

# *The Tinker Tailor Paintings*



*PATRICK WEBB*

## *THE RHYME*

### *Parts 1 & 2*

Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor,  
Rich Man, Poor Man,  
Beggar Man, Thief.

Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief.  
Or what about a cowboy, policeman, jailer,  
engine driver, or a pirate chief?  
Or what about a ploughman or a keeper at  
the zoo,

Or what about a circus man who lets the  
people through?  
Or the man who takes the pennies on the  
roundabouts and swings,  
Or the man who plays the organ or the other  
man who sings?  
Or what about the rabbit man with rabbits in  
his pockets  
And what about a rocket man who's always  
making rockets?  
Oh it's such a lot of things there are and such  
a lot to be  
That there's always lots of cherries on my  
little cherry tree.

### *Part 3*

*additional characters from other version of the rhyme*

Old Man, Young Man, Captain (Police) , Pirate  
Fisherman , Chief (Fire), Cooper, Farmer  
Teacher, Banker, Gunner, Gardener,  
Cook, Burglar, Boxer, Baker,  
Preacher, Writer, Politician, or Crook

### *Part 4*

*My list from free association*

Protester, Gangster, Nurse, or Undertaker  
Painter, Architect, Builder , Sculptor,  
Florist, Actor, Usher, Hairdresser or  
Doorman, Dressmaker, Shopper, Salesman ,  
Pornstar, Gravedigger, and Grave

*front cover: Teacher. Sailor, Zoo Keeper*

*back cover: Boxer, Cowboy, Gravedigger*

# *THE TINKER TAILOR PAINTINGS*

## *2013-2018*

*Patrick Webb*  
*an installation of paintings*  
*in honor of Stonewall 50*

*June 2019*  
*Pfizer Building*  
*630 Flushing Avenue*  
*3rd floor*  
*Brooklyn NY 11206*  
*M-Sa 11-5*

*special thanks to the Guggenheim Foundation ; PRATT Institute Faculty Development Fund and Sabbatical Program ;*  
*and Acumen Capital Partners for supplying the space for this exhibit*  
*and of course my wonderful husband Brian Kloppenberg without whose support nothing would be possible*

## *That Rare Mask that Identifies Its Wearer*

**Jonathan D. Katz**

Punchinello's mask, the singular constant in the pictorial world of Patrick Webb, is in the form of a cock, a mask that is also a dick. Stay with that metaphor a little, and it opens up to a wide expanse of contradictory possibilities in queer life: queerness as a kind of camouflage or cover for the many other, non-sexual things we are; as an identity category that sums us up, that literally becomes our face in the eyes of others—or ourselves; as the token of a sexual universe in which we are both the object of other men's desire, and ourselves desiring, a blessed relief from the closet in which desire always moved in one direction only, always out towards others. This dick/mask materializes the paradoxical construct we call the closet, that identity that by definition must always leak evidence of the very queerness it is intent on denying, for if it were watertight, it wouldn't be the closet but a seamless example of the heterosexuality.

The point is that Punchinello's mask opens up a space in which our sexuality is cleaved from the rest of what we are, and in so doing, it runs counter to the false unity we generalize as our identity. For the mask we wear that is our own queerness is at once blessedly right about us and woefully misleading. We are not the equivalent of our sexuality, even though in these times, queer sexuality is now perhaps the most salient thing about us.

Of course, the cock/mask that Webb's Punchinello wears was not his invention, but borrowed from the Commedia dell'arte tradition. The figure of Punchinello, called Punch in English, has always worn a mask with a beaked nose, albeit that mask is nearly always black, and the nose more fully integrated into it. Made a figure of ridicule, conniving and often violent, Punch is hardly a model citizen. Rather, he's a comic figure whose defining characteristics are both his wily ways and his general excessiveness. Punch is thus made over into an apt figuration of queerness through this fraught combination of a camouflaged, yet excessive, performance of selfhood. He is as ripe an analog to queerness as one can encounter in the Commedia dell'arte tradition.

In Webb's appropriation of another veritable tradition, the *Tinker, Tailor...* nursery rhyme, all the inherent, deeply buried queerness of the Punchinello figure is surfaced and exposed. He becomes a queer everyman in an all male world, his social standing highly variable, but his essential queerness at once his superficial costume and his deepest core identity. Whether dressed as a cowboy in a gay bar, pickpocketing as two men talk in Wall Street cocktail party, or working as a cop or a jailer, Punchinello occupies both sides of all our familiar polarities: rich and poor, empowered and oppressed, a judge and a crook, a soldier, sailor or doctor. He's everyone and thus no one. He has no essential characteristics, save for his mask. This series of beautiful, richly colored and mysteriously atmospheric paintings thus asks the question that is thankfully increasingly possible to consider. What are we, *what is it to be queer*, when sexuality ceases to signify any defining, important or even identifiable difference?

August 2015

**Jonathan D. Katz** directs the doctoral program in Visual Studies at the University at Buffalo. He curated *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire* in American Portraiture, the first queer art exhibition ever mounted at a major US museum, which opened at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, winning the Best National Museum Exhibition award from the International Association of Art Critics and the best LGBT non-fiction book award from the American Library Association. His current exhibition is entitled *Art AIDS America*, opening in Tacoma in October, the beginning of a three museum national tour, accompanied by a substantial new book.

A pioneering figure in queer studies, Katz was the first full-time American academic to be tenured in the field and founded and chaired both the Harvey Milk Institute, then the largest queer studies institute in the world, and the Queer Caucus for Art of the College Art Association. He also co-founded Queer Nation, San Francisco, and the Gay and Lesbian Town Meeting, the organization that successfully lobbied for queer anti-discrimination statutes in the city of Chicago. He is the president of the new Leslie Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art in New York City, where he has curated numerous exhibitions.

# *PARTS 1 & 2*

*all paintings 60 inches tall and 20 to 36 inches wide*

Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor,  
Rich Man, Poor Man,  
Beggar Man, Thief.  
Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief.

Or what about a cowboy, policeman, jailer, engine driver, or a pirate chief?

