

MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

SCOTT LYALL
selected texts & press

SCOTT LYALL

Scott Lyall combines drawing, painting, sculpture, and found objects into what he describes as a ‘scenography without actors,’ or ‘plastic supports for an almost clientless sense of design.’ His production revolves around issues related to sculptural display, the relationships between graphic processes, and the design legacies of conceptualism.

While Lyall’s earlier work involved installations created from construction and everyday materials such as particleboard, styrofoam, and other ephemeral fragments, his recent practice is predominantly comprised of graphic assemblages and printouts produced without direct mediation of an image. Referencing Bruno Latour, the artist describes his *Nudes* and *EVEs* series as “design all the way down,” a statement that resonates with Mark Rothko’s use of pigmented gessos to achieve what he called “color all the way down.”

Originating from the basic and most abstract unit of the digital realm—the single color pixel—the pale hues of Lyall’s color wave paintings and stickers are formed through a method of mathematical interpolation that generates a unique and potentially infinite bitstream. The resulting information is sent directly to the print heads, which apply sheer layers of ink such that the gradient color-deposits are mixed directly on the substrate. The immediate relationship between the numerical formula and the printer is akin to a “fauve” effect of releasing color from the received image. Embodying a movement from pure quantity—a digital field of dispersions and exchange—to form, these works are inherently split objects that exist first immaterially, and materially in the last instance. They address the informational fetish of recent art and the dissolution of visible signs.

The *Nudes* stand slightly detached from the wall, affixed to hand-painted monochrome MDF panels of corresponding dimensions, which are in turn attached to the wall directly – digital dust on canvas, one might say, over compressed and solidified wood powder. The pieces combine ink and its erasure in canvases subjected to multiple passes through a UV-based printer. The result is a subtle residual ‘tan’ that suggests an index of rays ‘beyond color’ that affect the tonal assemblage. Lyall describes the *EVE* vinyl adhesive sheets as ‘thin reliefs,’ and relates the printed posters to a generalized artistic space between painted, sculptural, and architectural forms. A glued sticker on one side of the panel and a spray of cartridge inks on the other establish a relationship between plastic and graphic determinations of the print. The interaction of the surfaces of the ultrathin paste-up and the façade of a smooth wall creates an implication of depth. Because of the use of non-archival inks in the instance of the adhesive sheets, each printout will eventually fade to white, thus merging with and disappearing into the wall that houses it. In this sense, these works exist beyond the traditional confines of the wall and architecture more generally. A further constitutive feature of the file is its capacity to circulate electronically freely around the globe and beyond before the moment of incarnation. The owners of unique bitstreams are then entrusted to printout new iterations of the color fields at will. This is painting engaging the digital realm and pushing it to the limit of its material and conceptual possibilities by reducing it to a sequence of three discrete and subjective gestures: 1. The random selection of an entry point among the 284 million color options. 2. The algorithmic unleashing of the infinite expansion of the file. 3. The final decision to cut the color progression in a particular place, that is finding the edges of the gradient before outputting its content onto a chosen substrate. As such, the painting object is suspended until the last impulse of incarnation.

Lyall’s recent *Talents*, which use the same algorithmic formula as his *Nudes*, are made of two compressed sheets of glass. The back sheet is a mirror; the front pane is printed on the inside with a unique field of color. An admixture of gel medium and nanoparticles of gold is applied by the artist’s hand to the outside surface to complete the work – the painter as window cleaner, if you will.

At their core, the *Talents* are identical (same process), yet unique (singular field of color). They both engage and subvert the three ghosts of contemporary art, that is the readymade, the monochrome, and the mirror.

In line with the dehierarchization proposed by monochrome painting in the 1950s, Lyall considers his work to be a function of its interaction with the surrounding space. The environment provides a space of aleatory, open representation, which might be captured by Cage's description of Rauschenberg's White Paintings as "airports for the lights, shadows, and particles." To the most limited form of commercially printed material, Lyall adds the speculative image of mental projection without an end. The works become advertisements for this 'grey matter.' In Lyall's words, "It will be whatever reality does not prevent it from becoming...."

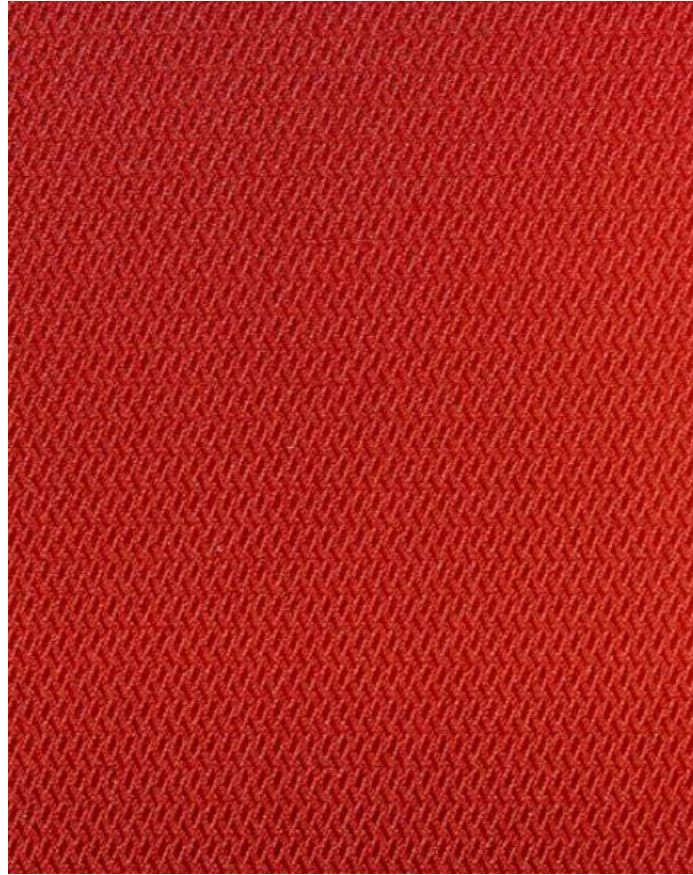
Scott Lyall (b. 1964, Toronto) lives and works in Toronto and New York. He earned an MFA from the California Institute of the Arts (1993). Solo and two-person exhibitions include SculptureCenter, New York (2007); The Power Plant, Toronto (2008); Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (2023, 2019, 2015, 2013, 2010, 2006); Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto (2025, 2022, 2018, 2014, 2010, 2006, 2004, 2001), Greene Naftali, New York (2011, 1997–98, 1996); and Campoli Presti, London and Paris (2017, 2014, 2011, 2008). Notable group exhibitions include A Serene Look upon the World, Mendes Wood DM, Brussels (2026); The Living End: Painting and Other Technologies, MCA Chicago, Illinois (2024); The Painter's New Tools, Nahmad Contemporary, New York (2022); The Poet-Engineers, Miguel Abreu Gallery, (2022); Ballistic Poetry, Hermès Foundation, Brussels (2016); Anti-Establishment, CCS Bard, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY (2012); The Montreal Biennial (2011); Double Yolk (with Rachel Harrison), Galerie Christian Nagel, Antwerp (2011); New York to London and Back: The Medium of Contingency, Thomas Dane Gallery, London (2011); Collatéral, Le Confort Moderne, Poitiers (2009); The Lining of Forgetting, Austin Museum of Art, TX, Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC (2008); and SITE Santa Fe, 7th International Biennial (2008). Lyall's work is held in the collections of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Pinault Collection; the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

FrameWork 11/25

Brendan Flanagan on Scott Lyall

Neither Math nor Feeling:

I.



Up close, the surface becomes too present. What looked from a distance like a red haze turns crisp and unyielding: flat ink layered on aluminum, a grid like the world's most exacting tapestry, its warp and weft reveal no strain of materiality. There is no brushstroke, no friction. Step back and the grid dissolves again into atmosphere. Move forward and precision returns. The piece organizes a rhythm: approach, calibrate, recede, recalibrate.

That rhythm is the work's address. It insists on oscillation. As the exhibition text puts it: "the work is neither math nor feeling. It occurs as a kind of circulation, and a struggle to relate these diverging poles." From a distance we get Feeling: warm reds dissolve and melt. Up close, we see the structure of that dissolution: pixels printed on aluminum, pure Math. As viewers, we can't hold one without the other. The work suspends the relation between procedure and affect without resolving it.

The panel is not an image to decode but an apparatus to inhabit. As viewers we are pressed into service, actors playing gallery-goers. The work scripts distance, colour, and body into a loop. From afar, it reads as Rothko-soft; up close, it is a finely etched schematic. It suspends expression and replaces it with conditions.

II.



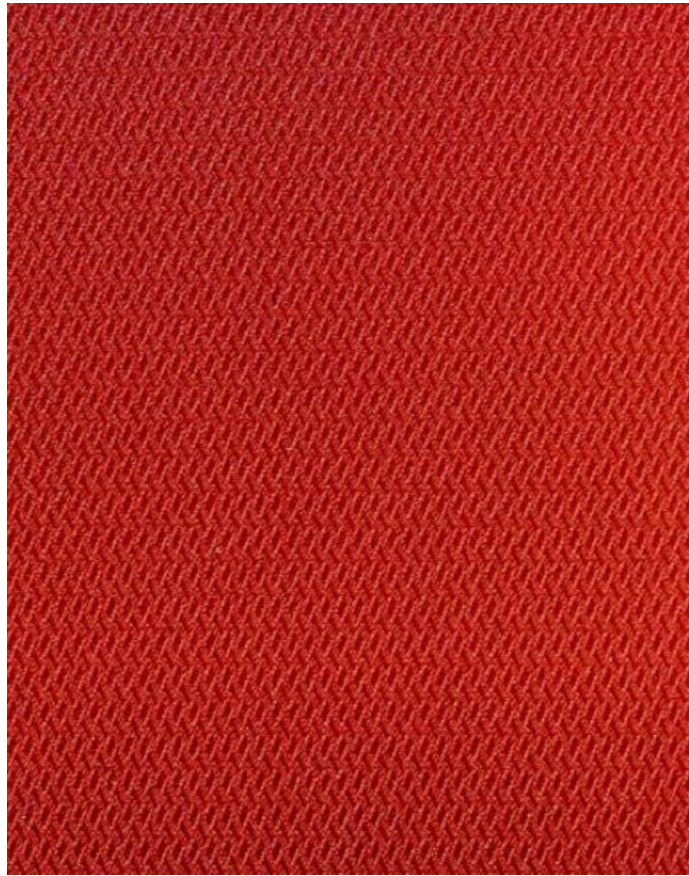
Do you feel something when you look at that colour? And would it be foolish to? It is often said, part art-historical fact and part myth, that more people have cried in front of the paintings of Mark Rothko than any modern painter. Traditional painting assumes both an expressive artist-subject and a receptive audience-subject: communication is a straight line, artist points and the audience sees. But what happens when the artist dissolves into mediation? When the audience is generated as a position within that mediation?

This work refuses the idea that an image is a fixed, transmissible unit of meaning. Instead, it sets a field of operations in which viewing happens. It is not so much an image as a stage.

Michael Fried famously criticized Minimalism for its theatricality: its dependence on the viewer's presence to complete the work. A Judd box or a Flavin light installation don't speak on their own; they wait for the audience to arrive, turning the gallery into a stage and the viewer into an actor. For Fried, this was a weakness, a failure to achieve the self-sufficient "presentness" he prized in modernist painting. Minimalist objects unfold like performances, structured not by what they contain but by the situations they create.

Lyall's surfaces inherit Minimalism's theatrical structure but internalize it. The choreography is no longer something to watch; it unfolds within the act of watching. The viewer's movements bend into the event, becoming one more variation in a distributed field of perception. The painting does not wait for the viewer to arrive; it generates the viewer as a temporary node within its field, a position produced rather than occupied. To look is not to see the painting from the outside but to be briefly instantiated within its logic. Feeling, math, feeling, math.

III.



Colour is often spoken of as if it were a universal language. Yellow is happy, blue is calming, red is passionate. These claims circulate with such confidence they seem to describe facts rather than tendencies. We're told that colour moves us directly, piercing emotion before thought. But standing before Lyall's red surfaces, I don't experience anything like that. There's no surge of emotion, no automatic reaction. Instead, there's a suspended pressure in the room—an atmosphere that holds the potential for feeling without tipping into it.

Colour does not dictate how we feel. It structures the conditions in which feeling may emerge. We often treat emotion as an arrow shot from artwork to viewer. But with these works, nothing pierces. Colour here is less a vector more a membrane. It envelops, sets a mood, but doesn't tell you what to do with it. The affect is latent, waiting.

This latency has a long and complicated history. In Western visual theory, colour has often been treated as volatile and secondary: something that affects the senses directly but without reason. Plato distrusted colour for exactly this reason, preferring geometric stability. Aristotle linked it to the sensuous world, closer to appetite than intellect. This suspicion endures in subtle ways: colour remains what makes an image seductive rather than intelligent.

At the same time, there's a counter-current that treats colour as profoundly expressive. Goethe's *Theory of Colours* is emblematic: for him, colour doesn't decorate form; it is a language of feeling, "a degree of darkness." He attributes to colours their own emotional characters: red as "gravity and dignity," blue as "contemplative," yellow as "cheerful." These poetic projections have proven extraordinarily durable.

These two attitudes—colour as irrational seduction and colour as universal expressivity—form an unstable foundation for how we talk about visual experience. Lyall's work refuses both. It does not seduce and it does not emote. It does not command anything of me. Instead, it constructs conditions in which perception is heightened and affect flickers into being, contingent on movement, position, and time in the room.

The affective charge comes as much from hue as from how the hue is delivered—through the inkjet printer, the aluminum surface, the lighting conditions, the absence of gestural trace. The result is a surface that both is, and is not, emotional. Math, feeling, math, feeling.



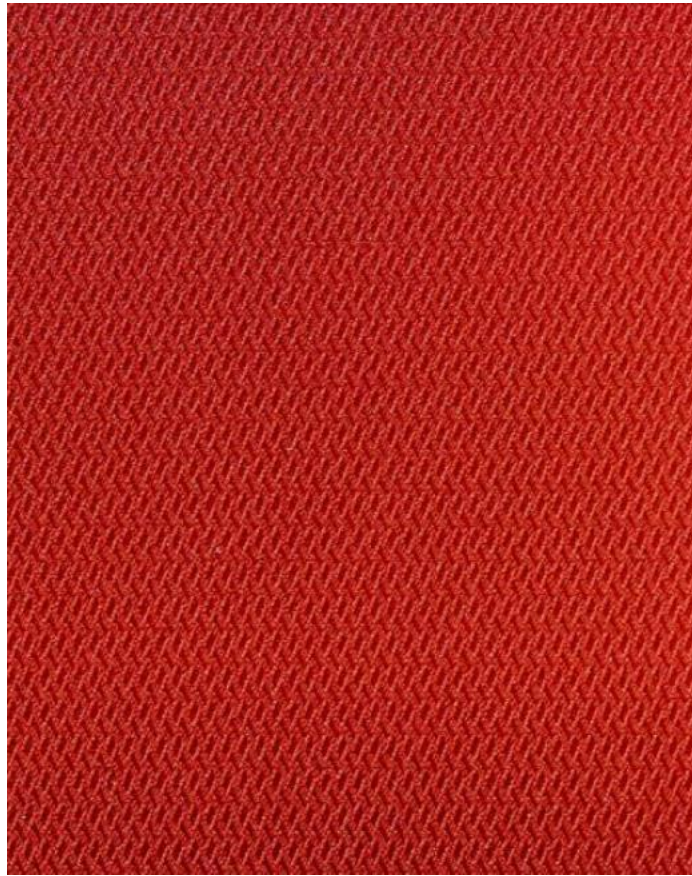
IV.

Procedures produce moods. Anyone who has scrolled too long knows this: no single post matters; the platform's rhythm—its pacing, its loops—creates that special feeling of boredom and overstimulation. Infrastructures shape feelings from the background.

Traditional painting's infrastructure is built from gestures. Even in the most minimal monochromes, some trace of the hand usually remains: a drag of pigment, a seam, a mark. Gesture carries intention—even when ambiguous. Lyall's works evacuate gesture. The inkjet prints not through expression but through code, making minute decisions at the scale of microseconds and micrometers. The field of red is so evenly laid that human intention dissolves.

This is not pure machinic anonymity. The work is not indifferent. The procedure has been authored, though not by a single visible hand. It's an authored atmosphere, an operation that carries affective temperature even as it withholds the traditional signs of expression.

V.



Vilém Flusser, writing on the “technical image,” noted that images produced through apparatuses no longer behave like paintings or early photographs. They operate according to a program. These programs may be invisible, but they shape what the image is and how it works on us. Platforms like Instagram or TikTok don’t tell you how to feel; they engineer conditions for feeling to arise.

Marshall McLuhan’s reminder that “the medium is the message” lands cleanly here. The content is “red,” but the medium—file → printhead → aluminum → light → eye—is what shapes perception. In Lyall’s work, mediation is the voice.



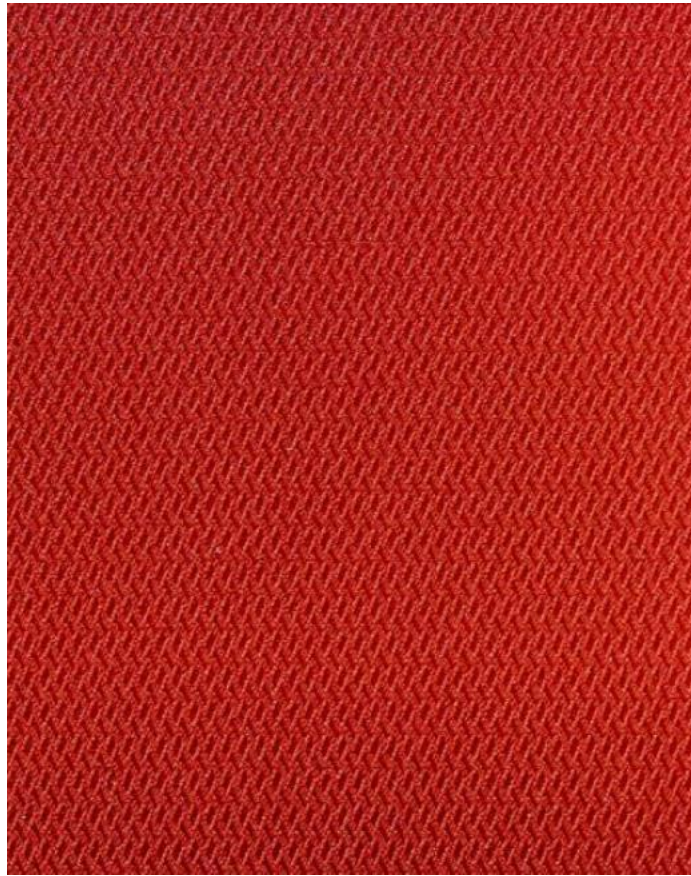
VI.

In much of art history, authorship is framed as expression: an interior subject externalizing emotion or thought through a medium. The artist acts; the work records; the viewer receives. Even in modernist attempts to purify form, this expressive chain persists. The artist-subject precedes the work, and the work transmits the artist-subject.

Lyall's procedure inverts that sequence. The artist-subject doesn't precede the work; the artist-subject emerges within it. The printer doesn't merely reproduce intention; it conditions it. The ink, the algorithm, the substrate, and the viewer's perception all participate in a distributed act of authorship. The voice that seems to speak is the echo of that distribution.

This is what I mean by mediation: not the transfer of content through a channel, but the way an apparatus actively shapes what can be seen, felt, or thought. Mediation is creative. It doesn't carry meaning from one place to another; it creates the very space in which meaning can occur.

VII.



Both Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes understood this before the digital. In *What Is an Author?*, Foucault argued that the “author” is not an origin but a function of discourse, a way of organizing statements and attributing coherence and ownership to a field of language. Barthes, writing around the same time, declared the “death of the author,” insisting that meaning arises not from the writer’s intention but from the reader’s encounter.

Lyall’s works perform a similar decentering at the level of visual mediation. The author-function still exists; his name anchors the work in a gallery, in discourse, yet within the image that function dissolves. What remains is a field of operations in which authorship is enacted by the interaction of technical and perceptual systems. The work’s “voice” is neither singular nor silent. It is procedurally plural, an emergent property of circulation.

But unlike Barthes’s reader, Lyall’s viewer does not stand outside the text to decode it. The viewer is embedded in the same circuitry that produces the work—another signal in the network of perception and process. Meaning is not recovered through interpretation but distributed through participation.

VIII.

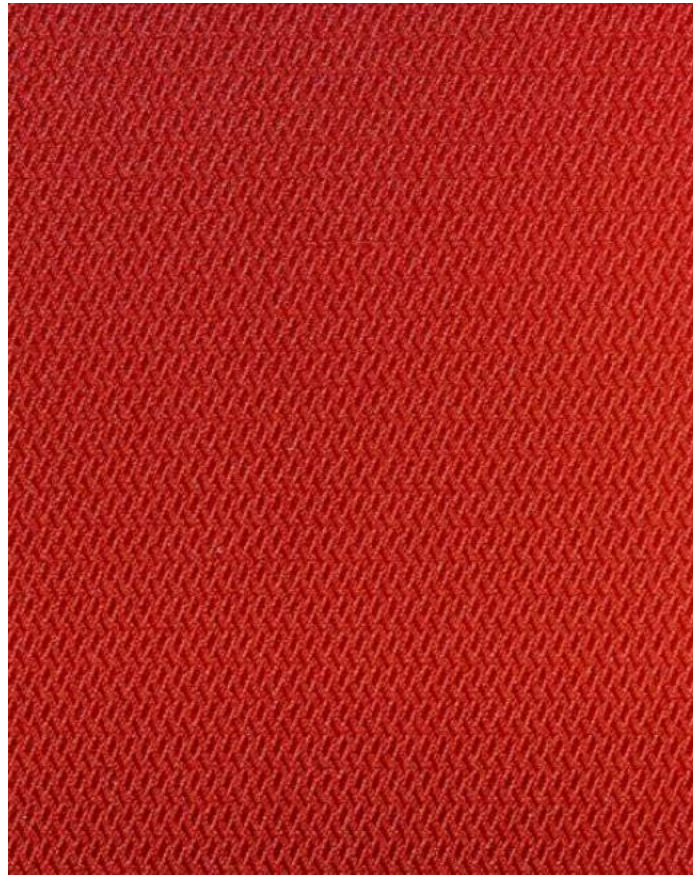


If Foucault and Barthes displaced the author into language, Vilém Flusser relocated authorship again, this time into the apparatus itself. In *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, he distinguishes between the traditional artist, who manipulates material directly, and the functionary, who operates a device according to a program. The apparatus produces technical images whose parameters are set by unseen structures: algorithms, codes, defaults. The functionary, Flusser writes, is “playing against the program.” Lyall’s role resembles this: he doesn’t express *through* the printer but collaborates with its logic, bending procedural parameters to produce something improbable within its system.

This is not mechanical reproduction but programmatic composition: the artist designs a situation in which the machine’s neutrality reveals its own aesthetic biases. The result is not the hand of the painter but the signature of mediation itself: a signature that looks like absence yet vibrates with procedural intensity.

