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More on Propaganda in Art

a second look at Bo Bartlett



by Miles Mathis

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this is a review and opinion piece*

I have found that most Americans—and most people generally—have a very low tolerance for the truth. They pay a constant lip service to the truth, but most can't stand to be in the same room with it for more than a few odd seconds a year. But a few people still hunger for the truth, and will seek it out even though it end up giving them a temporary fit. These people are my readers.

I know that even my most die-hard readers are having trouble digesting my recent papers, but fortunately or unfortunately (depending on how you want to look at it), the mountain just gets steeper after this. Look on this paper as a bit of a breather. Although it may tax your lungs a little, it is nothing compared to what I have in store for you soon.

Over the last six months, we have discovered that the [CIA is behind Modern Art](#), the Modern museums, and the Modern market. We have also discovered more recently [the role of money laundering](#) as one of the reasons for that control. Today, we will ask if that control extends to parts of the Realist market.

We (or at least I) have assumed that the big fish gave up on Realism about a century ago. They switched to Modernism, which they discovered was far easier to manipulate. But since the government agencies now have their fingers in just about everything, we should expand our analysis and suspicion to every market. We should never assume that any market is too small for manipulation, especially a market that is part of the media. Art remains part of the media, and the CIA and other government agencies have long known the power of media to sway opinion. So we should never have assumed Realism was too small to notice. Although they have been trying to destroy Realism for most of the

last century, what was left of it has not been free of manipulation—as we will now see.

Everything below is just my opinion. That opinion is based on the evidence I will give you, but it is nonetheless opinion. It may be true or not. I give you the facts and you decide. I don't offer anything here as proof, only as *indication*.

A few years ago I wrote [a review of Bo Bartlett](#), praising some things and criticizing others. One of the things I mentioned there was that his politics seemed to be a bit difficult (for me) to decode. He has done many political paintings, and while it is easy to see he is on the left and not the right (Democrat rather than Republican), the rest is a bit blurry, to say the least. Well, since then his politics has come into higher focus (for me), and so I am returning to make further commentary. If you think that artists shouldn't be talking about each other, you won't like this at all, but that isn't my concern. If you are one of those people, stop reading now. I happen to think I have a right to talk about whatever I want, and if it seems important, I publish it. If you are squeamish about opinion, go back to the safety of the mainstream, who will tell you what to think without effort.

What got me into this present line of analysis and present paper is the portrait of Obama above, which Bartlett did in the past couple of years. It is now being sold as Obama buttons, I believe. Since I am about to tear into Bartlett for this Obama propaganda, I feel I should repeat to any new readers that I am not a Republican or conservative of any kind. Old readers will know this, but I repeat this as a nod to anyone just showing up to this party. I have always despised the Republican party and almost everything it stands for. I despised Ronald Reagan and I despise all the Bushes. So this is not some small-minded factional argument I am about to make. It is based on facts that are public and that everyone should know by now, including Bo Bartlett.

In short, it is known that Obama has a worse record than George Bush, and that includes his record on things that are supposed to be of concern to liberals, including human rights. Back in 2008, I gave Bartlett a pass on this, since it was still remotely possible at that time that Obama might live up to at least one of his campaign promises. He hasn't, and the levels of fascism have continued to increase in this country since 2008. Although I am not naïve enough to believe Obama is actually making any decisions, his administration is continuing to start wars without Congressional authorization; is practicing illegal rendition, imprisonment and torture; is authorizing illegal drone strikes; and is murdering American citizens without due process (see the Anwar al-Awlaki saga). The Obama administration has ignored all the rules of international warfare, overthrowing governments at will (see Libya) and murdering innocent civilians—including women and children—with no compunction and no remorse. Beyond that, at home his administration has ignored all parts of the Constitution, illegally extending the power of the executive via various Patriot Acts, Military Tribunal Acts, and NDAA clauses. It has stood by while the Department of Homeland Security has created various gestapos and brownshirts to terrorize America, faking events and creating vast confusion and fear. The police have been militarized and the mainstream media has been completely consumed by government mouthpieces. Almost nothing you hear on the news is true and much of it is manufactured using green screens, hired actors, and other stooges. None of this is conspiracy theory. It is known to anyone who wants to know it. Most of it is admitted at mainstream sources like Wikipedia. I will not list more of Obama's outrageous sins to honest governance, but if you wish to see a longer indictment, [just read my previous papers](#).

So the fact that Bartlett is still cheerleading for Obama as of 2014 is big red flag. We could be generous and just say that Bartlett isn't too bright. He is too busy painting and waving flags to actually read anything, and he just believes what Anderson Cooper tells him on CNN. But I happen to think that explanation fails. Bartlett doesn't seem to me like a Democratic party twit, too dull to see through

the world around him. When I studied him before, I got the impression of a pretty smart guy.

