

THE BRUCE HIGH QUALITY FOUNDATION
ISLES OF THE DEAD

October 29 – December 6, 2014

In 2008, The Bruce High Quality Foundation reimagined the much-fabled Arnold Böcklin painting *Isle of the Dead* as a stark reality when two members, one clad in a makeshift shroud and the other at the helm of a dinghy, sailed toward a garbage dump with the skyline of New York City rising in the distance.

Between the years of 1880 and 1886, Swiss artist Arnold Böcklin created five variations on the painting *Isle of the Dead*, wherein a shrouded figure in a small boat with a coffin approaches a desolate island. Though Böcklin never explained the image, he did describe it as a "dream image," and commentators have assumed the boatman to represent Charon carrying souls to the afterlife on the River Styx. Böcklin's haunting image has inspired many artists: notably the dreamscapes of Giorgio de Chirico, Rene Magritte, and Yves Tanguy as well as legions of filmmakers, musicians and writers.

For their first appearance/inaugural exhibition in Texas, BHQF will exhibit silkscreen versions of Böcklin's first version of *Isle of the Dead* paired with silkscreen versions of their encomiastic image. In the center of the space will be a new sculpture, also inspired by Böcklin's painting. In a small pool, a record player floats on a block of Styrofoam and plays on a continuous loop Rachmaninoff's 1908 composition, *Isle of the Dead*.

Within additional gallery exhibition spaces a selection of earlier works from their History Painting series will be installed: *Las Meninas / Las Meninas* and *The Bachelors of Avignon*. This series draws directly from the font of art historical images that have inspired many of the Foundation's earliest works, and through color, paint handling, and varying degrees of silkscreen degradation, investigates the role of personal memory in the establishment of an art historical canon. *Isles of the Dead* form a key component of the BHQF's History Painting series.

The Bruce High Quality Foundation creates installations, videos, paintings, sculptures, performances, and institutions that reveal their collective creative agency within the seemingly monolithic forces of art and social history.

The Bruce High Quality Foundation, the official arbiter of the estate of Bruce High Quality, is dedicated to the preservation of the legacy of the late social sculptor, Bruce High Quality. In the spirit of the life and work of Bruce High Quality, we aspire to invest the experience of public space with wonder, to resurrect art history from the bowels of despair, and to impregnate the institutions of art with the joy of man's desiring.

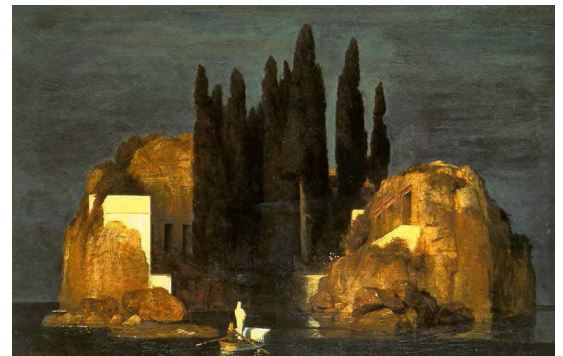
Professional Challenges. Amateur Solutions.

The exhibition opens on Wednesday, October 29 and will run through Saturday, December 6, 2014. An opening reception will be held at the gallery on Wednesday evening, 6:30 – 9 pm. On Thursday, October 30, the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, will host BHQF for an artist talk: *The Bruce High Quality Foundation talks about death: of painting, friends, and family - in an expansion of their exhibition "Isles of the Dead" at McClain Gallery which draws on the Foundation's interest in the eminent symbolist painter, Arnold Böcklin. Just in time for Halloween.* An exhibition catalog will also be available, please inquire for additional information. The gallery is open Tuesday through Friday 10 am – 5:30 pm. and on Saturdays 11 am – 5 pm. For further information and images, please contact the gallery at (t) 713.520.9988, or email: erins@mcclaingallery.com.

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The Bruce High Quality Foundation, 2008



Arnold Böcklin, *Isle of the Dead*, 1880, 43 3/4 x 61 inches