Or what about a ploughman or a keeper at the zoo,

Or what about a circus man who lets the people through?

Or the man who takes the pennies on the roundabouts and swings,

Or the man who plays the organ or the other man who sings?

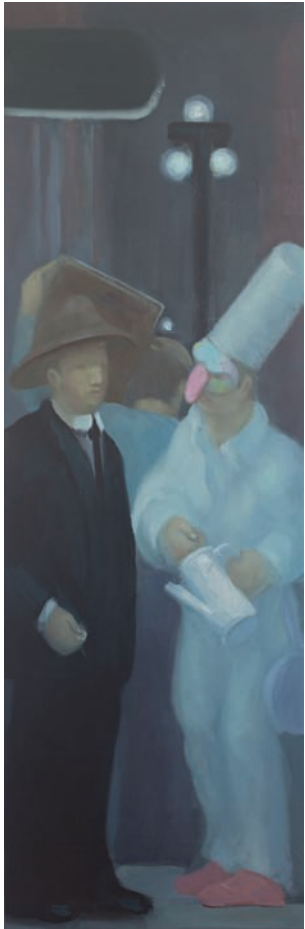
Or what about the rabbit man with rabbits in his pockets

And what about a rocket man who's always making rockets?

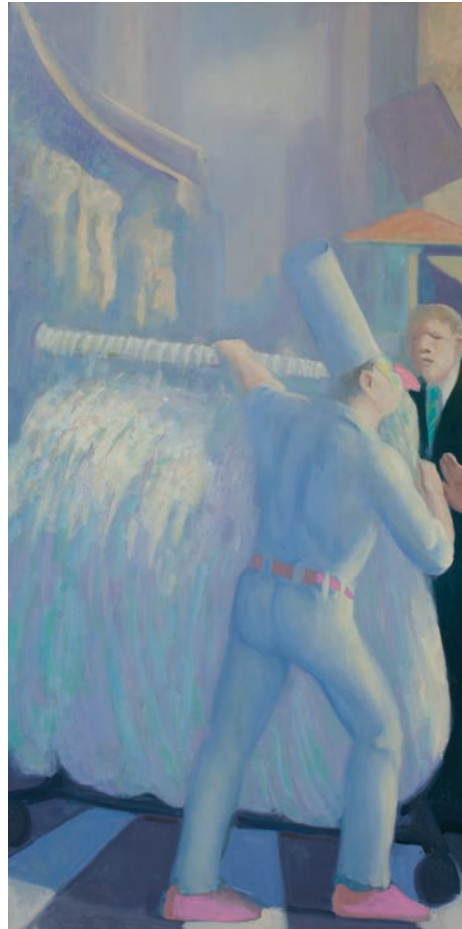
Oh it's such a lot of things there are and such a lot to be

That there's always lots of cherries on my little cherry tree.





