

## 7 QUESTIONS WITH ARTIST SLATER BRADLEY

# Amuse *VICE*

## INTERVIEW

After traversing America from West Coast to the East, Slater Bradley rapidly became an integral part of the NY art scene, establishing himself as cultured and complex maverick who could be embraced by museum and gallery alike. Featuring friends, muses, and strangers, his works, in video, film and photography are characterized by their rawness, a haphazard, found aspect and audacious attitude; Chloe Sevigny and River Phoenix's cinematic ghost take their place in Bradley's oeuvre alongside the electronic voice of Stephen Hawking. His relocation to Berlin in 2014 has opened a new chapter in the artist's life and work, and AMUSE gets the exclusive low-down on Bradley's new show "The Secret Key" at Zuecca Project Space, Venice, Italy.

**1: After being based in Berlin for over two years, how do you feel about the city now? As an American, how has relocating to Europe effected your artistic thought processes, and practice?**

SLATER BRADLEY: I love Berlin. I love its magnetic energy. Its slower rhythms and currents. Its dark and light waves. I feel very grounded here. I find Berlin a place to anchor-in transformation. A place to meditate and do Kundalini Yoga. A place to find your center.

**2: The shade of Joseph Beuys hangs in the grey sky of Berlin, in the concrete bunkers, the fog; he's present in so many of its colours and textures. Being involved in the current 'Reflections on Beuys' that went up on October 26th at Sexauer Gallery, what are your feelings about the man and his legacy?**

SLATER BRADLEY: In 2001, when I was 26 living in New York, I remember I was very honored to be included in a group show curated by Rene Block at the Kunsthalle Fridericianum in Kassel. Rene Block Gallery in New York City hosted Beuys's transcendental 1974 performance "I Like America and America Likes Me". Beuys' embodiment as a Shaman, Healer, Teacher, and Mythmaker has had a lasting effect on generations of artists, myself included. To be an "American Artist" living in Berlin now, with my work placed in direct dialogue with his legacy – a legacy founded on a return to spiritual principles – is a full spiral moment – and can be seen as a reflection and recognition of my own spiritual growth.

**3: Giudecca' in Venice is a name of obscure origin. But there is theory that its named as being the island of "The Judged" (Zudega), where those families who fell foul of others more powerful where exiled, and forced to look back upon the splendor of Venice, the ornate palaces and churches of San Marco which they could no longer visit. The Palladio on the Fondamente Zitelle where Zuecca Projects Space is situated and the Venice show will be, is adjacent to magnificent Redentore (Christ), which faces back to the Salute (Mary). What are you bringing to this place, so layered with history, with your new works?**

SLATER BRADLEY: I grew up in San Francisco and this "Zudega" theory reminds me of the stories of Alcatraz- that the real torture wasn't being locked up on a cold, windswept island, but instead being in such close visual proximity to the lights of the vibrant city -- that one went mad from not from isolation but from loneliness.

The Zuecca Space was a former monastery and orphanage for girls. The space was used by the maidens to work on their dowry. The energy of Venice is like an "alchemical bath". It has always called to me. The H. Bosch "Ascent of the Blessed" painting that forms the conceptual ground for the Shields in the show called to me. Perhaps, it has to do with working with the transformative energy of this Scorpionic city as a Spiritual Gateway. I like mystery and mystery likes me.

**4: Venice is also city where gold - real and gilt - is an integral feature, like steel and glass are to New York, or palm trees to Los Angeles. Tell me about your thoughts on GOLD- as material, colour, symbol - and as the myriad strokes of a marker pen, as in your newest 'Shield' works.**

SLATER BRADLEY: Gold is in the DNA and Spirit of my hometown, my roots, San Francisco -- the city of the Gold Rush, the 49ers, the Golden Gate Bridge. Gold as the archetype of the "Prospector", the California dream, baby! "Eureka, I have found it!" Gold as epiphany, revelation through the divine. Gold as Light, Gold as the fixed fire of the Leo Sun.

There's a Golden Gate in the heavens too, where the crossing of the celestial equator and the ecliptic occurs. Its located right at the Galactic Center. The Golden Gate is the Gate of Gods, right between the Scorpio and Sagittarius constellations. Supposedly, where the souls of man can ascend beyond reincarnation. My work in the show touches on these themes: ideas of Venice as a spiritual gateway, the Bosch ascension painting, the Mayan calendar ending on the 21.12.12--the winter solstice in alignment with the Galactic Center, and the shift in planetary consciousness

**5: Many of your video works blur the line between choreographed, fictive and 'found' footage, especially with the suicidal woman. Its like things that happened 'In Real Life' matched to ideas you already had, had already seen in your mind. Like the death of the man in La Jetee, haunting him, until he gets to see it play out right in front of him. Do you think that the universe predestines actions, or its the mind itself that finds and recognises it's own paths?**

SLATER BRADLEY: Complex question. Increasingly there is speculation that we are living in a holographic matrix, interacting with incredibly real 3-d simulations all playing out the programmed realities of the collective unconscious. Whatever this vibrating "reality" truly is, I know intuition guides the soul on its path through the holographic space. Navigation of the path can not be done with the the left brain alone, which often reinforces limiting thought patterns and contributes to creating obstacles, in its attempt to rationalize. However, when the rational mind is set free and embraces the intuitive mind and is encouraged to develop new thought patterns incorporating a spiritual practice – in time new belief systems are formed and a re-balancing of masculine and feminine energies – and a new consciousness can emerge within and without.

