EST. 1870

ART
WALLY FINDLAY

SIMEON BRAGUIN

UNTITLED DECADES

WALLY FINDLAY GALLERIES
Palm Beach : (561) 655 2090 / palmbeach@wallyfindlay.com

Simeon Braguin
(1907 - 1997)

This unknown Ukrainian immigrant became a leader in New York fashion illustration, an American war hero, and a modern artist who was as possessed by sailing as he was in forging his own abstract style in painting. Quietly and privately he produced an enormous body of work, mostly canvases. And despite his approach of making painting enjoyable and "accessible" to everyone, he never talked about what his works meant to him. He rarely exhibited, but when he did critics never compared his style to those of his peers, even though he was generally regarded as a member in good standing of the 'New York School'.

Braguin was born in Kharköv, the Ukraine, on January 12, 1907 to Anna and Yalöv Braguin. The Braguin family were White Russians, and loyal to the Czar. In 1917, at the outset of the Russian Revolution and Civil War, they fled to New York, where Simeon's father supported his family as a merchant.

As he grew up, Braguin took art classes at Columbia University and the Art Students League, with Boardman Robinson. There he fell in love with fellow student, Lenna Glackens. Lenna was the daughter of William Glackens, one of the leaders of the Ashcan School. It is likely that, with William Glackens support, Braguin held his first exhibition, in 1931, at the Marie Harriman Gallery in Manhattan, followed closely by a second at the Daniel Gallery. During that period, Braguin quickly developed into an accomplished photographer and gained more than a passing acquaintance with Alfred Steiglitz and Georgia O'Keeffe.

Like many artists of the Depression era, Braguin relied on work in the field of illustration for sustenance by 1932, he was a staff illustrator for Vogue, a position which brought him high visibility in the world of fashion. His illustrations appeared in many magazines, including Mademoiselle and the Saturday Evening Post. He quickly rose to become art director for Vogue, working closely with its leading photographers, Edward Steichen and Cecil Beaton.

On the outbreak of World War II, Cecil Beaton left Vogue to work as a photographer for the British Ministry of Information; Steichen joined the U. S. Navy and formed a unit to photograph aviation combat. Braguin took a more daring step. He became a spy. In addition to being multilingual (he spoke Ukrainian, French, and Italian, as well as English), Braguin was a photographer – all skills needed by the Office of Strategic Services. His reconnaissance photographs proved essential to the success of many Allied bombing missions. After successfully completing ten daring missions, Braquin sensed he was tempting fate and happily accepted an offer to "retire" with honors.

During the 1950s, Braguin's unique amalgam of art and design was passed along to a young disciple named Andy Warhol. Warhol had arrived in New York in 1949 Warhol produced many assignments under Braguin's commission and direction. It was natural that Warhol's drawings from this period should reflect his strong attraction to Braguin's light and playful style.

From the early 1980s onward, each of Braguin's paintings is marked by carefully balance geometric shapes, painted in unique hues of pastel color. These geometric shapes of color never bear a sharp precisionist edge; rather, they are purposely softened with a rough finish. The translucency of the color fields show that he worked and reworked these sections, layering one color atop another until he achieved the desired effect of establishing a careful harmony of shape and color.

Untitled, 1985 • 26 X 30 inches • Acrylic on canvas • 129364

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“From the early 1980s onward, each of Braguin’s paintings is marked by carefully balance geometric shapes, painted in unique hues of pastel color.”

Untitled, 1989 • 40 X 50 inches • Acrylic on canvas • 128140

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Untitled, 1983 • 34 X 344 inches • Acrylic on canvas • 128123

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Untitled, 1988 • 48 X 60 inches • Oil on canvas • 128149

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Palm Beach : (561) 655 2090 / palmbeach@wallyfindlay.com

Untitled, 1986 - 89 • 40 X 50 inches • Oil on canvas • 128138

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“He (Braguin) rarely exhibited, but when he did critics never compared his style to those of his peers, even though he was generally regarded as a member in good standing of the ‘New York School’.”

Untitled, 1983 • 44 X 34 inches • Oil on canvas • 128125

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Untitled, 1983 • 26 X 30 inches • Acrylic on canvas • 129360

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Palm Beach : (561) 655 2090 / palmbeach@wallyfindlay.com

Untitled, 1986 • 65 X 50 inches • Acrylic on canvas • 129346

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Untitled, 1985 • 28 X 30 inches • Acrylic on canvas • 129363

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Palm Beach : (561) 655 2090 / palmbeach@wallyfindlay.com

Untitled, 1988 • 48 X 64 inches • Acrylic on canvas • 132886

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Palm Beach : (561) 655 2090 / palmbeach@wallyfindlay.com

Untitled, 1986 • 50 X 40 inches • Acrylic on canvas • 133629

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Palm Beach : (561) 655 2090 / palmbeach@wallyfindlay.com

Untitled, 1977 • 34 X 344 inches • Acrylic on canvas • 133630

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NOW ON VIEW IN PALM BEACH

MON - SAT
10 AM - 6 PM

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