Lyall shows that mediation can be voice: a voice built from the interplay of hardware, software, light, pigment, and perception.

IX.



Yet despite this talk of voice, the dominant experience of the work is silence. The red field does not call out; it waits. It is not emptiness but density.

In stillness, the work doesn't make declarations; it holds us in suspension. The artist's hand is absent, the machine's autonomy incomplete, the viewer's perception unresolved. Each component leans toward the others without fusing.

To stand before the work is to inhabit this suspended state—to listen to a voice that is not one's own, not the artist's, not the machine's, but something between.

X.



There is an ethical dimension to this suspension. In refusing to impose a singular voice, Lyall's work models a form of relational attention. It acknowledges that perception is shared, that meaning arises from encounter rather than command. The procedural apparatus, often accused of alienation, here becomes a site of mutual attunement.

In this sense, Lyall's mediation is not just technological but social. It reorients the viewer toward a sensitivity to the infrastructures and relations that sustain experience. The red plate doesn't demand recognition; it offers co-presence.

FrameWork 4/18

John Nyman on Scott Lyall

The Looks

I

The animals painted on the walls of Lascaux are not there in the same way as are the fissures and limestone formations. Nor are they *elsewhere*. Pushed forward here, held back there, supported by the wall's mass they use so adroitly, they radiate about the wall without ever breaking their elusive moorings. I would be hard-pressed to say *where* the picture is that I am gazing at. For I do not gaze at it as one gazes at a thing, I do not fix it in its place. My gaze wanders within it as in the halos of Being. Rather than seeing it, I see according to, or with it.

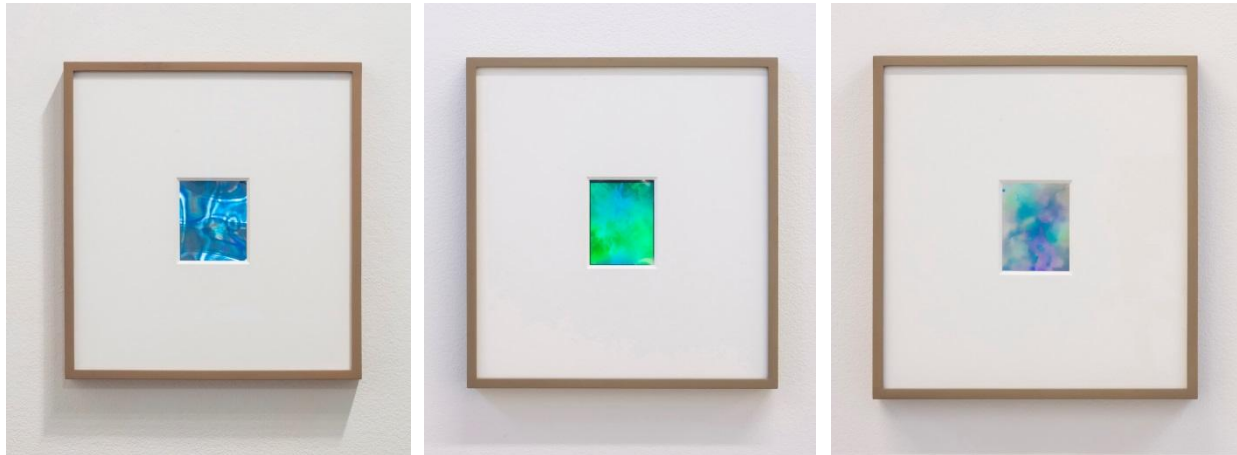
—Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “Eye and Mind”ⁱ

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's “Eye and Mind,” his last published essay, makes a remarkable claim on behalf of painting and the picture in general. In the first place, he distinguishes sharply between the phenomenological world of images and the techno-scientific universe, in which appearance is only the residue of *objects* more effectively manipulated at the level of their materials. While science, in other words, bases all of vision on the sense of touch, only phenomenology can understand our lived experience of seeing as “*having at a distance*.”ⁱⁱ On the other hand, Merleau-Ponty also refuses to limit aesthetics to the domain of the symbol, the mind, or even the concept. Rather, *looking* is an act and property of that mundane yet impenetrable (because fundamental) entity known as the embodied self—an immaterial “body which is an intertwining of vision and movement,”ⁱⁱⁱ and “a self, therefore, that is caught up in things, having a front and a back, a past and a future....”^{iv}

By the time of its publication in 1961, however, “Eye and Mind” may have already begun to sound like a naïve paean to a long-gone era. While already well-established formalist and emerging minimalist practices defied the distinction between art and object at its literal core, even performance and conceptual art diverted Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception by replacing its explicitly metaphysical orientation (“every theory of painting is a metaphysics,” Merleau-Ponty wrote)^v with more brazenly ontological rejoinders to the question of aesthetics. And all of this, of course, is to say nothing of the half-century of continental avant-gardism the phenomenologist seemed either unable or unwilling to assimilate.

The rest, as they say, is history. Yet it is precisely by ruminating on this history—that is to say by devouring it, digesting it, and chewing through it again—that *Cave Paintings Now* arrives at its strikingly prescient assertion of a phenomenological metaphysics of vision. While Lyall's work feels numbingly cognizant of the many tricks twentieth- and twenty-first-century artists have employed to revolutionize the debate over what art is, its half-ironic splicing of these strains exposes not a likely melange but a startling lack, forcing us to reconstruct the alchemy by which art expresses its value—financial, cultural, spiritual, and visual—in the first place.

One feels called to account along the same lines that, as Merleau-Ponty writes, “so many painters have said that things look at them,”^{vi} yet Lyall makes sure to subtract the creative genius who “listens” to those looks for us. The exhibition’s works are absolutely paintings without a painter (much as they are, surprisingly though not secretly, paintings without paint). But instead of allowing us to economize the picture by ruining its authority, Lyall’s postmodernist bait and switch only throws us further out into the wild. Though it staves off capture by subject, concept, or matter, *Cave Paintings Now* is stuffed with *looks*.



The works titled *DRAGONS*, for example, subtly bear the same frightening agency and elusiveness as their namesakes; in the first place, their photographic documentation feels like a snapshot of the Loch Ness Monster. While it’s true that a single photo doesn’t come close to capturing the multitude of images each piece offers—as one encounters iterations of *DRAGONS* in real gallery space, they readily flash between various multicoloured assemblages of blotches, branches, loops, and halos—there’s a further dimension to the camera’s inadequacy. The photographs are misleading (and misled) in that they suggest (no doubt against the photographer’s wishes) a unique image correspondent with each numbered title, when actually the physical uniqueness of the works is impossible to demarcate in the human imagination.

To my eye, at least, every instance of *DRAGONS* is both too much and not enough to tell them apart. When I manoeuvre around the dull metallic surface that meets me from most angles, I can catch visions of a turbulent cosmos, or else a mind-blowing microcosm laying bare the deep complexities of subatomic particles, organic chemicals, or brain dendrites. But these fantasies are very much my own, and trivially so; I know very well that the aluminum foil in front of me, although its texture has been manipulated at scales small enough to shepherd the refraction of individual light waves, is in a physical sense no more than what it is. Nonetheless, every iteration of *DRAGONS* preserves an impenetrable optical complexity and identity, an autonomy composed of pictures I will never properly *have*, either at a distance or at my fingertips.

Throughout the exhibition, I am threaded through a fabric of looks simultaneously embodied and not my own. Tracing the left wall, I draw close to the first iteration of *DRAGONS* only to be corralled into the vertical expanse of two works titled *sunlight painting (later evening)*, which engulf me in their finely textured, seemingly organic wash of pale pink and chemical green-grey. Even if I can wrench a landscape from the two horizontal gashes spanning the gold, mirrored surface of *untitled (talent)*, and even if I see myself there—in the landscape and in the gallery—reflected, the panel’s blaring diffusion of light blasts my vision to a distant, dark periphery. In truth, my body is an accident of illumination. Upstairs, *sunlight painting (early morning)* pulls my eyes into a blur whenever I look up to try and gauge its palette—bluer, paler, and yellower than *later evening*,

but I'm not sure. Beside it, I squat to frame my body in the black glass pane of another *untitled (talent)*, the top of which sits below a standing person's eye level.

Yet the looks' authority is not only spatial; rather, once I've become acquainted with the vertiginous depth and meticulous nuance of Lyall's premises and processes, I realize my thinking has positioned me in the exhibition's visuality as much as my body has. From the beginning, Lyall's "supernumerary" still life^{vii} —in this show, a beat up humidifier, a bouquet of flowers, and airy specks of yellow ochre on a crinkled tarp—signals me to restrict my assessment of the show's artwork to the immateriality of two-dimensional planes: in other words, to *paintings* in Merleau-Ponty's sense. I'm told that the canvas base of each *sunlight painting* has been sanded down to total smoothness, then run through an inkjet printer until the interlaced pigments coalesced into the texture of—of course—thin paint on a rough canvas. Suddenly, Lyall's cave feels more like a spot lit tunnel, although I'm not sure if I've found my way to Plato's form of forms or merely another node in the underground infrastructures of seeming. Either way, I have no hope of parsing idea and appearance, information and object, medium and message.



II

Among twenty snowy mountains,
The only moving thing
Was the eye of the blackbird.

—Wallace Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"^{viii}

While the bulk of Wallace Stevens' career is probably best captured by poems like "The Idea of Order at Key West," which celebrates a transcendently human vision's capacity to wash over the world, I've always been taken aback by the opening stanza of "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird." Although we, as readers, have been introduced to the poem in the role of its lookers, these first lines catch us in a startling reversal: if

motion can be measured to the movement of an eye, and the blackbird's eye is the only one moving, how do I picture my own gaze within the scene?

Later, Stevens writes,

I know noble accents
And lucid, inescapable rhythms;
But I know, too,
That the blackbird is involved
In what I know.^{ix}

And there is a harmony there (Stevens's first book was titled *Harmonium*), where Stevens and his blackbird mingle in a fuller epistemology than either possesses on its own. But I can't shake the feeling that there's something more to their chiasm. At the gallery, I stand one-to-one with *DRAGONS* (I can't be sure which instance), but my impression of its surface (in the sense that I might have an impression of a person's face) is scattered across the disjointed peaks of colour and form it pitches through the intervening distance. For both Lyall's pictures and Stevens's blackbird, I am as passive as the mountains. I think there's a word for this: *transfixed*. And it might be translated this way: *had at a distance*.

Notes

ⁱ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind" in *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, 355. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2007.

ⁱⁱ Ibid, 357.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid, 353.

^{iv} Ibid, 354.

^v Ibid, 361.

^{vi} Ibid, 358.

^{vii} Scott Lyall, email (16 April 2018).

^{viii} Wallace Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird." *Poetry Foundation*.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45236/thirteen-ways-of-looking-at-a-blackbird>.

^{ix} Ibid.

FrameWork 11/14

Scott Lyall on Scott Lyall

Eight Greeked Notes on Color and 'the Soul'

to say a word about procedure,¹

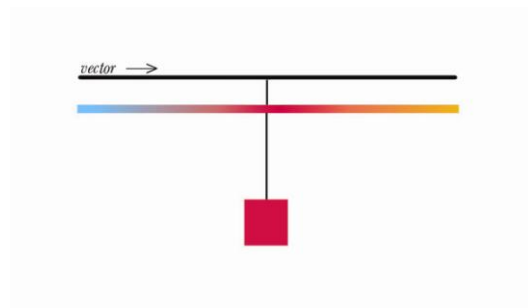


Fig. 2 A Vector includes a Gradient of Chromatic Change. This is what's happening when we isolate a monochrome.

- the very line
- there is already
- a changing color²

FrameWork 11/14

Everything now

a reflexive affirmation

void

a mesh around a

an excess

compression³

FrameWork 11/14

he wanted to be a machine

–the virtual (unspeakable) incognito

between syncope-like beats⁵

*a sunless condition*⁶

as if color were the bond, the fixity

–

indivisible from assemblage⁷

to radiate from darkness. Return from it. Survive –

(negentropic speculation)

from dead stars, I should say.⁸

This excerpt, edited by Jen Hutton, anticipates the forthcoming publication of an essay on this body of work by Scott Lyall.

¹ *Anti-Establishment*, curated by Johanna Burton, Bard College Center for Curatorial Studies, June 21, 2012.

² *The Episcene* (Performance/Lecture), Scorched Earth, New York, November 5, 2005.

³ *Indiscretion*, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, March 6, 2013.

⁴ *Sittlichkeit (Roses/Pinks)*, Silver Flag, Montreal, December 03, 2011

⁵ *Notes, Flash-Crash* Discussion (Hugh Scott Douglas, Scott Lyall, Ben Schumacher, Alex Bennison), Swiss Institute, New York, August 12, 2014.

⁶ ~~nudes~~, Sutton Lane Gallery, London, October 11, 2011.

⁷ *οἶνοπα πόντον* (wine dark sea), Campoli Presti, London, April 07, 2014.

⁸ Panel Discussion on the Occasion of Ad Reinhardt's Centenary, Ad Reinhardt Foundation, Temp Art Space, New York, December 10, 2013.

FrameWork 11/22

_____ on $i (j - (k - l) - m) / n$

Jonathan Scott

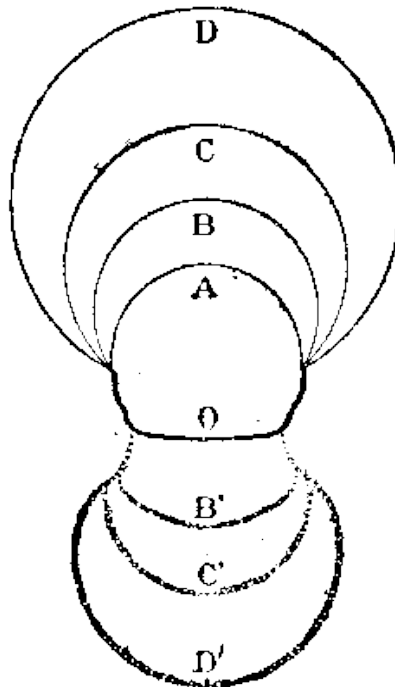


FIG. 1

From *Notes for a diagrammatic postscript*:

... the infinite / finite relation carries back the resonance of Pearky Pink[™] (7) - an upper scale shift doubles (.....24,000.) Lower level - increase application twice over (23).

[™] I propose considering every art form in terms of principles of sufficiency and no longer in terms of descriptive or theoretical or foundational historical perspectives. To do this, one must construct non-aesthetic scenarios or duals, scenes, characters, or postures that are both conceptual and artistic and based on the formal model of a matrix. Laruelle, 2012.

~~On the surface~~ At a glance, the water at Scarlet Lake plus White was completely still. If there was a sound it would appear from the misty horizon. The television in the room was a 68" Parasonic television. _____ turned it on. The screen filled with static. _____ watched as the shifting spirals of immanent images whirled and paused. An abstraction ~~in~~ of purpose, yet an articulation of moments. _____ suffered with Diplopia, caused by convergence insufficiency, and had spent a significant part of its life toying with the gap between percept and real. Double vision allowed the fracturing of a perception at its periphery with a simultaneous focus on void. For _____ this meant each scene had a potential question trapped between two planes. What are we not to look at?

Remove this plastic before crating

Closer and closer it asks us to examine every part of its surface. A speck of dust, the stain of water, scratch, scratch, scratch... I can't see my selves. Only at the edges does the dulled light refract. The only solution is through movement. A small tilt could bring its vision back to One. With each position, a new. My eye, my eye, my eye, the Dot.

Revised in final copy; see < >

[Deleted: One]

[Added in margin:] disappearance⁴



* ... the dia-gram, the moving form, is a between-form, and embodies real and actual connections...the diagram is a living, philosophical abstraction, but one that remains *actual so long as its outlines keep moving*. Mullarkey, 2006.



Caught in perpetuity the Dot is never secure in its existence[°]. Wedged in its own instantaneousness. _____ lay back on the raft. It bobbed gently over the water. A plane of frenetic stability. It was the golden hour at Scarlet Lake plus White and the clack of invisible shutters hummed from the distance.

[Deleted:] Pearky Pink™
[Added in margin:] Resonance Solidity

Pearky Pink™ (sound) undulating warm noise that throbs / pulses with rhythm of blood moving through eye. (270)

Pearky Pink™ is the resonance between $i \ (j - (k - l) - m) \ / \ n$

Pearky Pink™ is (a-c-e-h-l-o-o-p-r-s-u)

Pearky Pink™ is

[°] The *object O* is an 'as if' perspectival frame: the hypothetical point of immobility that is neither presence nor void, but the reality of regressive frames, the reality of a lucid dream within a dream. Mullarkey, 2006.

Remove this plastic before crating

In the case of the mirror
, there is a third aspect:
the subject / viewer.

Mirrors reveal and conceal; their mystery permanent, their hints at doorways, windows, points of entry and thresholds just out of reach of our conscious minds. T.I.M.E
(The Imaginary Mass Emits).

Image.

Idea.

There can be no separation, scientifically or subjectively. The atavistic face gazes down into a crystal pool. Ice-cold water.

Grunts.

A hand shatters the image; fear gaunt and haunting passes across, a shadowy cloud, and through all TIME; that moment can persist, be reclaimed.

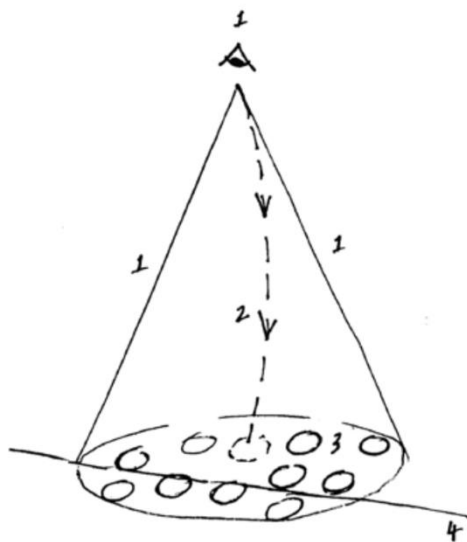
“What is Time, but a variant of one thing?” - Austin Osman Spare

Metzger, 2014

[Deleted in final copy]

$i (j - (k - l) - m) / n$ keep moving back and forth over the threshold. The affect of inside outside pulled them closer in unity, but their attempt was continually stymied by their adornments. Their attachment to Name was a condition of their stature and place within the system. Callings for ambiguity were always met with a levelling response.

Turn, Turn, Turn, no, No, stop.
a quarter.... back. NO. Turn it
Other way, Turn, turn, turn,,,
a bit less OK, OK, Ok, ok,,,
Lower, no... lower, no lower,
Hold it still.



Disappearance4 functioned as a light determinant. Its ability to rid any surface caused the objects to appear suspended in shadow. Each now functioned as proposition and marked a sequential framing of thought. _____ changed the channel. Cartoons were on. Wile E. Coyote screeched to a halt. Frozen in mid-air it turned to look directly at the audience, making the slightest of facial gestures. _____ knew that the Sisyphean cycle of the clinamen was the processual, and all it had to make sense of event was the memory of affect.

CONVERGENT WAVES OF LIGHT

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Burrows, D. O'Sullivan, S. *Fictioning The Myth-Functions of Contemporary Art and Philosophy*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019.

Laruelle, François. *Photo-Fiction, a Non-Standard Aesthetics*. Minneapolis: Univocal, 2012.

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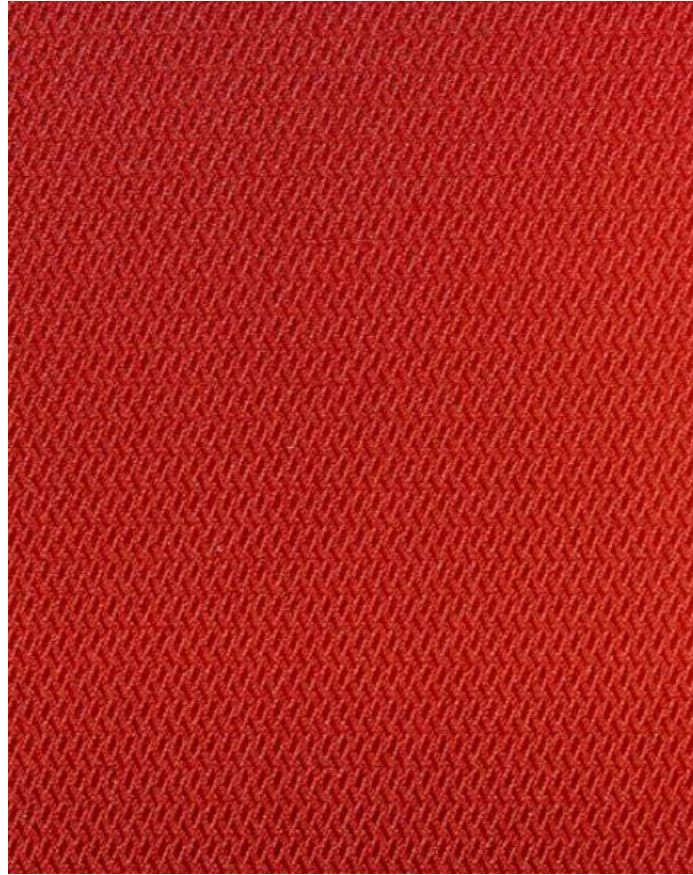
Metzger, Richard. (ed). *Book of Lies: The Disinformation Guide to Magick and the Occult (Being an alchemical formula to rip a hole in the fabric of reality)*. San Francisco: Disinformation Books, 2014.

FrameWork 11/25

Brendan Flanagan on Scott Lyall

Neither Math nor Feeling:

I.



Up close, the surface becomes too present. What looked from a distance like a red haze turns crisp and unyielding: flat ink layered on aluminum, a grid like the world's most exacting tapestry, its warp and weft reveal no strain of materiality. There is no brushstroke, no friction. Step back and the grid dissolves again into atmosphere. Move forward and precision returns. The piece organizes a rhythm: approach, calibrate, recede, recalibrate.

That rhythm is the work's address. It insists on oscillation. As the exhibition text puts it: "the work is neither math nor feeling. It occurs as a kind of circulation, and a struggle to relate these diverging poles." From a distance we get Feeling: warm reds dissolve and melt. Up close, we see the structure of that dissolution: pixels printed on aluminum, pure Math. As viewers, we can't hold one without the other. The work suspends the relation between procedure and affect without resolving it.

The panel is not an image to decode but an apparatus to inhabit. As viewers we are pressed into service, actors playing gallery-goers. The work scripts distance, colour, and body into a loop. From afar, it reads as Rothko-soft; up close, it is a finely etched schematic. It suspends expression and replaces it with conditions.

II.



