

Jacob Kassay

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Jacob Kassay, *IT* (detail), 2023, direct UV prints on OSB, candle, retort stand, sensor control unit, self-adhesive labels, dimensions variable.

GLASGOW

Jacob Kassay

IVORY TARS

20 Albert Road

May 13–June 18, 2023

For “IT,” Jacob Kassay’s first solo show in Scotland, the front-door frame of Ivory Tars is plastered with two tiny adhesive labels, each marked with one of the titular letters in both a slanted print font and braille. The stickers exude a minuscule but determined presence. From the gallery exterior, you can catch the flickering of the lights inside, though the frosted glass of the windows interferes with perception, so that you almost second-guess the effect, like the first glimpse of lightning in a storm.

Inside, the starkness is jarring. The bulbs in the gallery’s ceiling lighting track flash haphazardly, while OSB boards are fitted into architectural recesses within the walls. Kassay has

photographed these panels and printed the images back on their surfaces with a slight but deliberate misalignment. This simple gesture confuses the eye, triggering the viewer to perceive movement where there is none. The illusion is so intense you can almost hear your brain whirring: There is nothing in its database to process this.

In the back space of the gallery, a lit candle is suspended close to the floor, held in place by a metal clamp that looks like it may have been borrowed from a school science experiment. When the strength of the flame fluctuates (usually because of air displaced by someone walking around the gallery or by the front-door opening), it activates a sensor trained on the candle, which in turn affects the gallery lights.

With these interventions (all considered elements of a single installation, *IT*, 2023), Kassay digs further into his ongoing investigations into the act of looking, while also leaning into the liveness of the gallery. The interaction requires something so innately human. Are the art objects and their hierarchy useless without an observer? Does something need to be seen to exist? This is an eternal, existential question, one that Kassay addresses through small gestures that evoke significant bodily reactions.

— *Lisette May Monroe*

DECALAGES

L'ordre des choses programmé par les galeries et les centres d'art a subi pour le moins un décalage horaire aux mois de mai, juin et juillet. Les décisions prises furent celles de suspendre temporairement les expositions en cours, voire de les reporter de quelques mois ou aux calendes des jours meilleurs.

Mais qu'en est-il de l'écriture qui en découle ordinairement, de la réflexion esthétique qui s'édite dans un laps de temps approprié pour le lecteur, au fait de voir et de lire ou inversement ?

Ces temps rebours ont permis toutefois d'entrevoir l'une d'elles jusqu'aux derniers jours de juillet à la galerie *Art : Concept*, qui présentait une installation d'œuvres récentes de Jacob Kassay.¹

L'artiste Newyorkais, né en 1981, se veut pluridisciplinaire dont la pratique alterne entre peintures et vidéos. C'est la quatrième fois que la galerie parisienne présente Jacob Kassay pour une exposition puissamment contrastée entre la blancheur des cimaises et les pièces elles-mêmes. Cette dernière s'intitule *F'O'O'T'A'G'E'* – il est donc question d'*IMAGES* pour celui qui fut en son temps étudiant en photographie à l'Université d'Etat de Buffalo.

Onze panneaux de bois contrecollés sur une structure aluminium se décollent des murs en respectant l'épaisseur ordinaire d'un châssis. D'emblée, l'ambivalence s'impose entre la possibilité de voir une peinture, une planche de bois composite et un écran lumineux.



Jacob Kassay, *Vue*, ©F.N.J.P.F.

Pour une part, les panneaux OBS se présentent pour leur qualité fonctionnelle, en tant que panneau de bois d'aménagement destinés à tous types d'usage, dont la peinture est ici conceptuellement incluse.² D'autre part, une impression UV des OBS s'est apposée sur chacune des planches composites, dédoublant ainsi l'objet par son image.

Cette reproduction de haute définition s'est faite avec un léger décalage, lequel confère à chaque

ensemble l'effet d'une troisième dimension.

Jacob Kassay convoque et conjugue à la fois, l'espace pictural et le matériau présenté comme *ready-made*, en vue d'une transfiguration vers un ailleurs intuitif. Le dispositif a pour visée une mise au point perceptuelle et ce, autant sur le plan factuel de la dénomination que sur le plan d'une appréhension conceptuelle.

Non sans humour, l'intention s'affiche bel et bien

à l'entrée de l'exposition, par l'image d'un jeune chat siamois sujet à un strabisme aigu. Le portrait de cet animal sous-tend une dimension spéculaire, dans le sens où le visiteur est de fait personnellement et temporairement concerné par la dissociation diplopie dont il est ici question.³ Non sans effort, celui-ci cherche à rectifier l'alignement de son regard, tendant à réduire malgré lui la vision double.

Le trouble chez Jacob Kassay relève de la volonté d'avoir deux idées tuilées sur toute chose. L'installation forme une chaîne de signifiants qui associe une rhétorique d'exposition de la peinture, l'image pixélisée, l'image en mouvement et l'écran de l'ordinateur. Le doublement de l'organisation aléatoire des particules de bois se veut allusif au maillage des pixels qui compose désormais nos images.

Dans un mur de gauche, deux repose-pieds en acier inoxydable (*footrest*) sont encastrés. Contrairement aux plans de bois ressortis, ces deux objets sont enchâssés à hauteur de pied du visiteur, lequel peut possiblement se soulager d'une fatigue causée par l'abus des écrans et contre laquelle, l'usager, d'ordinaire, disposerait d'un repose-pied sous sa table de travail comme une aide au maintien du corps.

Pour Jacob Kassay, l'orientation et la forme oblongue des copeaux de bois rappellent également la vrille spiralee de la composition des deux versions du *Nu descendant l'escalier*, dont la première de 1911 est une huile sur carton, contrecollée sur un panneau de bois.

La décomposition du mouvement chez Marcel Duchamp est l'expression d'un mouvement en chaîne dont la successivité interroge la nature même de l'image cinématographique.

De même, les vidéastes, dès la fin des années 60 s'intéresseront au grésillement électronique et au modeste rendu de ces images qu'ils distinguaient de l'éclat progressiste que connaissait alors la technique du cinéma. Jacob Kassay déplace autrement la manifestation des images de son temps pour en observer la matérialité et les interconnexions induites.

MARCHÉ DE L'ART

en bref



Les galeries rouvrent à Paris : focus sur quatre expositions

Progressivement les galeries parisiennes reprennent leur activité tandis que l'offre sur Internet continue à être abondante.

A une époque où le virtuel est partout, il ne faut pas céder aux sirènes numériques. Rien ne remplace la vision physique des œuvres d'art. On peut en prendre conscience, de nouveau, en visitant, dans le quartier du Marais, un certain nombre de galeries, aux offres très diverses, qui viennent de rouvrir leurs portes depuis quelques jours.

Ainsi Art Concept, rue Rambuteau, une galerie bien connue internationalement pour son programme radical, expose un artiste qui a été un temps au centre de toutes les attentions du marché de l'art, Jacob Kassay (né en 1984). L'Américain présente un travail de nature conceptuelle qui joue avec l'idée de l'image. A la fin des années 2000 il produisait des

ne pourront jamais se substituer aux expositions », clame Emmanuel Perrotin.

La galerie Balice Hertling, par exemple, y montre en ce moment le travail d'Isabelle Cornaro (née en 1974). Il s'agit de reliefs monochromes en résine en forme de triangle sur lesquels sont incrustés le moulage d'objets trouvés. Comme une tranche de vie. Ces pièces uniques sont à vendre 40.000 euros. La Française fera en 2021 l'objet d'une exposition à la fondation d'entreprise Ricard et aussi au musée de l'Orangerie. « En l'absence de foires, cette opération généreuse nous permet d'établir de nouveaux contacts et de montrer la vivacité de l'écosystème de l'art contemporain à Paris », observe Daniele Balice.

« Nous voulons célébrer l'importance d'expérimenter en réel les œuvres d'art. Les "viewing rooms" ne pourront jamais se substituer aux expositions. »

EMMANUEL PERROTIN
Galerie Perrotin

✚ PHILIP-LORCA
DICORCIA, TIRAGES
À 30.000 DOLLARS

Mais Zwirner, pour sa réouverture, a choisi de montrer dans son

tableaux entièrement recouverts d'une peinture argent – référence aux sels d'argent de la photographie – censés refléter le regardeur. A vendre pour 4.000 dollars en galerie juste après leur production, il est arrivé que ces toiles soient revendues aux enchères jusqu'à 237.000 euros en 2013 chez Phillips à New York.

✚ JACOB KASSAY DÈS 15.000 DOLLARS

« C'était un marché complètement artificiel, aux mains de spéculateurs séduits au premier abord par l'objet lui-même, particulièrement esthétique », explique Olivier Antoine, le propriétaire de la galerie Art Concept, qui ajoute : « Heureusement le phénomène s'est calmé. Une grande peinture de ce type se vend aujourd'hui autour de 80.000 dollars. » Mais Jacob Kassay continue ses recherches picturales. A Paris, il montre jusqu'au 25 juillet sa nouvelle série, proche en apparence de l'esprit de l'art minimal. Ses tableaux sont des surfaces de bois aggloméré, sur lesquelles il a imprimé une photo représentant le même aggloméré. Il en ressort un étrange flouté, un trouble qui provient de la superposition de la matière réelle et de son double en image. Il faut sans aucun doute voir les œuvres et non des reproductions, pour les comprendre. Elles sont à vendre entre 15.000 et 35.000 dollars.

Par ailleurs Art Concept participe comme vingt-cinq autres galeries parisiennes à un cycle de présentation collectif au sein de la puissante galerie française Perrotin, jusqu'au 14 août, baptisé « Restons unis ». Le principe : ces galeries exposent chacune, dans l'espace du passage Saint-Claude de Perrotin, quelques œuvres d'un seul artiste et bénéficient ainsi de l'afflux de la clientèle du galeriste. « Avec cette initiative nous voulons célébrer l'importance d'expérimenter en réel les œuvres d'art. Les "viewing rooms"

✚ AD MINOLITI À LA HAUSSE

Toujours chez Perrotin, la galerie Crèveœur présente les peintures de l'Argentine Ad Minoliti (née en 1981). Un mélange de formes géométriques et de sujets pop, dans des couleurs vives, à vendre entre 25.000 et 40.000 euros. Elle était exposée à la Biennale de Venise de 2019 et bénéficie

Depuis 1993, Alain Margaron vend uniquement des œuvres qu'il possède.

Dans son écurie d'artistes, le plus connu est Jean Hélion (1904-1987).

d'une programmation importante dans les institutions américaines. « Face à une demande forte, nous avons augmenté ses prix de 25 % au début de 2020. Les tarifs des œuvres de nos artistes ne s'inscrivent pas à la baisse pour l'instant, même si les collectionneurs tentent de négocier des rabais », raconte Axel Dibie, codirecteur de Crèveœur.

La galerie multinationale Zwirner (1) installée depuis octobre 2019 à Paris, dans le Marais, propose aussi sur son site Internet, jusqu'au 19 juin, la présence de galeries françaises et belges qui mettent chacune en valeur, par ce biais, un artiste. Ici Crèveœur défend Autumn Ramsey (née en 1976), une peintre américaine dont les toiles semblent être inspirées à la fois par les dessins de Jean Cocteau, les peintures surréalistes de Francis Picabia et la transparence des estampes japonaises. A vendre 8.000 euros. Crèveœur exposera Autumn Ramsey en septembre dans son espace.

lieu parisien des tirages du célèbre photographe américain Philip-Lorca diCorcia (né en 1951). Entre 1997 et 2008 il a réalisé des images pour « W Magazine », qui sont exposées ici en grand format. Editées à 15 exemplaires, elles sont à vendre 30.000 dollars pièce. L'artiste procède en imaginant des scènes très travaillées, marquées par une lumière sophistiquée, qui peuvent être vues comme des critiques sociales. Des arrêts sur image d'un film qui n'existe pas, comme cette scène de deux dames mûres et élégantes en compagnie d'un jeune homme à l'attitude équivoque, ou celle d'une mariée en pleine préparation de la réception, dans une salle vide.

✚ HÉLION À PARTIR DE 4.000 EUROS

Enfin, toujours dans le Marais, dans un tout autre genre, la galerie Alain Margaron fonctionne selon un modèle peu singulier, tout à fait en dehors des circuits à la mode de l'art contemporain. Depuis 1993, Alain Margaron vend uniquement des œuvres qu'il possède. Dans son écurie d'artistes, le plus connu est Jean Hélion (1904-1987) qui, comme le montrait sa rétrospective au Centre Pompidou en 2005, fut durant une courte partie de sa vie un brillant peintre abstrait de l'avant-garde avant d'opérer un virage radical pour revenir à la figuration et dispenser un message social.

La galerie expose 25 œuvres dont des dessins à partir de 4.000 euros et des peintures jusqu'à 250.000 euros. Aux enchères, le record pour Hélion a été obtenu pour une abstraction de 1935 adjugée 3,1 millions d'euros, mais ses personnages de l'après-guerre qui ressemblent à des pantins colorés peuvent partir jusqu'à 300.000 euros. On en retrouve chez Alain Margaron dans une gamme de prix très sensiblement inférieure.

— Judith Benhamou-Huet

CORNELIA

Jacob Kassay at Hallwalls Center for Contemporary Art

f t in ♥

November 9, 2019 – December 20, 2019

by Axel Bishop



Jacob Kassay, *Footage*, 2019. Installation view: Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center, 2019. Photograph: Natalie Dienno

A good magician never reveals the secret to a trick. A masterful demon shows us what is behind the illusion yet coaxes the eye to the wrong cup nonetheless. The late Ricky Jay—trickster, card sharp, and historian of magic—would narrate his own legerdemain, telling us what we are seeing while defying our perception. Jay recounts the history of the trick (the very trick and trickery itself) while his act is in play, and the informative yet distracting patter that is the tactical deception of sleight-of-hand artistry goes to work on us. Jay jumps time, moves faster than the viewer can see, doubles back, slows down, chews on the elasticity of non-linear time, stretches his sequence out again, arriving repeatedly at the same result. The observer's constrained frontal view is framed and predetermined; the viewer understands that what is known has become destabilized by what can be seen. This sort of "card artistry" is entertaining on its face, dangerous in its implications. Jay's verbose manner, for him a technology of artifice, is an homage to historic illusionist showmen and an accomplice to his motives: the images he transmits in his narrative are a furtive veil to cover his hands as they sneak around the muted, felt-top table in plain sight. This is a tactic that magicians refer to as "misdirection." What purpose is served?



Jacob Kassay, *Footage*, 2019. Installation view: Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center, 2019.

Photograph: Natalie Dienno

In Jacob Kassay's recent Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center exhibition *Footage*, oriented strand board (OSB) panels are arrayed above a sea of blue carpeting, which dampens the sound of walking around the space and heightens the sense of being out of place. Kassay manages to sustain this effect, even as we get oriented to the installation. The carpeting absorbs the light, evening out the space as it sets off a contrast to the yellowy panels. The machinations of *Footage* hinge on the use of a crude material typically used as underlayment in roofing and other construction applications. While not visible in the finished interior, such material is essential to defining three-dimensional space. This seems significant when considering how the space of the image refuses to settle in one place in this installation: the artist has utilized the space of the gallery as a way to navigate us through slightly modified repetitions. One first encounters the panel on the wall and then again freestanding to reveal its back: now here, now there. But this is not a sculpture in the traditional sense of a many-sided, dynamic object: behind the OSB panel is a stanchion, merely the infrastructure that serves to prop up the front of this work, the *screen*.

“Footage,” of course, also refers to sequential motion captured by film or video. Kassay’s sculptures—slightly enlarged and off-register images of the OSB printed onto itself—have the contradictory effect of standing as fixed objects in space while eluding being held in place by just perceptible degrees of difference. These are not so much composites of images as they are collusions between image and material. The photographic image and its referent are nearly reunited in order to reveal the distance between the two.

Here, then, are objects that come equipped with their own propaganda, persuading viewers to believe even as we cannot quite reconcile this with what we are seeing. Or rather, this installation is not a series of objects but really one object told again and again. A card repeatedly pulled from behind our ear. Sometimes in varying scale (with constrained proportions) or varying presentation (wall or freestanding), the OSB panel reintroduces itself, persuading us to be in the material world and “within” its representations at once, much like Renato Bertelli’s *Continuous Profile (Head of Mussolini)* (1933), simultaneously an icon, a machine, a vectorized image, a static object about motion, a picture never at rest. Replicated and endorsed by Italian Fascists, the circumferentially constant image of Mussolini appears everywhere and supplants reality by its effect. It is a magic trick that contrives bronze as a time-based medium, the volumetric subject as perpetual image. Kassay’s manipulation of engineered wood and image is an appropriate strategy for considering our current moment in history. The tyranny of the space created here results from the recurring blurred and therefore destabilizing image. Perception is shaken in a manner that influences the audience to be both aware of and susceptible to the illusion. The photograph and its subject hide one another. Which is the predatory figure and which is the ground that serves as its camouflage? To promote the exhibition, Kassay created a poster that also advances the concepts of *Footage* and how we might approach the work. The poster contains a double image of a leopard stalking its prey. The cat’s hide blends into the golden field in which it discreetly moves. This image acts as a rubric, relating the visual to the thematic.



Jacob Kassay, *Footage*, 2019. Installation view: Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center, 2019. Photograph: Natalie Dienno

To this point there is another curious inclusion to the show: Andy Warhol's Polaroid photograph of O.J. Simpson, which breaks ranks with the aforementioned recurring imagery and insinuates a possible application of the artist's critique beyond the cool minimalism of the boards. Polaroid as a medium is associated with immediacy in its photographic processing, yet ironically the image here is clearly of another time both in material and representation. The portrait of O.J. arrests a moment of ambition and praise, but can only be undermined by what we have come to know in the interval since its "capture." It is a picture of two coexisting truths. Years after the image was made, viewers were entranced by the urgent banality of O.J.'s low-speed car chase and the equally heightened monotony of the ensuing trial as cultural event. Both chapters were excessively mediated experiences connecting and distancing us from the elusive certainties of the subject, our prey. The outcome of the trial and the stark oppositions of black and white, innocence and guilt provoked polarizing viewpoints, whereas the compiled facts were unpacked as a complex gradient.

In 1967 Dutch artist Jan Dibbets made the first of his *Perspective Corrections*, minimal trapezoidal shapes that collapse into squares when flattened in the documented image. The "corrections" explored and undermined the phenomenon of mapping depth in two dimensions, describing three-dimensional space on a flat plane by exploiting the limitations of photography as a surrogate for the human eye. Dibbets's "corrected" dimensional spaces are activated by the way in which they were compressed with representation. The works of Kassay's *Footage* operate on our eyes in a similar manner. After the subsiding stimulation of effects, the experience may be a suggestion for how to begin to interrogate the combined real/virtual environments that we increasingly navigate: our cultural landscape of obfuscation, where a plurality of perspectives can be bent into a prism of multiple non-truths, of existential incidents and their sharp but degrading representations. Perhaps Kassay's raw footage has captured a new *Perspective Correction* of tangible forms and the dazzling shadows that they throw.

Axel Bishop is a poet based in St. John's Newfoundland. Bishop often writes on Contemporary Art, Architecture and Film, and is currently working on a biography of Bern Porter.

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Collezione Maramotti's extraordinary art collection continues to evolve

The converted factory gallery in Reggio Emilia presents the first rehang of its permanent collection since it opened in 2007



Installation view of the 2017 exhibition 'Postnaturalia', by Kristof Kintera. Courtesy of Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, 2019. Photography: Dario Lasagni

Max Mara's late founder Achille Maramotti was born and bred in the Italian city of Reggio Emilia, best known for being the progenitive city of the famed Reggio Emilia approach to educational philosophy. Now, growing this local legacy in forward-thinking discussion, the Collezione Maramotti is one of the most important – and intelligent – contemporary art collections in the country.

The building, first built as a Max Mara factory in 1957 by the architecture firm of Antonio Pastorini and Eugenio Salvarani, was converted into a gallery between 2003 and 2007 by English architect Andrew Hapgood. The building, and its contents, are kept under the close watch by its protective family owners, spearheaded by Luigi Maramotti, Achille's son and the chairman of Max Mara. Though free to enter (at the wishes of Achille), the Collezione is reserved for appointment-only guests (of up to 25 people at a time) and no children under 11. 'Visitors must take their time and spend a couple of hours to see it,' explains the Collezione's senior coordinator Sara Piccinini. 'That's what we request: to enter into a personal relationship with the works'.

We first visited back in 2009 for the March fashion special of *Wallpaper** (W*120). 'The gallery may reveal occasional glimpses of its founder's idiosyncratic character,' we wrote at the time, 'but ultimately it conceals as much as it reveals'. In places, evidence of its former life as a factory has been retained; in the floors, stained by the memory of machinery long-removed, and in the Memphis-style cafeteria, with its gloriously vibrant orange booths and checkered tables. Elsewhere, in the sweeping reception hall opened up by Hapgood, and the architectural, slatted windows that tessellate across the facade, this is a polished, world-class art gallery.



The Collezione Maramotti, as pictured in the March 2009 issue of *Wallpaper**. The building was one of the first to contrast raw reinforced concrete with exposed brickwork on its exterior. *Photography: Milo Keller & Julien Gallico*

A good example: since 2005, the brand has sponsored the biannual Max Mara Art Prize for Women in collaboration with London's Whitechapel Gallery. In 2016, a fascinating show by artist Emma Hart drew upon the academic legacy of Reggio Emilia. She spent six months in the town, and travelling Italy, immersing herself in its culture, theory, and academia.

Indeed, art and fashion continually cohabit within the Max Mara identity. 'From the very start, Achille Maramotti thought that there may be a fruitful interchange between artistic creativity and industrial design: some of the art pieces were on display in the premises of Max Mara when the company was here, to positively inspire designers and creative collaborators,' Piccinini continues. 'But at the same time he had clearly in mind the intrinsic differences between these two languages: the artistic gesture and artworks are an end in themselves, they don't need any reason, while fashion, as exclusive as it may be, only exists because a user exists, someone who will wear it.'

A good example: since 2005, the brand has sponsored the biannual Max Mara Art Prize for Women in collaboration with London's Whitechapel Gallery. In 2016, a fascinating show by artist Emma Hart drew upon the academic legacy of Reggio Emilia. She spent six months in the town, and travelling Italy, immersing herself in its culture, theory, and academia.

Likewise, the collection is proudly Italian, and has particular strength in Italy's colourful postwar optimism; though it also presents an elegant chronology of key moments in both European and American contemporary art. The permanent collection features around 200 works from the late 1940s onwards, belonging to some of the most significant artistic trends of the second half of the 20th century: art informel, arte povera, German and American neoexpressionism, New Geometry, alongside more recent experimentations from the 1990s. Continuing to chart and represent emerging movements, the new exhibition 'Rehang' emphasises the family's restless fascination with the new, with a selection of works created by today's bleeding-edge.

In the exhibition, the work of ten artists that exhibited at the Collezione since it opened to the public in 2007 have been rehung in new contexts. Solo shows from Enoc Perez, Gert & Uwe Tobias, Jacob Kassay, Krištof Kintera, Jules de Balincourt, Alessandro Pessoli, Evgeny Antufiev, Thomas Scheibitz, Chantal Joffe and Alessandra Ariatti, pick up notes central to the collection, particularly its keen eye for the evolution of painting.

Joffe's paintings are equal parts seductive and arresting. In the four large format paintings on display, the British artist represents a large single figure, her then-teenager niece Moll, an *Alice in Wonderland*-esque figure, with enigmatic qualities. Through broad brushstrokes and blurred details of the face and dresses, the girl looks immersed in a dense, pictorial flow.



Installation view of Jacob Kassay's 2010 exhibition, 'Untitled'. Courtesy of Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, 2019. Photography: Dario Lasagni

Elsewhere, Jacob Kassay's silvery painted sheets (pictured above) act as an antidote to the almost overwhelming range of work on show throughout the museum. His room, filled with nine mirror-like works, is cast in a moonlit atmosphere; each individual painting contributing to a kind of peaceful immersion.



“Mechanisms” at Wattis



Artists: Zarouhie Abdalian, Terry Atkinson, Lutz Bacher, Eva Barto, Neïl Beloufa, Patricia L. Boyd, Jay DeFeo, Trisha Donnelly, Harun Farocki, Richard Hamilton, Aaron Flint Jamison, Jacob Kassay, Garry Neill Kennedy, Louise Lawler, Park McArthur, Jean-Luc Moulène, Pope.L, Charlotte Posenenske, Cameron Rowland, Danh Vo

Venue: Wattis, San Francisco

Exhibition Title: Mechanisms

Curated by: Anthony Huberman with Leila Grothe

Date: October 12, 2017 – February 24, 2018



Louis Cane, *Sol/Mur*, 1974, huile sur toile métisse. Courtesy de l'artiste et Ceysson & Bénétière. © Ville de Nice

—Nice (06)

DE NICE À NEW YORK : SI LOIN, SI PROCHES

Le 109

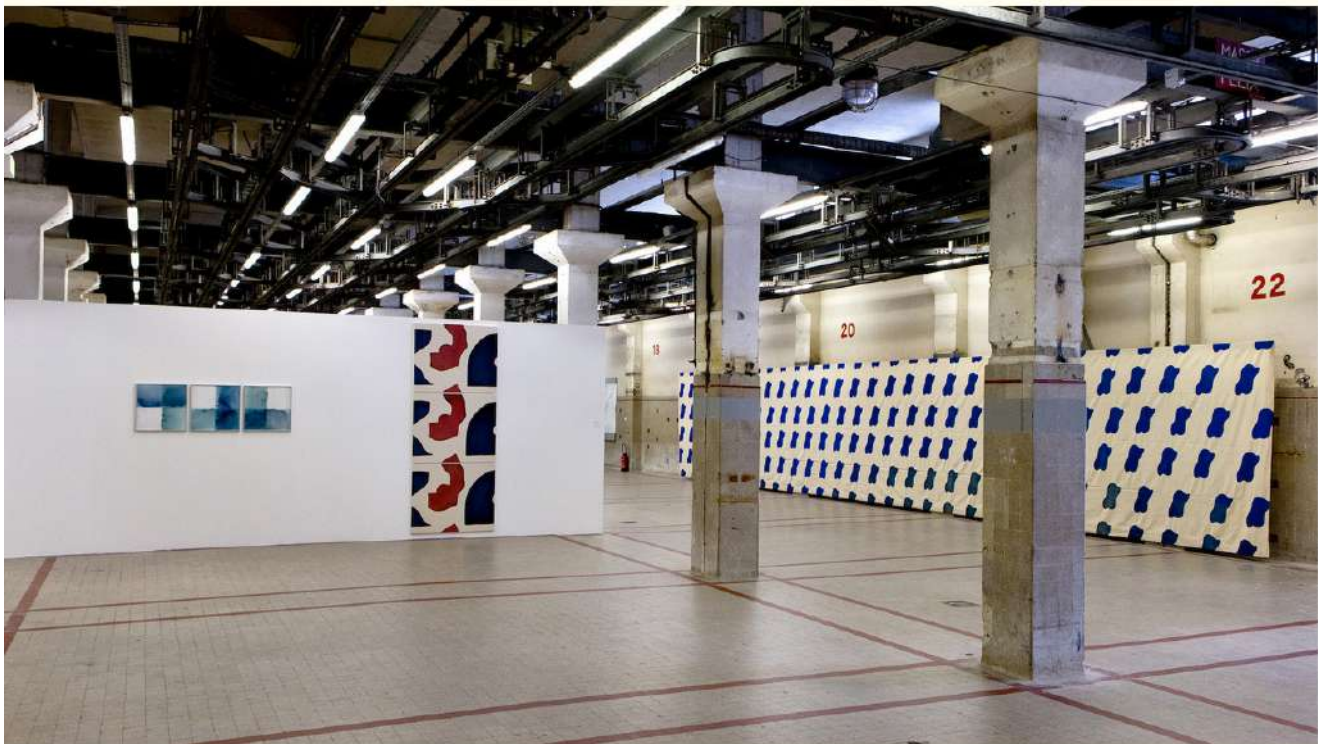
Jusqu'au 15 octobre 2017

Au nombre des mouvements successifs nés depuis les années 1950 dans la baie des Anges (le Nouveau Réalisme, Fluxus...), Supports/Surfaces a marqué entre 1969 et 1971 un tournant dans la remise en question de la peinture. Pour Viallat, Dezeuze, Dolla, Cane, Saytour et quelques autres, « l'objet de la peinture, c'est la peinture elle-même ». Retour aux fondamentaux, à rebours de la vogue lyrique et expressionniste. C'est cette radicalité avant-gardiste allant de pair avec une approche formelle et chromatique toute matissienne, qu'a choisi de confronter la commissaire Marie Maertens avec les préoccupations de plasticiens new-yorkais des années 2000. Douze Français face à autant d'Américains. Les jeunes quadragénaires de Brooklyn, héritiers de l'art minimal, de Kelly et de Stella, se révèlent partager avec leurs aînés de

l'école de Nice, jusqu'alors peu exposés aux États-Unis, une même volonté de déconstruction, de reconstruction de la toile, une réflexion sur le châssis, sur l'intégration de l'œuvre dans l'environnement, un questionnement du matériau – souvent modeste, de récupération – jusqu'à l'usage de techniques artisanales. La proximité plastique s'impose au regard. Le rapprochement générationnel et géographique fonctionne, soulignant les affinités picturales. Au final, le choix des œuvres et l'accrochage, exercice délicat dans l'immense espace des anciens abattoirs, créent un dialogue rafraîchissant, comme autant de réminiscences de la French Riviera sur la côte atlantique. *That's Nice !* —STÉPHANE RENAULT

« La Surface de la côte est, de Nice à New York », 109, 89, route de Turin, Nice (06), ecolesdenice2017.nice.fr

La Surface de la Côte Est...



...de Nice à New York, Le 109 – Les Abattoirs, Nice, 23.06–15.10.2017

La manifestation d'été *Nice 2017. École(S) de Nice*, placée sous le commissariat général de Jean-Jacques Aillagon et présentée dans divers lieux de la ville^[1], revient sur 70 ans d'activité artistique niçoise. Présentée au 109 dans l'espace en friche à peine remanié des anciens abattoirs, « La Surface de la Côte Est / de Nice à New York – The Surface of the East Coast / from Nice to New York » est une exposition imaginée par Marie Maertens, à la fois historique et prospective, qui réunit 24 artistes français et américains provenant d'horizons culturels et de générations différentes. Les premiers sont des artistes historiques issus du mouvement Supports/Surfaces qui a émergé à la fin de la décennie soixante : Pierre-André Arnal, Vincent Bioulès, Pierre Buraglio, Louis Cane, Marc Devade, Daniel Dezeuze, Noël Dolla, Bernard Pagès, Jean-Pierre Pincemin, Patrick Saytour, André

Daniel Dezeuze, Noël Dolla, Bernard Pagès, Jean-Pierre Pincemin, Patrick Saytour, André Valensi et Claude Viallat. Les seconds sont de plus jeunes peintres new-yorkais nés entre les années 1970 et 1980 : Justin Adian, Mark Barrow & Sarah Parke, Anna Betbeze, Joe Bradley, Sarah Braman, Adam Henry, Jacob Kassay, Lucas Knipscher, Erik Lindman, Landon Metz, Sam Moyer et Gedi Sibony. Le propos de ce face-à-face repose sur des affinités formelles et théoriques qui constituent « un axe imaginaire^[2] » entre Nice et New York, pour reprendre les termes de la curatrice, autour d'une peinture non objective et souvent auto-référentielle, sous-tendue par des processus de déconstruction qui mettent en avant la praxis et où la notion de plaisir et de liberté, ainsi que la couleur tiennent une place particulière, en dehors de toute filiation.



Le choix d'œuvres des tenants de Supports/Surfaces, qui proviennent en grande partie de collections privées, est centré sur les années d'émergence du mouvement. Il donne à voir des pièces marquées par un engagement esthétique et idéologique qui ont littéralement réinventé la notion de peinture en dehors des conventions bourgeoises et qui se déploient pour la plupart dans l'espace sur toile libre quand elles ne font pas purement et simplement disparaître cette dernière pour mettre en avant le châssis. Cinquante ans après, les stratégies déclinées par ces artistes pour passer la couleur (aérosol, teinture, tampon, combustion) ou pour structurer les compositions (découpage, pliage, trame et autres protocoles de subdivision de la surface picturale) opèrent encore dans toute la justesse et la radicalité de leur jeunesse. Il faut dire que la nature très brute de l'espace d'exposition dans lequel la peinture de ces artistes, mais également la sculpture d'un Pagès prennent place, contribue à extirper ces travaux de l'idéal *white cube* muséal pour les remettre dans une perspective exploratoire.



En regard de ces pièces paradigmatiques, les peintures des douze artistes américains constituent le point fort de cette exposition tant pour la découverte qu'elles offrent au public que pour la qualité de leurs inventions formelles, de leurs enjeux théoriques et de leur niveau de références. Forts d'une culture universitaire et stimulés par un marché de l'art florissant à la croisée de multiples courants, les artistes américains présentés dans cette exposition semblent plus avoir subi l'influence de la *hard-edge painting*, de la peinture et de la sculpture minimales que de Supports/Surfaces dont les développements sont restés confidentiels aux États-Unis. Dans le texte introductif du catalogue, Marie Maertens signale toutefois une exposition autour de Supports/Surfaces ayant eu un impact récent dans le milieu artistique et qui a été organisée à New York en 2014 à la galerie Canada, une galerie gérée par des artistes parmi lesquels figure Sarah Braman qui est exposée au 109. Erik Lindman a, par exemple, développé son travail sur le châssis après avoir découvert le travail de Pierre Buraglio à travers cette exposition.

Le cas de Lucas Knipscher constitue une exception dans la mesure où c'est au cours de ses études qu'il a connu l'existence de Supports/Surfaces. Ses peintures qui intègrent l'émulsion photographique ont pour support le tissu et les jeux de froissage et de combustion présents à la surface de ses images indiquent bien l'influence du groupe français. Quant à ses sculptures en porcelaine moulée sur du bambou, elles naissent comme des réactivations des barres de bois rond d'Andre Cadere.



Pour certains de ces artistes, la notion de processus reste primordiale au même titre que dans le passé au point de rendre accessoire le tableau en tant qu'objet achevé comme l'affirme Landon Metz à travers ses panneaux peints de motifs répétitifs bleus et roses en *all-over*. Leur dimension systématique n'exclut toutefois pas une efficacité formelle qui n'est pas sans rappeler les papiers découpés de Matisse.

Contrairement à Supports/Surfaces qui est un groupe exclusivement masculin, la scène artistique new-yorkaise présentée ici est marquée par la présence d'artistes féminines telles que Sarah Braman et Sam Moyer. Les sculptures en plexiglas de Sarah Braman forment des volumes géométriques complexes et ouverts dont la transparence est occultée par des interventions à la peinture aérosol qui leur confèrent une forme d'impureté minimale.

Sam Moyer met également en crise le minimalisme lorsqu'elle confronte de la toile teinte à des plaques de marbre récupérées dans le milieu de la construction et sur lesquelles elle n'intervient pas. Ces éléments *ready made* arrivent non seulement au hasard avec leur histoire, mais aussi avec une géographie dessinée par la nature.

On trouve également dans ces nouvelles générations des collectifs qui ont une façon différente d'œuvrer, moins indexée sur la primauté de l'individu. Par exemple, Mark Barrow & Sarah Parke travaillent en binôme à partir de savoir-faire différents : la création assistée par ordinateur et le tissage. Sur leurs toiles libres en soie teinte à la main s'inscrivent de très petits motifs dont le raffinement complexe est atténué par un chromatisme délicat.

Par rapport à Supports/Surfaces, certains de ces artistes remettent en question la dimension dogmatique d'une peinture qui ne référerait qu'à elle-même comme Jacob Kassay qui porte un regard dubitatif sur ces années de dématérialisation de l'œuvre d'art et qui affirme : « Un tableau dépend de sa relation à d'autres éléments[3] ». Il n'est pas anodin que ses *shaped canvas* soient réalisés à partir de chutes de matériaux d'atelier et donc porteurs de multiples histoires. Ils restituent une image volontairement approximative et bricolée des châssis découpés d'un Frank Stella ou d'un Robert Mangold.



