ARTFORUM
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Franklin Evans, *joysdivision*, 2021, acrylic on canvas, 30 3⁄4 × 32 5⁄8".

Franklin Evans

MILES MCENERY GALLERY | 520 WEST 21ST STREET

The titles for the paintings in Franklin Evans's exhibition "fugitivemisreadings" were made up of lowercase letters jammed together into solid blocks, like the stream-of-consciousness "thunderwords" in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939), or the file names of PDFs scattered over a Mac desktop. In one canvas, Evans paid tribute to Henri Matisse's famous pastoral of 1905–1906*, The Joy of Life*, by hand copying the composition's Fauvist figures and rearranging them as if he were using the cut-and-paste function in Photoshop. The work is called . . . wait for it . . . *joysdivision* (all works cited, 2021). Yes, the name of this Matisse remix is a callback to everyone's favorite short-lived New Wave postpunk act from Salford, England. Why so? Was the pun just irresistible? Or is there something tellingly ambivalent about associating Matisse with

one of the bands mentioned over the course of LCD Soundsystem's eight-minute epochal rhapsody of hipster affectation, "Losing My Edge" (2002)?

A recurring element in Evans's paintings are crisp acrylic lines that resemble taut strips of masking tape. In previous exhibitions, Evans employed actual colored tape to extend his picture plane into three dimensions, covering the walls and floors surrounding his canvases with pictures, press releases, spreadsheets, and other printed matter. The artist's use of tape led to his interest in Piet Mondrian's braided-line compositions of the 1940s, but a more apposite point of comparison might be the tape-encrusted installations of Thomas Hirschhorn. The Swiss artist's ersatz memorials to Georges Bataille or Antonio Gramsci reflect what Hirschhorn himself has described as a "fan" mentality that celebrates philosophers with a frenzied devotion usually reserved for sports teams or pop stars. The profusion of references to Matisse throughout "fugitivemisreadings" radiated a similar degree of unchecked enthusiasm. Why does Evans keep copying *The Joy of Life*? He's a fan!

But what does it mean to be a fan of modernism? Like Joy Division, modernist painting circa 1900 teeters perpetually at the edge of relevance. Even the era's most eminently cancelable "master," the predatory Paul Gauguin, continues to exert a generative influence on contemporary painters (e.g., Chris Ofili and Sanya Kantarovsky). Yet Post-Impressionism and Fauvism are now also thoroughly commodified fodder for coffee mugs and mouse pads, the pictorial equivalent of dad rock. Evans's direct citations of famous paintings play on this double aspect. At times, these snippets offered little more than the middle-brow pleasure of winning a name-that-tune contest. At other times, "high" modernism became a measuring stick for gauging the historical specificity of feeling human. For instance, Evans's representation of his own work space, *titianatilt*, calls out for comparison with Matisse's *Red Studio*, 1911. Both scenes are populated with nods to other Matisse paintings, but whereas the nested images in *The Red Studio* afford the eye moments of rest before it resumes its ambit over the canvas's rusted-red expanse, *titianatilt* shows a pile of printed-out JPEGs on a candy-striped floor so densely packed with visual stimulation that gaining one's bearings is nearly impossible. The interior becomes a vivid portrait of an information-addled twenty-first-century mind.

For three large-scale canvases in "fugitivemisreadings," Evans dispensed with his masking-tape lattices in favor of dollop-laden biomorphic patterns that serve as backdrops to swirling medleys of modernism's greatest hits. In one, *decenteringfacespace*, apples lifted from Paul Cézanne's works float beside the decapitated heads of the skull-faced boys in the Matisse paintings *Music*, 1910, and *The Piano Lesson*, 1916. This same painting also contains small-scale portraits of Frederick Douglass and Martin Luther King Jr. How should one understand these respective nods to the abolitionist and civil rights movements in the welter of Evans's art-historical references? Perhaps they mark the limits of fandom in grappling with the barely latent racism of modernist aesthetics. Or perhaps they are expressions of a sentiment that vinyl aficionados and museum curators alike have lately been muttering under their breath: Damn, my collection is just . . . so . . . *white*.

— *Colby Chamberlain*

HYPERALLERGIC

What to Do About the Artists in Your Studio

If Philip Guston wanted everyone, including himself, to leave his studio, Franklin Evans seems to be inviting everyone in.

Review by John Yau 3 July 2021

Franklin Evans, *pigmentpolymersplatspace* (2021), acrylic on canvas, 70 x 68 3/4 inches (all image courtesy the artist and Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, NY)

"I believe it was John Cage who once told me, 'When you start working, everybody is in your studio — the past, your friends, enemies, the art world, and above all, your own ideas — all are there. But as you continue painting, they start leaving, one by one, and you are left completely alone. Then, if you're lucky, even you leave.'"

I was reminded of Philip Guston's statement about influence when I was looking at the painting "iowapaintnotes" (acrylic on canvas, 45 1/2 by 41 3/4 inches, 2021), which is one of eight paintings and three works on paper included in the exhibition *Franklin Evans: fugitivemisreadings* at Miles McEnery Gallery (June 24–July 31, 2021).

Evans has divided "iowapaintnotes" into a crazy quilt of different-sized rectangles that both overlap and abut each other. Each one alludes to a painting by an artist, some well known, others seemingly by the artist's friends. The arrangement is non-hierarchical. The name "Philip Guston" is painted in the fourth rectangle down, aligned with the painting's left edge. Two red fields with black dots are signed "Yayoi Kusama." The thing is, the images above Guston's and Kusama's signatures only vaguely resemble the respective artist's work, which means they are not citations but instead Evans's riffs on their work.

Franklin Evans, *iowapaintnotes* (2021), acrylic on canvas, 45 1/2 x 41 3/4 inches

While Guston thought the point was to have everyone leave his studio, Evans memorializes the time when he was at the University of Iowa, where he earned his MFA in 1993. Together, the sections — almost all of which include a signature — are like the notes and postcards that might have hung on the wall in his studio at the time, except Evans's alter ego changed, misremembered, and turned things upside down. That slippage is crucial to Evans's project.

In "misreadinglandscapeintoart" (acrylic on canvas, 53 1/2 by 49 1/4 inches, 2021), Evans brings together bundles and stacks of stripes, for what look like aerial views of a white tray of watercolors, color charts, and Kenneth Noland "targets." These become suns, and echo — to this viewer at least — Arthur Dove paintings. Again there is a deliberate slippage, this time between abstraction and representation.

Franklin Evans, *joysdivision* (2021), acrylic on canvas, 30 3/4 x 32 5/8 inches

Is Evans commenting ironically on Noland's abstractions? I don't think it is as simple as that. He seems interested in undoing the categories and the boxes we use to identify something or, to extend this line of thinking, someone's identity.

By juxtaposing some of the landscapes with the abstractions, particularly along the painting's right and left side, Evans underscores the sense that these different elements may or may not fit together. Having to reorient these views in the mind's eye produces the sense that Evans's miscellany is undergoing change. This is a reminder that we cannot possibly process the barrage of images we encounter in our daily lives, much less make a reassuring order out of them.

As with "iowapaintnotes," Evans both pays homage and arrives at his own interpretations of different artists' works. One of his teachers at the University of Iowa was John Dilg, whose exhibition *John Dilg: Flight Path* is currently at Eva Presenhuber (June 3–July 21, 2021). Evans has taken one of Dilg's signature motifs, a mesa framed by two trees, and painted the scene in pastel stripes, colors and marks that Dilg has never used.

The one artist that Evans keeps returning to in this exhibition is Henri Matisse. In "joysdivision" (acrylic on canvas, 30 3/4 by 35 5/8 inches, 2021), Evans expands in a number of ways on Matisse's innovative painting "Le bonheur de vivre" ("The Joy of Life," 1906). In addition to alluding to Matisse's idyllic painting, Evans's title refers to the punk rock band Joy Division and the Nazi concentration camp brothels the group based its name on, as well as the strategy of dividing the painting into parts and motifs, which are repeated, enlarged, overlaid, and rearranged.

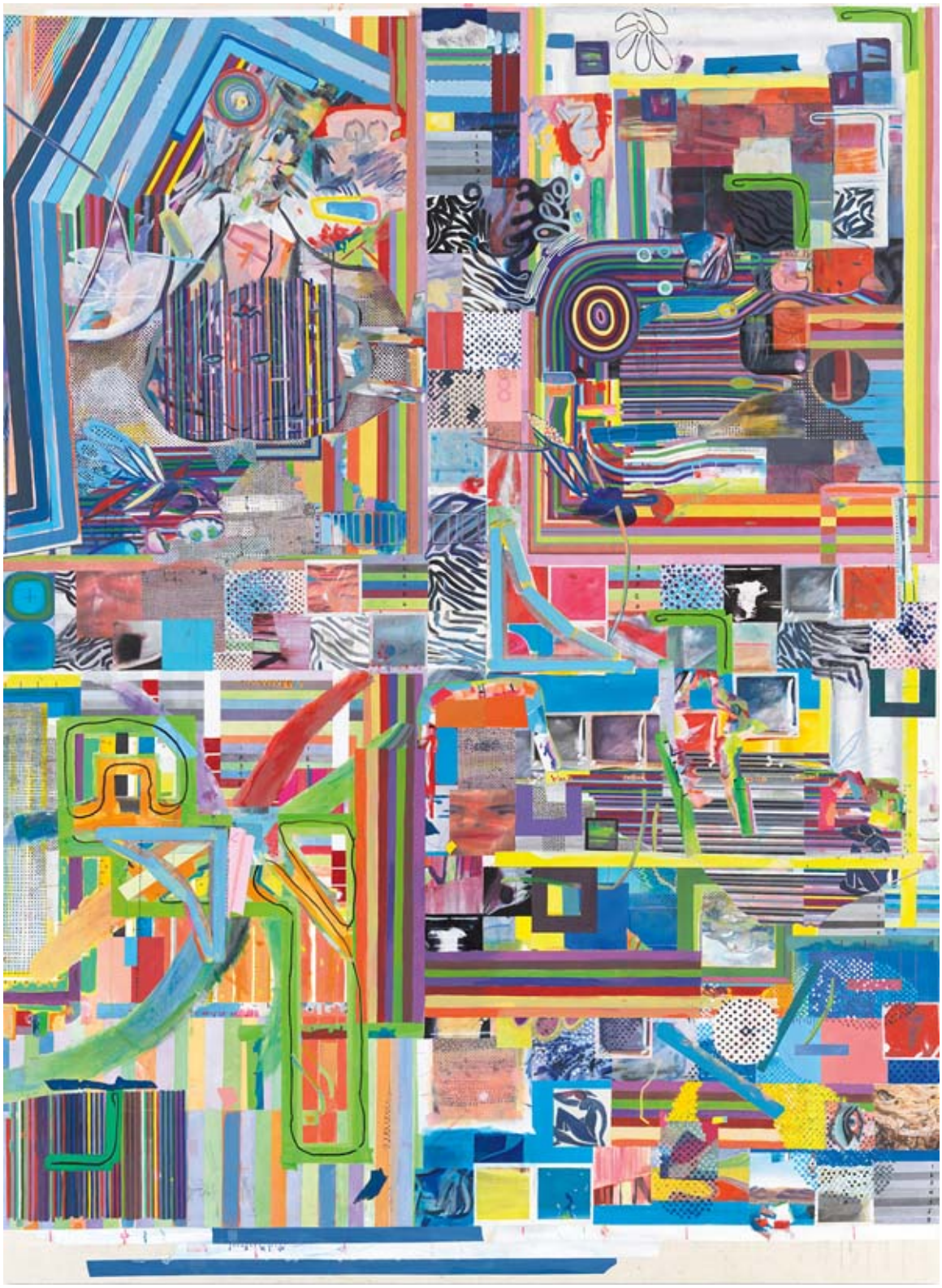
What keeps our attention is Evans's use of different techniques, which reflects his resistance to settling into a stylistic groove. In "pigmentpolymersplatspace" (acrylic on canvas, 70 by 68 3/4 inches, 2021), phallic shapes extend in from the painting's four sides. Along the bottom left edge, images of Matisse's fauvist "Self Portrait in a Striped T-shirt" (1906), the artist's only self portrait where he is not standing or holding a brush, has been cropped, stretched, and rendered in blue.

Are there faces in some of the elongated shapes? What are the red discs with black dots in the center that Evans has overlaid in parts of the painting? Is this a vision of a world imploding, a comment on the liquidity of paint, or a reminder that reproductions and images seen on a computer are distortions, and that much of our experience is removed from the actual? I would propose it is all of these possibilities and more.

In the three works on paper, Evans uses watercolor, ink, and graphite on gridded paper to explore pixilated views, abstraction, and legibility. For "selfportraitwithmatisse" (15 1/8 by 11 1/4 inches, 2019), he divides the grid into different-sized rectangles. The rectangle nestled in the upper left-hand corner contains a hand he has drawn in pencil, underscoring his commitment to being directly engaged in the making of his work.

In the lower right-hand corner, we see a grid of different blues and grays that evokes what I believe is the artist's self-portrait. Poised between resemblance and abstraction, the face neither coalesces into an image nor disintegrates into the unreadable. Between these two images are pixilated references to one of Roy Lichtenstein's blond women, as well as different pixelated

references to Matisse's Fauvist self portrait, rows of circles marked with a vertical line or, in the adjacent rectangle, marked by a series of spoke-like lines.



Franklin Evans, *franklinfootpaths15to20* (2020), acrylic on canvas, 78 x 57 1/8 inches

Evans recognizes that we live in a world where we must constantly translate what we see. It is

this chaotic plethora of images and the confusion of competing messages and distortions that he addresses in his work. You might think it is art about art, but it is much more than that.