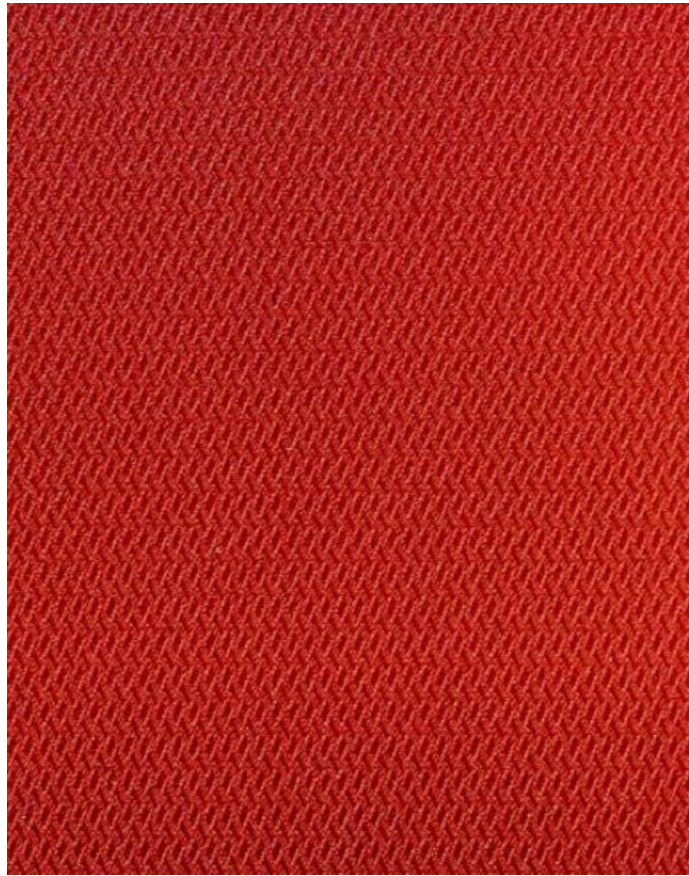
Do you feel something when you look at that colour? And would it be foolish to? It is often said, part art-historical fact and part myth, that more people have cried in front of the paintings of Mark Rothko than any modern painter. Traditional painting assumes both an expressive artist-subject and a receptive audience-subject: communication is a straight line, artist points and the audience sees. But what happens when the artist dissolves into mediation? When the audience is generated as a position within that mediation?

This work refuses the idea that an image is a fixed, transmissible unit of meaning. Instead, it sets a field of operations in which viewing happens. It is not so much an image as a stage.

Michael Fried famously criticized Minimalism for its theatricality: its dependence on the viewer's presence to complete the work. A Judd box or a Flavin light installation don't speak on their own; they wait for the audience to arrive, turning the gallery into a stage and the viewer into an actor. For Fried, this was a weakness, a failure to achieve the self-sufficient "presentness" he prized in modernist painting. Minimalist objects unfold like performances, structured not by what they contain but by the situations they create.

Lyall's surfaces inherit Minimalism's theatrical structure but internalize it. The choreography is no longer something to watch; it unfolds within the act of watching. The viewer's movements bend into the event, becoming one more variation in a distributed field of perception. The painting does not wait for the viewer to arrive; it generates the viewer as a temporary node within its field, a position produced rather than occupied. To look is not to see the painting from the outside but to be briefly instantiated within its logic. Feeling, math, feeling, math.

III.



Colour is often spoken of as if it were a universal language. Yellow is happy, blue is calming, red is passionate. These claims circulate with such confidence they seem to describe facts rather than tendencies. We're told that colour moves us directly, piercing emotion before thought. But standing before Lyall's red surfaces, I don't experience anything like that. There's no surge of emotion, no automatic reaction. Instead, there's a suspended pressure in the room—an atmosphere that holds the potential for feeling without tipping into it.

Colour does not dictate how we feel. It structures the conditions in which feeling may emerge. We often treat emotion as an arrow shot from artwork to viewer. But with these works, nothing pierces. Colour here is less a vector more a membrane. It envelops, sets a mood, but doesn't tell you what to do with it. The affect is latent, waiting.

This latency has a long and complicated history. In Western visual theory, colour has often been treated as volatile and secondary: something that affects the senses directly but without reason. Plato distrusted colour for exactly this reason, preferring geometric stability. Aristotle linked it to the sensuous world, closer to appetite than intellect. This suspicion endures in subtle ways: colour remains what makes an image seductive rather than intelligent.

At the same time, there's a counter-current that treats colour as profoundly expressive. Goethe's *Theory of Colours* is emblematic: for him, colour doesn't decorate form; it is a language of feeling, "a degree of darkness." He attributes to colours their own emotional characters: red as "gravity and dignity," blue as "contemplative," yellow as "cheerful." These poetic projections have proven extraordinarily durable.

These two attitudes—colour as irrational seduction and colour as universal expressivity—form an unstable foundation for how we talk about visual experience. Lyall's work refuses both. It does not seduce and it does not emote. It does not command anything of me. Instead, it constructs conditions in which perception is heightened and affect flickers into being, contingent on movement, position, and time in the room.

The affective charge comes as much from hue as from how the hue is delivered—through the inkjet printer, the aluminum surface, the lighting conditions, the absence of gestural trace. The result is a surface that both is, and is not, emotional. Math, feeling, math, feeling.



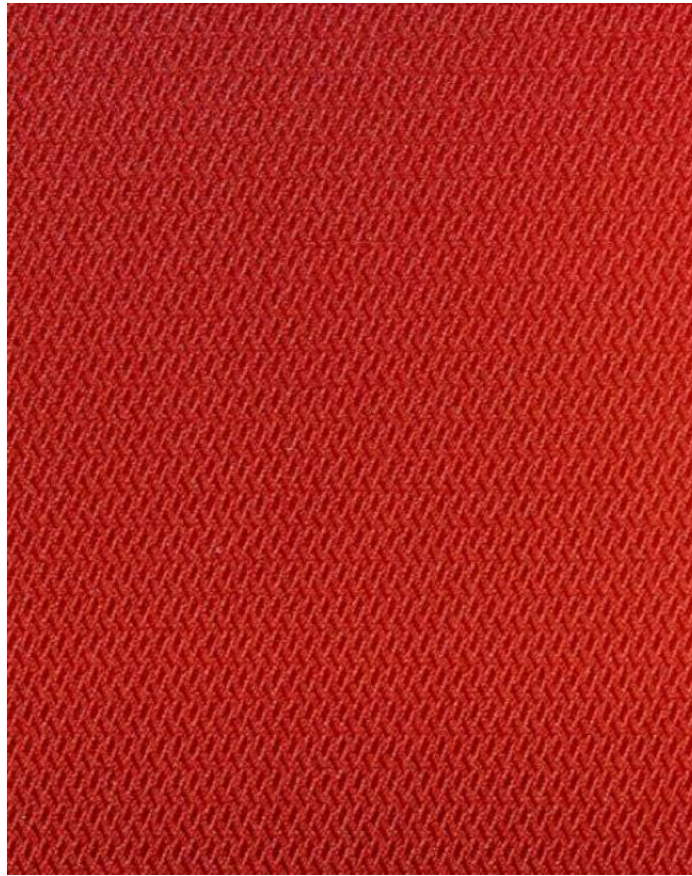
IV.

Procedures produce moods. Anyone who has scrolled too long knows this: no single post matters; the platform's rhythm—its pacing, its loops—creates that special feeling of boredom and overstimulation. Infrastructures shape feelings from the background.

Traditional painting's infrastructure is built from gestures. Even in the most minimal monochromes, some trace of the hand usually remains: a drag of pigment, a seam, a mark. Gesture carries intention—even when ambiguous. Lyall's works evacuate gesture. The inkjet prints not through expression but through code, making minute decisions at the scale of microseconds and micrometers. The field of red is so evenly laid that human intention dissolves.

This is not pure machinic anonymity. The work is not indifferent. The procedure has been authored, though not by a single visible hand. It's an authored atmosphere, an operation that carries affective temperature even as it withholds the traditional signs of expression.

V.



Vilém Flusser, writing on the “technical image,” noted that images produced through apparatuses no longer behave like paintings or early photographs. They operate according to a program. These programs may be invisible, but they shape what the image is and how it works on us. Platforms like Instagram or TikTok don’t tell you how to feel; they engineer conditions for feeling to arise.

Marshall McLuhan’s reminder that “the medium is the message” lands cleanly here. The content is “red,” but the medium—file → printhead → aluminum → light → eye—is what shapes perception. In Lyall’s work, mediation is the voice.



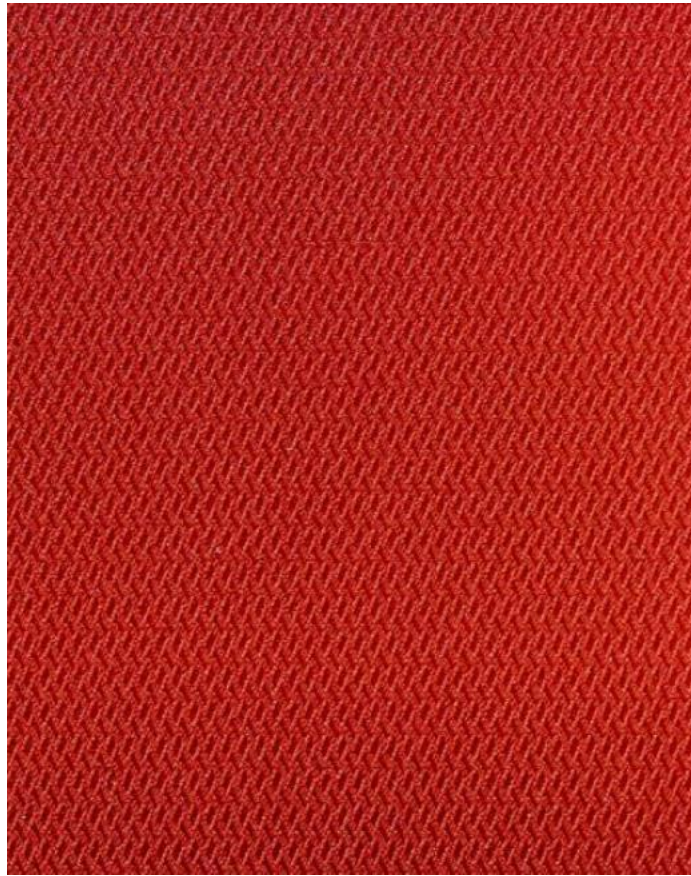
VI.

In much of art history, authorship is framed as expression: an interior subject externalizing emotion or thought through a medium. The artist acts; the work records; the viewer receives. Even in modernist attempts to purify form, this expressive chain persists. The artist-subject precedes the work, and the work transmits the artist-subject.

Lyall's procedure inverts that sequence. The artist-subject doesn't precede the work; the artist-subject emerges within it. The printer doesn't merely reproduce intention; it conditions it. The ink, the algorithm, the substrate, and the viewer's perception all participate in a distributed act of authorship. The voice that seems to speak is the echo of that distribution.

This is what I mean by mediation: not the transfer of content through a channel, but the way an apparatus actively shapes what can be seen, felt, or thought. Mediation is creative. It doesn't carry meaning from one place to another; it creates the very space in which meaning can occur.

VII.



Both Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes understood this before the digital. In *What Is an Author?*, Foucault argued that the “author” is not an origin but a function of discourse, a way of organizing statements and attributing coherence and ownership to a field of language. Barthes, writing around the same time, declared the “death of the author,” insisting that meaning arises not from the writer’s intention but from the reader’s encounter.

Lyall’s works perform a similar decentering at the level of visual mediation. The author-function still exists; his name anchors the work in a gallery, in discourse, yet within the image that function dissolves. What remains is a field of operations in which authorship is enacted by the interaction of technical and perceptual systems. The work’s “voice” is neither singular nor silent. It is procedurally plural, an emergent property of circulation.

But unlike Barthes’s reader, Lyall’s viewer does not stand outside the text to decode it. The viewer is embedded in the same circuitry that produces the work—another signal in the network of perception and process. Meaning is not recovered through interpretation but distributed through participation.

VIII.

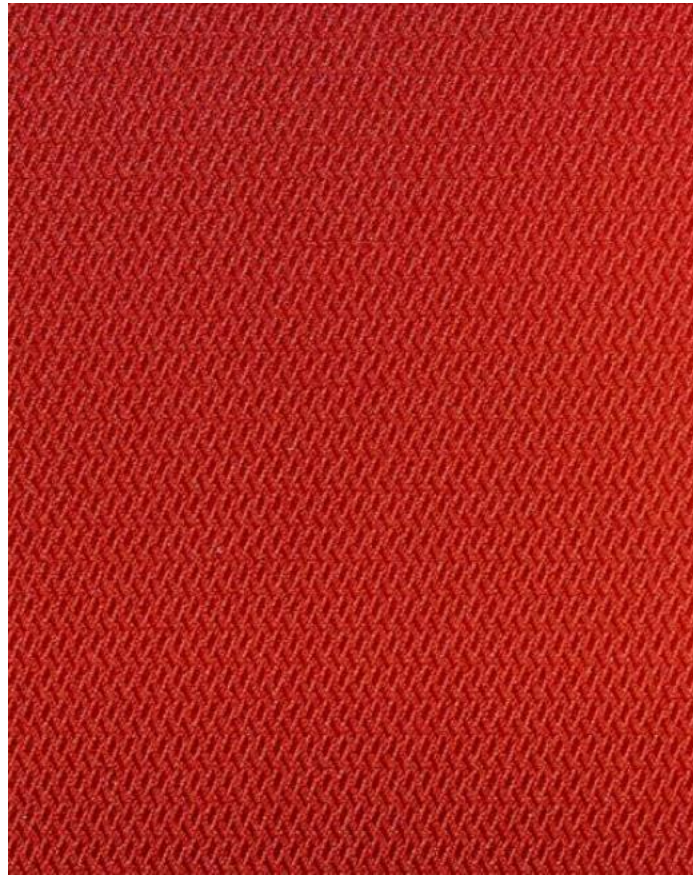


If Foucault and Barthes displaced the author into language, Vilém Flusser relocated authorship again, this time into the apparatus itself. In *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, he distinguishes between the traditional artist, who manipulates material directly, and the functionary, who operates a device according to a program. The apparatus produces technical images whose parameters are set by unseen structures: algorithms, codes, defaults. The functionary, Flusser writes, is “playing against the program.” Lyall’s role resembles this: he doesn’t express *through* the printer but collaborates with its logic, bending procedural parameters to produce something improbable within its system.

This is not mechanical reproduction but programmatic composition: the artist designs a situation in which the machine’s neutrality reveals its own aesthetic biases. The result is not the hand of the painter but the signature of mediation itself: a signature that looks like absence yet vibrates with procedural intensity.

Lyall shows that mediation can be voice: a voice built from the interplay of hardware, software, light, pigment, and perception.

IX.



Yet despite this talk of voice, the dominant experience of the work is silence. The red field does not call out; it waits. It is not emptiness but density.

In stillness, the work doesn't make declarations; it holds us in suspension. The artist's hand is absent, the machine's autonomy incomplete, the viewer's perception unresolved. Each component leans toward the others without fusing.

To stand before the work is to inhabit this suspended state—to listen to a voice that is not one's own, not the artist's, not the machine's, but something between.

X.



There is an ethical dimension to this suspension. In refusing to impose a singular voice, Lyall's work models a form of relational attention. It acknowledges that perception is shared, that meaning arises from encounter rather than command. The procedural apparatus, often accused of alienation, here becomes a site of mutual attunement.

In this sense, Lyall's mediation is not just technological but social. It reorients the viewer toward a sensitivity to the infrastructures and relations that sustain experience. The red plate doesn't demand recognition; it offers co-presence.

***TALENTS* by Scott Lyall – excerpts**

The beauty of recursion, characteristic of what happens across the *Talent* series, is the way that it extends algorithmic movement into every facet of the show. It does so very gently. It allows the artist to establish the game and to play, very lightly, and respectfully, within it. I would say that the artist is retained in the function of a feedback structure, or a servo-mechanism. That said, this function is relentlessly subjective. In a long-forgotten and devalued idiom, one would think it was sufficient to declare one's tastes.

[...]

Each of the *Talents*, when you take them one by one ('once-again,' as Whitehead puts it), is a fourfold locus of devices we can all retrace to the days of the avant-garde: readymades, mirror, lens, and monochrome. However, when all of these are superposed, they seem to convoke an uncertain surface that is traceable to none of the antecedents. Instead, a new spectrality appears to infect the image of the present, itself. Here, there is very little need to direct the viewer to a theory-based review of painting, sculpture or photography's expanded fields.

"Enjoy the wine and not the label," (Schitt's Creek).

The effective surface is intended as a mirror that reflects upon an image of non-institution (or at least, the image of a class-becoming that is not yet settled in stance, the arrest, the performance of the visitors who comes before it). I refer to this as clientless design ¹.

To elaborate clientless design, I usually rely on Rancière's interesting notion of *aisthesis* (an ancient word that pertains to the discourse of the sensible support of a shared episteme—and thus, of mimetic being). Aisthesis can be summarized: it declares a subject that persists in a domain of sensible experience—a signal that appears to merge from noise—between two mutually exclusive mimeses (or between two poorly superposed realities). In challenging times of technical development (especially of enhanced enframing by digitized programming and cybernetic code, which spans from Nano particles to AGI—the object of aisthesis is a sense occasion that supports two, mutually exclusive contrasts: it cannot be reduced to the avant-garde fourfold, but is not an expression of dystopian or zealous fantasies of digitized singularity. Neither-nor. Not an Altarpiece and not *analtarpiece*.

[...]

(iii) I close by proposing my idea of Talent. After all, this word still circulates among the panels as a kind of floating caption. What is a talent in the time of digitized Gestell?

Talent was once a word that defined the measure of gold in circulated coins. In this example, the referent is truthfulness, indisputability, and authenticity. Closer to the present, a talent was an aptitude, a general intelligence, creative knowhow. It becomes a matter of technical ability and grounds all areas of practical production (poetics, in the grandest sense of the word). It commonly supports the artist and the engineer, and is this sine qua non of science. Talent is inseparable from hypothesizing outcomes, establishing a method, and working through it. It is also the ability to work one's method in a spirited lightness, with a sense of ease. This latter kind of talent is especially available whenever art is thought to be, in essence, clientless.

To employ a currently enlivened term, talent is a mode of *cosmotronics*. In the jacket-flap text for his great best seller, *Astrophysics for People in a Hurry*, Neil deGrasse Tyson wrote that Enlightenment requires equal talents

1. I will just say this: in the *Talents*, the internal layer that joins the glass and mirror is a mix of colored ink and glue. They are not premixed, but they come to be fused to each other in the lamination (heating) process. The latter fixes them by curing the siccative stuff that it included with the liquid laminate. This locates the monochrome within the dual panels of mirror and glass: suspended in glass (*en verre*), which I like to pun--in French--with *l'envers* (the inverse side). A Talent is thus liberated from what Malevich (and most of his descendants) called the painting-surface. It is equally independent of photography and, especially, collage. Rather, we can think of a painting-stratum in the layers of relief that define these works.

for rational and cosmic thought. No-one should forget that imagination, intuition, and disquietude 6 shape the sciences, just as they are thought to encourage art. In Yuk Hui's triptych on Cosmotechnics, these domains of talent are enfolded on the plane of—precisely— a clientless mode of Art. This points to a power of pure aisthesis that links the celestial and moral orders through domains of technical unfolding. A Talent, we conclude, is a finite thing. It is concrete, elegant, and bound to change. It is technical because it is also historical, political, socially inscribed, and mortal. In the gap between an Altarpiece and broken glass, the *Talents* oscillate between reflection and absorption, and the world-reflecting instance of adventures in embodiment.

**THE
PAINTER'S
NEW
TOOLS**

NAHMAD CONTEMPORARY

The Talents employ a uniquely developed paint that, rather than appearing in figured colors, adds an optically blurred effect when applied to the surface of glass. I made this paint by suspending gold nanoparticles within a transparent medium. (Gold nanoparticles are used in cosmetics applications, printing, and medical imaging.)

Applied to the outer surface of the glass, this paint is not visible because the nanoparticles hold to a scale that lies below what humans can observe with the naked eye. (The count is a billion particles per meter.) This means that the gold produces its effect on a truly virtual scale.

Talent (my name for the paint itself) is applied by hand to the painting's surface, which is made from panels of mirror and glass. These are fused with laminating glue and UV-resistant printing inks. All of the visibly golden color is traceable to the ink-stained glue. And although the effect seems monochromatic, it is made with many variations in the red-yellow-orange and green-grey bands. As such, the Talents are polychrome.

A comedy of surplus unfolds: recalling the golden backgrounds in Cimabue's paintings, these Talents stand for the absence of a ground—or a ground replaced by atmosphere and made of physical and virtual parts interacting with existing natural light. These are the rudiments of any painting."



Scott Lyall

By **Brainard Carey** - April 22, 2022

00:00

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Scott Lyall

Scott Lyall (b. 1964, Toronto) lives and works in Toronto and New York. Scott Lyall combines drawing, painting, sculpture, and found objects into what he describes as a 'scenography without actors,' or 'plastic supports for an almost clientless sense of design.' His production revolves around issues related to sculptural display, the relationships between graphic processes, and the design legacies of conceptualism.

While Lyall's earlier work involved installations created from construction and everyday materials such as particleboard, styrofoam, and other ephemeral fragments, his recent practice is predominantly comprised of graphic assemblages and printouts produced without direct mediation of an image.

Referencing Bruno Latour, the artist describes his *Nudes* and *EVEs* series as "design all the way down," a statement that resonates with Mark Rothko's use of pigmented gessos to achieve what he called "color all the way down."

Originating from the basic and most abstract unit of the digital realm—the single color pixel—the pale hues of Lyall's color wave paintings and stickers are formed through a method of mathematical interpolation that generates a unique and potentially infinite bitstream. The resulting information is sent directly to the print heads, which apply sheer layers of ink such that the gradient color-deposits are mixed directly on the substrate. The immediate relationship between the numerical formula and the printer is akin to a "fauve" effect of releasing color from the received image. Embodying a movement from pure quantity—a digital field of dispersions and exchange—to form, these works are inherently split objects that exist first immaterially, and materially in the last instance. They address the informational fetish of recent art and the dissolution of visible signs.

The *Nudes* stand slightly detached from the wall, affixed to hand-painted monochrome MDF panels of corresponding dimensions, which are in turn attached to the wall directly – digital

dust on canvas, one might say, over compressed and solidified wood powder. The pieces combine ink and its erasure in canvases subjected to multiple passes through a UV-based printer. The result is a subtle residual 'tan' that suggests an index of rays 'beyond color' that affect the tonal assemblage. Lyall describes the *EVE* vinyl adhesive sheets as 'thin reliefs,' and relates the printed posters to a generalized artistic space between painted, sculptural, and architectural forms. A glued sticker on one side of the panel and a spray of cartridge inks on the other establish a relationship between plastic and graphic determinations of the print. The interaction of the surfaces of the ultrathin paste-up and the façade of a smooth wall creates an implication of depth. Because of the use of non-archival inks in the instance of the adhesive sheets, each printout will eventually fade to white, thus merging with and disappearing into the wall that houses it. In this sense, these works exist beyond the traditional confines of the wall and architecture more generally. A further constitutive feature of the file is its capacity to circulate electronically freely around the globe and beyond before the moment of incarnation. The owners of unique bitstreams are then entrusted to printout new iterations of the color fields at will. This is painting engaging the digital realm and pushing it to the limit of its material and conceptual possibilities by reducing it to a sequence of three discrete and subjective gestures: 1. The random selection of an entry point among the 284 million color options. 2. The algorithmic unleashing of the infinite expansion of the file. 3. The final decision to cut the color progression in a particular place, that is finding the edges of the gradient before outputting its content onto a chosen substrate. As such, the painting object is suspended until the last impulse of incarnation.