Le travail de ces artistes bien qu'il soit surtout centré sur la peinture, n'hésite pas à annexer la sculpture et l'objet et à varier gestes et protocoles d'élaboration. Cette sortie de la peinture pure est aussi caractérisée par des dimensions plus intimes que celles de la grande peinture américaine, depuis l'abstraction lyrique des années 1950 à la peinture minimaliste des années 1960. S'il constitue un modèle référentiel incontournable pour ces artistes, l'art minimal réapparaît ici sous une forme adoucie, souvent à travers des couleurs pastel et des volumes qui intègrent des courbes comme en témoignent les sensuelles sculptures peintes de Justin Adian réalisées à partir d'éléments en mousse recouverts de toile peinte.

Un autre aspect de la production de ces peintres et sculpteurs est leur approche de la beauté formelle de l'œuvre qui rejoue de façon finalement assez décomplexée quelque chose de l'ordre de la somptuosité de l'art en impliquant le spectateur dans le processus perceptif ainsi qu'en témoignent les surfaces colorées changeantes des peintures hypnotiques de Adam Henry.

Quant au contenu du travail de ces artistes, il dénote un engagement politique moindre mais, en revanche, il inclut des préoccupations d'ordre psycho-social en phase avec l'époque actuelle. C'est le cas d'Anna Betbeze qui s'intéresse à la notion de surface picturale et qui peint sur des tapis ornementaux en provenance de Macédoine auxquels elle applique de la couleur et qu'elle soumet à des opérations de combustion ou de brûlure à l'acide. L'objet qui en ressort n'est pas uniquement un fait plastique pictural, il porte en lui toute son identité culturelle et le trajet géographique qui est le sien.

On note enfin l'originalité du catalogue dont la richesse tient beaucoup aux entretiens réalisés à l'occasion de cette exposition avec ces artistes américains encore peu connus outre-Atlantique pour certains. On y apprend beaucoup sur les principes d'élaboration des œuvres dans les pratiques respectives de chacun ainsi que sur les territoires culturels annexés. Quant aux entretiens avec les neuf artistes encore vivants de Supports/Surfaces, ils présentent l'intérêt de livrer avec recul la vision d'une époque historique tout en révélant les développements actuels de leurs recherches respectives.

[1] Musée Masséna, M.A.M.A.C., Galerie des Ponchettes et Le 109.

[2] Marie Maertens, « Du Sud-Est de la France à la Côte Est des États-Unis, un parcours artistique », in catalogue d'exposition *La Surface de la Côte Est de Nice à New York*, (Le 109, Nice, 23 juin – 15 octobre 2017), éditions Cercle d'Art, Paris, 2017.

[3] Entretien de Jacob Kassay avec Marie Maertens, *ibid*, p. 101.

- **Partage :** [f](#), [t](#)
- **Du même auteur :**



À NICE, L'ART PREND CHAIR AU 109

Par Gilles Renault (à Nice)
— 28 juillet 2017 à 18:36

«*Un lieu de mort, aujourd'hui affecté à la création.*» Enoncé par Jean-Jacques Aillagon, le symbole est d'autant plus fort qu'il s'ancre à Nice où, à l'occasion du programme estival «Ecole(s) de Nice», la ville communique sur un espace dont le nom n'était connu que localement : le 109. A lire et interpréter, bien sûr, phonétiquement. Sur un site de 17 000 m², se dressaient jadis les abattoirs frigorifiques, avec une grande halle carrelée de 2 000 m² qui s'étend sur une centaine de mètres. Un temps promis à la destruction, après dix ans d'inactivité, le bâtiment doit en partie son salut à l'architecte star Jean Nouvel qui, de passage sur la Riviera, suggère aux élus qu'il y aurait sans doute mieux à faire de ce patrimoine industriel associé aux quartiers est, assez populaires et défavorisés. Mandatée par le maire (LR) de la ville, Christian Estrosi, la comédienne Sophie Duez planche sur le projet et, en 2009, s'y installe la Station, «*seul collectif artistique digne de ce nom à Nice, qui a résisté malgré l'inertie des pouvoirs publics*», selon une observatrice avisée. C'est du reste son chef de file, Cédric Teisseire, qui devient le directeur artistique du lieu pluridisciplinaire, pensé comme «*un projet urbain innovant à dominante culturelle et artistique*». En 2016, après des travaux, 29 plasticiens s'y installent et, cet été, le 109 accueille l'exposition «The Surface of the East Coast, from Nice to New York» (photo ci-dessous), qui entend «*faire dialoguer des générations et géographies différentes*», à travers des œuvres de Claude Viallat, Bernard Pagès, Mark Barrow, Joe Bradley ou Erik Lindman. ◆

Gilles Renault (à Nice)

Libération (3)

29-30 juillet 2017

À NICE, L'ART PREND CHAIR AU 109

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After 'Picasso,' Albright-Knox sets sights on emerging artists

**By Colin
Dabkowski**

*Published Tue, Feb 14,
2017*

Since November, the big draw at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery has been the work of Pablo Picasso, an undisputed master of 20th century art. Now, as Picasso: The Artist and His Models" draws to a close, the gallery is shifting its focus to five artists you've probably never heard of.

On Feb. 18, the Albright-Knox will open solo exhibitions featuring five new kids on this hallowed artistic block: Tamar Guimarães and Kasper Akhøj, a duo from Brazil and Denmark; New York-based sculptor and painter Eric Mack; Lewiston-born artist Jacob Kassay; and photographer Willa Nasatir of New York.

The public can take a free sneak preview at the exhibitions on Feb. 17 from 7 to 9 p.m.

The shows are the first solo exhibitions for each of the artists in an American museum. Willa Nasatir and Eric Mack's exhibitions are the first-ever museum solo shows for those artists. Collectively, the openings serve as a reminder of a longstanding commitment by the Albright-Knox to exploring the vanguard of contemporary art.

"Doing four exhibitions at once allows visitors to really see this commitment at the Albright-Knox not only to contextualizing the collection and bringing in masterpieces, but also introducing audiences to new voices," said Albright-Knox Senior Curator Cathleen Chaffee. "I love the idea that for a lot of people, this is an opportunity to say you saw it here first."

The artists will be on hand for a public discussion with Chaffee at 7:15 p.m. Feb. 17 in the Albright-Knox auditorium. A fifth exhibition, featuring a single sculpture by French artist Camille Henrot, also opens Feb. 18.

Here's a look at the five artists.



Lewiston-born artist **Jacob Kassay** will present a solo exhibition featuring 10 new sculptures.

Jacob Kassay: "OTNY"

The Lewiston native and University at Buffalo graduate rose to prominence in the art world in 2010, when his pieces began selling at auction for up to 10 times their estimated value. It is therefore somewhat remarkable that he has never had a dedicated solo exhibition, and it is fitting that the Albright-Knox that has singled out this hometown boy -- still early in his career -- for special attention. Far from the shiny, metallic paintings that brought Kassay his first taste of art-world fortune and fame, his Buffalo show features 10 new sculptures. They are, according to a release, "dispersed through the museum's galleries and transitional spaces" and meant to "draw attention to the way we rationalize, navigate, and narrate our own movement through space."



L'oeil MAGAZINE LE GUIDE DE LA FIAC 2016

PAR VINCENT DELAURY

PEUT-ON FAIRE DES DÉCOUVERTES À LA FIAC ?

Si la Fiac n'est pas le lieu où voir des nouveautés, il est pourtant possible de faire des découvertes, à condition de prendre le temps.

"J'ai toujours été marquée par cette phrase de Manet « Il faut être de son temps » », raconte Jennifer Flay, qui ajoute « La Fiac montre l'art du XX^e siècle mais aussi celui du XXI^e, c'est important de se projeter vers l'avenir. » Compte tenu des enjeux commerciaux, la foire mise d'abord sur les valeurs sûres et les artistes consacrés. Par ailleurs, de par son ADN, la foire ne peut rivaliser, dans la promotion des artistes émergents, avec les manifestations et institutions existant déjà en France (les biennales, les Frac, les centres d'art...) qui peuvent se targuer, bien davantage que la Fiac, d'être des têtes chercheuses.

PRENDRE LE TEMPS

En ce qui concerne la promotion d'une création prospective mondiale, la Fiac a donc encore du travail. On ne compte pas assez en son sein d'artistes nés dans les années 1980 et après. Pour autant, elle n'a pas à rougir. Elle a certes perdu OFFicielle, sa foire bis dédiée à l'émergence, toutefois elle s'appuie cette année sur deux plateformes potentiel-

lement défricheuses de talents nouveaux. D'une part, les Galeries supérieures du Grand Palais convoquent une quarantaine de galeries d'art pointues servant souvent de tremplins à des plasticiens prometteurs, tels que Canada, Labor, Triple V et Valentin à raison, Thomas Bernard (Cortex Athletico) note « Il est encore possible de faire des découvertes à la Fiac, notamment à son étage supérieur, dès lors que l'on prend le temps. » D'autre part, le secteur Lafayette, porté par le groupe Galeries Lafayette qui soutient financièrement les exposants aventureux, réunit une dizaine d'enseignes internationales (Arcade, Experimen-

1_Francesc Ruiz, *Cutter press sign*, 2016. Courtesy Galerie Florence Loewy, Paris.

2_Justin Adian, *Almost there*, 2015, huile et email sur toile marouflée sur mousse, 215,9 x 68,58 x 7,62 cm. © Justin Adian. Courtesy Almine Rech Gallery.

3_Sergio Verastegui, *Amuleto (I)*, 2016, tissu, toile, carton, bronze. Courtesy Galerie Thomas Bernard/Cortex Athletico, Paris.

4_Jacob Kassay, *Sans titre*, 2016, acrylique immiscible et encre sur toile, 38,3 x 25,5 x 3 cm. Courtesy Art Concept, Paris. © Photo : Claire Dorn.





Justin Adian
[Galerie Almine
Rech]

Sergio Verastegui
[Galerie Thomas
Bernard – Cortex
Athletico]

Jacob Kassay
[Galerie Art:Concept]

ter, Grey Noise.) annonçant des solo shows de jeunes pousses décloisonnant les champs disciplinaires.

UN ART EN RHIZOME

Ainsi en est-il de la galerie Torri qui, en présentant le jeune Hoël Duref, né en 1988 à Nantes, propose sur son stand une plongée transversale (peintures, sculptures, films, vidéos) invitant à pénétrer une sorte de plateau de tournage poursuivant son projet à tiroirs *UC-98 RGB* (2016) se référant aux câbles de fibre optique qui tapissent les fonds sous-marins et qui permettent d'accéder à Internet cette entreprise multimédia, en collaboration avec le chorégraphe Nicolas Paul, se prolonge par une performance réalisée dans le cadre de « Parades for Fiac ».

Toujours dans cette volonté de pratiquer le *sample* en brassant les références pour faire sortir l'art de son lan-derneau – c'est un geste récurrent chez les jeunes –, il ne faudra pas manquer d'être attentif à la proposition ironique du Barcelonais Francesc Ruiz, né en 1971, qui transforme le stand de Florence Loewy en un kiosque déclinant de multiples couvertures détournées de magazines afin de faire l'état des lieux d'un pays et de sa communication de masse. ____

NOS
COUPS
DE
CŒUR

JUSTIN ADIAN (2)

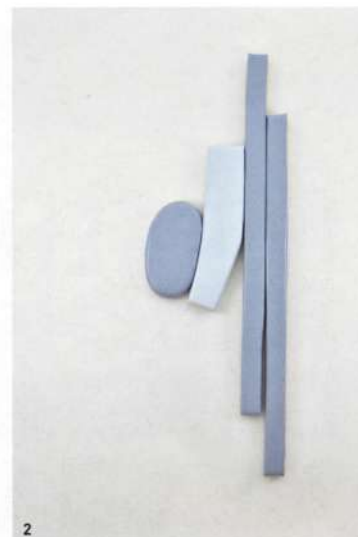
Né en 1976 à Fort Worth (Texas), cet Américain crée des objets colorés abstraits, qu'il passe des heures à composer et recomposer. Entre la peinture, la sculpture et la céramique – l'artiste veille scrupuleusement à l'accrochage –, chaque pièce, recouverte de quatre à sept couches de peinture, attire, car elle multiplie les renvois populaires et savants : certains n'y voient que des bonbons pendant que d'autres y décèlent un clin d'œil aux formes molles de Robert Morris. Jouant avec le regardeur et l'espace d'exposition, ces productions hybrides ont indéniablement une formidable présence. Prix entre 11 000 et 46 000 dollars. ____ **V. DE.**

SERGIO VERASTEGUI (3)

Lauréat en 2013 du prix Show-Room Art-O-Rama suivi du prix Jeune Création-Symev, le Péruvien Sergio Verastegui, né en 1981 à Lima, présente des pièces fragmentaires constituées de matériaux pauvres qui brodent des connexions subtiles entre texte et paysage, l'idée étant de dialoguer avec le spectateur autour des « restes » auxquels il accorde une deuxième vie : ce plasticien archéologue « reconstruit à partir de la destruction » afin de rappeler la poésie du local, notamment la forêt d'Amazonie et une langue vernaculaire disparue (okáina), face à l'uniformisation de la société de consommation. Les prix vont de 4 000 à 5 000 euros. ____ **V. DE.**

JACOB KASSAY (4)

S'étant fait connaître en France en 2013 par des monochromes argentés à la surface métallique, Jacob Kassay, né en 1984 à Lewiston (New York), fait partie de cette génération de jeunes plasticiens américains qui, en développant une réflexion sur les moyens picturaux traditionnels, rappelle la « peinture en question » de Supports/Surfaces, la nouveauté ici, particulièrement avec ses nouvelles abstractions nées d'un processus complexe additionnant peinture au pistolet, photographie, sérigraphie et autres, étant que le jeune créateur revisite les propositions françaises des années 1960 en utilisant le matériel actuel, notamment l'outil numérique. Prix compris entre 8 000 et 12 000 euros. ____ **V. DE.**



2



3



Two-Hour Art Challenge: Paris

Text by Emily Steer

Got two hours to spare in Paris? Who truly does during FIAC? Nonetheless, if you're feeling ambitious, why not take our two-hour challenge.

Begin your journey at the spectacular **Fondation d'entreprise Ricard**. The foundation are currently exhibiting works from the shortlist of their 18th annual prize, an accolade reserved for artists under 40 that the visiting curator feels are particularly representative of the French art scene. This year's line-up includes Anne Imhof, Will Benedict and Louise Sartor. Melanie Matranga's *Fortune Light* (2016) is a highlight, its swollen form aglow behind an enormous Frankenstein-like paper lampshade. The works — a mix of video, sculpture and wall-hung — play well with the roomy gallery space and vary from the large-scale to the minuscule. On the smaller end (around 15cm high) are Sartor's gouache works on paper that are so innocuous compared to the size of the other works that they're almost hidden, but once found, reveal perfectly formed portraits of twenty-something figures in trendy sports clothing brands like GoodHood. Fondation de'enterprise Ricard is also a media partner of satellite fair Paris Internationale, giving a series of curated talks over the week. So if you skip our first suggestion, catch curator Antonia Scintilla at Avenue D'Iéna at 6pm each day instead.

Next, nurture your inner tourist and hail a cab around the corner to **Jeu de Paume**, where Basim Magdy's *No Shooting Stars* may bring on an unavoidable sense of melancholy. Revel in said melancholy—it's a terrific show and the darkened viewing room downstairs offers the perfect solace from the art whirlwind outside. Visually luscious and accompanied by poetic (often humorous) subtitles, Magdy's film explores the ocean, its creatures, the surrounding human activity and the inherent links that this vast and often unknown mass has with the human mind. Upstairs, small-scale images continue the mood, with close-ups of mystical-looking beasts, vast landscapes and many, many light leaks.

Hop on the Metro at Concorde and take a swift journey across to Rambuteau for le Marais. Make **Marian Goodman** your first stop, and be sure to make a fuss while attempting to remember how Parisian doors work on the way in (always buzz, don't trip on the step). This week is the final chance to catch Giuseppe Penone's *Ebbi, Avrò, Non Ho (J'eus, J'aurai, Je n'ai)*, which ends this Saturday. The works in the exhibition take their form from specific gestures made by the artist's hand, reflecting his belief that 'tactile perception brings us closer to the present'. There is a tension between calm and ferocity here, the soft colours and occasional metallics of the works giving a tranquil feel which echoes the energy of the vast building, while the suggested action feels controlling and rigid.

Walk with the help of Google Maps to the nearby **Galerie Art Concept**, where the pared-back tones continue, accompanied by a singular pulse of pink light in the silkscreened canvases of Jacob Kassay in *(You)*. His works of varying sizes sit both in huddles and alone on clean white walls. Greys, peaches and white are speckled on the canvas, appearing as though sandy in surface from afar (some look distinctly like galaxies), and their individual dots and marks coming into full focus on closer inspection.

Your final stop along rue de Temple is at **Galerie Max Hetzler** where you'll end the trip on an upbeat note, enjoying the bright tones of Beatriz Milhazes. *Marilola* is the Brazilian artist's fourth solo show with the gallery, and contains a selection of paintings, collages and prints alongside a playful hanging curtain of vibrant beads, flowers and perspex disks. The sheer joy in this room should keep you going until tomorrow, at least.



exhibition view Jacob Kassay (you), Art : Concept, Paris, September 10th - October 22nd 2016 photo : Claire Dorn / courtesy the artist and Art : Concept, Paris



exhibition view Jacob Kassay (you), Art : Concept, Paris, September 10th - October 22nd 2016 photo : Claire Dorn / courtesy the artist and Art : Concept, Paris

Jacob Kassav "(you)" at Art : Concept, Paris

October 3~2016



Art:Concept is pleased to announce Jacob Kassav's third exhibition at the gallery, "(you)".

Kassay's new group of work enfold the mediating apparatus of the camera into the surface and scale of paintings, thickening the lens and formats through which they are imaged. Scaled to the fixed ratio of the camera's viewfinder, the paintings are objects fundamentally shaped by their documentation, sized at even intervals which expand and contract to fit the immanent window of the photo. In making manifest and multiplying the camera's otherwise implicit, standardized frame, Kassay's paintings – ranging from palm to head size – acutely stress how a work's dimensions become tailored to be photogenic, built to traffic on screens.

While the scaling of Kassay's paintings stages a smooth interfacing with the camera, their surfaces upend this calibration. At a distance, the paintings present mute, uniform colors which then dissolve into a pixelated field of multicolored flecks when approached. Rendering physical the compressing effect of resolution, this positional shift of the painting's surface from solid to diffuse is only active in embodied experience, variable states which lie dormant in documentation.

As Kassay's paintings elude the fixity of image in their oscillating opacity, their surfaces are inscribed by the camera, doubling it's capture back on itself. The darkest pixels from the paint's arbitrary speckle pattern are stamped over the original surfaces, creating a blurred mis-registration between the copied information and their source. Stammering the paintings' surfaces, exerting friction against their seamless backgrounds, this duplication of the pattern induces a disorienting, retinal schism where one struggles to isolate the layers of scattered points creased over themselves. In their stereoscopic misalignment between randomly dispersed pigment and its double, Kassay's paintings react internally against their processing as image, turning the multiplication of their surfaces into pixelated noise.

While Kassay's paintings are contiguous with the external apparatus of the camera, projecting its dimensions outward to the wall in canvas, the exhibition includes a sculpture which works inversely, modeling an interior volume embedded within the fixed scale of the body. Rendered from CT scans of a nasal sinus cavity and cast in lead, the sculpture (*1:1(psig)*, 2016) is set inside a wall of the gallery, hardening the head's passages into a solid toxic mass. Parallel to the way that the painting's patterns rupture internally, stymieing the coherence of the image, Kassay's sculpture acts as a material compression of the space of breathing, an insensible void which only becomes felt when the automatic operation that governs it is interrupted.

at Art : Concept, Paris
until 22 October 2016





REVIEW - 12 APR 2016

From Minimalism into Algorithm

The Kitchen, New York, USA

BY SAM KORMAN

'From Minimalism into Algorithm' is a formal gallery exhibition accompanied by a programme of performances, unfolding in three phases over the course of the winter and spring. The show focuses on repetition and serialization, tracing their development from minimalist dance, sculpture and painting of the 1960s to their appearance in contemporary artistic practices. The exhibition's iterative nature makes it nearly impossible to see in full. And although this necessarily limits the scope of a review (I write this during Phase II), such a curatorial framework elicits anticipation at every turn, while requiring us to work a bit harder to balance its material facts and productive contradictions. The Kitchen's gallery – a white cube set within a scrappier black box – lends the show a welcome sense of artifice. It stages the rules of exhibition-making, emphasizing the basic materials of a show (walls, time and viewership). Phase I included many alumni of The Kitchen's long-running programme, with videos by Lucinda Childs and Laurie Spiegel providing the scores. In a black and white video documenting *Work in Progress with Philip Glass* (1978), Childs rehearses at The Kitchen's former SoHo location. Her mesmerizing motions, by turns balletic and improvisational, fall in and out of synch with Glass's music. For Spiegel's *Living Painting* (1977–79), the artist developed her own software program at IBM's famous Bell Labs. Displayed on a box monitor, the Video and Music Program for Interactive Realtime Exploration (humorously abbreviated to 'VAMPIRE') generates a composition in constant flux. Pixel by pixel, a radiant spectrum of colour erupts, blurs, bulges, drips and traces a slow-moving phantasmagoria set to a moody synth soundtrack.

Historically, minimalism used repetition to challenge notions of linear time and rational space. Repetition is also an essential quality of statistical algorithms that map and predict human behaviour. Childs and Spiegel employ serial repetition to experiment with the structure of choreography and digital technologies; 'From Minimalism into Algorithm' stages these works as rehearsals, in which bodies and paintings take on new meanings within continually evolving sets of interpretive matrices. Other works engage with this idea directly: Vera Molnar's *Lettres De Ma Mère* (Letters from my Mother, 1981–90), for example, uses early algorithms to reproduce her aging mother's handwriting. Paul Sietsema's painting *Figure Ground Study (Fashion and Arts)* (2015) supplants the artist's subjective mark with painstaking, computer precision. Technology recoups or obfuscates something human for Molnar and Sietsema, underscoring the viewer's slippery relationship to the artworks, given the shifting material, temporal and situational contingencies of the exhibition. With its processual iterations, the show avoids assuming a single critical position. In Phase I, a corner of the gallery featured works that all contain grids: Charles Gaines's *Shadows IX, Set 4* (1980), which deconstructs a pair of photographs into silhouetted graph-paper notations; Jacob Kassay's *Untitled* (2015), a bare, poplar canvas stretcher cut to the shape of a canvas remnant from another, absent work; and Zoe Leonard's *Untitled* (2015), a series of black and white contact prints depicting the shifting patterns of a flock of birds. Each work translates a set of information through a minimalist grid. It is an inspired and unexpected trio, but it may not bear the most felicity to each artist's individual practice. Curatorially, the exhibition stages the historical shift from 1970s minimalism to the present through simultaneities and resonances that feel sometimes fateful and sometimes unnatural (the latter perhaps appropriate given the tragicomic fallibility of algorithms). 'From Minimalism into Algorithm' embraces these contradictions to illustrate the stakes of tactical repetition.

The performance programme reflects the influence of language in our societal shift from minimalist methodologies to algorithmic thinking. Complex linguistic systems underlie the late Robert Ashley's libretto *Quicksand* (2016), choreographed by Steve Paxton, and *For Claude Shannon* (2016), Liz Santoro and Pierre Godard's tribute to Shannon, the grandfather of information theory. With deadpan musical mutations of American speech or dancers following mathematically derived scores, these performances characterize language as a data-processing system in constant flux. In Phases I and II of the exhibition, Mary Lucier's *Color Phantoms with Automatic Writing* (2015), a mis en scène of Ashley's personal belongings with a video of a distorted landscape hung over his chaise lounge, is a potent eulogy to the composer's language-play: the ghostly sound of the composer's voice plays emanates from the monitor, disembodied and indecipherable.

When 'From Minimalism into Algorithm' clicked to Phase II, things shifted. Kassay's stretcher moved across the room, replaced by a multi-coloured John McCracken monolith, *Untitled* (1974); Andrea Crespo's interactive meditation on the neurological spectrum of identity, *polymist: echolalic transponder* (2015), took the place of Agnieszka Kurant's glittery termite mounds *A.A.I 1-4* (all 2014); and Richard Serra and Carlotta Schoolman's video diatribe, *Television Delivers People* (1973), moved from the gallery to the elevator. 'From Minimalism into Algorithm' merges minimalism's insistence on individual presence with the artificial intelligence of our enveloping, plugged-in, networked society. It is tempting to read the exhibition like a predictive algorithm, honing its formula through new content over time. But the curators resist this automatic characterization, even at the risk of making the works somewhat interchangeable. The show certainly requires a generous commitment on the part of the audience to see it through – and for the artists to see their work change in unpredictable ways. Within its algorithmic framework, the exhibition stages viewership as a form of labour for our technological age.

Jacob Kassay's comeback — as an architect

The hot young artist fell from favour last year. Yet he seems to have reinvented himself with this new Belgian show



Installation image from Jacob Kassay's HIJK exhibition. Photo credit: Allard Bovenberg, Amsterdam. Courtesy: the Artist and Xavier Hufkens, Brussels

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Jacob Kassay has experienced the kind of career problems most young artists can only dream of. In a short [New Yorker](#) profile in 2011 Kassay, then 27 years old, was described as "the art world's newest star," having found fame with his beautiful, silver-coated paintings, which Kassay created with the help of a Pennsylvania chemical firm that specialized in electroplating, coating each canvas with a layer of metal just "atoms thick."

Through this simple process Kassay created uncannily engaging works that demand repeated viewing, as if the artist, as we put it in our book [Vitamin P2](#), "is teaching us to look more closely, not just at his paintings but also at the historical lineage to which they belong."

him forecast the rise and fall of new artworks

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A · A



Installation image of Jacob Kassay's 2010 silver paintings, acrylic and silver deposit on canvas. Image courtesy of the ICA

Alas, many in the art market took a short-term view. The abstract works became a hot item among contemporary art collectors; perhaps too hot, after they found favour among art market flippers.

The reviewers turned, with [one describing Kassay's 2013 show](#) as "too busy, arch, unassimilated and cerebral." The market appeared to go against him also, with Art Rank positioning Kassay's work at number two in their 'liquidate' column for two of its quarterly reports for 2014.

In April 2014 [Artspace's columnist Walter Robinson](#) cited Kassay as an exemplar of "zombie formalism", a derogatory term to describe a number of abstract painters that use "a straightforward, reductive, essentialist method of making a painting" to create old-style pictures, alive with "the discarded aesthetics of Clement Greenberg, the man who championed Jackson Pollock, Morris Louis, and Frank Stella's 'black paintings,' among other things."



Untitled, (2015) aluminum, wall paint, 220,2 x 293,4 x 108 cm. Photo credit: Allard Bovenberg, Amsterdam. Courtesy: the Artist and Xavier Hufkens, Brussels

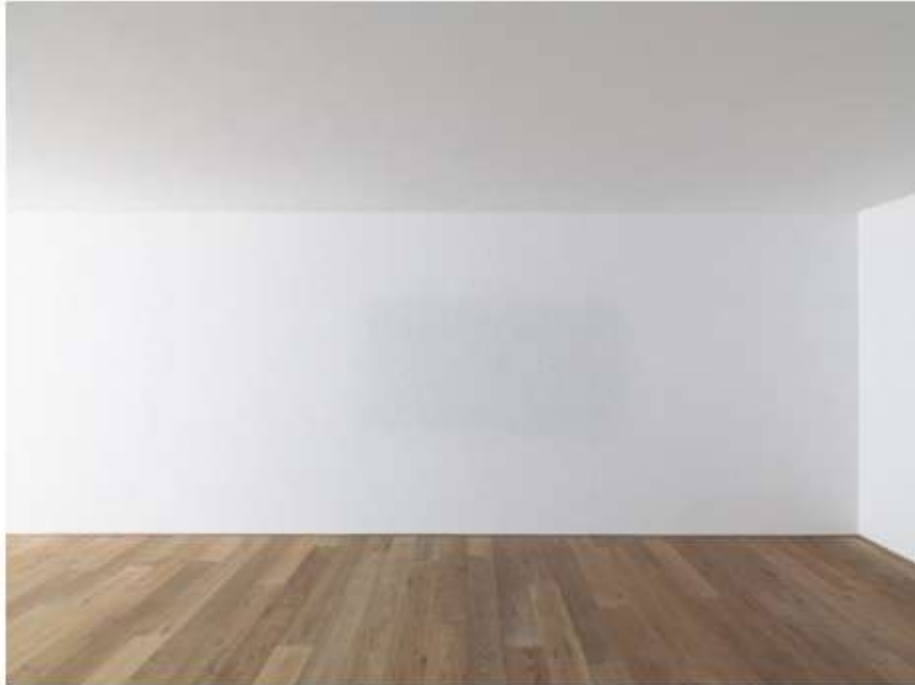
How has Kassay bounced back from this? Partly by turning to architecture. The artist's new show, currently on display at the Xavier Hufkens gallery in Brussels features two architectural sculptures, modelled on domestic stairwells. Kassay has removed the steps themselves, and presented the two creations as "gutted corridors", that may bring to mind [Bruce Nauman's corridor artworks](#) as well as [Carl Andre's](#) excursions into the built environment.

The show also features a framed drawing of air-conditioning and plumbing pipes usually hidden behind a suspended ceiling, as well as a series of abstract paintings, applied directly onto the gallery's walls; these dotty works, made up of "an amalgam of extremely fine, multi-coloured particles of atomized paint", interfere with the way viewers normally regard a painting on gallery wall, "requiring the viewer to move towards and retreat from their surfaces in order to gauge the perceptual shifts that occur in relation to proximity" the gallery says.



HIJK (pipe grid, Gallery), 2015, drawing on paper, 27 x 35 cm, Photo credit: Allard Bovenberg, Amsterdam Courtesy: the Artist and Xavier Hufkens, Brussels

The show's title is equally minimal and tricky; it is called [HIJK](#), a simple, four-letter, alphabetical letter sequence that includes the artist's initials. He's used this before, in 2013 for a New York show at the 303 Gallery entitled IJK. Yet the effect remains; it points to how Kassay has cut and presented fundamental, everyday chunks of our world, giving them back to us in a way that makes us pause, think and look again.



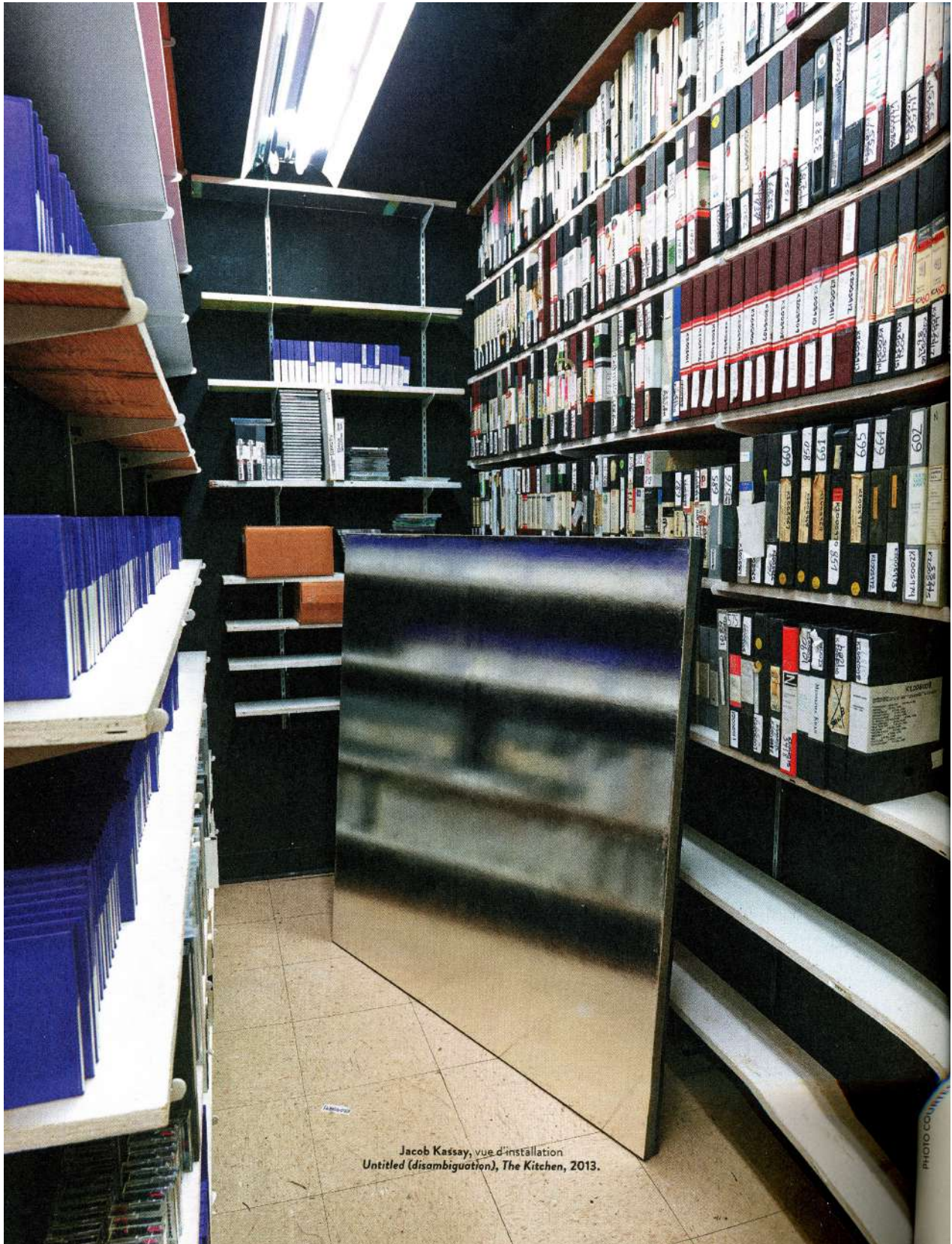
1.77:1, (2015), acrylic on wall, Dimensions variable, Photo credit: Allard Bovenberg, Amsterdam Courtesy: the Artist and Xavier Hufkens, Brussels

It might hark back to the principles of the early minimalists, but there's nothing zombie-ish about this this show. Should we view it as Kassay's rebirth?



1.77:1, (2015), acrylic on wall, Dimensions variable, Photo credit: Allard Bovenberg, Amsterdam Courtesy: the Artist and Xavier Hufkens, Brussels

Find out more [here](#); for greater understanding of his earlier work [get a copy of Vitamin P2](#), and for more on today's contemporary artists [buy a copy of The Twenty-first Century Art Book](#).



Jacob Kassay, vue d'installation
Untitled (disambiguation), The Kitchen, 2013.

AFFINITÉS SÉLECTIVES

JACOB KASSAY



SUPPORTS/ SURFACES

Propos recueillis par
Marie Maertens

COMME CERTAINS AUTRES PLASTICIENS AMÉRICAINS DE SA GÉNÉRATION, **JACOB KASSAY** (NÉ EN 1984) A DÉVELOPPÉ UNE RÉFLEXION AUTOUR DE LA TOILE, DU SUPPORT ET DU CHÂSSIS, RAPPELANT CELLE DU GROUPE SUPPORTS/SURFACES À LA FIN DES ANNÉES 1960. L'OCCASION DE S'INTERROGER SUR SES AFFINITÉS AVEC CE MOUVEMENT FRANÇAIS, ET SUR SES PROPRES INVESTIGATIONS SUR LE CORPS MÊME DE LA PEINTURE.



À VOIR

**Love Story – The Anne
& Wolfgang Titze Collection,**
Palais d'Hiver et 21er Haus/
Le Belvédère, Vienne,
15 juin-5 octobre, commissaires :
Mario Codognato, Luise Ziaja
et Severin Dünser.

Jacob Kassay est représenté
par les galeries 303 (New York),
et Art Concept (Paris).

Jacob Kassay, *Eternal Neither*,
acrylique sur toile, 2013.

“J’ai, au départ, approché la peinture à travers la reproduction de toiles dans des ouvrages. Mon travail vient de là et a rassemblé d’autres expériences...”

L'OFFICIEL ART :

Le groupe Supports/Surfaces a été actif seulement quelques années, mais en 1969, pour une exposition au musée du Havre intitulée “La peinture en question”, Claude Viallat, Daniel Dezeuze, Patrick Saytour, Vincent Bioulès, Noël Dolla et Jean-Pierre Pincemin déclarent “L’objet de la peinture, c’est la peinture elle-même et les tableaux exposés ne se rapportent qu’à eux-mêmes. Ils ne font pas appel à un ailleurs... et n’offrent point d’échappatoire...”

Qu’en pensez-vous ?

