

ARTPULSE

ARTPULSE NO. 24 | VOL. 7 | 2015
WWW.ARTPULSEMAGAZINE.COM

**Ryoji Ikeda:
Visualizing Data at
the Edge of Perception**

Beyond Painting: Nathan
Miner and Franklin Evans

María Raquel Cochez

David B. Jang

Ron Johnson

Paula Crown

Ben Degen

**Dialogues:
Tim White-Sobieski**

**Deborah Dancy:
Between Abstraction
and Representation**

**Pierre Bonnard's
Other Avant Garde**



ARTPULSE

NO. 24 | VOLUME 7 | YEAR 2015



Front Cover:
Deborah Dancy, *Easy Rider*, 2012,
(detail), oil on canvas, 60" x 60." Courtesy
of N'Namdi Contemporary, Miami.

00 KETTLE'S WHISTLE

No News from Home / By Michele Robecchi

PUSH TO FLUSH

This Is What Life Is About. Narratives of Progress, Freedom and Self-Fulfillment in Today's Capitalism /
By Paco Barragán

FEATURES

Bonnard's Other Avant Garde / By Julie Heffernan

Ryoji Ikeda: Visualizing Data at the Edge of Perception / By Scott Thorp

Ron Johnson: An Archaeology of Seeing / By Owen Duffy

The Material-Specific Paintings of Nathan Miner and Franklin Evans / By Jason Hoelscher

"It's a constant struggle to keep the 'thingness' at bay." An Interview with Deborah Dancy / By Jeff Edwards

María Raquel Cochez: Recalibrating the Body Beautiful / By Anne Swartz

David B. Jang: Inventions in Art / By Megan Abrahams

Pass on "Paula Crown: As Above" / By Craig Drennen

Beyond Objecthood. A Conversation with Benjamin Degen / By Stephen Knudsen

DIALOGUES FOR A NEW MILLENNIUM

Interview with Tim White-Sobieski / By Paco Barragán

ART CRITICS' READING LIST

Claire Tancons

Tobias Ostrander

REVIEWS

Yoko Ono: One Woman Show, by Keren Moscovitch (Museum of Modern Art, New York) / **Araki: Eros Diary**, by Taliesin Thomas (Anton Kern Gallery, New York) / **Joshua Dildine: Notating Hi Pops**, by Keren Moscovitch (Freight + Volume, New York) / **Melanie Daniel: Piecemaker**, by Megan Abrahams (Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles) / **Noah Purifoy: Junk Dada**, by Megan Abrahams (Los Angeles County Museum of Art) / **Katherine Taylor: Moving Horizon**, by Jason Hoelscher (Marcia Wood Gallery, Atlanta) / **Verónica Vides: Luxury Link**, by Raisa Clavijo (The Americas Collection, Miami) / **Alejandro Plaza: Imaginarium**, by Raisa Clavijo (Canale-Díaz Art Center, Miami) / **Journeys: A Dialogue With Time**, by Irina Leyva-Pérez (Miami Dade College Museum of Art + Design) / **Javier Martín: On War, Consumerism and Other Human Hobbies**, by Raisa Clavijo (Valli Art Gallery, Miami) / **Peter Emmanuel Goldman**, by Irina Leyva-Pérez (ArtMedia Gallery, Miami) / **Corrosively Bright**, by Jon Seals (Contemporary Art Space & Studio, Tampa) / **Rodney McMillian: Landscape Painting**, by Craig Drennen (Aspen Art Museum) / **Covered in Time and History. The Films of Ana Mendieta**, by Christina Schmid (Katherine E. Nash Gallery, Minneapolis) / **Jack Whitten: Five Decades of Painting**, by Christina Schmid (Walker Art Center, Minneapolis) / **Pedro de Oraá: Complementary Opposites II**, by Beatriz Gago (Villa Manuela, Havana) / **Intimate Strangers: Politics as Celebrity, Celebrity as Politics**, by Alejandra Villasmil (Matucana 100, Santiago de Chile) / **56th Venice Biennale**, by Keren Moscovitch / **Amanda Coogan: I'll Sing You a Song From Around the Town**, by EL Putnam (Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin).

THE MATERIAL-SPECIFIC PAINTINGS OF NATHAN MINER AND FRANKLIN EVANS

BY JASON HOELSCHER



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

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

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

resentation—either incidentally or deliberately so—and rewards in-person and on-site experience.

