

*Tinker Tailor
Series*

Part 1&2

PATRICK WEBB



Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor,
Rich Man, Poor Man,
Beggar Man, Thief.
Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief.

Or what about a cowboy, policeman, jailer, engine driver, or a pirate chief?
Or what about a ploughman or a keeper at the zoo,
Or what about a circus man who lets the people through?
Or the man who takes the pennies on the roundabouts and swings,
Or the man who plays the organ or the other man who sings?
Or what about the rabbit man with rabbits in his pockets
And what about a rocket man who's always making rockets?
Oh it's such a lot of things there are and such a lot to be
That there's always lots of cherries on my little cherry tree.

TINKER TAILOR SERIES
Part I & II

Patrick Webb
an installation of paintings

September 29- October 24, 2015

reception : October 1, 6-8 PM

back cover : *Cowboy*, 60 X 30", o/l, 2015

front cover: *Sailor*, 60 X 30", o/l, 2015

All paintings, 2013-15, 60" tall 20, 30 or 36" wide



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That Rare Mask that Identifies Its Wearer

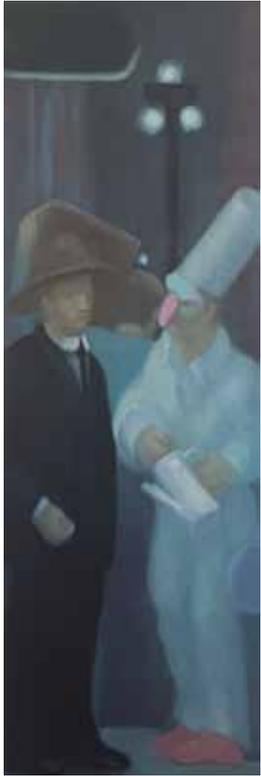
Jonathan D. Katz

Punchinello's mask, the singular constant in the pictorial world of Patrick Webb, is in the form of a cock, a mask that is also a dick. Stay with that metaphor a little, and it opens up to a wide expanse of contradictory possibilities in queer life: queerness as a kind of camouflage or cover for the many other, non-sexual things we are; as an identity category that sums us up, that literally becomes our face in the eyes of others—or ourselves; as the token of a sexual universe in which we are both the object of other men's desire, and ourselves desiring, a blessed relief from the closet in which desire always moved in one direction only, always out towards others. This dick/mask materializes the paradoxical construct we call the closet, that identity that by definition must always leak evidence of the very queerness it is intent on denying, for if it were watertight, it wouldn't be the closet but a seamless example of the heterosexuality.

The point is that Punchinello's mask opens up a space in which our sexuality is cleaved from the rest of what

we are, and in so doing, it runs counter to the false unity we generalize as our identity. For the mask we wear that is our own queerness is at once blessedly right about us and woefully misleading. We are not the equivalent of our sexuality, even though in these times, queer sexuality is now perhaps the most salient thing about us.

Of course, the cock/mask that Webb's Punchinello wears was not his invention, but borrowed from the *Commedia dell'arte* tradition. The figure of Punchinello, called Punch in English, has always worn a mask with a beaked nose, albeit that mask is nearly always black, and the nose more fully integrated into it. Made a figure of ridicule, conniving and often violent, Punch is hardly a model citizen. Rather, he's a comic figure whose defining characteristics are both his wily ways and his general excessiveness. Punch is thus made over into an apt figuration of queerness through this fraught combination of a camouflaged, yet excessive, performance of selfhood. He is as ripe an analog to queerness as one can encounter in the *Commedia dell'arte* tradition.