In line with the dehierarchization proposed by monochrome painting in the 1950s, Lyall considers his work to be a function of its interaction with the surrounding space. The environment provides a space of aleatory, open representation, which might be captured by Cage's description of Rauschenberg's White Paintings as "airports for the lights, shadows, and particles." To the most limited form of commercially printed material, Lyall adds the speculative image of mental projection without an end. The works become advertisements for this 'grey matter.' In Lyall's words, "It will be whatever reality does not prevent it from becoming...."

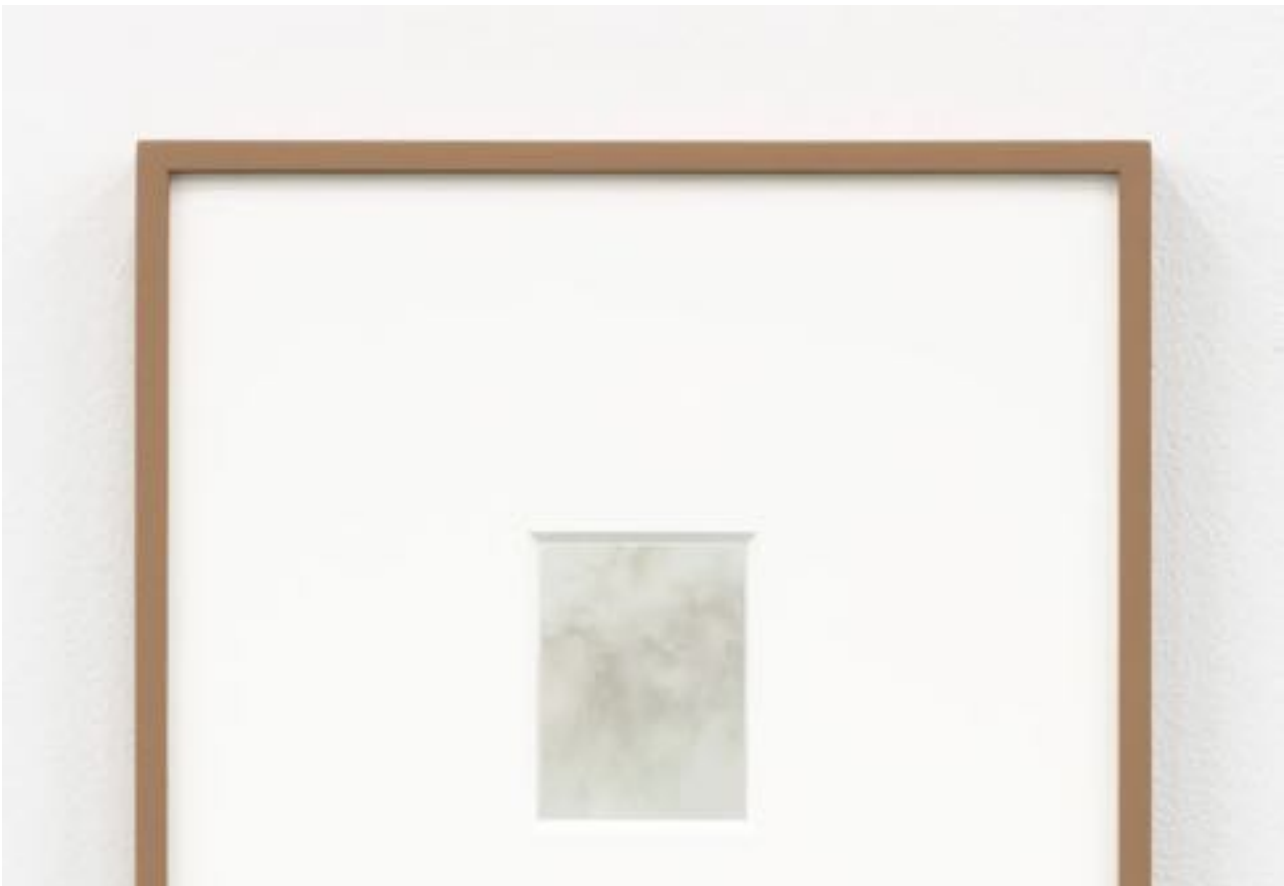
Scott Lyall earned his MFA from the California Institute of the Art in 1993. His solo and two-person exhibitions include Superstar at Miguel Abreu Gallery (2019), Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto (2018), DRAGONS at Campoli Presti, London (2017), Dragons. SLStudio.clone 1/2/1 – SLStudio.clone 1/10/1 at Campoli Presti, Paris (2017), Black Glass at Miguel Abreu Gallery (2015), οἶνονά πόντον [Winedark Sea] at Campoli Presti, London (2014), Indiscretion at Miguel Abreu Gallery (2013), Hasta Mañana at Greene Naftali (2011), An Immigrant Affection at Miguel Abreu Gallery (2010), The Color Ball at The Power Plant in Toronto (2008), the little

contemporaries at *SculptureCenter* (2007), and an eponymous exhibition at *Greene Naftali* (1996), among others. In 2012, he participated in *Anti-Establishment*, curated by Johanna Burton, at the *CCS Bard Hessel Museum*. Previously Lyall's work was included in group shows internationally such as *Ballistic Poetry*, *Hermès Foundation, Brussels* (2016); *Schnitte im Raum*, *Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen* (2011); *Tentation d'Hazard*, *The Montreal Biennial* (2011); *New York to London and Back: The Medium of Contingency*, *Thomas Dane Gallery, London* (2011); *Collatéral, Le Confort Moderne, Poitiers* (2009); *The Lining of Forgetting*, curated by Xandra Eden, *Austin Museum of Art, Weatherspoon Art Museum*; and *SITE Santa Fe, 7th International Biennial* (2008). Lyall's work is in the collections of the *Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY*; the *National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada*; and the *Whitney Museum of American Art, New York*.

Scott Lyall's essay "[From "The Surface of Design" to the Poet-Engineer?"](#) as part of *The Poet-Engineers* exhibition reader can be found on the *Miguel Abreu Gallery* website.



Talent 29, 2022. Gold nano particles and acrylic gel medium on ink printed glass, mirror. 48 x 67 1/2 x 2 inches (121.9 x 171.5 x 5.1 cm) © Scott Lyall, Courtesy Miguel Abreu Gallery. Photo: Stephen Faught.





Nanofoil (SLStudio.clone_1/16/2), 2018. UV-engraved photonic structures in aluminum foil, polymer coating, casein painted frame. 3 5/8 x 2 11/16 inches (9.2 x 6.8 cm). Framed dimensions: 13 x 12 inches (33 x 30.5 cm)
© Scott Lyall, Courtesy Miguel Abreu Gallery. Photo: Stephen Faught.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Scott Lyall
Black Glass

Location: 88 Eldridge Street, 4th floor

Dates: September 12 – October 25, 2015

Reception: Saturday, September 12, 6 – 8PM

Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to announce the opening, on Saturday, September 12th, of *Black Glass*, Scott Lyall's fourth solo exhibition at the gallery. The show will be on view at our 88 Eldridge Street location.

In the myth of Daedalus, all things veer from the straight line. Daedalus is an inventor. He conjures statues that seem alive, military robots to guard Crete, and ancient genetic engineering enabling the birth of the Minotaur—for whom he builds the labyrinth, and from which via another apparatus he escapes. Daedalus the inventor is said to have conceived of sails made of canvas, glue, and joined corners. Now imagine Daedalus as a photographer/painter who has tired of the routines of image production,

...the predictable use of light to fix the 'subject' or whatever other objects were before him. Imagine that (this photographer/painter) was crazy enough to want to fix the light as light. If so, this would not be the light from distant stars, but a light without stars, without source no matter how distant or hidden, a light inaccessible to the camera. Should the photographer abandon his technique and find another? Or should he generalize his technique across the forms of the darkroom, the white cube, and the camera obscura in order to proliferate the angles, the frames, the perspectives, the openings and shutters used to capture (or perhaps to seduce) the light itself? (Francois Laruelle, The Concept of Non-Photography).

In Scott Lyall's collection of *Black Glass* works, ink-infused glue is injected between two identical panes of 'museum glass' to stain and enclose the interior. Then, a thick layer of ink is applied to the back, to render the front of the glass surface a black mirror. Finally, a layer of pale, sheer color is printed onto the outward facing surface of the mirror. This has the value of a thin, textured veil. The mirror's reflectance is canceled by this veil, while the color is overwhelmed and absorbed by the darkness. The 'image' is thus reduced to a grain-like texture. The latter can be compared to both the *halides* in a photograph and the glazing layers used in a traditional oil painting. Light haunts this image, but no refractions or shadows can be seen.

The pixel is given to a process that depends on its material, rather than representational, value: *some* light passes through the veil of ink because its sheerness acts as a partial filter. The light that 'makes it through' is then reflected in the mirror and returned in the direction of the surface of the glass. But only *some* reflection passes outward through the surface. The same outer surface that functioned as a filter again filters the *reflectance* as it returns to the world. This is a real, material capture of energy, and not a *picturization* of color-and-light effects. A decomposing remainder of electron particles bounces back and forth between the panes of glass, in perpetuity.

Because of its capture and canceling of light, the diagrammatic arrangement of these *Black Glass* works seems to bring to mind an entirely unexpected entity. Never at rest and relentless, this entity is related to a *technical* economy of images based on constant navigation and processing speed. The work must literally keep on working (filtering, refracting, trapping, and absorbing the light) to maintain its negentropic hold.

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The color that eclipses both photography and painting has emerged from the adventure of a different kind of night: a night without days, a real depth of concealment. It's a night that is enfolded in compression and collapse. And it attracts light—captures it, consumes it, seduces it—as if the light were lured toward its surfaces like a moth. The colors we call 'pixels' are just as eternal. They are not the different colors of the perishable body. They come when they are called, and neither die nor survive (Lyll, citing A.N. Whitehead, in a note).

The suspended particle energy in the interior of the *Glass* meets a perceptual situation whose content relies on a question of methodological proof—we are literally called into perception via the canceled mirror. *Our image's* redaction has appeared as a prerequisite of the particle turmoil that continues in the *Glass*; and it is only because of the veil's cancellation of the mirror that we see this space of turmoil as potential and nothing else. If, as Bruno Latour suggests, our current era is characterized by the abolition of the material support of the image, then *Black Glass* functions paradoxically to materialize this estrangement by rendering the condition of digital transference sensible, and more importantly, in constant process. Our new habit of *navigating* back and forth through datascares without stopping at either end point (neither origin nor terminus) is effectively 'mirrored' in the depthless *Black Glass*, not as image but as darkness ... oddly *sensuously* revealed.

In addition to a slide projection piece by Christine Davis, the *Black Glass* is accompanied by a set of images that 'reflect on' its shifting and developing themes. Among these are three small nanofoil etchings which capture probe images of redshift light—ghosts from the edges of our expanding universe that testify to a heaven just about to disappear.

Scott Lyll was born in Toronto in 1964, and currently lives and works in Toronto and New York. He earned his MFA from the California Institute of the Arts in 1993. His solo and two-person exhibitions include Totality (Phantom Eclipse) at Susan Hobbs, Toronto, οἶνοπα πόντον [Winedark Sea] at Campoli Presti, London (2014), Indiscretion at Miguel Abreu Gallery (2013), The Color Ball at The Power Plant in Toronto (2008), An Immigrant Affection at Miguel Abreu Gallery (2010), the little contemporaries at Sculpture Center (2007), among others. In 2012, he participated in Anti-Establishment, curated by Johanna Burton, at the CCS Bard Hessel Museum. Previously Lyll's work was included in group shows internationally such as Schnitte im Raum, Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen (2011); Tentation d'Hazard, The Montreal Biennial (2011); New York to London and Back: The Medium of Contingency, Thomas Dane Gallery, London (2011); Collatéral, Le Confort Moderne, Poitiers (2009); The Lining of Forgetting, curated by Xandra Eden, Austin Museum of Art, Weatherspoon Art Museum; and SITE Santa Fe, 7th International Biennial (2008).

For more information or for visuals, please contact the gallery:

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New York, NY 10002
Telephone 212.995.1774 • Fax 646.688.2302 • post@miguelabreugallery.com

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CRITICS' PICKS
New York

Scott Lyall

MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY
88 Eldridge Street, 4th Floor
September 12–October 25

Light is a fundamental agent in Scott Lyall's output, acting as both material and subject matter. The series "Black Glass," 2014–15, includes twelve nearly seamless monochrome panels, each measuring some sixty-seven by forty-seven inches. The somber works are composed of pairs of glass panes, which Lyall has adhered with an ink-infused glue. They are coated with thick black ink on the reverse of the back pane and printed with a color gradient of diaphanous ink on the surface. These treatments ignite a reaction that recalls photographic development (some ambient light passes through the front pane, reflects off the back, and meets the front surface again). Lyall's conceptual project is trapped between these panes: The light that comes back through the glass is neither reproduction, reflection, or representation, but material reaction.

Lyall's process-oriented work functions as a compelling analogy for the material agency of images. By engaging light as both a subject and active medium, he points to otherwise-imperceptible aspects of image production—namely, the movement of light and its particle decomposition. It's striking that this trick is deployed through works that are so serene and seductive, with surfaces so slick and seemingly empty. But this dissonance between elaborate theoretical demonstration and polished art object seems integral to Lyall's practice.



Scott Lyall, *Black Glass* (οἶνονα πόντρον), 2015, UV-cured ink print on ink-infused laminated glass, wood frame, 67 7/8 x 47 3/8".

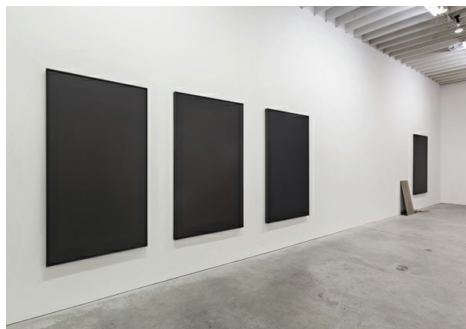
— Andrew Kachel

esse

Scott Lyall, Susan Hobbs, Toronto, October 16 – November 22, 2014

Susan Hobbs

Dagmara Genda



Scott Lyall, *Black Glass* (οἶνονα πόντον),
installation view, 2014. Photo: Toni Hafkenscheid,
courtesy of Susan Hobbs Gallery, Toronto

Scott Lyall Susan Hobbs, Toronto, October 16 – November 22, 2014

Images made through digital techniques often explicitly reference mass production, authorship or commercial processes, yet Scott Lyall's recent exhibition at Susan Hobbs is marked by a very human touch. Despite the detached and technical way in which the paintings are made, the exhibition evokes a soft, ethereal, even romantic, atmosphere. The ghostly gradients and deep, translucent blacks of the paintings are specifically the result of UV wide-print technology. A range of colour is sourced as compressed information from a digital profile, then printed with ink that is vaporized and applied at high heat to canvas or glass. The profile is a vector graph that interprets colour as a mathematical rule, producing a shifting toner rather than a block of specific hue. The result is a kind of evidence of technique, or perhaps a demonstration of the logic inherent in the technological processes employed. But in contrast to the works of Cory Arcangel or Xie Molin, the technology is not what comes to the fore. Instead the paintings have a closer relationship to colour field painting, or the near hallucinatory works of James Turrell. Inasmuch as technology is pushed to a limit, so is our perception.

Strangely enough, walking into the well-lit gallery is reminiscent of entering a dark room it takes time for the eyes to adjust before one begins to perceive the subtle shifts in each

painting. Initially, one simply sees four stark, black, rectangular paintings, a white canvas, and a golden glass pane leaning against the wall with a bouquet of flowers laid loosely beneath it. It is only with careful looking that one begins to notice faint changes in colour and tone. The black works, each titled *Black Glass*, are not all the same intensity or tone of black, but the differences are so slight that we might begin to question our own perceptions. The longer I look at the works, the more I try to convince myself they are indeed all the same, but of course they are not. Rather than creating pure differences in their subtle shifts, they seem to stir a deep uncertainty. The white canvas, titled *Magnitude (roses/pink)*, is in fact a gradient that almost imperceptibly shifts from pink to blue, to perhaps yellow or white. The ethereal quality seems somehow closer to perfume mist, evoking the expectance of a smell rather than a hue. Attempting to accurately see the shifts in colour, I found myself stepping back until I hit the opposite wall, which, as if anticipating this exact response, was left empty.

Upstairs, three paintings, all bearing the same title *nude*, hang side by side. On a directly adjacent wall there is a painted grey rectangle the exact size of the canvases. It functions as a palette cleanser as I strain to adequately see the hues in front of me. The soft pink tones might connote faintly flushed skin, yet there is the sense that the canvases have barely any ink on them in the first place, though they are made through the application of multiple layers. The traditional nude is both negated and evoked.

As might already be implied by the negated nudes and barely-there inks, there is a sense of loss implicit in this show. It is exuded in many layers, the strongest of which comes from the thick melancholy of the *Black Glass* series that, despite being characterized by a flat expanse of colour, creates the impression of uncertain, and perhaps even sinister, depth. The flowers on the floor, arranged as if for a funeral, are a sign of temporality: bound to wilt over time. Then there is the information loss that occurs in a digital profile upon compression. While we do not know precisely what information is lost, nor is that loss necessarily perceptible, the remaking of each image still introduces an element of chance.

Alongside the paintings – and perhaps a bit too easily missed – is a text piece available beside the show's promotional material. The text is part of a forthcoming publication to be officially released within the next year. Titled *FrameWork 11-14*, it at first reads like a Mallarmé poem. Words and phrases are suspended in empty space but the impression is not one of concrete poetry as much as missing information. This is further supported by a long series of footnotes referencing exhibitions,

panels, and talks Lyall has participated in. It seems this is a fragmented accumulation of his thought over time, distilled to mean something new altogether. And while large swathes of information are clearly missing, the key ingredients present themselves even more clearly for the empty space: "changing colour . . . void . . . excess . . . compression."

Perhaps because Lyall's subject matter is, as he himself describes, "aleatory," it is the uncertain materiality of the works that leaves the most lasting impression. Serving as a kind of perceptual ungrounding, these contemporary colour fields seem to abstract abstraction itself. Made by machines, and using the logic of machines, the exhibition is nevertheless deeply human. Its presentation and references tie it to a rich cultural history that both persists and changes meaning over time. As viewers, we are invited to reflect on how this history is reinvented and what our position might be within it.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Scott Lyall, *Indiscretion*

Dates: March 7 – April 21, 2013

Reception: Thursday, March 7, 6 – 8PM

Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to announce the opening, on Thursday March 7th, of *Indiscretion*, Scott Lyall's third one-person exhibition at the gallery. For the show, the artist will present a sequence of six new paintings along with three almost-black works on laminated glass.

Lyall's paintings, which are in fact digital prints on stretched canvas, are mounted on monochrome backings that frame them, double them, and space them in relation to their environments. As color field images – or the *lack* of such images – the paintings are generated using an iteratively mechanical strategy that resolves a triple demand for negation, schema, and repetition. The viewer is confronted with a continuous and joyfully predictable pictorial surface of totally rendered difference. Lyall begins a work by selecting a single pixel, an invisible quantified 'color' within a digital color model. From this initial decision and definition of primary color emerges a self-generating, potentially infinite sequence of transformations: the color is wound around the virtual curvature of a void. This vertiginously repeatable formula results in iridescent and impersonal visual atmospheres, where no two points are quantitatively equal, but where the magnitude of their relationships remains constantly equivalent. At face value, the paintings appear like sheer *almost*-monochromes made from digital dust, while being predicated exactly in the opposite reality of the polychrome. By contrast, the glass works, although made by an identical print technique, commit the layers of ink to the opacity of a glaze – the absorptive, 80% black sheet backing. These differential treatments of identical file material, which immerse the expressive artist in the technical support or apparatus, imagine a common interface of remarkably lucid lack.

'*The first paintings that cannot be misunderstood*', wrote Ad Reinhardt about his late work. But as it turned out, Reinhardt's insistence on negation, schematization, and repetition has never ceased to augur misunderstandings. Like his predecessor, Lyall accepts and even proposes that his work be conventionally recognized as abstract painting, that is that it exists as a signifying and signified part of a specific culture at a particular historical moment – *ours*. However, his infinitesimal and quasi-random choices of generative color pixels might point to a limit reached in the digital age. It is as if Lyall's paintings depict a lack in their environments, a pure particle that, to echo the famous words of Mallarmé, is missing from every volume, every empty sample of air. At the same time, his monochrome backings – made of cemented wooden powder, or MDF – are reminders that the tasks of separation and negation also signal an inevitable differential affirmation. Reinhardt was either *too early* or *too late* for most historians. Lyall, in repeating him, is *always-already there and done*. The artist's iterative painting resembles neither a critique of authorship (as was implicit in Conceptual art's 'instructional' production, or in the image appropriations of the Pictures generation), nor a romanticism of the 'ghost-in-the-machine' sensibility that has been heralded as the Pop intersection of painting and printers. His stance implies, rather, a program of refusal against the torrent of digital images that flood the world today. This subject would not be offered as the significance of anything, but it is opened to a poetics of its decision-based refusal. The object here, further, is pure discretion itself, the form in which compression can allow for absolute mobility.

Thus, if Reinhardt offers a kind of model for these paintings, it is because he points to the doubly negated subject of their form: a subject at once expressed against the legacies of abstraction, but also, *avant la lettre*, against the dispersed contemporary scene. The surfaces of Lyall's paintings and their almost-black counterparts, onto which any meaning at all could be projected – any misunderstanding whatever, any indiscretion you like – are backed and back away from their contemporary environments by the simple affirmation of their commonly absent ground. The works' effect is a style in painting that produces a register in which it is impossible to see the end – *cessation*, or *motive* – of art at all.

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SCOTT LYALL

Eve and Non-Color

Each of the *Eves* or *Non-Color* pieces are initiated with the selection of a single color pixel - the basic unit of the digital realm - to which Lyall applies an algorithm that generates an infinite sequence of pixels. That bitstream, or wave of color is specific and unique, that is determined by the initial choice. In other words, each work looks more or less the same, tends towards white, but is markedly different. And of course, an infinite number of works can be produced from this basic procedure that stages a kind of dialectic between randomness and infinity.

The *Non-Color* paintings are also *printouts*, but they are produced on a flatbed printer that separates in three distinct passes color, grayscale, and transparency. Those 3 values are all selected between 0 and 1% of their respective spectrum. This results in a direct interpellation of the printer without the production and mediation of a screen image. In a sense, the immediate relation between the numerical formula and the printer, is akin to a "fauve" effect.

The second act consists of selecting the printout size for the "infinite" file - a standard paper size in the current case. And finally, a wall area must be chosen upon which to permanently adhere the *Eve*. One could say that the *Eves* and *Non-Color* paintings are works that exist "beyond" the traditional confines of the wall. In the last instance, however, their active adherence to a selected wall space becomes absolute and final - for that particular incarnation of the file...

