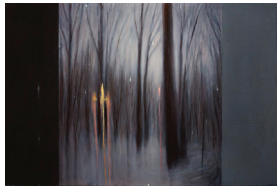


Adam Straus has always found inspiration in the work of the 19th century American landscape painters that portrayed the tremendous vastness and beauty of the country. His recent paintings at the Nohra Haime Gallery in New York take a distinctly 21st century approach, tweaking traditional painting styles. So as to offer insight for young artists today finding their way in the art world, we spoke with Straus about his early years in New York.

I was about thirty-three or so, and if I didn't do it then and soon, I wasn't going to do it; and if I didn't I would be really sorry at some point.

Adam Straus



Nohra Haime Gallery, New York

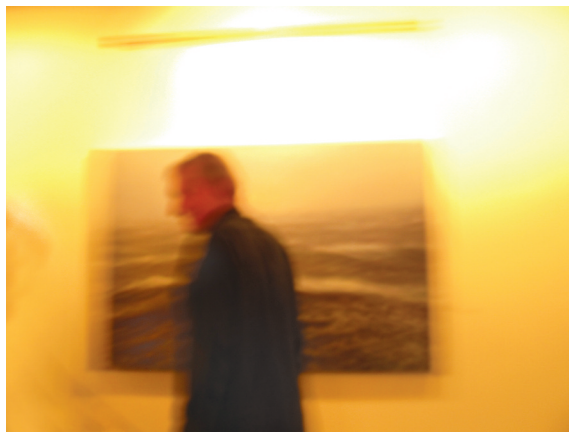
M. Brendon Macinnis

For probably most artists, it's their ultimate dream to make a living from their art, to kick that day job. You're a professional full time artist. Did you have to do other work to pay the bills, before arriving at a point where you could focus entirely on making art? Oh sure. I certainly did that for a number of years. Everybody has; but I have been incredibly lucky because I started showing with Nohra [Nohra Haime Gallery] in 1990, before I even moved to New York. At the time, I was living in Tallahassee, Florida. I had a small show of paintings that I was doing, in the late 1980s.

These were small paintings encased in lead that were very much objects, but they involved images, and it kind of was a marriage between my love of the object and the photographic image. Then I moved to New York in 1990, and I worked for an art moving company in Soho for several years. Nohra kept showing me every year, either a small or big show, every year since 1990. Then in the mid 1990s, the gallery

sales with Nohra were enough that started making my living just from art.

Was it that you were being paid a percentage from sales after each show, or that you were getting paid a guaranteed amount? No, I think I just got to the point where I made enough to survive. I don't remember her guarantying anything; I just remember that at some point she said that I could stop driving the truck. For a long time I was working



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4 and 5 days a week, but with this job, it would go 10 to 13 hours, only making \$10 an hour driving a truck. And I realized that I could make almost the same amount working 3 days a week as opposed to 5 days. So I cut it down to 3 days a week driving, so that I could have time to make art. Nohra kept selling for me, but they were small paintings at about \$1,200 each.

How much does the artist and gallery get from that? It's fifty, fifty now; pretty much every gallery is 50% today.

Do any galleries still do 60%, 40%? I don't think a gallery has been 60%, 40% since Rauschenberg had it with Castelli [Leo Castelli Gallery] or somebody. It was 60% for the artist and 40% for the gallery from what I heard. This is just probably rummer, but he was the only artist that Castelli had that got 60%. That shifted years ago, in the 1980s probably.

You have been showing with Nohra for a long time now.

Yes. In my case, I've always felt that Nohra did a fantastic job handling my work. At a certain point, before I was with Nohra and more established, I spent a lot of time taking slides and sending slides out [to gallery owners] and I would go to galleries and ask them to look at it. Then I had gotten a gallery in Miami, Ann Jaffe Gallery, to show my work and that's actually where Nora first saw my paintings; she bought a couple of them. She is in Miami a lot, and she would often go to the Ann Jaffe Gallery.

I was delivering a painting to the gallery one time and she was there; and I was just thinking about leaving Tallahassee and moving to New York because I was at that point where I felt like I had to do it, you know, go to the city. I love the city [New York] and I wanted to try to live here. I was about thirty-three or so, and if I didn't do it then and soon, I wasn't going to do it; and if I didn't I would be really sorry at some point.

So I was telling her that, and a few weeks latter I got a call from Nohra saying that she would like to do a show of some of my work. That was before I even moved.

So there was a confidence there from the start, that's great when that happens between artist and dealer. Well, she knew that I wanted to paint. **M**

Photo Captions: (left to right): Adam Straus *Colors Of Winter*, 2013-14. Oil on canvas, 48 x 72 x 2 inches. / Adam Straus (photo of artist) / Adam Straus *Woods And Clearing: Winter*, 2013-14. Oil on canvas, diptych, 48 x 80 x 2 inches. Courtesy: Nohra Haime Gallery, 730 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10019