JACOB KASSAY : Il est impossible pour une toile de ne référer qu’à elle-même et je dirais que c’est davantage de l’ordre de la déclaration ou d’une fausse promesse... Une peinture est toujours dépendante de sa relation aux autres choses. Elle n’existe pas dans un vide, sans objets et certainement pas sans un discours qui l’entoure. Si vous regardez la trajectoire de Supports/Surfaces, vous pouvez observer que les propos ou écrits ont d’ailleurs parfois remplacé la production d’œuvres, et il serait vain de dire qu’une peinture peut générer de l’intérêt sans assumer sa paternité ou de multiples données sociales ou financières. Un geste radical ne peut être maintenu dans la pratique de la peinture, dont je me demande comment les limites peuvent être atteintes...

D’autant plus dans un monde de l’art aujourd’hui plus étendu et professionnalisé qu’il ne l’était à l’époque de Supports/Surfaces, ces déclarations d’autonomie ne sont plus viables, mais elles peuvent nous rappeler certaines valeurs.

Ces artistes s’inscrivaient de manière plus globale dans une réflexion partagée par ceux de l’art minimal ou l’Arte Povera, rejetant une certaine tradition de la peinture, comme d’un marché de l’art naissant d’ailleurs...

Si l’on regarde Supports/Surfaces aujourd’hui, en refusant une certaine tradition de la peinture, une autre a finalement été créée avec ses propres problèmes. Leur programme a stagné car il annulait l’objet sur lequel ils avaient au

départ focalisé leurs discussions. Si vous cessez de faire de la peinture et n’en parlez que de manière catégorique c’est comme une mort annoncée, à l’exemple de ce que l’on a vu dans diverses trajectoires de la “dématérialisation” de l’art. Leur mythologie de l’autonomie de la peinture et de l’autoréférence était précaire dès le départ et, honnêtement, la raison pour laquelle nous parlons encore de ce mouvement aujourd’hui est en partie due au fait qu’il est de plus en plus présent sur le marché de l’art.

Un autre point important pour ce mouvement était de considérer à la même échelle les matériaux, les gestes nécessaires à la réalisation de l’œuvre et la pièce finale. Une déhiérarchisation que l’on retrouve dans votre travail, non ?

Oui et c’est finalement le point commun que je peux partager avec ce groupe. J’aime penser que la peinture n’est pas uniquement un assemblage d’éléments matériels, mais un ensemble vital et inextricable.

C’est ce qui vous emmène à dire aussi que vous ne maîtrisez pas la trajectoire d’une peinture et que, dès l’instant où elle est exposée, elle devient indépendante. Pensez-vous la même chose de la sculpture ?

Il ne me semble pas que le médium fasse une quelconque différence, à l’exception de matériaux qui sont plus durables que d’autres. Mais indépendamment de la forme que cela prend, l’œuvre sera toujours sujette à des contingences imprévues par rapport à nos attentes d’artistes.

Pour vous qui êtes Américain, cette réflexion sur la toile et le châssis peut-elle être également reliée aux travaux de Frank Stella, par exemple ?

Il est vrai que très tôt, dans mon intérêt pour la peinture, Frank Stella s’est imposé comme une référence assez naturelle. Il était aussi Américain, célèbre et l’une de ses peintures, *Jane*, faisait partie de la collection du Albright Knox Museum, à Buffalo, où j’ai grandi. Ce qui m’a attiré dans ses œuvres

était la manière très particulière dont leurs surfaces semblaient repousser le regardeur. Stella employait un geste semi mécanique, prédéterminé pour diriger l’énergie picturale uniquement dans la forme de l’objet, plutôt qu’en direction et à l’intention du spectateur.

Vous-même mettez en avant une production qui se veut mécanique, notamment dans les *Silver Paintings*, que vous ne réalisez pas et pour lesquelles vous revendez une certaine distance et une lecture immédiate. Pensez-vous que c’est aussi lié à vos études de photographie ?

Si ces œuvres ont un quelconque lien avec le médium photographique, c’est davantage dans la manière dont j’ai au départ approché la peinture, à travers la reproduction de toiles dans des ouvrages. Mon travail vient de là et a rassemblé d’autres expériences comme celle de percevoir une peinture en tant qu’objet accroché dans une pièce, situé dans un environnement actif, ou encore de la voir à plat, reproduite sur une page apparaissant comme une surface immobile.

Mais là encore, les *Silver Paintings* deviennent de plus en plus indépendantes.

Les membres de Supports/Surfaces avaient souhaité à l’époque dépoussiérer les accrochages trop classiques... Comment décidez-vous de la forme des châssis de vos *Shaped Canvas*, qui se déploient ensuite avec une grande liberté sur les murs ?

Ces œuvres sont réalisées à partir de reliquats de toiles qui émanent de la fabrication d’autres peintures.

A ces morceaux de tissu non utilisés, un support est ajouté qui suit les contours de la chute de tissu en question. Ces matériaux viennent de l’activité de l’atelier, de tests que je réalise, voire d’échecs ou de choses qui ont été laissés par d’autres personnes dans leurs ateliers et que j’ai récupérés. Ils m’offrent un potentiel de formes infini, comme un programme ouvert qui serait façonné par l’ensemble de ces différents formats et usages que l’on en fait.



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KASSAY**

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**TIM
ROLLINS AND K.O.S**

**PLAYER OF
THE YEAR**

END OF THE LINE

BIG SPRING

**VAMOS A
COLOMBIA**

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM
DOCLISBOA**

**WOMEN OF THE
YEAR IN MUSIC**

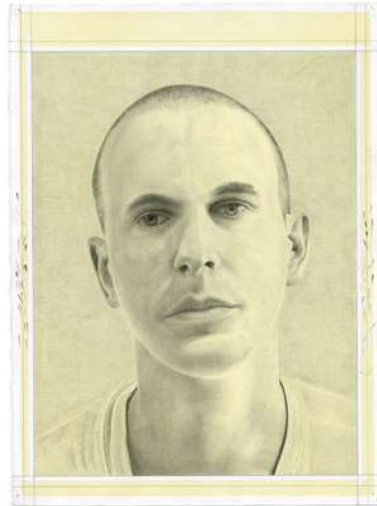
**POEMS FOR
ROBERT MOTHERWELL**

JACOB KASSAY with Alex Bacon

Over the past few months, Jacob Kassay and Alex Bacon have been having an extended discussion about the delicate balance Kassay's work strikes between attention to aesthetic form and the conceptual rigor that motivates it. In New York, Kassay has a solo show at the 303 Gallery, and two of his paintings are featured in *Correspondences: Ad Reinhardt at 100*. Concurrently, he also has a show at Off Vendome in Düsseldorf.

Alex Bacon (Rail): What were the first paintings that you made? Were they the silver paintings?

Jacob Kassay: Yeah, those were the first paintings I ever made. I got interested in Piero Manzoni's achromes. There was a fiberglass one on view at MoMA at the time. It was the first one I had seen and, curious about the term "achrome," I consulted Wikipedia, which was in its infancy then, and it said "something that resists properties of absorbing color." I tried to think of other ways to resist—as Manzoni's achromes do—any sort of fixed or applied quality and so I wanted to make something which reflected its surroundings back onto the space in which it was exhibited.



Portrait of the artist. Pencil on paper by Phong Bul.

Rail: How did you think you could accomplish this sort of opposition within the language of painting?

Kassay: The paintings may defer responsibility to the rest of the room. There is a formal relationship that they have within themselves, like having the qualities of a worked surface, but this also extends to incorporate anything that is absorbed by the surface—color, light, etc. But more than a reflection, these paintings act as lenses that "color" what gets caught on their surfaces. Within the painting's limits you recognize portions of something that might belong to one's environment.

Rail: For me, this means that your paintings actively pose the question—what does it mean to be represented? In a way they're suspended between representation and abstraction, as what gets caught in their surfaces is quite literally re-presented. This kind of aesthetic activity is suspended somewhere between the "real" world that is reflected, and the particular aesthetic world a painting inhabits as an always somewhat separate and autonomous thing.

Kassay: There's something to be experienced in the actual space in which the work is installed, and then in the surface of the work itself. I found the way that the paintings collapsed these two experiences into one another compelling. I have a pretty severe case of astigmatism and this inability to recognize where the borders between one object and another are drawn has always conditioned what I see. With the paintings, this blurring reminds you that there are other things that are informing the work which are atmospheric. The surface of the work moves into attention and recedes from it, always oscillating. It often reminds me of the autofocus of a digital camera, which doesn't know what to do with a silver painting's surface when I'm trying to document the work. It goes in and out, unable to separate the painting's present surroundings from the object itself.

Rail: It seems that you haven't yet exhausted the way the silver paintings interact with these ideas, right?

Kassay: I haven't. I'll continue as long as there are new ways that they can present themselves in different spaces, in different modes. Sometimes they seem most appropriate in high volume, using their apparent similarity as one note over and over again. In this configuration, the overall effect is like that of a marbled tone in the room. Are you familiar with the piece "In C" (1964), by Terry Riley? It's the same note over and over again, but there are these phantom harmonies that come through by that repetition and the sounds start to undulate according to the shape of the room. In other cases, a room may only require two or three paintings.

Rail: Your formal concerns appear to have an equally strong conceptual analogue. This is something that aligns you with a figure such as Ad Reinhardt, who rigorously conceived of his work along both lines.

Kassay: Reinhardt was an inveterate thinker, about his own work at least, and that's something I tried to absorb into my own practice from a very early point. In the first round of paintings I made as a student, I felt that I was dealing with an object that was similar to those black paintings. With Reinhardt, we're not talking about a solely retinal experience; we're talking about something that is also an absolutist schema on what a painting should be, which posits how it should function and how it should be understood.



Installation view, *Off Vendome*, 2013. Image courtesy 303 Gallery, New York. Photo: John Berens.

Rail: Right. I think that's what links you and Reinhardt together—that sense in which the paintings are never fully optical; they're never fully material. In that sense they have all these different lives; they function in these different ways; they're never fully translatable as one thing. Given your concern with the phenomenology of the work, how does this inform your approach to the materials of painting?

Kassay: Well, initially I was making paintings after recognizing that acrylic paint is a plastic which could be coated with a catalyst for electroplating. Paint is just one material available in the construction of a surface. I never approached painting from the point of view that I needed to work on a surface for any certain amount of time. I usually work on a surface for a very little amount of time and every other part of the process of constructing the painting is equal. I like the idea that in the paintings I'm making right now it takes the same amount of time for the stretcher, as it does for the stretching, as it does for the priming, the final surface, the photographing of it, etc. It's like using-all-the-parts-of-the-buffalo.

Rail: If every one of these aspects is truly equivalent for you, do you feel that it is important that all aspects of this trajectory—from the building of the stretcher to putting it on the gallery wall—are clear to the viewer when they're in front of the work?

Kassay: No. Because the viewer is never at the end point of a work but more of a node in its movement, I don't believe that the painting has to present a totalization of all the processes that preceded it. When the parts are taken in isolation, there are certainly points that are more privileged or active in the sum of the work, but the painting never remains complete. Even in storage, the work is never fully inert.

Rail: Could you expand on that?

Kassay: Well, with the installation at the Kitchen (*Untitled (disambiguation)*), I put work throughout the building in places where paintings rarely rest—such as in the video archive, or in the lobby—to emphasize their presentation as an almost momentary, contingent stage. The paintings were made so that they could be moved easily around the space and remain variable to the activity of the environment.

Rail: So in a way is it potentially hubris on the part of the artist to imagine that they know everything about the life of the work? Can a work ever account for all the ways in which networks of production, distribution, and reception enmesh it?

Kassay: Whether it's possible or not is a question that will remain forever debatable as those contexts change. Either way, it's mostly an issue of how rather than if. When you introduce a painting into any kind of network, its trajectory will never align to your expectations. It's going to have this entropic course from one point to another, as an object as well as information, which cannot be plotted. Since the work is always subject to all sorts of unforeseen mediations, you have to ease your expectations of how that course will develop.



Installation view, *EXPO 1: New York*, MoMA PS1, 2013. Image courtesy 303 Gallery, New York. Photo: John Berens.

Rail: Nonetheless, it seems that what you stake out as an important role for the artist today is to try to acknowledge the multiple lives lived by a painting. The artist should not try to predict the work's future and, in a way, he or she needs to release the work from a certain set of determinations for it to move from one place to the next—from the storeroom to the gallery, to the photographer's studio, etc. But at the same time the artist's task is to create the kind of work that can operate at a consistently rigorous level throughout these various stages of its "life," right? From the way it interacts with the photographer's camera, or the architecture of the space in which it is hung, for example. Given that they deal with where paintings begin and end, these considerations seem relevant to your most recent body of work. With these works, you take pieces of canvas leftover from the process of making other paintings, and then stretch them on supports shaped to fit the exact contours of each remnant of fabric.

Kassay: Yes, the idea was to give these peripheral scraps some kind of literal support so that they can be acknowledged as equal to the more traditionally "finished" painting whose canvas they were ripped from.

Rail: Is the stretcher the most important part of those paintings for you, then? Rather than the fabric? Even though the fabric is what originally inspired the painting because it dictated the shape of the work.

Kassay: Yeah. The shaped stretchers that were originally made to fit each of these discards are now being repeated but stretched with new canvas and painted. Now, I'm using the irregular stretchers not as supports for specific artifacts of fabric, but as templates with an undetermined number of possible iterations. Using the stretchers in this way parallels the standardized format of a rectangular support in painting, while providing an alternative to it. The bones remain the same, but the skin changes.

Rail: How is it that you began to paint and title these?

Kassay: Once I recognized that there was a limited sum of materials to use for these paintings, I worked out several ways of extending or expanding what I had already developed. Now, I'm very attuned to these basic activities that one begins a painting with, such as cutting fabric. Instead of approaching a roll of canvas as a set of separate, intentional units, I argue with myself over the vanity of that entire operation. When you separate a material, why is one side better than the other? Why is one used and one wasted, why make such projections? After a few years of making stretchers for these remnants, I've catalogued all their shapes so that they can be remade. While making supports directly for the scraps ejected a certain amount of intention from painting, I wanted to find a way in which similar rote procedures could be applied to other gestures of these supposedly incidental objects and see what these diminishing returns would be. Instead of gesture, what's at work is selection—the titles and surfaces act as an auto-fill that can be repeated ad nauseam.

Rail: This mode of seriality makes me think that throughout your work—from the silver paintings up to the recent irregularly shaped work—there is an interest in the formal and conceptual potential of a specific idea repeated in a potentially infinite and expandable sequence. You set the sequence to remain open rather than closed. The framework for old Minimalist or Conceptual art typically conceived of the system as closed, each serial iteration adding up to a principal statement, and in order to achieve this, all works ideally need to be present with one another.

An example would be Sol LeWitt's permutations of a cube. However, with your work, each individual piece

can expand or contract the horizon of the series, rendering its development less directional and more complex.



"Group Leader," acrylic on canvas, 2013. Image courtesy 303 Gallery, New York. Photo: John Berens.

Kassay: When I learned about how artists like LeWitt would ambitiously pursue a closed system to a point of exhaustion, the most important part seemed to be the ways in which these orders were designed to deny their own inevitable contingencies and vulnerabilities. So when I see a damaged, unfinished cube, its failure to illustrate itself as an element of an ideal system in turn allows it to become untethered from the narrow designs from which it was conceived. Perhaps then a degree of autonomy is returned to the object. A system is only as interesting as its contradictions and there's a great deal of personal satisfaction that can come when forms like these escape calculation.

Rail: What is the relationship between the show at 303 and the earlier one at the Kitchen? Many elements from the earlier show reappear, but take on different forms in the current one.

Kassay: The show at the Kitchen was used as a pivot point towards this new painted and titled work, outlining its structure. In a more literal sense, there was a wall that was built in the Kitchen to create a corridor and for the 303 show, it was used as a partition for a hall in the gallery. I wanted to see how parts of an exhibition could live past their temporary display. In that same show at the Kitchen, there were things which were also not announced as work but made with the same considerations as the wall and the paintings. There were benches in the room, made to resemble Bertoia benches, but I think they passed off well enough that no one recognized they were facsimiles and no one brought it up. These parts of the show were not intended as some sort of smug footnote or camouflaged strategy—I was interested in how attention would diffuse itself differently over these details and what elapsed recognitions do to one's experience. Steve Martin used to refer to these types of built in ricochets as "refrigerator moments." He would set up jokes that would fail on stage but linger long enough to bubble up again once the audience member opened his or her refrigerator at home—having had all the time in between to then recognize that the performance had already nested itself in their thoughts.

Rail: How do you arrive at the particular titles for these works? There seems to be something of an attempt to find neutral, non-associative titles, but by venturing into phrasing and possibly personal references, their meaning and intention become somewhat less stable. What kind of relation do you want them to have to the works on whose sides they are inscribed? Are they a key to anything in the work, merely a form of identification of one work versus another (as Ryman, for example, claims for his titles)? Or are they meant to be appreciated for their own sake—alongside, but not inherent to the works?



Kassay: By writing them on and scaling them to the edges of the paintings, the titles are presented around the object rather than from behind. Typically, a painting's surface conceals the work's information like a closed folder. All the details that identify, author, locate, value, and describe the painting—such as its materials and dimensions—are hidden by its wrapper. So, by putting the titles on the side, I wanted to move the paintings out of the domain of the image—a flat, scaleless surface—into a more planar space where the edge has as much content as the face of the paintings. The titles can't help but be personal, but actually they are more related to the way in which the surfaces of the paintings are painted with an arbitrary hue—a selection of features which could go on any number of paintings but happen to be on this one. The titles are there to make you look around the work and foreground their purpose as being purely indexical and mnemonic, as you suggest. The paintings begin from scraps and so it made sense to pair this with language which is fragmentary and torn far from its context.

Rail: Given this issue of coherence, are you interested in having any sort of continuity from one work to the next? Do you, for example, hope that each of your exhibitions will be considered as internally consistent, but ultimately very different from one another? Or is it important that in whatever the diversity of objects you might produce, there's a clear recognition of their relation and timeline?

Kassay: That's something I can't predict. I have my short-term focuses with the work—most go unrecognized, which is fine. Things like "signature" and strategy are speculations developed by others, sometimes very quickly or over



Installation view, *(Untitled (disambiguation))*, The Kitchen, 2013. Image courtesy Jeffrey Sturges.

Rail: What concern, if any, do you have for the future or longevity of your work in a material sense? Are you involved with, or even interested in, how the work will hold up over time? Whether that is the silver tarnishing, or the unmarked linen staining, or any other conservation issues. What role do you see for yourself in the future of your work as it circulates in the world?



Then by Necessity, acrylic on canvas, 2013. Image courtesy 303 Gallery, New York. Photo: John Beren.

Kassay: I don't care what happens to the work. If I ever wanted to display work that looked brand new, I would make it brand new.

Jacob Kassay: 'IJK'

By ROBERTA SMITH NOV. 28, 2013

303 Gallery

507 West 24th Street, Chelsea

Through Dec. 20

Jacob Kassay turns 30 next year, which means he has time to develop some originality to match his surfeit of intelligence and attitude. A few years ago, Mr. Kassay's career got off to a [precipitous start](#) primarily with well-made monochromatic paintings whose brushy, silvery surfaces all but reflected the viewer. They seemed largely generic, even if taken ironically. This was followed by a much more convincing, quietly beautiful show at the Kitchen last winter that featured works in unpainted linen whose irregular shapes were determined by leftover scraps of canvas. There were hints of Robert Ryman and Richard Tuttle, but that seemed O.K. The more modest mood was noticeable. Perhaps this artist was doing penance for the earlier work?



Jacob Kassay's "Airlock," from 2013, at 303 Gallery, 303 Gallery, New York

Wrong. In his first exhibition at 303, Mr. Kassay has kept the irregular shapes but added all kinds of bells and whistles that seem to point toward wink-wink posturing about painting. The shaped canvases — which remain the most engaging aspect of the work — are lightly sprayed with silver or light gray, yielding spatial effects that vary from atmospheric to flat. The titles of the works are now penciled onto the sides of the canvases à la Mr. Ryman, and several (“Murky Bargain,” “Stock Milieu”) seem to refer to the art market. There is an installation piece built with parts of a wall from his exhibition at the Kitchen and numerous carefully chosen used books cantilevered to the wall and held open by wedges of glass to reveal pressed flowers; there is also a canvas on muslin that features the artist’s last name. (This is consistent with the show’s three-letter title, “IJK,” which can read as “I, Jacob Kassay,” even when you discover that he’s using them because they appeared purely by chance on the ceiling of the Kitchen’s exhibition space.) All this and more makes the 303 show too busy, arch, unassimilated and cerebral, although it still holds open the possibility of future accomplishment.

A version of this review appears in print on November 29, 2013, on page C31 of the New York edition with the headline: Jacob Kassay: “IJK”. [Order Reprints](#) | [Today's Paper](#) | [Subscribe](#)

“A NEW ERA” UNFOLDS

Dealers See a Change from Frantic to Thoughtful Buying

THE FUTURE HAS arrived at Europe's biggest modern and contemporary art fair, in the sleek aluminum form of Herzog & de Meuron's new exhibition hall on the once-quaint Messeplatz. And while Tadashi Kawamata's faux-favela shacks, temporarily installed outside the main entrance, might seem like a darker vision of things to come, the mood and tenor among the 304 exhibitors at Art Basel's 44th edition is decidedly more upbeat than at the 43rd.

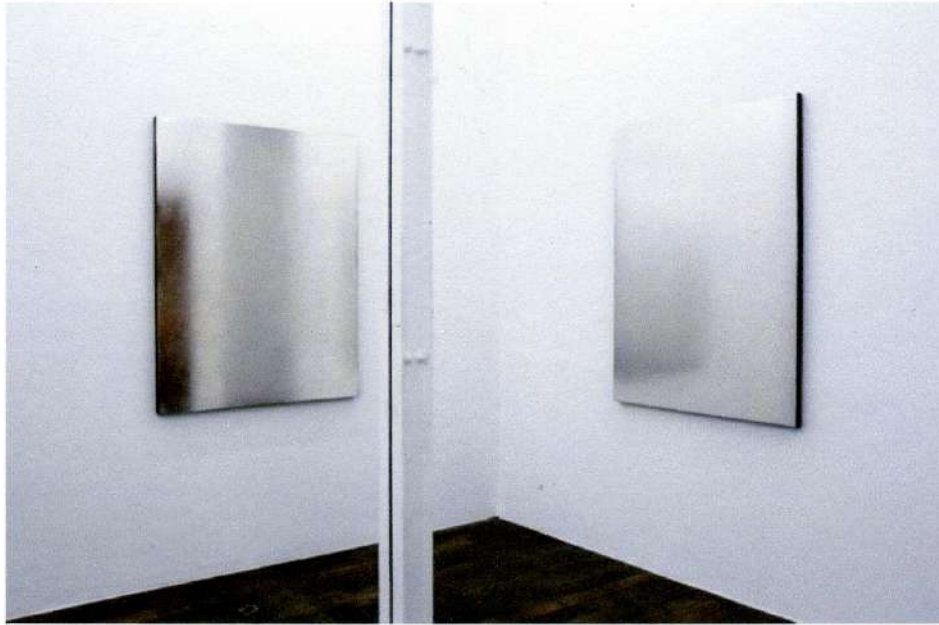
Works began selling as soon as VIP collectors, curators, art advisors, and well-connected hangers-on began filing into the Messe on Tuesday. At Paris's Galerie Kamel Mennour, six of nine limited edition videos of “Grosse Fatigue,” 2013, the work that won Camille Henrot this year's Silver Lion



Two of Jacob Kassay's large untitled silver paintings, from 2013, sold at New York's 303 Gallery

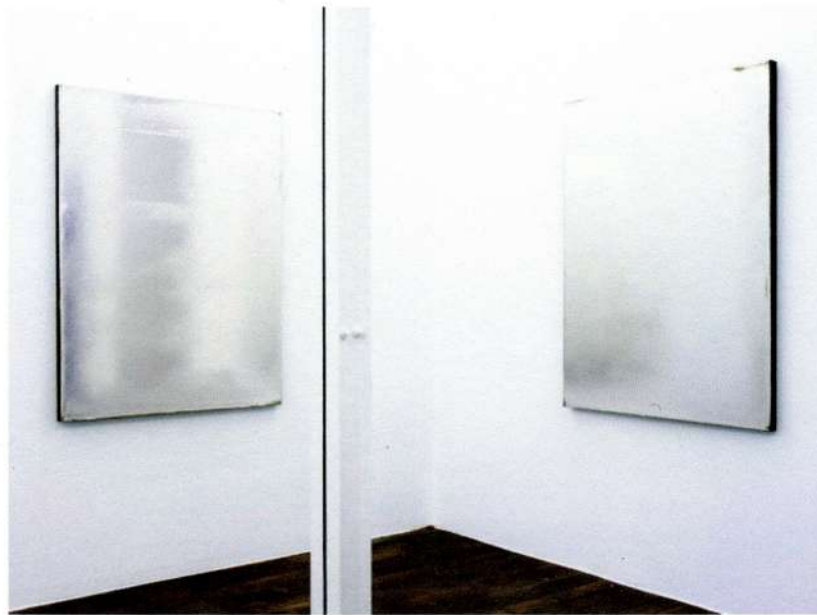
Mirror, Mirror

By greg on March 31, 2013 4:06 PM



OK, I am a bit in love with Jacob Kassay right now, in my head.

In [Art F City](#) Eva Heisler reviews [Kassay's current show at Art:Concept in Paris](#) [above], his second, and it looks remarkably like the first, in 2010 [below].



Do you see what he did there? Did he really just answer the perennial art journo question about how he'll top with the extraordinary popularity of his electroplate paintings by just cold restaging an entire show of them? Apparently, no.

Heisler explains that these are *not* Kassay paintings, but "canvases," "props in lieu of paintings." In fact, they're in exactly the same *lieux* and same dimensions as Kassay's first show. And the installation shots of 2013 are almost all identical to those of 2010. And despite what it *looks* like, this situation Kassay has set up is one in which, as Heisler astutely puts it, "his paintings are present only through their staged absence."

But these present absences, these "not paintings," are--are you sitting down?--not for sale. They will be destroyed after the show. At least the canvases will be. The "stretcher bars (will be) recycled." Which seems like an odd detail, but hey.









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 JACOB KASSAY Untitled, 2010 Under the Influence 11 April 2013 View	 JACOB KASSAY Untitled, 2009 Sold for \$188,500 Contemporary Art Evening 7 March 2013 View	 JACOB KASSAY Untitled, 2009 Sold for \$43,750 Contemporary Art Day 18 November 2012 View	 JACOB KASSAY Untitled, 2011 Contemporary Art Day 11 October 2012 View
 JACOB KASSAY Untitled, 2011 Sold for €181,250 Contemporary Art Evening 10 October 2012	 JACOB KASSAY Untitled, 2010 Sold for \$128,500 Under the Influence 20 September 2012	 JACOB KASSAY Untitled, 2009 Sold for \$22,500 Contemporary Art Day 29 June 2012	 JACOB KASSAY Untitled, 2009 Sold for \$50,800 Contemporary Art Day 11 May 2012

There were actually *not* 25 paintings at Phillips, *only* 17, with one sold twice. Which, holy smokes, nice placement. Does anyone hold onto these, ever?

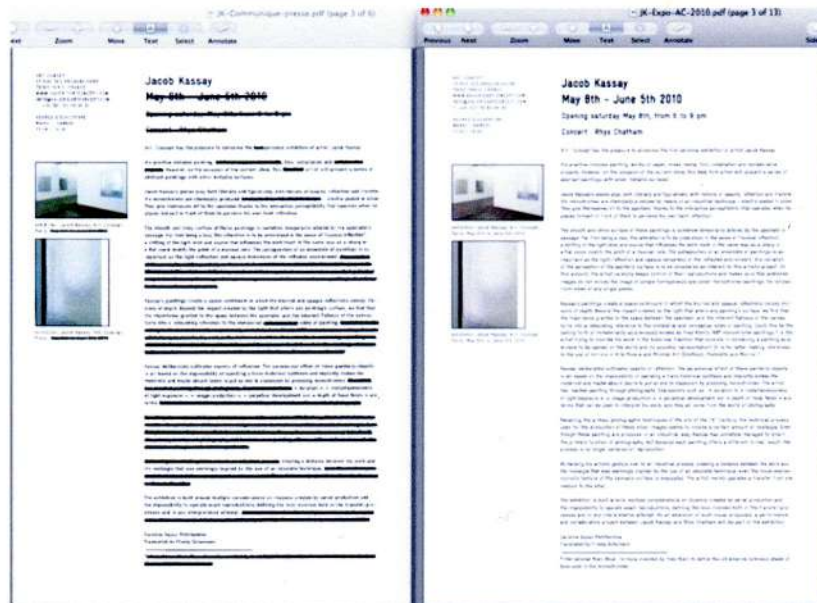
And not only do these new canvases have a uniform, non-gestural, more mirror-like facture, Heisler reports,

again, kind of oddly, that "this time the artist did not touch the surfaces at all." Which would seem like the least determinative factor possible for a non-painting these days, until this one:

The fact that Kassay's mirror objects are emphatically "not paintings" and earmarked for destruction implies that the definition of what counts as a "Kassay painting" has to do with its entry into the art market. If so, then it is an irony that the artist's attempt to evade the market in fact reaffirms its powers even to name what counts as "a painting by Jacob Kassay."

Which, what? Why? No way, not even. Kassay can outsource or not sell or destroy what he wants. The only reason Kassay's "not paintings" are not paintings is because Kassay says they're not paintings.

What Heisler calls "deflection" I would see as negation. Looking back, and following the artist's chosen mediations, the Art:Concept show reflects [sic] a sustained strategy of negation and "staged absence" as a constructive part of Kassay's practice.



Art:Concept's press release for the current show is, so to speak, Exhibit A. Just as the 2013 canvases bear striking resemblance to the 2010 paintings, The new press release, too, [left, pdf] turns out to be an excised, barely augmented, near-replica of the old [right, pdf] And you know what the funniest thing about Kassay in Europe is, it's the little differences.

Kassay's paintings create a space-continuum in which the blurred and opaque reflections convey illusions of depth. Beyond the impact created by the light that alters any painting's surface, we find that the importance granted to the space between the spectator and the inherent flatness of the canvas turns into a rebounding reference to the immaterial and conceptual sides of painting. Could this be the calling forth of immateriality as previously evoked by Yves Klein's IKB* monochrome-paintings? Is the artist trying to inscribe his work in the historical tradition that consists in conceiving a painting as a window to be opened on the world and its possible representation? Or is he rather making references to the use of mirrors in Arte Povera and Minimal Art (Smithson, Pistoletto and Morris)?

Kassay deliberately cultivates opacity of reflection. The paradoxical effect of these painterly-objects is all based on the impossibility of operating a trans-historical synthesis and implicitly evokes the modernist and maybe absurd desire to put an end to classicism by producing monochromes. The artist has reached painting through photography. Expressions such as: « duration », « instantaneity », « image-production », « perpetual development » or « depth of focal fields » are terms that can be used to interpret his work, and they all come from the world of photography.

To make it easier to see what's changed, or specifically, what's been deleted, negated, from Kassay's presentation, I converted his strikethroughs to highlights. You can download the [complete, highlighted pdf here](#). What's ~~erased~~ crossed out? Well, data [Dates, "New York," "collaboration," and "works on paper,"] but also things like "industrial," "chemical," "conceptual," and every reference to photography and his monochrome and mirror forebears. Also blacked out: any privileging of "the perception of the painterly surface," and particulars of how "the artist carefully keeps control of their reproductions." Which, he may not want to talk about it, but since the 2013 installation shots match perfectly to the 2010 photos, I think it's safe to say he still cares.

It's a stretch, perhaps, but there seems to be a non-trivial overlap between what was blacked out and the

terms, references and concepts initially used to hype Kassay's paintings in auction catalogues and the media.
["Whilst Kassay uses industrial techniques, they retain an engaging, painterly quality."]

What's less speculative but feels quite instructive is to see what stays:

"the modernist and maybe absurd desire to put an end to classicism by producing monochromes."

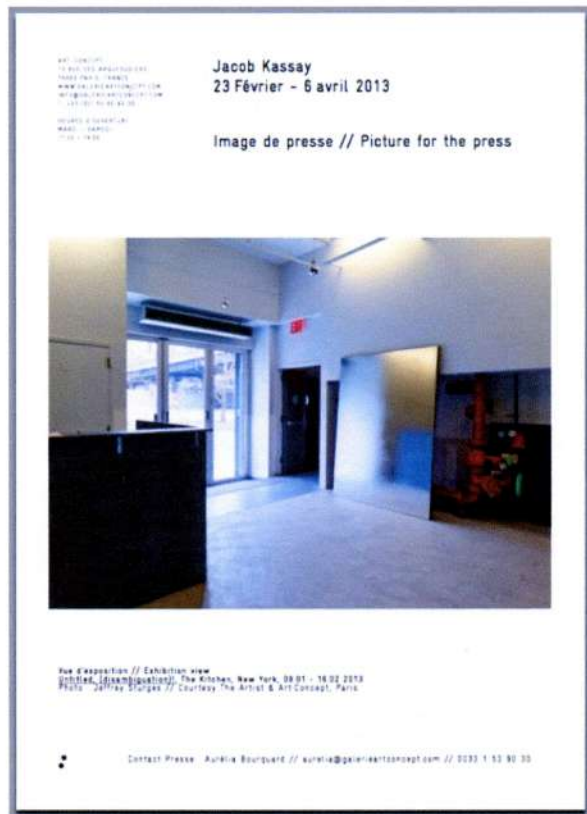
"...creating a distance between his work and the nostalgia that was seemingly implied by the use of an obsolete technique."

"...multiple considerations on illusions created by serial production and the impossibility to operate exact reproductions; defining the loss involved both in the transfer-processes and in any interpretive attempt."

The Art:Concept show also invites a reconsideration of Kassay's just-ended exhibition in New York, *Untitled (disambiguation)* [or as I liked to call it, "*leftovers at The Kitchen*"], which consisted, remember, of stretched scraps of canvas from which his earlier paintings had been cut. The staged absence of paintings.



It also included several silvered paintings, installed/photographed in conspicuously offhand, even marginalized spaces: propped in the foyer, behind a column, or in a storeroom. These images are, in fact, included in Art:Concept's press release.



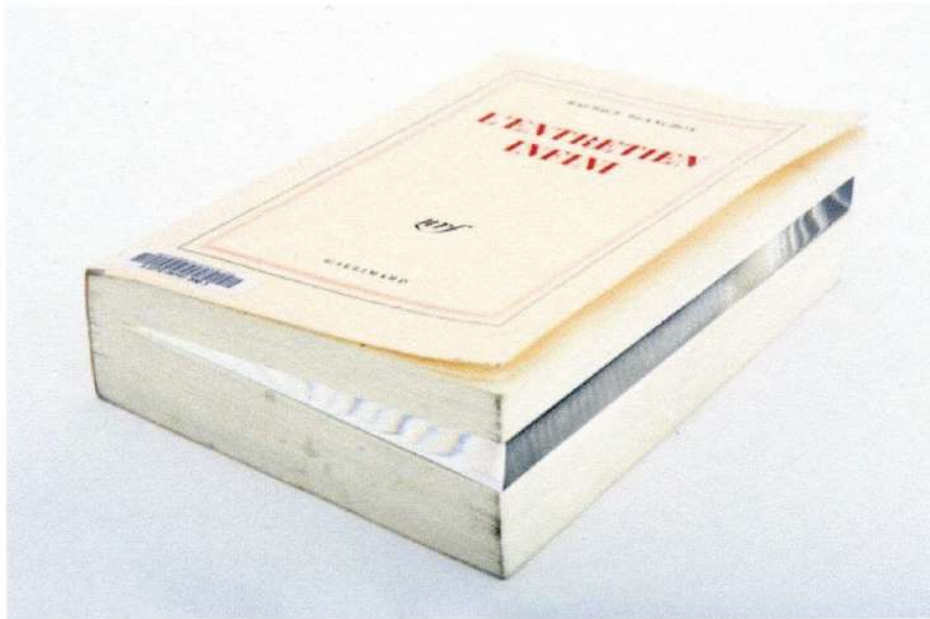
And now that you mention it, their surface looks as uniform and non-painterly as the "not paintings" of Paris. Did anyone look into The Kitchen's mirrors, to see what their status was? Were they, too, "props in lieu of paintings"? Were they dismantled or destroyed? Were they for sale? Is there anyplace better than the gallery of a performance space to stage absence?