The owner of a specific *Eve* - of a particular bitstream - is entitled to produce new printouts at his or her discretion.

SCOTT LYALL

nudes

Lyall's title, *nudes*, can be interpreted as a charm. (Charme in French: incantation, intonation; a key search.) But the title is also given as an image under erasure, according to a formula that recurs in written thought: 'since a word is inaccurate, it must be crossed out. Since some word is necessary, the chosen word remains legible.' (Heidegger). The *nudes* are graphic assemblages combining ink and its erasure in multiple passes of canvas through a UV-based printer. Lyall's procedure sequences ink in sheer layers of application so that the gradient color-deposits are mixed directly onto the field. There is no graphic image that pre-exists this on a screen because the color information is sent directly to the print heads. At stake is a movement from pure quantity to the figure without the mediation of an 'image' from the regime of graphic design. Each nude becomes an expression of almost negative saturation, undecidable between the veiling and laying bare of what is seen.

An interesting occurrence apropos of the UV printer is that each nude attains a warm and very subtle residual tan. (This effect is the result of long exposures from multiple passes.) There is therefore an index of rays 'beyond color' that affect the tonal assemblage by subtly calibrating the whole. You would think that UV exposure would only bleach these sheets of color. But in fact it works to fix them. It sears them in and cures the tone. The result is neither perception, pure and simple, nor an image. Lyall sees these special effects as the nude's emergent quality, a kind of sacrifice of abstraction and mechano-graphic (conceptual) thought.

'Paul Valéry spent his mornings writing thoughts about mathematics. He said he earned the right to be stupid –intuitive, moved—the rest of the day. I will say: the difference between mathematics and emotion, between an empty symbolic quantity and a meaningful plastic art— between a figure in circulation and the self who must have summoned it— is discharge, sprays of fog, the sublimation of ink itself.' (-S. Lyall)

STATEMENT

Typically, a figure of the anti-establishment is one that stands opposed to conventional propositions, shaking the ground of support for hardened models and brittle forms. But I have never believed in such rigidities of the establishment, or in the skeletons-become-closets that give us bodies of positive law. Especially in an epoch defined by information technology, I describe establishments more as a mesh of oppositions—all the differential positions, all the sides you can be "on." This means an establishment is not a form of identity; it is a supple space of codes where points of difference are regularized, but where making the (empty) differences can sometimes become a civic norm. If so, though, to wager on the theme of anti-establishment is not to express a right of return to more stable institutions. (I will not applaud the semblants, the simulations, or "likely stories"). I will offer instead to trace a kind of a movement in the establishment—to use a phrase of Catherine Malabou's—that works at changing difference itself. I cannot really develop this in the space I've been allotted, but I am thinking of an establishment of institutional plasticity, an establishment that is something like a double-mirror cortex joining a powdered set of differences and our skill at inventing forms. I institute, I establish, because I am in essence being transformed.

(Having said this, I should emphasize that I would place the word establishment in a bond between the human and its technical objects, a bond that is both organic and mechanical, and encoded. An establishment is to me a kind of information technology that wants to cohere—like any technology—around a self-attracting node. [In modern art, a word for this establishment was "surface." But the German word *Gesell*, which means a frame, an apparatus, an organization, or a tendency, is maybe closer to what I mean.] Such establishing technologies are just as visible in Ellsworth Kelly—or Newman's *Onement*—as in museums or in expanded critical modes.)

If I'm human, if I am part of the plastic that establishes, I'm inverted both to model and to be modeled, and destroy. I establish being established in such a way that I can consider not only my resistance to our elastic screen economies (and not only my abhorrence at things reduced to credit and junk), but also that there is meter and a spacing in formation that anticipates and is in fact the only future I can know. However clumsily I say so, it is something like this meter that I can hear in what I have taken to be the theme of our show:

establishment/ anti-establishment;
and then to rhyme it,
anti-establishment.

I have sometimes written "hors" (season, hour, sexual ripeness, point of precision, a Gestalt, and even the time when one must die) to give a color of temporal theater to this spacing of the establishment, to an infinity within the finitude that every plastic body enjoys.

CHECKLIST

"nodes, magnitudes, Elys"

node

2012

ink on canvas with UV radiation, and
painted board
66 x 48 in. (168 x 122 cm)

node

2012

ink on canvas with UV radiation, and
painted board
66 x 48 in. (168 x 122 cm)

node

2012

ink on canvas with UV radiation, and
painted board
66 x 48 in. (168 x 122 cm)

node

2012

ink on canvas with UV radiation, and
painted board
66 x 48 in. (168 x 122 cm)

Unnamed (magnitude: roses/pinks)

2012

ink on canvas with UV radiation, and
painted board
83 x 66 in. (206 x 168 cm)

Unnamed (magnitude: roses/pinks)

2012

ink on canvas with UV radiation, and
painted board
83 x 66 in. (206 x 168 cm)

Elys (Early Video edits)

2012

Six inkjet prints on adhesive vinyl
Each: 66 x 48 in. (168 x 122 cm)

All works courtesy of the artist and Miguel
Abreu Gallery

Stretched canvas and adhesive-backed vinyl provide supports for near-monochromes that are actually made of thousands of colors. In Lyall's canvas works, chromatic code is deposited to the fabric as it is passed again and again through a flatbed printer. Softened by a tan from this UV-based process, the effect appears from "nowhere" (unless, possibly, from a Cloud). If these works are convincing contenders within legacies of abstract art, the adhesives are destined for more contingent lives: Color dispersions multiply from a single greyish pixel, but their removal from any wall is their destruction for all time.

ARTFORUM

SUMMER 2011

ACTING OUT
THE AB-EX EFFECT

DE KOONING • ELDERFIELD • WINTERS • SILLMAN
JOSEF • PRINCE • ARAKAWA • WOOD • MITCHELL
POLLOCK • DUBUFFET • TWOMBLY • TEMKIN
OEHLER • SCHNABEL • EISENMAN • WILKES • SMITH



SCOTT LYALL

Bruno Latour tells us that when almost all the parts of an artifact are digitized, it's as if the object is composed of "writings all the way down." This phrase makes me remember Mark Rothko's technique of tiring gesso so his paintings would be color all the way down. While Rothko might have understood these paintings by their surfaces, not as compositional schemes but as color released from line (a pair of categories that were traditionally opposed until Matisse), my shift to a vector that goes "all the way down" invokes images of vertical depth and of definition in sharp detail. Depth, which only appears when it is paired with given surfaces, points attention toward a chiasma of formless color and screen design.

Against the vertigo of history, painting's engagement with "edges"—and therefore the lateral axis—could be taken as an achievement. For Barnett Newman, edges did not just delimit a painting's surface; they conveyed a shape that was real, a near ideograph of thought. Newman wrote that for primitive artists "a shape was a living thing, a vehicle for an abstract thought-complex . . . before the terror of the unknowable." Perhaps these primitive artists could see the twentieth century coming and made their shapes speak of clefts between phenomena and things themselves.

In my own work I have invoked chiasmic depth as thin relief. A plastic substrate receives an allover application on both sides—ink on one and liquid adhesive on the other—allowing sprays of abstract color to be modeled by the walls. The thin relief captures disparate layers of all-the-way-downs to form a poster that announces its own penumbral, sunless light. A deeply compacted matrix of form, figure, and color becomes a subtle graphic economy of sapient imagery yet to come. Depths of line and color announce a plastic choreality (Plato's *chora*, the nonexistence of every surface you ever saw.) □

SCOTT LYALL IS AN ARTIST BASED IN TORONTO AND NEW YORK.



View of "Scott Lyall: Early Ideas,"
2000, Susan Lyden Gallery,
Toronto. From left: (21x
62) (2000, 1820) (74x), 2000;
untitled, 2000.

A person's legs and feet are visible, hanging from a white, angular, geometric structure that resembles a modern staircase or a piece of architectural art. The person is wearing dark trousers and dark shoes. The structure is composed of several white, rectangular blocks stacked and angled to create a series of steps or a platform. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

02 n° 59

Automne / Autumn 2011

Revue d'art contemporains internationale et gratuite

ÉRIC
BAUDELAIRE

GREGORY & CYRIL
CHAPUISAT

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SAVARY

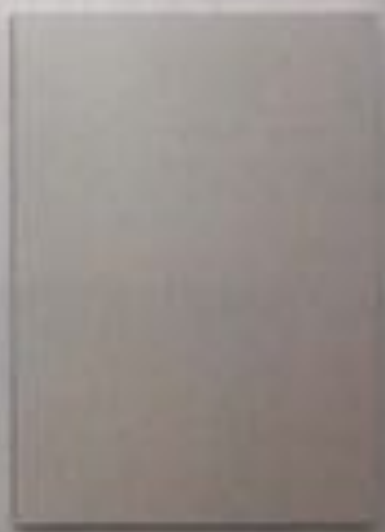
SCOTT LYALL,
BERTRAND PLANES,
HUGO PERNET

HUGO
PERNETBERTRAND
PLANES*A Certain Idea of White*

BERTRAND PLANES
The place we've been to
Sans titre #2, 2001.
Tableau, peinture acrylique
blanche, réalisation photographique
impressionnée par projection
vidéo, rétroprojecteur, fixation /
Painting, white acrylic paint,
photographic realization exposed to
a video projection, developer, fixer
62 x 112 cm.

While the vogue veered towards colour, one brighter than the last, summer seemed to announce itself under the auspices of a certain idea of white, as we did the Paris galleries. At Triple V, the tone was set straight away: the billed *Peintures blanches* (White Paintings) turned out to be black. Needless to say, literalism might have been a tad risqué, whereas there, once the promise had been digested, regular customers are confronted by a disturbing experience of thought. What actually is the negative of a painting? Passing from expected white pictures to dark rectangles coldly hung without further ado, is all the same a little rough, it has to be admitted. The idea is there, though, involving a brush's backhand of pictorial history and producing negatives, in the photographic sense, of illusory pictures. But what else? Well, in addition to the delightful impression that abstraction is painting with lots of wit, something we sometimes tended to forget in recent years, what is also involved is a demystifying praxis which gives the painting back its object status,

twice over. First by cultivating its objectivity, neutrality and flatness, through the "mouth" chosen in the tradition of those of Olivier Mosset, Barnett Newman and other advocates of a minimal painting, then by the use of seriality and the double, which reiterate the objecthood of the thing painted by ridding it of that aura we might have been tempted to attribute to it. So Hugo Pernet's *Peintures blanches* are presented as the opposite of Robert Rauschenberg's *White Paintings*, but like the work of the Hegelian negative, they are not posited as a definitive response to those ultimate paintings, white monochromes. Since the end of the 20th century, abstract painting has paradoxically become a repository of "forms", of classics to be re-interpreted or, to use the artist's own words, "a 'genre' painting". So what we are dealing with here is images of abstractions and no longer with literal abstractions. "As for the monochrome, we might regard it as part of the still life, or more broadly the *vanitas*, genre: while remaining something literal, a monochrome



painting is also a vanitas of painting, a canvas's canvas, a truncheon of botched painting, or painting not made at all.¹¹

No Signal, Bertrand Planes's show at the New Galerie, invited us to a sort of game of hide-and-seek with images. Here again, the painting/photography connection is central and destabilizes the pictorial expectation. We are looking at a "classic" hanging of pictures which all look like duds which have been too long in a flooded cellar. Faded and blurred landscapes appear on canvases which look as if they are studded with mould and mildew. Yet we are in no way in the presence of some process whereby the works are naturally deteriorating. This is a technique which Bertrand Planes himself describes as "high low tech", and applies in his different works. Coming to art by way of computer science, he plays with his DIY technologies to reveal their absurdity through repetitive applications. The series *The Place We've Been 2* (2011) originates in amateur pictures bought in secondhand markets and then subjected to a photographic procedure so arranged as to bring out the shadow of the images they once contained. The method is well tried and tested, but nevertheless permits accidents. Bertrand Planes starts by photographing his acquisitions before repainting them white, and then exposing them, covered with photo-sensitive emulsion, to the projection of their own image—the one prior to the shift

to white. Chemistry acts and thus produces objects which tend to blend in an absence of differentiation awakening ideas about the author's death and Benjamin-like attention about the crisis in painting. Disguised beneath their own image—with reproduction altering their precision—the original images are cancelled in a poetic-cum-chemical equation. The landscapes appear in shades of grey and seem to boast a romanticism with regard to their past splendour, while the technique of reproducibility has its effectiveness denied because, in the end of the day, it merely thwarts the uniqueness of the basic picture, while paradoxically leading it to a certain standardization with its companions on the walls.

From the fictitious white of Hugo Perret's canvases by way of the adulterated white of Bertrand Planes, we come to the artificial white explored by Scott Lyall in his series of *Nudes* at Sutton Lane. They could actually be false white monochromes, because they are neither absolutely monochrome nor really white, even if, at first glance, this is the closest description of them. More explicitly, they are in fact unprepared printed canvases with a whole host of colours which, in the end, form a kind of non-colour. Nor are they really paintings, rather 'unpainted paintings',¹² as Bob Nickan has described Wade Guyton's printings, because the canvases have known neither brushes, nor rollers, nor even paint, even if, on their stretchers, they look as if they have. Nor are there just

SCOTT LYALL

Nudes

Year of the exhibition /

Installation space: galerie

Sutton Lane, Paris.

18.08-08.09.2011.

Courtesy Sutton Lane.

London / Paris.

BERTRAND
PLANES

canvases, but adhesive panels, too, similar in format to that of the canvases, which respond to them with the rhythm of a hanging which makes them alternate. Let us say that nudes are in effect involved, because the cotton weave presents no extra thickness, it seems dyed in the mass, and the panel ink appears to have been blown to simulate the colour of the sky. Painting stripped bare by its painters, even.¹ Except that Scott Lyall is not even a painter... well, not for the most part. He programmes his impressions digitally, nothing else, without any image intervening; knowing this further intensifies this sensation of nebulous void. The calculation is precise, the colours applied one by one; each file contains several hundred. There is no colour, strictly speaking, rather the idea of a diffuse and opaque luminosity. "Light is colourless. If it is, it is so in the sense that numbers are colourless."² This series is beyond abstraction, we are looking at anti-Buchans: a light emanates from the wall the better to push us back, explode in our faces, and block any tempt to run away. The canvases and vinyls refer neither to what lies beyond the wall nor to the down-to-earth side of the wall presenting them, but to the edge, in the manner of a more than illusory window, a closed window. "If all colours were to become whiter, then the image would lose more and more depth"³; which bolsters the use of adhesive which takes all autonomy away from the object. (What is more, if the said object is not brought into play after its

exposition by a purchase or a curatorial request, it will not be re-made). Conversely, this also permits the colour almost to become autonomous. Released from the image, it is also partly freed from the surface, once it no longer exists in digital form, moved on a hard drive.

From Hugo Pernet's negative images, Bertrand Planes's dissolved images and Scott Lyall's in-existent images comes a simple idea: in this day and age when everything is, creates, or becomes imagery, this latter paradoxically loses its priority in favour of a discourse about it. While some of the forerunners of contemporary abstraction already mentioned in these pages⁴ (Chrysey Thompson and R. H. Quaytman among others) make use of painting to describe what David Joselit calls "the social life of images", by using the gesture of abstraction for the purposes of a transfer—and no longer a production—of information⁵, others play on the materiality of images (quality of definition, production process: is it made of lines or signs?, digitization and manual alteration...) to demonstrate its fragility.

1. Hugo Pernet in the catalogue for *Disappearance of presence*, Zec gallery, 2009, p. 22.
2. Ibid.
3. Bob Ruckus, "Made (Un)seen" in *Painting Dislocation: Five Decades of Abstract Painting*, Phaidon, 2009, p. 201.
4. An allusion to Richard Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors*, 1916.
5. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures on the foundations of ethics*, T.E.S., 1997, p. 21.
6. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the foundations of ethics*, pp. 104, p. 20.
7. Chrysey Thompson, *Art since 1900*, winter 2000, p. 24-25 and R. H. Quaytman, *Art since 1900*, winter 2000-01, p. 31-32.
8. David Joselit, "Digital Processing", *Artforum*, November 2001, p. 360-361.

PRESS RELEASE

SCOTT LYALL

~~nudes~~ 3

15 October – 17 December 2011

Campoli Presti, London

Campoli Presti is pleased to present *nudes 3* by Scott Lyall. This will be the artist's second solo show in London, and his fourth exhibition with the gallery.

Lyall's title, *nudes*, can be interpreted as a charm. (Charme in French: incantation, intonation; a key search.) But the title is also given as an image under erasure, according to a formula that recurs in written thought: 'since a word is inaccurate, it must be crossed out. Since some word is necessary, the chosen word remains legible.' (Heidegger). The *nudes* are graphic assemblages combining ink and its erasure in multiple passes of canvas through a UV-based printer. Lyall's procedure sequences ink in sheer layers of application so that the gradient color-deposits are mixed directly onto the field. There is no graphic image that pre-exists this on a screen because the color information is sent directly to the print heads. At stake is a movement from pure quantity to the figure without the mediation of an 'image' from the regime of graphic design. Each nude becomes an expression of almost negative saturation, undecidable between the veiling and laying bare of what is seen.

An interesting occurrence apropos of the UV printer is that each nude attains a warm and very subtle residual tan. (This effect is the result of long exposures from multiple passes.) There is therefore an index of rays 'beyond color' that affect the tonal assemblage by subtly calibrating the whole. You would think that UV exposure would only bleach these sheets of color. But in fact it works to fix them. It sears them in and cures the tone. The result is neither perception, pure and simple, nor an image. Lyall sees these special effects as the nude's emergent quality, a kind of sacrifice of abstraction and mechano-graphic (conceptual) thought.

'Paul Valéry spent his mornings writing thoughts about mathematics. He said he earned the right to be stupid –intuitive, moved—the rest of the day. I will say: the difference between mathematics and emotion, between an empty symbolic quantity and a meaningful plastic art— between a figure in circulation and the self who must have summoned it— is discharge, sprays of fog, the sublimation of ink itself.' (-S. Lyall)

Scott Lyall was born in Canada, and works in New York and Toronto. Recent exhibitions of the *nudes* and related works include Sutton Lane (Paris), Klosterfelde (Berlin), Greene Naftali (New York), Miguel Abreu Gallery (New York), Galerie Christian Nagel (Brussels Project Space), and the Montreal Biennial. Other exhibitions include The Color Ball (solo exhibition at The Power Plant, Toronto) and the 7th Santa Fe Biennial. Lyall's work will next appear as part of Art Nova (Art|Basel| Miami Beach with Campoli Presti), and in a solo exhibition at Silver Flag (Montreal).

For further information or images please contact Cora Muennich cora@campolipresti.com.

CANADIANART

See It

Scott Lyall: In-Between Times

SUSAN HOBBS GALLERY, TORONTO MAR 25 TO MAY 8 2010



"Scott Lyall: Early Video" 2010 Installation view Courtesy the artist and Susan Hobbs Gallery / photo Toni Hafkenscheid

In recent years, Toronto artist [Scott Lyall](#) has garnered much critical attention. Using everyday materials such as particleboard, polystyrene, cotton fabric and cardboard, Lyall's work has consistently challenged ideas about sculpture, its space and the formal workings of the culture industry at large. Lyall's 2008 exhibition at the Power Plant in Toronto, titled "[The Color Ball](#)"—a single installation resembling an entertainment venue or stage set, as seen before or after a fete of some kind—hovered between the mutually exclusive conventions of graphic imagery and set design, replete with ambiguity and allusion. Lyall's sense of materiality and understanding of space resonates through his current solo exhibition at [Susan Hobbs Gallery](#) in Toronto. Sharing themes with his recent exhibition at [Le Commissariat](#) in Paris earlier this year, "Scott Lyall: Early Video" features a set of pictorial works comprising print graphics, photographs, painting and exhibition décor. Although seemingly diverse, the elements in the exhibition share underlying procedures of design and are simultaneously abstract and intimate, theatrical and genuine, succinct and convoluted. As always, Lyall aims not just to turn heads, but turn minds. (137 Tecumseth St, Toronto ON)



"Scott Lyall: Early Video" 2010 Installation view



Scott Lyall [*EVE 03072010_14351648*] 2010
Courtesy the artist and Susan Hobbs Gallery / photo Toni Hafkenscheid
www.susanhobbs.com



View of Scott Lyall, *The Color Ball*
2006, Power Plant, Toronto

Scott Lyall

POWER PLANT, TORONTO
Dan Adler

"THE COLOR BALL"—Scott Lyall's most ambitious collaboration to date—might be seen as a calculating event for a rising contemporary whose oeuvre has been increasingly recognized for its formally sophisticated and resistance to the workings of the art-world industry. Coined by the Power Plant's director, Gregory Burke, the show took the form of a single installation resembling an extensive menu: some 40 bags of rice, each labeled a performance or a list of some kind. This condition of anticipation from a feeling of temporal displacement to a display that did not contain "finished" products. Rotating party lights were positioned overhead on two large metal cranes like those used in concert halls. A bunch of circular tables and chairs were stacked up alongside a table machine, which opened up a view that seemed to dance about in the movements of the light above. Piled up white boxes, two chairs covered in plastic, and various musical glasses created spiritual worlds from *Disco*, and *cocktails*.

These study-table objects comprised compositionally with a carefully laid-out series of low-lying, hard-edged rectangular sculptures with angled ends. Composed of alternating layers of raw MDF and gold Mylar film, each of these angled units had been intricately cut with a laser. They were placed in a rough zigzag configuration. Two horizontally elongated to serve as conventional museum plinths and ran from the ground to function as buffet tables, the objects seemed able to read display platforms—maybe for chairs and clothing—or perhaps portions of

unscripted stage acts. In recent months, in venues including New York's SculptureCenter and Baltimore Museum of Art, Lyall has proved himself adept at employing these lightly abstract shapes—which he calls "Bills"—to serve their own ends up to such varied situations. In Toronto, he has either left the platforms bare or adorned them with materials, often derived from the shipping and packing industries, that arise from the very construction of commercial events. On one of the largest Bills, viewers encountered the collective dress and strictly masculine shape of some neatly folded black tablecloths as well as a few air-filled plastic bags used for packing the sort of weights after heavy items that were previously absent from the installation. This sense of absence was further reinforced by such details as a disappearing weight of gestural boxes jostled against one of the Bills. On the floor nearby stood a nearly depleted bottle of Gold Label, a knock-off of Goldschlager, the schnapps known for its conspicuous inclusion of flakes of precious metal. Tableaux like this prompted me to read the installation as a fleeting still life, its forms associated with the creases of the wealthy and of an imagination—the likes of which have become familiar in recent years and, in our present moment, are bound to wear off the more pervasive.