Franklin Evans, *selfportraitwithmatisse* (2019), watercolor, ink and graphite on paper, 15 1/8 x 11 1/4 inches

Franklin Evans: fugitivemisreadings continues at Miles McEnery Gallery (520 West 21st Street, Chelsea, Manhattan) through July 31.

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THE MATERIAL-SPECIFIC PAINTINGS OF NATHAN MINER AND FRANKLIN EVANS

BY JASON HOELSCHER

Franklin Evans, "juddrules," 1,500 sq ft, mixed media installation at Montserrat College of Art, Beverly, Massachusetts (September 2014). Photo: Bethany Acheson.

Painting today exists across a wide range of forms, objects and environments. For example, artists such as Katharina Grosse, Jutta Koether and Claire Ashley either open up the notion of a bounded picture plane beyond recognition, or incorporate enough non-planar objects and unpainted materials that any flat, painted surface appears as only one component among many. Their paintings seem to function in the realm of scatter art or installation, yet are institutionally framed and exhibited as paintings. This type of work thrusts beyond painterly materiality or medium specificity as those terms have come to be understood in aesthetic discourse.

As culture is subsumed by screen-based experience and increasingly immaterial digital interfaces, many painters today are beginning to explore instead a materialized, spatially expansive mode best described as *material specificity*: a focus on those particular, tangible qualities specific to embodied encounters. Following up on a decade of painterly flatness highly amenable to looking good on screens, material-specific painting is no longer specifically anchored to a flat surface, is resistant to screen-based representation—either incidentally or deliberately so—and rewards in-person and on-site experience.

Two recent back-to-back solo exhibitions at the Montserrat College of Art in Beverly, Massachusetts, both curated by Leonie Bradbury, offer compelling examples of how material specific painting takes part in the space/time unfolding of lived experience. Franklin Evans grapples with an expansive approach to painting that constructs and activates space, while Nathan Miner reveals how painterly form endures across states of time and becoming.

Miner's "The Long Now" (from June 19 to August 14, 2014) takes as its starting point the subtle ways paintings operate in and across time. Comprising dynamically positioned and softly painted abstract forms set in motion against each other, Miner's work resembles futurist paintings viewed through deep water—a combination of speedy brusqueness and soft, aquatic shimmer. Germane to the idea of material specificity is Miner's goal of constructing and arranging his paintings to highlight how time is felt—to foreground the "subjective studies of time, materials, and sensory properties," as the artist phrases it.

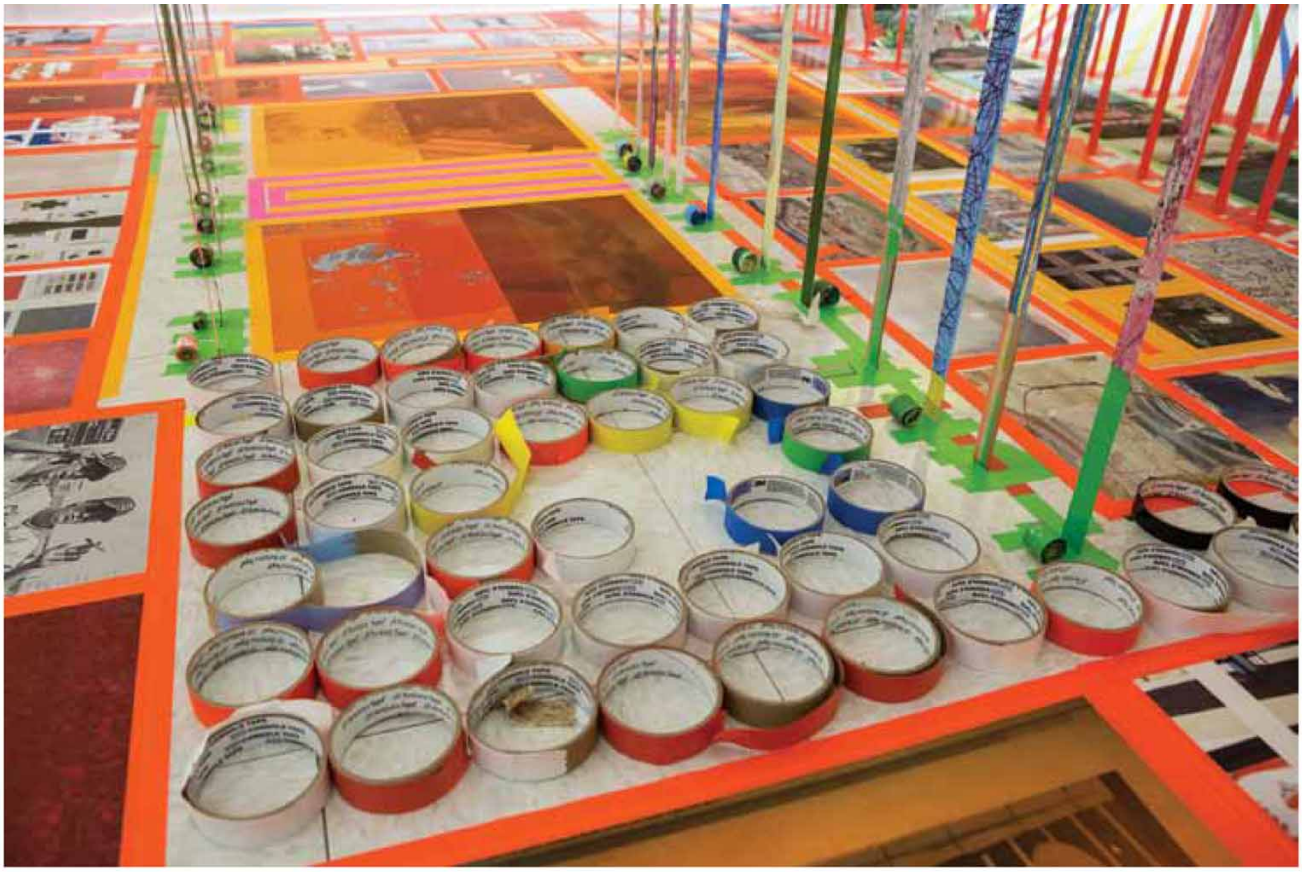
Franklin Evans, "juddrules," 1,500 sq ft, mixed media installation at Montserrat College of Art, Beverly, Massachusetts (September 2014). Photo: Bethany Acheson.

The name of the exhibition lends itself to the experience of time. While it always feels like "now" at any given moment, the things we experience within the mutable framework of the present are always changing—always different from our experience of "now" at other times. Building on this idea, the paintings in Miner's exhibition change over time. Most paintings enter a gallery having long since been completed, already settled into an unchanging state. For "The Long Now," however, Miner visited the gallery almost daily, working on-site, modifying paintings already on display, and being present to talk with visitors. The paintings in "The Long Now" might change quite a bit over the span of a few days, creating an exhibition somewhere between a solo show and an artist residency.

In addition to highlighting the instability of time, particular activations of surface and space marked an important component of the exhibition as well. Miner's paintings, all of them incorporating a mix of pencil, watercolor, gouache, airbrush, acrylic paint, shellac and oil paint on aluminum panels, create highly variable surface layers and tactile qualities that would be extremely difficult to capture through digital representation. In terms of their relations to space, the works include shaped, multi-panel canvases mounted on a concavely curved wall (*Chimera*), paintings that bend around corners, and an impressive diptych, *Field Reflections #1* and *Field Reflections #2*, in which the paintings face off against each other. These latter two paintings, each ten by ten feet and hung parallel to each other on opposite walls ten feet apart, envelop the viewer in a highly activated perceptual space. The correlations of their scale and spatial relationships, in combination with the push-pull of their visual similarities, make standing between the two works feel similar to intruding on a person's personal space. While the resonance between the size of the works and their relative distance is subtle, their opposed, face-to-face placement triggers a strong sense of being part of the works' field of operation. The fact that each painting so forcefully requires the presence of the other, yet both could not occupy the viewer's field of vision simultaneously, creates not only an aesthetically activated bodily experience, but one also strongly resistant to screen-based digital reproduction.[1]

This highlights a primary aspect of material specificity, namely a drive to consider trends other than immateriality and remote, purely optical intake. Painters like Miner and Evans, either overtly or implicitly, focus on qualities specific to direct, material, in-person artistic experience—such as a particular, physical locatability at odds with the everywhere/whenever-all-at-once possibilities of networked distribution. As visual aspects of painting like pictorial representation and abstract opticality become increasingly replicable across a range of screen formats, painters have come lately to emphasize precisely those aspects of art experience that are (for the moment) difficult to convey with pixels.

Where "The Long Now" activated the viewer's subjective experience of time and space through a range of subtle inversions, the subsequent exhibition, "juddrules" by Franklin Evans (from September 17 to December 13, 2014), aggressively foregrounded space and materiality. Evans considers himself a painter, and his exhibitions are taken as such, but the experience of his work is analogous to a visu-



Franklin Evans, "juddrules," 1,500 sq ft, mixed media installation at Montserrat College of Art, Beverly, Massachusetts (September 2014). Photo: Bethany Acheson.

ally cacophonous explosion of painterly tools, documentation, modified and unmodified source materials, collage elements, and more. "juddrules"—the exhibition title refers to an amalgam of lines from Donald Judd essays that Evans used as self-imposed limits—suggests the idea of painting not as object or installation, but as the exploded, materialized residue of the process of its own making, in which the painting is its own visual, spatial and material paratext.

Like a decentralized painting, "juddrules" overwhelms the ceilings, floors and walls of the Montserrat gallery with material. Painter's tape stretches floor-to-ceiling, partitioning the space off into sections; low-res computer printouts, press releases, pages from magazines, potted plants, installation shots of his and others' exhibitions, photos of artworks, and actual artworks are mounted to the wall in taped-off, gridded sections; pieces of unstretched canvas, color swatches, stacks of paper, rolls of tape, and more come together to overload the space with objects ranging from the important and stable to the underwhelming and ephemeral.

As a counter to these dense aggregates of art history, discourse, biography, and materiality, Evans takes care to orient the viewer physically and spatially. Amid the apparent chaos of the exhibition, the floor is covered with lines of tape that serve not only to evoke the modernist grid, but also suggest walkways through the space. Folding chairs are situated in key spots as well, inviting the viewer to absorb the exhibition from specifically chosen, incident-loaded vantage points. These chairs serve multiple functions, offering a chance to stop and be part of the total artwork, while arresting movement and corporeally locating the viewer within the space itself.

These chairs' function of locating the viewer points to an important aspect of "juddrules": as distributed and decentralized as Evans' approach to painting may be, it is very much part of a distinct viewer does not travel to a digital file in space so much as she or activates it onscreen wherever they happen to be at the moment. the other hand, the visceral impact of Evans's analog art distributi network emerges only through a viewer's step-by-step navigati within its intricately constructed spaces—a version of Michael Fr theatrical space on steroids.

This leads to another consideration: while Miner's "The Lo Now" focuses primarily on an experience of time, it deals w space as well, albeit subtly. Similarly, Evans's work is not only sp tially complex—from the initial gestalt intake of the entire gall to the surprising details one has to seek out—but it is tempora complex as well: densely folded, filled, and loaded with experien that would require all day to take in. Dense books are sometin described as being skim-proof, requiring time to read, and the sa can certainly be said of "juddrules." The overload of intertwin forms and spatially complicated arrangements force the viewer slow down and take part in the revealing of the exhibition's ma layers through via mindful participation.

Creating what might otherwise be termed installation, perf mance, or any number of names—but which the art world has ch sen to define as painting—Miner and Evans are doing importa work in the exploration of material specificity. Now that two cades of widespread digitization and virtualization have highlight aspects of location and material form previously taken for grant each artist in his own way articulates an experience of culture th unfolds across time and through physical space.

* I would like to thank Peter Plagens for his invaluable assistan and suggestions with this article, which was written as part of t Creative Capital/Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Workshop. ■

HYPERALLERGIC

Painting as Super Model

Review by Patrick Neal 9 July 2014

Franklin Evans, “paintingassupermodel” (2014), mixed-media installation (all images courtesy of Ameringer McEnery Yohe unless otherwise noted)

Yve-Alain Bois’s book *Painting as Model* was written twenty-odd years ago and continues to be an important text, providing conceptual fodder for many contemporary art practices. A case in point is the current exhibition of painting and installation art by Franklin Evans, where a physical copy of *Painting as Model* sits up front and center on the gallery floor while material unleashed from the book orbits about the space.

In the introduction to his book, Bois posits that to concentrate solely on the formal elements of a work of art (line, color, texture, value, etc.) as its defining content can be a dead end, but so is a strictly theoretically approach disinterested in the physical qualities of an artwork. It is both of these realities in accord with each other that truly account for an artwork’s totality. Examining the medium of painting at the end of the millennium and after the eclipse of High Modernism, the book offers artists fresh insights on how to move forward. Seen alongside contemporary realities like the saturation of images, digital, and virtual networks, and the dictates of the art market, the book is more prescient than ever.

Franklin Evans, “bluetorednude” (2014), acrylic on canvas, 67 x 64 in

Evans’s show at Ameringer McEnery Yohe gallery is an overload of visual, diaristic, and statistical information. A quick way to orient oneself in the space is to identify nine large paintings, more or less traditionally hung in the front and rear galleries, and note how the paintings are conceptually tethered to an array of installation elements on the floors, walls, and internal areas. From there, a viewer can see connective threads between the contents of *Painting as Model* and the installation where Evans doesn’t use the book as a theoretical manual as much as let the ideas wash over him. Concentrating on three essays about Matisse, Mondrian, and Barnett Newman, Evans fluidly ties together words and pictures from *Painting as Model* with his own art making practices and autobiographical material. The exhibition is a *tour de force*, a rendition of mental and physical processes demonstrating ideas gleaned from the book and actualized in the work.