I looked back at [reviews and such](#), and found that, again, the press release had been altered, this time without leaving a trace. The early text [preserved](#), along with Ben Davis's mug, in [this photo](#) contains facts about the making of which [are omitted from the archived version](#). What had been explained and presented as the artist's intent was eliminated, transformed through negation into historical hearsay.

Which makes me think again of the [Henry Codax Incident](#) last year. That's when Christie's, citing [Gallerist NY's report](#), described a dark grey monochrome by the fictional artist Codax as the product of a collaboration between Kassay and Olivier Mosset. [Kassay protested, and insisted that Christie's read a statement before the auction "disassociating his name" from the painting.](#)

So in addition to Codax paintings which are "not Kassay paintings," we can add canvases in a Kassay show which are "not paintings." To paraphrase John Cage, Kassay has nothing to paint, and he's not painting it.

But just as Rauschenberg demonstrated erasure as a generative act, Kassay gives hints that negation for him is constructive and not repudiation or "deflection." [Art:Concept's current Kassay slideshow also includes two non-not-painting objects](#): used French library books with prismatic acrylic wedges inserted into them. One is a collection of work by the late Greek poet Constantin Cavafy.



The other: *l'Entretien Infini*, *The Infinite Conversation*, by philosopher/theorist Maurice Blanchot. Blanchot and Mallarmé argued that the power of language derived from its ability to negate a thing and replace it with an idea. And that both thing, the disappeared/negated thing and the idea that replaced it were equally valid, constant, and stable. And that the idea was even moreso, because the thing was subject to change. So really, instead of looking at the not paintings as destined for destruction; we should see them as ideas which will never be tarnished by time, atmosphere, or white-gloved flippers.

Jacob Kassay at Art : Concept, Reflection or Deflection? [artcity]

Jacob Kassay, 23 février - 6 avril 2013 [galerieartconcept.com]

Jacob Kassay, 8 mai - 5 juin 2010 [galerieartconcept.com]

Previously: Henry Codax at Auction; also, *Speculation*

Also, Jacob Kassay, Johns & Rauschenberg, and collaboration

Jacob Kassay at Art : Concept: Reflection or Deflection?

by EVA HEISLER on MARCH 29, 2013 · 0 COMMENTS



Exhibition view, Jacob Kassay, Art:Concept, Paris, May 8th to June 5th 2010 Courtesy Art : Concept, Paris - Photo : Fabrice Gousset



Exhibition view, Jacob Kassay, Art:Concept, Paris, February 23rd to April 6th 2013 Courtesy Art : Concept, Paris - Photo : Guillaume Ziccarelli

First, let me confess: I've never seen a painting by Jacob Kassay.

I've never seen the silver electroplated canvases that supposedly owe a debt to 19th-century photographic practices and have been compared to the monochromes of Robert Ryman and Yves Klein. These paintings have fetched upwards of \$250,000 at auction, turning 29 year-old Kassay into an art-world darling.

After traveling to Paris for his latest show at Art : Concept, I still haven't seen a Kassay painting.

I saw props in lieu of paintings. On view are eight 36 x 48-inch silver canvases, identical in size and installation to the paintings that were presented at Kassay's 2010 Art : Concept show. As with his paintings, the canvases were first coated with gesso and then turned over to a professional who electroplated them before applying a thin layer of silver (a process similar to how mirrors are made). Kassay's subsequent working of his silvered canvases is said to be minimal, but this time the artist did not touch the surfaces at all.

I can't compare these stand-ins to the paintings in Kassay's previous exhibition. According to the gallery, the 2010 paintings have more incidental markings, but the surfaces of the current objects are uniform – hence more reflective – than the “real” paintings. And this time, they are not for sale: once the exhibition is over, the canvases will be destroyed and the stretcher bars recycled.

Lacking marks that could be gestural, the metallic objects reflect my body as a dark, blurred shape. I see myself straining to see. Kassay sets up a situation in which his paintings are present only through their staged absence. They are a memory, perhaps, for some viewers and nothing more than a blur in photographs. (Kassay's paintings do not reproduce well.)

Art : Concept's 2010 exhibition happened before Kassay's market success, and this 2013 repetition appears to be the artist's attempt to engage with the theater of the art world and the conditions under which it is possible to see “a painting by Jacob Kassay.

The exhibition is *trying* to be critical – I don't question the earnestness of the gesture – but I don't think Kassay's repetition works. For all the reflective surfaces, the exhibition strikes me as deflective: replacing “painting” with “mirror” is a refusal or an evasion that stands in for criticality. The exhibition is not reflective in other than the most literal way. (Sometimes a mirror is just a mirror.)

The fact that Kassay's mirror objects are emphatically “not paintings” and earmarked for destruction implies that the definition of what counts as a “Kassay painting” has to do with its entry into the art market. If so, then it is an irony that the artist's attempt to evade the market in fact reaffirms its powers even to name what counts as “a painting by Jacob Kassay.”



PARIS

L'apparition des images

Fondation d'entreprise Ricard / 29 janvier - 9 mars 2013

Avec l'actuelle prolifération des images, la survie de la technique argentique est mise en cause. De nombreux artistes questionnent son processus, ses matériaux et ses possibilités plastiques. Audrey Illouz a rassemblé onze propositions ouvrant une réflexion sur les moyens de fixations ou de mise en mouvement d'une image (couleur, lumière et matériau) en s'appropriant des protocoles photographiques (filtrer, révéler, fixer, projeter). Une volonté collective qui s'inscrit à rebours de l'ère numérique. Les artistes reviennent sur l'histoire de la technique et réactivent librement des procédés photomécaniques pionniers comme le sténopé, la photogravure, le photogramme et l'héliogravure. Au fil de l'exposition, un dialogue à la fois technique et conceptuel s'instaure entre les œuvres. L'altération accidentelle, l'imprévisibilité des matériaux et la part expérimentale interviennent dans plusieurs pièces. Le développement de pellicules involontairement voilées par Meris Angioletti a généré une réflexion autour de la peinture (fresques de Clusone, province de Bergame), de l'érosion, à la fois de la peinture murale et du négatif. Lorsqu'il arrive au Japon, Eric Baudelaire se voit dans l'impossibilité de produire des images sans tomber dans le cliché exotique, il produit alors la série *Anabasis X-Rayograms*. En passant les portiques de sécurité des aéroports, ses films

sont marqués par les rayons X. Il se remet au caractère incontrôlable de l'accident pour en exploiter ses qualités picturales. Les dissonances temporelles jouent également un rôle de choix. À l'ère de l'image immédiate, Juliana Borinski passe 600 heures à insoler une diapositive afin que l'image projetée surgisse sur une plaque de cuivre ; Dominique Blais réactive quatre sténopés enregistrant les traces lumineuses de bougies ; Sébastien Rémy procède à des allers-retours temporels, d'Internet à l'héliogravure en passant par un transcodage de l'image en son, il puise dans l'histoire et l'actualité de la photographie. En creux se pose la question de la fixation et du mouvement des images. La *Table Sensible* de Blanca Casa Brullet conjugue ombre et lumière au profit d'une œuvre mouvante. **Jonglant entre peinture et photographie, Jacob Kassay recourt à un procédé industriel, l'électro-galvanisation, pour fixer les particules d'argent sur ses toiles.** L'effet de miroir obtenu répond à l'opacité de la toile de Joseph Dado, qui, elle, est entièrement recouverte d'une épaisse couche de goudron (matière que Nicéphore Niepce utilisait en son temps). Après avoir plongé des feuilles de papier dans une solution de graphite liquide, Diogo Pimentão procède à une fixation des particules par évaporation. L'alchimie entre la gestuelle de l'artiste et les paramètres du phéno-

mène technique engendre le dessin. À partir de protocoles spécifiques à la photographie, les artistes formulent différentes translations techniques et créent des passages entre la photographie, la peinture, le dessin, la gravure, le cinéma et la sculpture.

Julie Crenn

With today's proliferation of images the survival of silver-based photography is in doubt. Many artists are interrogating the process, the materials it uses and its artistic possibilities. Audrey Illouz has brought together work by 11 artists in a show that explores the means by which images are fixed or made to move (color, light and materials) by using photographic protocols (filtering, developing, fixing, projection). The common desire manifested in this show is decidedly unusual in our digital era. These artists revisit the history of the medium and freely reactivate early photomechanical procedures such as pinhole cameras, photogravure and heliograms. Through the course of the exhibition the works enter into a conversation with each other on both the technical and conceptual levels. Accidental alterations, the unpredictability of the materials and the experimental dimension intervened in the making of many of these pieces. When Meris Angioletti found that

her photos had become foggy during development, she used this to reflect on painting (the Clusone frescos in the province of Bergamo) and erosion, both of the wall painting and the photographic negative. When Éric Baudelaire went to Japan and found it impossible to take pictures that were not infused with exotic clichés, he made the series called *Anabasis X-Rayograms*. When taken through airport security portals, his films were marked by exposure to X-rays. He makes use of the uncontrollable nature of accidents to explore their pictorial qualities. He also privileges temporal dissonance. In this era of the immediate image Juliana Borinski spent 600 hours exposing a slide to light so that the projected image would emerge on a sheet of copper. Dominique Blais revisited pinhole cameras, using four of them to record candlelight. Sébastien Rémy's work is about the past and present of photography. He makes pieces going back and forth in time from the Net to the transcription of images into sound and heliogravure, implicitly interrogating the freezing and movement of images. *La Table Sensible* by Blanca Casa Brullet counterposes shadow and light to produce photos that seem to move. Working in a medium somewhere in between painting and photography, Jacob Kassay uses an industrial process, electro-galvanization, to attach silver particles to his canvases. The resulting mirror effect goes well with the opacity of the painting by Joseph Dado, a canvas basically covered with a thick layer of tar (a material Nicéphore Niepce used back in the day). Diogo Pimentão dips sheets of paper into a liquid graphite solution and lets evaporation make the particles stick. The alchemy between the way he moves the paper around in the liquid and the parameters of the chemical process gives rise to drawings. These artists use protocols specific to photography to produce different technical translations of the image and open passageways between photography, painting, drawing, engraving, film and sculpture.

Julie Crenn
Translation, L-S Torgoff



Vue de l'exposition /
Exhibition view « L'apparition des
images », 2013 © Fondation
d'entreprise Ricard / A. Molel



JACOB KASSAY, DE L'AUTRE CÔTÉ DU MIROIR

Pour sa seconde exposition à la galerie Art: Concept, le jeune artiste new-yorkais Jacob Kassay présente une série de quatre diptyques monochromes argentés, réalisés grâce à un procédé industriel et chimique d'électro-galvanisation (les prix se situent entre 15 000 € et 70 000 €). L'interaction avec le spectateur et avec l'environnement, notamment les effets de lumière et la variation des reflets



Vue de l'exposition Jacob Kassay :
Untitled, 2011, acrylique et dépôt
d'argent sur toile, 122 x 122 cm
chaque (©GALERIE ART: CONCEPT, PARIS).

opaques, est recherchée par l'artiste pour modifier les perceptions et aboutir ainsi à une sorte de plongée dans une dimension immatérielle. Artiste pluridisciplinaire adepte de peinture et de vidéo, Jacob Kassay (né en 1984 à Lewinston, État de New York) propose ici une expérience unique de l'œuvre, tout à la fois intérieure et extérieure, conceptuelle et cependant étroitement liée à l'environnement dans lequel sont installées ces pièces. V. DE M.

« JACOB KASSAY »,
galerie Art: Concept, 13, rue
des Arquebusiers, 75003 Paris,
01 53 60 90 30, du 23 février
au 6 avril. + d'infos :
<http://bit.ly/7131kassay>

MARS 2013 CONNAISSANCE DES ARTS

Works by Jacob Kassay, Olivier Mosset and Lawrence Weiner in conversation at Andrea Rosen Gallery



NEW YORK, NY.- [Andrea Rosen Gallery](#) announced a highly unique exhibition that joins in conversation works by Jacob Kassay, Olivier Mosset and Lawrence Weiner. Presented at their new Gallery 2 location, which is dedicated to content-driven, experimental and historical exhibitions, this project is the outcome of a rare gathering and communication between these three artists.

Crafting significant dialogues and unexpected relationships between historical artists and those of a younger generation is a defining aspect of Andrea Rosen's Gallery 2 program, which seeks to broaden our basis of visual reference and education. The focal point of the exhibition is a shared installation comprising a single yellow wall painting by Olivier Mosset upon which a new painting by Jacob Kassay—the irregular shape of which is defined by the repurposing of canvas scraps from other projects---and Lawrence Weiner's A 36" X 36" removal to the lathing or support wall of plaster or wallboard from a wall (1968), from the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, are hung.

On one hand, the installation may be considered as a formalist exercise -- a three-layer relief that, when viewed from afar, appears to be a flattened image. On the other, the combination of the works, in relation to each other and within the gallery setting, inspires new revelations about those works and the relationship between the artists. "A yellow wall is a yellow wall, but I like that it is questioned by its situation (the gallery) and the works of other artists whom I respect," remarks Mosset. The exchange between these three artists not only addresses conceptual abstraction and the significance of space; presence and absence; it develops new affiliations between works that reference the hand, material and process.

Additional paintings by Jacob Kassay and Olivier Mosset are included in the exhibition.

Jacob Kassay was born in 1984 Lewiston, NY. He received his BFA from State University of New York at Buffalo and now lives and works Los Angeles. A solo exhibition of new works by the artist is on view through February 16, 2013 at The Kitchen, New York. Other recent solo shows include Art: Concept, Paris; Protocinema, Istanbul; and The Power Station, Dallas (catalogue).

Olivier Mosset was born in 1944 in Bern, Switzerland. He lives and works in Tucson, Arizona and New York, New York. He was a founding member of the BMPT group in Paris in the 1960s, along with Daniel Buren, Michel Parmentier, and Niele Toroni. Mosset has participated in exhibitions spanning the Fifth Biennial of Paris at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris in 1967 to the Whitney Biennial in 2008.

Lawrence Weiner was born in 1942 in the Bronx, New York and lives and works in New York and Amsterdam. He is one of the central figures in the formation of conceptual art in the 1960s and has exhibited at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art (2008); Whitney Museum of American Art (2007); Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg (2000); the Museum Ludwig, Cologne (1995); the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (1994); the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (1990); and the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (1990). He has participated in Documenta V (1972), VI (1977), and VII (1982), as well as the 2005 Venice Biennale, and the Biennale Sao Paolo in 2006. Among his many honors are National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships (1976 and 1983), a Guggenheim Fellowship (1994), Wolfgang Hahn Prize (1995), and a Skowhegan Medal for Painting/Conceptual Art (1999).

«Works by Jacob Kassay, Olivier Mosset & Lawrence Weiner in conversation at Andrea Rosen», in [Art Daily](#), 15 février 2013

L'image argentique, un oxymore autour de la création du monde à la Fondation Ricard



Photo Aurélien Mole

"L'Apparition des Images," janvier 2013 - Fondation d'entreprise Ricard

Par Juliette Soulez

Publié: 12 Février 2013

« L'apparition des images » à la **Fondation Ricard** est une exposition qui à travers les œuvres présentées de 11 artistes porte une attention particulière à l'émergence de la matière de l'image photographique. Qu'y a-t-il sous la photographie ou qu'est-ce que l'image argentique ? La commissaire de l'exposition **Audrey Illouz** qui a longtemps travaillé sur l'image documentaire au **CPIF** notamment est donc revenue au protocole de l'argentique trouvant là des parallèles avec les processus d'élaboration à l'œuvre dans les pratiques conceptuelles actuelles.

« Les œuvres opèrent une succession de déplacements indissociables du contexte technique, économique, esthétique ou idéologique dans lequel s'inscrit le médium photographique. La spécificité du médium n'est pas ici envisagée de manière intrinsèque mais en tant que source de détournement, en tant que parasitage d'un système en mutation, » explique Audrey Illouz dans sa note d'intention. En somme, « l'histoire des œuvres n'est pas anecdotique, » confie-t-elle aussi à **ARTINFO**.

Et dans cette exposition, l'on y voit avec **Eric Baudelaire**, la trace colorée d'une lueur - un rayon x provenant d'un scanner aéroportuaire au Japon, des photographies du soleil d'Henry Draper réexposées à la lumière du jour par **Lisa Oppenheim**, un monochrome noir et des textures toxiques de goudron par **Joseph Dadoune** et des images évanescences de flammes de bougie par **Dominique Blais**, ou le fantôme d'une fresque archéologique dans le diaporama de **Meris Angioletti**.

L'un des indices de cette exposition, parmi d'autres détournements conceptuels, est bien le film de **Simon Starling**. Ce film en noir et blanc montre un monteur en train de fabriquer un film avec une colleuse traditionnelle sur le passage de Vénus près du soleil en juin 2012.

Et c'est en effet Simon Starling avec des histoires de temps de pose et d'inventions dix-neuviémistes de fusils photographiques à la fois tout à fait intrigantes et tout à fait comiques mises bout à bout, qui conte le premier des débuts de la photographie et du cinéma, d'où l'apparition des images argentiques.

Cependant alors que Vénus frôle le disque solaire dans sa gravitation, nous raconte aussi Simon Starling, se forme une goutte noire à l'instar de la diffraction des optiques utilisées jadis qui brouille la datation exacte de la rencontre de ces astres.

Dans cette œuvre cabalistique, c'est bien la création du monde qui est en jeu, qu'on ne saurait à la seconde près dater. L'artiste contourne alors complètement ces phénomènes et invente donc par détournement un autre système de chiffrement qui finit par donner une preuve irréfutable de ce qu'il a voulu filmer.

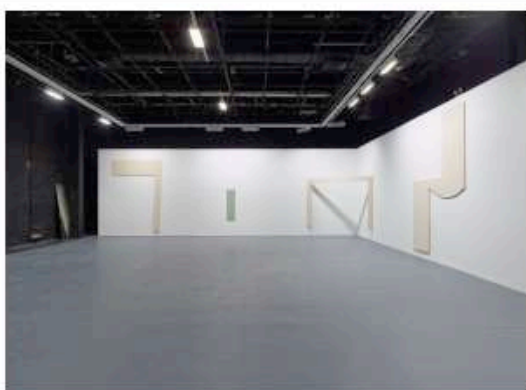
Dans un jeu de renvois internes à l'exposition pensée par Audrey Illouz tant par associations d'idées que d'un point de vue scientifique, **Newton** est un figure récurrente.

On la retrouve d'ailleurs chez **Blanca Casas-Brullet** avec le phénomène de la toupie et les différents origamis gris disposés autour de la projection de l'apparition photosensible du dessin de son atelier.

L'apparition des images est donc tout autant un titre générique qu'un oxymore autour de la création. Les sels argentiques et autres procédés de fixation et de révélation photographique opèrent dans la chimie de l'image à la manière des mouvements gravitationnels qui permettent aussi l'émergence de l'ombre et de la lumière. La disparition et la mort constituent aussi deux des termes de cet oxymore.

Jacob Kassay Joins 303 Gallery, Which Is Headed to 24th Street

By Dan Duray 2/06 6:07pm



Mr. Kassay's current show at the Kitchen. (Courtesy the Kitchen)

Chelsea stalwart 303 Gallery now represents the up-and-coming artist Jacob Kassay, gallery owner Lisa Spellman has told *The Observer*. The gallery will also move from its current spot on West 21st Street to a new building under the High Line on 24th Street, as **Gallerist** previously reported, in mid-April.

Mr. Kassay, 28, first made headlines in 2010 when one of his silver monochrome paintings sold for \$86,500 at the auction house then known as Philips de Pury & Co., over an estimate of \$6,000 to \$8,000.

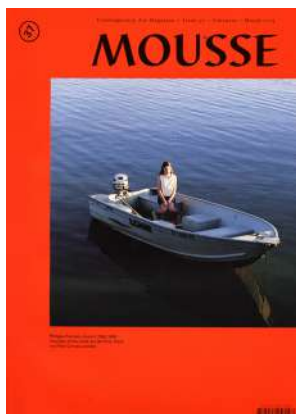
The following spring, another work, at the same house, went for \$290,500, over an estimate of \$60,000 to \$80,000. Where Mr. Kassay will go has been a subject of much art world gossip since he left Eleven Rivington gallery over the summer.

"We are so excited about Jacob's work," Ms. Spellman wrote in an email. "I have been a fan for so long."

The gallery will host its first show of Mr. Kassay's work this fall, in the new 24th Street space.

In 2015, the gallery will move once again, Ms. Spellman wrote, and anchor a new high-rise by developer Scott Resnick at 11th Avenue and 21st Street. 303 will occupy the first and second floor of that space. Ms. Spellman said she isn't sure that the gallery will also stay on 24th in 2015, but added that "we will probably take on an additional space at some point."

Mr. Kassay had a show at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London in 2012 and currently has a show up at the Kitchen. He's included in a group show, with Lawrence Weiner and Olivier Mosset, that opens at Andrea Rosen gallery this Friday.



FRANCE - PARIS
ART: CONCEPT

Jacob Kassay

February 23 - April 6



How many thoughts and ideas can be contained in what seems to present itself to the viewer as a simple monochrome surface? For at least several years now, Jacob Kassay has been a market phenomenon, and though this has definitely contributed to his standing, it has also come to overshadow his silent and yet powerful work, which is based on sophisticated theoretical and critical speculation about the pictorial surface, the object, and how it is perceived within a given space.

Produced using a semi-serial electrochemical plating process, Kassay's paintings are silvery, polished, mirror-like canvases, constantly shifting and changing surfaces that offer themselves to our gaze in a delicate game of interaction, both with the viewer's own reflection and that of the surrounding space – and "time" – and working through dynamics that resemble those of sound, in which a simple inflection can change the tone of a note, and as a result, its meaning. For his first solo show at art: concept, the young American artist will be presenting a new series of monochrome works that continue along the line of investigation that characterizes his work, while reflecting on other themes important to the artist, such as the impossibility of reproducing anything without simultaneously losing information, and the problems inherent in any process of transfer, as in any attempt to arrive at a fixed interpretation of the work.

galerieartconcept.com

Kassay Turns Silver Deposit, Acrylic Into Gold: Interview

Artfully put together 20-somethings mingled with fur-bedecked matrons of a certain age for the opening of Jacob Kassay's show at the [Kitchen](#) in Chelsea.

Dressed in a bright print shirt and glasses, the 28-year-old artist stood in a far corner of the gallery, next to one of his signature burnished silver paintings -- a similar work sold at [Phillips de Pury](#) in 2011 for \$290,500.



Jacob Kassay in a double exposure portrait taken in Venice, California. His show at the Kitchen in Chelsea runs through Feb. 16. Source: VN/Jacob Kassay via Bloomberg

The occasional flash of an iPhone illuminated the artworks, most of which were oddly-shaped, raw canvases, formed out of left-over material.

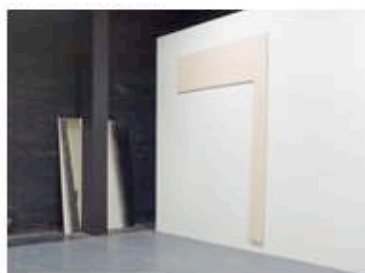
Kassay left [Eleven Rivington](#) about six months ago and is now represented only by galleries in Europe: [Art Concept](#) in Paris, and [Xavier Hufkens](#) in Brussels.

The day before the opening, Kassay met me at the Kitchen, which was in a state of disarray. As we wandered through the space, canvases were folded up in corners and walls in the room had yet to be built.

Tarmy: Can you tell me about your new show?

Kassay: All of the work is within the last year. I don't want to give away too much, but works are in other places in the building as well, like some will be here in the theater, some will be in the offices.

Tarmy: If people come to see the exhibition and the theater is



One of the silver paintings that put Jacob Kassay, 28, on the map, at the Kitchen in Chelsea. Kassay will spend the next several months teaching at SUNY Buffalo.

closed, are they only getting a partial experience of your work?



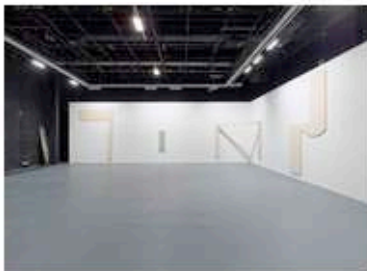
Kassay's artwork is featured throughout the performance, exhibition, and administrative spaces of the Kitchen. Another show of his work opened on Jan. 20 at Protocinema in Istanbul. Photographer: Jeffrey Sturges/Blake Zidell & Associates via Bloomberg

Kassay: I don't think that there's any chance that they could come to an understanding of the work as a whole -- as I imagine it anyway, so what's the idea of being "complete?"

I might be the only one who gets to see everything that's a part of it.

High Prices

Tarmy: Does the knowledge that your work is selling for hundreds of thousands of dollars affect how you make it?



The exhibition space at the Kitchen in Chelsea. Several of the canvases in the show are untreated with paint or gesso. Photographer: Jeffrey Sturges/Blake Zidell & Associates via Bloomberg

Kassay: In one sense, of course it has to. But all you have to do is take a break and continue what you've been doing. Are you really not going to trust yourself to keep making the decisions that got you to this point in the first place?

I don't think you make good work or even keep a level head by listening to a lot of people.

Tarmy: Do you collect art?

Kassay: Sure. I got a Scott Lyall painting, the first thing that I ever bought. I had a Franz Erhard Walther given to me once and that was an amazing gift, and I've traded a lot of work.

Tarmy: Do you invest? How do you handle your money?

Art Investing

Kassay: Poorly. I just bought a painting -- I guess some people consider that an investment. But I wasn't kidding when I said I handled my money poorly. It's a separate job, you know, to actually deal with it.

Tarmy: It's a little surprising that you don't have a gallery representing you in the U.S. Do people now try to contact you directly?

Kassay: I've had that happen a couple of times. Someone contacted me from [Europe](#) asking me to collaborate on some sort of jewelry design with him.

I had to say no, because that's just not what I do. Stick to what you're good at.

Tarmy: What's next?

Kassay: I don't know. I can really only talk about what's in front of me. And everything's been going so well here -- this might be a bad thing, but no one's said "no" to a decision that I've made so far.

That's not to say that everyone is saying "yes" to everything I say, either.

Tarmy: So you don't have a career plan?

Kassay: I don't know that it's a career yet. I've laid out the next five months of my life -- isn't that planning far enough ahead?

"Jacob Kassay: Untitled" runs through Feb. 16 at the Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. Information: +1-646-481-4704; <http://thekitchen.org>.

(James Tarmy writes for Muse, the arts and culture section of [Bloomberg News](#). The opinions expressed are his own. This interview was adapted from a longer conversation.)

'Jacob Kassay: Untitled (Disambiguation)' at the Kitchen

By Will Heinrich 1/15 4:10pm

0 / 4

NEXT



Using large scraps of white, off-white, burlap-colored and pale industrial green linen left over from previous projects, some of them dating back to grad school (which, of course, wasn't that long ago), Jacob Kassay has constructed a series of scrupulously odd-shaped monochromes, all untitled, that have the elegant simplicity and the delicately affected sheen of humility of a Japanese tea ceremony. None of the lines are too straight, and most of the shapes —though not the lunar white sliver hung on

a black wall, or the best piece, a squat, notched green hut—are clearly but not ostentatiously negative, the kind of sticky long bars and borders left when you cut rectangles out of larger rectangles. Standing in the buzz of the fluorescent lights and numbering the canvases' few imperfections—the dark bits of fuzz, the hanging white threads, the single black eyelash—you can imagine a complementary positive of effort, some long process of attempting, failing, winnowing and editing necessary to get to this kind of meditative, purely nonobjective blankness. A few examples of Mr. Kassay's earlier work, large canvases coated with layer after layer of gesso and then electroplated with silver to make warmly foggy mirrors that reflect the viewer back to herself, but not so clearly as to be empty conceptual, seem to bear this out. But under examination, the pieces look more and more recessively reactive, the products not of good choices triumphantly discovered, but of bad choices pre-emptively denied. (Through Feb. 16, 2013)

5 (Mostly Imaginary) Ways of Redeeming Jacob Kassay's Show at The Kitchen



Pity poor **Jacob Kassay**. A young painter with a decent idea — electroplated silver paintings — has become a living punch line, all on account of the fact of the huge and clearly speculative interest in his works that has made him the poster boy for the madness of the contemporary art market. It is really impossible to look at anything he does and ask the question, “Is it really worth all that attention?” And the answer can't help but be, “Probably not.”

Why an experimental nonprofit like the **Kitchen** would choose to debut a new suite of works by Kassay is a little beyond me — the commercial art market has given him quite enough exposure. At any rate, he has used the opportunity to offer up a show called “Untitled (disambiguation),” and is clearly trying to put some air between himself and the whole silvery paintings thing. In fact,

Kassay has stood one large mellow silver painting in a corner, as if to symbolize this aspiration in the most literal possible way. Another silver painting is put in the stairwell.

The main attraction is a series of shaped, slightly inchoate canvasses, dun-colored or in mild monochromes. One is a frame-like shape that bridges a corner, another a gawky L. Most are smallish uneven rectangles. They look like Richard Tuttle at his most roguishly indistinct. A lot like that, actually.

At least Kassay is trying to find his way forward (later in the month, there is going to be a drum performance at the Kitchen based on a “graphical score” by the artist). Rather than just complain, I also tried hard, while I was at the show, to imagine what kind of idea it would take in order to make these paintings seem new and interesting enough to warrant the attention. Here are some that I came up with (Hint: One of these is the actual idea behind the show):

1. The mellow colors of the paintings are the faded colors of institutional interiors in upstate New York, where Kassay went to school. The shapes reference floor plans of various incomplete buildings. The half-formed character of the works is a comment on industrial decline.
2. The shapes of the canvasses are the abstracted forms of runes from Nordic myth, and the show is meant to cast a spell to exorcize the unfortunate demonic spirits that have possessed his career.
3. The beige canvases are, in fact, scraps of linen he collected while living on a kibbutz in an attempt to reconnect with and understand a non-market driven way of life.
4. The pieces are leftovers from earlier paintings he did, and paired with them conceptually to create the world’s biggest diptychs.

5. They are not paintings at all but fabric stretched over scrap wood that Kassay found on the street, and that he is presenting as art here as a subversive commentary on how anything he touches turns to gold (or silver).

If you want to discover the answer to this quiz, you can find it in the press release, below:





GOOD VIBRATIONS SPÉCIAL NEW YORK

GOOD PROFILE - ART



1. STEPS, BRIAN BELOTT, 2012.
2. SYNTHA-6, RACHEL HARRISON, 2012.
3. AQUAFRESH (REGINA HALL), KELLEY WALKER, 2006.
4. MIG 29 SOVIET FIGHTER PLANE AND CLOUDS, CORY ARCANGEL, 2005.
5. UNTITLED, JACOB KASSAY, 2012.
6. BIRD CORPSE, LABELED AS HOME DECOR, INDONESIA TO MIAMI, FLORIDA (PROHIBITED), TARYN SIMON, 2010.

logiciels de retouche, il recadre, agrandit, superpose, gomme... Il démultiplie le visage de la chanteuse Whitney Houston, dont l'aura se dilue dans le gris de mauvaises photocopies. Il ajoute des giclées de chocolat sur une photo montrant un policier blanc tabassant un Noir. Il macule de dentifrice des couvertures de magazines masculins. En détournant les icônes médiatiques, il crée ce qu'il appelle des « sortes de collages numériques situationnistes ».

4. Cory Arcangel, nouvelle star de l'art numérique

Né en 1978, Cory Arcangel fait partie de la génération qui a grandi avec les consoles de jeux. Expert en technologie numérique et en hacking, il s'est fait connaître très tôt par le détournement, à des fins artistiques, de jeux vidéo aujourd'hui obsolètes, et compatibles avec les non moins obsolètes Commodore 64, Atari 800 et Nintendo 8-bit. Dans l'une de ses œuvres les plus connues, *Super Mario Bros*, il a supprimé tous les éléments visuels, à l'exception des nuages qui défilent en boucle sur un ciel d'azur, créant ainsi une nouvelle forme animée de peinture de paysage. Ancien élève du prestigieux Oberlin College, où il



a étudié en virtuose la guitare mais aussi les technologies de musique électronique, il multiplie les pratiques – montage accéléré de vidéos récupérées sur Internet, recompression 666 fois d'un morceau de hardcore, sculptures cinétiques, impressions et dessins au traceur informatique... Repéré lors de la Whitney Biennial de 2004, il est très vite entré dans le cercle restreint des artistes numériques en vue et a bénéficié, l'an dernier, à 33 ans à peine, d'une expo solo au Whitney Museum.

5. Les faux effets miroir de Jacob Kassay

Jacob Kassay n'a que 28 ans, mais il s'est fait remarquer dès 2011, lors d'une grande expo que lui a consacrée l'Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) de Londres. Installé entre Los Angeles et New York, il

est venu à la peinture par la photographie, ce qui explique peut-être que ses toiles ont l'étrange aspect de daguerréotypes vierges. Ses tableaux sont en réalité des monochromes argentés obtenus grâce à un procédé d'électroalgalisation (des ions d'argent sont déposés par électrolyse sur la toile). L'effet est saisissant pour le spectateur qui se reflète dans ces surfaces un peu voilées et brumeuses, sensibles au moindre changement de luminosité. Dès lors, les œuvres, à la fois opaques et réfléchissantes, n'existent que par la présence du regardeur, qui n'obtient en retour qu'un reflet fugace et déformant. Jacob Kassay pose ainsi, avec acuité, la question de la représentation : la peinture n'est plus le miroir du monde, elle offre tout juste une réverbération déformée du réel, laissant le spectateur en proie au doute et au flou.

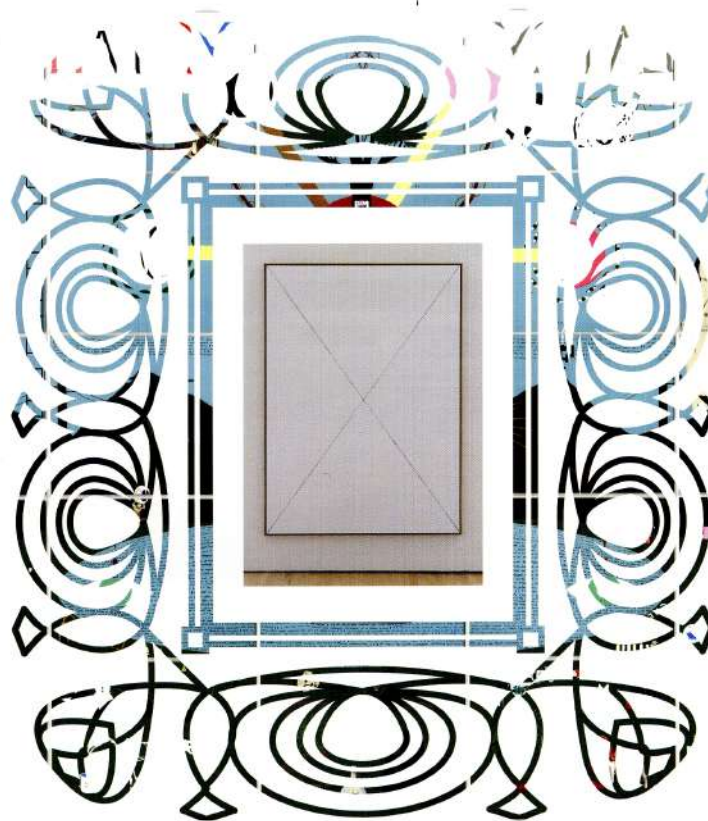
6. Taryn Simon réinvente la photo documentaire

Représentée par la galerie Gagosian, Taryn Simon est la nouvelle star de la photographie américaine. A 37 ans, elle s'est offert une tournée de luxe avec une expo solo à la Tate Modern de Londres, puis à la Neue Nationalgalerie de Berlin et, tout dernièrement, au MoMA de New York. Taryn Simon a assis sa notoriété en 2002 avec une série, *The Innocent*, où elle met en scène des personnes accusées à tort de crimes aux États-Unis et ayant purgé plusieurs années de prison avant d'être disculpées grâce à des tests ADN. Depuis, cette jeune New-Yorkaise ne cesse de mettre en lumière les mécanismes cachés de la société américaine. Dans *Contraband*, elle a pris, en l'espace de cinq jours, plus de mille clichés d'articles saisis à l'aéroport John F. Kennedy, établissant ainsi l'inventaire de ce qui reste aux portes de l'Amérique. Dans *An American Index of the Hidden and Unfamiliar*, elle a pénétré les lieux les plus secrets ou les plus inattendus du pays et dressé un index de ce que l'on ne voit jamais : des capsules de déchets radioactifs dans un site de retraitement, des corps congelés dans un labo de cryoconservation, une cellule grillagée de récréation dans le couloir de la mort de la prison de Mansfield... La puissance esthétique de ses photos renforce leur impact documentaire et fait de Taryn Simon l'une des photographes les plus dérangeantes et les plus subversives du moment. ■



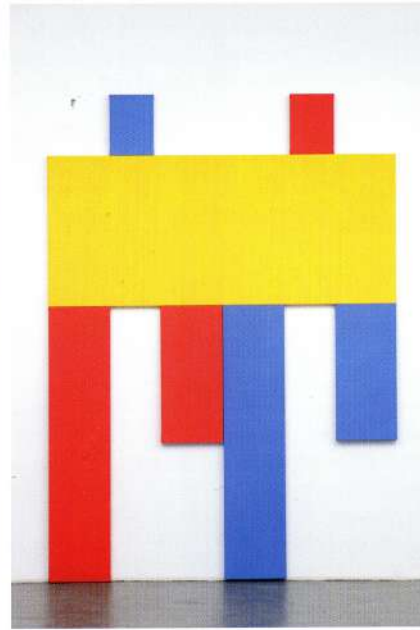
L'IDÉE DE LA PEINTURE

FLIRTING WITH DEATH:
DISPATCHES ALONG 19TH TO 21ST CENTURY PAINTING



Jacob Kassay, *Xanax* (détail | detail), 2011.
photo : Marc Blower, permission de | courtesy of Art-Coscept, Paris & ICA, Londres

FRÔLER LA MORT :
TOMBEAUX OUVERTS SUR LE PARCOURS DE LA PEINTURE DU 19^E AU 21^E SIÈCLE

Joe Bradley, *Night Runner With Strike*, 2007.Joe Bradley, *The Cavalry*, 2007.

photos : permission de | courtesy of Perse Projects, Berlin

Depuis l'aube de la révolution industrielle, on a tenté à maintes reprises d'en finir avec la peinture, à commencer par Hippolyte Delaroche qui aurait déclaré en 1839, en voyant pour la première fois un daguerréotype : « la peinture est morte à dater de ce jour ». Amorcé à cette date fatidique, le débat fait rage encore aujourd'hui : la photographie, avec son efficacité insurpassable à documenter les événements et à immortaliser les visages, elle qui a démocratisé le processus de création d'images en permettant à n'importe qui de manifester, d'un seul clic, les talents jadis élitistes du peintre, la photographie a-t-elle bel et bien tué la peinture ?