Indeed, the central group of Bills recalled the monumental 1988 *Untitled* by Judy Chicago's installation, *The Dinner Party*, 1976/78—although, unlike Chicago's work, Lyall's did not seem particularly polemical, even as it appeared to suggest that the party is over, or perhaps never happened at all. Included with the supporting documentation provided by the artist—printed in a literary adjacent to the gallery—was a photograph showing the in-progress mobilization of *The Dinner Party*; the image depicted folded table linens and shipping containers and seemed a far more relevant source than Chicago's finished work. Lyall's project, after all, is to write some about the process by which cultural products, like Chicago's, achieve as objects and ideology, and how they come into being in relation to changing trends, socialities, and bodies. This theme of concern that is in keeping with the artist's method of drawing comparisons on a computer screen. The technique ensures that the work exists

in the first place as an instrumental object that is capable of inhabiting a wide range of sites and moments. For as long as they remain contained within digital planes, and perhaps beyond that point, Lyall's projects should thus be understood as early provisionally "Bills" with content, in a manner recalling the strategies of Daniel Buren, whose (initially unscripted) works suppress the desire to definitively assign aesthetic value or historicity of meaning.

And so one tentatively wondered about "The Color Ball," already probing its components for signifiers that speak with neither an obvious condition. Stacked atop a shipping crate were green leatherette, corrugated strips, but these were emblematic the extent that they denied any sign as fruitfully contradictory. Hanging on the wall was a line-up of circular wooden tablecloths. Scoring the walls, walls, and scratches on its surface—forms recalling another limited gesture made by Daniel Spence, here well a visual artist, theater designer, and organizer of

The installation recalled Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party*—although, unlike Chicago's work, Lyall's did not seem particularly polemical, even as it appeared to suggest that the party is over.

hangings who also was fond of mounting furniture from floor to wall—was a table to speculate productively about the very nature of the physical. Such elements, however, seemed to exist in a domestic holding pattern, or in a state of anticipation, awaiting either collective narrative or commodity status. Lyall's impressive project recalls Michel Rabinovich's construction of the grotesque as a degradation of experience, a domestic condition existing somewhere between the comfort of death and rebirth. The grotesque is a body that is never grounded in fully being, that is always coming into being, and that therefore may serve as the basis of a critique of the relation between word and spectacle. □

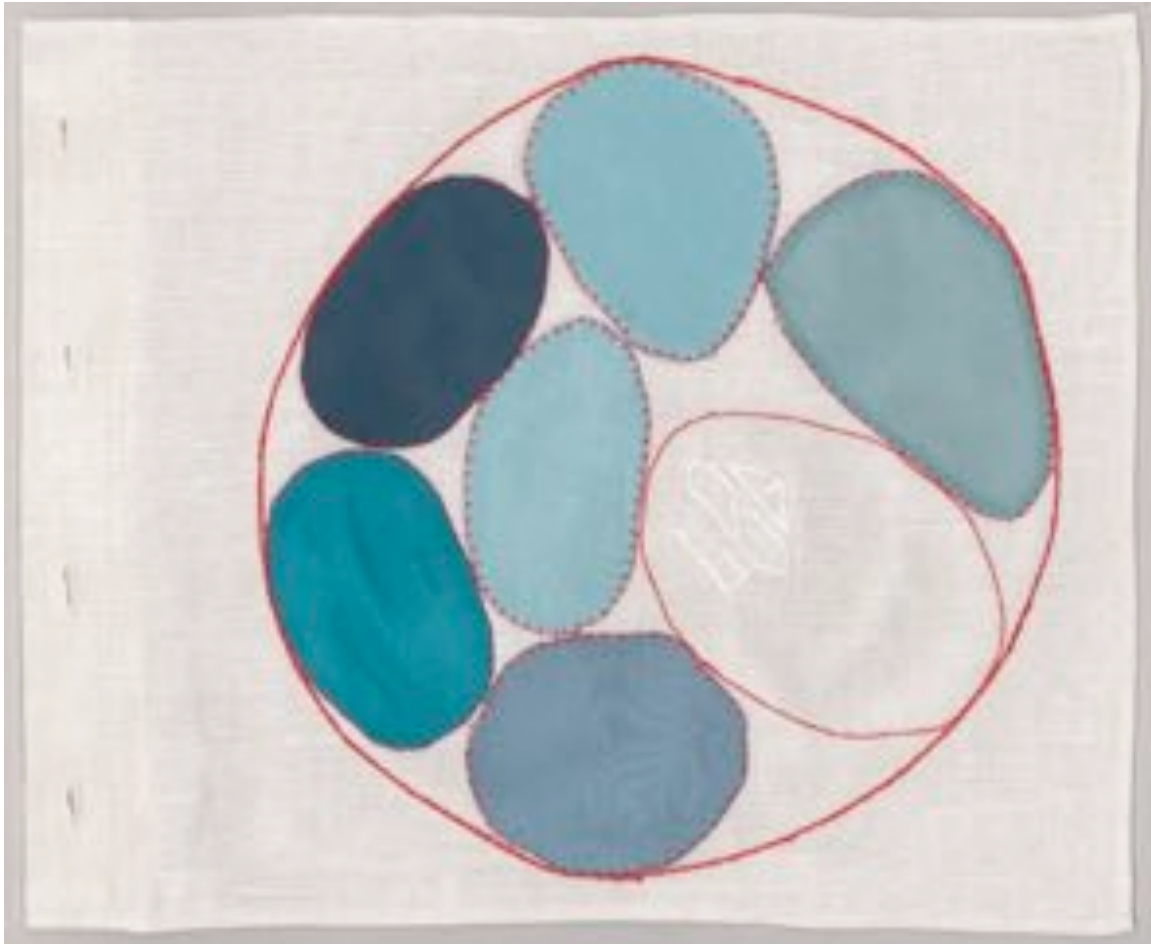
dan adler is a freelance writer and art writer at various museums and venues.

FLUENT~COLLABORATIVE

a speculative contemporary art initiative based in austin, texas

...might be good, Issue #124 • If the Exhibition Were a Cocktail • June 19, 2009

The Lining of Forgetting Austin Museum of Art Through August 9 by Claire Ruud



Louise Bourgeois
Ode à L'Oubli, 2004 (detail – page 4)
Fabric and color lithograph book, thirty-six pages
10.75 x 13.25 x 2 inches
Collection of the artist; courtesy Cheim & Read, New York
Photo: Christopher Burke.



Rachel Whiteread, *Surface*, 2005

Full image credit in slide show

When Rachel Whiteread first exhibited her white plaster casts of cardboard boxes in New York, Ken Johnson called the show “underwhelming.” Right now, *Surface* (2005), stacks of Whiteread’s boxes resting under and on top of a white laminate table, are smartly installed in a remote corner of the Austin Museum of Art as part of the exhibition *The Lining of Forgetting*. Recently, I expressed appreciation for the ghostly white boxes to a curator, and in response, she echoed Johnson’s opinion, “I love Rachel Whiteread, but frankly, this work is insignificant.” Underwhelming, insignificant... in other words, forgettable? Fitting, then, in a show about memory.

In the exhibition catalogue, curator Xandra Eden argues for the contemporary relevance of memory through a discussion of the effects of modern technologies and artificial memory. These technologies remember for us, making it more convenient for us to forget; vast sums of information stored in on our personal electronic devices make it possible to find forgotten details at the speed of our internet connection. By contrast, the most affecting works in *The Lining of Forgetting* are those that slow this process down and ask us to relocate memory within our minds, hearts and bodies.

Whiteread’s boxes, of a type and scale to which I can relate, do just that. Like the boxes in my grandmother’s attic, or the ones containing all the novels I read years ago but can’t stand to part with. Literal and metaphorical boxes in our lives contain all kinds of memories and the emotions that go with them.

Like Whiteread's boxes, Louise Bourgeois's *Ode á L'Oubli* (Ode to Forgetfulness, 2004), a book based on fragments of old linens and clothing that the artist has collected over time, is about affect—not only thinking backward, but also feeling backward. The book evokes a family album or a patchwork quilt. The pages (which may be buttoned into the cover and spine, but were individually framed for the exhibition) recall motifs from Bourgeois's oeuvre, while the fabrics typify the colors and patterns of domestic textiles from decades gone by. The book may evoke our collective memories of Bourgeois's career as an artist, but her own personal memories of a private life seem buried deep within its pages, too.

The family album appears again in the work of Cody Trepte, *Photo Album* (2006–7), two shelves of black books, each filled with page upon page of zeros and ones. On the front of each book, a small placard bares a concise text describing a family photograph, most often of Cody and his twin sister Cami as children. The numbers inside express the photo in binary code—pages and pages of information impenetrable to the human eye. The books are literally heavy with this information; it's as if the thicker the book, the more weighty the memory.

The photo albums of my childhood are bulky physical objects, polaroids and snapshots pressed onto thick, sticky cardboard, now browning with age. Today, my photo albums are virtual; I store them on my hard drive, and I flip through the albums of my friends with the click of a mouse on Flickr and Facebook. Trepte's *Album* translates the concrete photos of his childhood into the virtual language of our computers, but invests these zeros and ones with physical substance by printing them line by line, page by page, in thick volumes. Whiteread's *Surface* and Bourgeois's *Ode* work similarly. These works weigh the difference between the surface of a memory—a description, an image, a symbol—and the emotional content it holds. Among others, Emma Kay's *Shakespeare from Memory* (1998), Scott Lyall's *the little contemporaries* (2007), Dinh Q. Lê's *Untitled (From Vietnam to Hollywood)* (2003) and Mungo Thomson's *The American Desert (for Chuck Jones)* (2002) stand out for their contemplative rhythm and wistfulness. A few works in the exhibition translate the mechanics and theories of memory too literally, but more often, *The Lining of Forgetting* effectively ponders the affective substance of memories through physicality, duration and meditative repetition.

Claire Ruud is Editor of ...might be good and Associate Coordinator of testsite.

SWITCH

1.1

Winter 2008–09: Contemporary Art Institutions of the Future
Nina Möntmann / Peggy Gale / Roger McDonald / Plus: Luis Jacob,
Felix Gmelin, Simon Starling, Artist's Project by Andrea Bowers



FOCUS:
SCOTT LYALL

by Jennifer Matotek

Toronto artist Scott Lyall’s abstract installations initially appear difficult to penetrate. Though immersive and sensually appealing, they all result from an enormous amount of research and rigorous thought whose subtleties take patience to unravel. But viewers who are willing to relish both the work’s aesthetics and grapple with its dazzlingly cerebral production process are rewarded with the pleasure of unlocking Lyall’s richly layered discourses and clever allusions. Although the artist appears somewhat fancy free in the configuration of his art—an empty champagne bottle here, a piece of coloured cardboard there—the oblique concepts behind his exhibitions implore our consideration, and are anything but hastily conceived and assembled.

So in 2007, when The Power Plant’s Director, Gregory Burke, invited Lyall—who was in the midst of a hectic schedule of exhibitions in Europe and the US—to participate in the SITE Santa Fe Seventh International Biennial and then follow up with a commission and solo show at The Power Plant, the artist’s excitement was tinged with pragmatism and a touch of panic: “My first thought,” he says, “was that the timeline would be tight. I have to carefully compress my thoughts if they’re going to be a platform for performing the more spontaneous parts of my work.”

Lyall hadn’t always envisioned an artistic career.

After completing a degree in commerce at Queen’s University, he studied law and obtained an LL.B from the University of Toronto. Just one year later, he began his MFA at the California Institute of the Arts. Why the seemingly drastic shift? “When I was working toward law I assumed that art could be a sideline. I’d be a fan or a collector,” he says. “Maybe sometime I’d also participate, like as a board member at The Power Plant.” He adds, “I don’t really know how my interest in making art grew. There was nothing about law or finance that was negative for me. In some ways,” he laughs, “making art is a lot like corporate law.”

When Lyall began his MFA, his lack of studio art training was partly compensated for by his grounding in economic and critical theory. “Law was very much about the materials, defining them carefully, and constructing things.” Working under Michael Asher at CalArts attracted him to institutional critique, but he was not always satisfied with the highly analytical results. While most of his classmates already had a concrete fabrication practice, and saw their time at graduate school as an opportunity to think more deeply about cultural meaning, Lyall faced the opposite problem: “I had nothing I knew how to make, so my problem at CalArts was that I needed some kind of production. I had to start to make things *against* a backdrop of excess of words and critique. I am really

and very severely anti-conceptual in that regard.” Once he had identified his central concerns—production and the conditions of its display—Lyall then tackled his next conundrum: understanding where ‘productivity’ might actually lie. “Computer-aided design was a way to disestablish conceptualism without falling into a fantasy with traditional studio objects.”

Lyall recalls: “At the beginning, a note Duchamp wrote in his journal made an impression. It said: ‘Marcel, no more painting. Get a job.’ My whole project at art school was to quit the job and make a painting. So, just as Duchamp didn’t ever do anything that really counts as a job, I never made anything that properly qualifies as a painting.”

After spending time in California, Lyall lived for five years in New York, followed by a year-long studio residency at Delfina in London. During these years as an emerging artist, Lyall was judicious about which exhibitions he participated in, only accepting invitations that enabled him to develop in specific ways. His practice didn’t enable him to “mail out studio work in editions,” he says. “I wanted a closer form of engagement with the exhibition’s context.”

When Lyall moved back to Toronto in 2000, the adjustment was challenging in some ways. “A different selection of material—intellectual and otherwise—was dominant here compared to California or

New York. That made it difficult to fit in,” he says, “not impossible, and not socially, but hard to communicate with people. I still think it’s amazing how these things change from country to country.” Between 2001 and 2006 he steadily gained recognition in Toronto, through solo exhibitions at Susan Hobbs Gallery and the Art Gallery of York University, though most of his exhibitions happened abroad, in cities like Los Angeles and New York.

Lyall’s connection to the New York art world remains strong. In 2006 he joined Miguel Abreu Gallery (Abreu is himself a CalArts graduate) on New York’s Lower East Side. The gallery’s location, amongst other conceptually driven artist-directed commercial galleries like Reena Spaulings Fine Art and Canada, strongly resonates with him. “Just like everybody, I’m stuck with the people I came up with from art school,” he smiles. Recent collaborations with Blake Rayne and the choreographer Maria Hassabi bear this out, as well as work completed with Rachel Harrison, a friend from his first days in New York.

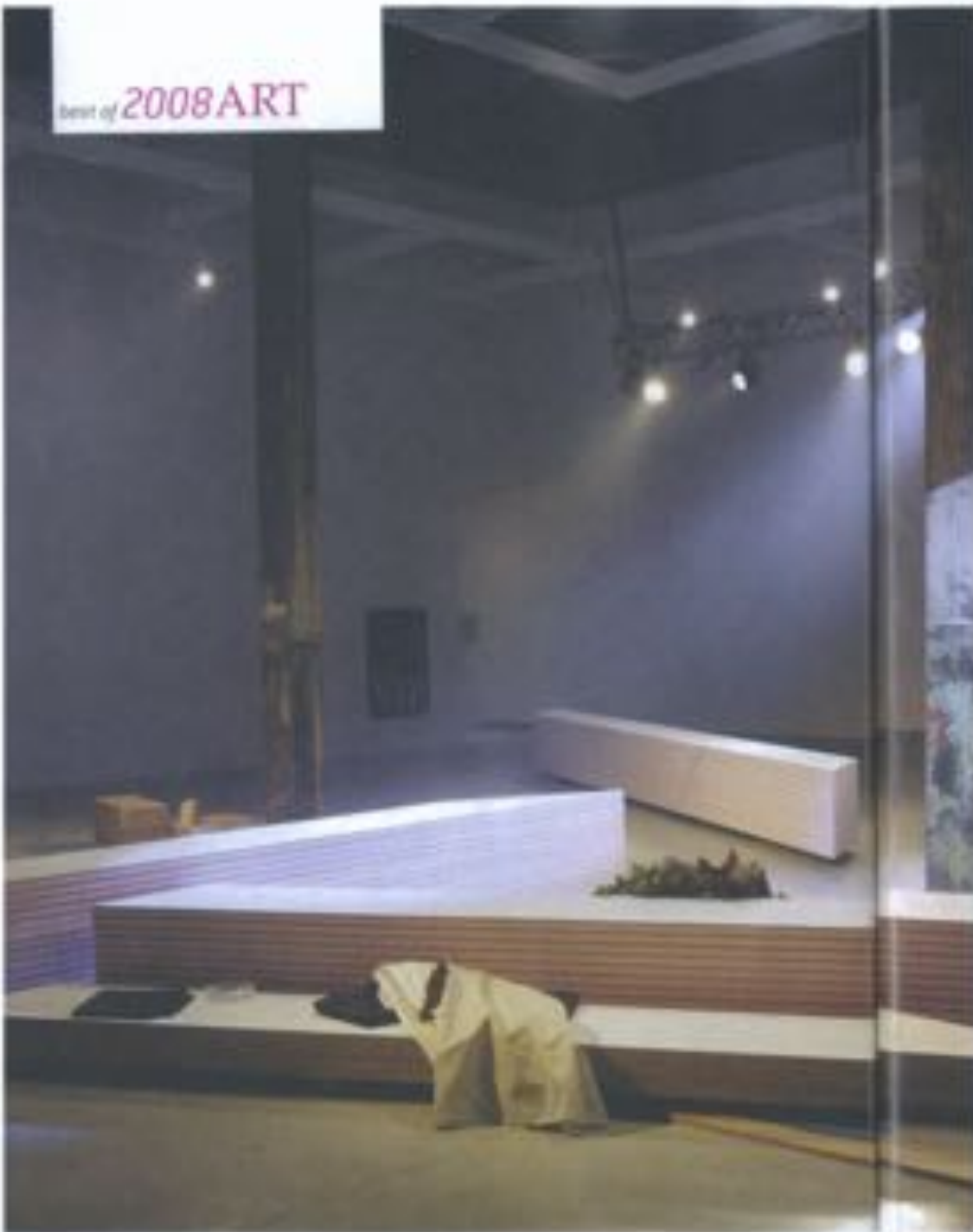
In his recent with The Power Plant, Lyall’s work has shifted in new directions. His SITE Santa Fe installation, titled *anatmospheric perspective, santa fe*, necessitated a completely different approach. A temporary piece created over a period of days, it involved placing a pixelated, semi-opaque surface

over a mural produced by a crew of local volunteer painters. The painters drew inspiration from Depression-era murals, the Berlin Wall, 1980s ‘bad painting’ and references to their own work. “The SITE Biennial was about encouraging people to react to a situation. It had a strange mixture of openness and precise structural limitations. It wasn’t an opportunity for me to accumulate a bank of associative material.” Constructed predominantly by other people, *anatmospheric perspective, santa fe* enabled Lyall to act as a director, relating to other people’s desires. This made for a work that couldn’t easily be reproduced at The Power Plant. “I didn’t want the two shows to look sequential, like one commented on the other,” he says.

‘The Color Ball,’ Lyall’s fall 2008 exhibition at The Power Plant, took its imaginative dimensions from institutional charity galas like the gallery’s own annual fundraiser, Power Ball. The installation features Lyall’s first consideration of party event lighting as a staging device refocused as a primary artistic element. This would seem to place the work in the areas of social critique and what Lyall terms “relationalism,” but the artist speaks only about his excitement at the phrase ‘death takes a holiday’: “I am thinking about how death might attend this very beautiful party, in a mansion in Long Island, and look

[A] note Duchamp wrote in his journal made an impression. ‘Marcel,’ it said, ‘no more painting. Get a job.’ My whole project at art school was to quit the job and make a painting. So, just as Duchamp never did anything that really counts as a job, I never made anything that properly qualifies as a painting.

Scott Lyall, *anatmospheric perspective, santa fe* (detail), 2008, photo by Paul Kyle.



THE COLOR BALL

WORDS BY LINDA ANTONAKA
PHOTO BY MICHAEL DOUGLAS

The mercurial intelligence of Scott Lyall has settled once again, fortuitously, as the season's inaugural exhibition at the Power Plant in Toronto. His latest endeavor, suitably entitled *The Color Ball* is a take on the Power Plant gallery's own yearly fundraising event, *The Power Ball*; consequently the piece reflects the artist's views on the state of contemporary art institutions, using as a starting point and subject, the emergence of the fashionable contemporary art "gala."

Upon entering the gallery, the viewer is confronted by something familiar: party tables. In the center of the room are three sculptural elements, three individual rectangular volumes placed in a triangular formation. These volumes uncannily reference various popular culture and art historical sources. They bring to mind, for example, the ever-flooding contemporary Indian world, while at the same time referencing canonized art historical moments, such as Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* or minimalist sculptural forms of the 60's. The three triangularly positioned volumes are not enclosed, but rather, they are broken so as to encourage the viewer to weave in and out of the composition, in turn, providing a multitude of possible views of what Lyall calls the "landscape" of the installation which encourages an subjective experience as possible. These central sculptural masses, alongside the eerie presence of the mechanized spotlights, formally anchor the rest of the installation while at the same time directing the viewer's physical movement through the space of the exhibition. Around these central forms are various uncorrelated, seemingly arbitrary objects: haughty rental articles, tablecloths, sound equipment, wilted flowers, oversized champagne flutes; not to mention a cheeky red heart emblazoned with the artist's

own signature creeping out from behind a DJ mixing console. These elements act as cultural signifiers and communicate the subject of the work, that of an arts social function, *afterwards*—but upon spending time within the space of the installation, the viewer experiences something curious: as loaded as these various objects are with cultural residue, they seem to function first and foremost as formal components to the overall composition of the work. The result is the experience of a constant back and forth between the objects themselves, their relation to the space as well as to one another, just as one identifies a particular object, one quickly becomes aware of its overriding function as a formal element of the whole of the composition. Due to the multitude of functions these objects serve, the spectator's focus is consistently disturbed. As the spectator's eyes scan across the space (moving in no details and zooming out to experience the entirety of the work), it comes as a surprise when components take on an entirely new meaning and serve a different function when revisited.

Even though the chaos of the work could be interpreted as its subject, the viewer soon comes to realize that every component has been methodically placed and arranged. The work reflects chaos when read symbolically and order when read formally. As a result, the viewer is left with the overriding sensation that there are two sides to every story and every experience, while having to somehow negotiate a position.

SCOTT LYALL, *The Color Ball*, is on view until Nov. 23 at the Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, 220 Queens Quay West, Toronto.

Wide Angle

A Site for Thinking Outside the Box

Discussion

With special emphasis on new research, *Engineering News-Record* will continue according to the following format:

- An introduction to discuss key people, new and emerging ideas.
- An introduction to discuss a new or developing technology, including a review of the state-of-the-art.
- An introduction to discuss a new or developing technology, including a review of the state-of-the-art.

of the year with the highest number of deaths in the United States.

• **Differs** from high- α in intensity (weak fluorescent light, no features visible) and in appearance (homogeneous with a diffuse glow, no visible structure, irregular in shape). It fills the entire volume of the system. They can be detected in a wide range including the area of high- α clouds, in other words, also within conditions suitable for most of the potential life on Earth.

© 2000 Blackwell Science Ltd, *Journal of Internal Medicine* 247: 395–401

When you're looking for a new home, you'll want to make sure you're getting the best value for your money. That's why we've put together a list of the top 10 things to look for when you're buying a house. These are the things that will make your house a home.

Department of Health and Human Services, Health and Safety Administration, Bureau of Occupational Safety and Health, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20541, USA.

[illegible]

and the resulting convergence of the two sub-groups was then observed at levels of 5% (single) or 10% (double) multiple t -tests for multiple comparisons or post-hoc analysis.