Tinker



Tailor



Soldier



Sailor

In Webb's appropriation of another veritable tradition, the *Tinker, Tailor...* nursery rhyme, all the inherent, deeply buried queerness of the Punchinello figure is surfaced and exposed. He becomes a queer everyman in an all male world, his social standing highly variable, but his essential queerness at once his superficial costume and his deepest core identity. Whether dressed as a cowboy in a gay bar, pickpocketing as two men talk in Wall Street cocktail party, or working as a cop or a jailer, Punchinello occupies both sides of all our familiar polarities: rich and poor, empowered and oppressed, a judge and a crook, a soldier, sailor or doctor. He's everyone and thus no one. He has no essential characteristics, save for his mask. This series of beautiful, richly colored and mysteriously atmospheric paintings thus asks the question that is thankfully increasingly possible to consider. What are we, *what is it to be queer*, when sexuality ceases to signify any defining, important or even identifiable difference?

August 2015

Jonathan D. Katz directs the doctoral program in Visual Studies at the University at Buffalo. He curated *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture*, the first queer art exhibition ever mounted at a major US museum, which opened at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, winning the Best National Museum Exhibition award from the International Association of Art Critics and the best LGBT non-fiction book award from the American Library Association. His current exhibition is entitled *Art AIDS America*, opening in Tacoma in October, the beginning of a three museum national tour, accompanied by a substantial new book.

A pioneering figure in queer studies, Katz was the first full-time American academic to be tenured in the field and founded and chaired both the Harvey Milk Institute, then the largest queer studies institute in the world, and the Queer Caucus for Art of the College Art Association. He also co-founded Queer Nation, San Francisco, and the Gay and Lesbian Town Meeting, the organization that successfully lobbied for queer anti-discrimination statutes in the city of Chicago. He is the president of the new Leslie Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art in New York City, where he has curated numerous exhibitions.



