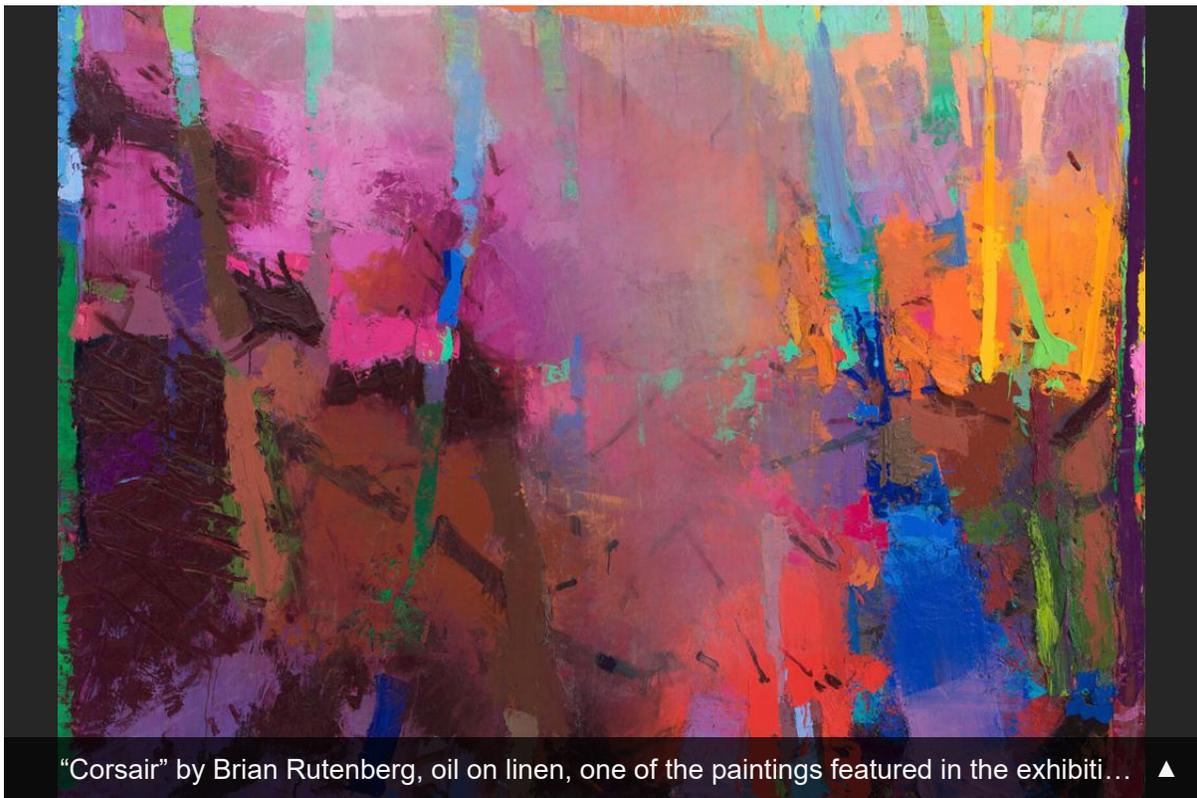


Art

RENOWNED ABSTRACT ARTIST BRINGS VIBRANT OIL PAINTINGS TO BBAC

Renowned abstract artist brings vibrant oil paintings to BBAC



“Corsair” by Brian Rutenberg, oil on linen, one of the paintings featured in the exhibit... ▲

By **Stephanie Sokol** For MediaNews Group

Apr 9, 2021



With Frank Sinatra playing softly and a view of the Empire state building out the windows of his art studio, Brian Rutenberg keeps his focus on the canvas.

He locks the door, sets up for the day, and spends time brushing rich oil paint onto large-scale Belgian linen, working to use shape and color to bring a cohesive story and flow between 12 paintings of one collection.



“Point of Pond” by Brian Rutenberg, oil on linen, one of the paintings featured in th... ▲

“My philosophy is that to paint a landscape, you must sit with your back to the window,” Rutenberg says.

Rutenberg was born and raised in Myrtle Beach, S.C., but now lives in New York City. He draws inspiration for his abstract landscapes from both the low-country swampy nature he observed as a kid and the bright neon elements of signage and amusements in the beachside town.

His renowned paintings tend to “leave out the middle ground” of a scene, stemming from the way he viewed the world as a kid — in worm’s eye view, lying on his stomach and looking up to take in the world around him.





"The greatest compliment I get is when someone looks at my paintings and says they don't look like traditional landscapes, but I feel that I've been there," he says.

Over his 45 years as an artist, Rutenberg's approach has evolved. One of the biggest lessons he says he learned was to narrow the subject and focus of each painting rather than trying to include too much — knowledge passed to him from his teacher, Michael Tyzack. Rutenberg. Now he aims to "simplify and get down to the essence."

He has worked in multiple media throughout his art career before settling into his current palette. Beginning with watercolor at age 10, he moved on to acrylic and finally oil, which he favors now. He says oil is "really exemplary," and helps him achieve "saturated and delicious color."