Franklin Evans, "matisseasmodel" (2013), acrylic on canvas, 70 1/2 x 60 in

In the discrete paintings, Evans appears to be using the scuffed and littered surfaces of his own studio walls or floors as subject matter. Each painting is overlaid with assorted items at their actual size: swatches, notes, photos, prints, rulers, drips, scribbles, spills, and yards of colored tape. They are painted in a *trompe l'oeil* manner with the picture plane serving literally as a flat surface and these illusionistic images are cross referenced with their physically real counterparts strung throughout the gallery. The ephemeral and factual elements with allusions to the creative process and external world bring to mind Sylvia Mangold's early works depicting tape, yardsticks, and floor planes and Manny Farber's later still lifes that teem with incident. Even so, Evan's paintings, with their more radically shifting surfaces, launch us into the more nebulous realms of immersive media and cyberspace.

Franklin Evans, “paintingassupermodel” (2014), mixed-media installation

In the large, front gallery, the left wall is covered in a Mondrian-esque grid, the back with a depiction of Matisse’s “Romanian Blouse” (1940). These images reappear altered on a central column and in many other sections of the installation. The right wall is bisected with spreadsheets at top that spell out such things as the art world’s 200 supercollectors, derivatives and net worth around various artworks, and Evans’ own curatorial notes and encounters. At bottom there are installation shots from other shows where Evans has reproduced the books from his own library. Many images are distorted or defaced and commingle with candid shots of various artists and models from high and low strata of society. Tape likely used in the paintings for stenciling appears recycled, stuck to the gallery walls or marking off sections of the rooms.

Franklin Evans, “irwinorange” (2014), acrylic on canvas, 78 1/2 x 53 1/2 in

As we put all of this together, it becomes clear that what happens privately in the studio is in direct connection to what happens publicly. One senses Evans’s painting existing among a world of images — even the painting’s constitutional formal parts are regurgitated as images and self-generating. Evans has been known in his practice to reconfigure his work, adding new components or remaking an installation as it traverses galleries and museums, the art market, or moves in and out of his studio. It’s as if Evans’s tape, thread, and castoffs are formal elements on the move, with the artist and artworks coexisting in a ubiquitous, flowing network.

In proximity to Bois’s book, we consider the time and the place that figured into the radical daring of both Newman’s and Mondrian’s stripes and grids, what influenced them and propelled their art toward something that hadn’t been done before. And we remember that both of these

artists utilized tape to work out their compositions. All the while, actual tape, with its rhymes and rhythms inherent in the bold colors, planes and contours and landscaping potential zigs and zags throughout the gallery.

There are structural elements in the show that connote the glowing screens and floating windows of computers. Evans has constructed vitrines made of transparent Plexiglass scrims, and viewers are steered toward looking through these in order to make out pictures facing inwards or to see objects entombed within the cells. Likewise, three wooden rectangles that look like painting supports turned backwards hang on a wall to resemble the windows of Evans's studio looking out to traffic on Houston Street. Each is sized with a photographic depiction of a glass pane adorned with colored snippets of transparent tape and paper that cleverly inverts the idea of painting plane as window onto the world.

Franklin Evans, "paintingassupermodel" (2014), mixed-media installation

Since *Painting as Model*'s publication, Bois has noted his appreciation of the art historian Rosalind Krauss's observations on Jackson Pollock's drip paintings — how Pollock, by deploying gravity and painting with a stick, did away with an autographic, gestural mark. And how, by painting on a horizontal plane, Pollock asserted the real over the imaginary to the degree that he introduced trash into his compositions (cigarette butts, nuts and bolts, etc). These interpretations signaled a twist on what had formerly been predominantly formal readings of Pollocks work, and Evans' work takes off from these possibilities.

Franklin Evans at the opening of his show (image courtesy Oliver Frankel)

Bois also asserts the importance of a dialectic, how in order to clarify his own positions on art, he found it useful to read Clement Greenberg's clear-minded and rigorous criticism even if he saw in it a failure to see beyond a solely formalist reading of artworks. The polemics governing either a formalist or anti-formalist position can have a deadening either/or rigidity. As a painter, I find Evans's work fascinating because he hasn't thrown the baby out with the bath water; the materiality of paint matters to him even as he has found ways of linking painting to process and transitive practices. The sheer painterly messiness and "more is more" aesthetic of Evans's installation is refreshing and ambitious, sharing the sprawling formal lexicons seen in installations by Jessica Stockholder or Jennifer Bartlett.

Upon entering or leaving the gallery, a visitor comes across a portrait of Evans hanging high on a wall across from the entrance. It was interesting to discover on Facebook, soon after the show's reception, that someone had photographed the artist at his opening standing beneath his own image. This double self-portrait now making the rounds on social media is an image too good not to be used again, realized anew in different contexts and freshly reconsidered.

Franklin Evans: paintingassupermodel *continues at Ameringer McEnery Yohe (525 West 22nd Street, Chelsea, Manhattan) through August 1.*

artcritical

August 5, 2014

Model as Mayhem: Franklin Evans pace Yve-Alain Bois

Matthew Farina

Franklin Evans: paintingassupermodel at Ameringer| McEnery| Yohe
June 5 through August 1, 2014
525 W. 22nd Street (between 10th and 11th avenues) New York

Installation view, "paintingassupermodel," 2014, at Ameringer McEnery & Yohe. Courtesy of the artist and Ameringer McEnery & Yohe

Entering Ameringer McEnery & Yohe, those who have followed Franklin Evans's work over the last 10 years will recognize the artist's application of readily accessible, process-spun materials to the gallery walls and floor. Materials that might otherwise be pulled from a painter's trashcan, including paint-scuffed masking tape, clippings from photo albums and incomplete works on paper, are positioned in bursts of action that may at first seem disorganized. The solo exhibition, "paintingassupermodel," is Evans's first at Ameringer and succeeds as a personal rumination on Yve-Alain Bois's 1990 book *Painting as Model*. Celebrated abstract paintings by Matisse, Mondrian and Newman, which Bois discusses in his book, make appearances in the exhibition.

Evans's typical array of materials is supplemented at Ameringer by enormous inkjet prints on paper and canvas running longitudinally along the right side of the gallery and hung in overlapping bands from floor to ceiling. Overtop the printed matter, eight discrete, densely colored paintings on canvas are hung at slightly different heights throughout the gallery at more or less eye-level. Other supports for paintings, which appear to be hung backwards, look like window frames covered in color-copied photos. Jutting from a support beam in the center of the gallery, two rectilinear Plexiglas sculptures are adorned with tape and clippings. On the left, a Mondrian painting has been recreated in strips of black tape, its dimensions stretched horizontally to fit the gallery wall.

Franklin Evans, matisseasmodel, 2013. Acrylic on canvas, 70 1/2 x 60 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Ameringer McEnery & Yohe.

Visually engaged by Evans's materials, ideas in Bois's book are spliced and resituated. Evans grapples with Bois's primary argument, that art theory loses meaning when applied dogmatically to critical problems — that, for modern art to be understood, it cannot be stripped of its context or, to the opposite extreme, divorced from its technical making. Evans expands these ideas by presenting his process as the unpolished model (literally a "pin-up") and by turning the gallery into a Rubik's cube of cultural fallout. The abstracted female figure in Matisse's *Romanian Blouse* (1940) is repeated prominently on walls and in a few of the paintings. In *matisseasmodel* (2013), Matisse's subject has been re-painted into square patches that intermingle with flats of saturated color. Slight differences in the many iterations of the woman's face reinforce Evan's incessant act of re-interpretation — a honing-in on Matisse's painting as Bois does in his chapter "Matisse and 'Arche-drawing.'" As exemplified by the ubiquitous model, Evans's references are almost never linear. Digital photographs of his installation hang at one end of the gallery, and then those spaces appear in actuality in the rear of the space — a kind of mirror imaging that Evans has described as a response to Rauschenberg's 1957 *Factum* works.

Evans's approach to Bois is a salient aspect of "paintingassupermodel" — it scrutinizes a lineage that is relevant to Evans's practice — but that focus is not all the show has to offer. In fact, the subtext of Bois's book dissipates the more one's eyes follow detour after detour through the skewed grids of Evans's canvases. The implicit formalist grid in *irwinorange* (2014) looks as organized as an aerial city map from afar and more like a Gee's Bend quilt upon closer inspection. The artist's keen sense of humor can be felt in his pliant, idiosyncratic painting vocabulary and in his witty titles. The word *model* takes on multiple meanings; Internet printouts of male and female models, gleaned from the worlds of fashion or soft-core erotica are intermittently spaced around the gallery to form an underlayer of camp. The title of one recent painting, *boo,iseeyou* (2013), is a quip appropriated from the TV show *RuPaul's Drag Race*.

Franklin Evans, boo,iseeyou, 2013. Acrylic on canvas, 68 1/2 × 65 1/2 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Ameringer McEnery & Yohe.

Models are also presented in the form of statistical charts, derivatives and spreadsheets that trace (rather unromantically) Evans's own path through the New York City art world. Having spent half his twenties working in finance, the artist continues to be a strategist and a quantifier. Giant spreadsheets and typewritten lists adorning the largest wall at Ameringer are digital relics pulled from old hard drives. Among these enlarged documents is an outdated list of NYC galleries that Evans recorded in 2002. Practical notations reveal how Evans got his bearings, how he plotted what was what and learned who was who. Across from the gallery's entrance, to the right of the spreadsheets, a pixilated, life-sized photograph of the artist hangs at balcony height. In the image, Evans stands nonchalantly at three-quarter view with his back turned to the wall, which represents his past work. He faces yet another list — ARTnews's "200 Top Collectors" — which becomes another obstacle and extension of the narrative. Through these clues, an artist's career becomes another model to be examined, that of artist as aspiring super-artist.

Despite his implicit use of autobiographical content, Evans is not really a storyteller with his art as much as he is a record-keeper, a philosopher and an interpreter of what

he reads. If Evans's career continues to be plotted, and if one can imagine such a chart for this purpose, the coordinates might be made with one axis for the artist's resourcefulness (of idea, of material, of professional adaptability) and another axis for the passage of time. Evans positions and bravely repositions his material past much like he rereads or reconsiders texts, like he has done with *Painting as Model*. His process persists as a slow and thoughtful evolution of fast-looking art.

ARTE FUSE

June 9, 2014

Franklin Evans Super Sized Pastiche Royale

OSCAR LALUYAN

Colorful work and characters on Thursday Art Night

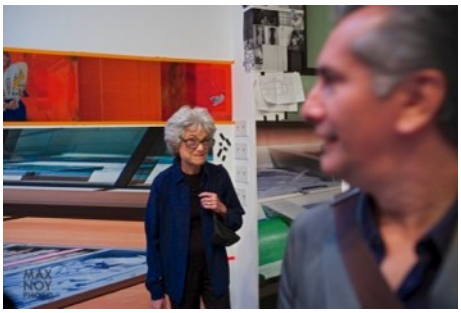
Close detail of work by Franklin Evans

The studio is where it's at – that's ground zero where the artist's thought process and experimentation explode into fruition. Now what if you take that investigation into the gallery interior and set it free all over? AF walked into the solo exhibition of Franklin Evans for paintingassupermodellast June 5th to witness the full color explosion come to life. Maybe there was no Gisele Bundchen or Chanel Iman aka Super Models present but art was definitely making itself known in Super Sized doses.

Based on the 1993 Yves-Alain Bois book Painting As Model and his essays on Matisse, Mondrian, and Newman that Evans covered every surface of the gallery with paintings, collages, digital prints on canvas / paper / silk, photographic sculptures, floor works and sculpture vitrines that laid bare his studio process into an art installation. The patchwork formed by squares of various images, patterns and notes evoke a visual quilt that informs yet in its multiplicity kept the elusive and abstract thought of his artistic process still a secret. Evans exposed a lot yet reveals nothing singular about his artistic process. This proves that art is never distilled into a simple idea because it is a complex network of ideas made cohesive by the creative prowess and investigative process.

Artist Franklin Evans

There are elements of Matisse, Mondrian and Newman who are all masters of color forms. Evans took those cues and made his own visual landscape of color that is a modern matrix grid projected in large scale. It is allowing us to flip through his art journal but we get a wallop of everything thrown our way. Quite clever and ambitious but it does so with a concise and controlled manner that kept one engaged instead of overwhelmed. It is a super sized artistic skill that Evans managed to pull off and pass with flying colors.



Art fans come to pay homage during Art Night

The show reflects today's seismic shift in information as bits and pieces to be processed in a millisecond. Welcome to the age of fast information at your fingertips, held by your electronic

devices laden with apps, attention spans that are spastic and that instant gratification of the now. Evans may have demonstrated a visual pastiche of the artistic model in the process but it is also a commentary on how we digest and process said visual information. The art world may have gone digital and tech savvy but it is still quantified by what the eyes capture. The visual cues might have evolved but the manner of viewing art remains the same. One still has to look in order to be informed in a variety of ways. Look all you want because what you choose to see either the tiny gem or the super sized version is entirely up to you. Anyway, as it stands in the art world, you'd better WORK!!!