But if we take this path where Bartlett is assumed to be smart enough to know better, we find ourself in some thorny weeds pretty quickly. This is because Bartlett is not only creating Obama buttons, he is also cheerleading for gun control. If we go to his website, we find an extensive blog, where Bartlett *expresses his opinion* on a wide variety of subjects. Dummies don't normally do that. Dummies normally can't write as well as Bartlett can. Bartlett is both very charming and very smooth. That takes a level of intelligence, as we all know. Given that, we are supposed to believe Bartlett is smart enough to have a smooth opinion on a wide variety of important topics, and smart enough to create a very readable blog, but not smart enough to see through the obvious government propaganda.

[In his blog on gun control](#), he starts by reminding you of all the recent tragedies, like Sandy Hook, Boston Marathon, etc, etc. So he is just taking those as given, with no analysis. But to do that requires we believe Bartlett hasn't noticed on his own that Sandy Hook and the others smell fishy. It also requires us to believe he hasn't heard through the grapevine that many intelligent people are saying [these events were fake](#). I have trouble believing either of those things. Everyone I know, *even the dummies*, knows there is scuttlebutt concerning Sandy Hook.

What I have found is that most people *publicly* calling for gun control right now are hidden agents. These faked events were created to give agents an opportunity for calling for gun control, and after the events, they did. Therefore, anyone now publicly calling for gun control should raise your suspicion. Of course, not all of them *are* agents. Some really *are* dummies and are just repeating what they are hearing around them, to look smart and appear to be part of the conversation. But the more high-profile and intelligent and *influential* these people are, the more suspicious you should be. This is why my suspicions have been raised concerning Bo Bartlett. Bartlett has been creating paintings that could be interpreted as propaganda for a long time, so when we see him parroting mainstream propaganda concerning gun control and Obama and so on, we should look more closely.

Bartlett's bio is pretty spotty, so it isn't easy to get extensive information on him. There are only a couple of paragraphs at Wikipedia, for instance. But once my suspicions were raised, other things began to fall into place. I have always wondered how Bartlett rose so high in Realism so fast, despite the fact that hundreds of realists I know can paint better than he can. I will be told, "Miles, he got where he is by doing PR, something you seem allergic to. He has contacts, and works hard to get himself out there." And if you go to his bio, you get some evidence of this. We are told he started out in film*, and got entrée into realism sucking up to Andrew Wyeth and his wife Betsy by making a film about them. Maybe it was one of them who suggested he paint big politically correct paintings in order to get into the second level museums, but however that may be, that is what he did. In the late 1990's, I noticed he was having success with these museums and thought to learn something from him. I said to myself, "Hey, that's good idea. There isn't as much competition for shows at these smaller museums, and some of them aren't so stridently Modern." So I put together a packet and sent it to several of the ones that had worked with Bartlett. No response, not even even a "no, thanks." I found that peculiar then, but didn't really think much more about it at the time.

The reason it is peculiar is because before Bartlett came along, museums weren't doing shows for unknown realists. Or even for *known* realists. They still aren't. I suspect there were orders from on high *not* to do shows for any realists. It was and is extremely rare for a museum to do a show for a realist. I think Richard Schmid had a show with the Gilcrease in Tulsa, but that was after being in the market for more than three decades. How was Bartlett able to just waltz in and get shows at a dozen museums across the country, in his first decade of serious painting? Was it only the Wyeth connection,

or was something else going on?

I will be told, "Miles, for heaven's sake, it is because Bartlett does Americana and you do these big nudes with pubic hair. You probably frightened the curators to death." That sounds plausible if you pass it by at 80 mph, but otherwise it is nonsense. It is nonsense for several reasons: 1) Why couldn't these curators send me a note saying "no, thanks"? We could just assume it is because they are rude sons of bitches, except for 2) These museums haven't made a policy of showing any other top realists on a consistent basis. Except for Bartlett, they don't do it. In most cases, it doesn't look like a policy to promote Realism so much as a policy to promote Bartlett. I find that odd. 3) If these museums *are* showing Bartlett because he is painting Americana, that by itself tends to prove my point. In my opinion, museums should put shows together based on quality, not based on whether the art is promoting some feel-good emotion about America. If these museums are choosing art based on some form of political correctness, it automatically proves they are tools of government of one kind or another. 4) The museum is the one place where nudes should not seem out of place. The nude has been a staple of artistic subject matter since the Greeks. It is the one place where we don't protect children from nudity (unless it is unbelievable vulgar). For this reason, it is very difficult for me to believe that museums are ignoring me because I paint nudes. Not one of them sent me a note saying, "We see you do a lot of non-nudes as well. Could we just do a show of those?" 5) Bartlett also paints nudes with pubic hair, so the argument doesn't fly from the first word.

People like to accuse me of making up things to suit myself, but already you have seen that there are indeed several red flags popping up with Bo Bartlett. I did not make these things up, I am just circling them for you.

