

ROGER BRAIMON BIOGRAPHY

I grew up in Closter, NJ (far from the Jersey Shore) to Russian-Polish Brooklyn-born non-practicing Jews. (I'm 98.1% Ashkenazi Jew according to 23andme). I was a 2-month premature 4th child and least likely to do anything significant (read high-paying) with my life. I received cryptic support from my father when he said he wouldn't pay for a "stinkin' box of crayons" to help defray my school costs. Now, at a non-surgically young-looking 49, I have accomplished much more than was expected from certain dead family members. I was an academically lagging distant 2nd to my endocrinologist sibling (2 years older with an academic record of all A's through college). My MFA from the University of Pennsylvania (painting, 1992) and BFA from Cornell University (printmaking and photography, 1989) were a start to gaining some respect, not to mention unconscionable debt – finally paid off in 2016 (where were you, Bernie Sanders, in 1992?).

I moved from Philadelphia to NYC in 1994 and worked as a textile painter in the garment district, knocking off Ralph Lauren paisley scarves in teal, fuchsia, and celadon for low-end fabric manufacturers. I wallowed in delusional fame from my publication in 1994's "Forever Barbie" by M.G. Lord, which featured a painting from my ken doll series and a blurb about my coming out process through art. One exhibition followed, and another was cancelled due to the "mature content" of my work... probably the first time I was called "mature". The book/exhibition circuit of one was the result of my famed 2nd place finish for a \$50K Pew Fellowship (out of 900 applicants). "Disciplinary winner" they called it, which included a free pass to the already free Metropolitan Museum of Art, and a very generous introduction to the author by Ella King Torrey, founder of the Pew Artists program.

Undeterred, I hand carried framed etchings from gallery to gallery in SoHo looking for a show (uncannily following the actions of my great grandfather Morris who carried a sewing machine on his back on the lower east side looking for work in the early 1900's). If it weren't for coffee shops and friends teaching at universities, my exhibition record would have been anemic. Sales picked up with my work displayed along side sofas and soy candles in a boutique interiors store in NYC's trend-setting NoLiTa district. Disguised as decor, my art sales flourished...until the store-owning couple divorced and moved to Mexico.

In spite of personal and professional rejection and self-doubt, I still enjoy following free artistic expression. Art is always a constant, whether making it or thinking about it. I find art, joy and humor in everyday life using video, photography, collage and watercolor. On a serious artsy note, I love patterns and colors, and play with ideas of imperfection and precision, random and contrived, real and imagined.

I've survived financially as a preferred vendor for a cosmetics company – doing design, presentations, photography, and whatever creative ideas need to be hashed out. I once accidentally emailed nude photos to my boss and luckily remained with the company. Which reminds me, sign up at the end for my email list!