

TIME AND MOTION

Paintings by Ralph DeAnna

August 7–November 8, 2009



The Bridge, 2009, oil on canvas

RALPH DEANNA IS CHASING TIME. Influenced by Marcel Proust and his classic attempts to “see” time and unravel memory, DeAnna plays with time and space in his seemingly representational paintings. Whether composed of distinct scenes or a single scene depicted from multiple points of view, his paintings convey a continuum in time rather than telling a specific story.

While DeAnna often sets his paintings on the familiar streets of Brattleboro, Vermont, he sees his work as being about time rather than place. His subjects are purposely vague, allowing him the latitude to move away from narrative and work with light and color. He seeks to embody iconic moments contrasting a separate, perhaps isolated, individual with a broader unity. In this way, the artist hopes to help us develop a sharper sense of our own identity.

Like the storyteller in an epic tale, DeAnna sees all views simultaneously. In *The Bridge* he shows a woman in the (central) foreground driving a car, with four views of the same bridge surrounding her in the background. Viewers have much to ponder: If we are meant to see this young woman in motion, which direction is she coming from or going to? What do the other images of the woman represent? Why are there four views of the same bridge? Is it not the angular bridge (perhaps metaphorically spanning past and present time), rather than the woman, which is the real focus of this painting?

DeAnna sometimes frames his scenes like movie stills, controlling the information in each separate but related frame. Night intrigues him, making the familiar seem magical and romantic, and allowing many sources of light to become reflective elements. In *Night and Day* we see the same street twice, but our eye must quickly solve the puzzles of subject, time of day, light, characters.

Reflection and Traffic further reveals the artist’s fascination with night and reflected light. On one side of the painting a young woman stares at the softened, reflected image of herself and the street behind her in a shop window; on the other side she walks through traffic in the harsh lighting of the street itself. DeAnna’s female figures, not yet adult, seem not fully present—as if they are crossing unawares into a new zone of time.

The studies in this exhibit represent the artist’s experiments with juxtaposing images from photographs he has taken. Created quickly on tracing paper, these smaller and more loosely painted works push the connection between the concept and what will become the finished picture. DeAnna explains that “a study is a way to work from the original inspiration—an inspiration not always known to me.” In the studies he is free to substitute or reposition part of a composition to try to achieve his desire. As he explains, “Perspective and pictorial space aren’t enough—I am working to create a passing of time.”

Linda Rubinstein, Guest Curator

Brattleboro Museum & Art Center

10 Vernon Street • Brattleboro, VT 05301 • www.brattleboromuseum.org • Open 11–5 • Closed Tuesday & Wednesday except by appointment



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Hours and Accessibility

Open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 Closed Tuesday and Wednesday except by appointment.
 Closed Labor Day.
 The Museum is wheelchair accessible. An ASL interpreter for the hearing impaired will be provided if requested two weeks in advance of tours or programs.

Admission and Parking

BMAC members free
 Adults \$6
 Seniors \$4
 Students \$3
 Children 5 and under free

Parking is available in front of the Museum.

Museum Shop

The Museum Gift Shop, free to the public during regular Museum hours, features an assortment of cards, games, books, prints, and educational and gift items, including work of many local artists.

Group Tours

Docent-led tours of the Museum for groups are available by appointment. Call the Museum for information.

Looking Back 2008
 oil on canvas
 16 x 43

Coincidence 2009
 oil on canvas
 26 x 40

Study for Reflections and Fragments 2007
 oil on paper
 19 x 43

Reflection and Traffic 2008
 oil on canvas
 28 x 38

Electric Bouquet 2009
 oil on canvas
 30 x 40

Study for Coincidence 2008
 oil on paper
 19 x 24

The Bridge 2009
 oil on canvas
 24 x 60

Night and Day 2009
 oil on canvas
 30 x 40

Study for On the Verge 2009
 oil on paper
 19 x 2

All works are on loan courtesy of the artist. Dimensions are height by width, in inches.



Looking Back, 2008, oil on canvas



Reflection and Traffic, 2008, oil on canvas



Night and Day, 2009, oil on canvas