Another one to circle is his early promotion by *ArtForum* and *Art in America*. See March and June of 1989. What other American realist, doing Americana, was getting space in *ArtForum* or *Art in America* in 1989? Those are Modern mags, not Realist mags. Even Odd Nerdrum couldn't get any mention in those magazines in 1989. He finally had to buy his way into *ArtNews* more than a decade later. But somehow Bartlett found a way through doors no one else could get through. How did he do it? Even the link to Wyeth doesn't explain it, because the editors of those magazines have been trashing Wyeth all along. The Moderns always hated Wyeth more than almost anyone else, except maybe Rockwell. I don't think he or his son Jamie Wyeth ever got a positive mention in those magazines. So how did Bartlett manage it?

Another thing you may wish to consider is one of the few pertinent facts we do get from Bartlett's bio: his PEW Fellowship from 1993. He says he got it in 1994, but Wikipedia says he got it in 1993. This art fellowship was established in 1992, so Bartlett was one of the first 24 recipients. This is a red flag because although Bartlett claims to be liberal, the PEW charitable trusts were set up by ultra-conservatives. PEW has funded the John Birch Society, the American Enterprise Institute, and the Brookings Institution, the last two of which are basically mouthpieces of neo-fascism. The PEW trusts were started by the Pew family, and they made their money from Sunoco, or Sun Oil, one of the largest companies in Pennsylvania. They came out against the New Deal in the late 1930's, and sided instead with the other old families of the US who wished to undermine democracy at every turn. More recently (2012), Sunoco has decided to exit the oil refining business, basically selling out to the Carlyle Group. This is fantastically odd, seeing an oil business quit during a time when oil companies are making record profits. For example, ExxonMobil had a total revenue of 460 billion in 2008, and a net profit of 45 billion. Sunoco isn't as big as ExxonMobil, but it is huge. You will say that was 2008, but there is an energy boom going on right now, as USA Today admitted [two days ago](#). So this looks like another of the Carlyle Group's leveraged buyouts, though where the leverage is coming from, only they

can say. For more on the Carlyle Group, see the film *Fahrenheit 911*, where Michael Moore does a pretty good job of exposing the Carlyle Group's illicit profiteering after 2001, via defense contracts. The Carlyle Group is one of those big neo-conservative funds with ties to the Bushes, Cheney, Rumsfeld, the Pentagon, and Intelligence.

You may also be interested to know that the PEW trusts were involved in the Barnes' Collection dust-up, where Walter Annenberg and other billionaire assholes broke the will of Barnes, basically stealing his art collection away from Merion for Philadelphia.

The PEW trusts also fund the misnamed Center for American Progress, which we are told is a progressive or left-leaning organization, but which is really just a front for blue fascism. You can see this even in the whitewashed blurb at Wikipedia, which admits that among the “high profile senior fellows” at CAP is Lawrence Korb, who was assistant secretary of defense for Reagan. If you think he is progressive, you better check your pulse. Wikipedia also admits CAP helped Congress develop “strategic re-deployment” during the Iraq War. Curiously, the “strategic re-deployment” link at Wikipedia is broken, but I can tell you it is more Newspeak. It was a way to make the public think we were moving troops out, while the Pentagon was moving more troops in.

So you see that the PEW trusts fund these fake progressive organizations. Is Bo Bartlett, like the Center for American Progress, just pretending to be progressive? It is hard to prove anything for sure, but I would say he is pretending to be for peace, since he started a Peace Award but still supports Obama. Those who are really for peace don't support a President who has involved us in every war he could find. Although Obama won the Nobel Peace Prize, his record indicates he has been a war President *par excellence*. If Bartlett wishes to indict people for war crimes—as he has by publicizing the atrocities of the School of the Americas—he should take a closer look at Obama. Several Congresspeople (and many others, worldwide) have pushed for charging Obama with various war crimes, especially for the administration's actions in Libya and for illegal drone strikes in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Yemen. See [this article](#) from the London *Guardian* from just six months ago, if you aren't up to speed on such things. There we find Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and three United Nations Special Reporters all telling us US drone strikes are illegal under international law.

But we don't even have to look that far. Bartlett gave his 2011 Peace Award to Father Bourgeois, who has been protesting the School of Americas since 1983. That's when he and others broke into Fort Benning in Georgia, reading a homily for slain Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador. Well, Bourgeois is *still* protesting at Fort Benning, and the military training program is still there. They renamed it WHINSEC, but it is basically unchanged. Twenty people were arrested there in 2010 for protesting continuing US interference in Latin America. Well, you can't blame Reagan for what the Department of Defense is doing now, can you? The US military has continued its policy of secret targeted killings under Obama, and these murders take place all over the world, including of course South and Central America. With the new use of drones, it is probable these murders have expanded, since it is now so easy. This is why many accuse the Obama administration of being worse than any before: new technology makes both murder and secrecy even easier. I would guess that many or most of those protesting at Fort Benning, including Father Bourgeois, don't support Obama or his administration, and the reason they don't support Obama is that he is continuing the war crimes of those before him, plus a few. So why is Bartlett still supporting Obama?