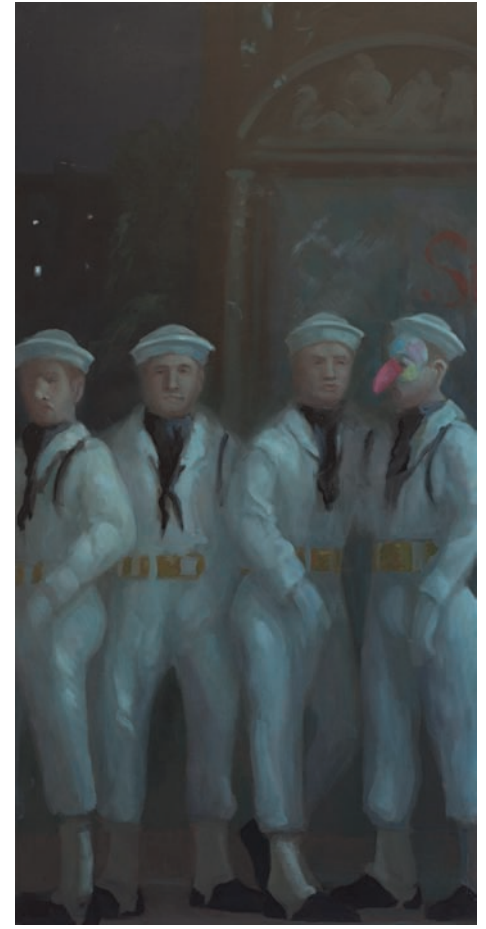
Tinker



Tailor



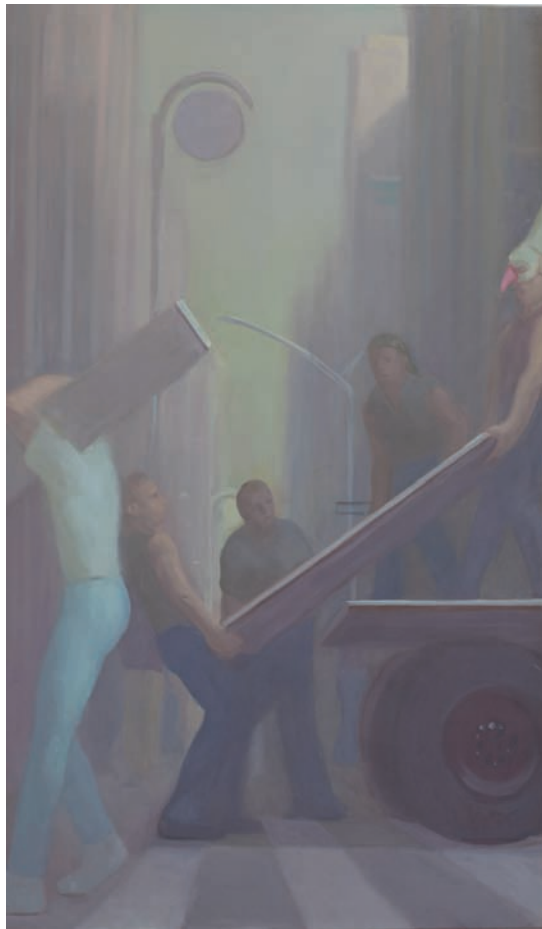
Soldier



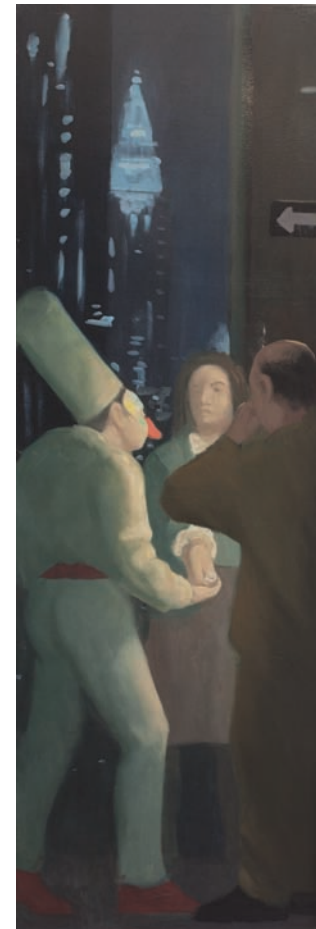
Sailor



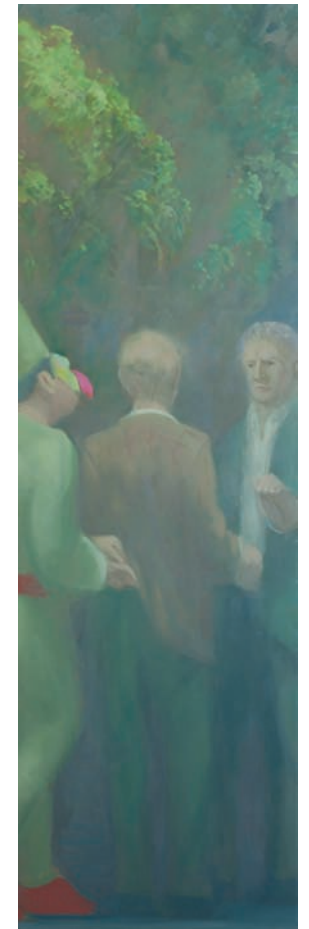
Richman



Poorman



Beggarman



Thief



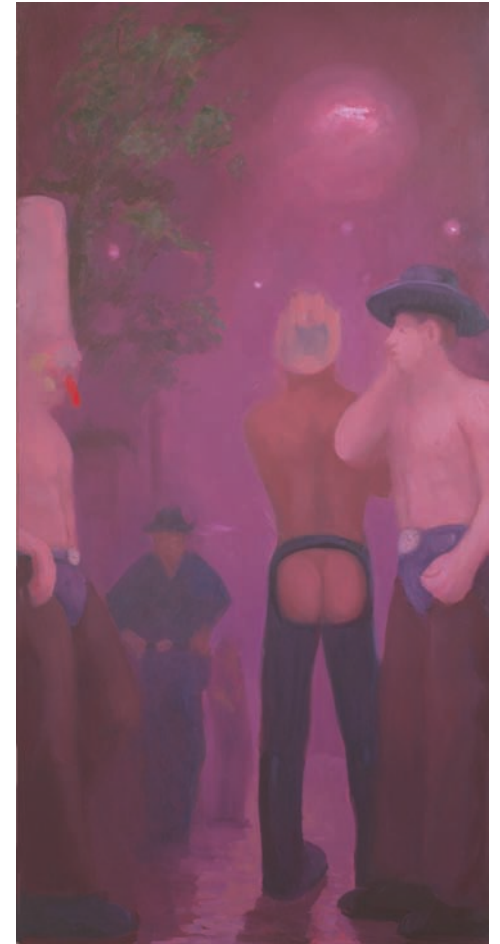
Doctor



Lawyer



Indian Chief



Cowboy





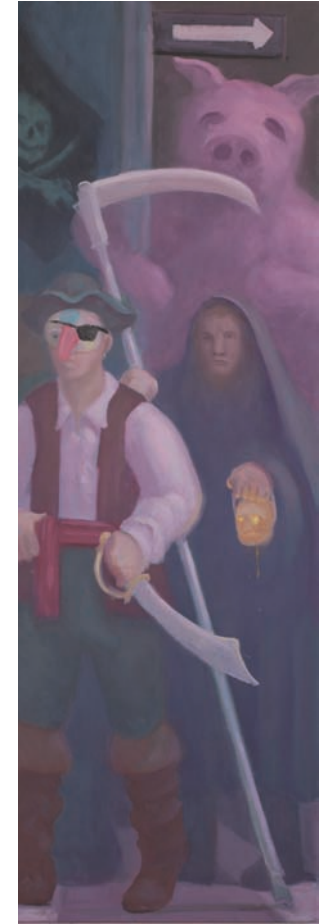
Policeman



Jailer



Engine Driver



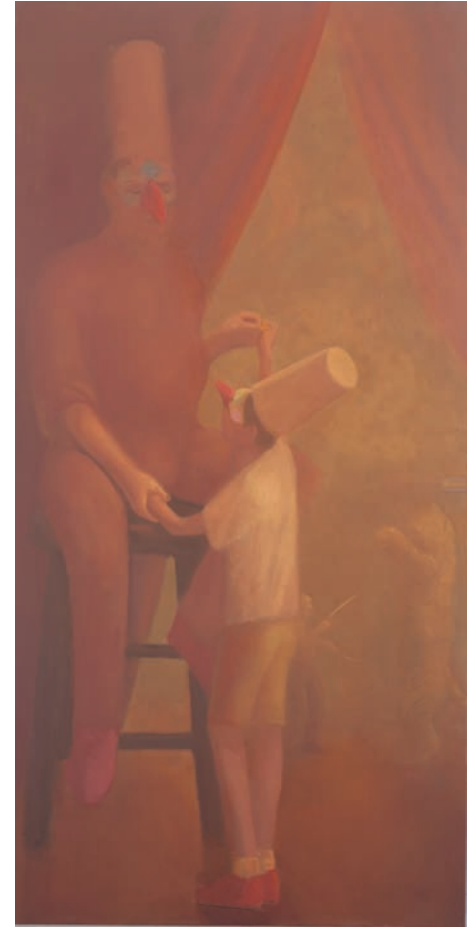
Pirate Chief



Ploughman



Zookeeper



Circus Man



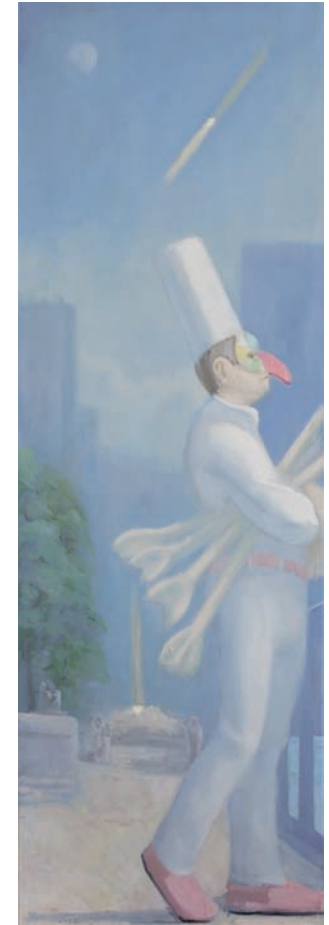
Swings & Roundabout



Singer & Organist



Rabbitman



Rocketman

# *PART 3*

*all paintings 60 inches tall and 20 to 36 inches wide*

Additional characters from other version of the rhyme

Old Man, Young Man, Captain (Police), Pirate  
Fisherman, Chief (Fire), Cooper, Farmer  