Franklin Evans: paintingassupermodel / On View: June 5 – August 1, 2014
Ameringer McEnery Yohe. 525 West 2nd Street. NYC, NY 10011

Art Review by: Oscar A. Laluyan
Select Art Images from Ameringer McEnery Yohe courtesy of the artist
Photography by: Max Noy Photo

Studio Installation Image of Franklin Evans Photo by Tom Powel

In Full Color Installation at Ameringer McEnery Yohe

Art comes to life off the wall and those who came to see it


Franklin Evans Studio Installation Photo by Tom Powel

ART NEW ENGLAND

Franklin Evans: juddrules

by Robert Moeller

Any combining, mixing, adding, diluting, exploiting, vulgarizing or popularizing of abstract art deprives art of its essence and depraves the artist's artistic consciousness. Art is free, but it is not a free-for-all. The one struggle in art is the struggle of artists against artists, of artist against artist, of the artist-as-artist within and against the artist-as-man, -animal or - vegetable. Artists who claim their artwork comes from nature, life, reality, earth or heaven, as "mirrors of the soul" or "reflections of conditions" or "instruments of the universe," who cook up "new images of man"—figures and "nature-in-abstraction"—pictures, are subjectively and objectively, rascals or rustics. -Donald Judd, American Dialog, Vol. 1-5

Donald Judd was an exquisite contrarian. Call him a minimalist and he'd say, no, he wasn't. To be fair, the term itself was widely rejected by artists working at this narrow-end of the artistic spectrum, and so it was only natural that what started out as an explanation of the work, became the rules that governed both its wider understanding and presentation. Looking back, what's become clear is that the dialogues that emerged from this era were as intrinsic to the work (from the artist's perspective) as the work itself. In part, it was the apparatus of distinction—the breaking with old ideas that felt stale and over-used. It was a carving down to the essential nature of an object that interested Judd, but it required sensitivity to some rules-based order.

At Montserrat College of Art, Franklin Evans has expertly taken Judd's advisories to heart, if not literally, in an installation called juddrules that continuously sweeps across the entire gallery like an elegant wave of ordered form and natural chaos. What Evans captures is the tensions that fill out the interior life of a painting, informed by biography, color and a wide array of materials. As Judd said, "Art is free, but is not a free-for-all." And Evans' highly structured/unstructured homage to him adheres brilliantly to Judd's sage and cautionary directive.

Indeed, what Evans accomplishes is allowing the viewer inside the deliberate mosaic of the

creative process. Everything is laid bare and yet the work is fully cohesive. Evans uses tape to mark, set borders and string like connective tissue. It hangs from the ceiling, slashes across painted surfaces and stands in for line, gesture and mark-making. Its very flimsiness becomes its strength, in architecture forms that feel permanent and deliberate.

Evans situates several metal folding chairs throughout the exhibition to enable viewers to take in specific channels of the work. One view opens and closes like a stretch of roller coaster track bracketed by vertical lines of tape. Here, the artist asks you to take a journey with him, and as your eyes move down this sliver of the overall installation, the information he has placed in the corridor begins to speed up before a gentle upward curve slows it down again.

Seated in another chair, there's a broader view of the work. Here, one begins to see a long, interconnected, painting take shape. It isn't so much the intersection of painting and sculpture, but it's the intersection of a painting with you in it—under you, beside you and above you. It is like being injected into the very essence of the work. The forms are so organic and natural that they make no specific claims as a single gesture but instead inform the whole. Everything is balanced and the absence of any visual neediness is the fulcrum upon which it all rides. The stability and control of the application of ideas inherent to creating the work are exposed and an interior monologue emerges. It is one in which the artist engages with the ideas of another artist while writing an autobiography of sorts, about himself, or if you will a form of portraiture about the absorption and consumption of ideas.

It begins here with Judd and transforms itself fully into Evans. What Judd allows, Evans expands upon. Judd's rules become markers in Evans' story. It's not a question of primacy but rather the natural accrual of information and influence and its reinvestment in new work. Interestingly, one wonders if Judd would find Evans' approach too unruly, too much the free- for-all he cautioned against. That being said, it is hard to imagine Judd finding fault in the precise nature of Evans' harnessing of so many disparate elements into such a singular and profound work.

Image Credit: Franklin Evans, "juddrules" Installation View, 2014, mixed media. (Photo credit Bethany Acheson)

Robert Moeller is online content coordinator for Art New England.

The Boston Globe

GALLERIES

With artist Franklin Evans, an immersive experience

By Cate McQuaid
NOVEMBER 18, 2014

Franklin Evans's "circumjacentoffsetloweredgeredorangeochergray."

Franklin Evans drops viewers into his own weird wonderland. Once you're down the rabbit hole, you may be as awed and dismayed as Alice herself.

Evans has two shows up now, at Montserrat College of Art Gallery and Steven Zevitas Gallery. Walk into his installation at Montserrat, and it's like stepping inside a painting. Colors and lines are everywhere: on walls, on the ceiling and floor; in corridors of vertical strips of colored tape. The same is true, on a more modest scale, at Zevitas.

It's breathtaking, and daunting. With his hues and gestures, with his art-history

references, the artist solidly places us within the rubric of painting. But with most paintings, the viewer regards a discrete object. This one swallows us up. It is much bigger than us, but there are tiny things in it, such as texts too small to read. The effect discombobulates.

Evans engulfs us in his process, too. He starts with writings by minimalist icon Donald Judd, who was a critic attuned to technique. Snippets of Judd's reviews appear throughout both shows, and provide launching points for Evans's painterly meditations. For instance, Judd describes in detail an abstract work of squares within squares, orange at the center and gray on the edges.

High on one wall at Montserrat, Evans has a painting that fits that description. At Zevitas, several discrete paintings, all on unstretched canvas, accompany the installation, and in one, "circumjacentoffsetloweredgeredorangeochergray," the same color scheme arises in a jittery patchwork of images. Although painted, they look photocopied or scanned, groggily blinking with references to artists such as Matisse and Sigmar Polke.

The installations, too, roil with art-history rumination. We're not just inside Evans's painting, we're inside his imagination, which roams compulsively from his childhood to his art idols to naked people, and more.

The artist searches the Internet for images of his paintings, or those of others, and prints them out, no matter the quality. He recycles pictures of previous installations. In his paintings, he may start with a small reproduction of a fraction of a painting by, say, Polke ("polkedots," at Zevitas). He'll zoom in and reproduce repeatedly, then paint what he sees.

In the paintings, the result is clever and visually exciting, but half-chewed, as if Evans hasn't quite integrated his art-history lessons. The installations, while brimming with historical imagery, crackle with originality. They demonstrate how one man's overflowing mind reflects two great rushing rivers of culture — art history and the whitewater of the Internet.

ARTFORUM

"DECENTER"

ABRONS ARTS CENTER
466 Grand Street
February 17–April 7

The first Armory Show in 1913 effectively introduced American audiences to modern art; the vast, widely publicized art fair served as the United States debut for European avant-garde movements like Cubism and Fauvism, and provided major exposure for stateside modernists like Charles Sheeler and Marsden Hartley. "DECENTER: An Exhibition on the Centenary of the 1913 Armory Show" at the Abrons Arts Center—the initial announcement of the venue's construction was made in 1963 on the occasion of the Armory's fiftieth anniversary—pays homage to the show's particular influence on contemporary art by featuring digital-age perspectives on Cubist space and abstraction.

Douglas Coupland, *Imagine a Car Crash . . .*, 2011, acrylic and latex on canvas, 72 x 72".

Appropriately, the exhibition's website hosts a rhizomatic cluster of artists' projects, from Diane Dwyer's psychedelic GIF, *WORRY/don't*, 2011, to Rafaël Rozendaal's abstraction-inspired animation, *from the dark past .com*, 2009. At the physical exhibition, Franklin Evans's sprawling installation, *Bluenudesdissent*, 2013, strives to emulate the website's encompassing connectivity. Evans "hyperlinks" the exhibition's artists to the stars of the 1913 Armory, charting the intergenerational connections between them (humorists Duchamp and Gabriel Orozco, painters Cézanne and N. Dash) through color-coded tape and juxtaposed images of their work sourced from the Internet. Elsewhere, artists render the language of digital media, like Douglas Coupland's painting, *Imagine a Car Crash…*, 2011, which pairs geometric QR codes with Gerhard Richter–esque color blocks, or John Houck's creased digital print, *Untitled #155,809,999 combinations of a 2X2 grid, 30 colors*, 2013, which uses digital technology to exaggerate the compositional strategies of serial Minimalism.

The most provocative works, however, address the abstractions of history and power. In Liz Magic Laser's *The Digital Face*, 2012, dancers perform the gesticulations of Presidents George H. W. Bush and Barack Obama during their respective 1990 and 2012 State of the Union addresses. Andrea Geyer's drawing, *Indelible*, 2013, plumbs the gender politics of the first Armory Show, depicting the names of the 1913 fair's female artists whose reputations now pale in comparison to their male counterparts. Decenteredness, in this curatorial framework, revises the 1990's term of globalization. Instead of an all-connected international field of artists, the exhibition's focus on virtual networks shifts both the methods of artistic practice and the exchange of ideas to an all-dispersed system that seeks representation.

— *Wendy Vogel*

HYPERALLERGIC

Tracing a Path from Cubism to Digital Art

Review by Jillian Steinhauer 2 April 2013

I first learned about Cubism in an art history class my sophomore year of college. I remember the moment of revelation, after reading a lot about it but still failing to grasp what exactly Picasso and Braque were after. In the darkened lecture hall one afternoon, our teacher summed it up this way: how sparingly could you paint a face while still having the viewer understand it as a face? What was the bare minimum required for representation? As legend has it, these questions and the art they inspired changed the course of art history forever.

Is the same true of the digital revolution? Are widespread computer and internet usage changing the way we make art and understand the world? The answer to those questions is undoubtedly "yes," and that affirmative is the starting point for Decenter, a physical and virtual exhibition curated by Andrianna Campbell and Daniel S. Palmer at the Abrons Arts Center. Celebrating in a refreshingly forward-thinking way the centennial of the Armory Show, which unleashed Cubism on the US in 1913, Decenter features 27 artists "who explore the changes in perception precipitated by our digital age and who closely parallel the Cubist vernacular of fragmentation, nonlinearity, simultaneity, and decenteredness," the curators write. As Cubism was to the 20th century, then, so digital and digitally inspired art are to the 21st.

It's a plausible premise, and the curators seem to first make their case by highlighting the aesthetic overlap of the two movements, a connection I was surprised I hadn't made before. Geometric planes and the breaking up of images into squares (cubes) abound in both, as does a dogged interest in the manipulation of flatness and depth. This comes through especially in the physical-space exhibition of Decenter, at Abrons. Upstairs, one room features an excellent pair of paintings by Gabriel Orozco that filter flowers through pixels, while nearby Andrew Kuo has transformed the actions and elements of a single day into a beautifully blocky, nonsensical chart.

Across the way, Franklin Evans has taken over a wedge-shaped staircase landing with one of his patented installations, in which colorful panels of images and words are laid out, strung up, and connected intermittently with tape, like the contents of someone's mind (or computer, or the two as one) exploded into bits. In an adjacent space, a sculpture by Michael Delucia, who creates his geometric forms in enamel and plywood using software and a computer-guided router, brings the concept and practice of digital abstraction into three dimensions.

Franklin Evans, "Bluenudedissent" (2013)

All of these works, as well as a handful more at the center, succeed in not just transmitting a digital aesthetic but imposing it on the viewer, pushing our eyes and minds into different modes of perception. But much of the art in Decenter's physical show — including good, solid pieces by David Kennedy Cutler, Douglas Melini, and Liz Magic Laser — feels digitally inflected (or

affected) rather than truly immersed in the digital, which means the connections with Cubism feel mostly superficial, confined to diagonal lines and fragmented planes.

That's less the case in the online exhibition, where the gleefully chaotic network of artists and artworks you encounter immediately points to the vastness of our digital moment. Although not all of the works here are digital — click on some, and you'll simply see an image of a painting or installation, which can be confusing and disappointing. Some of the digital works, too, are boring, or at least don't outlive the neat factor; how many geometrically abstract looping animations or GIFs can you watch before growing restless?

A number of pieces here, however, are outstanding. They point to the ways in which artists are not just making art about or on the internet but tapping into and transmitting a profound shift in visual culture, in much the same way that the Cubists did. Perhaps the best of these is Brenna Murphy's "Latticescanr" (2013), a never-ending network of pages filled with images and GIFs of abstract forms that generally look like a cross between sea coral and ancient Incan or Aztec sculptures, sometimes accompanied by ominous electronic tones. "Latticescanr" is an online maze, a kind of digital architecture that's profoundly unsettling because there's no prescribed way to navigate it.

Other standouts include James Bridle's "Rorschmap" (2013), which turns the logic of Google Maps on its head by transforming sites into Rorschach-like mirror images that you can expand or contract with your arrow keys, and Jennifer Chan's "Grey Matter" (2012), which mashes up pop culture, net art, and teen-girl online aesthetics into a overloaded diaristic video that questions what privacy and sharing mean in the age of social media. Joe Hamilton's "An Illusion of Democratic Experience" (2012) presents a series of virtual collages, many of the image snippets seemingly drawn from art historical canvases, as rotating slides in a slide show, which is set to the sounds of a clicking projector and people talking and wandering in a vast hall. Listen for a while and you'll envision the Great Hall of the Met and begin thinking about how the internet has supplanted the encyclopedic museum as the profferer of the great democratic visual experience.

These pieces offer up digitalness as more than just a style or a new aesthetic, and in that sense, they make for case Campbell's and Palmer's thesis. And yet, there's one sticking point I keep coming back to: Cubism was a revolution within art that ostensibly had a broader cultural impact; the digital revolution, meanwhile, is a societal change that's been shaking up art. In that sense, digital art began as a reaction, whereas Cubism is hailed as a catalyst — which leads me to wonder if visual art has the power to spark such widespread change anymore (if it really ever did). In the end, though, I suppose it doesn't entirely matter, so long as the artists who are leading the way into uncharted territory are the ones who are remembered when the present becomes history.

Decenter: An Exhibition on the Centenary of the 1913 Armory Show continues at Abrons Arts Center (466 Grand Street, Lower East Side, Manhattan) through April 7. The online exhibition will stay up longer, until a yet-to-be-determined date.