Dans la mesure où la peinture n'a perdu aux yeux du public ni son attrait ni sa valeur marchande, on peut supposer que son territoire est plus vaste que celui que revendique la photographie. Il semblerait même qu'elle soit toujours la favorite des acheteurs dans les galeries commerciales ou lors des symposiums et encans d'art : neuf des dix artistes qui se vendent le plus aux enchères dans le monde sont des peintres¹. Morte, la peinture ? On le dit, mais comme chaque notice nécrologique qui lui est consacrée suscite une pluie d'éloges et d'articles à son sujet, on se prend à penser que si la violence d'un scénario est une garantie de succès à la télévision, on pourrait peut-être en dire autant dans le milieu artistique... De nos jours, à voir les innombrables tableaux qui ornent les murs des musées, galeries et autres lieux d'exposition, il est tentant de mettre en cause le sérieux des menaces et des coups portés contre la peinture : sa mort annoncée haut et fort ne serait-elle pas plutôt une campagne promotionnelle savamment orchestrée ?

Certes, des événements comme l'exposition-conférence *Parti pris de peinture*, à l'Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) en 1993, ont nourri la vitalité de la peinture au Québec. Cela dit, une telle gerbe de louanges s'accordait mal avec l'esprit du temps ; de fait, à l'échelle mondiale, la peinture n'avait pas été la cible d'autant d'attaques depuis l'aube de l'ère industrielle. Ainsi, tout au long des années 1990, une grande part de

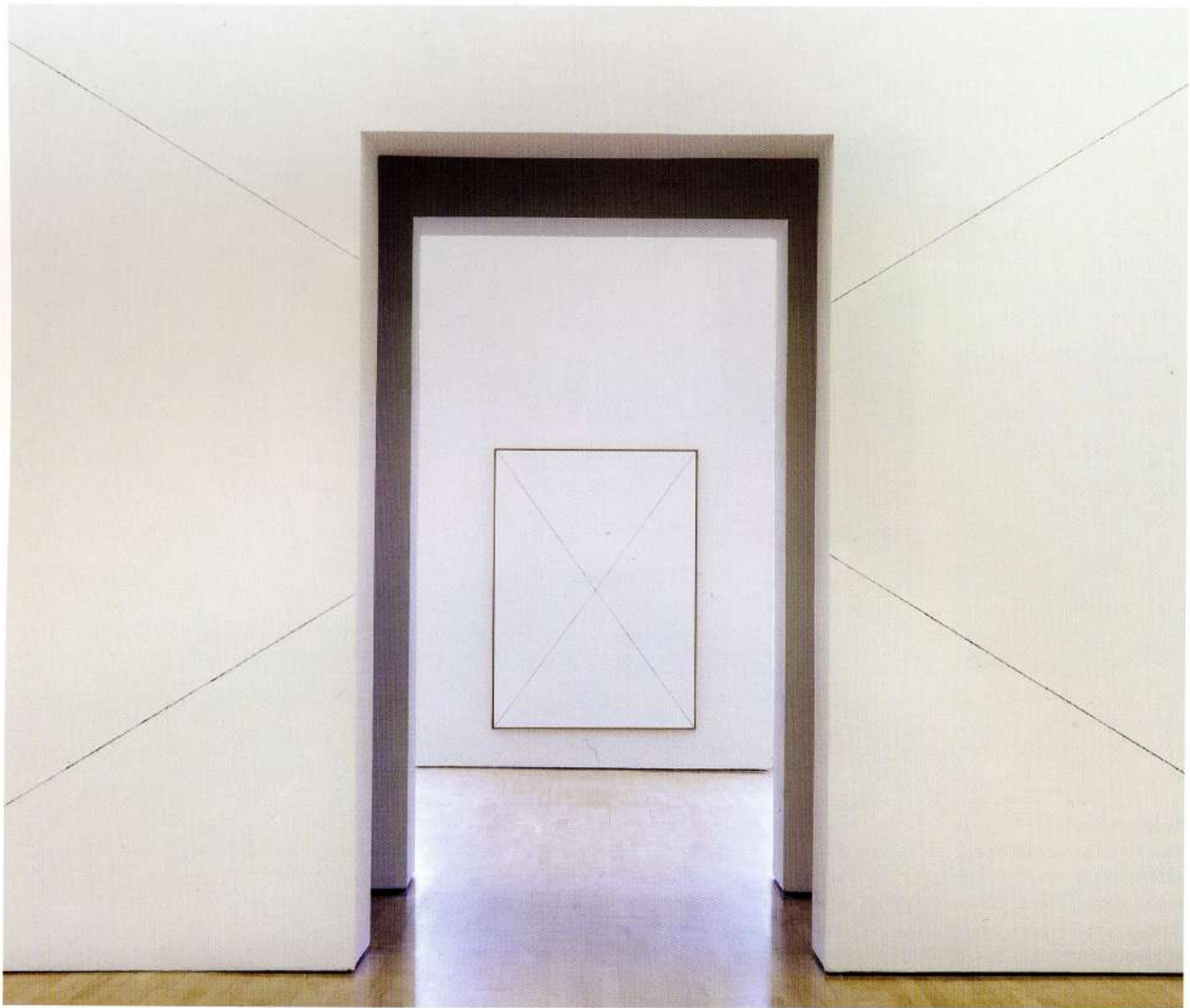
Painting has suffered at least half a dozen major existential blows since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, starting with Hippolyte Delaroche declaring "from today, painting is dead" in 1839, when he first set eyes on daguerrotypes. From this precedent, debate still abounds today as to whether photography, with its more effective means of documenting events and immortalizing faces as well as democratizing the whole imaging process—and now allowing anyone to embrace the once elitist talents of painters with a point-and-click camera—killed off painting.

There must be more to painting than the territories claimed by photography, since it certainly hasn't lost any of its appeal to audiences, nor has it lost any market value. On the contrary, painting seems evermore the dominant commodity for commercial galleries, art fairs, and auctions. Of the ten top-selling artists at auctions worldwide, nine are painters.¹ Each time painting is declared dead, more kudos and column space are dedicated to the deceased. If violent scenarios make for good television, perhaps the same is true in the art world. Today, so many paintings adorn the walls of art institutions that one is tempted to wonder if this art form was ever under serious threat, or if all this death talk was just an elaborate marketing campaign.

Although the livelihood of painting was supported in Quebec with events such as the *Parti Pris de peinture* exhibition/conference at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) in 1993, the timing of all the praise seemed a bit off, when indeed painting, on a global scale, had not been under such serious attack since the dawn of the Industrial Age. Throughout the 90s, much of the public imagination was captured by the digital revolution and, arguably, digital art was the only format (after acknowledging our postmodern condition) that could deliver anything new, at least in technical terms. In addition to the lens-based representational fidelity of photography, digital art added movement and interactivity to

1. Source : Blouin Art Sales Index, <http://artsalesindex.artinfo.com> [consulté le 1^{er} mars 2012].

1. Source: Blouin Art Sales Index, (accessed March 1, 2012), <http://artsalesindex.artinfo.com>.



Jacob Kassay, *Xanax* (diptych | diptych), 2011.

photo : Marc Blower, permission de | courtesy of Art: Concept, Paris & ICA, Londres

l'imaginaire public s'est trouvée accaparée par la révolution numérique, et on pourrait avancer l'idée que l'art numérique a été le seul véhicule (une fois admise notre condition postmoderne) capable de produire quelque chose de neuf – techniquement parlant, à tout le moins. En plus de la représentation fidèle que rend la photo par l'intermédiaire de la lentille, l'art numérique ajoutait à la trousse d'outils expressifs du photographe le mouvement et l'interactivité, ainsi que le laissait prévoir l'ère positiviste annoncée par les Modernes.

L'effondrement du mur de Berlin a favorisé le ralliement des institutions technocrates qui ont ravivé le projet des Lumières pour nous faire croire que le monde progressait constamment. La technologie instaurait le règne de l'ordinateur, en en faisant le dénominateur commun de toutes les pratiques créatives et organisationnelles. Par le biais de l'énergie propre, de la fabrication bon marché et de l'agriculture durable, la technologie promettait de résoudre tous les problèmes de la planète. Mais le réveil brutal du 11 septembre a fait voler en éclats nos derniers idéaux de progrès pour cristalliser la vision d'un monde où les conflits sont endémiques et les positions extrémistes, méprisées, qu'elles soient d'un côté ou de l'autre de l'échiquier. On observe le même phénomène

its range of expressive tools, along with the positivist agenda originally promised by the Moderns.

Helped by the fall of the Berlin wall, technocratic institutions rallied to revive the enlightenment project and make us believe the world was becoming incrementally better. Technology instigated the computer as the common denominator for all creative and organizational practices. In the form of clean energy, cheap manufacturing, and sustainable agriculture, technology promised to solve all the world's problems. But the rude awakening of 9/11 shattered the last of our ideals about progress and left behind a worldview of ongoing conflict, and with it a disdain for extremist positions on any side of the exchequer. Similarly, in the creative world, pushing ideas to their ultimate logical conclusion was frowned upon. Thus, the failure of technology to carry a unifying narrative was self-fulfilling, because in accordance with Moore's law,² technological art could not fence in its own specificity for periods of longer than eighteen months.

In its pursuit of optimizing digital images, Photoshop actually weakened photography's documentary status by making pictures infinitely

2. Which states that every eighteen months, computers become twice as powerful, and half as expensive.

dans le monde de la créativité, où le fait de mener des idées jusqu'à leur conclusion logique est devenu quasi répréhensible. Du coup, l'échec de la technologie à soutenir un grand récit unificateur n'a fait que concrétiser sa propre prédiction : conformément à la loi de Moore², l'art technologique s'est avéré incapable de contenir sa propre spécificité pour des périodes excédant dix-huit mois.

Par l'optimisation continue des images numériques, Photoshop s'est trouvé à affaiblir le statut documentaire de la photo en rendant les clichés infiniment malléables : l'amincissement des mannequins et le lissage de leur peau sont des opérations de routine effectuées sur les photos de mode, et les portraits officiels sont modifiés sans effort afin d'atténuer certaines associations politiques (tout comme le faisaient déjà les Soviétiques dans les années 1930). Plus encore, l'ajustement automatique de la luminosité sur les appareils numériques permet aux photographes amateurs de prendre, trop facilement, d'excellents clichés, ce qui sape le mérite artistique des professionnels. Et c'est un fait que, si les technologies optiques numériques reproduisent avec une fidélité extrême notre expérience visuelle du monde, l'obsession commerciale de la dernière mise à jour fait de ce support le matériau le moins apte à l'archivage. Devant un contenu numérique qui date de quelques années seulement, nous sommes toujours et de plus en plus déçus par sa faible résolution, les altérations infligées par des disques durs en mauvais état ou son incompatibilité avec les nouveaux logiciels. Les soins constants qu'exigent la sauvegarde, la mise à jour et la reprise de ce contenu vieillissant prématurément offrent un contraste assez gênant avec les œuvres peintes sorties, elles, à peu près indemnes de leur voyage à travers les siècles. La *longévité*, plus que la *fidélité*, pourrait bien être le critère qui permettrait à la peinture de regagner son statut documentaire.

Le peintre figuratif américain John Currin a déjà dit – la citation est bien connue – que sur le plan technique, il avait le niveau d'un peintre moyen du 19^e siècle. Fort bien, mais pourrait-on savoir à quoi il aspire en ce qui concerne le choix d'un sujet ? La technologie a mis au jour la sottise qu'il y a à vouloir réduire la pertinence de la peinture à ses moyens représentationnels ; de là, nombreux sont ceux qui ont préféré voir le revers constructif de la médaille : cette mort fondatrice a permis aux peintres d'inventer l'abstraction. Après s'être libérés du fardeau de la commémoration d'événements historiques et de gens influents, les peintres allaient être en mesure de se consacrer à des questions propres au *métier* de peindre. Au lieu de représenter visuellement le monde, la peinture abstraite pouvait désormais donner corps à la pensée abstraite et se mettre au diapason du vocabulaire philosophique, comme l'a montré l'artiste new-yorkais Peter Halley en abordant Foucault et Baudrillard par le truchement de ses toiles. Toutefois, avant de prendre leurs aises dans l'abstraction, les peintres devaient d'abord répondre à l'argument des tubes (dont les impressionnistes ont été, ironiquement, les premiers à faire l'expérience) de Marcel Duchamp, argument ainsi formulé par Robert Katz : « Pour remplir les nouveaux tubes, toute une gamme de nouvelles couleurs vives et stables a fait son apparition sur le marché. Les avancements de la chimie dans la première partie du [dix-neuvième] siècle avaient annoncé de nouvelles couleurs, comme le bleu cobalt, l'outremer artificiel, le jaune de chrome... Dans les années 1850, l'artiste avait à sa disposition une palette plus brillante, plus stable et plus commode que jamais auparavant³. »

En déclarant que les tubes de couleurs étaient en fait des « *ready-mades* assistés », Duchamp sous-entendait que le fait de les utiliser avait des répercussions sur les images produites. C'est, en gros, ce dont Katz et d'autres discutaient en se demandant si la fabrication industrielle de nouvelles couleurs vives aurait provoqué la naissance de l'impressionnisme. Van Gogh, Cézanne et d'autres peintres de l'époque appliquaient

malleable; fashion models are routinely made thinner, with smoother skin, and "official" pictures are effortlessly manipulated (as first practiced by the Soviets in the 1930s) to edit out political liabilities. In addition, automated light adjustments in digital cameras make it too easy for hobbyists to take very good pictures, thus undermining the artistic merit of professional photographers. Indeed lens-based digital technologies most faithfully reproduce our visual experiences of the world, but commercial obsessions for new upgrades have transformed this format into the least archivable of materials. When looking at digital content that is just a few years old, we have become increasingly disappointed by its low resolution, its corruption by faulty hard drives, or the difficulty of opening images with the latest software. The constant nurturing process required to back up, upgrade, and remake this rapidly ageing content stands in embarrassing contrast to paintings that have traversed centuries, relatively unscathed. *Longevity*, rather than *fidelity*, might well be the winning criterion for painting to regain its documentary role.

American figurative painter John Currin famously said that he's only as good technically as a mid-level nineteenth-century painter. That being said, one might as well ask to what level he aspires in terms of his choice of subject matter. Technology exposed the folly of reducing painting's relevance to its representational means, and many have brushed off this initial death as a blessing in disguise, since it allowed painters to invent abstraction. After relieving themselves of the burden of commemorating historical events and affluent people, painters should have been free to focus on issues specific to the *métier* of painting. Instead of depicting the world visually, abstract painting could inform abstract thought and tune in with a philosophical vocabulary, as New York artist Peter Halley did when addressing Foucault and Baudrillard on his canvases. However, before getting too comfortable in abstraction, painters first need to respond to Marcel Duchamp's "tubes of paint" argument (ironically first experienced by the Impressionists), as described by Robert Katz: "To fill the new tubes a whole new range of bright, stable colors began to appear on the market. The advancement of chemistry in the early part of the [nineteenth] century had heralded new colors such as cobalt blue, artificial ultramarine, chromium yellow... By the 1850s, the artist had at his disposal a palette more brilliant, stable and convenient than ever before."³

In stating that tubes of paint are actually assisted ready-mades, Duchamp implied that their use impacted the images produced. This is pretty much what Katz and others disputed about the industrial provenance of new, vivid, machine-made colours in prescribing the emergence of impressionism. Van Gogh, Cézanne, and other painters of this era increasingly applied unmixed paint, oozing straight out of the tubes, onto their canvases. With this in mind, how else should we interpret Claude Monet's successive depictions of Rouen Cathedral, other than as assisted ready-mades *avant la lettre*, celebrating industrially enhanced pigment?

As art history repeated itself, the Impressionists' lust for colour was readily pursued by the Fauves, and the Suprematists' endeavour to take abstraction to its purest form was readily echoed by Minimalism, thus reducing the visual vocabulary to literal shapes. In 1965,⁴ artist/art critic Donald Judd prematurely dismissed painting on the basis of its illusionistic properties before realizing the enormous contributions Minimalism was making to painting in the works of artists such as Frank Stella, Ellsworth Kelly, and Sol LeWitt. Even so, the self-imposed visual rhetoric of these artists created a negative iconography of unauthorized constituents: no image, no space, no story. Minimalist painting wasn't killed off; it just attempted suicide by vacuum.

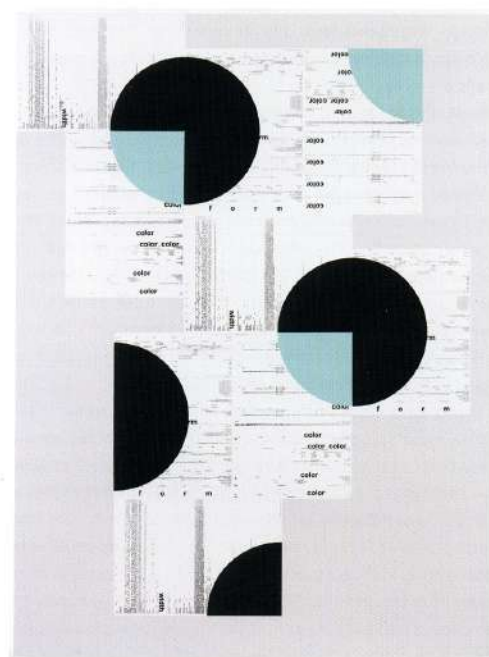
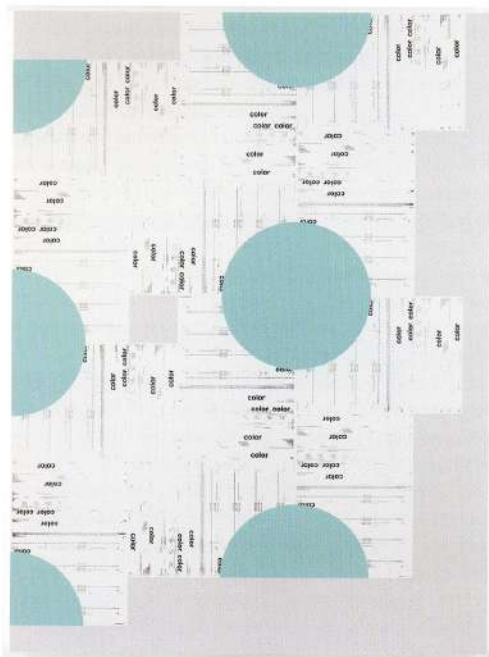
As if no crisis had ever occurred, Julian Schnabel encapsulated the 1980s revival of figurative painting with a simple one-liner: "I thought that

2. Selon la loi de Moore, tous les 18 mois, la puissance des ordinateurs double tandis que leur prix diminue de moitié.

3. Robert K. Katz et Celestine Dars, *The Impressionists Handbook: The Great Works and the World that Inspired Them*, New York, Metro Books, 2000, p. 33. [Trad. libre]

3. Robert K. Katz, Celestine Dars, *The Impressionists Handbook: The Great Works and the World that Inspired Them* (New York: Metro Books, 2000), 33.

4. Donald Judd, "Specific Objects," in *Arts Yearbook 8*, (1965). Rpt. in *Art in Theory: 1900–2000*, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).



Michael Riedel, 20, 2011.

Michael Riedel, 20, 2011.

photos : permission de | courtesy of David Zwirner, New York

sur leurs toiles avec de plus en plus de liberté la peinture non mélangée, directement du tube... Si nous poursuivons cette réflexion, comment interpréter la série de toiles de la cathédrale de Rouen par Claude Monet, sinon comme des ready-mades assistés *avant la lettre*⁴, comme une célébration du pigment amélioré industriellement ?

Et comme l'histoire (de l'art aussi) se répète, le désir brûlant des impressionnistes pour la couleur s'est transmis naturellement aux fauves, et l'entreprise des suprématistes de porter l'abstraction jusqu'à sa forme la plus pure a trouvé naturellement un écho dans le minimalisme, qui a réduit le vocabulaire visuel aux formes les plus élémentaires. En 1965⁵, l'artiste et critique d'art Donald Judd a répudié prématurément la peinture en raison de ses propriétés illusionnistes, avant de réaliser la contribution énorme que le minimalisme apportait à la discipline par le biais d'œuvres comme celles de Frank Stella, Ellsworth Kelly et Sol LeWitt. Même à cela, l'iconographie produite par la rhétorique visuelle que ces artistes se sont imposée demeure négative, faite de composantes interdites : pas d'image, pas d'espace, pas de récit. La peinture minimaliste n'a pas été assassinée, elle a tenté le suicide par le néant.

Puis, comme s'il n'y avait jamais eu la moindre crise, Julian Schnabel saisit dans une sobre formule l'essence du renouveau des années 1980 en peinture figurative : « Je me suis dit que si la peinture était morte, c'était un bon moment pour commencer à peindre... Un peintre peindra toujours⁶. » Mais Schnabel à son insu venait de se positionner au cœur même du problème : en séparant l'acteur de son activité de peinture, il contestait l'asservissement du premier à la seconde conçue comme moyen de subsistance. Autrement dit, il offrait la légitimité aux peintres

if painting is dead, then it's a nice time to start painting.... Painters will paint.⁷ But unbeknownst to Schnabel himself, he stepped right into the crux of the matter: by separating the actor from the activity of painting, he questioned the former's subservience to the livelihood of the latter. In other words, he proposed the legitimacy of painters operating in a dead medium. Australian philosopher of language David Chalmers puts this issue in perspective with his "zombie argument." While displaying all the external signs of sentience, Chalmers' philosophical zombie experiences thoughts and feelings, but not within a unified conscience or subjective will. With this in mind, could painting be regarded as *un-dead*?

In response to the zombie argument, and with the irony of a devil's advocate, one could argue that the successful death of painting actually adds credibility to its cause, akin to the practice of martyrdom. In death, did painting find more followers than in its lifetime? How very Christian. In a convenient twist of fate, these issues now invite debate about the dualist nature of painting; on the one side materialist, sensitive, and on the other side spiritual, cognitive. In short, two invertible types of painters emerge from this dualism: the painter of substance, determined to find a subject matter that would warrant her ongoing obsession with painting; and the painter of ideas, experimenting with other media, but eventually returning to painting to find the most efficient presentation format for her pre-selected subject matter.

To break from the shackles of dualism as well as engage with our non-Western neighbours on this globalizing planet, painters should today propose a *middle way*,⁸ a third type of practice which stands halfway between the outermost positions of painting's pendulum cycle, where its swing is at its most energetic. Appropriately enough, painters such as

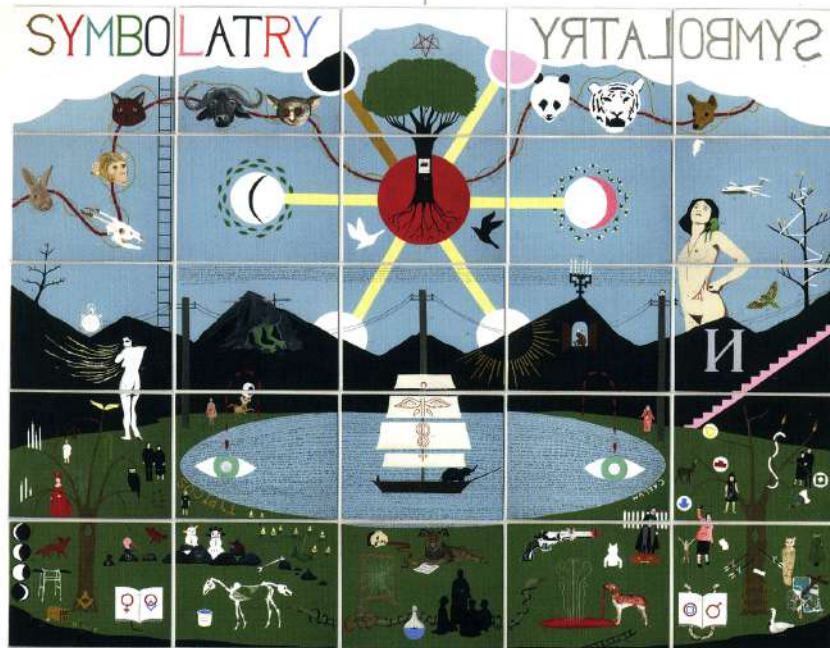
4. En français dans le texte. [Note du traducteur]

5. Donald Judd, « De quelques objets spécifiques », *Écrits 1963-1990*, Paris, Daniel LeLong éditeur, 1991.

6. Julian Schnabel, dans une conversation avec Max Hollein. « Julian Schnabel talks to Max Hollein », New York, *Artforum* (avril 2003), p. 59. [Trad. libre]

5. Julian Schnabel in conversation with Max Hollein, "80s Then" (series), New York, *Artforum* (April 2003), 59.

6. A Buddhist term describing the moderated path between the extremes of sensual indulgence and self-mortifying asceticism.



Michael Dumontier & Neil Farber, *Symbolatry*, 2009.
photo : permission de | courtesy of the artists & Richard Heller Gallery,
Santa Monica

qui exercent un art mort. Replaçons la question en perspective en recourant à l'« argument du zombie » formulé par l'Australien David Chalmers, philosophe du langage : le zombie de Chalmers, tout en manifestant les signes extérieurs de la sentience, fait l'expérience de la pensée et des sentiments, mais cette expérience ne se vit pas au cœur d'une conscience unifiée ni d'une volonté subjective. De ce point de vue, ne pourrait-on considérer la peinture tel un mort-vivant ?

Avec l'ironie de celui qui se fait l'avocat du diable, on objectera à l'argument du zombie que la peinture, en mourant comme une martyre, renforce sa cause. La peinture ne fait-elle pas plus d'adeptes dans la mort que de son vivant ? Très chrétien, comme façon de penser... Dans un retournement fort à-propos, ces questions ouvrent maintenant un débat sur le dualisme de la peinture : matérialiste et sensible d'un côté, spirituelle et cognitive de l'autre. Pour faire bref, disons que deux types de peintres naissent de ce dualisme : le peintre de la substance, déterminé à trouver un sujet qui justifie son obsession pour la palette ; et le peintre des idées, qui fait l'expérience d'autres moyens d'expression, mais qui revient éventuellement à la peinture parce qu'elle offre le support le plus efficace au sujet qu'il a choisi.

Afin de se libérer des entraves du dualisme et d'entrer en contact avec nos voisins non occidentaux, dans ce monde mondialisant, les peintres devraient proposer dorénavant une voie du milieu⁷, un troisième type de pratique qui se trouverait en plein centre du mouvement pendulaire de la peinture, là où son élan a le plus de vigueur. Fort opportunément, des peintres comme Joe Bradley, Jacob Kassay, Michael Riedel et de nombreux autres se font connaître aujourd'hui, des peintres qui mêlent la sensualité et la rigueur à la précision du langage, et qui affichent une certaine bravade sans être fanfarons. Plus près de chez nous, on trouve même une quatrième sorte de peintre, du genre des Winnipégois Michael Dumontier

Joe Bradley, Jacob Kassay, Michael Riedel, and many more are emerging today, mixing sensuality and rigour, precision in language, and a certain bravado without bullshit. Closer to home, we may even find a fourth kind of painter, exemplified by Winnipeg's Michael Dumontier and Neil Farber, or Montreal's Janet Werner; in their immediate environment resided brushes and canvas, and for no reason other than proximity, conjuncture, and force of habit, painting has been arbitrarily recaptured as a utilitarian engine of self-expression.

After zombies and martyrs, painters may turn to the phoenix as the definitive metaphorical figure to service their profession. Not one to shy away from the prospect of its own demise, the flaming death of the phoenix essentially announces the start of a new life cycle, through a rebirth from its own ashes. As the Egyptian Phoenix is identified with the sun god Ra, shouldn't we be surprised to see painting rise again in all its grandeur and shine across the art world sky, only to crash into the horizon before dazzling yet another day? Certainly a noble metaphor, the phoenix/painting is dramatic enough to pull some chords of empathy. However, each passage should still deliver a singular presence—perhaps as the sun's height on the firmament marks the seasons—and avoid exhausting our attention. And so, as we follow painting's predictable fate in the future, we should at least appreciate its journey.

7. Il s'agit du terme bouddhiste qui décrit le chemin de la modération entre les extrêmes que sont la complaisance dans la sensualité et l'ascétisme autoupunitif.



Michael Dumontier & Neil Farber, *Healing Potentiality*, 2009.

photo : permission des artistes | courtesy of the artists

et Neil Farber ou de la Montréalaise Janet Werner : parce qu'il se trouvait tout autour d'eux des pinceaux et des toiles, et sans autres raisons que la proximité, la conjoncture et la force de l'habitude, la peinture est arbitrairement redevenue pour eux le moteur utilitaire de l'expression de soi.

Après zombies et martyrs, les peintres peuvent maintenant se tourner vers le phénix comme métaphore ultime de leur profession. Pas du genre à fuir l'éventualité de sa propre fin, le phénix en sa mort flamboyante annonce avant tout le début d'un nouveau cycle, puisqu'il renaît de ses cendres. Sachant que pour les Égyptiens le phénix est un avatar de Râ, le dieu-soleil, nous étonnerons-nous de voir la peinture s'élever à nouveau dans toute sa splendeur et briller au zénith du firmament artistique, pour s'écraser ensuite à l'horizon avant de nous éblouir encore au jour suivant ? Métaphore noble assurément, l'image de la peinture-phénix devrait être assez théâtrale pour éveiller quelque empathie. Chaque passage cependant devrait offrir une présence singulière, unique – peut-être à la façon dont la hauteur du soleil sur l'horizon est un signe des saisons – et se garder d'épuiser notre attention. Ainsi, en suivant dans le ciel le destin prévisible de la peinture, nous serons au moins sensibles à son périple.

[Traduit de l'anglais par Sophie Chisogne]

Oli Sorenson est né à Los Angeles. Il est titulaire d'une maîtrise en médias interactifs de l'UQAM. Il poursuit actuellement ses études doctorales à l'Université Concordia, dans le programme interdisciplinaire de sciences humaines. De 1999 à 2010, Oli Sorenson a vécu à Londres, où il menait de front son travail en atelier et ses activités de commissaire ; il a organisé de nombreux projets, notamment pour la Tate Britain et le British Film Institute. En 2006, selon le sondage annuel du *DJ Mag*, il figurait au 3^e rang parmi les 20 VJ les plus populaires. Il vit et travaille à Montréal.

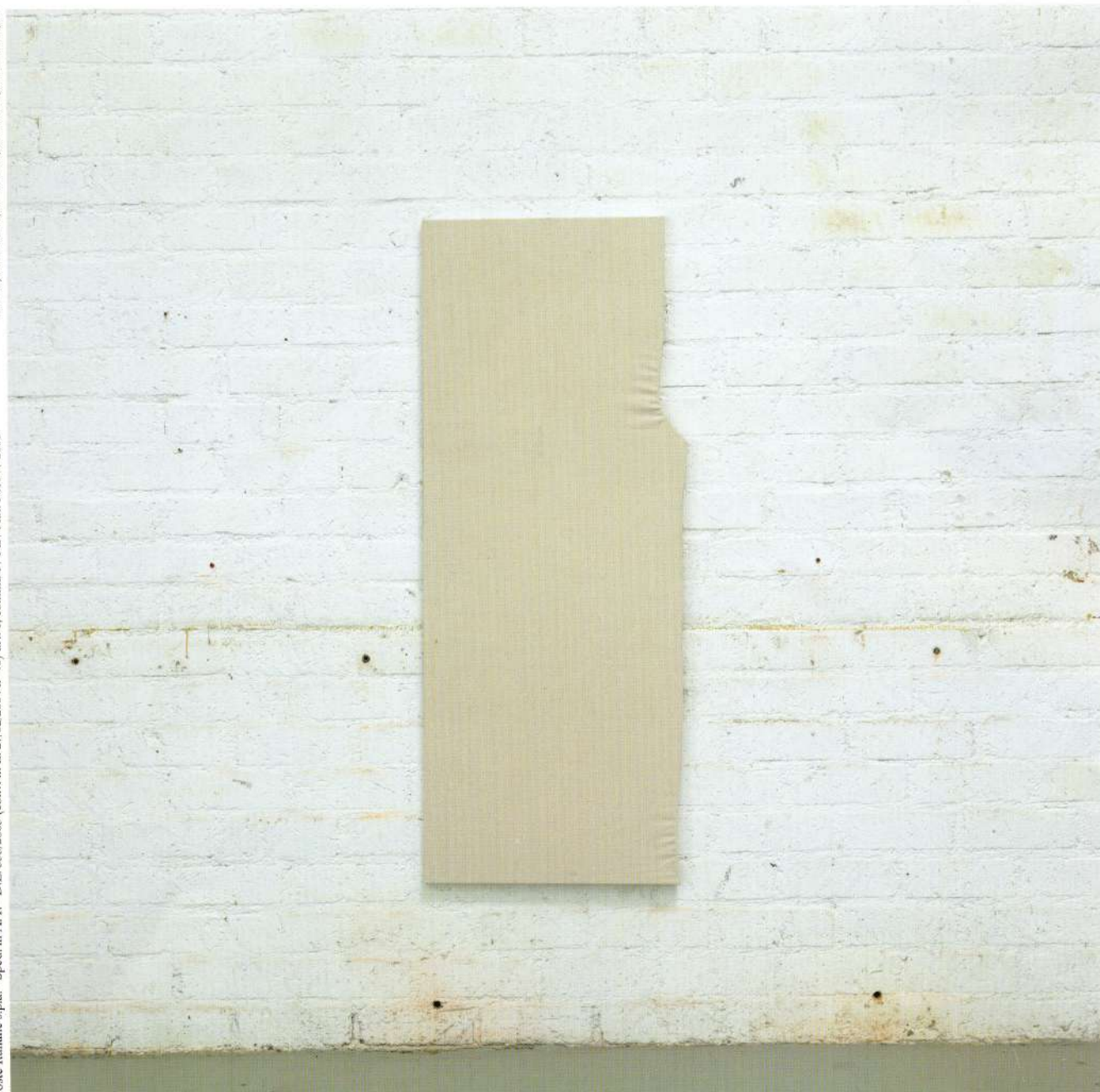
Oli Sorenson was born in Los Angeles and holds an MA in Interactive Media from UQAM. He is currently pursuing doctoral studies in Interdisciplinary Humanities at Concordia University. Sorenson lived in London (UK) between 1999 and 2010 where he combined studio work and curating, organizing numerous programs at Tate Britain, the British Film Institute, and other venues. In 2006, he was voted 3rd most popular VJ in *DJ Mag*'s "Top 20" annual survey. He currently lives and works in Montréal.

