

# JOE BRAINARD

*I Remember*



A PEAK INTO THE  
COLORFUL  
MEMOIRS OF THE  
VIBRANT JOE  
BRAINARD MADE  
EASY

The ART  
& Labour  
ISSUE



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# Introduction

For Artifact 1 our group compiled an index of the experimental memoir *I Remember* by Joe Brainard, which is composed of a non-chronological list of memories. By tracking the themes of art and labor in *I Remember*, we can begin to see Brainard's development both as a person and as a visual artist. The process of indexing began with engaging in distant reading of the text to find any word that relates to art and work, including references to colors, fashion, jobs, or an aesthetic description of both art and everyday things. The distant reading allowed us to recognize how artistic Brainard's mind really was.

Working together, we categorized the various forms of art that Brainard mentions in his memoir. Though Brainard is best known for his work as a visual artist, memories relating to fashion appear the most, accounting for 25% of the total index. These memories making up a quarter of the index is significant because Brainard's attention to fashion is both a record of his aesthetic tastes but also his exploration of gender as a young gay man.

Brainard's memories related to fashion tend to describe women's clothing, especially dresses, such as, "*I remember when I went to a 'come as your favorite person' party as Marilyn Monroe,*" and "*I remember that for my fifth birthday all I wanted was an off-one-shoulder black satin evening gown. I got it. And I wore it to my birthday party.*" It's clear that fashion played a significant role in both his growth as an artist and the expression of his sexuality. Brainard's attention to women's fashion reminds us that clothing is always a kind of aesthetic presentation of identity.

His memory, "*I remember my first sexual experience in a subway. Some guy (I was afraid to look at him) got a hard-on and was rubbing it back and forth against my arm. I got very excited and when my stop came I hurried out and home where I tried to do an oil painting using my dick as a brush,*" gives strong representation of the most intriguing category found in relation to art; "body". This gives a sense of how an influence of art affected so much of Brainard's life. Ultimately, the index reveals how visual he was and how often he takes the time to elaborate on memories that have certain artistic relation to him as a painter.

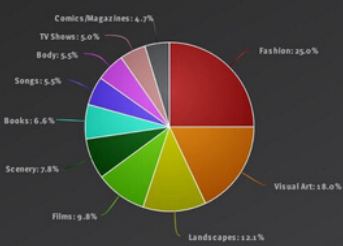
GROUP 4

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By the hands of  
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BRAINARD'S DIFFERENT ART REFERENCES



- FASHION
- VISUAL ART
- LANDSCAPES
- FILMS
- SCENERY
- BOOKS
- SONGS
- BODY
- TV SHOWS
- COMICS/MAGAZINES

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and designs by closing my  
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*I Remember*

JB