



Allen Bentley, *Firecracker*, 2008
Oil on Canvas, 52 x 52"

Extravagance!
By ALLEN BENTLEY

30 September – 1 November, 2008

Opening Reception with the Artist
First Friday, October 3rd, 6 - 8:30 pm
Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10am – 6 pm

Allen Bentley's dynamic figures come together in his most recent collection of paintings titled, *Extravagance!* The show will run from September 30 – November 1, 2008, with an opening reception First Friday, October 3rd, from 6:00 - 8:30 pm.

The figures in Allen Bentley's new work are like the exclamation point on the end of his show title: a bang of high volume. By abandoning his usual background technique (saturated color fields), for white grounds, figures explode from the 52 x 52" canvases. Skirts turn, hair flies, and the relationship between couples are examined "through the dynamics of motion." Pushing away, leading toward, teasing with a sway of the hips and a flick of the wrist, the couples in *Extravagance!* are charged, vibrant and engaged. By changing the style of the "stage" his dancers perform upon, Bentley has heightened the conversation between them, creating a grand spectacle.

Susan Isaacs discusses in her catalogue essay on the exhibition, "...Bentley's work is more similar in composition and lighting to Degas's performance images like *Miss Lala at the Cirque Fernando* of 1879 than to the more delicate ballet images. Degas utilizes intense colors and extreme angles. *Bang* and *Jet* by Bentley build on Degas's exploration of new ways of thinking about space; Bentley utilizes even more highly saturated colors than the well-known nineteenth-century artist. Degas too enjoyed popular entertainments, and produced many studies of dancers and singers. Degas and Bentley both depict performers. Here, Bentley utilizes the dancers' poses to examine their relationship with each other, while Degas's dancers were isolated individuals or anonymous members of a troupe."

Allen Bentley was born in 1972 in Charlotte, North Carolina, and currently resides in Ithaca, New York. He received his M.F.A. from the University of Pennsylvania in 2000 which followed his studies for a B.F.A. Cum Laude degree in Painting, Drawing, and Printmaking from Western Carolina University, Cullowhee North Carolina in 1996. This is Allen's fifth solo show at the Bridgette Mayer Gallery.