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Multimedia Artist Todd Murphy, Loved by Elton John and Jon Bon Jovi, Opens New Gallery

11/7/2016 by [Carson Griffith](#)



Sam Matamoros
Todd Murphy Art

The cat has been let out of the bag on the music industry's best-kept secret -- in the art world, that is.

[Todd Murphy](#), a multimedia artist who has been selling his paintings, sculptures and photography to musicians and record executives for

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several decades, had his opening reception at Marc Straus Gallery earlier this month. The exhibit of Murphy's work will be on display until December 11th.

Marc Straus is Murphy's first representation in New York City, and his first representation of any type in over a decade. Prior, Murphy, who was born in Chicago, and resided in Atlanta, Charlottesville, Va., and in Costa Rica for a year before relocating to Brooklyn's Park Slope, had seen widespread but quiet success simply due to word of mouth: He counts the [Indigo Girls](#) as one of his first industry buyers (their 1990 video, "Hammer And A Nail," was shot in Murphy's Atlanta studio and featured both the artist and his work) and [Elton John](#) began collecting his work in the mid '90s.

"[Elton John] has all kinds of different pieces of mine: He has photography, paintings, sculpture. He's collected my work across different mediums," explains Murphy. "He became a huge fan and advocate." Murphy also counts [Jon Bon Jovi](#), Michael Stipe, Dave Navarro, T Bone Burnett, Ed Rollins ([Collective Soul](#)) and LA Reid as buyers. Avery Lipman, the President/COO of Republic Records, was in attendance at the opening show at Marc Straus Gallery.



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While Murphy's art scales from "miniature to monumental site specific work," as he puts it, he is perhaps most recognized for his oversized pieces that incorporate what he calls "key themes": Horses, aviary species, dresses, boats and a multitude of images he has gleaned from his extensive travels. One image alone painstakingly showcases over two hundred species of birds, and Murphy is bold in his mixture of mediums. Some oil paintings remain bare while others are layered with painted Plexiglas (to add to the illusion of depth). Many of his works also include foreign objects he has carefully collected over time. "Photography and plexi and paint mixed with found objects from nature and flea markets are where I play a lot," he explains. Murphy also uses salt, charred wood, sticks and wire to create a lot of his sculptural work. "For me, these basic natural elements have their own sort of resonance."

A few pieces also layer multiple images within freestanding sculptures. He then adds the element of artificial lights and film projection to create an entirely new entity of work.

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As many of the pieces are multi-faceted, Murphy describes his art as "a slow building story that will eventually reveal itself as time goes by." Not one particular type of medium or theme in Murphy's work seems to attract those within the industry. Instead, according to Murphy, whether a buyer will opt for a piece of art featuring a stag or a dress (like many of those currently on display at Marc Straus) depends on the individual.

In addition to his current exhibit, Murphy says he is currently working on an installation that is a series of paintings focusing on flocks of starlings, as well as a series of horse paintings. Murphy has also been "quietly" working on a film project, albeit he says it's "nowhere close to development."

Todd Murphy's current exhibition is on display until December 11th at Marc Straus Gallery (work available for purchase); 299 Grand Street; 212-510-7646.