

EDWARD THORP GALLERY
Press Release

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Reviews: New York

Katherine Bradford

Edward Thorp

Katherine Bradford's "By Life & By Land" was a thoughtful and appealing, if slightly uneven, show of 20 paintings falling into three basic categories: figures, boats, and figures on boats. All successfully transported viewers into a whimsical world that is at once serene and dynamic. Movement seems suspended. Sailboats, canoes, and cruise ships are poised motionless against the suggestion of a horizon; rotund, partially defined figures also appear stationary amid bright washes of color. Action is always impending.

One room featured three large paintings, each portraying a solitary cruise ship. It was these canvases that best communicated the mysteriousness of Bradford's narratives. In *Liner in Sight* (2006), an orange ship floats in a sea of creamy vermillion; a row of tiny white figures exits the liner's belly and appears to wander toward the horizon. Is it water or cloud?

In another room, the large *Last Days of Splendor* (2006) depicts a richly robed queen standing beside her throne, surrounded by figures on a delicate, translucent stretch of yellow. Some of her companions, including an unmistakable court jester, are bright, but others, defined by thin brushstrokes, fade into soft whispers of form.

The luminous figures and compelling suggestions of a story line that animate the large paintings were missing in the small canvases here, such as *Beach* (2007), its spiritless female nude rendered in pale, flat contour.

The most successful works were the figures on boats. In *Desire for Transport* (2006), a cluster of dark canoes carries luminescent characters clad in glowing, almost transparent costumes. It is unclear whether they are light or matter, human or simply shape. —**Molly Birnbaum**



Katherine Bradford, *Desire for Transport*, 2006, oil on canvas, 54" x 72".
Edward Thorp.