

BRAD / HOUSE TRUCKER & JANITOR

Brad Tucker

HOUSE PLANTS

September 21–October 24, 2019

HOUSE PLANTS is a suite of shaped canvas that live on the walls like sentient plants, less tamed than coaxed. The paintings are domestic-sized. They expand the spaces around them, nourishing the air of the room. Modernist but winking, folky yet sophisticated, kind, exact, unique and warm. In two words: Brad Tucker-y.

viewing hours:
Saturdays 3–6:30 pm

or schedule a visit, email:
hello@northern-southern.com

price list available

Organized by Phillip Niemeyer
Thanks to Robyn Beaver

N–S's programing is sponsored in part by the City of
Austin's Cultural Arts Commission



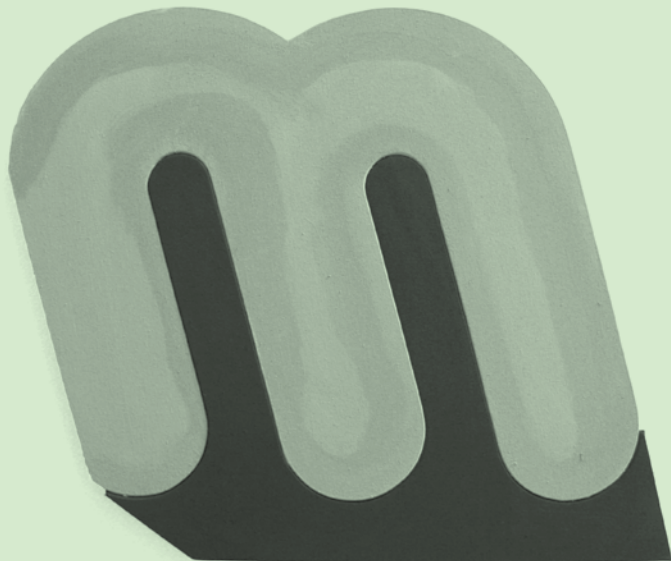
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Northern–Southern
1900-B East 12th Street, Austin, TX 78702
northern-southern.com

Brad Tucker

Brad Tucker (b. 1965, West Covina, CA) first moved to Austin in the early 1990s to make art and art-music. He performed in the beloved pop-noise groups Wonder Whip and Dizzy Luna. He moved to Houston for a spell where he won Teacher of the Year for his work in Special Education. (He started a band with the kids). He has been back in Austin since the 00s. Father of three—his partner Elizabeth Stearns is a librarian and was the bassist of Wonder Whip—Tucker skates, mountain bikes, and teaches Middle School.

Tucker never stopped making art. He earned a BA from the University of North Texas in 1991, and an MFA in Sculpture from the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College. He exhibits internationally, regularly in Houston, Dallas, and New York. The week of the Northern-Southern opening he is also opening a mid-career catch-up show, along with Sterling Allen, at Trinity University. *House Plants* is Tucker's first solo show in his hometown of Austin in over a decade.



Room Temperature
2019
acrylic on canvas
30 × 26 inches

interviewed by Kate Green

Kate Green: *Can you expand on the title of your new body of work, House Plants?*

Brad Tucker: The title *House Plants* came about quite naturally in conversation with Phillip from Northern-Southern when he came to visit my studio. The works are abstract and open-ended, and I didn't want a title that would direct people to consider them in a limiting way. *House Plants* is a good title because thinking about the presence of and care for plants in our homes offers parallel associations of how we might live with and care for art. Hopefully art, like houseplants, will enrich our lives and bring joy to our everyday routines.

