

"Takin' the Riverboat Out on Snake Lake: Eliot Greenwald @ Harper's Books, NYC," *Juxtapoz*, January 27, 2021

## JUXTAPOZ

Art & Culture

### Takin' the Riverboat Out on Snake Lake: Eliot Greenwald @ Harper's Books, NYC

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Since first introducing the *Night Car* concept with a limited edition book and an accompanying solo show back in July 2020 at [Hesse Flatow in NYC](#), [Eliot Greenwald](#) has been intensively experimenting with this deceptively simple composition. After a solo show with mostly small scale paintings at [Taymour Grahne Projects](#) back in November, and participation in a couple of group exhibitions, [Harper's Books](#) recently announced the representation of Brooklyn-based artist with a solo exhibition of thirteen new oil stick paintings, *Takin' the Riverboat Out on Snake Lake*.

While we genuinely enjoyed the small-scale works that originally introduced this body of work cause of their precious, semi-sculptural appearance, the new, big-scale works are armed with a full set of new qualities that are utilized through his signature concept. Using this familiar yet ambiguous setup,

the textures and marks created with oil sticks give the work a new layer of intense tactile peculiarity. Still playing with the infinite polarities of perspective, the snapshots of a vehicle approaching from in between the two hills continue the ongoing ride that Greenwald has been taking us on. With misshapen canvases evoking the thought bubble of sorts, the dreamy, semi-fantastical ambiance becomes more real and the premonition of a never-ending narrative sets off.

"The shape of my canvases is a bi-product from an entirely different series of paintings I made a few years ago," Greenwald told *Juxtapoz* about the coincidental use of such distinctive format. "I spent 19 months replacing every VHS tape in my collection with facsimiles made from canvas and acrylic paint wrapped around woodblocks that were the exact shape and size of the tapes. I recreated all of the details with my best attempt at trompe l'oeil. The titles, the faded price tags, the worn box corners, and the tiny pictures of the star of the movie or the production company's logo. This is where the shaped canvas came from." Over time, this aspect has become an integral part of the *Night Car* works adding to the artist's fascination with the uncertainty of time. As the manifestation of the ever-present entropy, these imperfect formats are suggesting the passage of time needed for a rectangle to lose its precise rectangle-ness. "Time also helps us quantify how painting, as an expression, reforms," the artist continues explaining the conceptual aspect of this mystifying feature of his works. "From the vague shape of a cave wall, to the rigidity of the classical, to the morphings of the contemporary. My canvas shapes are representative of times beat and what that rhythm does to an object or idea."

Such a persistent approach to elaborating a simple idea is the pillar of the now recognized image that Greenwald has been working with almost exclusively for the past year or so. "I have found that my experience making these new works in many ways seems congruent with a conceptual theme within the entire series, the phenomena of superposition," he explains the way that his practice connects with the theme that set off the original idea. "The measurable occurrence of the same particle existing and reacting to stimuli in two separate places at the same time." While the material and the physical size of these works is completely new and unfamiliar to the artist, their composition and basic elements are simply repeated from his earliest drawings in the series. Just as driving down the unknown road feels exciting and intriguing while it is an automatic behavior at the same time. "Simultaneous familiarity and mystery," Greenwald accurately sums up both the enthralling imagery and the creative process leading to them. —*Sasha Bogojev*

***Eliot Greenwald will be in a group show at Hesse Flatow in February and a first solo in London at Taymour Grahne Projects in October.***