Richman



Poorman



Beggarman



Thief



Doctor



Lawyer



Indian Chief



Cowboy



Policeman



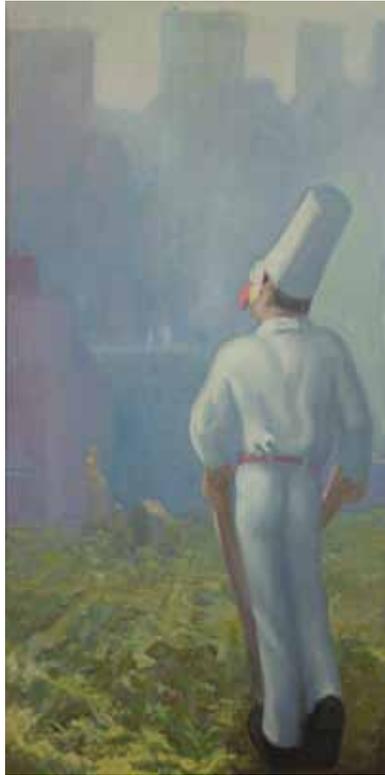
Jailer



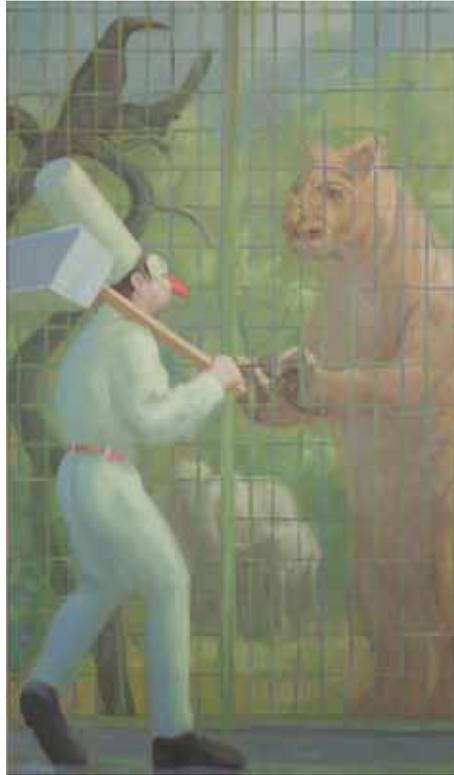
Engine Driver



Pirate Chief



Ploughman



Zookeeper



Circusman



Swings & Roundabout



Singer & Organist



Rabbitman



Rocketman



Tinker



Tailor



Soldier



Sailor



Richman



Poorman



Beggarman



Thief



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Ploughman



Zookeeper



Circus Man



Roundabout & Swings



Singer & Organist



Rabbitman



Rocketman

Artist Notes

Over the last few years I began thinking about how surviving the worst of the HIV epidemic that killed so many of the people I knew, changed my outlook on being and the future. With the help of Visual AIDS and The Painting Center I curated and organized a show, *The Sword of Damocles*, in 2011 that explored how the work done by a selection of artists changed as we witnessed, sero-converted, and survived, the darkest moments of the epidemic. The experience of writing the essay and being interviewed about the exhibition precipitated intense self reflection. As I have always liked painting, poetry, song and fiction that explores an artist's changing sense of being, I realized I wanted my paintings to do that — so the 25 year arc of my PUNCHINELLO series goes from the intense tragedies of the 1990s, into the resurrection and rebirth of the early 2000s, and now into a sense of possibility.

Since late 2013, I have been obsessed by the simple rhyme of *Tinker Tailor*—I love the seeming banality of the list that in verses and versions expands and resonates with associations and confluences. Umberto Eco says we make lists because we are afraid

of dying. I agree, and would add we make lists to understand and to make connections. I enjoy the John Le Carré novels that use the rhyme. In them, the characters' search for information is indirect—the questions asked reveal as much about the questioner as the answers reveal about those questioned. This is how art and the imagination work too—through implication and within ambiguities. So my ubiquitous PUNCHINELLO explores a series of activities. He inhabits the roles of the rhyme. It is a journey of possibility rather than of death and loss. I thought at first I would paint only one verse of 11 canvasses; then the discovery of a second verse precipitated 12 more canvasses. Further research revealed a third version that added another 19 characters bringing the series to 42 paintings. Then I had to write my own list, my own libretto, and now I am planning 60 canvasses. The sequence, like many of my recent series, is malleable—interchanging the placement of the paintings brings to light new connections, possible narratives and causalities that underscore the niggling strangeness of life, with its interconnectedness and unknowability. This catalog documents, at various stages of completion, the first 23 canvasses and drawings.

—Patrick Webb, September, 2015

All Paintings 2013-15, 60 inches tall and 20, 30 or 36 inches wide; medium: oil on linen
All Drawings 8-10 inches tall various widths; medium : white gouache, walnut ink, pen, & sponge

Special thanks to the PRATT Faculty Development Fund for its support of this project

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SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2014 FIRE! Rice Polack Gallery Provincetown, MA
2013 LOVE'S PROGRESS: 1989-2013, The Painting Center , NYC
2012 ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT, The Painting Center
2012 PAINTINGS, Rice Polack Gallery, Provincetown
2011 NIGHT & DAY, Julie Heller Gallery, Provincetown
2010 PUNCHINELLO AS OTHER, The Painting Center
2008 25 YEARS OF WORK, Provincetown Art Museum.Provincetown
2007 PROVINCETOWN-NEW YORK, Julie Heller Gallery
2005 CHEAT, Julie Heller Gallery, Provincetown
2003 HOME, Julie Heller Gallery, Provincetown
2002 PUNCHINELLO'S CITY, CJG Projects, NYC
2001 PUNCHINELLO YOUNG , Julie Heller Gallery
1999 IN NEW YORK WITH PUNCHINELLO, Erector Sq .New Haven
1999 PUNCHINELLO UNDRRESSED, Julie Heller Gallery
1998 PUNCHINELLO WORKS OUT (PWO). Cortland Jessup, NYC
1996 PUNCHINELLO GOES WEST, Julie Heller Gallery
1995 PUNCHINELLO IN AMERICA, 55 Mercer Gallery , NYC,
1993 PUNCHINELLO PAINTINGS, Amos Eno Gallery, NYC
1987&5 ALPHA GALLERY, Boston, MA