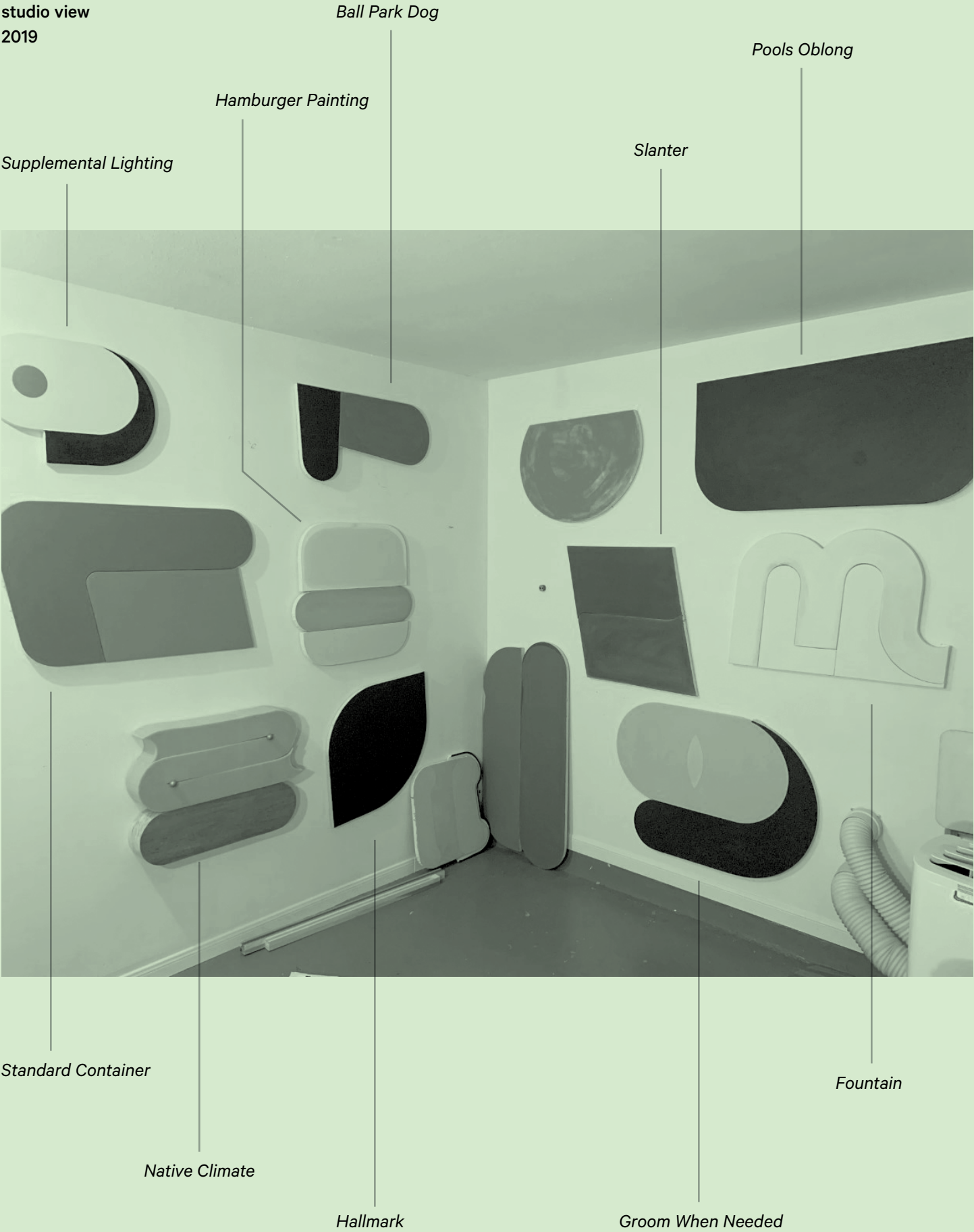
KG: *How do House Plants relate to the shaped wall pieces with text from your show last year at Inman Gallery in Houston?*

BT: I think, in the most obvious way, the works in *House Plants* differ from the works I showed last year because these works don't feature inserted texts as a component of their compositions. I want the shaped canvases in this show to do their own work without the assistance of the attached texts. I want the forms to resonate on their own terms. I will say though, that while the canvases don't explicitly express messages in text, the titles of the works function as text and provide an interpretive layer of meaning to the painted forms.

The scale of the paintings in *House Plants* differs from the larger paintings in the previous exhibit. Each work can be easily lifted, transported, and hung by an individual. It was pleasing to make paintings at this scale and move them around in my studio and work on several pieces at a time. That's another reason why *House Plants* makes sense as a title; working with paintings in this domestic scale feels akin to caring for small plants.

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HOUSE PLANTS
studio view
2019



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KG: What makes a shape—in the world, not necessarily your art—particularly interesting?