The Boston Globe Theater & art

ART REVIEW

‘PAINT THINGS’ is off the wall

By Cate McQuaid | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT FEBRUARY 07, 2013

Painting is the linchpin of art history. That’s why some thrill and some bristle when artists paint outside of the lines. We expect a painting to hang flat on a wall, to have a discrete rectangular surface, usually framed. We expect a picture. That format invites a particular interaction, in which we imaginatively enter the space it offers us.

CLEMENTS PHOTOGRAPHY & DESIGN

Franklin Evans’s installation “paintthinks” in “PAINT THINGS” at the deCordova Museum and Sculpture Park.

In “PAINT THINGS: beyond the stretcher” at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, the paintings spill out of bounds into our space. They peel off the wall, they slither up corners, they hang from the ceiling. They don’t even necessarily utilize paint, although they all deploy the rubric of painting.

This sprightly exhibit with deep theoretical roots blurs boundaries — between painting and sculpture, painting and performance, painting and architecture. Genre busting is nothing new. Artists habitually push at edges and rewrite definitions. Think of Robert Rauschenberg’s combines, which positioned collaged paintings more as objects than pictures, or of Anne Truitt, who was as much a colorist as she was a sculptor. Sculpture spawned installation art. It’s all constantly changing.

But the ideas behind “PAINT THINGS,” while brewing for decades, have lately hit a boiling point. Dina Deitsch, the deCordova’s curator of contemporary art, points out in her catalog essay that no fewer than seven gallery shows on this theme have appeared in the Northeast in recent years. These include a fresh and nervy show at Steven Zevitas Gallery in 2011, “Not About Paint,” organized by Evan J. Garza, which was the inspiration for this exhibit, which Garza co-curates with Deitsch.

CLEMENTS PHOTOGRAPHY & DESIGN

Jessica Stockholder’s “Kissing the Wall #5 With Yellow.”

They hang their circus of an exhibition on two artistic tent poles, Jessica Stockholder and Cheryl Donegan, and art they were making roughly 20 years ago. Stockholder’s painterly sculptures explode notions of flatness and space. Donegan’s feminist performance art confronts what it means to be the object of the viewer’s gaze. Both, to be fair, took cues from Lynda Benglis, who was spilling paint on the floor and making art of her sexuality long before they came along.

PAINT THINGS: beyond the stretcher

deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, 51 Sandy Pond Road , Lincoln 781-259-8355. http://www.decordova.org

Closing date: April 21

Stockholder saw sculpture through a painter’s lens with works in her 1988-1990 “Kissing the Wall” series, one of which is on view here. Traditionally, paintings hug the wall; sculptures stand free. Not here. Yellow and gray paint coat skeins of yarn and sheets of newspaper piled on a chair. A light bulb behind the chair lights up the wall. Painterly, composed on a human scale, it’s confrontational in its three-dimensional assertion that it’s as much painting as sculpture.

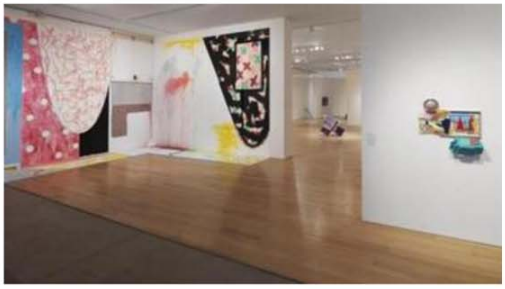
There’s a natural progression from Stockholder to younger artists such as Sarah

Cain, whose terrific "killing me softly" installation careens over walls, around a corner, and onto the floor, swallowing canvases whole with razzle-dazzle wall paintings, looping chains, and neon string. Or Franklin Evans's "paintthinks," a room that pulses with colorful stripes on the wall and suspended from the ceiling like Barnett Newman's zips stepping out to dance, and an immersive collage of texts and images that represent the lively cave of Evans's mind.

Then there's Stockholder's most direct descendant. Katie Bell's smart, disturbing "Blind Impact," made with paint and the rubble of a gutted room, hangs on the wall like a canvas, but also creeps up onto the ceiling, with shards of wood and blots of gunk dotting the upper expanse like shrapnel after an explosion.

Donegan sets a defiant tone with her 1993 performance video "Kiss My Royal Irish Ass (K.M.R.I.A.)." Dressed in a green bra and thong, Donegan dips her rear in a puddle of green paint, then plants it on paper to make paintings of a clover, all to the sappy trilling of "Danny Boy." At the end, she sits and consumes a pint of Guinness. Talk about action painting! She politicizes the painterly gesture by using her body as a brush.

Her acolytes here include Kate Gilmore, whose performance video "Like This, Before" follows the artist, in her pretty skirt and kitty-cat heels, as she repeatedly climbs a ladder onto a black platform to fill cylindrical vases with white paint. Then she kicks them all over, down black gullies that empty into round vases at the bottom.



CLEMENTS PHOTOGRAPHY & DESIGN

Sarah Cain's installation "Killing Me Softly."

You can't miss the sexual metaphors. Gilmore, too, thumbs her nose at the action painters, an especially macho group of Abstract Expressionists. Then, her black-and-white palette also recalls Frank Stella's much cooler black paintings, striped with white. The black platform, sodden with white paint and strewn with shattered glass from the broken vases, makes an imposing painting itself.

In an exhibit about painting as an object, videos present a special problem: They're far less material than a traditional painting. The curators address that in part by including Donegan's paint-stained chair, and Gilmore's sculptural remains are part of her process. But other videos here, such as Allison Schulnik's poignant and comic claymation shorts, cannot alter the passive viewing experience.

When painting pops off the wall into a viewer's space, we respond with our bodies as well as our eyes. We may feel engulfed, drawn in, or commandeered. Expecting to look at a picture, we may find ourselves inside one. "PAINT THINGS" prods us to leap over gaps in our own perception and understanding. Go ahead and jump.

Cate McQuaid can be reached at catemcquaid@gmail.com.

PRICE $5.99

THE NEW YORKER

APRIL 16, 2012

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

FRANKLIN EVANS

There are seven unstretched paintings in this exhibition, but you'll be hard pressed to find them amid the rainbow stripes of artist's tape, the snapshots of friends, family, and art-world insiders, and the scans of book covers lining the transparent floor at the gallery's entrance. Walking into the gallery is like entering a hyperorganized brain. Objects are obsessively assembled; photographs hang in a gridded formation, tethered to threads attached to the floor and the ceiling. But a sound piece hints at more primal impulses—among the quotes recited are lines from "Secret Historian," the biography of Samuel Steward, a tattoo artist and literary figure who kept notoriously meticulous records of his sexual exploits. Through April 15. (Scott, 1 Rivington St. 212-358-8767.)

Art NEW YORK

EDITED BY MIRANDA SIEGEL

April 2012

SO MUCH TO LOOK AT Walk into Franklin Evans's sumptuous new show and onto a floor of what looks like shelves of books, through a hall, and into an open gallery decked out in all manner of collages, photos, paintings, and sculptures, and your perceptions are thrown into a topsy-turvy, skewed polyphonic dumbfounded glee. Evans creates a walk-in index of marks, moves, motions, systems, and grids, with flickering references to sex, love, food, texture, time, and intensity. It's a living representation of a relentless, restless mind always at work, breaking it all down and putting it back together. A show that gives until it hurts to see (at Sue Scott Gallery through April 15). JERRY SALTZ

HYPERALLERGIC
Sensitive to Art & its Discontents

Galleries

Pulling Down the Curtain

by **Howard Hurst** on March 13, 2012

Franklin Evans, Eyes on the Edge, Installation View (all photos courtesy Sue Scott Gallery)

Franklin Evans is a Manhattan-based artist. You might have heard of him as a result of his involvement in PS1's 2010 installment of *Greater New York*. I knew little about the artist until I walked into his current exhibition *eyesontheedge* at Sue Scott Gallery. He is a painter and installation artist of the self aware/self conscious brand. Upon entering the gallery the visitor is forced to walk across a Plexiglas-faced bookshelf installed on the floor. Resting on the upturned shelves is a carefully installed library — presumably the artist's own.

Franklin Evans, "Eyes on the Edge," Installation View

As an artist there is a conscious choice, whether to allow the viewer behind the curtain. This isn't necessarily a matter of honesty (it is easy to lie, even in the studio) but of power, of how much to expose. This impulse has its own danger. The clichéd image of the artist as a bleeding heart self biographer is probably more poisonous than the Gowanus canal. It is just as easy to retreat across the spectrum behind the steely surface of irony. Evans walks this line. His is a performative practice situated in the act of cutting down that curtain. The artist has carefully transformed the space into a studio where we are privy to a spotlit opera telecast from backstage.

Here is a cacophony of imagery and information. It would be easy to write off this installation as a multimedia scrap book of the artist's life. We are lulled into a false sense of security, bated with the crusty, romantic tropes of a studio artist. However, spend enough time in the space and the carefully articulated; site specific nature of the project becomes apparent. Only then does the installation start to dazzle.

The installation is a painstakingly constructed, artificial environment that pushes out from the walls. In the middle of the studio the artist's collection of black and white photographs form a visual diary of inspiration and reference. These forms allude not only to this artist but the space that these sorts of images occupy in every studio. They bring to mind other famous photographs, particularly of Francis Bacon and James Rosenquist, their floors scattered with cut and pasted magazine adds.

Evans' collection of colorful tape and image based collages ricochet in and out of the artist's trompe l'oeil canvasses. They appear to embody the crusty, cast off remains of studio practice. On closer inspection we realize they are carefully rendered in paint. Tape, photographs and gridded lines function to foreground the background. When staring at these up close I immediately think of Daniel Buren and other 1970s-era painters. The difference is self confidence. Evans, like many of his generation, has found strength in the unfinished.

Franklin Evans, "Flatbed Factum As Studio Wall" (2012) acrylic on canvas, 72 x 78 Inches

An installation view of Eyesontheedge (click to enlarge)

The three or four large scale pictures are pinned directly to the wall. Each of these canvasses, like the walls surrounding them, are heavily worked. The surfaces are layered with vibrating color that seems to flaunt a lack of editing. Like a screenshot, they display a moment of creation and deliberation — one transported from the actual studio, or in fact that may never have existed.

In the middle of a stage set with props, these actual paintings are rendered even more special. This is an example of why it is best not to judge a book (or in this case a library) by its cover. Evans is crafty; his space alludes to the systems of perception and judgment all around us. Sure, *eyesontheedge* confuses and confounds notions of authenticity. It is easy to question what in the gallery is real and what is imagined. It also seems to question whether any of that matters. Behind the conceptual detritus strewn across the gallery-studio floor, the installation seems to smile with irreverence. The rooms of the Sue Scott Gallery are full of the pleasure and complexity of looking.

Franklin Evans: Eyesontheedge *continues at the Sue Scott Gallery (1 Rivington Street, Lower East Side, Manhattan) until April 15.*

Franklin Evans

Sue Scott Gallery // March 2–April 15

Ideas, identities, and objects merge in Evans's installation *eyesontheedge*. One enters by walking over a sculptural rendition of the artist's shelved books; past photographs of his friends and family as well as images of work seen by him over the past year, all references to similar archives used by Gerhard Richter and Aby Warburg; and acrylic paintings that mimic crafty tape collages. Meandering through this meditation on the wellsprings of creation, visitors hear snippets of text read aloud. These elements stage an environment one is reluctant to leave.

Detail of *eyesontheedge*, 2012.

THE BROOKLYN RAIL
MAR 2012

ArtSeen

A Studio Visit with Franklin Evans: EYESONTHEEDGE

By Kara L. Rooney

"You can just step on the Plexi-covered portion," Evans said as I walked into the space and across the beginnings of the artist's installation at Sue Scott Gallery on the Lower East Side. I was walking on the front face of an upended bookshelf, recreated in measurements (180 by 60 by 4.5 inches) that accord precisely to the artist's personal library. Littered among the shelves of the sleek white structure were reproduced books from the artist's studio, neon-colored rolls of artist's tape, photo clipping ephemera, and bits of string. The illusion of stepping directly into studio debris was disorienting at first, and it was only one of the many surprises I would encounter over the course of three meetings with the artist, currently in the throes of installing his second solo exhibition at the gallery.

Franklin Evans's in progress installation at Sue Scott Gallery to accompany the studio web exclusive. Courtesy of Sue Scott Gallery.

Originally from Reno, Nevada, Franklin Evans is known for his architecturally inflected re-presentations of his New York studio. For his debut at MoMA PS1's 2010 installment of its "Greater New York" programming, Evans created a multi-layered, site-specific installation consisting of hundreds of feet of artist's tape, printed press releases, wall paintings, and text—material culled from either his personal experiences or his creative practice. Much of the same sensibility fills the space at Sue Scott, yet this time, Evans has transferred much of his ephemera-based imagery onto canvas, exhibiting a total of seven completed paintings in addition to site-specific wall and floor installations. At first glance, the paintings, which meticulously recreate the illusion of collage in two-dimensions, would seem to be about disrobing the illusion of the medium itself—a treatise (or attack) on art historical discourse à la Daniel Buren (much of the work consists of patterned organizations of striated

forms) or Frank Stella. But after numerous conversations with the artist and witnessing the work evolve, it becomes clear that this rather slick thesis is only one aspect of the artist's intention. Evans is arguably more interested in presenting a collection of systems: ones that, in their often slippery means of application, we use to make sense of the world around us, as fodder for the creative impulse, and as allegory for the artistic process itself. In fact, all of Evans's work is about process. And paint.

Franklin Evans Installation. Courtesy of Sue Scott Gallery.

