully experiment by

merging abnormal relationships. Recently I have been incorporating these ideas into pop-up or tent city-like communities. I imagine a subculture evolving from various American cultures where lowbrow and highbrow appear to exist as one. To achieve this, for example, I sometimes place a religious figure or a Greek statue on top of a camper or mobile home. Although these types of shrines, by way of lawn ornaments and such, exist throughout America, I enjoy taking it a step or two further. Americans have the freedom to display what is important to their identities, and I am fascinated to see how humans go about showcasing what defines them.

*Many of your pieces depict towers of people, trailers, and various objects assembled like neon monuments on a black void. Can you explain the reasoning behind your aesthetic choices here?*

I usually find myself painting two-dimensional versions of a sculptural assemblage of "found objects" that can also be used as a livable habitat for carnival or gypsy-like communities. Each element of the assemblage is a deliberate decision both formally and conceptually. I find myself adding, changing, and adding again, to the point where I often put myself in a problematic situation with regard to composition and concept. Most

*This Place Does Not Exist*  
Oil on panel  
122 x 152 cm



of my decisions are not predetermined, but in the end everything must work together like a well-oiled machine. I was once told by the artist Pepon Osorio in graduate school that "when you have a perfect marriage of form and concept, you have success." Since that point, I have been attempting to meet those standards within each painting. In *This Place Does Not Exist*, I used the Trans-Am phoenix symbol for what it represents. When I was younger, this symbol represented everything that was cool, awesome, and darkly mysterious. The image of the Trans-Am exuded unapologetic beauty, sex, and power. However, symbols can change meaning over time. One group of people may now view it as proudly showcasing masculine freedom, whereas another group views it as trashy, ostentatious, and embarrassing. These different points of view are what I enjoy mixing together. I love the dichotomy between meanings of imagery or symbols. When I am painting, I have the most fun when I can transcend the perceived limits of imagery and meaning into one glorious happy homogeneous place. I get a sense of personal victory if I can pull that off.

*The Second Coming*  
Oil on panel  
122 x 77 cm





*Do you think teaching art to others has influenced your work in any way?*

Absolutely... I have not taught painting very much, which may sound odd being that I am a painter. I teach mostly drawing, color and design, and 3-D design. I now realize that teaching, researching, and working with those three courses has definitely made me a better painter. I try to include more in my paintings than just the conversation of painting relating only to its history. Good painting, good photography, good sculpture, or just good art is all the same thing to me. I think art is more successful when it moves beyond the discipline and relates to much more. I believe that teaching subjects like 3-D design has helped me to consider more than just issues in painting.

*What is the art scene like in Philly right now?*

I think the Philly art scene is doing pretty good. We definitely have an abundance of artists, youth, and energy; however, the support from contemporary collectors is another story. I don't think we compare to NYC and LA in that regard, but times are changing and I see more and more interest. There have been various articles about Philadelphia being the sixth borough of New York City. I have met several "creatives" who have moved down here from NYC because it is a happening and affordable city to live in, and is still close to NYC. We also have amazing art schools here that pump out very talented MFA graduates each year. I also have met a few graduates from other blue-chip programs, such as RISD and Yale, who have decided to reside here. We have the Fabric Workshop and Museum, Vox Populi Gallery, the Artblog, and so many more amazing establishments for the arts. Philadelphia is becoming a hot spot...

*The Funeral*  
Oil on panel  
122 x 122 cm