But back to the PEW Fellowship. You will say Bartlett has no control over who decides to give him \$50,000 in start-up money, but that isn't true regardless. He could have applied for grants somewhere

else. Taken by itself, I admit it isn't conclusive of anything, but with all the other red flags here, it raises suspicion.

For another red flag, let us return to Bartlett's [next to last blog post](#). The last was on gun control. This one is a short piece he says he wrote “for NPR's 3-minute fiction about a US President.” My first thought was, “NPR has a contest asking for fictional accounts of US Presidents?” But no, NPR has a contest for fiction, but Bartlett added the part about US Presidents. He needed a comma. He should have said, “for NPR's 3-minute fiction, about a US President.” Anyway, I still wonder if we need more fiction about US Presidents. I should think we are already pretty much full up on historical fiction about US Presidents. What I would like to see is three minutes of *truth* about a US President—*any* US President.

Anyway, Bartlett says his story is non-partisan, but he manages to include being picked up as a hitchhiker by “a carload of black kids,” almost getting raped by a “fine, nice gentleman,” a brother who is in a methadone clinic, and a pick-up by Bush, Jr. This last pick-up is obviously composed to remind you of Georgie's National Guard controversy. So the entire 3-minute fiction is anything but non-partisan. I would call it poorly disguised agitprop. I encourage you to read it. It is surpassingly strange, by any measure.

But it gets weirder. Since my last article on Bartlett in 2009, he has added another genre to his *oeuvre*, one I am also not really able to decode. In his recent works pile, we find several paintings like this:



I am an extremely liberal guy, and most people probably thought I would get to painting porn before Bartlett, but I would say that in some ways he is now far ahead of me. I will be told he is just celebrating lesbianism, in a politically correct way, but even so, this confuses me. I don't know if that is his wife Betsy Eby, since that head isn't painted very well, but I am pretty sure this is:



That is titled "Betsy and Alyssa". They look more than friends to me. This one is also strange:



It is like Bo is telling us Betsy has crossed over and he can't stand to watch. Also notice that little smoke stream Bo is watching rise in the distance. That's his personal end-of-the-world signal, which he has used in many paintings. He is telling us that Betsy is dancing with her girl-lover while Armageddon is on the horizon.

He was still at it in 2013:



Maybe I am reading this all wrong, but that makes me very sad. Not because I have anything against lesbianism, but because Bo is painting his great love with another lover. I wouldn't want to paint my wife with another lover, man or woman. I don't think that makes me a conservative. It makes me a romantic.

These paintings are also weird from a psychological standpoint, since Betsy is either becoming more manly or Bo is painting her that way. In many of the new ones, he is giving her either a slight beard or mustache. We now see Betsy as marginally repellent, which means Bo, the artist, must be seeing her that way. He puts a lot of gray in her skintones, in places where you wouldn't necessarily expect it.



I am pretty good at reading emotional tone in a painting, and these paintings don't read as a celebration of lesbianism. They read as another sad artifact of Modern America, where everyone is more and more

sexually screwed up. There is deep and transparent pathology in these newer paintings, and I find them very hard to look at. If Betsy is a lesbian, why did she marry Bo?

Here's another example:



That's called "Blind Tom." Why is Bartlett painting a blind man, you should ask. Well, here is your next psychological clue:



That is called "Home." It's dark inside the house, Betsy is looking very confident as usual, and Bo is crawling around on his hands and knees, too emasculated to let us see his face. The baby looks dead, as if Betsy just stepped on its head. Bartlett just wishes he were blind.

These lesbian paintings are also another red flag, since they seem to *promote* lesbianism. Not coincidentally, the government has also been promoting homosexuality for decades. I happen to think homosexuality is natural and fine. I have always had friends who are homosexual (including Graydon

Parrish—just ask him), and they know I am not any sort of homophobe. If you will remember, [I defended Graydon's AIDS memorial](#), as well as his 911 memorial. That said, I do not think the government should be *promoting* homosexuality. Whatever sexuality you have, it doesn't need to be promoted or denied, it just needs to exist. The government doesn't need to be involved one way or the other. But we now know the government has been promoting homosexuality for a long time. Why would they do that? Why would they switch from suppressing it to promoting it? Because it fits many of their new schedules, including depopulation, break-up of the family, and de-masculation. Homosexuality is fine for homosexuals, but promoting homosexuality to straights creates chaos and confusion, and that fits right into the governors' current plans of overall destabilization. They want your brain, your heart, and your dick to be upside-down and topsy-turvy, so that you can't tell up from down or left from right. If you are pulling yourself in 50 directions at once, you won't be capable of any meaningful action or reaction, including rational resistance.