With a B.A. from Stanford and an M.F.A. from the University of Iowa, Evans is institutionally trained as a painter, yet he considers himself a "materialist" first and foremost. That he has only recently begun reconstituting his imagery onto the moveable plane may be surprising for some. But when pressed as to whether or not this new activity could be categorized as contradictory, Evans responded that he has always been an interdisciplinary artist, albeit with strong ties to painting. Indeed, the shift to canvas in pieces like "wallcollectionwallsystem" and "flatbedfactumasstudiowall01" (all work 2012) was more of a functional move than an aesthetic one (snippets of tape, studio detritus, and unframed/raw working sketches still line the perimeter of the gallery walls), but that in no way diminishes the power and eloquence with which the artist speaks to that moment of recognition that sparks creative inspiration. In this sense, the paintings comprise only one piece of the puzzle, the viewer left incapable of separating their frenetic aura—often marked by a cadenced vortex of taped angles, lines, and triangular folds—from the geometrically-oriented debris and photographic systems that surround and at times engulf the canvases. It is only upon close inspection that the spell is broken and the image is revealed for what it is: acrylic paint on unprimed canvas. That the finished works often careen off the walls and onto the floor, as in "gnycollectionofwallobservation," only adds to their illusionistic effects, like draped sketches awaiting some final mark of artistic genius. What is most interesting about the work, however, is that it registers so many seemingly disparate sources of inspiration, from which the artist amasses these tactile accumulations of time and space.

Franklin Evans's in progress installation at Sue Scott Gallery to accompany the studio web exclusive. Courtesy of Sue Scott Gallery.

Originally from Reno, Nevada, Franklin Evans is known for his architecturally inflected re-presentations of his New York studio. For his debut at MoMA PS1's 2010 installment of its "Greater New York" programming, Evans created a multi-layered, site-specific installation consisting of hundreds of feet of artist's tape, printed press releases, wall paintings, and text—material culled from either his personal experiences or his creative practice. Much of the same sensibility fills the space at Sue Scott, yet this time, Evans has transferred much of his ephemera-based imagery onto canvas, exhibiting a total of seven completed paintings in addition to site-specific wall and floor installations. At first glance, the paintings, which meticulously recreate the illusion of collage in two-dimensions, would seem to be about disrobing the illusion of the medium itself—a treatise (or attack) on art historical discourse à la Daniel Buren (much of the work consists of patterned organizations of striated forms) or Frank Stella. But after numerous conversations with the artist and witnessing the work evolve, it becomes clear that this rather slick thesis is only one aspect of the artist's intention. Evans is arguably more interested in presenting a collection of systems: ones that, in their often slippery means of application, we use to make sense of the world around us, as fodder for the creative impulse, and as allegory for the artistic process itself. In fact, all of Evans's work is about process. And paint.

Franklin Evans Installation. Courtesy of Sue Scott Gallery.

One example is coded in the medium-format family and art world inkjet prints, titled "indexicalmeasfocalscreen2012," that line the exterior perimeter of the space, at times jutting out into the room to create gridded architectural dividers. Both physically and metaphorically, this series of images acts as a grounding element for the inherent chaos introduced by the strikingly loud-paletted paintings. As an entry point into the artist's mind, the prints are fascinating markers; touchstones such as Richter's and Warburg's atlases make up a number of the images, as do art world exhibitions seen over the course of the previous year. A singular image of the artist's partner along with visual references to the life of Evans's Houston Street studio prior to his tenancy

(seen here in the form of a fuzzy black-and-white photograph of John Currin and Sean Landers standing in the artist's space) are particularly striking.

"1967," a sound piece broadcast throughout the gallery space on a three to four-hour loop comprising over 350 discrete fragments of text encountered by the artist during the past year, is narrated by five different voices, adding an additional component to Evans's repertoire of multimedia forms. Located on a flimsy card table in the far corner of the gallery, it too serves as a substantive force, compelling the viewer to move more slowly, to look more carefully, at the images that embody the sources of the artist's creative thought. According to Evans, this "de-heroizing" of the artistic process is at the core of his conceptual practice. "This is really a conversation about art," Evans says, likening the appropriation of his own and other artists' personal "images of collections of images" to the simple diffusion of visual language.

There is a certain bravery in such straightforward depictions of artistic exposé. Carried from the artist's studio in neatly stacked and labeled piles, tubes, trays, and containers, these installations introduce the ineluctable themes of transport and reproduction. The idea that anything can be recreated is elucidated here, yet concurrently brought to the fore is the notion that this recreation will never achieve one hundred percent accuracy. For Evans, Warhol's Factory does not exist. The process, rather, is open-ended, organic, and, with any luck, "takes one in directions that could not have been predicted otherwise." Ideas may be transported, images carted from one venue to the next (Evans has a concurrent exhibition scheduled for April in Milan, in which he plays on the idea of Rauschenberg's famous diptychs, "Factum I" and "Factum II"), but the end product, like thought turned to object, will always differ slightly from the original.

Ultimately, what Evans offers is highbrow artistic craftsmanship coupled with the coveted glance behind the curtain, one that in our contemporarily frenzied quest for authenticity, cannot be bought, sold, or commodified. Such is the beauty of the creative process. It also locates the artist's work with a poignant sense of urgency. Systematic organizations of chaos: fearless, raw, and fervently applied.

artwriting mfa

Spring 2012, Degree Critical

Franklin Evans. eyesontheedge (2012); installation view, Sue Scott Gallery, NY. Courtesy Sue Scott Gallery.

Eyes on the Edge

by Matthew Farina (Class of 2013)

Remaining pictorially rich while colorfully abstract, Franklin Evans' newest work surrounds the viewer on the floor and the walls in his current exhibition. Stepping into the space, one must walk, despite initial hesitation, on a bookshelf positioned face-up on the floor with Plexiglas covering it for foot traffic. Entering into the space in this way is like crossing a threshold characterized by Evans' literary and critical interests, which proliferate in the show. Titled "eyesontheedge," Evans' second solo show at Sue Scott presents the notion of the "artist as reader," while including mashups of color and geometry that characterizes his relatively formal aesthetic leanings.

Situated more like a single in-progress installation than separate completed works, Evans' show grabs for material rawness but first demands a few moments to figure out what you're looking at. Printed or painted ephemera is affixed to the gallery floor, and unstretched canvases presented with the casualness of a studio-visit are found close to loosely related ephemera—strung up, taped, tacked, printed or photocopied. The paintings on canvas are layered with vividly intersecting lines that resemble layered painter's tape, perhaps used to edge and re-edge the pigment in stripes that refract with kaleidoscopic flux. As acid greens, soft oranges, and canary yellows surround a central axis in memorydoubled (2012), the painting grounds the installation with an entry point that, in an otherwise chaotic environment, provides a desirable but unrestrictive focal point.

Franklin Evans. eyesontheedge (2012); installation view, Sue Scott Gallery, NY. Courtesy Sue Scott Gallery.

Overall, Evans' geometric interests communicate with formal sharpness, but the printed and found imagery surrounding it breaks the formality. Viewers learn about Evans' personal life through snapshots of friends and lovers; there are also film stills and ephemera the artist simply found and enjoyed. Homoerotic fragments augment the autobiographical openness viewers may feel in the photographic components of his work. At times, the installation elements can be

somewhat distracting. Sheets of paper taped to the floor feel more like unconsidered filler when crinkling underneath your feet. Conversely, small printed images taped along corners and hung on strings communicate with a lackluster fussiness.

These qualities are easily overshadowed by the strength of 1967, the one sound-based work in the show. In this piece, a card table in the middle of the gallery supports a Macbook that plays readings from art criticism, biographies and various other texts—the original pages for which, in some cases, are photocopied with Evans' notations and taped to the walls. The voices of five readers speak the lines with sensational flair. Justin Spring's Secret Historian, passages from issues of October and other literary bits are plucked out of the texts and spoken with singular conviction. Certain lines direct the viewer's thoughts both outside and further inside Evans' show. "Wiener's canvases look at the idea of something, rather than something of it itself," was a line recited with directness by an anonymous male reader. Another of the 350 recorded lines played twice in 15 minutes; "Color patterns are seen as elaborations of the elementary pure qualities of yellow, red, blue." The sentences and sentence fragments give a sensual form and personality to the show while reminding us of the artist's library, which literally paves the entryway.

Despite the clarity gained from 1967, nothing in "eyesontheedge" is easily defined. Evans' impressively raw use of materials presents a mixed-media amalgamation of his life and interests—visual and otherwise. The work is more of an overall experience than an opportunity to see discrete art objects. Most interestingly, Evans' critical and literary inclinations are effectively embedded in the presentation of his abstract painting. After leaving "eyesontheedge," it's satisfying to ponder the essence of Evans' very individual practice as a whole—one that spills over into broad cultural engagement, color-rich materiality and a personal willingness to string it all together.

art agenda

“Greater New York 2010”

MOMA P.S.1, New York

May 23-October 18 2010

Several installations from P.S.1's inaugural exhibition "Rooms" (1976) have left a lasting mark on the institution—literally so, as they're embedded into the building. In the attic, Richard Serra's steel-beam *Untitled* is sunk into the concrete; Alan Saret's *The Hole at P.S.1*, *Fifth Solar Chthonic Wall* Temple pierces through a wall. These enduring physical remainders make the history of P.S.1 inseparable from that of site-specificity. Through considerable renovation, the building has retained the character of its Romanesque Revival architecture and traces of its original use as a school. Its spaces are so emphatically idiosyncratic that, even in the case of artworks long absent, it's difficult to view a new installation without also perceiving the after-image of what stood there previously.* Though it's been covered over for years, you can still see the cut marks from Gordon Matta-Clark's *Doors, Floors, Doors* in the floorboards.

At "Greater New York 2010," the museum's first major exhibition since the departure of its founding director Alanna Heiss and its re-christening as MoMA P.S.1, the emblematic piece might be Franklin Evans's *timecompressionmachine*, (2010) which occupies the same first-floor corner gallery where Matta-Clark once sawed through the ceiling and floorboards. Evans has smothered the space with colored tape, mylar, canvas, and, most curiously, numerous press releases from recent gallery exhibitions. It's the latter element that reverberates with GNY10 overall, since a substantial swath of the same or nearly identical work has appeared elsewhere in New York within the past nine months: by Tauba Auerbach (at Deitch Projects in September), Zipora Fried (On Stellar Rays, September), Tommy Hartung (On Stellar Rays, November), David Benjamin Sherry (Sikkema Jenkins & Co., March), and Amy Yao (Jack Hanley Gallery, May—that is, concurrently), to name just a few. If Evans's installation "compresses time" by incorporating past exhibition press releases into a spatial collage, GNY10 accomplishes a similar effect by including so much recently exhibited artwork.

The resulting moments of *déjà vu* are experiences markedly distinct from the chance discoveries of half-hidden artworks that traditionally typified a visit to P.S.1. Those sorts of surprise encounters were certainly plentiful during GNY's previous iteration in 2005—an exhibition of such density that artworks were stuffed into every available crevice—but are largely absent this go-round. It's difficult to state forthrightly whether this should be attributed to the shared vision of its three curators, Klaus Biesenbach, Connie Butler, and Neville Wakefield, or to the discreetly shifting sensibilities of the city's artists, but this much is clear: big gestures and eccentric interventions have lost out to works of modest ambition and diminutive materials. The exhibition's profusion of photography comes primly framed, mixed-media pieces are tidily arranged, and signs of mess remain sealed within video documentation (as in the case of deliriously gooey investigations by Alex Hubbard, Gilad Ratman, and Leidy Churchman). In deference to two years' backlash against Wall Street, material excess of any kind seems frowned upon.

This pared-down approach has the advantage of giving artists ample maneuvering space to showcase their full repertoire. For instance, Leigh Ledare has assembled a suite of photographs exploring his unsettlingly explicit yet tender relationship with his troubled mother that spans eight years. There is ample evidence that GNY10 aspires to the condition of multiple solo shows, or, in Ledare's case, even retrospectives-in-miniature. Of course P.S.1 has an extensive record of solo and retrospective exhibitions—perhaps most notably of influential-yet-overlooked figures like Jack Smith or Manny Farber. It's a new development to apply that same treatment to younger artists, who often debut at P.S.1 with a single original piece specific to the building. Of these, there are comparatively few: in the boiler room, Aki Sasamoto has annexed a lair-like alcove, and Saul Melman has taken to periodically gold-leafing its arcane plumbing fixtures; Evans and Dominic Nurre make room-sized rubrics out of their respective corner galleries; and David Brooks has turned the duplex space into a rainforest environment devastated by concrete. In general, however, most work feels shipped in from elsewhere.

Rather than conjuring the image of a building overrun by artists busily installing up until the press preview, GNY10 suggests an alternate scenario: artists present through the duration of the exhibition as contributors to an extensive schedule of live programming. Every weekend, P.S.1 will host performances, lectures, and artist "office hours," thus framing the works on view as the backdrop for on-site activity. This implies that private studio practice now needs to be supplemented by a live public component. In this respect, Naama Tsabar's sound-sculpture *Untitled (Speaker Wall)* (2010)—which appears to be a black 2001-type monolith from one side, and as a blocky, oversized guitar body from the other—may be the new exemplary model; the piece exists autonomously yet doubles as a musical instrument for performance.