Flash Art

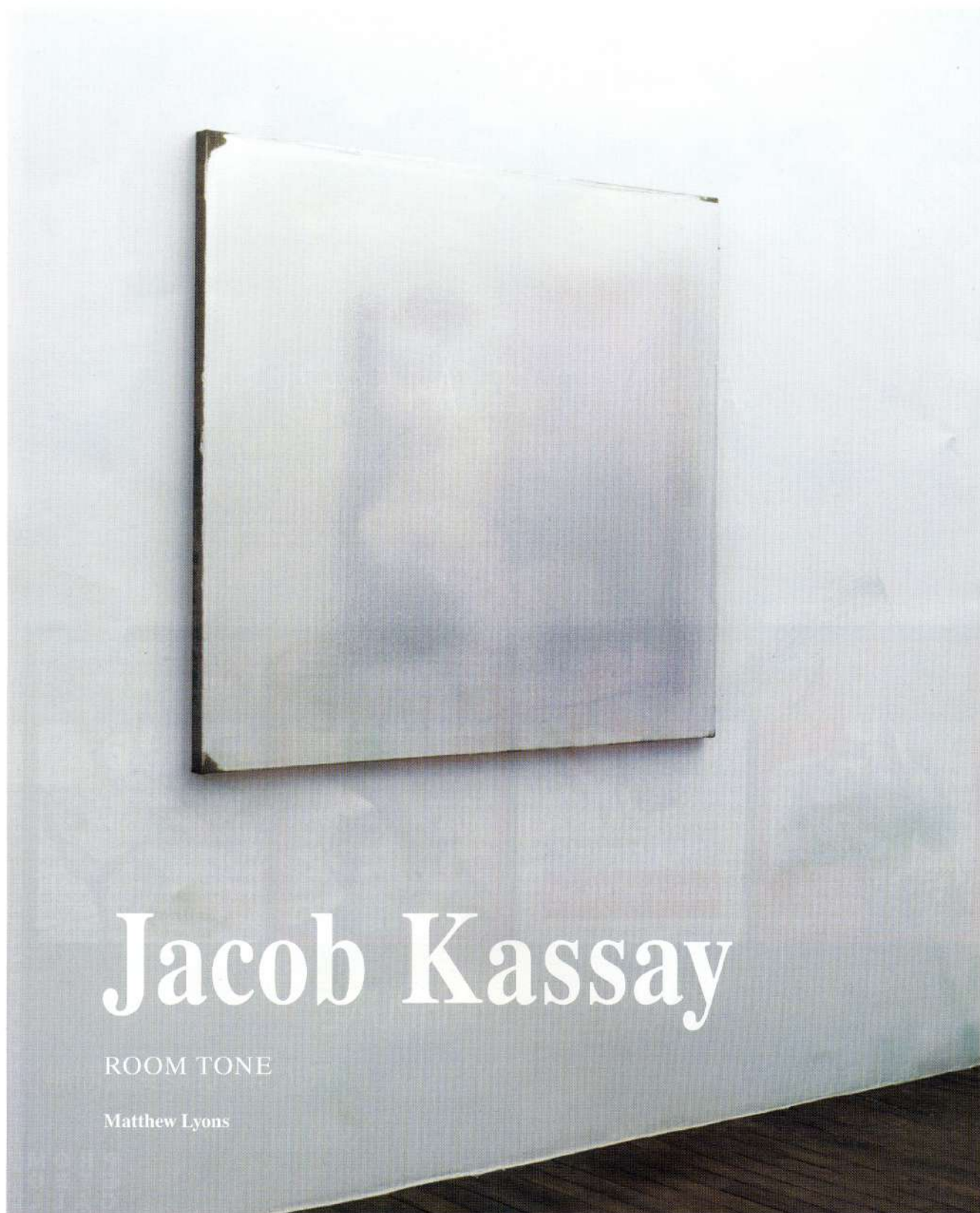
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JACOB KASSAY



Jacob Kassay

ROOM TONE

Matthew Lyons



MATTHEW LYONS: *I thought we could start by talking about the art scene up in Buffalo where you're from and went to school, which also has connections to the history of The Kitchen and people like Steina and Woody Vasulka, Tony Conrad, Cindy Sherman and Robert Longo.*

JK: I had to go to the Castellani Art Museum in Niagara Falls when I was 15 to write on a piece of artwork for an English class, and I chose to write on one of Robert Longo's "Men in the Cities" (1969) pictures. I didn't know what it was, who he was, but it was an arresting image, and I got encouragement from how that piece turned out so I started focusing on art and ended up going to college for it. In one of my classes, the students were allowed to make up their own project, and we decided to make an arts space. It was called Kitchen Distribution and it lasted for about two years. This was in the days of MySpace, so we could track bands that were coming from Pennsylvania to Canada. We'd say, "Come to Buffalo and you can make \$150-200, whatever the door is going to be, and get a free place to stay," and that was appealing to most bands that we approached.

ML: *What were some the bands that played there?*

JK: The Flying Luttenbachers. Japanther came through a couple of times, once with "This Bike Is a Pipe Bomb" — that was a good show. Yip-Yip, from Orlando. Tony

Conrad played there once. Who else? Pit Er Pat, Hologram, from Brooklyn — they were great. Thanksgiving (Adrian Orange). Burning Star Core.

ML: *How did you come up with the name of the place?*

JK: It was the name on the side of the building. It was a distributor of kitchen appliances. I worked for the guy that ran the building as a shop rat for his woodworking and we became good friends. It's funny to go back to the same building all the time, to be reminded of all these things.

ML: *What art were you making while you were so involved with booking these music shows? Is this around the same time when the ideas for the silver paintings started?*

JK: Yes. The room where I made my first paintings is still there. It was important that I was just being active. We had a good scene going. But I still had to go to school and make work, and I was interested in becoming a painter. So I just decided to start making paintings in a way that I felt was responsible to all the things that I was paying attention to that had informed my understanding of painting up to that time.

ML: *Including music? Or sound and vibration?*

JK: Yes, ambience... If you're thinking about not just music but everyone that's making

a space alive, then you have to consider a lot of things outside of an object itself. I was considering everyone that helped me come to arrive at the end point, the painting. So, one friend was building the stretchers, and at the same time I had to ask around to find out how to paint. This taught me more about a network of developing ideas through conversation. So that's how early work came about as a physical thing, and the ideas that were supporting them were somewhat similar. I figured that if I wanted a surface of a work to reflect any of those ideas, it should literally reflect the space. I wanted to make the thing so that it would point to other things in its own atmosphere and treat the air around it like a physically noticeable, viscous material that you would have to engage with in order to experience the work as a part of a whole.

ML: *The very large, muslin curtain at The Power Station in Dallas will do this?*

JK: I expect it will act as a membrane that will allow one to notice passing air. All of the windows in the exhibition space will be left open.

JACOB KASSAY, *Installation view at Art : Concept, Paris, 2010.*

Opposite: *Untitled (detail), 2011 (diptych). Acrylic and silver deposit on canvas, 122 x 122 cm. Courtesy Art : Concept, Paris. Photo: Fabrice Geusset.*

ML: *Recently your works seem very much connected to the architecture, everything that's involved with the structure and surrounding environment, not just the wall. Was that there from the beginning?*

JK: I feel that I am always practicing towards something that's outside of the production of a piece of work. Usually left with all this stuff to edit down, and the only way to do that is to look at a space and find out what you have to apply to it to make a space feel right. When you have a certain amount of noise in an area, it takes work, push and pull, to bring it into harmony, and that's all I'm trying to do with the amount of work brought to a space.

ML: *That makes me think of this concept used in sound art called "room tone," which is a real auditory property.*

JK: Every room has a tone; you can harmonize with a room's tone. It is nice knowing something can be done.

ML: *Do you think about your paintings as "time-based," as having duration?*

JK: Paintings age as objects, not just as an image or a surface. I try to be insistent on focusing on or at least suggesting that you spend a long amount of time with the object. Maybe that'll give you time to think about other things, such as why you even find yourself in that space to pay attention. I can't tell when things start or stop, everything has a thick, blurry line. I took painting as a given, something that looked natural to its environment, because I grew up going to museums that had paintings in them. I chose to practice in something that seemed like it was already supposed to be there. I didn't want to have a whole lot of say in the image; I just wanted the painting to exist as a thing itself so that I'd have freedom to move it around space and suggest things outside of the object.

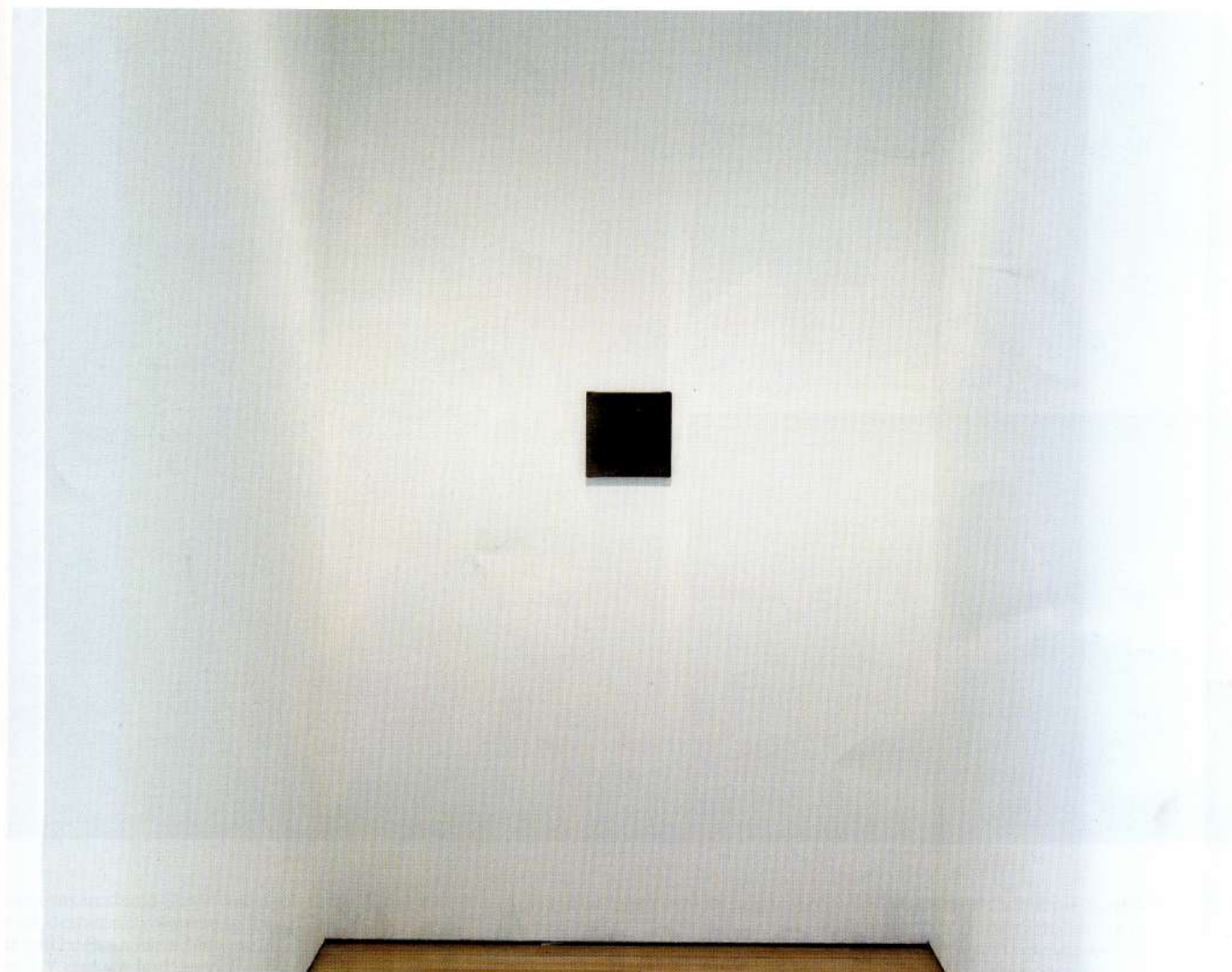
ML: *An artist once asked me how being at The Kitchen and seeing a great deal of dance and*

performance has informed how I now look at what gets called "visual art." I feel it has changed the way I stand in front of an immobile work of art. I look at things not just with my eye; my experience has become as much corporeal as ocular. That seems to resonate with my experience of your work.

JK: This is an interesting idea. While watching you're using "mirror neurons," which aid your understanding of what's going on in front of you. You get a familiar feeling out of just watching something that's moving. And so, when you try to apply those principles to something that's not apparently moving, it slows down perhaps.

ML: *There is a way in which working in a highly site-responsive method is a choreographic process, right?*

JK: Yes. Everything has its place. Showing up to a place with more than you need is usually a good idea. You can find an appropriate place for things to function and pairing down is the



action. Once you have picked the amount of work you don't have to worry about the density of the room changing. It feels as if I am performing maintenance rather than creating anything. Also, the work has been far removed from its origin so that it takes a personal remove to rearrange it and make the show happen.

ML: What do you think of terms of like "reductive" or "minimal" art? Do they make sense to you?

JK: I try to make things that seem natural to their environment — that's why I chose painting anyway. Trying to follow a lineage of thought is annoying. My interest was in why I was going to the space in the first place, and why these reactions were holding my interest. Self-examination? Cognitive dissonance? I don't know.

ML: Your exhibition at *The Power Station* also includes an outdoor installation. Has working outdoors changed how you are composing and underscoring space in the exhibition?

JK: The work outdoors may be nice. I live out West now and I leave my door open. When you come to California you should stop by. Anyway, the seating area outside in Dallas — that is, depressions laid into the ground — is meant to function as a humbling area for quiet thought among others. It is a slight homage to the experiences I had at Artpark in Lewiston when I was young and unaware of the multiplicity of values that a functioning object can hold and give.

ML: So is that a shift for you? Taking the triangulation between a single viewer, the object and the space, and now foregrounding the experience of the work as a group experience?

JK: This is a difficult progression for me. I have relied on one-to-one relationships up until this point. I am beginning to feel comfortable enough now to trust a group. Much of relying on primary experiences is relying on word of mouth. The piece made for sitting is simply a platform for idea building. ■

Matthew Lyons is Curator at The Kitchen, New York.

Jacob Kassay was born 1984 in Lewiston, New York. He lives and works in Los Angeles.

Selected solo shows: 2012: Xavier Hufkens, Brussels; The Power Station, Dallas (US). 2011: ICA, London; L&M Arts, Los Angeles. 2010: Art : Concept, Paris; Sorry We're Closed Gallery, Brussels; Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia (IT). 2009: Eleven Rivington, New York.

Selected group shows: 2011: "The Indiscipline of Painting: International Abstraction from the 1960s to Now," Tate St. Ives (UK); "Four Rooms," CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw; Prague Biennale. 2010: Gwangju Biennale.

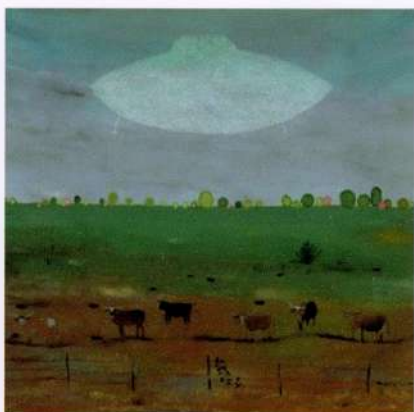
JACOB KASSAY, Untitled, 2010. Silver deposit on canvas, 25 x 25 cm. Installation view at ICA, London. Courtesy Art : Concept, Paris; Eleven Rivington, New York; Xavier Hufkens, Brussels. Photo: Mark Blower.

An Art Fair With a Texas Twist

In the Dallas art world, even a Neiman Marcus store can serve as a canvas.

The flagship department store's windows have started showing site-specific work by the Swiss artist Sylvie Fleury as part of the Dallas Biennale, a first-ever event starting Friday and featuring pieces by 19 artists at sites around the city.

The Biennale is one of a number of events around the same time as the Dallas Art Fair, which also starts Friday. That fair, now four years old, is looking to establish a longer-term identity in a world of huge fairs that threaten to look alike. To that end, the Dallas fair is examining its roots: "I don't really think Miami Basel has a lot to do with Miami," said Dallas fair co-founder Chris Byrne. "We want to have great exhibitors, but we want [the fair] to be grafted into the community."



Esther Pearl Watson/Webb Gallery, Waxahachie
Webb gallery will bring Esther Pearl Watson's 'Comanche TX 2011' to Dallas.

Dallas collector Howard Rachofsky said that as more enthusiasts brush off individual gallery shows in favor of art fairs—"the Target or Wal-Mart version where you can do everything at one time"—the Dallas fair is taking a narrower approach: "It's bite-size, it's attempting to find a niche."

About a quarter of the 78 galleries are from Texas; the rest are national and international. Feature Inc., the New York gallery that showed artists such as Jeff Koons early in their careers, is coming, but so is Webb, a Waxahachie, Texas, gallery known for self-taught or outsider artists.

Other events around Dallas next week include a show at the Nasher Sculpture Center by Erick Swenson, the internationally recognized Dallas-based contemporary artist known for resin sculptures of deer and other animals frozen in haunting tableaux. This is the venue's first exhibition of a Dallas artist and will feature works that Mr. Swenson created specifically for the show, like a piece involving hundreds of fake snails climbing up the sides of a large colorful beer stein.

Also next week, a show by the young art star Jacob Kassay opens at the Power Station, a not-for-profit Dallas art venue in a 1920s industrial space. The exhibit by the Los Angeles artist is still taking shape but will include a big bronze sunburst sculpture set outside.

As for the Biennale, organized by the Dallas Contemporary museum, the exhibit at the downtown Neiman Marcus includes neon sculptures by Ms. Fleury that wink at consumer culture and brash style in a city where "live large" is a motto. "There's one neon that says 'Exfoliate' with a huge pair of scissors, which is a funny cosmetic-surgery hint to Dallas," says Florence Ostende, the Biennale's curator.

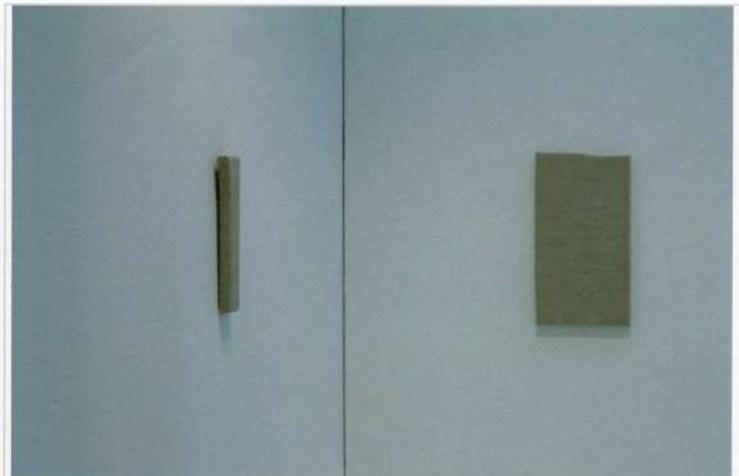
The Biennale will also feature several exhibitions with Texas ties, such as a new country song created by conceptual artist Mario Garcia Torres about the earthworks artist Robert Smithson, who died in a plane crash in Texas. The song will be featured at the Dallas Contemporary, though one day Ms. Ostende hopes to hear it on the radio.

—Ellen Gamerman

armory week 2012

Catching Up With Jacob Kassay at Eleven Rivington's Armory Show Booth

By Andrew Russeth 3/08 8:53am



New untitled works by Jacob Kassay at the booth of Eleven Rivington. (Photo by Andrew Russeth)

One of the pleasures of visiting the Armory Show's contemporary section on Pier 94 is the opportunity to catch up with the work of an artist one hasn't seen in a while. Case in point: Jacob Kassay, the young artist who gained a certain level of notoriety a few years back after his slightly charred, unabashedly beautiful silver paintings began fetching increasingly high prices on the secondary market.

Though his work has appeared in a handful of group shows around town, frequently at somewhat off-beat locations, like Brooklyn's Journal and Clearing galleries last year, it's been a full three years since Mr. Kassay has had a one-person show in the city. (The closest we've gotten to a full exhibition was an elegant three-person show that set his work alongside that of Virginia Overton and Robert Morris, at Mitchell-Innes & Nash in 2010.) It's a relief, then, to see two new pieces by him at the booth of Lower East Side mainstay Eleven Rivington, which presented his first show in New York, back in 2009.

These small paintings are made of raw linen that the artist pulled over wooden stretchers. Simple enough, it would seem. But the stretchers have peculiar imperfections. They're not quite rectangles. The larger one bulges almost imperceptibly on its left side, and its top has a few tiny bumps, sloping down slightly from left to right. The smaller work looks like a slightly compressed model of Vermont or a long, thin cut of steak, thicker on the top than the bottom—it could almost be a broken-off hunk of an early Bruce Nauman painting or a badly damaged Barnett Newman wrapped in gauze.

Trying to make sense of new work that one has seen for only a few minutes at a crowded art fair is a fool's game, so we'll avoid that project here. The paintings, for the record, were \$10,000 and \$3,500—a reminder that prudent dealers do not price work, especially work by living artists, in lockstep with auction mayhem. Both works have sold, but they're on view to all interested parties through Sunday.

Jacob Kassay

L&M ARTS

Mounted by a gallery better known for its specialization in works by blue-chip artists than for its fledgling LA-based contemporary program, Jacob Kassay's first solo West Coast show seemed something of an anomaly. But L&M Arts' interest in this young painter is no mystery: Regardless of their merit, Kassay's silvery-reflective monochromes made a splash at auction last fall. Anticipating the cynics, the staff penned a press release that was quick to distance Kassay's older output from the new work he made for this show. Calling attention to the differences in surface treatment, it announced that his most recent paintings would feature a "surprising yet deliberate lack of reflection."

If Kassay had demonstrated the *savoir faire* needed to glide through this awkward impasse, it would certainly have marked him as an artist to watch. Given the opportune colliding of arbitrary prices and precious metals (those mythic stores of supposedly intrinsic value), Kassay might have taken a tip from Yves Klein (whose estate is also represented by L&M) and attempted both to recuperate the monochrome's sublime presence and to critically undermine its fictive claim to autonomy in

one gesture. To be fair, as this young artist publicly sorts through his own still-forming intentions, he has yet to clearly articulate how (or even whether) he intends his work to dialectically engage these contradictory impulses.

However, on this occasion, rather than taking hold of the conditions of production, distribution, and reception at work in shaping—if not foreclosing—his practice, Kassay choreographed a precious investigation into Color Field and "Minimal" painting around a ballet barre, (installed at one end of the gallery), behind which, stapled to bare wall studs, he had mounted a silver-coated sheet of rag paper made using his signature technique. There were also six pairs of monochrome panels of varied thickness (in combinations of pink, white, and oxidized silver) hung in rows unusually low on the opposing walls that flanked this central installation. As one approached each diptych, the components of each pair visually merged onto a single plane—a neat trick but hardly the kind of formal innovation characteristic of Robert Ryman, Ellsworth Kelly, or any of the other art-historical greats to whom those who've bought into the hype have ventured to link Kassay's practice.

But if, on the one hand, this work had little to say in terms of form or its own materiality, neither did it venture to engage the discursive context of its display. At the end of one row of diptychs hung a partially concave, shaped canvas that had been arranged next to a work that, in turn, had been bisected by a graphite arc drawn directly onto the wall. This mildly site-specific installation may have perceptually activated the immediate viewing space, but it provoked no consideration of the venue's particular symbolics—namely, that this was a newly opened West Coast branch of a major New York gallery, and that exhibiting here would likely play a pivotal role in directing the trajectory of the artist's practice. For comparison, one need only look to the pithy business-as-usual intervention that David Hammons recently made in L&M's New York location.

Offered a chair at the high rollers' table, Kassay could have made only one compelling move—a wager with the potential to break the bank. Of note: His Paris dealer, Art: Concept, has already offered public assurances that the artist is not about to meet the market's demand for more of the same. In fact, had Kassay overperformed (or overproduced) this summer, he might have presented a distance from these overdetermining forces or even productively embraced them. . . . It appears, however, he's chosen to ignore them altogether.

—Ben Carlson



View of "Jacob Kassay," 2011.

ARTFORUM

Art

Edited by Ossian Ward
twitter.com/timeoutart

Jacob Kassay, 'Untitled'
installation at Art Basel,
2011 and another 'Untitled'
acrylic and silver deposit
painting from 2010 (below)

The price of silver

American young gun Jacob Kassay's shiny paintings are more likely to line a collector's walls than those of the ICA. **Gabriel Coxhead** finds that all that glisters is not gold

Walking around Jacob Kassay's exhibition at the ICA, it's hard to shake the sense of there being an elephant in the room. The gallery bumf talks about the New York-based painter's dialogue with the traditions of the monochrome and colour-field painting and, certainly, his work is all about formalist concerns to do with surface and objecthood – electroplating his canvasses with a thin layer of metal to produce a beautiful, iridescent, slightly singed effect, one that captures the viewer's own shimmering reflection.

Yet this description feels like an evasion of what's surely the most salient fact about Kassay, and the reason why he's such a prominent name at the moment: the utterly astonishing prices his works fetch at auction. Sotheby's recently sold a similar so-called 'silver painting' (actually 'Untitled') for £145,250 – and while that's some way off the insane prices at the very top of the art market, it's still pretty unbelievable for a 27-year-old without any solo museum shows to his name. More than anything, it's the sheer rapidity of his rise which has been garnering column inches in the States – works estimated at \$8,000 suddenly selling for more than ten times that last autumn, then prices tripling again some months later to \$290,500. Inevitably, there have been suggestions of market

manipulation by interested dealers – yet it's undeniable that a veritable, one-person bubble now exists, along with all the attendant anxieties over the likelihood of it bursting, and how this would affect Kassay's market in the long term.

The ICA, of course, can hardly be criticised for not addressing such market issues: it's not a commercial space, but a public institution. Even so, avoiding all mention of it feels slightly disingenuous. It's surely no coincidence that Kassay's show opened during the week of the Frieze Art Fair, when the world's biggest collectors were in town, and when the ICA could expect the highest return on their accompanying limited-edition artist's prints (all 15 were sold at £2,600 each).

As for Kassay himself, it's hard not to feel a little sorry for him – as sorry as one can be, that is, given that his primary prices have presumably also skyrocketed. But for an artist to receive so much attention early on in their career can end up being, in the long run, quite debilitating. At the very least, it must get frustrating – this constant focus on the commercial aspect of his art, over and above its actual meaning. And yet, what's interesting about the ICA show is how these two aspects appear implicitly, intrinsically linked – as if the very form of his works is intended to deflect attention away from his commercial success. Most

obviously, none of the works here are single, commodifiable objects – rather, they're all installations. Even his quartet of 'silver paintings' are incorporated within a continuous structure, mounted on a semi-opaque wall opposite a trio of muslin-covered windows – the idea being that the paintings reflect changes in day light, as a kind of comment on the conditions of their own exhibition.

And there's a similar notion in the upstairs galleries, where the various components all interrelate. There are canvases whose concave or convex edges echo each other, geometric lines on the wall that lead the eye through to similarly bisected paintings as well as monochromes which are all painted the same creamy colour as the walls themselves. Everything seems designed to focus attention on the objective here-and-now of the viewing space, to make visitors forget about any extraneous context.

All of this is hardly new territory for art, of course; and much of Kassay's work seems like a rehash of, in particular, various minimalist tropes from the '60s – throwing together Robert Mangold, some Robert Ryman, perhaps a bit of Robert Morris. In that sense, Kassay is at the forefront of a formalist revival that's been bubbling away for a few years now among younger artists – presumably as a kind of reaction against the bombastic, media-saturated excesses of recent artistic generations. There's a greater sense of playfulness, though, with

Kassay – his upstairs installation, especially, coming across almost like a kind of cerebral game, a puzzle to be solved, with precisely the sort of easy, distanced humour that's only really possible with a nostalgic look backwards.

As for his 'silver paintings', it's not difficult to work out, despite the ICA's attempts to shift focus, why they might

be such a hit with collectors. Simultaneously cutting-edge and reassuringly familiar, they evince a simple, contemplative, purist sensibility. And during what are ostensibly more economically downbeat times, such relatively pious fare offers an alternative for collectors sick of gorging themselves on slick, high-concept pieces – in which case, the paintings can perhaps be seen as akin to an expensive course of colonic irrigation, a way of purifying the system. At the same time, though, more than any other work being made by

Kassay's peers, they manage to tap into the most basic, most elemental motives for collecting: their shimmering auras, their sense of burnished luxury acting as a reflection – quite literally, in this case – of the collector's own status.

Jacob Kassay is at the ICA until Nov 13 (see Major spaces).
www.timeout.com/art

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The
paintings
are like an
expensive
colonic
irrigation,
a purifying
of the system



Seductions with a sting in their tail

EXHIBITIONS

CONTEMPORARY ROUND-UP

VARIOUS VENUES

WHAT ROLE can painting play in an era dominated by photography? While this question is by no means new, it remains unresolved. One artist who offers a coherent answer is the Polish painter Wilhelm Sasnal.

Sasnal tackles photography head-on, by using pictures that he encounters in newspapers as a starting point for his paintings. *Tsunami* (2011), for instance, is based on a photo that accompanied a newspaper report about the tidal wave that devastated Japan this year.

The original image featured a beautiful young woman wrapped in a dirty blanket and surrounded by detritus. Sasnal retained the composition but transformed the junk in the background into a swirling miasma of abstract brushstrokes. A specific catastrophe becomes an event of almost cosmic significance – an expression of chaotic mental and emotional states – rather than a straightforward documentary record.

Born in 1972, Sasnal believes that artists shouldn't be detached from society – and perhaps the best way to think of him is as a contemporary history painter. His spare style is seductive: the application of paint feels easy and laid-back, with traces of the happy-go-lucky Pop painters of the Sixties. There are flashes of beauty, such as *Kacper*, his 2009 painting of a silhouetted child, lit from behind by the sun.

But, time and again, the beauty is offset by a melancholy awareness of recent history. A Palestinian woman clutches red apples that glow with the intensity of fireballs – are they in fact a suicide bomber's belt? An enormous landscape contains low-slung farm buildings that resemble a death camp. An attractive portrait of a young black woman actually depicts someone implicated in the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Many of Sasnal's paintings

enact this one-two sucker-punch combination: they look pleasing and radiant, but their subject is malignant – like advertising imagery given an Orwellian twist.

The American painter Jacob Kassay was only born in 1984, but his minimalist work has been achieving eye-catching prices at auction, anointing him as the next bright young thing. With its finger on the pulse, the ICA in London is presenting Kassay's first solo exhibition at a public institution anywhere in the world (until Nov 13).

The lower gallery presents four of the murky, monochromatic paintings for which Kassay is known. Each canvas is primed, before being electroplated in a bath of chemicals. The final abstract images have an all-over, dappled metallic sheen.

It is easy to imagine rich collectors shelling out for paintings like these, but they have more integrity than this suggests. To me, they resemble magical mirrors fashioned out of quicksilver, like portals into fairyland. At the very least, they possess a subtle, bewitching quality.

Pipilotti Rist isn't a painter but a Swiss video artist with a retrospective of more than 30 works at the Hayward Gallery (until Jan 8). Since the Eighties, she has been making madcap video installations characterised by lush, psychedelic colours. Rist often makes the naked female body a central preoccupation: in one never-ending video loop, a camera repeatedly floats into her mouth, before popping out of her backside, as though it has been ingested and evacuated in a trice. Elsewhere, Rist presents a chandelier constructed out of women's underwear.

Perhaps I'm not her target audience, but the focus upon female sexuality and "gender issues" struck me as somewhat tiresome and dated – even if I did warm to the exuberance of the work.

Wilhelm Sasnal, Whitechapel Gallery, London E1. Jacob Kassay ICA, London SW1. Pipilotti Rist: Eyeball Massage, Hayward Gallery, London SE1

⌘ WILHELM SASNAL ★★★★★
⌘ JACOB KASSAY ★★★★★
⌘ PIPILOTTI RIST ★★★★★

Alastair Sooke

didn't think I was doing anything crucial." His cat, Ohno, picked up on his tension, swatting a paw at him before jumping off his lap. "I don't know if you can tell by now," Kassay, who is clean-cut and has the reedy physique of a teenager, said, "but I'm pretty world-weary." He laughed nervously.

Kassay's troubles are the kind most young artists would kill for: he is too much in demand. Since his debut solo exhibition, at Eleven Rivington, in 2009, which sold out before it even



Jacob Kassay

FEEDING FRENZY NEW KID



In a narrow storefront studio in Chinatown not long ago, Jacob Kassay was trying to wrap his mind around the idea that, at the age of twenty-seven, he has been anointed the art world's newest star.

"I just wanted to make a good painting," he said, a bit embarrassed by all the to-do attached to his work, which consists mainly of hauntingly murky, mirrorlike silver canvases, several of which were hanging on the studio walls. "I

opened, the waiting list of people who want to buy a painting from him has grown to nearly a hundred names. Last November, one collector, who was too impatient for the waiting list, paid eighty-six thousand five hundred dollars for a Kassay at auction (the estimate was eight thousand); in May, another person bought one at auction for \$290,500, roughly fifty times what Kassay had sold it for two years earlier. Galleries generally try to protect young artists from the irrational exuberance of the auction world, preferring that prices for their work rise gradually. At an age when most artists are still experimenting with their styles, Kassay suddenly has a "market" to protect.

Trying to keep his mind off business and on art, Kassay has been spending a lot of time hiding out in his studio (he recently consolidated his operations in Greenpoint). He postponed a solo show last spring, and started working more in California. He did manage to persuade one consignor to pull a painting from a

Sotheby's sale. It had originally been a gift—"like a friendship bracelet"—to a fellow-artist, who claimed he needed the money for medical expenses and to produce his own work. "My answer to that was 'Don't make work you can't afford to make,'" Kassay said. "I was eating ramen my first year in New York."

Kassay moved here after studying photography at SUNY-Buffalo. Having grown up on the banks of the Niagara River, the son of a former letter carrier and a probation officer, he had seen art primarily in books. "It took me a long time to learn that something had to be experienced in real time," he said, reconstructing the thinking that led to his silver series. "And this was the break with photography. I started to think that photographs were just ready to be digested too quickly."

Kassay admired Ad Reinhardt, and, in an age when multimillion-dollar deals for art are routinely made by looking at JPEGs, the fact that Reinhardt's paintings reproduced poorly. He also came under the spell of the Minimalists. "Robert Ryman's huge!" Kassay said. "His work you maybe have to spend more time with." He went on, "Maybe you should spend at least as much time with a painting as it takes for the painter to make the thing, you know?"

In college, as he set out to create his achromatic painted surfaces, he drew on his experience in the darkroom. Gesturing to the silver canvases on the wall, he explained his process. Step 1: Paint canvas with flat-white acrylic. Step 2: Dip in an electrified silver solution. (He outsources this part to a chemist in Pennsylvania.) The resulting patinas vary from shiny—abstractly reflecting, say, a colorful dress sashaying by—to burned-looking oxidation. Some admirers call the paintings beautiful and sensual; others, cold and industrial.

"I always thought of this work as much more boring than people were taking it for," he said. "Even just the steps involved. It's really crude."

Kassay doesn't see much difference between himself and a number of other young achromatic painters, or a slew of artists who came before them. "These are things that have been explored in painting since the fifties," he said. "So I didn't think I was doing anything new."

Still, the offers have not abated.