Teacher, Banker, Gunner, Gardener,  
Cook, Burglar, Boxer, Baker,  
Preacher, Writer, Politician, or Crook

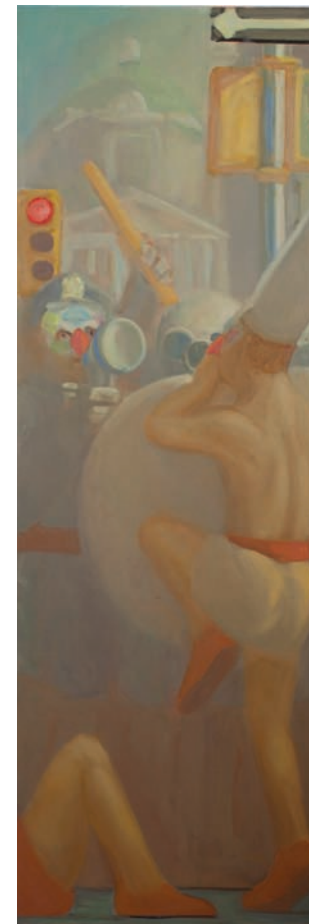




Old Man



Young Man



Captain

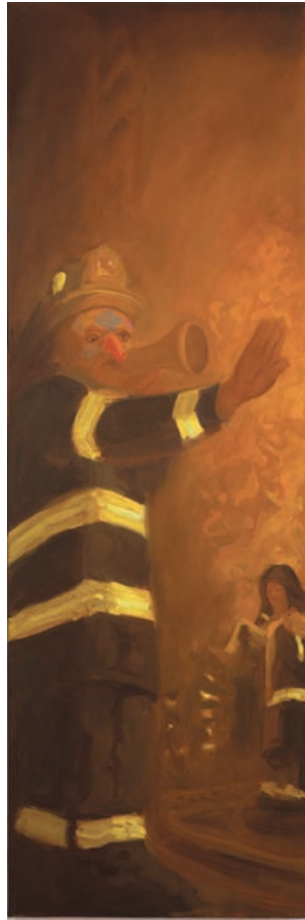


Pirate





Fisherman



Chief



Cooper



Farmer



Teacher



Banker



Gunner



Gardener



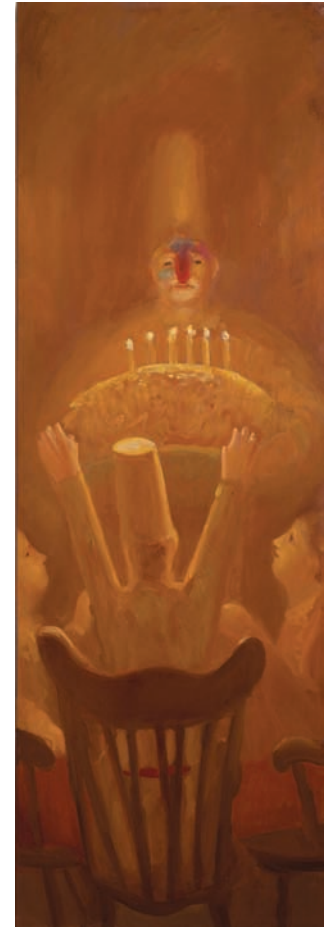
Cook



Burglar



Boxer

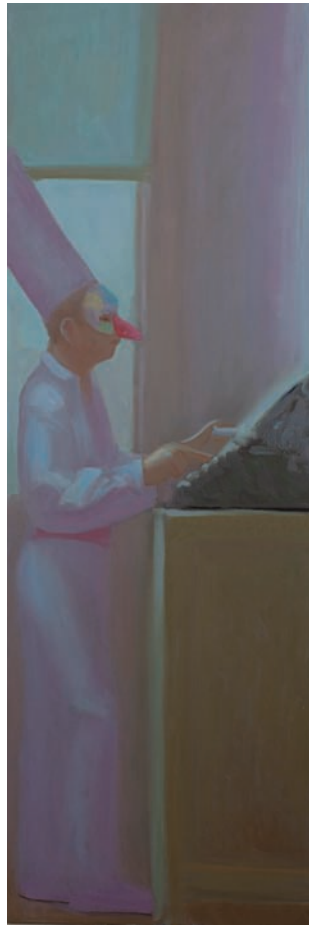


Baker





Preacher



Writer



Politician



Crook

# *PART 4*

*all paintings 60 inches tall and 20 to 36 inches wide*

My list from free association  
Protester, Gangster, Nurse, or Undertaker  
Painter, Architect, Builder, Sculptor,  
Florist, Actor, Usher, Hairdresser or  
Doorman, Dressmaker, Shopper, Salesman ,  
Pornstar, Gravedigger, and Grave