"A painting shouldn't do too many things," Rutenberg says. "What changed for me was learning not to bring an entire globe to a painting, just doing one thing. The physical presence of being in a landscape and having that sensory feel of sounds, smells and texture and putting right in front of you, in a way it's been a simplification or distillation of what I'm trying to show in my heart to the viewer."

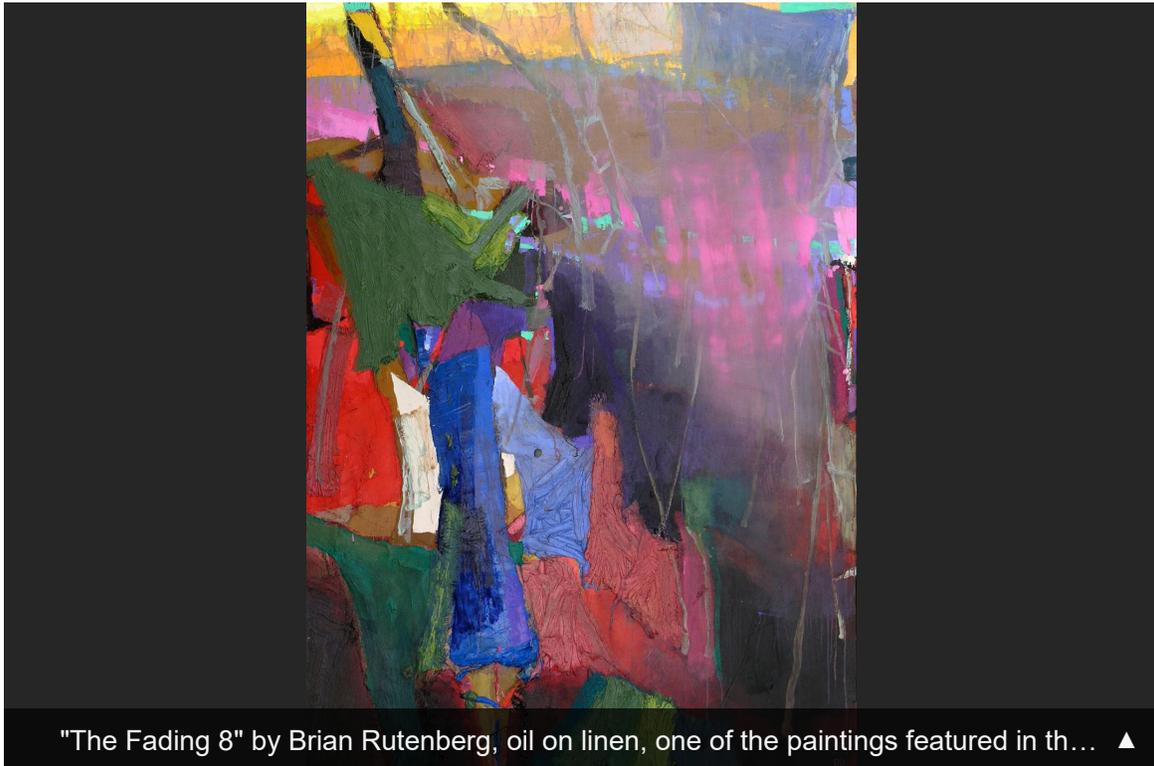


Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center will highlight works from the past 10 years of Rutenberg's career in "Pine, Palm & River." BBAC president Annie Van Gelderan curated the show along with Michela Lorens at Forum Gallery in New York.

Featuring a variety of forms, scale and subject matter, the exhibit will showcase Rutenberg's range and the evolution of his painting style.

Rutenberg has had more than 250 exhibitions in the United States and around the world throughout his career.

He connected with the BBAC when he was asked to jury a show there in 2009 and was warmly welcomed. The staff stayed in touch and supported his art over the years, so he says he was happy to have this exhibit mounted there.



"The Fading 8" by Brian Rutenberg, oil on linen, one of the paintings featured in th... ▲

For Rutenberg, the chance to have people view his art in person is always an intimate and beautiful opportunity. He wants viewers to realize that when they look at his art, they see things from the perspective of which he painted it, and each painting is a joint effort between those observing and the artist who created it.

“You’re sharing the physical space,” Rutenberg says. “It’s very important to have the physical presence of the view in front of the physical subject.

“I believe that painting is the most empathetic of all art forms. When you look at the painting, you’re standing in the exact same spot the painter did when they worked on it, sharing that physical space.”



“Estuary,” an oil painting by Brian Rutenberg, is one of the paintings featured in th... ▲

[View on theoaklandpress.com](http://theoaklandpress.com)



If You Go

- Pine, Palm & River
- Through April 22
- Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center
- 1516 Cranbrook, Birmingham
- 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Mon.-Thurs.; 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fri.-Sat.
- View the show virtually at bbartcenter.org/brian-rutenberg-pine-palm-river/