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25 *Studio* / Fall-Winter 2007-08


## 3Qs: New Acquisition

### Brenna Youngblood

**01** Brenna Youngblood  
*Scene*  
 2007  
 The Studio Museum in Harlem; purchase with funds provided by the Buddy Taub Foundation 07.11  
 Photo: Margo Leavin

**by Christine Y. Kim**, Associate Curator

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**Christine Y. Kim** Where do you create or find the photographs and images of lightbulbs, leather seats, vehicles and furniture that you incorporate in your paintings? How do their original meanings and histories change as you crop, manipulate and reconstruct them to work within your ominous abstractions, interiors, still lifes and landscapes?

**Brenna Youngblood** I always have my camera with me so I can capture images in my home and in the homes of family members and friends, as well as in public spaces. I am particularly drawn to photographing everyday objects. Lightbulbs often reoccur in my collages. Photographed images don't always lose their original meanings. A lightbulb is still a lightbulb, but when placed alongside dripping paint in a seemingly out-of-control environment, the mood shifts. I'm most interested in disrupting the familiar.

**CYK** Didn't you study photography in your MFA program at UCLA? I remember your early compositions included photo-collages of body parts and furniture. How, when and why did you transition into painting?

**BY** I started out in the program strictly as a photographer. But I had access to a large studio space and was surrounded by other artists working in different media, so I soon became interested in exploring. The transition was natural. I work in a bricolage fashion and am especially interested in the relationship



between painting and photography. I rarely work with a plan, but rather build from a previous work or an undeveloped idea. I enjoy the handmade process of addition, subtraction, layering and peeling. It's always a surprise. The hand makes mistakes and that's what keeps me excited. I think the conversation becomes engaging when the handmade mingles with the mechanically reproduced.

**CYK** Intuitively, I feel like there are literary and cinematic narratives and gestures in your work, such as a reference to Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* in the dark, empty room with lightbulbs in *Scene* (2007). Are you influenced by literature, music, architecture and/or film? Do you incorporate any specific narratives in your imagery?

**BY** The collage *Scene* was indeed partially influenced by both Jeff Walls's work *After "Invisible Man" by Ralph Ellison, the Prologue* (1999–2000) and William Eggleston's image of a red ceiling with a light bulb.