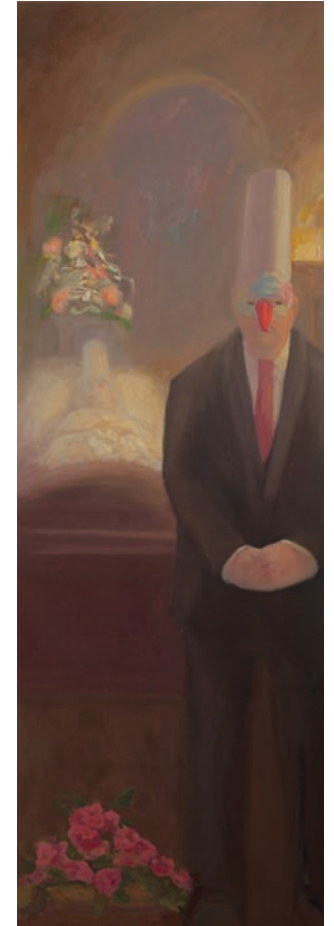
Protester



Gangster



Nurse



Undertaker



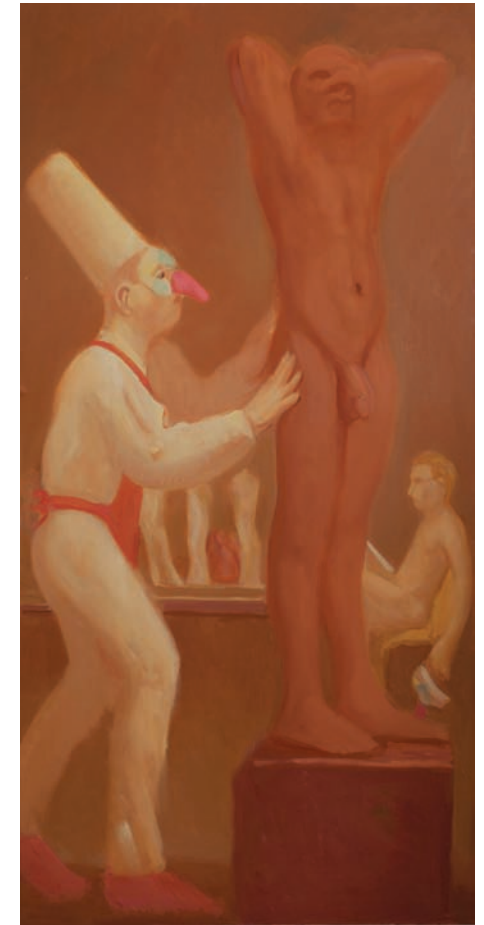
Painter



Architect



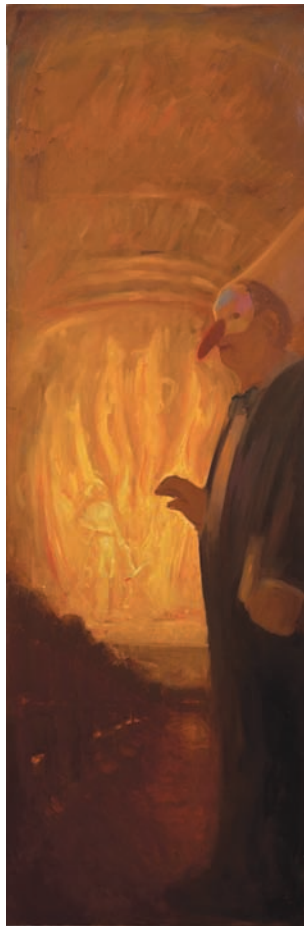
Builder



Sculptor



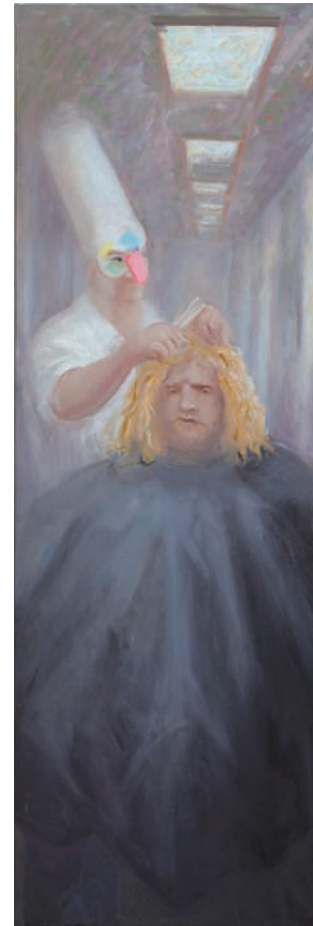
Florist



Usher



Actor



Hairdresser

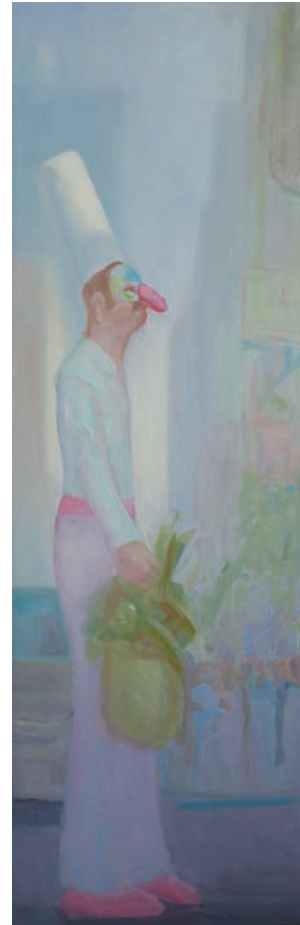




Doorman



Dressmaker



Shopper



Salesman



Pornstar



Gravedigger



Grave



## WORK NOTES: *Studies and preparatory sketches for The Tinker Tailor Paintings*

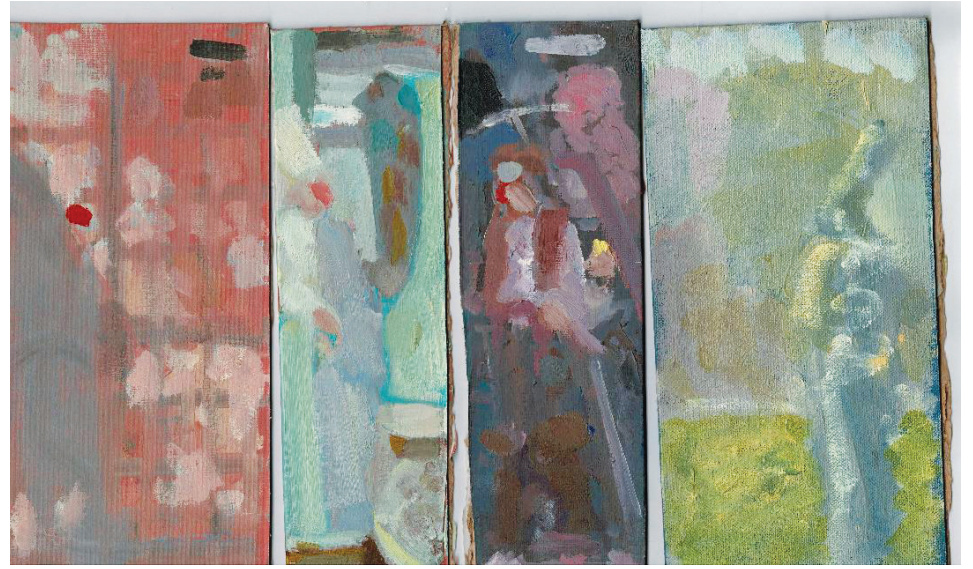
*I have assembled these studies and sketches in much the same way they are collected in my studio on the walls and in sketch books. They are not all identified by title since I want the viewer to have the experience of discovering how the abstract relationships, (line, movement, pattern, light, color, shape etc) of the compositions and gestures carry the meanings of the activities..*

*The color studies in oil paint on canvas, board and prepared paper are started before color is added to the large canvasses and after the elements of drawing and underpainting have been provisionally established on the canvas. They are modified and adjusted as the paintings progress to explore changes in color balance and movement on a smaller scale where the total effect is immediate.*

