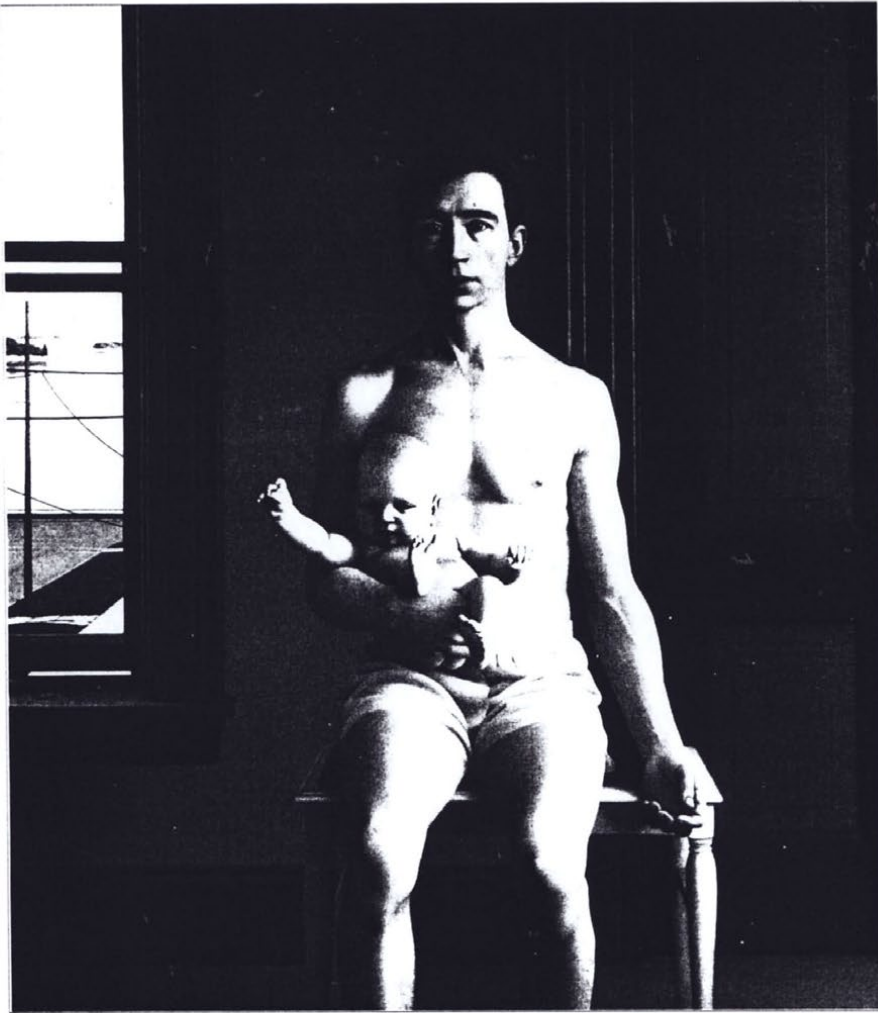


ALEXANDRE

# NY ARTS

reviews

may 1999



**Brett Bigbee** *Joe (Self-Portrait)* 1994-99, oil on canvas, 60 1/8 x 51 1/8 inches. Courtesy Tibor de Nagy, Gallery.

**Tibor de Nagy** 724 Fifth Avenue, Tel. (212) 262-5050. **Brett Bigbee** New Paintings through June 4th.

Bigbee's allegory-like images are serene yet startling--not only in the Durer-like draftsmanship of his obviously modern subjects, but in the effect of a rarefied presence suspended in a crystallized moment. Clearly descended from Piero della Francesca, they exude stillness and concentrated energy, silence and psychological weight. Both iconic and enigmatic, these are figures poised at the center of a revelatory event, their ordinary surroundings infused with a sense of heightened reality, like a site transformed by the weight of its history. Although the hushed solemnity is rooted in Renaissance epiphanies, it also reflects a post-

Einsteinian calm - less grand but more generous in its acceptance of randomness in the quantum universe of the present. The individuals revealed here are contemplative in a post-modern way, literally stripped of trappings and isolated in a reductive space that constantly cycles the viewer back to the central figure. This economy of environment is balanced by the luxuriously soft, translucent handling of the flesh, giving the body a subtly glowing, almost immaterial, quality--as though it were a nimbus generated by the arresting clarity of the gaze. Ultimately, tranquility and sensuality permeate this work in a seamless blend that reveals contemporary beings as incarnations, both encompassing and transcending the realm of the here-and-now. (Everett)

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