Notice that Bartlett isn't just promoting lesbianism, he is promoting a de-masculating kind of lesbianism, where a woman married to a straight man *becomes* a lesbian, and the man ends up crawling around on his hands and knees, totally demoralized.

For this reason, I read Bartlett's new paintings as just more propaganda. While I admit it is entirely possible Bo Bartlett and Betsy Eby are just naïve progressives, and that Bartlett is simply chronicling her forays into lesbian sex, it is also possible we are witnessing more than that. We have seen *proof* of many of thousands of seemingly normal and earnest artists, writers, editors and critics being controlled and paid by the CIA [in my previous papers](#). Both the CIA and the artists ended up being forced to admit it. So we have to at least consider the possibility that we are being manipulated here as well. If we are looking at what appears to be propaganda, why should we assume it is accidental propaganda? No propaganda we have seen before turned out to be accidental, so the rational assumption should be this propaganda isn't accidental either.



That doesn't look like accidental propaganda to me.

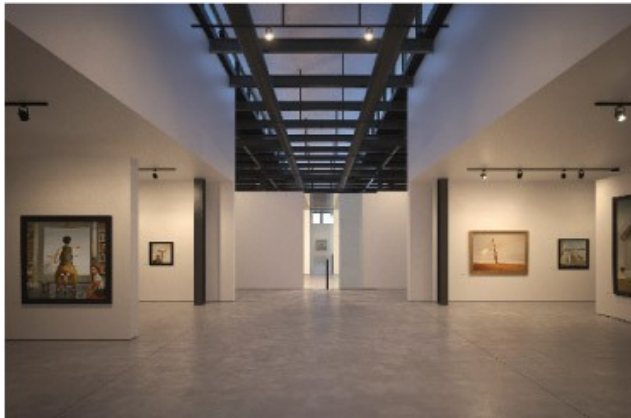
In closing, let us look at the [Bo Bartlett Center](#) at Columbus State University. This was just founded last year, and consists of what we are told is a \$10 million gift of Bartlett to the university of his paintings, journals, etc. Since Bartlett is still in his 50's, this seems a bit premature, not to say strange. Once again, I can't make sense of it. To start with, I don't know why he would want to give them to the university, since he never went there. But more importantly, I can't understand why they would want them. We have to assume the lesbian paintings aren't part of the gift.

That was cheeky, I admit, but seriously, what other university is accepting gifts like this from living realists? I can just see Bartlett's teacher Nelson Shanks offering his unsold works to Penn State or someplace. They would tell him to get lost. In my experience, all universities are hotbeds of Modernism. No one there knows how to paint, and no one wants to know. Remember, it was only a few years ago (2005) that [I was writing about George Washington University](#) closing its traditional art program. You may think things have changed since then, and you are right: they have gotten worse! If I donated any of my paintings to my alma mater the University of Texas, they would throw them in the incinerator with maximum speed and force, and it isn't because I am not as famous as Bo Bartlett. It is because they *aren't Modern*.

Again, Bartlett didn't really hit the big time until the mid-90's, so he has been known to most people for less than two decades. And like me, he is still in his 50's. How does that qualify him to have his own University Art Center? Like everything else to do with Bo Bartlett, it doesn't really make any sense. I am quite happy for any University to be promoting realism, but I can't convince myself this is what this is about. Once again, I suspect this is a bait and switch game, by which prospective artists are pulled into the program and then propagandized until their eyes fall out.

You may not understand how I can think that, but remember that is what we saw with the National Portrait Competition, which everyone thought at first was a nod to realism and tradition and portraiture, but which turned out to be [another game of the Moderns](#). I predict that Bo Bartlett at Columbus State University will turn out to be like [Eric Fishl at the Pennsylvania Academy](#): the opportunity to turn prospective realists into a new crop of shallow propagandists.

For more evidence of that, we can look at the paintings he has donated.



Once again, there is or should be mystery here, since normally a top artist gets famous by *selling* paintings. But if all these major works are still in his private collection, I assume that means he *didn't* sell them. We aren't told that his clients are giving up any of these paintings for the collection. But we *are* told, "The artist anticipates premiering his new works at the Bo Bartlett Center gallery before their exhibition in other museums and galleries." Again, very strange, since such a museum doesn't have the tools to facilitate sales. It doesn't normally have a sales staff to deal with buyers, for a start. You could say it is unprecedented, but "unbelievable" would be more accurate.

Bartlett's primary gallery since the late 80's has been PPOW, which is also otherwise Modern. They carry no one else remotely like Bartlett. I find that unexplainable. And if you look at the Wikipedia page on one of the owners, Wendy Olsoff, you see that Bartlett isn't even listed as one of their top artists. With all these major works unsold for years, that isn't really a surprise.