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

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



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

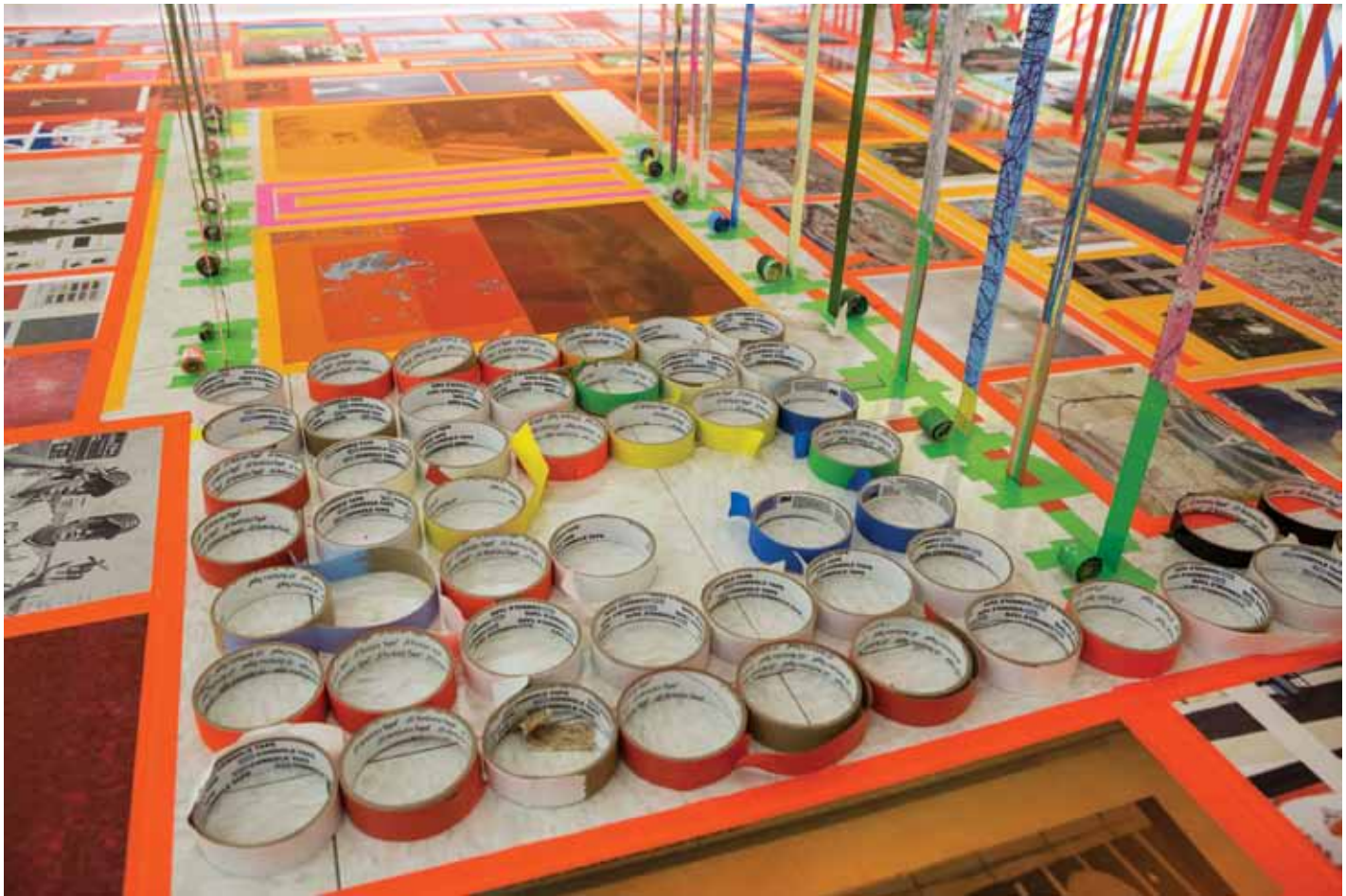
The name of the exhibition lends itself to the experience of time. While it always feels like “now” at any given moment, the things we experience within the mutable framework of the present are always changing—always different from our experience of “now” at other times. Building on this idea, the paintings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

In addition to highlighting the instability of time, particular activations of surface and space marked an important component of the exhibition as well. Miner’s paintings, all of them incorporating a mix of pencil, watercolor, gouache, airbrush, acrylic paint, shellac and oil paint on aluminum panels, create highly variable surface layers and tactile qualities that would be extremely difficult to capture through digital representation. In terms of their relations to space, the works include shaped, multi-panel canvases mounted on a concavely curved wall (*Chimera*), paintings that bend around corners, and an impressive diptych, *Field Reflections #1* and *Field Reflections #2*, in which the paintings face off against each other. These latter two paintings, each ten by ten feet and hung parallel to each other on opposite walls ten feet apart, envelop the viewer in a highly activated perceptual space. The correlations of their scale and spatial relationships, in combina-