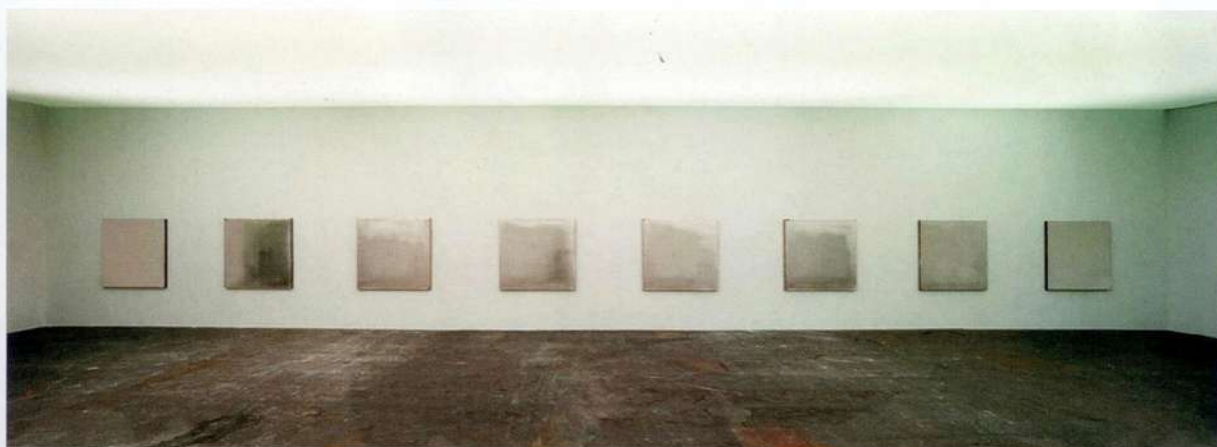
There was a Kassay installation at Art Basel and a solo show at Collezione Maramotti, the Italian art foundation run by the family behind the Max Mara fashion empire. (One disappointment: Kassay was hoping to get a new suit as part of the deal, but Max Mara doesn't make men's clothes.) This month, London's Institute of Contemporary Arts will stage his first solo museum exhibition. Although a few potshots have been aimed at the fact that the silver paintings are all fairly similar to one another, Kassay is standing firm. "I'm not going to drop something I'm proud of and have been doing for six years," he said. Nor, he said, is he being pressured by his dealers to churn them out like widgets.

Kassay knows he'd still be eating ramen if it weren't for collectors—although he genuinely seems not to care if he were—but he's also learned a hard lesson about the art world's de-facto bankers. "It's really simple," he said. "All they have is money."

—Julie L. Belcove

JACOB KASSAY

BY ALEX GARTENFELD



Jacob Kassay: *Untitled*, 2011, acrylic and silver deposit on canvas, 8 parts, each 47 1/4 inches square. Courtesy Art:Concept, Paris, and Xavier Hufkens, Brussels.

TWENTY-SEVEN-YEAR-OLD Jacob Kassay finds himself an unwitting fire-starter due to the success of a single body of work—acrylic and silver paintings that famously commanded a wait list when they debuted in a 2009 solo show at New York's Eleven Rivington, and more famously climbed to nearly \$300,000 at auction this spring. Given still-current boom-time art world protocols, whereby the market creates value and institutions, including publications, confirm it, Kassay's paintings are ripe for investigation. This month, his first museum show opens at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. The press release promises "the opportunity to critically appraise the work," resonating with the words of Kassay's Belgian dealer, Xavier Hufkens: "I imagine a lot of people know his work for the wrong reasons." The challenge is for his many mixed-medium projects to create value that truly exceeds the aura of the market.

CURRENTLY ON VIEW

A solo show at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, Oct. 12–Nov. 13.

Analysis of Kassay's paintings and their appeal has taken two tacks. The first suggests that the silver itself creates value. The artist applies acrylic and silver to primed canvases; a chemist runs a current through them, activating reactions that create reflective fields, while the porous areas oxidize into a rusty matte. If the "luxury" explanation sounds improbable, it's partly because the silver is tarnished in the process. And while Kassay puns on Yves Klein's "gold" and "fire" paintings, in which process and image combine as divine fetish, Kassay's objects beg less reverence. At Eleven Rivington, he stacked silver canvases on the floor, a laugh about the presumed finish of their surfaces.

A second explanation is that the mirrorlike paintings appeal to viewers' vanity. But their textured surfaces reflect only a spectral presence. To approach Kassay's paintings is to experience deflection, an uneasy abstraction of the body.

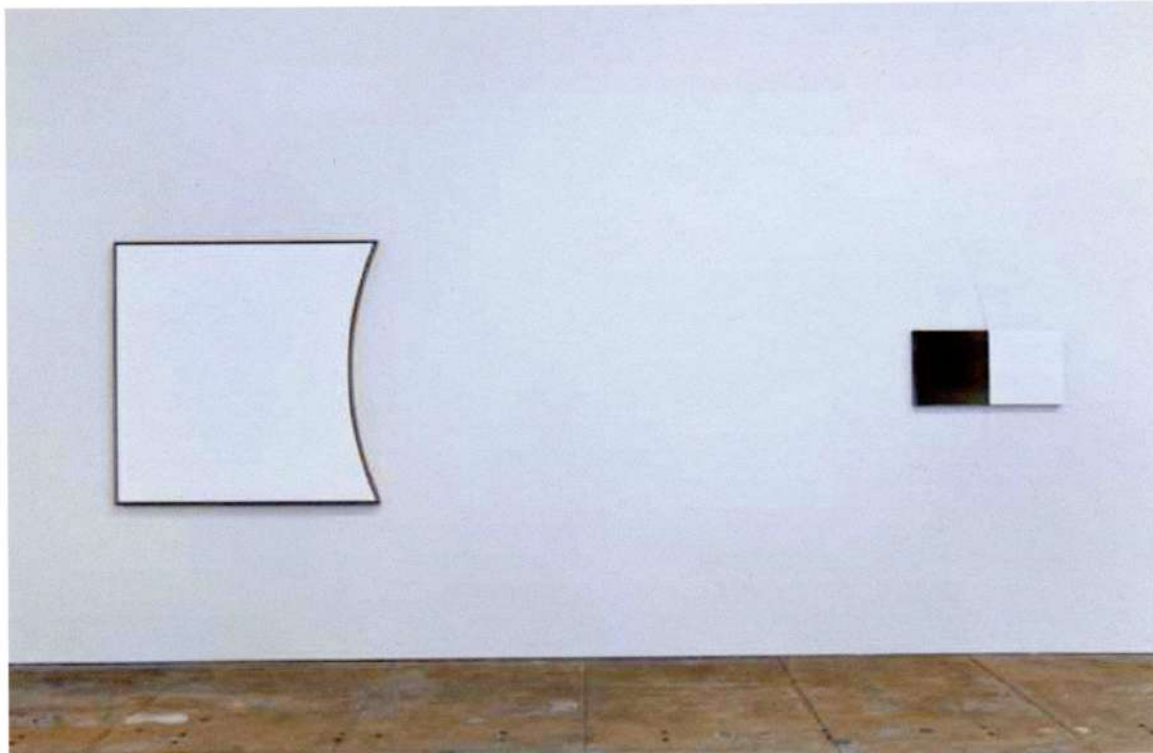
Kassay, who lives in Brooklyn and earned a BFA from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 2005, works systematically to diminish his authorial mark. Previously he conceded a loose

brushstroke, creating pools of reflective wet paint, but he makes fewer marks now, and the effect is all over non-composition—a rough ground and silver specks. Formal decisions are separated from expressive gesture. He builds stretchers in varying sizes and prepares his own canvases, then selects from among them almost arbitrarily for monochromes or the silvers.

On the ground floor at the ICA, Kassay will remove an interior wall to reveal windows facing Buckingham Palace, and cover the panes with muslin to create a semi-luminescent screen. Kassay's scrim, like Irwin's, convey a feeling of openness and use luminescence and atmospheric to encourage circumnavigation. In his *Art Unlimited* project at Art Basel 2011, the artist installed an ascending muslin ceiling over his paintings, an expanded version of a separate body of work that he creates by enclosing reflective, silver-plated sheets in wood boxes, the open end covered with jute. These sculptures sit on the floor, sending out unreliable reflections that look like hazy paintings on the wall and the floor—displacing interest onto everything but the works themselves. ○

October 3, 2011

Institute of Contemporary Arts, London



Jacob Kassay, "Untitled," 2011.*

Jacob Kassay.

12 October–13 November 2011

Institute of Contemporary Arts

The Mall, London, SW1Y 5AH

Box Office 020 7930 3647

Free exhibition

www.ica.org.uk

The Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) is the first UK public gallery to present a solo exhibition by American artist Jacob Kassay from 12 October to 13 November 2011.

Jacob Kassay's canvases are simultaneously painting, sculpture and interactive installation. The exhibition includes a new body of work, in which Kassay continues his dialogue with the traditions of monochrome and colour field painting.

A wooden framework with a selection of canvases embedded within it, each of which is evenly painted and then silver-plated, will be located in the ICA's lower gallery. The technique used on the canvases creates expansive reflective surfaces that come alive with the presence of an audience.

The movement of ambient colours and changing light subtly and continuously alter the appearance of the works throughout the day. The wooden structure releases the canvases from their status as single units, combining them into a larger composite installation that functions as both architectural support and environment.

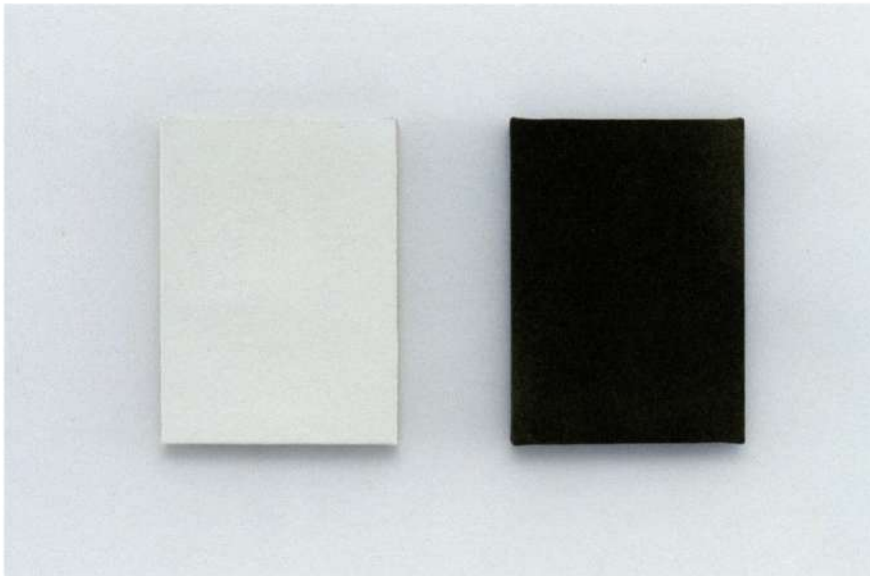
In the ICA's upper galleries, a series of shaped white monochrome canvases appear in conversation with each other and the surrounding architecture.

Jacob Kassay (b. 1984, Buffalo, NY) lives and works in Los Angeles and New York. Solo shows include Art: Concept, Paris; Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy; Eleven Rivington, New York; L&M, Los Angeles and Kitchen Distribution, Buffalo, New York.

The Institute of Contemporary Arts is supported by Arts Council England.

*Image above:

Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Joshua White / JW Pictures.



JACOB KASSAY

*At just 27, this New Yorker's **SILVER-PLATED PAINTINGS** have made him art-world dynamite almost overnight.*

Their shimmering surfaces are created using photographic techniques: the canvas is painted, then chemically treated. Shown in series, the results are far from uniform. They constantly change, catching our reflection as we move around them, throwing back light and colour. The surfaces are pitted, while untreated canvas has burns here and there. Recalling colour-field painting, process art and Ad Reinhardt's experiments, this is work intensely engaged with the history of painting. There is also something of Dorian Gray's devil's pact with an artwork in the burned, shifting surfaces in which we see ourselves.

HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE SILVER-PLATING PROCESS?

"It was a goal of mine to make a painting that literally engaged ambient space, what moves in real time and to pick up nuances from the environment around it, light, colour, all these things. It's been a subject of painting for a long time."

YOU TRAINED AS A PHOTOGRAPHER?

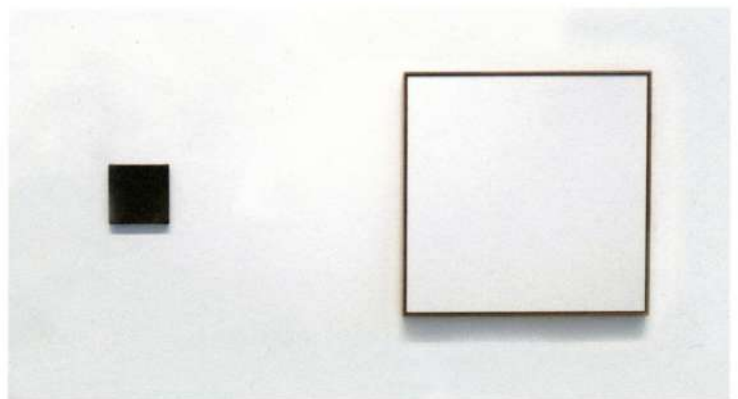
"Initially yes, and later I moved to New York and worked for a couple of different painters. I felt like I got my education then. In New York painting was actually one of the cheaper things to be doing on any scale. I could start and stop at any moment, depending on how much income I had."

IS PHOTOGRAPHY AN INFLUENCE?

"Only in so far that I get frustrated with it. The way photography works with time is that it deadens it – it fixes it into an easily digestible, communicable thing. I get frustrated with the photographs of artworks and how easily transferable they are with the internet. I wanted to make sure that people knew that photographing my paintings from the front would render them lame. They're meant to be objects that engage the space around them. I'm interested in how people experience work on a very human level. They go to a gallery, they get to enjoy the pilgrimage there. It's part of a better day for something to be seen in real life."

YOUR PAINTINGS ENGAGE WITH PAST STYLES – MINIMALISM OR COLOUR-FIELD PAINTING.

"Of course I have my heroes but I can't say they're direct influences. I can say that I was looking at people like Ad Reinhardt, whose work insisted on real-time experience. A photograph of an Ad Reinhardt painting is completely black. They're serious but there's humour to them. They're very spry."



WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM YOUR ICA SHOW THIS AUTUMN?

"I'm working though a lot of things right now and I'm also planning a move to Los Angeles. I'm very sensitive to my environment, so I think that will have a great effect on the work. I'm also one to make more than I need and press pause at the last moment."

Jacob Kassay's solo exhibition, Oct 11-Nov 13; ICA, The Mall, SW1

WWW.ICA.ORG.UK
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In the frame



■ Who knew that uber dealer **Larry Gagosian** had a soft spot for pooches? His current squeeze Shala Monroque reveals all about her love affair with Larry in the *New York* magazine with revelatory details about the dogs owned by the couple. So which breed does the dealer like: Great Danes, pitbull terriers or Rottweilers perhaps? Shala, who is working with art patronne Dasha Zhukova on a new magazine called *Garage*, throws light on life in their Hamptons retreat. "I love the dogs we have out there, these **two big poodles** that we got after Larry's old dogs, a present from Richard Serra, passed away," she says.

■ If all goes to plan, the **Moscow Biennale** (22 September-30 October) will present to the world a new arrival: a baby called **Dada**.

The outlandish project is down to the Swiss artist duo **Com&Com** who paid a Russian couple \$10,000 to name their offspring after the abstract art movement. The biennale **Dada baba** is the second child to become part of the wider project, entitled **Gugusdada**, which aims "to create a global network of children called Dada", the first being six-year-old **Dada Kim Osarimen Izvelige** from Zurich. For the broody among you, the search for willing parents will move to New York in 2012. All the Dadas will be invited to meet at Zürich's Cabaret Voltaire in 2016 to celebrate 100 years of Dadaism.

■ Emerging artist and auction favourite **Jacob Kassay**, who has a major show at the ICA in London this autumn (12 October-13 November), has teamed up with the high-profile US composer **Rhys Chatham** to produce a limited-edition record released this month. "Inspired by Jacob's cool work, I made a 20-minute tape piece especially for his show at the Paris gallery

Art:concept last year," said Chatham who also performed at the exhibition opening. The result? "Jacob was inspired by the live performance and also the piece I made for him, and wanted to put it out as a record. I agreed, and we decided to make it a collaboration in the sense that I did the music and he made the work for the cover [below left]," added the musician. Groovy.

■ The prize for the most eye-catching press release of the week goes to **Scope Art Fair**, which recently sent out an apocalyptic statement declaring: "Signs of poor economic conditions and civil unrest, Scope London postpones show until 2012 Olympics."

Scope director, Mollie White, explains: "The current climate of social unrest, and poor economic conditions, did not create the sure environment to relaunch this year's edition of the fair." But as went to press, Scope's website was still trumpeting that "after a two-

year hiatus watching the world markets settle, Scope London 2011 confidently returns to London's dynamic East End arts and media quarter".

■ **Michael Jackson** was known as an avid collector—of memorabilia, music, art—but who knew the King of Pop was a gifted visual artist as well? It turns out the musician was a talented draughtsman. Ten works by Jackson (his sister La Toya, below, stands next to the star's drawing of Mickey Mouse) were donated to the Los Angeles Children's Hospital last month by a friend of the late singer, **Brett Livingstone-Strong**. Michael's art now fills a Santa Monica hangar, where

Livingstone-Strong revealed the collection to *LA Weekly* (he also plans to show the work at LA's City Hall). Jackson's favourite subject matters ranged from baroque chairs, including one emblazoned with the face of his beloved chimp, **Bubbles**, to historical figures, such as a portrait of George Washington.

■ Another surprising collection comes courtesy of Christie's New York, which on 11 October is selling a collection of guitars owned by actor **Richard Gere**. The star is also a self-taught



musician (that scene in "Pretty Woman" with the piano was all him), though he has kept his "passion for America vintage guitars...under wraps until now", according to the auction house. He's not only amassed instruments chosen for their playability and craftsmanship, among them examples by C.F. Martin, Gibson, and Fender, but he's also collected guitars once owned by **Albert King** and **Peter Tosh**. "[Guitars] have been my true friends through the best and worst of times," said Gere. All the proceeds will go to support humanitarian causes.

■ It was a sad day for Upper East Siders when it was announced that the restaurant and bar, **Elaine's**, once a favourite haunt of luminaries including **Woody Allen**, **Kurt Vonnegut**, **Norman Mailer** and

Jackie Onassis, was closing after nearly 50 years of service. Regular diners can find some solace this month when memorabilia from the eatery goes up for sale at Doyle New York on 20 September. The auction is set to include barware, furniture and art, including two Andy Warhol prints and books signed by Richard Avedon and Truman Capote. Just make sure you order yours "to go".

■ As we went to press, a video of actor **Ryan Gosling** stepping in to break up an art-related scuffle on the streets of New York went viral. The movie hunk (or somebody very like him) is seen separating two men fighting over a work of art in the East Village. One of the girls shooting the film excitedly exclaims: "It's that guy from 'The Notebook'!" The muscled, tank-top-wearing Good Samaritan obviously felt that art is worth risking life and limb for. ■



Jacob Kassay, Robert Morris, and Virginia Overton

MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

534 West 26th Street

December 16–January 29

Three American artists from different generations strike a similar (if muted) chord in this exhibition, which brings together two wall-bound felt sculptures from the mid-1970s by Robert Morris (b. 1931) with several 2010 works by Virginia Overton (b. 1971) and by Jacob Kassay (b. 1984). The show suggests that the younger crew is well versed in Morris's seminal essays from the 1960s on post-Minimalism, but that they identify with this history to rework it, performing a "temporal drag," to borrow an idea from Elizabeth Freeman, by bluntly pulling the past into the present, thus underlining how time might not always move seamlessly ahead—and, more important, how it can be punctured.

Behind the massive, site-specific wooden triangle that Overton has lodged between two of the gallery's large pillars, her plank covered in globs of white sheetrock mud appears to be the love child of Richard Serra's props and Lynda Benglis's pours. Continuing the in joke, a few of Overton's Dan Flavin-esque fluorescent tubes are installed high up on two walls, hugging the corner. These striking works, which similarly appeared in her New York debut last spring at Dispatch, are affectionately (and fanatically) wrapped in images of Overton's own curly golden locks.

Kassay's paintings also tender notions of the artist's self, via methods that reveal his process, but his best pieces play with elements of chance. While a few shaped monochromes evoke Robert Ryman and Ellsworth Kelly, the murky surface of one small canvas encrusted with silver deposits subtly shifts with the natural changes of light in the gallery. The senior artist, whose pivotal thoughts likewise slowly emerge here, will celebrate a birthday a few days after the show concludes. Happy eightieth, Robert Morris!

— Lauren O'Neill-Butler



View of "Jacob Kassay, Robert Morris, Virginia Overton," 2010. Foreground: Virginia Overton, *Untitled (Triangle)*, 2010. Background, from left: Robert Morris, *Untitled (White Felt)*, 1976–2008; Virginia Overton, *Untitled*, 2010; Robert Morris, *Untitled*, 1976.

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Moi en émoi par Nicolas Trembley

Les tableaux-miroirs du jeune Américain Jacob Kassay suscitent l'engouement du marché new-yorkais, pas uniquement par effet boule de neige, mais également pour le reflet qu'ils renvoient au collectionneur.

"Miroir, gentil miroir, dis-moi, dans le royaume, quelle est de toutes la plus belle ?" se demandait la reine dans *Blanche-Neige*. "Tableau, gentil tableau, dis-moi, dans l'art contemporain, qui est de tous le plus beau ?" peuvent désormais se demander les collectionneurs dans une fable où l'artiste devient le Prince charmant d'un joli conte de fées : celui de la réussite. Depuis sa première exposition personnelle l'année dernière à New York, les *Untitled* tableaux-miroirs du jeune Jacob Kassay, né en 1984 à Buffalo, affolent les collectionneurs. La raison ? Il y en a sans doute plusieurs, dont les méandres s'étendent de la psychanalyse lacanienne jusqu'au plaisir narcissique d'être les premiers à "miser" sur la *hype* new-yorkaise du moment. Mais parions sur le fait que la véritable raison tient sûrement à la magie que procure la lumière qui se reflète dans ces tableaux lorsqu'on les "éprouve". Car, dans la peinture abstraite, la lumière et ses variations, qui se font couleurs au cœur même de la matière, ont finalement toujours été ce qui a consacré les grands artistes, de Rothko à Ryman, en passant par Soulages.

Pour chaque tableau, Kassay utilise la même technique : il enduit d'abord grossièrement ses toiles de gesso (un apprêt) avec une truelle, un peu à la façon dont Manzoni pratiquait avec l'argile. Une fois secs, les tableaux sont plongés avec leurs châssis dans un bain de nitrate d'argent, selon un procédé d'électrolyse classique similaire à celui utilisé pour la fabrication des miroirs. Ils sont ensuite vernis pour empêcher leur oxydation. Ce sont donc, au bout du compte, des peintures plaquées argent, des bijoux...

Jacob Kassay.
Untitled (2010). Acrylique
et dépôt d'argent
sur toile, 122 x 91,5 cm.
Collection privée.

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Jacob Kassay est représenté à Paris par la Galerie Art: Concept, 13, rue des Arquebusiers, Paris III^e. www.galerieartconcept.com.

Photo: Fabrice Cousset, Courtesy Art: Concept, Paris.

This page – All works *Untitled*, 2009. Installation views at Eleven Rivington, New York.
Courtesy: Eleven Rivington, New York.



FIELDS OF LIGHT

BY ANTHONY HUBERMAN

Jacob Kassay's field of action is the monochromatic neutrality imparted by the absence of figures and interaction between colours, inspiring technical experimentation that shows an affinity with the development of photography; in the quest to achieve an emotional effect, he creates unpainted paintings that are animated by the reverberation of the space we view them in. To this young American artist, chemistry is a tool for developing his conceptual practice, for leaving a mark on the canvas, for capturing the nuances of an environment.

I think most of us know the story about the white paintings. It was 1951, and Robert Rauschenberg made a series of monochrome white canvases. When he saw them, John Cage famously described them as “airports for the lights, shadows and particles”, noting how it was precisely their blankness that made them so full of content. The paintings convinced Cage to premiere *4'33"* in 1952, a musical score that consisted of 4 minutes and 33 seconds of silence and allowed the random sounds of the concert hall audience – or those coming from the street outside – to make up the entirety of the piece.

But my own favorite story about a white painting, dust, and light happened when I first visited the basement of P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, in 1998. Climbing down the stairs into the abandoned boiler room of what used to be a public school building, I found myself below ground, far away from any natural light, surrounded by the musty smell of still air. Walking past the rusted old boiler, I entered a small room where the coal was once stored. It had a dirt floor and crumbling stone walls. The low ceiling was also made of un-



even stone, except for two small square skylights. Looking up through the thick cubes of sandblasted glass and seeing the fleeting shadows of feet walking by, I realized that I was not standing under the museum's building anymore, but underneath the sidewalk. These skylights had not been cleaned in months, maybe years. The afternoon light shone through its layers of dirt, dust, cobwebs, and created dim spots of natural light on two opposing walls in the room. Hanging there, quietly, were two small squares, equal in size to the windows themselves: acrylic-on-aluminum white paintings by Robert Ryman, from 1964. Flickering to life with each bit of passing sunlight and shadow, the monochrome paintings took on an ethereal – almost spiritual – presence. I felt like I had stumbled into an underground cathedral, where monochrome paintings were lit from above.

Just 25 years old, New York-based artist Jacob Kassay pursues the lineage of paintings as places for light and shadow. With their shimmering silver surfaces, his canvases transform blankness into aura and emptiness into reflection. These paintings have no color, no paint, and no image, but as ob-

Exhibition view, *Art: Concept*, Paris, 2010. Courtesy: *Art: Concept*, Paris, and Eleven Rivington, New York.



jects in space, they take on all the lights, shadows, colors, and images of their surroundings. These are paintings about the experience of being in a room with a painting.

In fact, Kassay's training is in photography, but the entire photographic process, of course, is about capturing lights and shadows. With the click of a shutter, the camera projects light onto its film, and the subsequent chemical process fixes the image into place. Familiar with the chemical reactions involved, Kassay considered putting a painting through the photographic development process of being dipped, bathed, and fixed. Working with an electroplater in Pennsylvania, the artist began plating a series of primed canvases. A process commonly used to create shiny silver surfaces for jewelry or silverware, electroplating involves using electrical current to fix a layer of metallic material onto an object. By painting a canvas with a thin layer of acrylic primer – making the surface of the fabric impermeable and able to hold the metallic deposit – and dipping it into a silver-electroplating tank, it emerges with a reflective silver surface. The chemical process singes any parts of the canvas that are left unprimed and exposed to the chemical solution, creating burn marks around the edges of the silver paintings.

Kassay likes to install his paintings in groups, preferably in corners, and the slightly varying textures, colors, reflections, and burns within each work create a silent symphony of differences. Like the minimalism of Terry Riley – one of the artist's favorite composers – when paintings are shown together they contain the ebb-and-flow of repetitions that

don't quite repeat. In fact, music is a useful way to describe Kassay's work: while John Cage uses a prepared piano, submitting it to a rigorous system of chance-based operations, Kassay uses a prepared canvas. Though the late composer couldn't exactly predict what any of his compositions would sound like, he knew his instruments well enough to know what types of manipulations might generate the most compelling music. In a similar way, if Kassay has chosen to enter the crowded and delicate world of abstract painting, he does so by paying little attention to painterly "talent" and placing little emphasis on his own hand. Instead, he makes his works by remaining faithful to a simple process, clear constraints, and a rigorous conceptual system. Having no control over how the chemical process will determine the formal qualities of his works, he is always surprised by what he sees after his canvases are plated. Still, as he prepares them for plating, he applies the primer in such a way as to create areas of different smoothness, roughness, and density, which inserts a certain amount of deliberate composition into his largely chance-based system. Kassay's priming is inevitably imperfect, and any uneven brushstrokes will eventually lead to lines, streaks, and textures, once the surface has been electroplated silver. While he paints with an informed sense of foresight, he can't know what the painting will ultimately look like. Like all good photographers, he knows that what happens in the darkroom is just as important as taking the picture.

Kassay's first solo exhibition in New York took place at Eleven Rivington in February 2009, and the artist was especially drawn to the gallery's large windows and to the short winter days. The

windows let in plenty of natural light to sweep over the silver surface of the canvases, turning them blue, white, or yellow, depending on the sky, the snow, or the taxicabs driving by. With the sun setting early in the evening, while the gallery was still open, visitors could see the works in the full range of possible sunlights. They might be industrially produced metal paintings, but they couldn't be more closely tied to nature.

Like all good artists, Kassay creates a complicity between opposites and inserts paradox into the fabric of knowledge: he makes colorless pieces about color; he makes opaque surfaces about reflection; he makes metal paintings about light; he makes fixed images about movement; he uses chemical means to reach spiritual results; and he animates the techniques of painting and photography by disobeying both. Inserting a round peg into a square hole, Kassay's work tests the productive tension that comes from asking painting to co-exist with photography. What emerges in his silver abstractions is the somewhat ghostly presence of an elsewhere: a place of lights and shadows that reaches beyond the limits of either medium to include the room, the people, and the other paintings, artworks, or furniture nearby. Kassay's mirror-like silver surfaces perform a graceful bait-and-switch: while they're clearly seductive, they also divert the eye and blur its focus. As face-to-face experiences, these works become reflections of the act of looking itself.

I heard that Robert Ryman called up P.S.1 one day and asked for his two paintings back. I hope the museum will soon ask Jacob Kassay to lend two of his.

DI ANTHONY HUBERMAN

Il monocromo, la neutralità data dall'assenza di figure e dell'interazione fra i colori, sono per Jacob Kassay il campo d'azione e il propellente per una sperimentazione tecnica che tradisce un'affinità allo sviluppo fotografico, votata alla ricerca di un risultato emozionale, alla creazione di quadri non dipinti, che si animano del riverbero dello spazio in cui ci troviamo a guardarli. La chimica è per il giovane artista americano lo strumento per sviluppare la sua pratica concettuale, per imprimere la tela, per catturare le suggestioni ambientali.

Tutti conosciamo la storia dei dipinti bianchi. Nel 1951, Robert Rauschenberg dipinse una serie di monocromi bianchi. John Cage, dopo averli visti, li descrisse come "aeroporti di luci, ombre e particelle", osservando che era proprio la loro vacuità a renderli così densi di significato. Un anno dopo, quei dipinti spinsero Cage a presentare al pubblico *4'33"*, un brano musicale costituito da 4 minuti e 33 secondi di silenzio, dove i rumori accidentali della sala da concerto – o quelli provenienti dall'esterno – contribuivano al risultato sonoro.

La mia esperienza più memorabile di dipinti bianchi, polvere e luce risale alla prima volta che visitai i sotterranei del P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, nel 1998. Scesi le scale e mi ritrovai nella vecchia sala caldaie di quello che un tempo era stato un edificio scolastico. Ero sottoterra, isolato dalla luce naturale, immerso in un odore stantio, di aria viziata. Oltrepassata la vecchia caldaia arrugginita, entravi nello stanzino dove un tempo veniva ammassato il carbone. Aveva il pavimento sporco e i muri in pietra fatiscenti. Anche il basso soffitto era di pietra irregolare, a parte due piccoli lucernari quadrati. Attraverso gli spessi riquadri di vetro satinato, vidi le ombre delle suole dei passanti, e mi accorsi che non mi trovavo più nello scantinato dell'edificio, ma sotto il marciapiede. Quei lucernari avevano l'aria di non essere stati puliti da mesi, forse anni. Il sole pomeridiano filtrava tra gli strati di polvere, sporcizia e ragnatele, creando pallide chiazze di luce naturale su due pareti opposte del locale, dove erano appesi due piccoli quadri della stessa dimensione delle finestre: i quadrati bianchi, acrilico su alluminio di Robert Ryman (1964). Animati dalla fugace alternanza di luce e ombra, i monocromi sembravano acquistare una presenza eterea, quasi spirituale. Mi parve di essere capitato in una cattedrale sotterranea, con i monocromi illuminati dal cielo.

A soli venticinque anni, l'artista Jacob Kassay, che vive e lavora a New York, porta avanti la tradizione delle tele come spazi di luci e ombre. Con le loro superfici argente e scintillanti, i suoi dipinti trasformano il vuoto in emanazione, in riverbero. Sono quadri privi di colore, pittura, immagine, ma come oggetti nello spazio assorbono qualsiasi luce, ombra, colore o immagine nelle vicinanze. Questi quadri parlano dell'esperienza di stare in una stanza insieme a un dipinto.

Non è un caso che Kassay abbia studiato fotografia. Il processo fotografico consiste proprio nel catturare luci e ombre: quando l'otturatore scatta, la macchina proietta la luce sulla pellicola, e l'immagine verrà in seguito fissata dal processo di sviluppo. Grazie alla sua familiarità con le reazioni chimiche coinvolte nel processo, Kassay ha avuto l'idea di sottoporre i quadri a un procedimento simile allo sviluppo fotografico, in cui la tela viene trattata e poi immersa in una particolare soluzione. Supportato da un laboratorio galvanotecnico della Pennsylvania, l'artista ha iniziato a rivestire di metallo una serie di tele trattate. Il processo della galvanoplastica, in genere usato in gioielleria o argenteria per ottenere superfici lucide e cromate, comporta l'uso della corrente elettrica per fissare su un oggetto un rivestimento metallico. Prima si applica sulla tela uno strato sottile di primer acrilico, al fine di rendere la superficie impermeabile e capace di accogliere il rivestimento, poi la si immerge nel bagno elettrolitico, ottenendo una superficie argentata e riflettente. Il processo chimico ustiona le parti della tela non protette dal primer e rimaste esposte alla soluzione metallica, creando segni di bruciature lungo i margini del quadro.

A Kassay piace installare i suoi quadri a gruppi, preferibilmente negli an-

goli di una stanza, in modo che le sottili varianti di superficie, colori, riflessi e bruciature compungano una muta sinfonia di differenze. Come nel minimalismo di Terry Riley, uno dei compositori più amati dall'artista, i quadri accostati producono un flusso e riflusso di ripetizioni che in realtà non si ripetono mai. La musica è un buon termine di confronto per descrivere il lavoro di Kassay: come John Cage usava un piano preparato, sottoponendolo a un rigoroso sistema di operazioni aleatorie, Kassay si serve di tele preparate. Pur non potendo prevedere nei dettagli la resa finale dei brani, il compositore conosceva a fondo i suoi strumenti, tanto da sapere quali manipolazioni fossero capaci di generare la musica più convincente. Allo stesso modo, Kassay ha fatto il suo ingresso nel mondo fragile e inflazionato della pittura astratta, ma scegliendo di non porre l'enfasi sul "tallento" pittorico o la gestualità autoriale. Realizza i suoi lavori rispettando un processo semplice, vincoli precisi e un rigido sistema concettuale. Non potendo governare il modo in cui il processo chimico determinerà le caratteristiche formali dei lavori, rimane ogni volta sorpreso dal risultato finale. Tuttavia, nel momento in cui prepara le tele per il bagno galvanico, stende il primer in modo da creare zone più o meno lisce, ruvide o dense, introducendo così una certa misura di composizione volontaria in un sistema in

gran parte aleatorio. La preparazione delle tele è inevitabilmente imperfetta, e ogni minima irregolarità nelle pennellate produrrà graffi, striature e altri segni una volta che la superficie sarà stata placcata. Anche se la conoscenza del mezzo gli garantisce un margine di previsione, l'artista non può conoscere in anticipo il risultato finale. Come tutti i bravi fotografi, sa che quanto accade nella camera oscura è altrettanto importante del momento dello scatto.

La prima personale di Kassay a New York si è svolta alla Eleven Rivington, nel febbraio del 2009. L'artista è rimasto affascinato dalle ampie finestre della galleria, spalancate sulle brevi giornate invernali. I vetri lasciavano entrare fiotti di luce naturale, che sfioravano le

superfici argentate delle tele, sfumandole di azzurro, bianco o giallo, a seconda del cielo, della neve, o del passaggio di un taxi. Dato che il sole tramontava presto, durante l'orario d'apertura della mostra, i visitatori avevano la possibilità di osservare i lavori in tutte le possibili varianti d'illuminazione. I dipinti, nonostante la loro produzione meccanica, non potevano essere più strettamente legati alla natura.

Come tutti i buoni artisti, Kassay stabilisce una complicità tra gli opposti e introduce paradossi nella materia della conoscenza: crea lavori incolori che parlano del colore, superfici opache che parlano del riflesso, dipinti metallici attorno alla luce, immagini fisse attorno al movimento; usa mezzi chimici per ottenere risultati spirituali, e anima le tecniche della pittura e della fotografia trasgredendole entrambe. Come se inserisse una vite rotonda in un buco quadrato, il lavoro di Kassay testa la tensione produttiva che nasce quando si chiede alla pittura di convivere con la fotografia. Quel che emerge dalle sue astrazioni argentate è la spettrale presenza di un altrove: un luogo di luci e ombre che trascende i limiti dei due mezzi, per coinvolgere la stanza, le persone, e qualsiasi altro quadro, lavoro o arredo nelle vicinanze. Le superfici riflettenti di Kassay producono un gradevole inganno: calamitano lo sguardo, ma lo distraggono e lo confondono, ponendosi come riflesso dell'atto del guardare stesso.

