

POUGHKEEPSIE JOURNAL

MAY 29, 2019

INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED ARTIST, SAUGERTIES RESIDENT PETER BRADLEY EXHIBITS 'NEW WORK'

by Linda Marston-Reid



Peter Bradley's "Stone House Series" can be viewed at the exhibit in Emerge Gallery.

Peter Bradley has led an enviable life as a successful artist and curator, and was at the forefront of the contemporary abstract painter's movement in the early 1970s. For the past few decades Bradley has resided in Saugerties, where he continues to create new work. For the month of June, Emerge Gallery in Saugerties has mounted a one-person exhibit of his paintings.

Bradley developed his contemporary painting style as a young man in the 1970s. His work began to be known in what art critic Clement Greenburg called "color field" painting. Other painters using this style include Kenneth Noland, Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman.

As Bradley continued to work as a painter during this time, he made connections while supporting himself through work as a gallery salesperson, handling such artists as Picasso and Calder. These contacts led to Bradley being invited to exhibit his work at The Whitney Museum in the "Contemporary Black Artists of America" show. But Bradley wanted his work to be considered with other contemporary artists, not simply as a black artist, and he declined to show.

The criticism among the black community was that there was little black participation in organizing the Whitney exhibit, and in response, the Menil Foundation planned to fund an exhibit that would place black artists and curators at the center of organizing an exhibit of contemporary art. Bradley was invited by the Menil Foundation to curate "The DeLuxe Show" in Houston, which he organized integrating some of the most well-known contemporary artists in 1971 with no regard to race. This was a turning point for black artists that began to change the dialogue about which artists get representation.

In today's contemporary art world, black artists have been recognized for their contributions to American culture and their work is now featured more frequently in group exhibits and increasingly in one-person shows.

Bradley continued to work through the decades and his work is held in the permanent collec-

tions of museums across the United States, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, The Museum of Fine Art in Houston, The New York City Museum of Art, African American Museum in Dallas, The Fogg Museum at Harvard University and Johannesburg Art Foundation in South Africa.

The exhibit at Emerge Gallery shows Bradley's recent work that fills the gallery space with its explosive energy. The painting, "We Should be Heroes," is a large abstract work that celebrates the relationship of colors to each other. Bradley is a master at the placement of colors and textures which creates a space that brings to mind a topographical map. "Not Quite Here" is another painting with surfaces reminiscent of the earth. The shock of the brilliant spring green at the top of the painting contrasts with the charcoal lava-like color and textures in the body of the artwork.

The exhibit in its entirety is a rare opportunity to appreciate one of the region's internationally known local artists who has produced a lifetime of important work.