I will be told that Bartlett sells better than I do, but that isn't the point. I am not claiming to be successful in the market; he is. I admit I have had poor representation, and that I have pretty much given up on finding good representation. That's why I decided to attack all the markets after about 2004. They all seemed to me too corrupt to ever do me any good. But we are supposed to believe Bartlett has been a major success, so successful he merits his own university art center before he hits 60. I am showing you that much of that success is just an illusion.

I hope you understand my argument here. I don't really have a problem with these paintings being exhibited at the University: they are better than what is hanging in most university contemporary collections. The problem is understanding the mechanism by which Bartlett achieved this, or the mechanism by which Bartlett plans to continue making a living. If you argue Bartlett achieved it by being more famous than other realists, you have to ask how he got more famous while failing to sell all these major works. I don't know any other realist in his 50's or younger (or older, for that matter) who has his own Center at a University. You see, it isn't just a matter of donating \$10 million dollars worth of paintings and journals, it is a matter of the University devoting a building and permanent staff and paying for lights and air conditioning and a hundred other things, *and doing this for a realist artist whose works have not sold*. It does not compute.

The only way (I can see) to explain it rationally is that Bartlett is the hidden scion of some great family like the Rockefellers or Vanderbilts, or that he is underwritten by the CIA. Or, like Anderson Cooper, maybe he is both**. Actually, he may be linked to an even bigger family: the Rothschilds. I know that some readers will be rolling their eyes, as the theme from the Twilight Zone begins to play, but wait. If you study the announcement of the Bo Bartlett Center closely, you find Bartlett is sharing gallery space with the Benno Rothschild Collection of New Guinea Art, donated to the university in 2004. With some [more research](#), we find this:

The Rothschild family has played a major role in the development of Columbus State since its founding in 1958 and we greatly appreciate their support," said Rexford Whiddon, director of major gifts.

Jac. H. Rothschild, father of Benno Rothschild, was an original steering committee member who worked with President Thomas Whitley to create the Columbus College Foundation. The former fabric manufacturer is noted for his committee role and 10-year dedication to acquiring funds.

Curious, to say the least. Jacob Rothschild died in 1993, the same year Bartlett got his PEW grant and began his rise. So far this is all circumstantial, I admit, so the logical thing to do is Google "Bartlett Rothschild", to see if there is any link between the two families in the 20th century. Amazingly, [there](#)

[is.](#)

Irma Bartlett was born Irma Florine Rothschild. She was the daughter of Max. M. Rothschild of New York City. Irma's brother was J. A. Rothschild of Rothschild and Co. [New York City], and her sister was Mrs. Austrian, whose husband was Alfred S. Austrian, a well-known Chicago attorney with the firm Mayer, Meyer, Austrian and Platt. She married George Walter Bartlett and they both survived the sinking of the Lusitania. She died in 1949.

Helen Bartlett was born Helen Rothschild. She was the daughter of Walter Allen Rothschild. She married James Agard Bartlett in 1930. She died in 1998 and he died in 1954. They had two female children, Mary and Myrta.

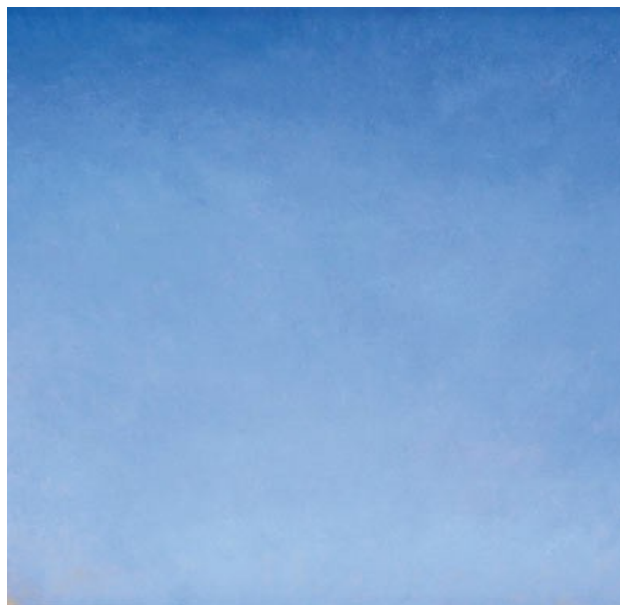
You will say we are all related, so that is meaningless, but try Googling "Mathis Rothschild". Nothing. No reports from the genealogy sites mentioning marriages between the two families. Try Googling your own last name with Rothschild or Rockefeller. Odds are you won't find a thing.