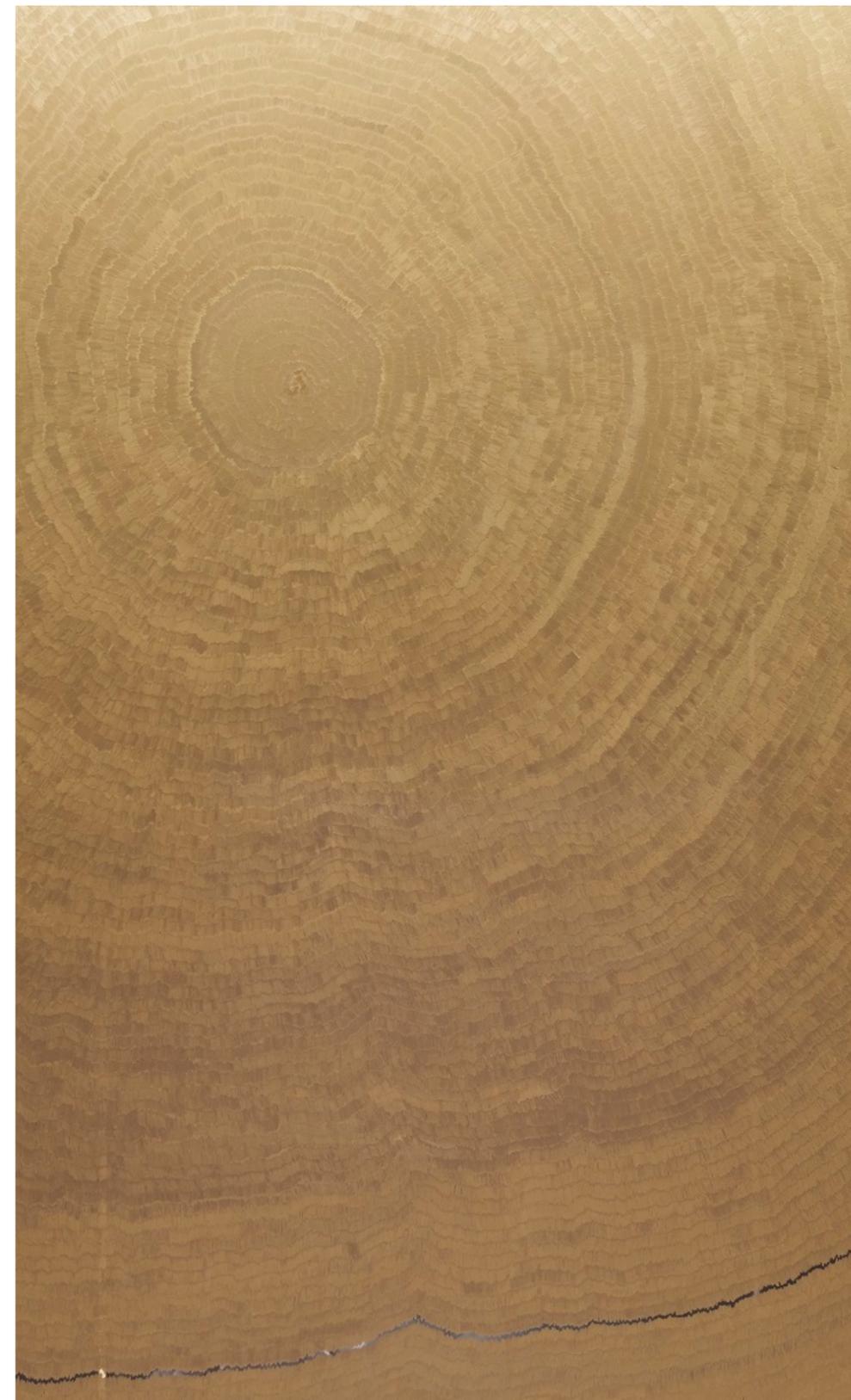
**6:One of your early titles was - "Nobody gives a fuck what you go do with your life." The trajectory of your own life, across the world and through many spheres, seems to be as much the art work as the works that you produce. Would you agree?**

SLATER BRADLEY: The title comes from a 1994 Drive Like Jehu song "Do You Compute?" Seeing it now, I can tell you it came out of an intense period of self judgment and darkness.

"There are two types of creators in this world, those who makes objects and create things- the other type of creator, the mystic, creates himself. And he is the real creator, the real poet because he makes himself into a masterpiece." (Osho Tarot. The Creator Card). Perhaps, after all, The Great Work is to unify the polarities of both types of creators.

**7:Throughout your career, you have based many of your works on other works, letting them speak again through your reenactments (as when Chloe Sevigny recited Thomas Mann), relating your own life experiences to historical ones (JFK Jr) echoing the forms of popular cultural icons in your Doppelganger series. How would you feel for your works, or life, to be paid homage to in the same way you have with other's works?**

SLATER BRADLEY: We are all connected-- if my work inspires others and gives off the energy to create action – there is no greater compliment for an artist.



Slater Bradley, Ninth Wave Solar Shield, 2006