



Timothy Callaghan
Nightshift

WBg

William Busta Gallery
Cleveland Ohio

Cover (detail):
Moondog, 2010
acrylic and oil on canvas,
43 x 44"

Right:
Rock Stars, 2010
gouache on paper, 14 x 15"



Shadow Boxer, 2010
gouache on paper, 15 x 15"



Moondog, 2010
acrylic and oil on canvas
43 x 44"

Timothy Callaghan
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Oct 15–Nov 13, 2010

William Busta Gallery
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Callaghan's Nocturnes

(*Night Time Is) The Right Time*,

2010

acrylic and oil on canvas,

67 x 52"

Like most Clevelanders, Tim Callaghan commutes to work. On the short five-mile journey from his home to his studio in the St. Clair-Superior neighborhood, he drives by gas stations, restaurants, bars, car dealerships, homes, shops, and warehouses. Callaghan's newest body of work portrays these urban sites at night, creating quietly dramatic paintings that are based on movement but encourage pause.

Callaghan is part of a generation of artists whose sincere, idiosyncratic approach to genre painting has reinvigorated figuration in contemporary art. Callaghan paints evocative scenes of his immediate surroundings using techniques that exploit the tension between surface and illusion. He balances figurative elements crafted from memory, with intuitive mark-making and painterly brushstrokes, to call attention to the act of seeing as a process of discovery and association. The gentle friction of representation and abstraction in Callaghan's paintings slows down the viewing process so that the world unravels gradually before us.

The notion of slowing down is particularly significant to his latest series, which hones in on the sites that Callaghan passes swiftly on his daily commute. To create these works, Callaghan used a low-grade cell phone camera to capture the cityscape at night along his drive. As indistinct as the commuter's passing environment, these grainy digital photographs provided a basic foundation for Callaghan's initial, richly detailed gouache-on-paper compositions. He selectively translates these drawings into larger oil and acrylic paintings, exchanging the sketches' tightly-rendered, illustrative quality for painting's more corporal, expressive features.

Callaghan's use of black canvas as the backdrop for his atmospheric paintings is a simple shift with dramatic effect. In leaving parts of this rich surface blank, the canvas becomes more than negative space; it functions as another component—another character—in each narrative. In most cases, it serves as the night, the rich dark shadow that either envelops or accentuates each surface along Callaghan's commute. However, in works like *Moondog* (2010), the raw canvas becomes the protagonist, in this case a brawny dog surveying the environment.

Like watercolor paper—that unforgiving surface that requires a temperate, often calculated approach by the artist—the black canvas obliges Callaghan to slow down and make measured advances with color and form. Areas of rigorous detail are balanced by confident applications of pure hues. In (*Night Time Is) The Right Time* (2010), broad ribbons of pinkish red soar across the sky in stark contrast to the fragile diamonds and rippling white lines of the fence and pool below. Floating pale yellow orbs signifying light posts are minimal counterpoints to the grids of meticulous brickwork in *Shadow Boxer* (2010). Pulsating with figurative imagery and nonrepresentational forms, Callaghan's paintings reveal their narratives gradually and subtly all the while acknowledging the presence (and history) of the flat picture plane.



The movement (or, rather, the things that move) and the light are two other important characters in the *Nightshift* paintings. Comprehensively, this body of work is built on movement. Individually, subjects like bicycles, cats, Firebirds, tinsel, and snow seem to pause momentarily under Callaghan's brush before moving slowly, even surreptitiously, across the landscape. All are struck by a moody light that ranges from prosaic to magical. It is a hazy wet reflection in an asphalt driveway, a buzzing vibration around a neon bulb, a luminous blue halo around a pregnant moon.

As the title *Nightshift* implies, this exhibition signifies certain changes in the artist's work. Callaghan's decision to create paintings based on local, recognizable sites represents a new appreciation for the artistic and social relevance of regionalism. Callaghan finds aesthetic virtue in a prevalent, ordinary experience among Midwesterners. With an invigorating combination of figuration and abstraction, the artist decelerates our commutes and offers a refreshing vision of the world that usually just passes by. Neither nostalgic nor ominous, Callaghan's Nocturnes portray Cleveland's weathered urban areas with honesty and expressivity, revealing the quiet drama and modest beauty of our cityscape.

Timothy Callaghan

Born 1976, Toledo, OH
Resides in Cleveland, OH

Education

2005 MFA, Kent State University, Kent, OH
1999 BFA, Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland, OH

Solo and Two-Person Exhibitions

2010 *Nightshift*, William Busta Gallery, Cleveland, OH
2009 *Saint Clair En Plein Air*, William Busta Gallery, Cleveland, OH
2007 *First Time, Long Time*, William Busta Gallery, Cleveland, OH
2005 *Untitled*, 1300 Gallery, Cleveland, OH (two person)
2005 *Good Intentions & Empty Promises*, Kent State University Gallery, Kent, OH (MFA Exhibition)

Selected Group Exhibitions

2010 *Let's Go Enjoy Nature!*, Seraphin Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
Empty Time, The Fridge, Washington, DC
2009 *Color As Structure*, Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York, NY
Light of Day, William Busta Gallery, Cleveland, OH
2008 *Summer Painting Exhibition*, William Busta Gallery, Cleveland, OH
2007 *The Big Bang*, Spaces Gallery, Cleveland, OH
Revive, Zygot Press, Cleveland, OH

Awards

2009 Nesnadny + Schwartz Visiting Critics Program Winner, MOCA Cleveland, OH
2005 Nesnadny + Schwartz Visiting Critics Program Winner, MOCA, Cleveland, OH
1997 Eastman Painting Prize, Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland, OH

Professional Experience

2008–10 Visiting Assistant Professor, Oberlin College, OH; Visual Problems: Painting Fundamentals
2006–Present Adjunct Faculty, Cleveland Institute of Art, OH; Foundation Drawing Instructor/Painting Instructor/Color Theory Instructor
2006–Present Adjunct Faculty, Cuyahoga Community College, OH; Drawing/Visual Design/Color Theory/3D Foundation Instructor
2003–05 Graduate Teaching Assistant, Kent State University

Collections

The Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, OH
The Cleveland Artists Association, Cleveland, OH

Bibliography

Douglas Max Utter, "The Right Stuff: *Light of Day* Artists Keep it Together," *Cleveland Scene*, April 1, 2009
Douglas Max Utter, "Unnatural Habitats: Tim Callaghan Makes a Place For Paint In the World," *Free Times*, Volume 14, Issue 53, April 25, 2007
Dan Tranberg, "Returning Gallery Director Busta Displays Work of Emerging Artist," *The Plain Dealer*, April 20, 2007
Michael Gill, "Bang, Bang: CIA Alumni Make Some Noise At Spaces," *Free Times*, Volume 15, Issue 19, September 12, 2007

Born Under a Bad Sign, 2010
acrylic and oil on canvas
45.5 x 50"