In this regard, it is also worth remembering that the first Jewish governor of any State was [Washington Bartlett, who was Governor of California in 1887.](#)

Without spending hours or days in the genealogy sites, it is unlikely I will find anything conclusive, but I did trip across one more easy tidbit. Bartlett's dad died in 2012, and his obit tells us he worked for Standard Oil before the war. Standard Oil is Rockefeller. Maybe his dad was just pumping gas, or maybe there was a closer connection. I couldn't get anywhere with that, either. I tried to find his mother's maiden name, which might have gotten us somewhere, but hit a dead-end there as well.

Speaking of his dad, Bartlett has his last portrait of his father on his death bed [for sale at Dowling Walsh Gallery](#) for \$80,000. I find that at least as curious as all the rest of this. I ask you, if you had painted a portrait of your dad on his death bed, would you stick it in one of your galleries? I wouldn't. Not only because I wouldn't expect it to sell and wouldn't expect the gallery to want it, but more importantly because it is in incredibly bad taste to try to make a buck from it. That is a private collection piece and should remain in his family.

At the same gallery, he has several 15" x 15" paintings of blue sky for \$30,000.



I guess that is for rich people who want to donate to the “let's pretend Bo is famous fund,” without having to take home a lesbian painting.

Just as bad is this:



That is 18” x 18”, and were are told it sold. Given the size, we must assume it sold for about \$30,000. Any true realist or artist would be ashamed to paint that or sell it, for any price. Charging high prices for nothing is not a realist trick, it is a Modern trick. If you are a fellow realist, I ask you, “would your gallery accept that? Is there any chance they would put that on the wall with a price tag of \$30,000?” The answer, of course, is no. They know there is no clientele for that. They don't know any real people who would pay all that money for a poorly painted salt container. Absolutely no one is that stupid. *No one*. Not even mentally retarded people are that stupid. I have known some challenged people—siblings of friends and so on—and I have talked to them. Even if you gave them a billion dollars to blow, they wouldn't blow it on paintings like that. They would buy a billion dollars worth of candy and toys, but they wouldn't buy one single work of non-art. You couldn't convince a dog or a porpoise to buy something like that, but we are supposed to believe someone paid \$30,000 for it?

Frankly, I am past believing it. Just as I no longer believe the Modern market is real, I no longer believe that paintings like this are selling for high prices in “realist” galleries. It's a con of some sort. I can't prove to you what con is being perpetrated here, but since the actual sale isn't believable, some con is being pulled. We now know that one of the cons in the Modern galleries is money laundering. The mainstream media has reported on that, so we know it is happening. But I will suggest to you another possibility, one I think is more likely in this case. The so-called recession we are still in has lasted for at least seven years, and while most people have lost money and buying power, the rich have gained it. The rich are actually getting far richer with each passing year, and the richer they are the more this applies. The wealth distribution in the US is now about the same as Uganda. While you are probably struggling to pay the rent, the billionaires are now doubling their money every few years. Well, art is run by very rich families. They now *own* it. And they don't have to make money on art. They make enough money elsewhere. Art is where they spend money. But they don't spend money buying paintings. They could care less about art or paintings. What they are spending money on is their children's hobbies. The rich have all these children who need something to do, and because they already have all the money in the world, they can do whatever they want. Many of them want to pretend to be artists. Some want to be actors, but probably a greater number want to be artists. They

see acting as hard compared to being an artist. Directors make actors get up early and work all day, but artists don't have to do much of anything. If you are a contemporary artist, you only have to crank out a few paintings a year, and each painting may only take 30 minutes. That salt container probably took Bartlett less than an hour. I could paint it in about half an hour, maybe less if we were in some kind of race.

Therefore, when you see these nothing paintings of blue sky selling for big money, you aren't seeing a real sale. You are seeing one rich family supporting the kids of another rich family. It is like a vast billionaire cooperative kindergarten. It is in this sense that the art market is manufactured. It is like a giant merry-go-round of insider trading by the rich, except that there is nothing capitalistic about it. No one is actually trying to make a profit. They are all just trying to keep the kids happy and occupied. This is why all these markets are so closely tied to the Social Register. And that is why I was trying to figure out how Bartlett fit into the register. All the indicators point to his inclusion.

Remember this photo from [my paper on Tim Eitel](#)?



That's Eitel with Sophie Vigorous, at at the New York Social Diary. The Social Diary is a subset of the Social Register, and an inclusion in the Register is far more important for an artist than anything he or she could ever create. The paintings are just wallpaper for the parties, where no one ever looks at them except to be polite.

I don't actually have a problem with the Social Register, as such. People, rich or poor, can be social in any way they wish without offending me in the least. Birds of a feather like to foul nests of a similar size, and nothing I say will ever change that. I also don't have a problem with elitism, of a sort. I believe the best people should be doing the most difficult jobs, and if they get paid more, fine. That is a sort of elitism, but it is logical. What is not logical is the elitism on view here, where the families of the Social Register take over art, installing their children in positions where they have no talent and no business.