These findings are consistent with the idea that the brain's ability to process information is not fixed, but can be shaped by experience. This has important implications for the development of educational programs and interventions for children with learning disabilities.

While being a high jumper, the young lady frequently overtook her male peers in the mile and half marathon, the 5 mile and 10 mile races, and the 15 mile and 20 mile races. She was also a member of the school track and field team, and was a member of the school basketball team.

[illegible]

Author's address: Department of Psychology, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL 60607, USA.

* *Expenditure* The amount of expenditure on the project in the year

...and the ...

[illegible]

Big, muscular, mean-looking, in fact, even made up and dressed in style as the gunrunner, he is a former inmate of the state prison who helped the cops, in return for his parole, to take out on their turf a "house" dealer's in "the badlands" (Chicago, where the book is set).

[illegible]

Further, because a firm's culture can be a competitive advantage, it is important to understand how it can be leveraged to create value. This is the focus of the article by Jeffrey Pfeffer and Sutton, who argue that a firm's culture can be a source of competitive advantage. They argue that a firm's culture can be a source of competitive advantage because it can help the firm to attract and retain talented employees, to create a sense of purpose and direction, and to foster innovation and creativity. They argue that a firm's culture can be a source of competitive advantage because it can help the firm to attract and retain talented employees, to create a sense of purpose and direction, and to foster innovation and creativity.

Research also shows that people who are highly intelligent are more likely to be successful in the workplace. This is because they are able to think critically and solve problems more effectively than those who are not as intelligent.

Abstract: *See page 100.*

These findings have several implications. First, parents in single-parent families, especially those who are more distressed, are at an elevated risk for child abuse. Second, the findings suggest that the child welfare system may be able to identify and intervene with these families at an earlier stage. Third, the findings suggest that the child welfare system may be able to identify and intervene with these families at an earlier stage.

[illegible]

They believe that there is a competitive edge in providing accurate, reliable information that helps them to make informed decisions. That's why they're so committed to the idea of providing accurate, reliable information that helps them to make informed decisions.

Students were asked whether in their young adulthood (18 to 24 years) someone in the government was the best person to make the decisions. The overwhelming majority of students (about 80%) thought that the government was the best person to make the decisions. The other 20% of students believed that individuals should make the decisions. The government was the best person to make the decisions in 1994.

Key Words: social support, coping, depression, anxiety, self-esteem, health-related quality of life

Authorizing and Accrediting Agencies (AAAAs): Entities that are authorized by the U.S. Department of Education to accredit institutions of higher education.

ART PAPERS

May/June 2008

THE LINING OF FORGETTING GREENSBORO, NC + AUSTIN, TX

I learned a new word in John Roberts' essay from the catalogue for *The Lining of Forgetting*: "Fasiparousness" means tending to break up into parts, a central quality of the experience of memory and its counterpart, forgetting. The show's title comes from Chris Marker's film *Sans Soleil*, 1963, in which Marker declares that remembering "...is not the opposite of forgetting, but rather its living." The fragmentation and inevitable loss of memory are at the center of this shimmering exhibition, curated by Kendra Eden (Weatherpoon Art Museum, February 10–May 25, 2008; Austin Museum of Art, May 30–August 9, 2009). In viewing *The Lining of Forgetting* one is reminded that memory's original source—real-time perception—is perhaps as fragmented as memory itself.

Edgar Arceneaux's *Blocking Out the Sun*, 2004, is a series of slide projections of sunset views intermittently suppressed by the artist's thumb—in all its cloaked glory. With this gesture Arceneaux decentralizes the composition and leaves the viewer to parse what is left of the image—recasting the ancillary information as mere supporting evidence of the suppressed center. The framing nexus is the conceptual anchor of the term "sunset." Here, Arceneaux's excision of the center explodes the visio-linguistic experience, creating psychic chaos by forcing us to deal with the infinity of bits that make up a single image or idea, the majority of which will never be consciously registered.

Another enigmatic tour-de-force is Muriel Thomson's *The American Desert* (for Chuck Jones), 2002, a compilation of *Road Runner* cartoons from which all characters have been digitally excised: no *Road Runner*, no *Coyote*. One is left with a subtle remainder, a series of landscapes, imagined amalgamations of the American Southwest, where traumatic scenarios of never-ending innocence and antagonism once played out. *The American Desert* foregrounds what has always been just below the surface of our awareness: the exaggerated heights of red rock mesas, endless, car-less highways,

deep blue skies where white Abstract Expressionist flourishes masquerade as cloud formations. Thomson's project reflects the paradox of the televisual experience: practiced by isolated millions, solo TV viewing produces shared mythological spaces we all remember, more real than real ever was.

June 10, 2007, is Deborah Aschheim's neuroscience-inflected project, an installation of three large suspended sculptural pieces. Small DVD screens encased in oval-shaped matrices of DayGlo-green soft-plastic tubing replay super-8 footage of the artist's birthdays from the years 1970, 1969, and 1965. Three drawings accompany the nodal constructions, diagramming an internal reference system of associative terms that correspond with the sculptures, such as "miniature golf" (1970), "ventriloquist dummy" (1969), and "sleeveless" (1965).

In John Coplans' long-running photographic investigations, the artist lays bare the image of the surfaces of his own body. Every scar, every wrinkle, and every pore read as the text of embodied existence, framing the body as living archive. Rachel Whiteread's poster casts of storage boxes are monuments of accumulation and the forgotten. Like Coplans' photographs, Whiteread's sculptures draw attention to surface qualities, foregrounding objects placed in our spatial and perceptual peripheries by their pre-fabricated densities. *Odor à l'oubli* (*Odor to Forgetfulness*), 2004, is Louise Bourgeois' series of twenty-five cloth drawings sewn on household items and vintage fabrics the artist has collected for decades. Each support presents a unique, variegated pattern that triggers a direct connection for Bourgeois with her own past. As such, the fabrics function as repositories—like Coplans' skin or Whiteread's storage boxes.

Cody Tripp's *Photo Album*, 2006, is a concise treatise on memory as a shape-shifting entity stored in minds, images, words, and hard drives. Dinh Q. Lê literally weaves layers of memory by using traditional

Vietnamese mat weaving techniques to interlock contrasting photographic surfaces. Pablo Helguera explores the personal/global implosion of cultural, historical, linguistic, and familial inheritance. The experience of passing among the backstage debris and set pieces of Scott Lyall's installation creates a new subset of memory in the viewer, overriding the artist's personal associations that frame the work's components as souvenirs. Emma Kay's triumphant, funny, and sad attempt to remember Shakespeare's works hovers in on memory's dual processes of recall and erasure.

The time-lapsed video of David Rokeby's dueling surveillance-cams creates a slow-moving choreography of memory, experience, perception, and change. Janice Caswell's wall-sized diagram tracks massive amounts of web-based information accumulated by the artist while working for Barack Obama's presidential campaign. Kerry Tribe's video *Episodes*, 2006, co-opts the traditional talk-show format to explore an experience from her past. Seated in a TV studio on cushy armchair, Tribe and two friends are interviewed by a talk-show host as they strain to retrieve details from a remembered road trip that—each of them ultimately admits—may have included a supernatural encounter. Tribe's project is an eloquent reminder that even in our most obdurate attempt at objectivity, recollection relies upon the memory of the witness, which is always in question.

These are only fragments. Undoubtedly, *The Lining of Forgetting* will reverberate long after the real-time moment of its experience, in myriad flashbacks.

—Amy White

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Kerry Tribe, *OPA Shuts on Branderburger Str*, 2006, 4-print, 12 x 14 inches. Courtesy of the artist and sculptural installation, mixed media, 5.5 x 5.5 x 1.8 meters. Courtesy of the artist, Galleria Continua, San Gimignano + Eindhoven, Galleria Kluunerg, Vennuul

Toronto Star

Artists make their mark, then erase it

After Santa Fe exhibit closes, no physical trace will remain of 18 works

Jun 22, 2008

PETER GODDARD

VISUAL ARTS COLUMNIST

Santa Fe, N.M.—Most of the talk around here is about water, except around downtown near Site Santa Fe where the talk is about art.

At this point, cautiously good news can be found on both fronts what with tourist already arriving en masse. The capacity of the two municipal reservoirs, always a concern going into any summer, is around 95 per cent, says Victor Archuleta, the chief water official.

Site Santa Fe's Seventh International Biennial is off to an energizing opening, according to Lance Fung, its chief curator. "Lucky Number Seven," its title, may be just that. But the good art vibe could dry up like water in this desert town when people show up over the following months to take in an exhibition before it's cannibalized, as Fung puts it, to return it "back to the raw material that it was."

Like any international, multi-billion-dollar business, art is hugely eco-sensitive now. Site Santa Fe showed a certain genius in selecting Fung to run the show designed not to leaving any physical trace of the 18 site-specific pieces following its Oct. 26 finale. "Process, experimentation and collaboration" is Fung's mantra, not collecting stuff, however expensive.

To this end, Fung partnered with 18 international art centres, such as Toronto's Power Plant, whose mandate is not to collect work but to foster its creation. The 25 artists selected, including Scott Lyall from Toronto, are known for the temporary nature of their work.

"Hey, this is even more about nothing than Seinfeld," I was thinking driving north through aboriginal land from Albuquerque. Yet something didn't compute. Jerry's "nothing" made him rich. And didn't I read on the flight in from Toronto that Damien Hirst, the British art star, may be worth \$1 billion, from all the hugely expensive and very tangible pieces he's been churning out along with his bevy of assistants? Susan Hobbs, Lyall's Toronto dealer in Santa Fe to watch her prodigy, says she's being inundated with calls about his work.

In order to sort through the contradictions apparent, I began a diary, keeping in mind something Lyall wrote about his own huge wall work tucked into a plywood labyrinthine carved into Site Santa Fe itself by New York architects Tod Williams and Billie Tsien.

Like any other art institution, a biennial is a "medium" to make art. "But I mean 'medium' in the way Marshall McLuhan used this term," the artist writes, "as both a social metaphor and as a faculty that aims to realize latent potentials."

Wednesday: Nothing is finished. It feels like a summer art camp for international students who are still drilling, hammering and joking as they've been doing for the past few weeks. As compact as a jockey, Fung thinks like a social worker. "Not to worry," he says. Collaboration is his thing. His family wanted him to become a doctor, he had such good people skills. A part-time job in New York's art world led him to meet Nam June Paik, the late video artist, and to absorb the ideas associated with the Fluxus collective, crucial in furthering the idea of art as performance.

Yoko Ono, a Fluxus member, was one of the artists Fung included in his reputation-making "Snow Show" in 2004 in Finnish Lapland, where impermanent ice structures were allowed to melt over time. Fung has fashioned a solid career out of the ephemeral.

One thing is mostly finished, though: the reconfigured Site Santa Fe interior, by Williams and Tsien (other contributors of "Snow Show") along with Santa Fe architect Greg Allegetti. A mazelike series of ramps, sharp corners, rooms that function like halls and halls turned into gallery space, the all-white interior often absorbs what it holds – such as Lyall's mural *anatmospheric perspective* (2008) which almost disappears into the interior wall given over to it – or excessively challenges what it displays with noticeable hostility.

Story Line (2008) by the remarkable Morse family of New Mexican artists – Nora, her daughter Eliza and her niece, Rose – snakes through the Site's new, oppressive and manipulating architecture as if it didn't exist. Made from a mélange of hard-scrabble local materials, including clay, wattle and willows, the reddish-brown length grows out of a fecal-like pool that seems to have splashed particles on the pristine gallery wall.

"Finally," I found myself thinking, "something subversive."

Thursday: It's press preview day hosted by ... Canada? Yes, there's Alain Dudoit, Consul General of Canada for the "southwest of the United States," as he explains, welcoming a moderate crowd. The 25 biennial artists come from 16 countries, but Canada was invited to host "because we asked them," says one biennial organizer matter-of-factly.

Turning around, I bump into Judy Chicago, the famous feminist artist who lives two hours south of here. Besides writing about the biennial, she's also in town for her photographer husband Donald Woodman's new show, "The Selling of the West" at the Zane Bennet gallery. It's one of dozens of openings, small and large, hoping to cash in on the publicity generated by the biennial. Art Santa Fe, the international art fair on at El Museo Cultural July 10 to 13 will include Lausberg Contemporary, a Toronto gallery.

Friday: Back to Site Santa Fe before heading out to work placed around the city and deep in the hills. The most unambiguous connection to Santa Fe itself comes with *The Fourth Ladder*, (2008), the interactive video mural from the veteran Milan-based collective Studio Azzuro.

With the title coming from the Hopi belief in mankind's evolution from one world to the next, *The Fourth Ladder* shows a long line of Santa Fe locals who, when their image is touched by a visitor, stop to explain something of themselves.

Then there's Bulgarian performance artist Luchezar Boyadjiev's "art squad," local students like Benji Geary hired to infiltrate visitors groups and later display what they hear. I can't wait to see what comes out of tonight's, posh party for Site Santa Fe's deep pocket supporters.

Saturday: The biennial resonates the most – with Fung's mandate and with Santa Fe itself – with its many site-specific installations, such as Japanese artist Hiroshi Fuji's *Kaeru* (2008), the plastic water bottle sculpture leading to the Santa Fe Opera.

On my way back to the airport in Albuquerque, I make a point of heading north of Santa Fe to Museum Hill to see Martí Anson's *Flour Factory* (2008), a scaled-down replica of an old flour mill threatened with destruction in the Spanish artist's hometown, Barcelona.

Once the biennial is over, Anson says, maybe Santa Fe can use the building "for any function other than being an art work."

Peter Goddard, the Toronto Star's visual arts columnist, can be reached by email at pgoddard@thestar.ca

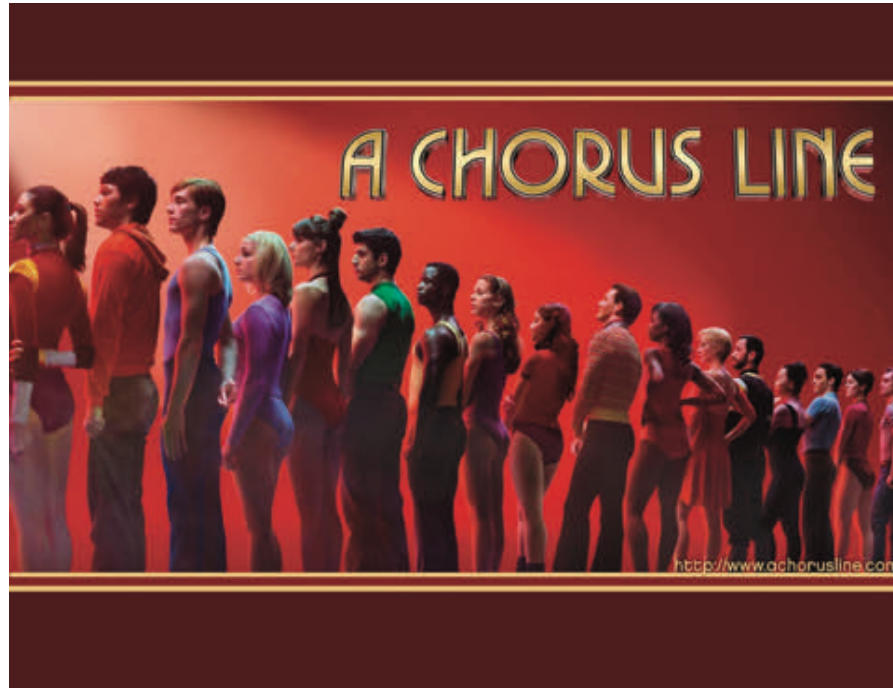
MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: Scott Lyall
a dancer dances

Dates: September 10 – October 22, 2006

Reception: Sunday, September 10, 6:30 – 9 PM



Learn about A Chorus Line and obtain advanced tickets by contacting the official 2006 revival website /
www.achorusline.com

“Traditions are beautiful—but to create them—not to follow.”
—Franz Marc, motto of the ‘Société Anonyme’

Opening on Sunday, September 10th, Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to present ‘a dancer dances,’ an exhibition by Scott Lyall.

‘a dancer dances’ is a fragment from the musical ‘A Chorus Line.’ The full line invokes God as well as a demand and a compulsion.

“God, I’m a dance / a dancer dances.”

We hear these words very early in the opening ensemble number, when the themes and the diagetive space of the story are established. The show presents an audition of 32 young dancers, each competing for one of 16 places in a musical production. There is nothing that determines for us the subject of this musical, its songs or its dance style, its narrative thrust or headline stars. It’s as if the event of the spectacle were still a determining horizon, neither realized on the stage nor strictly absent or virtual. ‘A Chorus Line’ is devoted to the symbolic understanding that works of art are in progress: the real show is still ‘coming.’

'A Chorus Line' concludes with a famous and spectacular finale: the house goes dark, a curtain drops, separating the backstage from the performance space; the lights come up and the line of 16 selected dancers enters. 16 have made it, 2 subsets of 8, men and women. They have escaped from backstage, from the cycle of hopes and disappointments, but they are regulated and made anonymous by the sameness of their costume. They now install themselves—they are incorporated—on the stage as a 'company.' If this finale can stand in as the conclusion of the scenic arts in general—the end of painting, as Fried had worried, just as much as the conquest of serious theatre by the spectacle—this idea is composed at least provisionally by remembering how 'conclusion' was once defined in Harold Bloom's notion of critical lateness. A conclusion is the emergence—beyond the periphery of any artwork—of an incapacity in the audience to provide further faithful interpretations. Or else, a conclusion is something like a perspective shift in the audience that cannot be anticipated or captured by the space of the artwork. (To be from Canada, which is to say to be from anywhere in global culture, Lyall has said, is to approach all of modernism from this condition of lateness.) This proposes a certain crisis: the 'not-enough' of every spectacle, and then the temptation of escalation, the global demand for a 'Gesamtkunstwerk.' (Today, super-curators are charged with including all of the dancers, promoting a cycle of obsolescence and the permanent injunction of innovation.)

But if so, and if 'A Chorus Line' concludes the modern scene in general, Lyall proposes that the 'Société Anonyme,' Duchamp and Dreier's artist-made collection and exhibition program, is the point of this scene's first appearance for New York. The 'Société' is another situation based on incorporation by selection, with its 1920 inaugural exhibition consisting of 16 emerging art works. Coincidentally, like 'A Chorus Line,' this show is subject to a revival. 'A Chorus Line' re-opens on Broadway on September 18th, and the inaugural 'Société' exhibition is replicated in a touring show currently on display at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. Lyall has positioned the modern scenic arts between these speculative brackets in order to emphasize his position on the side of their conclusion. We inhabit the space of a global audience of spectacular culture 'in revival,' with no direct access to the scenes as they were composed or intended. We inhabit, more specifically, an information-driven art world. This suggests there is no way to read a modernist work directly, and that such work provides no horizon to a contemporary decision-maker. Lyall's conclusion means, however, that the dream of autonomy in modern art has been achieved. That art is fully and finally alienated from other objects. But instead of sublime presence, autonomy has become permanent historical obsolescence, or it is assigned to the 'sensational' figures of global celebrity culture.

The current show is composed by a set of 16 different elements, of various materials and styles, capable of various identifications and relations. Each is discrete, but in some cases the outer edges might seem fuzzy. A framed drawing is more obviously a discrete thing than a title. A scatter of particles is more vague than a concrete wooden platform. There are also, though, some groupings that seem to relate as in series. The 16 elements for the show derive from 4 general procedures, or 4 general orientations to the production of the show's subject. There is symbolic manipulation of senseless information data, concrete production of programmed space, the selection of junk elements for abstraction, and a performance-like improvisation with found and ephemeral elements.

Although each element in the show has a production history of its own, and could be used to tell its own little stories of formation, the show itself does not organize them according to the themes of these stories. They are organized by the trial of their displayed incorporation. It's not a case of going backstage for local stories as in 'A Chorus Line.' That appeal to the stabilizing comfort of individual narratives is not the supplement that sustains the critical void the artist encounters. Things have crossed the velvet curtain to function for an uncertain public. And for this reason, Lyall is committed to having one of the functions of exhibition be the occlusion of each element by the display of incorporation. An exhibition should damage the individual meanings of all its objects in favor of the collective effect of a set and its anonymous presence. One should not recognize the subject that is framed by these objects. The set should simply function. As Lyall says, 'a dancer dances.'

Half of the elements come from existing and unrelated work from the studio—a mini retrospective!—while the others were made especially for this show. Besides this division, half the elements support a symbolic (organizational) subject, while the others support the appearance of a performative subject. One perspective looks backward at patterns that arise in discrete works; yet another attempts to assemble a scenic order for these relations. But all are halved, which is to say there is a hashing of the apple. Each is a half cut by halves, only partially successful in its processes. There are formal relations, color and line, sensuous moments and opacities, appeals to the body and to vistas, domestic moments or consumer displays. There is also the arcany of thwarted cultural references, dialectics of attention and distraction, and some limited entertainment. And if so, there is also an ephemeral matrix that structures everything—and an object-relation on the verge of coming together, or else collapsing.

The subject of all this is like an audience for a dancer, shifting perspectives and scanning for patterns and references in subtly choreographed movements. This subject moves the viewer's thought, as well as the eye and the body, through the impossibility of its devices, partial scenes and relations. Because this subject is submitted to the alienation/completion of its references, it is not decidable, Lyall always says, between the corporate collection and the landfill. 'a dancer dances' is finally associated with the oscillation implied here. No dancer ever actually dances in a realized musical production. A dancer dancing is just the multiple of everything inapparent in scenic spectacles. A dancer dancing is an eternity lost 'inside' its scenic fragments, a kind of senseless supernumary whose destiny is not-to-be, ...a-d-d-ed.

For more information or for visuals, please contact the gallery at 212.995.1774 or info@miguelabreugallery.com.

Gallery hours: Wednesday — Sunday, 11:00 AM to 6:30 PM

¹ Hash is here a mathematical slang for the cutting and scrambling of blocks of information.