### PARTS 1&2









*PART 3*







*PART 4*







## Preparatory Drawings along with Paintings

*The wash and gouache drawings in the next section are the culmination of a series of small sketch-book studies that are done as the idea of the activity is considered ( 8-10 inches tall)*

*The figure drawings are from inventory or from life using gestures that have been established in the compositions. (8 X 8"-16 X 12").*

*Paintings reproduced either wholly or in details were from inventory or sales and used to reference light, palette, pose and locations.*





*Parts 1 & 2*



Tinker



Tailor



Soldier



Sailor



Rich Man



Poor Man



Beggar Man



Thief



Doctor



Lawyer



Indian Chief





Cowboy



Policeman



Jailor



Engine Driver



Pirate Chief



Ploughman



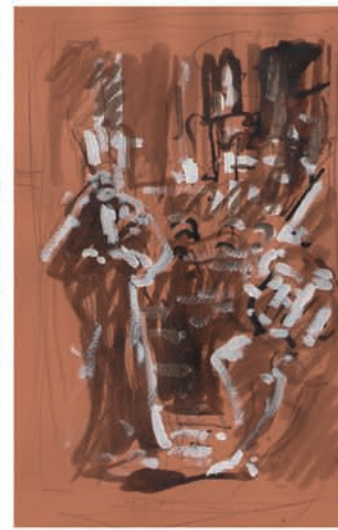
Zookeeper



Circus Man



Roundabout & Swings



Singer & Organist



Rabbitman



Rocketman

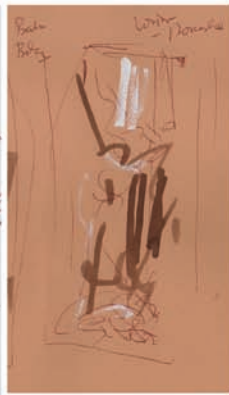




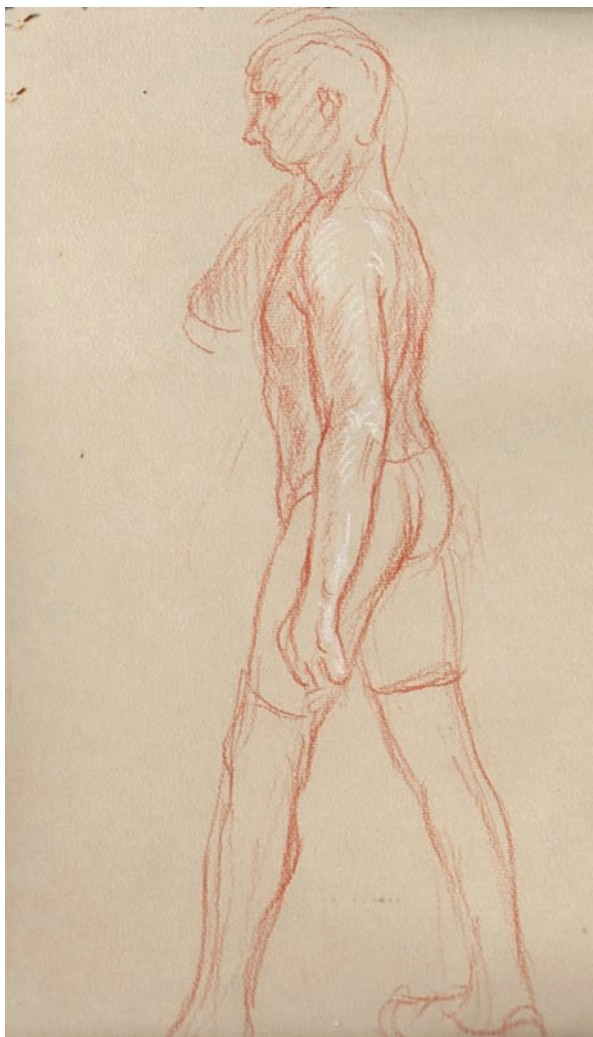
## Part 3

*Parts 3 & 4 were composed and begun during the Guggenheim Fellowship and completed a few months after it ended.*

