

## DAVID BAILIN

David Bailin's fascination with the momentary circumstance of the person defines his drawing practice, which is born of a desire to wrestle with and tell a story. In each thematic series Bailin develops, this narrative functions as an allegorical testimony of the effects of familial, cultural, and political histories on perception and impetus. Responding to a Russian Jewish ancestry and contemporary American politics, Bailin shoulders a self-described paranoia and questioning, juxtaposed with a passion for a personal vision of justness. Inspired by the stories of Franz Kafka (1883-1924) and contemporary novelist Haruki Murakami (the profoundly infinite effects of one's actions), Bailin fashions his narrative scenes with a character, a set, and a "piece of business," as he calls it. These elements invite viewers, through beautiful and frenetic marks on paper, to recognition, humor, empathy and finally to a foreboding sense of shared experience in the point Bailin makes.

The person or persona and his narrative circumstance may originate for Bailin from an inner struggle, something witnessed, or more recently, a revelation brought about in a dream. Bailin's studio contains boxes of magazine and newspaper images of people, whose stories can be derived from their clothing, gestures, stances, and settings. These become his models and set the stage in his drawings. Characters in the series *Dreams and Disasters* engage in actions that represent fanciful and self-preserving responses to uncertainty. More abstract in their narratives than previous compositions, these drawings offer a reading that may include humor, through a blunt relationship between the title of the artwork and the figure's "piece of business," but more likely reveals unease, for which we as viewers have myriad explanations.

Bailin seeks an experience of struggle in making the work, as if he is in dialogue with his character, who argues with Bailin about the situation in which the artist puts him but ultimately accepts or settles into his circumstance. In Bailin's hands the mark of charcoal expresses directness and dynamism, both as the artist makes the mark and

as the viewer reads it. As the story unfolds in the artist's studio, marks and forms are placed and erased and placed again, sometimes so much that a hue emerges from the residue of medium, which itself lends meaning to the scene. Bailin's lines, like his stories, convey unrest and yet have a softness and sense of order that reveal an underlying appropriateness—that all is right in the moment.

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*Marking a Course*

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