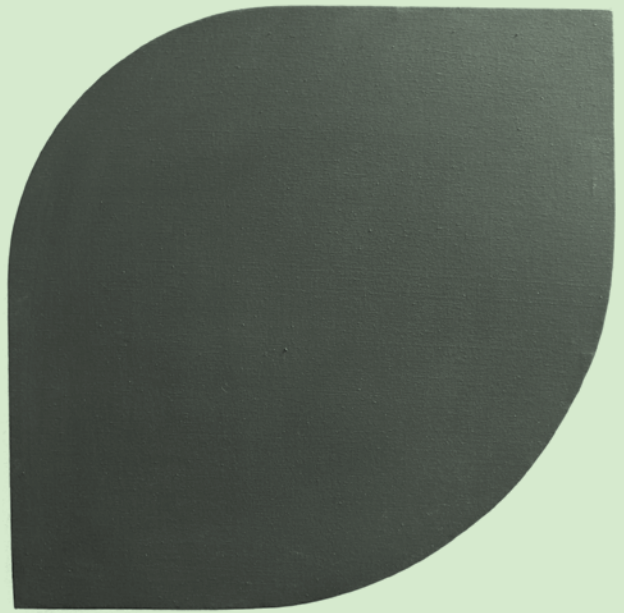
BT: Shapes are interesting in and of themselves as visual language. They convey information so well. Like flowers, shapes attract the eye and stimulate curiosity and desire. Shapes slow me in my perpetual motion as they beg me to stop and see their stillness.

KG: You have long intermingled sounds and shapes in your work. When you see shapes—in the world, in your work—do you hear certain sounds? What sound does a circle make?

BT: I love the idea that there could be a one-to-one correspondence of specific shapes to specific sounds. At Northern-Southern during the day, flashes of light bounce through the gallery's round street windows and form light circles that move across the wall. It's phenomenal. While installing *House Plants* it happened many times, and I captured the magic on my camera. When I played back the video, a car horn honked from the street at the same time the light splashed upon the wall. It was a nice convergence of sound and shape, as if there was a direct correlation between the two.

Maybe there is a platonic ideal of a circle that would pair well with, I don't know, the pure sound of a baby's cry, but I think that would be too simple. Shapes and sounds don't ever really exist outside of their contexts. I don't think that the circle I saw yesterday will ever be the same circle I see today. When I am quiet, I sometimes hear a whisper that sounds like my father's voice. It takes me by surprise, but if I try to recall the sound, I can't summon it. Things I've seen and heard in the past don't always reconcile with those that I experience in the present.

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*Hallmark
2019
acrylic on canvas
24 × 24 inches*

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KG: Do you listen to music (or play instruments) while in your studio making work?

I do have stereo equipment that is set up to play the tapes and records I keep in my studio, but when I am working, I rarely listen to music. I like quiet. Also, when I am busy I can't be bothered to flip over tapes or records.

Even though I don't listen to music much while I am working, I do play musical instruments, and at various times in my life I have really embraced the idea of making music. I played in bands when I was younger, and I still occasionally write and record music. A lot of my artwork functions as testimony to what it means to endeavor as a visual artist and a musician at the same time. And... I make occasional performances (often at art events) as a one-person band called Bad Trucker.

KG: If you were an instrument, what would you be and why?

BT: Hmmm? I'm not sure. I love to play guitar, but I don't think I would BE a guitar. I am a sucker for melody and instruments that can sustain long, breathy notes. If the god Pan came down my street playing his flute, I would probably drop everything and follow him back to his grotto.

KG: There are so many Brad Tucker fans in the world, and we could each name endless aspects of you that we love (funny, friendly, game, creative, present, ageless...). What's something that you love about yourself?

BT: Well, that is very of you to say. I think I could also say similar things of you. I love many things about the life I am living, but I am also aware of my many flaws. I guess, since you are asking, I love that somehow, I have convinced another person, Elizabeth Stearns, my wife of twenty years, to spend so much time with me. There is something lovely about that.

Kate Green is the Senior Curator at the El Paso Museum of Art.



Hamburger Painting
2019
acrylic on canvas
27 × 26 inches

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SEP–OCT 2019

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