People always respond to my criticisms by telling me the world has always been like that. “Art has always been such,” or “The world has always been such.” But it hasn't. This is a relatively new occurrence, and art wasn't taken over by the plutocracy until about 100 years ago. Yes, the plutocracy has always been involved in art, as the main client, but as late as the 19th century they were still looking for the best art for their palaces, and they knew their own children couldn't provide it. Art connoisseurship was a near-monopoly of the rich, but art *production* wasn't. Almost none of the great artists of history were from wealthy families. Since about 1900, that has reversed, and almost all the famous artists now arise from the various Social Registers. Since art no longer takes any talent, why not? A great artist can be born anywhere, but a phony might as well come from the Registry.

After my previous paper on Bartlett, several bloggers went to work accusing me of being bitter. Hah. I am way past bitter, and have every right to be. Just as art shouldn't be manipulated by the CIA, it also shouldn't be a field only open to children of the Social Register. The rich have thrown us a bone, and the lowest parts of downmarket Realism are fairly open (which is how I got in), but as far as the major art markets go, the only hope for a guy like me is to marry into the Register. But even if I achieved that, I still wouldn't be allowed to paint what I do. I would have to be debriefed by the CIA and given a propaganda assignment, *a la* [John Currin](#). Only in that way could I be of real use to the Families, and thereby earn my right to some fake sales.

That is what I finally figured out about Bo Bartlett. In my opinion, he isn't a realist. He only appears to be a realist. Like John Currin and Tim Eitel and Eric Fischl and many others, Bartlett is just a rich boy posing as an artist, and all his success is manufactured. Having these guys pose as realists only further damages real art and painting, and that was part of the plan as well. Real art and real artists are seen as a danger to these Social Register people, and we have to be kept out and down. That is why you see the bloggers attacking me, saying I should keep quiet and learn how to paint.



Right. That's a detail of my latest, a snapshot from right off the easel. I respond that if they think their

children are really better than me, let's put our work side by side and let the public decide. It doesn't matter how big Bartlett paints, since—as Nietzsche said—it is easier to be gigantic than to be beautiful. If they don't think Bartlett is their best painter, they can choose whomever they like, or gang up on me with their best dozen. It doesn't matter, because once we get the works side by side in person, the whole con will evaporate. Any dozen of their works will look like emotional duds next to [my Triptych](#). And once the works are on the wall side by side, we will see who needs to learn how to paint.†

I sometimes wonder if any of these people who have been paid to ignore the likes of me feel any remorse. I remember sending slides of my Triptych to Philippe de Montebello at the Metropolitan about 15 years ago. People think I haven't done any PR, but I have actually done a lot over the years, for all the good it did me. As usual, de Montebello had to pretend I didn't exist, but I have to wonder if he felt a twinge of regret. Art history used to belong to artists, and I have to think he knew that. If he had any kind of eye at all, or any real feeling for art, he had to know this Triptych was an extremely rare thing. He had to know that treating me as a nothing and a nobody was not only very unfair, but that it was a misfeasance to all the silent oaths he had taken as a director and connoisseur.

I have a suggestion. This fake art market for the rich kids is fine, *in its place*. My problem isn't that it exists, it is that it has replaced real art. These rich families didn't create a parallel market for their precious babies, they coopted art history and replaced it with manufactured market. That is a sin to the Muses. If you want me to shut up, just make a place again for real art. Reserve some portion of art for real artists, keep it open, and keep the rich families out of it, except as honest buyers. That will keep not only me off your back, it will keep the Fates and Furies from dogging your steps, eventually getting you as only they know how. The rich can't figure out why in everything but cash they are cursed, but this is one of the reasons. I did not have to curse them: the Muses have cursed them with no prodding from me. I know some of you are laughing, but I am completely serious.

But although I am angry, at least I can sleep at night. I will never end up in rehab, or burned out from saying yes too often. You will never see me crawling around on my hands and knees while my wife stands proudly above me. You will never ever see me painting lesbians or Presidents or actors or curators or critics or bishops or Nobel Prize winners. You will never see me writing about gun control, saying the same thing at the same time as all the paid talking heads (of both parties) on TV. After the events of the past decade, any person with integrity should be embarrassed to agree with *anything* they see on TV or in the media. If I agree with either party on any major issue, I take a long hard look at myself.

*This by itself is a red flag, since [most film schools have long since been infiltrated by the spooks](#). Film has long been the first weapon of choice for government propaganda.

**Anderson Cooper is a Vanderbilt scion. Look it up. And of course CNN is a hornpipe of the government.

†This challenge is for the Moderns, you understand. There are plenty of Realists doing good work, and whose paintings I admire. See my previous papers, where I have praised many of my fellow Realists, including Yuqi Wang, Mary Qian, Jeremy Lipking, Jacob Collins, Stephen Scott Young, Aron Wiesenfeld and many others.