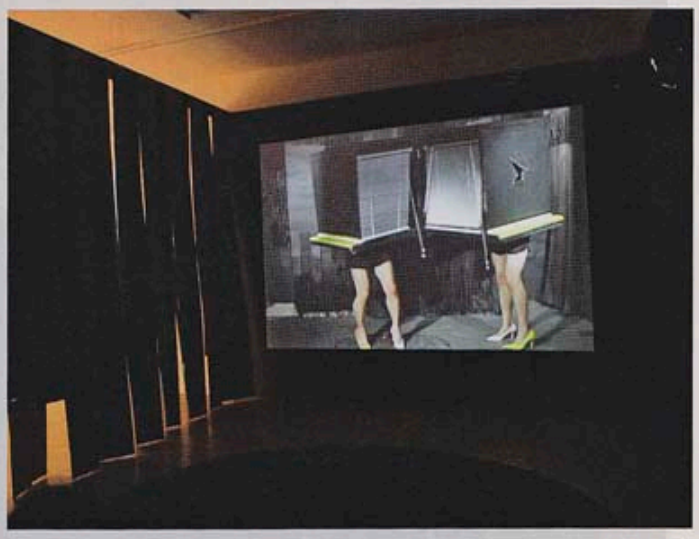
If GNY10 is an indicator of anything, then, it's a shift in emphasis from site specificity to live programming. Instead of discovering a covert artwork in a stairwell, visitors are now likely to stumble across Ryan McNamara temporarily inhabiting a corridor for his daily performance-cum-dance-class *Make Ryan a Dancer* (2010). The question is whether this shift is anything more than a consequence of financial straits. After all, P.S.1 pulled the show together with an avowedly tight budget, and the time an artist devotes to a performance is less dear in an accountant's ledger than the by-the-hour expenses of installation crews. Or does GNY10's cocktail of studio-based practice and performance announce a definitive change in ethos, for P.S.1, other institutions, and artists more broadly? That is, will it leave a lasting impression?

* Full disclosure: I probably experience this after-image effect at P.S.1 more acutely than most, since I was employed there in 2006.

—Colby Chamberlain

Colby Chamberlain is a senior editor for the online magazine Triple Canopy and a Jacob K. Javits Fellow in the art history department at Columbia University.

GREATER NEW YORK
MoMA P.S.1



"Greater New York," the quinquennial roundup of mainly emerging artists who live and work in the city, is currently in its third edition at P.S.1. The curators—Klaus Biesenbach, Neville Wakefield and Connie Butler—cut the number of participants by over half from the previous two installments, allowing more room for 68 artists and collectives. In addition, the curators announced that the museum's spaces were to be a "productive workshop" in which artists could develop their projects over time, as well as participate in performances, panels and screenings.

While on-site activities may have fostered a sense of community among the participants, the effects have probably been little noticed by visitors who don't attend the exhibition more than once. They might miss, for example, the transformation of Bruce High Quality Foundation's "art pedestal exchange program," an installation of empty white Miminalist-like plinths that was pristine at first but has grown progressively grubbier as the pedestals are swapped with used examples from art schools and elsewhere. Those visitors would have assuredly not seen Franklin Evans creating the room-size work *timecompressionmachine* in the weeks leading up to the May 23 opening, touted as an instance of the laboratorylike atmosphere of the show, though his process seems not so different from the usual preparation required for a labor-intensive installation. (An immersive space of painted and cut-up paper, including articles and other printed matter, with sly allusions to art history and a fractured take on pictorial space, Evans's room is a high point.) Ryan McNamara, who is slated for a final performance on Oct. 15, has periodically taken dance lessons within the museum's galleries from experts in various genres, something most viewers will not have seen. (His two-channel video *I Thought It Was You*, 2008, in which he executes, to the Herbie Hancock song, nearly identical spastic movements simultaneously in a disco and on a deserted country road, is on view in the show.)

Though the curators, bless them, do not publically congratulate themselves in this respect, the "Greater New York" roster presents an impressive diversity of gender, race and sexual orientation. It is likely the gayest of such summary exhibitions ever mounted. Yet the identity politics feel less ham-fisted than in days of yore. A piece by Sharon Hayes, *Revolutionary Love: I Am Your Worst Fear, I Am Your Best Fantasy* (2008), is compelling despite its didacticism, with screen projections placed at floor level in a room scattered with balloons. The viewer is placed squarely in the action: a crowd of gay people at the 2008 Republican and Democratic conventions reading, in unison, a text outing an unnamed, archetypal closeted politician.

There are some failures—most spectacularly, the decaying tree covered with concrete dust in the first-floor well by David Brooks, which, in making an environmental point, is neither a particularly interesting object nor a convincing metaphor. I found Emily Roysdon's text wallpaper at the entrance, faintly printed with "Who Am I To Be So Free," inadvertently laughable, and her multichannel video of a live Happening-like dance performance pointless as an installation. I was merely depressed by Leigh Ledare's sexually charged photographs of his mother, and longed for Marilyn Minter's subtler photographic portraits of her own narcissistic mother, an intimate filial homage that never feels sensationalistic.

That said, there is much excellent work. Rashaad Newsome's 2009 video mash-up of hip-hop culture samples Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, as the glitter of bling and sex polishes an old chestnut. Leidy Churchman contributes paintings, tabletop objects and two videos of wrapped people being painted with abstract splotches. The oil-on-panel paintings are especially quirky and fanciful, showing odd men with chin-curtain beards lounging about with dogs and lovers, and, in one instance, engaged in an orgy. Deville Cohen's wall projection *Grayscale (A Video in Three Acts)*, 2009-10, involving a cast of men dressed in high heels and wearing masks or bearing structures à la Laurie Simmons, is a funny, skillfully executed meditation on art-making. A sinister video (*Mine*, 2009) by Liz Magic Laser shows a robotic arm picking through Laser's battered purse, which looks as if it has been retrieved from the site of a mugging or worse (the actual purse is nearby in a vitrine); and a surreal animation reminiscent of the Quay Brothers, *The Ascent of Man* (2009), by Tommy Hartung, offers a weird take on evolution that at one point involves a white rat climbing out of the primordial slime onto a Barbie doll. Some of these artists will be performing during a heavily programmed October, bringing to a close the laboratory that is "Greater New York."

—Faye Hirsch

Top, Deville Cohen: *Grayscale (A Video in Three Acts)*, 2009-10, video installation, 18 minutes.

Left, view of Leidy Churchman's oil-on-panel paintings and oil-on-clay sculptures, all from 2007 to '09.

CURRENTLY ON VIEW
"Greater New York" at MoMA P.S.1, through Oct. 18.

The New York Times

May 27, 2010

Take Me Out to the Big Show in Queens

Roberta Smith

To get the full effect of "Greater New York," the three-ring circus of new art that has commandeered MoMA P.S. 1 in Long Island City, Queens, clear your calendar, pack earplugs and be grateful for what substance and revelation come your way.

This show, a survey of little known and emerging artists working in New York City, was established in 2000 and is mounted every five years. More than other versions, the current one is a welcome jolt to the New York art world in scope, ambition and the range of things it gives you to think about. Spreading the work of 68 artists throughout an immense building, "Greater New York" conveys the impression that it is a wonderful thing to be young and making art in this city.

But if the show has some exhilarating highs, they seem fueled less by art than by diffuse artistic energy, inspired curatorial power sharing and an inexplicable optimism. Maybe the excitement stems from seeing the largest, most flexible contemporary-art space in New York being put to such extensive use. Too often, though, "Greater New York" feels like a mirage, with the hard evidence withheld. It has strong work, but not nearly enough of it.

The show has been organized by Klaus Biesenbach, director of MoMA P.S. 1 and chief curator at large at its parent institution, the Museum of Modern Art; Connie Butler, chief curator of drawings at the Modern; and Neville Wakefield, MoMA P.S. 1's senior curatorial advisor. It pays lip service to all of the touchstones of the moment: collective art making, the ephemeral, audience participation, political subject matter, art as life, art as documentary, art as social interaction.

The main mission of "Greater New York" seems to be to prove from the inside out that not only is performance art the dominant medium of our time but also that aspects of it have infiltrated all other forms, including that of the art exhibition itself.

Dominated by videos, chockablock with performances and punctuated with other works that are in progress in some way, "Greater New York" has something of a viral, mutating organizational structure. Some of the selected artists have invited collaborators to work with them, or recommended others for the show's performance program. The eight-page schedule mentions poetry readings, artists in residence (and office hours), collaborative performances, meet-up groups, open studios and rehearsals, and "an experiential durational happening." It starts to

sound a bit like summer camp.

Contributing further to all the activity, five independent curators will each organize a five-week show within the show during the four-and-a-half month run of "Greater New York." (Unfortunately, the first, "The Baghdad batteries," a group exhibition of multiple mediums spanning several generations that was organized by Olivia Shao, is too wanly conceptual.) The curators have also, perhaps lazily, co-opted some recent solo gallery shows, moving "Greater New York" away from its tradition of discovering artists. But in this case K8 Hardy's anti-Cindy Sherman photographs and Franklin Evans's walk-in painting and drawing installation are high points, as are efforts by Tommy Hartung and Leidy Churchman.

Franklin Evans's "timecompressionmachine."
Credit...Michael Nagle for The New York Times

It is rare to see a show that puts such faith in artists or channels their generosity, imagination, passion and networking skills so deftly while paying so little attention to actual works of art. There are too many galleries with almost no inducement to stop and look. It's hard to feel any need to when the curators don't seem to have been looking, at least not with sustained openness, rigor and disinterested curiosity. The sorriest sight is painting, most of which is really "painting," approached with irony and pushed toward sculpture, video or performance. Mr. Churchman is the only painter left standing. Here he moves with ease from faux-naïve homoerotic renderings on wood to painting-as-performance-as-exorcism videos to tabletop sculptures with no loss of

concentration.

Several sculptural works will change noticeably as the show proceeds. The Bruce High Quality Foundation, today's art collective with the mostest, has filled a gallery with pristine white sculpture pedestals in different proportions. They are available to art schools if replaced by old, used ones. For now the unmatched pedestals look like a Sol LeWitt sculpture in rebellion.

Other works in progress are too beholden to the tired fur-lined teacup formula: combine objects or materials not usually found together and wait for people to say wow. David Brooks has earnestly assembled a representative chunk of tropical rain forest plant life and deluged it with concrete something between an indoor Robert Smithson rundown and a landscape by George Segal in protest of the destruction of nature by industry. The encased plants will die and decay, collapsing in a kind of slow-motion happening.

On a brighter note, Saul Melman is gilding the building's long-unused boiler works with gold leaf. David Adamo has covered the floor of one gallery with baseball bats, fit perfectly in rows, head by handle, and appropriately named the result, "Untitled (rite of spring)." Just crossing this surface is something of a balancing act on the viewer's part, and by the end of the show it will be a completely different color.

None of this gives video, performance and photography much competition. A few of the works in these mediums are relatively elaborate, if made with a do-it-yourself directness. Deville Cohen's 18-minute performance video, "Grayscale (A Video in Three Acts)," surely a send-up of Matthew Barney, centers on a troupe of cross-dressing men in improvised heels who find unexpected uses for office supplies and surprising inspiration in the basic elements of a carwash. Mr. Hartung's "Ascent of Man," a tribute to the famous BBC series, has a wonderful poetry and uses improvised tabletop sets with results alternately grand and comic.

But most of the best efforts in these mediums are more elemental, sharing an impulse to reveal basic processes: life being lived or art being made, and the vulnerability both require. One of most intense, disturbing examples is the work of Leigh Ledare, who uses photography and video to document his highly eroticized relationship with his mother and its effect on his own sexuality. Mr. Ledare is making a sensational spectacle of himself and his clearly troubled parent, but he is also taking us deep into the darkness and torment that drive many artists.

Similarly forthright is A. L. Steiner's amazing accumulation of photographs, which cover two large walls with images of lesbian life and love, a tough, celebratory concatenation titled "Angry, Articulate, Inevitable." The work applies the Minimalist ideal of "just one thing after another" to highly personal units of information. A similar approach is found in the Dani Leventhal's

evocative 16-minute film, a string of short, almost snapshotlike scenes titled “54 Days This Winter 36 Days This Spring for 16 Minutes.”

In other cases structure is dictated by reality, as with Lucy Raven’s imposing if also tedious “China Town,” a photographic animation with sound that follows the production of copper wire from the mines of Nevada to the factories of China, and in the process reveals landscapes devastated and lives diminished by the brute power and immense scale of industry. Hank Willis Thomas’s “Unbranded: Reflections in Black by Corporate America 1968-2008” presents 41 pairs of photographs, pithily labeled, that reveal another kind of wasteland: advertising’s performance of blackness over the last four decades.

In one of the show’s most peripatetic pieces, the performance-video artist Ryan McNamara, who has a dancer’s body and musical sense but no training, will use the galleries as a dance studio. Wheeling around a mobile barre and mirror, he will take instruction from dance professionals of all kinds (classical, modern, exotic) or just stretch and practice. In either case visitors can watch or join in.

“Make Ryan a Dancer,” as Mr. McNamara’s sweetly courageous work is titled, is one of several here that examine the distinction between amateur and professional. Naama Tsabar accomplishes something similar, if more jarring, with two impressive eight-foot-high slabs of speakers she calls speaker walls. Visitors can pluck the various amplified guitar strings that course up, down and across the back of this slab. This is where the earplugs come in, especially if you want to look at anything in the immediate vicinity.

“Greater New York” is like the proverbial stream: always in flux. You’ll want to put your foot in more than once.

ROBERTA SMITH

“Greater New York” continues through Oct. 18 at MoMA P.S. 1, 22-25 Jackson Avenue, Long Island City; (718) 784-2084, ps1.org.