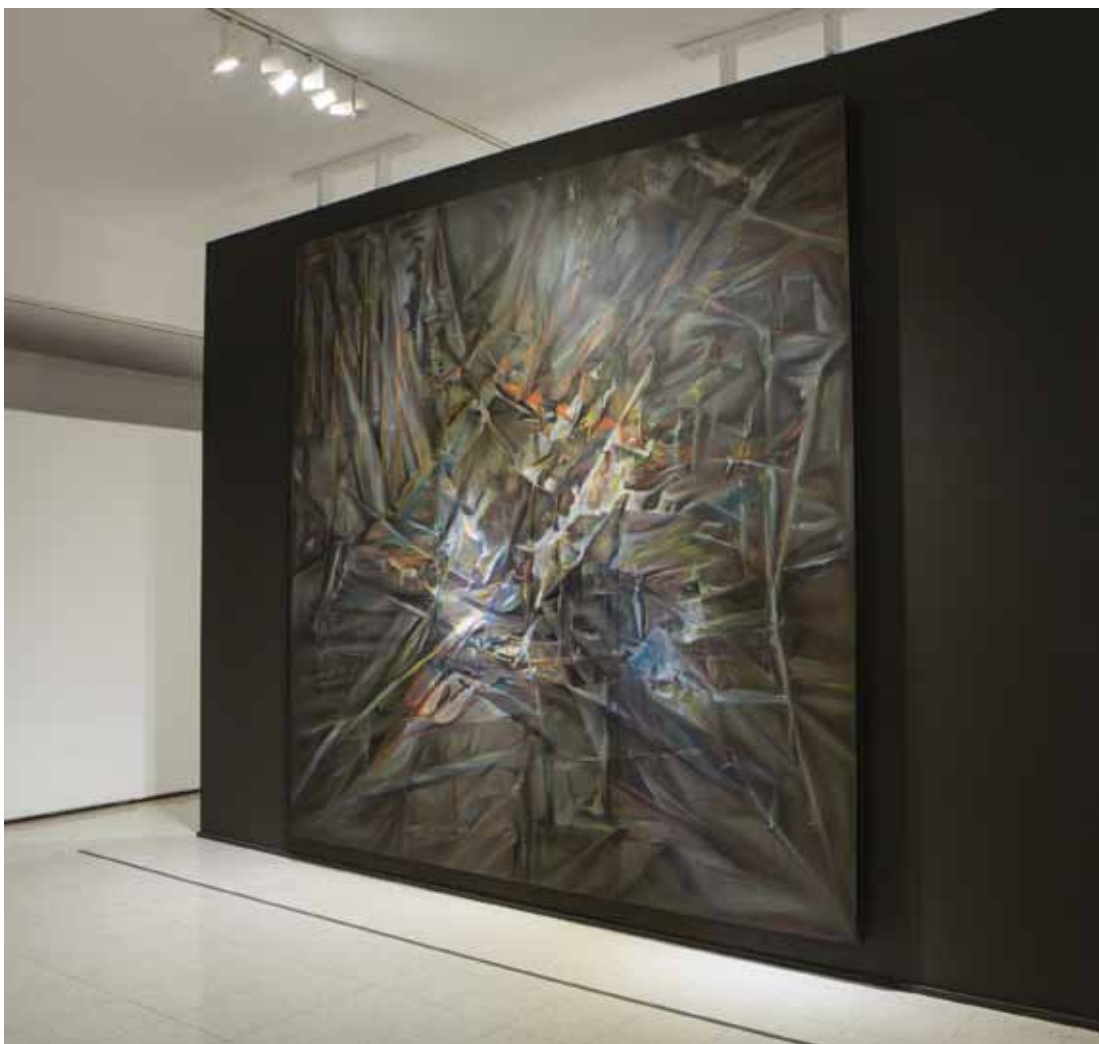
tion with the push-pull of their visual similarities, make standing between the two works feel similar to intruding on a person’s personal space. While the resonance between the size of the works and their relative distance is subtle, their opposed, face-to-face placement triggers a strong sense of being part of the works’ field of operation. The fact that each painting so forcefully requires the presence of the other, yet both could not occupy the viewer’s field of vision simultaneously, creates not only an aesthetically activated bodily experience, but one also strongly resistant to screen-based digital reproduction.¹

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

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



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



Nathan Miner, *Field Reflections 1*, 2012, pencil, watercolor, gouache, airbrush and acrylic paint with shellac and oil paint on 9 aluminum panels, 120" x 120." Installation view of "The Long Now" at Montserrat College of Art, Beverly, Massachusetts (July 2014). Photo: Bethany Acheson.