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ARTFORUM

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**BEST OF
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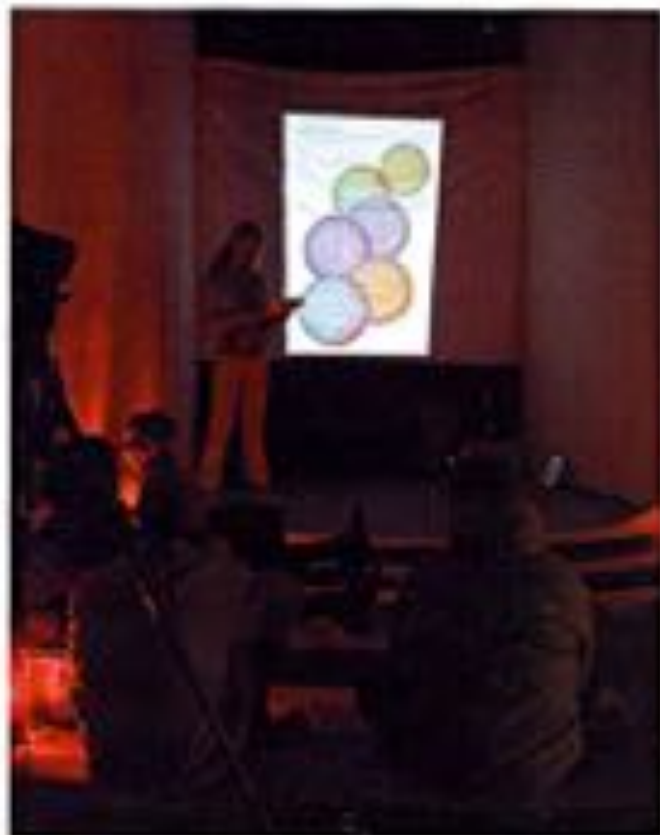
ON THE GROUND

New York

MATTHEW HIGGS

FAR FROM THE DEAFENING BUZZ that continues to emanate from the auction houses, and even further from the glossy pages of *Vanity Fair*, whose "art issue" hit newsstands in November, one of the most intriguing—and least commented on—narratives in the New York art world continued to unfold this year. The underreported story I refer to revolves around the unprecedented number of personnel changes that have taken place, or are about to take place, at the city's better-established, and indeed historical, "not-for-profits" (a literal term that handily serves as both a mission statement and a manifesto, of sorts). Considered as a whole, these changes can't be dismissed as a mere human-resources shakedown. Rather, they constitute a profound shift in both ambition and attitude, one that suggests an equally profound opportunity, even a mandate, to reimagine and reanimate an entire culture. The crop of recently appointed curators and administrators includes, in no particular order: Debra Singer, executive director and chief curator of The Kitchen; Gianni Jetzer, director at Swiss Institute; Benjamin Weil, executive director of Artists Space; Richard Flood, Laura Hopeman, and Massimiliano Gioni, curators at the New Museum of Contemporary Art (whose new building will open on the Bowery in 2007); Rochelle Seiner, director of the Public Art Fund; and artist AA Bronson, director of Printed Matter, Inc. (And then, I guess, there's me—for the past two years I have been the director and chief curator of White Columns, New York's oldest alternative art gallery.) With the exception of Singer (formerly a curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art) and Bronson, all these people left jobs in other cities, and, in many cases, other countries, for their new positions in New York. Tellingly, about half forsook curatorial roles at major museums. Add to the mix the fact that as of this writing the Drawing Center, Art in General, and the Dia Art Foundation are all looking to appoint new directors, and you begin to perceive a historically unparalleled situation in which the opportunity—and desire—for change is contagious. It's a groundswell that could exert a broad and lasting influence on the cultural topography in and beyond New York. While much is still in flux, the general prognosis is better than good.

Indeed, a renewed focus on artist-centric activity has been discernible in New York for the past couple of years. One particular aspect of this activity—cooperative practices—was very publicly privileged in the 2006 Whitney Biennial, "Day for Night." Curators Chrissie Iles and Philippe Vergne presented a number of collaborative contributions, including the Wrong Gallery's show-within-a-show "Down by Law" and the coauthored artworks of Rensha Spaulings. Elsewhere, RoseLee Goldberg's biennial of live art, PERFORMA, which debuted in 2005, has single-handedly reinvigorated a genre—performance—that seemed to have gone underground, though "single-handedly" is probably not the right term for an endeavor that includes innumerable partners throughout the city. Printed Matter's



Opposite page: Director of Dia during the Serpentine Museum's first night; above: a ready-made artist, New York, January 2006. Photo: Anna (left) and performing at her event since Andrew Weiss Gallery, New York



inaugural NY Art Book Fair, held in November at the now (sadly) defunct Dia Art Foundation building on Twenty-second Street, will—I hope—kick-start a similar resurgence in independent publishing. Collaborating projects that have each, in their own highly individual ways, occupied interstitial spaces between the commercial galleries, the traditional not-for-profit, and other platforms include Matt Kasper and Sara Greenberger Rafferty's North Drive Press, which publishes artists' paper-based projects; Pin Backert's various and sedulous activities, including the most recent "Herd/Instinct 360°" and the city design project "Tafelberg for Commercial Galleries"; Garth Jones, Sam Lewis, and Chelsey Thompson's chaotic publication "drawing" project, *Scorched Earth*, and the artist-run gallery Orchard, which this year presented projects ranging from Nicolas Guerin's slide show *Middle Class Goes to Heaven, 2003-2006*, to "Apostrophe Corner," a kind of psychogeography of the Lower East Side organized by Christian Philipp Müller. Maverick commercial enterprises such as Miguel Abreu Gallery, Thomas Kish and Jarvis Press's Asia Song Society (aka A.S.S.), and James Farnum LLC evince an attitude close to that of their not-for-profit peers. Many of these initiatives are operating in the geographical and

ideological space mapped out by Lower East Side pioneers such as Rector Spoolings Fine Art or Maccarone Inc. The latter's new space will soon debut in an area that has the makings of a true "post-Chelsea" neighborhood: the lower edge of the West Village, already home to Gavin Brown's Enterprise and Harris Lieberman Gallery.

With respect to the changes afoot at the established not-for-profits, my feeling is that this annual scenario reflects a serious commitment by an idiosyncratic group of artists, curators, and administrators—each with his or her own motives and intentions—in the latent viability and potentiality of smaller artist-focused organizations. In the recent past, such organizations have struggled to distinguish and justify themselves in the face of the pressures

exerted by an overboarded and, it has to be said, aggressively art market. (The past was also notable for high-profile articles in the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times* about the predatory habits of certain art dealers and collectors, for whom the region's

The recent changes at New York's not-for-profits constitute a profound shift in ambition and attitude, and, maybe, an equally profound opportunity to reanimate an entire culture.

most visible graduate programs have become a breeding ground.) Put simply, there seems to be a renewed urgency around the idea that we can't trust market forces to nurture art and artists, and thus, consequently, it is absolutely imperative—once again—to find other outlets for, and means of supporting, culture. My guess is that even the most ardent boosters of the current art market are aware that the situation looks increasingly undesirable and unsustainable. (Certainly many people would agree that the art world is a lot less fun than it used to be.)

And while the processes of economic and logistical consolidation—e.g., the accelerated free-market movement of successful artists from large to even larger galleries—continues, many of New York's public institutions and museums find themselves in something of a quandary, a state of limbo perhaps, that seems to have induced both a sense of inertia and a crisis of confidence. The current direction of both the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Museum of Modern Art were each the subject of lengthy "and-searching" articles in the *New Yorker* in 2006. In recent years, the complexities and pressures that accompany working within large institutions have increased. Staffs face heavier fund-raising responsibilities and must negotiate the desires of ever-more-influential board members, even as they attempt to assimilate the rapidly shifting parameters of contempo-



rary art as well as the relatively new historical category "twentieth-century art." It is not difficult to imagine why so many high-profile curators, such as Robert Rauschenberg, Saskia Bos, Russell Ferguson, Okwui Enwezor, Lawrence Rinder, and Hou Hanra, have recently elected to work—both curatorially and as scholars—from within the more elastic framework of the art school. In light of this general sense of flux, it really does seem like an opportune moment for artists and artist-centric organizations to seize the initiative and create new, autonomous approaches to the production, display, discussion, and dissemination of art.

In fact, one model of this kind of approach turned out to be my personal highlight—and possibly my personal epiphany—of 2006. And, in what could be considered an encouraging reflection of the general dispersal of influence from the institutions, and cities, where it has traditionally been concentrated, this experience transpired not in any of the established centers of attention (London, Berlin, New York, etc.) but rather in Milwaukee. A week after the Frieze Art Fair kicked off, in early October, the midwestern city hosted a kind of samizdat version of the London jamboree: the inaugural Milwaukee International, a new, bona fide art fair—of sorts. Conceived and organized by an informal collective of Milwaukee-based artists and galleries (among them Kiki Anderson of Jody Monroe Gallery; Nicholas Frank of Hemetec Gallery; John Riepenhoff of Green Gallery; and Tyson Bender, Scott Reed, and Elysia Boowry-Reeder of the General Store), it opened more modestly than Frieze, in the Polish Falcon Beer Hall in the city's Riverwest neighborhood. The fair temporarily displaced the hall's typical goings-on—cribbage, dart-ball (a game that "combines darts with baseball," according to my local guide), spaghetti dinners—but, even though the space had been tricked out for the weekend to look like a typical art fair, the spirit of these activities remained as a spectral ambience. The exhibitors, who each paid \$150 for one of the white-painted booths, constituted a curious, ad hoc group of thirty-odd galleries and projects, both commercial and otherwise, from Oslo (Willy Woelke Inc.); Zurich (Karma International, in collaboration with Mark Miller); San Juan, Puerto Rico (Galeria Comercial); Winnipeg, Canada (Paul Butler's Other Gallery and its affiliated Collage Party); Los Angeles (Ooga Booga); New York (Canada, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, Zieher-Smith, Swiss Institute, and White Columns, among others); Miami (Locust Projects and Bas Fisher Invitational); Oak Park, Illinois (The Suburban); and elsewhere. What distinguished the whole affair was that selling art didn't seem to be anyone's primary—or possibly even secondary—concern. Instead, the weekend seemed—in the most straightforward yet profound sense—to be about hanging out. Casually employing the format, and exploiting the ubiquity, of conventional art fairs while eschewing the civic (and corporate) ambitions of, say, a biennial, the organizers put together a genuinely organic "grassroots" gathering that mimicked the form of a marketplace to create a porous social event. Turnout was excellent: Over the course of the weekend, a steady stream of visitors, seemingly of all persuasions, braved the inclement weather simply to check out the fair and listen to its house band, Vers and the Originals.

The Milwaukee International felt simultaneously fundamental, magical, and possibly even a little subversive. Certainly it felt like something significant was happening, even if the exact nature of that significance—still—remains elusive. The event's informal structure reminded me of some of the pioneering art fairs of the early and mid-1990s, fairs that, in hindsight, can be seen to have helped shape international networks of artists, dealers, critics, curators, and, indeed, collectors that persist to this day. Like the original Unfair, held in Cologne in 1992, for example, or the early manifestations of the Greenery International Art Fair (1994–98), held in the guest rooms of the Greenery Park Hotel in New York, the Milwaukee International served a function that went beyond the

merely commercial: It provided an occasion, a platform, for sympathetic individuals to meet—in person—to share information and ideas in a manner that was both convivial and communal. The fair also reminded me of how and why, as a teenager in the North of England in the late 1970s, I started to become tentatively interested in art via the independent, DIY music scene that emerged in the aftermath of punk. Like that scene, the Milwaukee International proposed a viable, self-sustaining model of culture, one that was rooted not in social or economic one-upmanship but in the pleasures of self-determination, friendship, and cooperation (reasons that, I imagine, partly motivated Jeffrey Lew and Gordon Matta-Clark to start White Columns, at 112 Greene Street as it was then known, in 1970).

Returning to New York in a state of mild post-Milwaukee euphoria, I find myself more optimistic than ever about the new possibilities and potential of New York's alternative art spaces. Central to the processes of reorientation and reinvention that are already under way will be the creation of new networks, new conversations among different kinds of artists, writers, curators, and others, of all generations—conversations that simply didn't exist or hadn't taken place before. Obviously, the more people involved, the better. Of course, this is not an occasion for consensus building—quite the opposite: It is an occasion to call for and celebrate difference. The Milwaukee International provided a tangible example of one way to proceed. Its "lessons," such as they are, can be readily applied everywhere—including New York. As both the Milwaukee fair and the newly merged not-for-profit community in New York testify, art does not need to be expensive (or even necessarily for sale) to operate as an agent and catalyst for change. All that is required now is for every town and city in the United States (and elsewhere, of course) to create its own "International," its own context for dialogue and exchange, and shape it according to prevailing local needs and desires. And before you know it, the polarized present-day art world—of "them" and "us," of the "haves" and the "have-nots"—might be no more than a distant memory. □

NICHOLAS FRANK IS DIRECTOR AND CHIEF CURATOR AT WHITE COLUMNS, NEW YORK, WHERE THE EXHIBITION "LOOKING BACK," CURATED BY FRANK, IS ON VIEW UNTIL DECEMBER 22.



Opposite page, top: Opening of the Bender's exhibition "A Life Full of Values: The Street Project" (The Museum, New York, April 7, 2006). Second row, left: View of Scott Lyall, "A Dreamer's Dream," Miguel Alvarado (left), New York, 2006. Right: Benoit (right) at the opening of L'Épave's exhibition "Future Clock" (New York Society, New York, March 26, 2006). Third row: View of "Green by Law" (a component of the 2006 Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York). Bottom: View of Nicolas Frank, "The Middle Class Goes to Heaven" (Conrad, New York, 2006). This page: The Milwaukee International art fair, Polish Falcon Beer Hall, Milwaukee, October 21, 2006. Photo: Nicholas Frank.

Art

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Review

Scott Lyall, “a dancer dances”

Miguel Abreu Gallery, through Oct 22

★★★★★

This fall, *A Chorus Line* is back—and not just on Broadway. Scott Lyall, a 42-year-old artist from Canada who makes high-concept artwork out of simple forms, has created a spare, one-room installation based on the musical. There is no plot, narrative or music, yet a drama—a highly intellectual one—awaits those willing to tease out the connections between Lyall’s pared-down formal language—works include long planks of pink Styrofoam, half-painted pieces of wood, abstract drawings and found objects—with a play about hope and ambition.



“a dancer dances”
Photograph courtesy Miguel Abreu Gallery

Lyall is a master of allusion, making idiosyncratic references rather than literal depictions, so there are no simple correlations between objects and ideas. It would be easy to read a few of the objects scattered about the floor—gold sequins (from a dancer’s costume?), empty muffin wrappers, theatrical lighting gels—as relics of a rehearsal or performance. But the sequins are scattered just so and many of the muffin wrappers have been purposefully painted over. Ultimately, Lyall wants us to consider how his evocative objects relate to each other, rather than to the source that inspired them.

As for the framed drawings, the gallery tells us only that Lyall based them on random mathematical patterns and other chaotic events. Just how this relates to *A Chorus Line* is anybody’s guess. In another context, these non sequiturs would function perfectly well as stand-alone artworks. Here, however, they’re put into the same role as the show’s other elements: ensemble players in a sterile, but beautiful, *mise-en-scène*. — Sarah Schmeidler

ARTFORUM

SEPTEMBER 2006

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

FALL PREVIEW

ZAHA HADID

PHILIPPE PARRENO AND
DOUGLAS GORDON'S "ZIDANE"



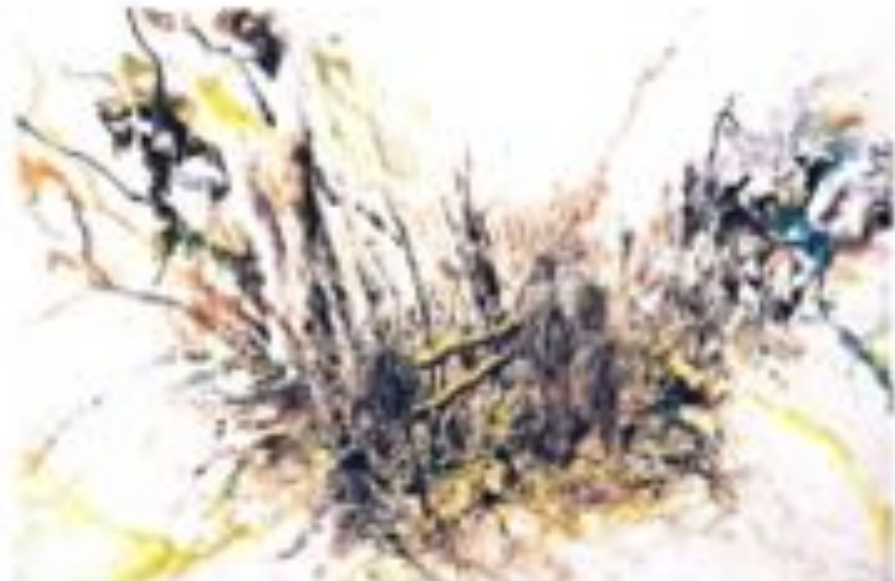
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photo, *Jungle*
 by Rachel Harrison
 2006, oil
 on canvas, 40 x 50"



hiding. The exactitude with which the fish, coral, anemones, sharks, and otters are rendered makes the work seem almost hallucinatory, a slice of real life that's stranger than fiction.

In *Jungle with Jaguar*, dense greenery surrounds an elaborate central image of trees and lichen-covered timber. Hopkins's aerial perspective also reveals a jaguar resting on the forest floor. In *Bamboo with Snake*, the viewpoint moves lower as we gaze through a thicket of bamboo stalks at a snake resting in a pile of fallen leaves. Here the palette appears on the left, an area already dense with color, and the forest fades diagonally toward the right, finally disappearing into the light in the upper corner. Two paintings of bat caves reveal a darker side of the natural world, and of the artist, and the maskiness of the caves provides a nice contrast to the vivid intensity of the reef, the jungle, and the forest. In *Cave with Bats*, oranges and red break into a predominantly black and brown color scheme, and the bats are camouflaged in their dark dwelling, where they hang like the stalactites that surround them. *Cave with Bat* depicts a solitary creature flying out of a gloomy crevice.

Hopkins's magical paintings pay homage to color and communicate a childlike love of animals and, of course, of color. But despite her simple affection for the timeless visual appeal of lush natural scenes, there's nothing childish about her technique.

—Anna Brooks

Rachel Harrison and Scott Lyall

CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY

Near the center of Rachel Harrison and Scott Lyall's recent sprawling collaborative exhibition "When Hangover Becomes Form" sat a large shipping container in which Harrison's work had been transported to the gallery. Opened, this retrowhile horn of plenty had disgorged its contents into the gallery: A cardboard box in the crate indicated that it had contained, among other works, something called vomit spray. Throughout the space, elements culled from earlier Harrison assemblages, including nine tumescent, paint-clad abstract sculptures recycled from her 2003 Venice Biennale contribution *Indigenous Parts III*, found temporary homes atop either plinths or Lyall's minimal, acumbent structures of pink foam insulation and MDF.

While promiscuous in its incorporation of everything from Q-tips to an image of Mel Gibson, the installation was nonetheless carefully plotted. Lyall's platformlike planes charted much of the exhibit's summing horizontal axis, while Harrison's works invested the space with

a vertical anthropomorphic dimension. Still, the full scope of the installation was difficult to process, a single point of entry impossible to establish. The contemplation of isolated visual events, such as the way the hole in one of Harrison's sculptures framed, depending on one's vantage point, either a smiley-face plastic bag or a video projection, required consistent attention while moving through the space.

Presiding over the whole tangled affair was a foamcore-mounted image of Ronald Reagan as painted by Hans Haacke for his installation *Oelgemaelde, Hommage à Marcel Broodthaers*, 1981. This quotation from the history of spectacularized installation art diverged into a commentary on the excesses of '80s celebrity as one moved past the Gipper toward a makeshift plinth propping up a second image, of a leopard-print-clad Cher. In the opposite corner of the room, an abstract sculpture clad in a mesh muscle shirt echoed Cher's campy vibe (the late president looks suitably disappointing).

Debris scattered around the installation, including an empty champagne bottle and a few cans of Red Bull, seemed like detritus from some strange party: Collaborative social structure and provisional formal structure, having been thus implicated in a culture of excess and spectacle, were thus thoroughly drained of their utopian potential. A video projection of a frog on a rock appeared as the alter ego both of the by now overtaxed viewer and of Harrison's biomorphic abstractions. Elsewhere, Internet printouts containing information on epidermoid cysts countered an implied idyll.

Working in consultation with curator Dan Adler, Lyall and Harrison did not radically reimagine their works in this show so much as settle them together in a way that was as mutually constraining as it was ludic. Our experience of their independent practices to date registered as a "hangover" as much as did the legacy of Harald Szeemann's "When Attitudes Become Form," the seminal 1969 exhibition invoked by the Vancouver show's title, which marked the emergence of a freedom in exhibition practice that now plays out as a ubiquitous "installationist" aesthetic. In this sense, "Hangover" reflected on the paralysis paradoxically engendered by freedom. Lyall's contributions retained their sense of abstracted social scenes, while Harrison's continued to function as singular objects of individual contemplation, resulting in a tendency toward mutual nullification. The same might be said for the installation's alignment of the categories of information and form. Just as these numerous fragments seemed on the verge of coagulating into an undifferentiated lump, they separated into an elegantly balanced orbit, only to clump together again. The oscillation was, finally, oddly sobering, offering a ruthlessly equivocal and intelligent rumination on the circuits of exchange that constitute collaboration.

—Drew Mahoney



View of the
 installation
 by Lyall, "When
 Hangover Becomes Form"

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Scott Lyall, self abuse, self critique, self defense: ode to shame, 2001

color photograph

SCOTT LYALL: SUSAN HOBBS GALLERY, TORONTO

For almost a decade, Scott Lyall's work has steadfastly resisted coherent, analytical description and mechanical consumption. This resistance is partly due to his habit of periodically and speculatively shifting between a remarkably wide range of media and representational devices. The artist's most recent solo exhibition represented yet another shift in practice—in this case from installation art toward work that is exclusively pictorial and computer-generated.

Fifteen photo-printed images (all works from '01) reference the unpredictable movements of the formless wax within a lava lamp. Each work contains an array of curved line segments—arranged using stock tools and brushes on the desktop—that is unrepeatable because of their random and unique origins. The viewer, however, would be better off unaware of the images, wax association, which, as an interpretive key, inhibits the opportunity to ruminate about their other myriad connotations.

The most successful works are larger (47 by 43 inches) and have greater visual complexity, combining a central, but not centered, ovoid motif with multi-hued layers of sinuous stripes and lines arranged on top of each other, often in a seemingly haphazard manner. The stripes tend to encircle the ovoid shape, but frequently pause, stutter, and shift direction before resuming their orbits. The thinner lines follow a less circular path, becoming arabesque doodles that roam more freely than the gravitational stripes.

Lyall's extensive pictorial vocabulary yields surprisingly expressive painterly effects. In only the beat of a tiring drum, the predominating red central form resembles a hastily-applied graffiti tag, but its ephemeral nature is balanced by its absolutely flat and hard-edged execution. In

giasco bertoli

luis macias

lee stoetzel

brian alfred

angus hood

omar lópez-chahoud

ester partégas

steven severance

self-abuse . . . , the emphatic outline of the large ovoid mingles with the pixelated, ghostly haze that surrounds it; the haze and partial background shading lend a remarkably atmospheric feel to a composition which tentatively suggests a cosmological context. In celebration . . . , a light blue cloud serves as a backdrop for a typically Canadian motif—the backs of three deep-red maple leaves, rendered schematically with black veins. The leaves appear to float above a palimpsest of striped bands and thinner lines, which chart many trajectories of the “lava,” or perhaps a missile, or anything else that comes to mind.

Rather than just an exercise in programming skill, Lyall’s imagery can and should be read as valuable attempts to explore a complicated site of dialogue between user and computer—a place that is not merely about the exchange of data, but that is prone to the sort of speculative thought-process and expressive possibilities that cannot be readily commodified.

Dan Adler

Brooklyn, New York
2002

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*More information
available upon request*