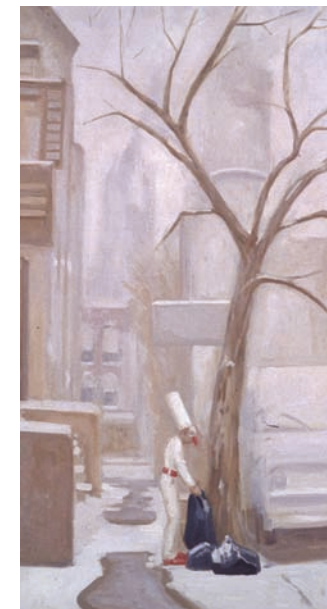




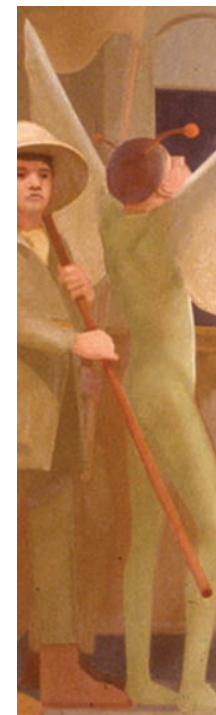




Madison Square 12X16 2006 o/c



LIC Trash 48X25 98 o/c



Detail: Halloween Parade  
1989 72X226 o/c



Saved I 48X22 2003 o/c



Farm 12X16 2001 o/c



Punchinello's Lair 24X72 2014 o/c





The Candidate 96X120 1989 o/c



Rooftops IV 12X12 2014 o/c



Da Ponte Paintings: Punchinello as Leporello 48X72 2010 o/c

Part 4









Unload III  
72X36 2010 o/c



Rooftope Glare 24 X 24  
2011 o/c







## Artist Notes

Since late 2013, I have been obsessed by the simple rhyme of *Tinker Tailor*—I love the seeming banality of the list that in verses and versions expands and resonates with associations and confluences. Umberto Eco says we make lists because we are afraid of dying. I agree, and would add we make lists to understand and to make connections. I enjoy the John Le Carré novels that use the rhyme. In them, the characters' search for information is indirect—the questions asked reveal as much about the questioner as the answers reveal about those questioned. This is how art and the imagination work too—through implication and within ambiguities. So my ubiquitous Punch explores a series of activities. He inhabits the roles of the rhyme. It is more a journey of possibility rather than one of death and loss. I thought at first I would paint only one verse of 11 canvasses; then the discovery of a second verse precipitated 12 more canvasses. Further research revealed other versions that added another 20 characters, bringing the series to 43 paintings. Then I had to write my own list, my own libretto. These final 19 characters were inspired by a stream of consciousness riff on the rhymes and bring the entire series into an even more biomythographical frame, fulfilling an arc of possibilities for this everyqueerman. There are now 62 canvasses. This uncanny fiction is filled with anachronistic activities (Tinker, Cooper) as well as memories and screen memories of childhood experiences (Indian Chief, Circus) of a cis queer man. The sequence, like many of my recent series, is malleable—interchanging the placement of the paintings brings to light new connections, possible narratives and causalities that underscore the niggling strangeness of life, with its interconnect-edness and unknowability. This catalog documents, the paintings and some of the preparatory drawings and sketches as well as older work that inspired elements.

---Patrick Webb 2019

## GRANTS AND AWARDS

2016	John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship
2004,8,11,15,19	PRATT Institute Faculty Development Grants
1998	Thomas B. Clarke Award in Painting, National Academy Museum
1995 & 89	Ingram Merrill Awards in Painting
1992	Art Matters Inc. Fellowship
1984,6,8	National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2018-9	WHAT MAKES THE ENGINE GO? IPTAR , NYC, NY
2018	AT HOME WITH PUNCHINELLO Rice Polak Gallery, Provincetown MA
2016	PAINTINGS Rice Polak Gallery, Provincetown MA
2015	TINKER TAILOR SERIES PART1&2, The Painting Center, NYC , NY
2014	FIRE! Rice Polak Gallery, Provincetown, MA
2013	LOVE'S PROGRESS: 1989-2013 The Painting Center , NYC, NY
2012	ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT The Painting Center, NYC, NY
2012	PAINTINGS Rice Polack Gallery, Provincetown, MA
2011	NIGHT & DAY Julie Heller Gallery, Provincetown, MA
2010	PUNCHINELLO AS OTHER The Painting Center, NYC, NY
2008	25 YEARS OF WORK Provincetown Art Museum, Provincetown, MA
2007	PROVINCETOWN-NEW YORK Julie Heller Gallery, Provincetown
2005	CHEAT, Julie Heller Gallery Provincetown, MA
2003	HOME Julie Heller Gallery, Provincetown, MA
2002	PUNCHINELLO'S CITY CJG Projects, NYC, NY
2001	PUNCHINELLO YOUNG Julie Heller Gallery, Provincetown, MA
1999	IN NEW YORK WITH PUNCHINELLO Erector Square Gallery, New Haven, CT
1999	PUNCHINELLO UNDRESSED Julie Heller Gallery
1998	PUNCHINELLO WORKS OUT (PWO). Cortland Jessup Gallery, NYC
1996	PUNCHINELLO GOES WEST Julie Heller Gallery
1995	PUNCHINELLO IN AMERICA 55 Mercer Gallery, NYC, NY
1993	PUNCHINELLO PAINTINGS Amos Eno Gallery, NYC, NY

