



CADE TOMPKINS PROJECTS

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## GALLERIES

### Painting, pattern, and place collide in Bob Dilworth's tender portraits

The artist's show gives intimate glimpses of 'Another Place' at Cade Tompkins Projects in Providence

By Cate McQuaid Globe Correspondent, Updated July 19, 2022, 1:01 p.m.



*Bob Dilworth, "Self Portrait," 2021-2022, acrylic paint, ink, paper, fabric, and marker on canvas. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND CADE TOMPKINS PROJECTS*

PROVIDENCE — Bob Dilworth's sumptuous paintings in "Another Place" at Cade Tompkins Projects are tender portraits of people and places dear to him. They're also capacious, tangled depictions of the ethereal. That other place is both precise and indefinable: It's his hometown, and it's the matrix of memory, love, and spirit rooted there. Love just might be his aesthetic; in 2018, he painted a series titled "Black Love Matters."



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Dilworth, born in 1951, grew up in Lawrenceville, Va., a small town 70 miles south of Richmond. He lives in Providence, but often visits Lawrenceville, and recently started recording oral history interviews with friends and family. He photographed the décor of their homes. People gave him fabric samples of wallpaper and upholstery. He cuts those textiles and layers them into paintings, folding tangible memories into image. Dilworth's canvases are just as much about the alchemical power of painting as they are about pattern and identity.



*Bob Dilworth, "Margaret," 2015-2019, oil and acrylic paint, spray paint, fabric, paper doily photo transfer on canvas. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND CADE TOMPKINS PROJECTS*

Many of his subjects are resting. Using the fabrics as launchpads for painterly improvisation, Dilworth creates verdant gardens around them, linking the netherworld of sleep to that of creation. In "Margaret," his elderly mother relaxes in a chair, eyes closed. She appears again, in an outline of black spray paint, perhaps as the portion of her consciousness drifting into dreams. A sparkly, royal-blue stalk of fabric rises to the right; peachy roses bloom at her feet; bouquets hover. It's hard to discern what's paint and what's textile.





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In “Lawrenceville Landscape #2,” vines of deep green upholstery dance with ghostly stems painted in mint green. White cut-paper blossoms spill delicately over the surface and whispering painted baubles echo them. A chain-link pattern in the background walls off this generative paradise from a far less vivid street.



*Bob Dilworth, "Lawrenceville Landscape #2," 2021, acrylic paint, spray paint, ink, paper, fabric, marker on canvas. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND CADE TOMPKINS PROJECTS*

The artist appears three times in “Self Portrait”: as a young man asleep, an older man seated on the bed, and an elderly man sitting beside it. Dilworth’s paint-handling is virtuosic. In fabric and paint, roses take over the floor. The thick impasto of the hydrangeas above the figures matches the lushness of the blossom itself. They sit against swirling vortices of berry-red paint that threaten to hypnotize.

Dilworth uses paint as matter to conjure the world of the spirit. There’s no better subject for that than the people and places who made him.

### **BOB DILWORTH: ANOTHER PLACE**

At Cade Tompkins Projects, 198 Hope St., Providence, through Sept. 2. Open by appointment.  
401-751-4888, [www.cadetompkinsprojects.com](http://www.cadetompkinsprojects.com)