NEW YORK

MAY 27, 2010

Sincerity and Irony Hug It Out

By Jerry Saltz

I'm noticing a new approach to artmaking in recent museum and gallery shows. It flickered into focus at the New Museum's "Younger Than Jesus" last year and ran through the Whitney Biennial, and I'm seeing it blossom and bear fruit at "Greater New York," MoMA P.S. 1's twice-a-decade extravaganza of emerging local talent. It's an attitude that says, *I know that the art I'm creating may seem silly, even stupid, or that it might have been done before, but that doesn't mean this isn't serious*. At once knowingly self-conscious about art, unafraid, and unashamed, these young artists not only see the distinction between earnestness and detachment as artificial; they grasp that they can be ironic and sincere at the same time, and they are making art from this compound-complex state of mind—what Emerson called "alienated majesty."

The best of the work at "Greater New York" pulses with this attitude. The worst of it is full of things that move, light up, or make noise, all frantic enough to make you feel like you're at a carnival rather than a museum. I yearned to see more art here that demands that you stop and be still, like painting, of which there is very little. Instead, the curators—Connie Butler, Neville Wakefield, and Klaus Biesenbach, the museum world's unofficial czar these days—favor things that are "about" painting, like Dave Miko's canvas propped on a little shelf with drips painted on the wall behind it, carrying the heavy-handed title *Lonely Merch Guy*. (When will everyone get over the ossified idea that painting's particular alchemy is suspect? Bad dogma!)

But let's look on the sunny side. I counted thirteen artists whose work I really like and twelve others whose work I'd like to see again. Like Liz Magic Laser's *Mine*, a secret-life-of-women video in which she and a surgeon perform an operation, with medical robots,

on her purse (tiny tools snipping the face out of a $20 bill, for example); the artist simultaneously dismantles and creates, remaking her purse into a Rauschenberg combine. This weirdly familiar otherness goes green in Brian O'Connell's funny-strange architectural columns composed of potting soil, which make you feel like you're occupying a very large sand castle. Or David Brooks's section of real forest mummified in concrete, a sad comment on turning the natural world into doomed playgrounds. Leigh Ledare's pictures of his mother having sex bring us to the dark heart of the human drive for connection; the sweet sight of Ryan McNamara being taught to dance in the building's corridors speaks for artists compelled to strip themselves naked (metaphorically or literally) in public. Saul Melman's gold-leafing of the giant double furnace in the building's basement may be just another labor-intensive process piece, but it's also an ancient sarcophagus, a moving memorial to the dead. Equally serious, particularly in their strangeness, are Matt Hoyt's tiny carved clay objects, which look like sculptural-biological forms and dead rodents. They hint at the innate connection between creating form and creating life.

Much of the most effective work in "Greater New York" also involves the artists' leaping from medium to medium in madly unexpected ways: Sculpture, music, video, and photography get mashed up; techniques like collage and assemblage are combined with unusual materials like mud, magnets, stolen record albums, and art reviews (even one of my own, in Franklin Evans's walk-in installation-painting). Mariah Robertson's long strip of photographs looping along the ceiling and across the floor is photography as sculptural installation, so smudgy and phantasmagoric and unruly that it looks like drawing, a painting, and a filmstrip all at once.

Giant group events are distorting organisms: You can like and hate them in rapid succession. In the 2005 edition of "Greater New York," there were 162 artists on view, which was ridiculous. In 2010, there are just 68. More critical is what's *not* there: a by-now-familiar genus of cynical art that is mainly about gamesmanship, work that is coolly ironic, simply cool, ironic about being ironic, or mainly commenting on art that comments on other art. I'm glad to see it fading away—sincerely and otherwise.

Greater New York
MoMA P.S. 1.
Through October 18.

The New York Times

September 25, 2009

FRANKLIN EVANS
'2008/2009 < 2009/2010'
Sue Scott Gallery, 1 Rivington Street

Through Oct. 24

Having been mostly confined to elaborate abstract watercolors in his last show, Franklin Evans's art is now all over the place. It has embraced the popular convention of the ephemeral wall-to-wall-environment, although it makes the genre look archaic and faded.

This installation, which Mr. Evans spent about a month creating, covers everything but the ceiling and the gallery's office.

The total effect is of a giant walk-in watercolor, or of an artist's studio striped and blotted with color that accrued during the making of many paintings. This is achieved primarily with many parallel and perpendicular strips of colorful hand-painted tape. Balled-up clumps of tape lie in corners. Little loops of tape dot the wall like confetti. In some of the best parts, fluorescent tape is cut into tiny pieces that are applied to wall and floor in small, intense mosaics.

Much else in the way of light, transient materials contributes, along with art books and recent news releases from New York galleries. These are taped to the floor, as is a page of dialogue from "Romeo and Juliet" in which Romeo suddenly segues into a discussion of Ernesto Neto's work.

Many watercolors, framed and not, also join in. Often they depict a lone tree and landscape in a pixelated grid in different hues, as if imitating both computer printouts and four-color separation. In one, the tree seems to have been typed in bright colors on index cards using an old-fashioned typewriter, but closer examination reveals that it, too, is watercolor applied by hand.

Mr. Evans is foremost a latter-day Process artist. Thought processes, studio processes and art world processes are all evoked here, and parsing the details can be engrossing. But taken as a whole, or even in larger pieces, the show looks indecisive and creaky. It could be a long-lost precedent for bolder environments being made today, rediscovered and dusted off.

ROBERTA SMITH

Art in America INTERNATIONAL REVIEW
NOVEMBER '09

FRANKLIN EVANS
SUE SCOTT

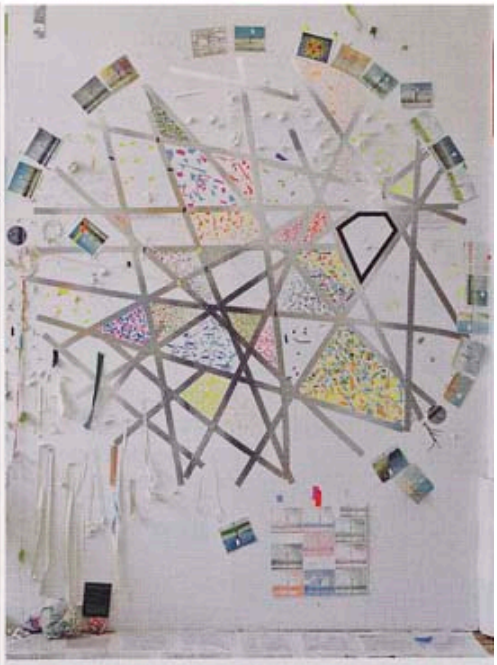
Taped to the exterior wall of Sue Scott gallery during Franklin Evans's exhibition were a couple of layered sheets of bubble wrap; a square hole in the center showed cryptic numbers scribbled in colored pen on the wall. This was the first one saw of Evans's show, and it signaled his ambitious attempt to materialize his studio—and thought processes—and to turn both inside out.

The stairs to the gallery were adorned in cardboard, neon tape and paint spills, while the entrance was sheathed in a messy wallpaper of last year's exhibition press releases, occasionally covered by a bulge of bubble wrap or layered tape. The main room revealed a delightfully dizzying explosion of Evans's currently favored materials: paint bottles and a spool of hot-pink thread perched on a roof beam; lopsided balls of rolled tape drooped from the wall and congregated on a windowsill (Eva Hesse in the age of Office Depot?); piles of art books and pieces of wood blocked a window; and an eggshell, postcard and other detritus nestled in a corner. An image of a leafless tree was subtly repeated throughout the show, appearing in framed or taped-up watercolors, in degraded digital printouts and on graph paper where each painted square was a pixel of saturated color. Throughout, there was a bounty of tape—pink, neon green, yellow and blue: painted and scribbled on; hung from the ceiling to form a screen; and stuck neatly to the wall or the floor in horizontal, vertical and diagonal bars.

Evans is known for his abstract paintings of loose, brightly colored geometries—they are something like a cross between the frenzied detail of Terry Winters's work and Julie Mehretu's sharp explosive forms. During a residency last year, Evans's cleanly painted horizontal and vertical lines leapt from the canvas to his studio's walls and ceiling. On the evidence of this exhibition, it was a breakthrough moment. The artist cites Caspar David Friedrich's painting *The Wanderer* as a current influence, specifically the tiny bands of horizontal color composing its misty landscape. Indeed, while Evans has moved successfully into making installations, he remains a painter, breaking the world down into bands—or pixels—of color.

But the exhibition was also an exercise in making work *about* making work, using materials that typically remain behind the scenes. In this sense, Evans has invited us to step inside his practice: we saw the books he reads (by Danto and Judd; on Picasso and Turner), the tape he has used to block off sections of paintings, and the press releases that form part of the world he moves through. Notably, in comparison to other artists who have rendered their practice transparent, there is no sense of struggle, isolation or anxiety. Instead, Evans's vision of artmaking projects a chaotic, obsessive, freewheeling pursuit that is decidedly, and contagiously, joyful.

—*Lyra Kilston*

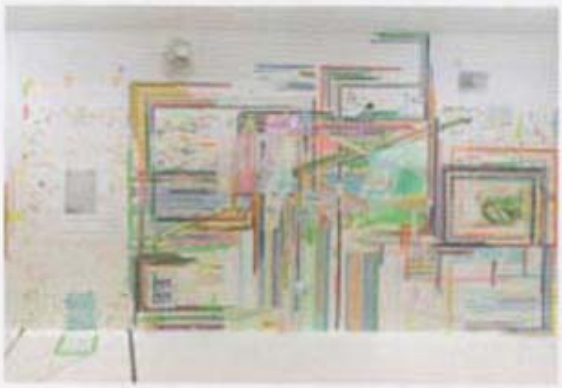


Franklin Evans: *turningtime*, 2009, mixed mediums on wall, 100 by 80 inches; at Sue Scott.

Flash Art

The World's Leading Art Magazine - International Edition - Vol. XLII • No. 269 • November - December 2009 - US $8.00 • €7.00

FRANKLIN EVANS
SUE SCOTT GALLERY - NEW YORK



Franklin Evans, throughfriedrichsfuture, 2009. Acrylic, painted tape, tape, thread and watercolor on paper on wall, 304.8 x 762 cm. Courtesy Sue Scott Gallery, New York.

Franklin Evans's trippy meditation on the multiple layers of time and space, exemplified by the exhibition title "2008/2009 < 2009/2010," takes the form of a sprawling installation covering most of the gallery's two rooms, including sections of floor, ceiling, stairs and railings. Initially conceived as a work in progress in the artist's studio, the piece incorporates throwaway materials such as scraps of tape, wood and bubble wrap in conjunction with paper, canvas and paint to create a sense of perpetual evolution; in contrast to a painting or drawing's push toward resolution, the emphasis here is on process and movement. Shifting vantage points, created for example by *lookbackstage* (2009), an angled wall of hanging strips of colored tape, allow us a different perspective on the complex relationships among this installation's myriad minute details.

Throughout the psychedelic overflow of Evans's enterprise, questions are posed and, in place of answers, infinite possibilities are revealed. Spills and stains represent a sort of fluidity as well as allude to a residue of times past. As various elements fade, erode, or are erased, intimations of mortality arise. The lone tree that reappears throughout the show seems to indicate a thwarted narrative within a rollicking, psychedelicized landscape, as well as a stand-in for the isolation of a solitary figure.

Amanda Church

THE NEW YORKER

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ART

AUGUST 20, 2007

"TRUE FAITH"

The artists here—painters, mostly—embrace a foggy notion of "faith," encompassing what the curator Paul Brainard describes as "ambiguity" in the work and "openness" on the part of the viewer. What this boils down to here is a range of colorful naïf or fabulist drawings and paintings by Franklin Evans, Jeff Konigsberg, Kanishka Raja, and others. In another era, much of this work would have been called psychedelic, but, at a time when few people cop to doing drugs, art has been recast as a source for a natural high. Through Aug. 17. (Greenberg Van Doren, 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-445-0444.)

THE Arts

The New York Times

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2005

THE LISTINGS

Franklin Evans: 'freakout' If you like Mr. Evans's densely worked neo-psychedelic mural in the Drawing Center's current emerging artists show, you will appreciate the ink-and-watercolor drawings on view here. Crammed with richly colored geometric patterns, abstracted landscapes and figures, they are both trippy and intimately sensuous. Jeff Bailey, 511 West 25th Street, through Nov. 12.

- Ken Johnson

The New York Times

October 14, 2005

SELECTIONS FALL 2005

The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster Street

Through Oct. 29

As usual with the Drawing Center's twice-a-year exhibitions for emerging artists, this one stretches drawing almost beyond recognition. It includes traditional works like finely rendered, close views of woven fabric by Stefanie Victor and smooth, much enlarged drawings of human navels by Susan D'Amato. But a large cocoonlike structure by Monika Grzymala made of four miles of paper tape wrapped around three columns in the gallery could be taken by an innocent viewer for sculpture.

The nominal unifying theme is line, drawing's most fundamental element, but the broader imperative that gives the show its entertaining appeal is the pursuit of novelty. This can be formal or technical, as in the works of Adam Fowler, who made his medium-large drawings by carefully cutting out the unmarked spaces between myriad penciled arcs to create lacy, seemingly layered works of remarkable delicacy.

Judy Stevens's colorful irregularly shaped wall hangings made of crocheted yarn and Franklin Evans's semi-abstract, neo-hippie mural don't look unfamiliar, but the aspiration to formal and stylistic novelty is palpable in their works, as well. So too for Molly Larkey's enlarged graphite copies of handwritten letters exchanged between herself and her father, though the epistolary contents add an emotional charge missing from the rest of the exhibition.

Conceptual novelty is also in play. David Tallitsch's installation of a table bearing blocks of colored clay and chalk, with drawing exercises and art postcards pinned to the wall, slyly meditates on conventionalism in art. And an installation of officially notarized documents with zanily poetic, typewritten texts -- supposedly the results of a collaboration between two artists, Cariana and Carianne, who inhabit the same body -- puts a novel spin on ideas about identity and authorship.

KEN JOHNSON