Nathan Miner, *Echoes Embrace*, 2011, pencil, watercolor, gouache, airbrush and acrylic paint with shellac and oil paint on 12 aluminum panels, 80" x 240." Installation view of "The Long Now" at Montserrat College of Art, Beverly, Massachusetts (July 2014). Photo: Bethany Acheson.

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

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

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

These chairs' function of locating the viewer points to an important aspect of "juddrules": as distributed and decentralized as Evans' approach to painting may be, it is very much part of a distinct place—specific to the idiosyncrasies of this installation, in a specific location, and at a particular point in time. The distributed nature of most digital artwork effectively negates a sense of location—the

viewer does not travel to a digital file in space so much as she or he activates it onscreen wherever they happen to be at the moment. On the other hand, the visceral impact of Evans's analog art distribution network emerges only through a viewer's step-by-step navigation within its intricately constructed spaces—a version of Michael Fried theatrical space on steroids.

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

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

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

NOTES

1. The train of thought that led to this article's thesis began with the observation that an ostensibly 2D art form like painting is increasingly coming to share many of the documentation issues typically associated with 3D forms like sculpture or installation.



Katherine Taylor, *Almost White*, 2015, oil on canvas, 48" x 36."



Katherine Taylor, *Guard Rail*, 2015, oil on canvas 48" x 42." Images are courtesy of the artist and Marcia Wood Gallery.

KATHERINE TAYLOR: MOVING HORIZON

Marcia Wood Gallery - Midtown, Atlanta Ga.

By Jason Hoelscher

The automobile has played a variety of roles in modern art, whether the birth of Futurism after Filippo Tommaso Marinetti crashed his speeding car into a ditch in 1909, or Tony Smith's 1951 experience of suburban sublimity while driving on the unfinished New Jersey Turnpike. In her exhibition, "Moving Horizon," Katherine Taylor uses the automobile as a starting point as well, albeit in a somewhat less dramatic fashion: the point here seems less on epiphany than on prompting a new look at things easily taken for granted.

The paintings in "Moving Horizon" range from blurred but recognizable images on the one hand, to paintings that for all intents and purposes look like brushy, out of focus abstractions on the other. All are unified not only by a very limited color palette, but by the fact that they depict scenes glimpsed through an automobile window, at different speeds. The approach to landscape here is complicated—not only must the details be taken in quickly, but because over a half century the types of landscape that bound highways have settled into a kind of homeostasis—there often is not much to look at on either side of a highway.

This self-similar sparseness of the landscape combines with the fast-glance look necessitated by the speed of passage, allowing Taylor to focus on the space, paint and surface without getting bogged down in the tight rendering of detail. The most detailed components of these paintings are those elements that are closest, either the edge of the pavement or a guardrail; these, however, move by so quickly and are so linear that they appear more as abstract geometry than as

representation. While elements farther away have more variety, they are blurred by distance and so dissolve into their own, different kind of abstraction. These inversely proportionate relationships between depiction, speed and space are shuffled, subtly folding back and contradicting each other. Determining the spatial registers is complex, like determining the space of a Möbius strip seen edgewise.

There is a nice pun that arises from the fact that each of the paintings depicts a scene glimpsed through a car window—an interesting update of Alberti's Renaissance notion of the picture plane as window. This pun is all the better since it is not specifically pointed out anywhere, but only emerges after a bit of consideration. Formalist puns and complex space aside, Taylor uses various strategies to assert the paintings as paintings. Seen from afar the paintings have a shimmering softness to them, which pulls the viewer in for a closer, absorptive look. Up close, however, each painting has some variety of marks that push the viewer back out, or which interrupt one's absorption into the painting. For one thing, the final layer of brushwork on each canvas is a fairly even horizontal mark that zips laterally right across the canvas, a materially present X-axis that counterpoints the desire to push back into the Y-axis of the atmospheric picture space. If these are picture planes as windows, the brushwork functions like streaks or smudges on poorly cleaned glass—the desire to look through the surface is frustrated by the qualities of the surface, but the luminosity of the depiction draws the viewer back in, only to be drawn back, and so on. This oscillation makes for a much more dynamic viewing experience than the initially serene first glimpse might suggest, making for a very compelling exhibition that works as both a quiet meditation on space and a complex consideration on frenetic speed. ■

(April 24 – May 16, 2015)