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2019	MALE GAZE :Life, Legend, Legacy Leslie Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, NYC , NY
2015-17	ART AIDS AMERICA curator Jonathan Katz & Rock Hushka; One Archive & Library Los Angeles; Tacoma Museum of Art; Zuckerman Museum of Art, Atlanta; Bronx Museum; Alphawood Gallery, Chicago
2015	DOGS AND CATS curator Nancy Grimes and Leslie Lalehzar, Mark Miller Gallery, NYC

- 2011 THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES Visual AIDS sponsor, curator Webb,  
The Painting Center, NYC, NY
- 2005 MALE DESIRE curator J. Weinberg, Mary Ryan Gallery, NYC, NY
- 2004 ARTIVIST FILM & ART FESTIVAL Egyptian Theater, LA
- 2004 NEO QUEER CoCA, Seattle, WA
- 2002 TRANSFORMATIONS Sakia City Museum Osaka, Japan
- 2001 RITUAL DAM , Detroit, MI
- 2001 SELF INTEREST: AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND MYTH IN RECENT  
FIGURATIVE ART curator Nancy Grimes, RC FA, Maplewood, NJ
- 1998 THE 173rd ANNUAL EXHIBITION National Academy Of Design, NYC
- 1995 THE NEW AMERICAN FAMILY SUNY , Stoneybrook Gallery
- 1995 THE COMMON MYTH: icon and symbol in art today curator Ludwig  
Datone', Park Avenue Atrium, NYC, NY
- 1988-90 ART AND THE LAW West Co., Bally's Casino, Reno NV; AK Univ. Jonesboro;  
Robert I. Kahn Gallery, Houston; MN Museum; Metro Toronto Convention  
Center; Virginia Commonwealth, Richmond VA; Temple U, Phil; Rose Art Mus
- 1989 "...the Subject is AIDS" Nexus Art Center, Atlanta, GA
- 1987 "CURATOR'S CHOICE" curator Bill Arning, BWAC, Bklyn
- 1983 SUMMER SHOW Odyssia Galleries, New York, NY
- 1983 NEW TALENT Alpha Gallery, Boston, MA
- 1982 EVERSON BIENNALE curator Nancy Hoffman, Everson Museum

## SELECTED PUBLIC & CORPORATE COLLECTIONS

FRED ALGER & CO., New York, NY  
 BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY, Boston, MA  
 GLICKENHAUS & CO., New York, NY  
 HORTON & CALAMIFDE, New York, NY  
 INTERNEURON INC., Boston, MA  
 JANE VOORHEES ZIMMERLI ART MUSEUM, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY, NJ  
 LESLIE LOHMAN MUSEUM OF GAY AND LESBIAN ART, NYC  
 OTIS ELEVATOR, New York, NY  
 PIER-FINE ASSOCIATES, New York, NY ( )  
 PROVINCETOWN ART ASSOCIATION & MUSEUM, Provincetown, MA  
 ROSE ART MUSEUM , Brandeis University, Waltham MA  
 QUEENSBORO COLLEGE MUSEUM, CUNY, Queens, NY  
 MICHELLE ROSENFELD, INC., FINE ARTS, Ramsey, NJ  
 SHARF MARKETING GROUP, New York & Boston  
 UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-OSHKOSH, Oshkosh, WI

## PARTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

"ART AIDS AMERICA" Chicago Tribune, photo reproduction 1/17/17  
 "Protest, Memorial: AIDS in the Art World" Barbara Pollack, Art News May 2014  
 "Patrick Webb ; The Heroic Journey of Punchinello" Philip Gambone,  
 Provincetown Arts Magazine 2012/14  
 New York One interview "Sword of Damocles " 11/29/11  
 " Punchinello Hits the Gym" David Cohen, NY Sun 9/24/10  
 "Patrick Webb: Punchinello as Other and Caren Canier "  
 John Goodrich, City Arts 9/14/10  
 " Stripped" & "Completely Stripped" Bruno Gmunder Publication 7/ 09  
 "David Carbone, Nancy Grimes & Patrick Webb"  
 Alex Taylor, Art News 1/09,  
 "Treasures of Gay Art from the Leslie/Lohman Gay Art Foundation"  
 edited Peter Weierman, All Saints Press, 2008  
 "Webb Finds Truth in Anonymity of an Everyman" Sue Harrison,  
 Provincetown Banner 3/15/08  
 " Nancy Webb by Patrick Webb", catalog essay Provincetown Art Assoc. & Museum 3/06  
 reprinted in 2006 summer issue of Provincetown Arts  
 " The Body and Its Dangers" Robert Ayers, Art News summer 2005  
 " Male Desire: The Homoerotic in American Art" Jonathan Weinberg, Abrams 2005  
 "Webb Takes an Outsider's Look" Deborah Minsky, Provincetown Banner, 7/17/03  
 Cover reproductions and introduction The Georgia Review, summer 2002  
 Listings The New Yorker Magazine, April 6, 1998  
 "A Punchinello Page" (illustration) College Art Association Journal , winter 1996-7  
 "Patrick Webb's Adventures With Punchinello" Stephen Greco, POZ Dec 96/Jan 97  
 "A Life Reinvented: The Paintings of Patrick Webb" & "Punchinello In America" Laurie  
 Fitzpatrick, Art & Understanding 1/96  
 "Eros and Angst" Phillip Gambone, Bay Windows 7/29/93  
 "Stonewalling" Thomas J. Jackson, New York Native, 2/93,6/95  
 "Finding Those Who Fall Before" Gambone, Bay Windows, 8/20/92  
 "Real Implications" Mary Verrill, New North Artscape 2/90  
 "Coat of Many Colors" Mary Abbe, Star Tribune, Minneapolis, MN, 1/25/90  
 "...the subject is AIDS" Art South 5/89  
 "Alone and Embattled" Walter Wadas, Bay Windows, Boston, MA 12/86  
 "Rhythms of New York and Promising Young Talent" C. Temin, Boston Globe 6/23/83