Mi hanno detto che Robert Ryman ha chiamato il P.S.1 chiedendo la restituzione dei suoi dipinti. Mi piacerebbe che il museo chiedesse a Jacob Kassay di



Opposite – The artist installing his works at Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, May 2010. Courtesy: Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia.

This page – *Untitled*, installation view at Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia. Courtesy: Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia. Photo: Dario Lasagni.



La couleur de l'argent

LE JEUNE JACOB KASSAY REFOUT UN COUP DE FOUET AU MONOCHROME AVEC SES TABLEAUX MÉTALLIQUES.

JACOB KASSAY / GALERIE ART:CONCEPT ★★★★★

Radicales et séduisantes, les peintures monochromes de l'Américain Jacob Kassay sont surtout de formidables surfaces réflexives, des objets à tendance quasi philosophique. Pour sa première expo solo en Europe, la galerie Art:Concept présente une dizaine de tableaux argentés, réalisés grâce à un procédé chimique industriel qui

laisse l'aléatoire participer à la composition finale. C'est à la fois ultrabrillant et mat, opaque et réfléchissant, lisse et accidenté par quelques fils tirés depuis la tranche du tableau qui viennent se fossiliser dans la matière et perturber la surface de la peinture.

Cette épaisseur faite de contrastes, accentuée par un contour doré périphérique et presque invisible, donne autant à ces toiles l'allure de totems minimalistes que de sculptures métalliques abstraites.

Les peintures du New-Yorkais de 26 ans, très vite soutenu par l'influent critique Bob Nickas, fonctionnent comme des miroirs renvoyant, dans un flou introspectif, l'image des spectateurs et de l'espace environnant. Entre présence et

effacement, elles s'adressent au sensible, se destinent à une expérience physique et immatérielle – et non à une spéculation expressionniste. Prenant un soin tout particulier dans le display de ses toiles, Kassay élabore une partition à l'échelle de la galerie, où chaque vibration des spectateurs transforme la musique d'ensemble, de la même manière qu'en fonction

des points de vue, elle modifie les intensités lumineuses à la surface des peintures.

Inspirée de techniques historiques propres à la photo argentique mais ultramoderne dans sa conception du monochrome, réalisée industriellement mais anti-sérielle dans la forme finale, la peinture de Kassay se joue des

paradoxes pour se situer dans un entre-deux. Comme si le minimalisme s'était laissé emporter par une entropie chimique incontrôlable, ou que les miroirs brisés de Pistoletto avaient basculé dans la peinture. On le croyait dépassé et aussi épuisé qu'un cheval après une course. Jacob Kassay le prouve pourtant aujourd'hui: le monochrome a encore un bel avenir devant lui.

(JUSQU'AU 12 JUIN / 13 RUE DES ARQUEBUSIERS, 75003 PARIS).

CH. B.



Communiqué de presse

Jacob Kassay
8 mai - 5 juin, 2010

Vernissage
Samedi 8 mai 18⁰⁰ - 21⁰⁰
Concert : Rhys Chatham



Art: Concept a le plaisir d'annoncer la première exposition personnelle de l'artiste Jacob Kassay.

Jacob Kassay est un artiste pluri-disciplinaire, sa pratique comprend aussi bien des peintures, des œuvres sur papiers, des vidéos que des collaborations avec d'autres artistes et musiciens.

Pour la présente exposition, ce jeune artiste new-yorkais présentera une nouvelle série de peintures abstraites aux surfaces métalliques argentées.

Les œuvres de Jacob Kassay jouent au sens propre comme au figuré sur l'opacité, le reflet et le transfert. Ses monochromes argentés, réalisés par un procédé industriel et chimique d'électro-galvanisation, s'offrent directement au visiteur par l'expérience sensible, notamment par l'interaction qui s'opère lorsque le spectateur se place dans le champ de la toile, comme devant un miroir.

La surface unie et réfléchissante des peintures est d'une certaine façon temporairement modifiée par le passage du visiteur. Cette altération est à prendre au sens musical du terme, il ne s'agit pas d'une dégradation, mais bien d'une modification de la hauteur et de la source de la lumière, comme un dièse ou un bémol modifie la hauteur d'une note sur une partition. La juxtaposition de l'ensemble des peintures est aussi importante que les reflets de la lumière ou le rendu opaque de l'environnement se réfléchissant à la surface du tableau. Les variations de la surface picturale sont des composantes inhérentes de l'expérience de ces œuvres. À ce titre, l'artiste contrôle soigneusement leur reproduction, afin de ne pas diffuser des images qui transformaient ces œuvres en de simples tableaux à la surface plate et argentée. Il refuse donc toute prise de vue frontale et cadrée sur une seule peinture.

Les peintures de Kassay créent un espace, les reflets opaques et flous donnant l'illusion de la profondeur. Au-delà de l'impact de la lumière qui modifie la perception de n'importe quelle peinture, c'est davantage l'importance donnée à l'espace entre le spectateur et la planéité de la toile qui devient une mise en abîme de la part immatérielle et conceptuelle de la peinture.

S'agit-il d'une évocation de l'immatérialité telle qu'Yves Klein l'a révélée avec ses monochromes bleus IKB* ? L'artiste cherche-t-il à s'inscrire dans l'alignement de la tradition historique qui consiste à concevoir le tableau comme une fenêtre sur le monde et sa possible représentation ? Serait-ce plutôt une référence à l'usage des miroirs dans les œuvres de l'Arte Povera ou de l'art minimal (Smithson, Pistoletto ou Morris) ?

Kassay cultive délibérément l'opacité du reflet. L'effet paradoxal de ces objets-peintures joue sur l'impossibilité de cette synthèse trans-historique et convoque en filigrane la volonté moderniste, peut-être absurde, de vouloir radicalement rompre avec la peinture classique par le biais du monochrome.

L'artiste est cependant venu à la peinture par le biais de la photographie. La durée, l'instantané lié à la diffusion de la lumière, la fabrication d'une image en perpétuelle révélation et la profondeur de champ sont autant de termes qui permettent de mieux saisir son œuvre et qui sont empruntés au vocabulaire de la photographie.

Le procédé technique de ces images argentées participe d'une forme de nostalgie, évoquant les techniques photographiques archaïques de la fin du 19^{ème} siècle. Bien que ces peintures soient réalisées industriellement, Kassay a détourné la fonction première de la photographie. Chaque peinture offre un résultat formel différent, il ne s'agit plus donc plus de reproduire. Il a également délégué son geste à l'industrie. Une distance critique s'établit ainsi par rapport à la nostalgie d'une technique devenue obsolète et aux interprétations de ces surfaces faussement expressionnistes. L'artiste opère donc par le transfert d'un médium à l'autre.

L'exposition articule de multiples réflexions sur l'illusion de la sérialité et l'impossible répétition, sur la perte liée au transfert comme à l'interprétation. Telle une extension de ces propositions visuelles, une collaboration entre Rhys Chatham, compositeur et musicien minimaliste expérimental, et Jacob Kassay, fera partie intégrante de l'exposition.

Caroline Soyez-Petithomme

* International Klein Blue: formule inventée par l'artiste pour nommer son bleu lumineux outremer

Art: Concept, Paris_13 rue des Arquebusiers 75003 Paris_ www.galerieartconcept.com

Press release : Art: Concept, Paris, France 8.05 - 5.06.2010



ART | CRITIQUES



Jacob Kassay

Jacob Kassay

08 mai-05 juin 2010

Paris 13e. Galerie Art: Concept

Les toiles du jeune artiste new-yorkais Jacob Kassay sont des monochromes argentés à la surface métallique, obtenues par un procédé industriel. Grisées, elles ont la couleur ambiguë des miroirs, elles pensent.

Jacob Kassay obtient ses toiles par un procédé industriel et chimique de galvanisation. La surface de ses œuvres nous fait plonger dans le monde flou et indistinct de leur matière argentée. Elles ressemblent à d'imparfaits miroirs qui reflètent l'entourage et enregistrent les couleurs et la lumière, dans une atmosphère brouillée. Le spectateur se voit et l'extérieur se reflète à travers un verre opaque et un voile brumeux. Une mise en abyme de l'espace d'exposition.

Le spectateur devient entièrement partie prenante du processus d'existence et de création de l'œuvre. Narcissique, il est acteur et spectateur de la toile qu'il modifie et altère en la regardant. Selon le lieu et l'instant, les œuvres de Jacob Kassay deviennent autres. Son travail prend appui sur une matière miroitante et reflétante, une matière qui permet au spectateur de se projeter dans un autre monde, immatériel. Chaque toile n'existe alors plus que parce qu'on la regarde et rend visible une autre réalité, floutée.

A travers cette suite de monochrome, l'exposition propose une réflexion sur la sérialité et l'impossible répétition. Même si les œuvres paraissent interchangeables à travers le processus sériel et industriel, chaque œuvre reste unique. Elles portent chacune en elles, les traces discrètes



et uniques des passages et regards des spectateurs, empreintes du temps, marques mélancoliques et réflexion sur la mémoire.

On pense alors aux monochromes de Pierre Soulages. Dans la matière opaque de l'outre-noir, un monde apparaît sous l'œil du spectateur, un monde de reflets, de lumières, de couleurs et de vibrations. De la même manière, les monochromes de Jacob Kassay nous font passer du monde matériel au monde immatériel. Pendant ce moment privilégié où le spectateur devient constitutif de l'œuvre, dans le prisme d'un miroir déformant, la toile nous dévoile une autre vérité. Ses peintures industrielles assurent une transition visuelle où le cadre devient miroir d'une réalité volontairement opaque. Une alchimie artistique où la couleur argent métallique devient l'espace de nos projections.

En utilisant une illusion de miroir, l'œuvre de Jacob Kassay s'inscrit volontairement dans l'histoire de l'image et de la théorie de la peinture: l'art est-il le miroir ou le reflet du monde? Alors que pour Leon Battista Alberti la peinture dont le miroir est emblème, est une fenêtre ouverte sur le monde qui donne à voir la réalité, la peinture de la Renaissance est un miroir du monde, une représentation la plus véridique possible de la réalité. Le miroir est également devenu un médium depuis le *Grand Verre* de Duchamp jusqu'aux œuvres du Land art et de l'arte povera comme chez Michelangelo Pistoletto, un miroir comme support et surface. Les tableaux de Jacob Kassay s'inspirent de toutes ces traditions. Entre miroirs vides, miroirs déformants et miroirs fenêtres, son œuvre critique et abolit la quête de la ressemblance et de la vérité du monde pour chercher un ailleurs.

La manière dont ces fines pellicules argentées capturent les délicats reflets de ce qui se présentent à elles, rappellent aussi avec nostalgie un autre médium : les premiers temps de la photographie, celui perdu de la photographie digitale. Exposition mémorial sur l'image perdue et insaisissable, l'œuvre de Jacob Kassay nous aura ouvert une fenêtre-miroir sur un autre monde, flou, aux contours imparfaits et immatériel, le temps d'un passage devant chaque œuvre.



Jacob Kassay

By Adrian Dannatt

Published: May 27, 2010



Courtesy ART:CONCEPT, Paris

An installation view of Jacob Kassay's exhibition at ART:CONCEPT

ART:CONCEPT, Paris Through June 5, 2010

It is a curiosity of synchronicity, or zeitgeist perhaps, that everything gets invented at the same time, as true in the history of art as industry. Thus the telephone, camera, and airplane were developed simultaneously in several places by several people. Thus, on entering Jacob Kassay's exhibition at Art: Concept in Paris one feels as if looping into a time machine of sorts, back to a Liz Deschenes exhibition held last year at **Sutton Lane** gallery, just around the corner.

Artists never like direct comparison to other artists (or they love it if the other artist is very famous and very dead, but hate it if the artist is a rough contemporary), let alone the suggestion that their work should seem similar to someone else. However, comparison and differentiation is an engaging methodology to genuinely engage with work. Kassay and Deschenes are both New Yorkers, but from very different generations, the former born in 1984 and the latter in 1966, which by the tight chronology of current practice constitutes a vast shift. Deschenes' work is all about photography and its processes while Kassay is concerned with painting and its own manifold processes. But both produce utterly seductive, beautifully blank, deliciously tarnished variations on a silver surface somewhere between **Richter's** reflections and an antique Venetian mirror. Both also show their work to optimum effect in Paris thanks to the contrast and compliance between the worn elegance of their burnished surfaces and those of their respective galleries. Both are much concerned with the ensemble, the installation and its spatial effect, rather than individual art work.

Kassay uses industrial techniques, serial production, to create his panels but they retain an engaging quality which one might dare term "painterly" especially compared to his other work in such varied fields as video, performance, or music. As a complementary experience (viewed so closely both temporally and spatially) these shows by Deschenes and Kassay provide a fascinating essay on current approaches to painting, photography, and their future potential fusion, a conceptual synthesis as much about the architecture of the viewer's experience as any singular *objet*.

Paris – Jacob Kassav at art:concept

May 6~2010

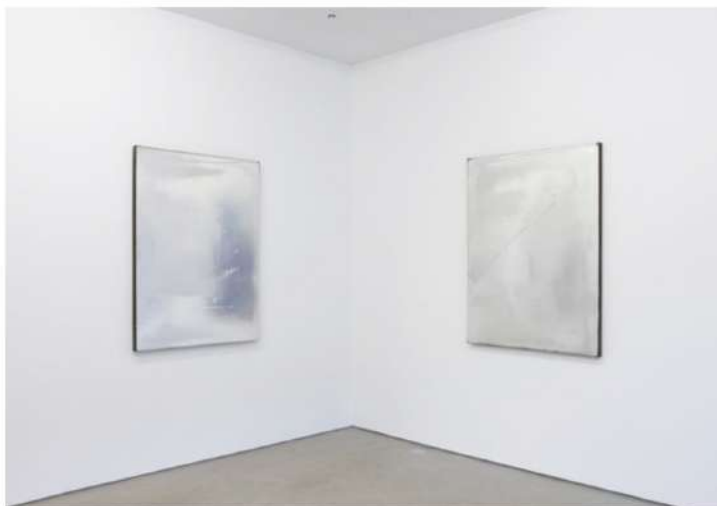


Jacob Kassav's first exhibition in Europe, at [art:concept](#), in Paris, will present a series of abstract paintings with silver metallic surfaces. The works of this young American artist create a space-continuum in which blurred and opaque reflections convey illusions of depth. Beyond the impact created by the light that alters any painting's surface, we find that the importance granted to the space between the spectator and the inherent flatness of the canvas turns into a rebounding reference to the immaterial, conceptual side of painting. His field of action is the monochromatic neutrality imparted by the absence of figures and interaction between colours; in the quest to achieve an emotional effect, he creates unpainted paintings that are animated by the reverberation of the space we view them in.

PRESS RELEASE

Jacob Kassay
Untitled

23 May – 3 October 2010



The project for Collezione Maramotti comprises ten new pieces, some of which are mounted on the wall, while others are lying on the floor.

The canvasses have the look of reflecting panels which convey the ghost-like presence of the underlying paint while absorbing and rendering the external surrounding space of the piece. The canvasses on the floor, as sculptural elements, are conceived as rejects, surging to the value of possibility/potential.

Kassay's work is based on a minimalist *praxis* where the industrial process for the production of the art-piece subtracts the quality value of the artefact to replace it with the value of objectuality, turning it into something of interchangeable quality.

The conceptual elements of monochrome, the objectification of paint pigments, the reflection of colour, movement and form, become central in the artist's research, and are codified and translated into a new metaphysics of the painted surface, in a new form of abstraction, strongly lyrical, where the reference to photography appears evident.

The pieces are conceived starting from the priming of the canvas with wide expanses of an acrylic base to make the surface water-proof, and the subsequent application of a silver finish coat which, through a chemical process similar to the industrial process of an electroplating bath, crystallises the accidental components of the painting on canvas, thus creating

irregularities on the mirror-like surface. The electroplating process also produces singeing and burning on the uncoated elements along the edges of the canvas, and the appearance of unevenly burnished and oxidized areas on the metal-like surface which are out Kassay's control.

Kassay, who has a photographic background, has transposed many of these techniques in his painting practice. The chemical process of mirror plating on the canvasses is comparable to the old photographic process using a suspension of silver salts in gelatin: both techniques produce a transmutation where the light becomes the central element for the sensitization of the base and for the perception of the work.

With this exhibition Collezione Maramotti continues its activity taking place in the space dedicated to specific projects, which houses art pieces made specifically by guest artists. The pieces become then part of the permanent Collection in order to merge together acquisition practices for the expansion of the collection with the practice of public viewing.

Pattern room, as this dedicated space is called, was at one time – when the building was a manufacturing plant - the place where models and prototypes were designed. Therefore the dimension of project designing and experimentation merge together as the true vocation of this space, in a continuum between past and present.

Private view: 22 May 2010 h 6.00 pm in the presence of the artist.

The exhibition, with free admittance, may be visited from 23 May to 3 October 2010 in the opening hours of the permanent collection.

Thursday and Friday 2.30 – 6.30 pm

Saturday and Sunday 9.30 am-12.30 and 3.00-6.00 pm

Closed: from 1 to 25 August

Info:

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Galleries don't need many visitors to survive. They just need a few of the right visitors — people willing to spend money. As Barbara Gladstone once told *New York* magazine, "You don't sell four times as many pieces if four times as many people come in." That is the ethos of the hundreds of galleries that inhabit the upper floors of Chelsea buildings, who trade walk-in traffic for cheaper rent and the hope of a potentially more serious clientele.

Gallery-goers — even those not planning to buy — benefit from the proliferation of aboveground galleries, as well. Even on crowded Saturdays in the neighborhood, the upper floors are often tranquil, the art is, on average, more adventurous, and the galleries are smaller (and packed more closely together) than down on the street, meaning that if the art doesn't interest you, another show is just down the hall or a short elevator ride away.

"Brendan Fowler, James Hyde, Jacob Kassay" at Nicole Klagsbrun, 526 West 26th St., Floor 2, #213, through Oct. 31, 2009

"People are redoing and redoing figurative art," Brice Marden said in the mid-'70s. "Why can't they redo and redo monochromatic art?" Artists have tried over the intervening three decades, though rarely as successfully as Jacob Kassay, the most celebrated name in this three-person show devoted to pleasantly disheveled work.

Kassay primes his canvases, then runs them through a chemical bath, drying the silver paint to a crisp and burning it along the edges. He stops just before their destruction, before Warhol's urine or Stingel's boots might hit the canvas. They are charred, brittle relics: monochromes as survivors — quite a gambit on which to start a career.

Brendan Fowler, meanwhile, takes a framed concert promotion poster and launches it like a lightning bolt through two others. The three posters are intricately interwoven, and glass shards hang on the frames, threatening to drop to the ground. It is a curious act of mediated rage from the young artist/musician.

Strangely, the three-decade veteran, James Hyde, makes the most current-looking work, the show's only misstep. His *OK* (2007) sculpture spells those letters in brown, painted foam. Resting on a series of bricks and strung haphazardly with an electrical cord, it looks self-consciously unmonumental and exhausted.

Rumor has it that Kassay's solo show, at Eleven Rivington earlier this year, sold out. If he has a second act, he could become a lasting presence. Fowler, though, will get to prove his mettle first. His solo show opens Oct. 24 at Rental, a sixth-floor space in Chinatown.

Andrew Russeth

Let's Renegotiate! 'Abstraction and the Ready-Made Gesture' at the Kitchen

Irony? Sincerity? The venerable Chelsea venue cooks up an uneven mix of paintings on painting.
By R. C. Baker, December 1, 2009



Art's silver lining: Jacob Kassay's *Untitled*, 2009

Before there was a modernist canon, populist critics relied on such derisive metaphors as "explosion in a shingle factory" to describe Duchamp's 1912 *Nude Descending a Staircase*. As late as 1956, Jackson Pollock's graceful pas de deux with the canvas was reduced to the incoherent frenzy implied by Time's nickname for the abstract expressionist: "Jack the Dripper."

But that was a googol of dissertations and almost as many Jasper Johns exhibitions ago. Audiences and critics are more sophisticated now. For instance, one can resort to critical shorthand to describe just about any painting in "Besides, With, Against, and Yet: Abstraction and the Ready-Made Gesture," a group show at the Kitchen of 22 artists who, according to the press release, are "renegotiating histories of painting with a mixture of both irony and sincerity." So indeed, Patricia Treib's *Untitled (Pages)* combines late de Kooning with Milton Avery, Charline von Heyl's *Dudo* grafts R.B. Kitaj's fleshy hands onto Daniel Buren's stripes, and Jessica Dickinson's gossamer *Here*, fashioned from oil and limestone, recalls Rothko by way of Albers.

OK, I apologize for that trio of annoying critical mash-ups, but this lazy style of description illustrates the show's conundrum: Where Pollock declared, "I am nature" to embody his expansive inspirations, this exhibition exists in the realm that critic Robert Hughes aptly termed "Culture as Nature." Think of Stuart Davis's paintings of signboards and Sherrie Levine's ongoing appropriation of other artists' works.

Besides, except for those brilliant muralists who, some 30 millennia ago, depicted now-extinct beasts on cave walls, anyone who has ever picked up a brush has had to "negotiate" the history of painting. Yet few of the artists here look further back than the 1950s. For instance, Richard Aldrich's smudgy panels recall Philip Guston's patches of paint, though with none of that master's delicate chromatic tuning or compositional solidity. (Guston, for his part, counted the classical rigor of Piero's 15th-century frescoes among his greatest inspirations.) Nate Lowman's *The Rejects* features stencils of malformed fruit with such labels as "Pointed ends" or "Exaggerated curvature." The rather laborious wit in this 2009 canvas trails a catalog of Warhols, including 1961's *Before and After* nose-job painting, the banana adorning the Velvet Underground's first album, and the underwear bulge beneath zippered jeans on the Stones' *Sticky Fingers* cover.

On the other hand, Wade Guyton's large ink-jet-printed sheets of linen demonstrate that he's one of the few artists since Warhol to fully appreciate the serendipitous beauty that arises from mistakes in mechanical reproduction, those fascinating flaws that resonate with our own. And even though Agnes Martin's hand-wrought grids haunt his overlapping stripes, misaligned edges, and spotty printing defects, Guyton summons a gorgeous ghost from the machine.

Similarly, Jacob Kassay doesn't let conceptual stratagems get in the way of the startling aesthetic pleasure he wrings from "silver deposit" mixed with mossy brown acrylic on rough canvas. I don't know what price silver fetches on the commodities market these days—no doubt Damien Hirst could tell us—but Kassay's buckled ground battles the viewer's vague reflection in the precious metal, a rare melding of the materials' intrinsic worth with aesthetic value. And Polly Apfelbaum's stained rolls of fabric arrayed across the gallery's floor provide the physical tug that great painting has always exerted on the viewer's body, from Masaccio's Brancacci chapel right up to Bill Jensen's recent abstraction of St. Sebastian. Apfelbaum's *Bones* (2000) is the oldest work in the show and emanates a worn wisdom; the ribs of color striating each of these thick rolls of synthetic velvet hint at an even more luminous procession, if only they could be unfurled.

Just as I was concluding that the aesthetic chops of some artists had trumped the show's conceptual conceits, I was snagged by Kelley Walker's small canvas, *4870 Series*. The size of a notebook page, I'd barely noticed it, but when I leaned in to study the almost blank white ground, my eyes registered tiny Benday dots. What I'd thought was a spare painting was actually a "four-color process silkscreen on canvas" and the unassuming image suddenly became a sly koan—a mechanical print scarcely discernible from the wall it hung upon. Depending on your mind's bent, such an image might conjure Magritte's picture of a pipe, which is, of course, not a pipe, or Malevich's white on white Supremacist painting, or ruminations on the visual prevarications of our Photoshopped age.

Not enough to look at, but plenty to think about.

'Besides, With, Against, and Yet: Abstraction and the Ready-Made Gesture'
The Kitchen
512 West 19th Street, 212-255-5793
Through January 16, 2010

JACOB KASSAY

ELEVEN RIVINGTON - NEW YORK



JACOB KASSAY, installation view at Eleven Rivington, New York 2009.

Jacob Kassay's elegant U.S. solo debut (all works *Untitled*, 2009) includes seven virtually interchangeable identical-size canvases and a floor sculpture made of three of the same pieces stacked on a low pedestal. Each of these monochromatic panels was prepared in a way that mimics the photographic process: it was first coated with an acrylic base and then "dipped,

bathed, and fixed" in a silver finish using a process similar to mirror plating. The quasi-reflective mirrored surfaces, which may over time tarnish and darken, are seductively imperfect — alternately shiny and matte, pitted and striated, and sometimes singed around the edges. As such, they function both as minimalist, formal works of art and as blurry impressions of the people surrounding them. The silver insulation-board expanses of veteran Conceptualist Rudolf Stingel come to mind. In past projects Stingel invited the viewer to draw, write, deface or otherwise interact with the walls he installed, thereby creating another kind of portraiture of the masses. By simply reflecting in varying degrees of clarity the light, movement and shadow inside the gallery and from the street outside, Kassay's works similarly abdicate a degree of responsibility for their own representation and instead become *tabulae rasae*, in which that representation takes on a life of its own. As the light shifts throughout the day, the silver surfaces mutate and pick up hints of gold-

en pinks, blues and yellows, conveying the same sort of ephemeral beauty as sun-dappled waves. Combining nature with artificiality, these façades end up imparting less about the work itself than giving free reign to the exterior world to reverberate and so become a sort of free-form, protean counterpart of existence beyond any art-related, autogenous boundaries.

Amanda Church

Installation view at Eleven Rivington, New York 2009.



ARTslant

Ali Baba-like Treasure Trove at PSM

By Ana Finel Honigman

Art Review: CAVE PAINTING

PSM Gallery, June 3 – July 18, 2009

With "Cave Paintings" at the PSM gallery, Bob Nickas has arranged a taster for "Painting Abstraction," his survey book on the subject that will be published with Phaidon in September. Nickas cherry-picked a vastly varied selection of artists for the show after months of studio visits in New York, Los Angeles, London, Paris and Berlin. What the contributors all share is the ability to raise constructive questions about the nature of painting and to push and play with technique while also providing wondrous examples of painting's possibilities.

Nikas titled his twenty-seven-artist-show "Cave Paintings" as a reference to the origins of pictorial representation, language, and painting itself. The show did not seek to present a strict curatorial thesis. But the underlining premise was that if abstraction does function as a key starting point for the contemporary art world's vast array of practices and approaches that function as a departure from the strict rules of representation, then the work produced by the show's artists demonstrates how sophisticated the genre has become.

Most of the artists on view play with the genre's conventions and assumptions about its history and constraints. A few, such as Jules de Balincourt, Kelley Walker and Verne Dawson include completely recognizable figures and non-abstract forms. Tony Just's small neon yellow canvas with the words "Fuck you all" written too large to be read in their entirety becomes an abstraction because Nickas hung it upside down - letting the soft brushstrokes of the black against the yellow take precedence over the words' meaning and the image's backstory. Others, such as John Armleder and Katharina Grosse, present three-dimensional works that can only loosely be considered "paintings." But all twenty-seven have developed sharp and compelling tactics of attracting attention to the inherent qualities of their media and adding beauty, interest and value to the media they selected.

The interplay of these media and techniques adds strength and cohesiveness to the wide range of work Nickas has brought to the show. Clement Greenberg has criticized viewers who were too invested in the "stories" of works and less interested in simply seeing the works without a context. Here, however, knowing the specific techniques of many of the artists in "Cave Painting" adds depth and worth to their individual creations.

(next page)



Cologne-based Bernd Ribbeck's 2009 Untitled work with marker, acrylic and ball point pen is a luminous little painting of a multi-coloured geometric form. Its lovely light elements were created by removing portions with an eraser. By contrast, the New York-born twenty-five-year-old artist Jacob Kassay's three stunning silver canvases, all 2009, are rich with captivating texture and complex variations in colour within the monochrome silver. And the astonishing visual pleasure of those works is greatly enhanced by the information that the arresting appearance of Kassay's paintings is the product not of paint, but of silver deposits on dark canvases. Having begun his artistic career as a photographer, Kassay now applies the same techniques used to develop film for his canvases. He dips canvases of different sizes in the chemicals to "develop" them, creating beautiful silver surfaces that resemble antique mirrors. The results also cleverly engage with the assumption taught in many art history classes that Abstraction stems from Impressionism, which

evolved as a reaction to the pressure placed on representational painting by the advent of photography. In that respect, Kassay's canvases are a snappy bridge between painting and photography.

Jutta Koether's "Cine-tract" (2007) uses similarly industrial materials to create captivating slick and textured surfaces. She combines smoky patches of black acrylic paint with silver push pins used as fasteners in antique leather furniture and then covers her canvas with liquid glass. Underneath the slick, tactilely attractive surface, are faintly written, poetic sentences such as "I am where every woman wants to be," penned by Koether in a fine feminine hand that counter-balances the tough associations of her materials. From a critical feminist vantage point, Koether's canvas can be read as juxtaposing her personal diary-like thoughts with materials associated with old-fashioned offices where women were not allowed to develop their potential. In less message-laden pieces, Monika Baer's pair of gentle but beautiful peach and pink "Spiderweb paintings" (both 2009) play with the conventions of the canvas itself, by exposing the stretcher on one side where the German artist has cut-out spiderweb forms.

In a group where most of the work tests the boundaries of materials, De Balincourt's cheeky take on the show's title initially appears out of step with rest of the work because it is exclusively representational. The Paris-born and Brooklyn-based artist's paint-on-wood image of tourists looking around a pink cave is a good-natured poke at how domesticated abstraction has become and perhaps also at the futility of Nickas, or any curator, endeavouring a survey of contemporary practice in any area. However, after engaging the other works in Cave Paintings, the wood's fine grain under de Balincourt's pink paint captivated me more than the theme, and thereby became a object lesson in how the whole show sheds light into an Ali Baba-like treasure trove of new approaches to abstraction.

Ana Finel Honigman

F A R I M A N I



Jacob Kassay
Eleven Rivington, NY

Although one may say that the modernist paradigm of autonomy in painting is long since outmoded (that it is a recurrent and irrelevant trope in the history of narration and craft) it has become of importance once again. In the contemporary world of painting however, what is an effective sign of autonomy is no longer the canvas' ability to exclude narrative from its formal parameters (so that it may speak on its own behalf) but an artist's selfless ability to forfeit the act of painting to a process whose effects are indeterminate and out of their hands.

Jacob Kassay's recent solo debut at Eleven Rivington is comprised of a set of silver plated paintings (all of which were initially primed by the artist and exposed by chance to various types of debris) whose reflective surfaces are the result of a complicated chemical process, each with an unexpected outcome. With a minimal layout around the gallery that consists of no more than eight paintings facing one another on opposing walls, and the remaining few stacked neatly on top of one another towards the entrance, the experience is of a particular craft that prioritizes the autonomy of its process over the product. Jacob Kassay's practice is in this way less about the canvas expressing subjective constraints, than it seems to be about eliminating subjectivity altogether, about allowing the artist to be just as surprised as the audience.

While from a distance the pieces in the exhibit portray a sort of uniformity that can be mistaken for another study into the longstanding tradition of the monochrome, upon closer inspection each painting displays a multitude of elegant and detailed variations born from Kassay's initial layering techniques, the effects of oxidization upon the silver, and our own distorted reflections as we move around them. They are, in this way, also performative paintings. Ones which, after reacting to their chemical treatment, continue to act and react to their surrounding spectators. And, once we stop looking at them, they continue to look back at us, establishing, again, their active autonomy over all those fortunate enough to find themselves reflected in Kassay's intelligent and shifting practice.

Amir Mogharabi

FARiMANI 3/16/09



The New Yorker, Goings On About Town, 3/16/09

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

JACOB KASSAY

Art this conspicuously clever is rarely so beautiful. The twenty-four-year-old New Yorker amalgamates photography and monochrome painting—with a tip of the squeegee to Gerhard Richter—by putting his paintings through chemical paces that mirror the silver-gelatin process. After layering his identically sized canvases with acrylic, Kassay sends them out to be professionally coated in reflective silver. The results, with their charred edges (the chemicals burn unprimed fabric) and mottled gleam, call to mind the deliquescent surfaces of Albert Pinkham Ryder as readily as the conceptual canniness of R.H. Quaytman. Kassay's paintings have a dusky, irresistible elegance, like the far sides of so many moons. Through March 29. (Eleven Rivington, 212-982-1930.)

-Andrea Scott

Art

Time Out New York / Issue 703 : Mar 19–25, 2009

Art review

Jacob Kassay

Eleven Rivington, through Mar 29



Installation view

Photograph: Courtesy of Eleven Rivington, New York

In his promising debut, Jacob Kassay paints canvases in broad horizontal strokes of color before electroplating them in silver. The result: Specular works that are hung on the walls or, in one instance, stacked on a low pedestal like oversized ingots to create a strange hybrid of monochrome painting and metallic sculpture.

The plating process scorches unpainted canvas, so the edges of these works are often blackened. In a few cases, burn marks extend onto the shiny faces of the panels, fading into golden, tarnish-like smears. Here and there, hints of the original color show through, and some of the pieces have strands of unraveled canvas flopping across the front, their sinuous curves fossilized under paint and silver. Yet the artist downplays surface incident, and the works appear nearly interchangeable: A set of rough mirrors that imperfectly reflect their surroundings, registering color and movement, if not the actual appearance of things.

The way that these thin silver surfaces delicately capture the traces of whatever stands before them evokes photography, with its light-sensitive emulsions of metal salts. But film photography as a technology has now been surpassed by digital—just as photography itself once usurped the province of painting—making Kassay's metal coatings feel like bronzed baby shoes, elegies to an unrecoverable past. Simultaneously paintings made into memorials, sculptures that refer to photography, and abstractions that speak of the changing regimes of representation, Kassay's works, while beautiful, are also melancholic, philosophical objects.—*Joseph R. Wolin*

[More Art reviews >>](#)



Eleven Rivington to present a solo exhibition

JACOB KASSAY

February 14 – March 29, 2009

Eleven Rivington is pleased to present the US solo debut exhibition of New York artist Jacob Kassay, on view from February 14 – March 29, 2009. The exhibition is accompanied by a self-published artist book project.

Jacob Kassay's work encompasses painting and installation in various media, including acrylic, fiberglass, paper tape, solid and printed synthetic fabric, asphalt, and the chemical element of silver. For this exhibition he will present a suite of recent monochromatic (silver) paintings, all 2009. While his practice mines territories of formal abstraction - it 'performs' the feat of representation; Kassay's 'mirrored' paintings reflect their surroundings, the shifting of light, and the space and viewer before them. They are primed, composed, painted and prepared on canvas in the studio and then finished by a process similar to mirror / silver plating. In these works, alchemy is an integral part of a mixed media practice that presents illumination and transformation as primary subjects.

Kassay's training is in photography and he has translated many of the medium's essential techniques and concepts into his painting practice. This includes the basic photographic printing principle in which a support is coated with a medium that is then dipped, bathed, transformed and 'fixed' as an image. Kassay applied and developed this premise to painting, using silver – a precious metal used variously from jewelry and silverware to electrical conduction – as a catalyst for his work. This seemingly fixed technique is subverted by varying impasto, gesture, brushwork, collage elements such as string and tape, and the inevitable possibility of oxidation. Tarnish develops creating a halo effect around shapes and brush marks, while the raw canvas edges burn in the process. Kassay's work ricochet with disparate and sometimes contradictory effects, employing the reflection of light and image in a paradoxical manner in order to engage the interpretive qualities of painting, image, and abstraction.

Jacob Kassay was born and raised in Buffalo, NY, and received a BFA from The State University of NY, Buffalo. He currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Group exhibitions include Art:Concept, Paris (forthcoming); Cave Painting at PSM Gallery, Berlin, curated by Bob Nickas (forthcoming); Emily Harvey Foundation, NY; Derek Eller, NY, and White Flag Projects, St. Louis, among others.

Eleven Rivington is located at 11 Rivington Street, LES + Downtown, New York, NY, 10002. Gallery Hours are Wednesday through Sunday from 12 to 6 pm. Please contact Kristen Lorello at 212-982-1930 or email the gallery at office@elevenrivington.com for more information.