SELECTED GROUPS EXHIBITIONS

- 2015-17 ART AIDS AMERICA, curator Jonathan Katz & Rock Hushka, ONE Archives Gallery & West Hollywood Library, Los Angeles; Tacoma Museum of Art, Tacoma, WA; WA Zu,,NY
2015 ON THE DOMESTIC FRONT, cur J. Saslow, Leslie Lohman Mus.
2015 DOGS AND CATS, cur Grimes and Lalehzar, Mark Miller Gal, NYC
2015 I WANTED BODY AS FORM AND VICE VERSA Stiegler, Vis AIDS
2014 SECRETLY, FREQUENTLY (COWBOY DRAG), Easton, Vis AIDS
2013 AMERICAN NOIR INTO A DARK PAST, curator Atkins, Vis AIDS
2012 NO WASTED WORDS NO ILLUSIONS, cur Northrop , Vis AIDS
2011 THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES, cur Webb, The Painting Center
2007 ECLIPSE, curator Laura Gilbert, Visual AIDS Web
2005 MALE DESIRE, curator J. Weinberg, Mary Ryan Gallery, NYC
2005 THE BODY AND ITS DANGERS, curator Patrick Webb, Ptg Ctr
2004 ARTIVIST FILM & ART FESTIVAL, Egyptian Theater, Los Angeles,

- 2004 PYROLYSIS, curator Virgil Wong. Visual AIDS Web
2004 NEO QUEER, CoCA, Seattle, WA
2003 STIRRINGS, curators Dirk Dhener and Sharp, Visual AIDS Web
2002 TRANSFORMATIONS, Sakia City Museum Gallery, Osaka, Japan
2001 SELF INTEREST: Autobiography and Myth In Recent Figurative Art, cur Nancy Grimes, RC FINE ARTS, Maplewood , NJ
1998 EMBODIED FICTIONS, curator Carr, Saint Mary's College, MD
1998 TROUBLING CUSTOMS, Ontario College of Art & Design Gallery Katherine Lane Weeds Center, The Sch. of the MFA , Bos
1995 THE COMMON MYTH: icon and symbol in art today, cur Ludwig Datone ' , Park Avenue Atrium, NYC, NY
1990 SELECTIONS, curator Connie Butler, 55 Mercer St., NYC, NY
1990 POSITIVE ACTIONS: VISUAL AIDS, Clocktower Gal., Longwood Gallery, D.C. 37 Gallery, New York, NY
1988-90 ART AND THE LAW; West Co. multiple venues
1989 "...the Subject is AIDS", Nexus Art Center, Atlanta, GA
1987 "CURATOR'S CHOICE", curator Bill Arning, BWAC, Bklyn, NY
1982 EVERSON BIENNALE, curator Nancy Hoffman, Everson Mus, NY

SELECTED PUBLIC & CORPORATE COLLECTIONS

- BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY, Boston, MA
CHASE BANK, New York, NY
GLICKENHAUS & CO., New York, NY
HORTON & CALAMFIDE, New York, NY
INTERNEURON INC., Boston, MA
JANE VOORHEES ZIMMERLI ART MUSEUM, Rutgers U, N. Brunswick, NJ
LESLIE LOHMAN MUSEUM , New York , NY
OTIS ELEVATOR, New York, NY
PIER-FINE ASSOCIATES, New York, NY
PROVINCETOWN ART ASSOCIATION & MUSEUM, Provincetown, MA
ROSE ART MUSEUM , Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
QUEENSBORO COLLEGE MUSEUM, CUNY, Queens, NY
MICHELLE ROSENFELD, INC., FINE ARTS, Ramsey, NJ
SHARF MARKETING GROUP, New York & Boston
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-OSHKOSH, Oshkosh, WI

