

juddrules
MONTSERRAT GALLERY

September 17 – December 13, 2014

Franklin Evans

CURATED BY
Leonie Bradbury



©2015 All rights reserved
Montserrat College of Art
23 Essex Street
Beverly, Massachusetts 01915



CONTENTS

6 Foreword **Franklin Evans : juddrules**

Robert Moeller

11 Minimalism, Maximalism and Judd as Model

Patrick Neal

19 Franklin Evans : A Moment of Complexity

Leonie Bradbury

44 Credits

ALL CATALOGUE IMAGES

Franklin Evans: juddrules

installation view

Montserrat Gallery, 2014





Foreword

Franklin Evans : juddrules

Robert Moeller

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

Donald Judd, *American Dialog*, Vol. 1-5

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

At Montserrat College of Art, Franklin Evans has expertly taken Judd's advisories to heart, if not literally, in an installation called *juddrules* that continuously sweeps across the entire gallery like an elegant wave of ordered form and natural chaos. What Evans captures is the tensions that fill



out the interior life of a painting, informed by biography, color and a wide array of materials. As Judd said, "Art is free, but is not a free-for-all." And Evans' highly structured/unstructured homage to him adheres brilliantly to Judd's sage and cautionary directive.

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

Evans situates several metal folding chairs throughout the exhibition to enable viewers to take in specific channels of the work. One view opens and closes like a stretch of roller coaster track bracketed by vertical lines of tape. Here, the artist asks you to take a journey with him, and as your eyes move

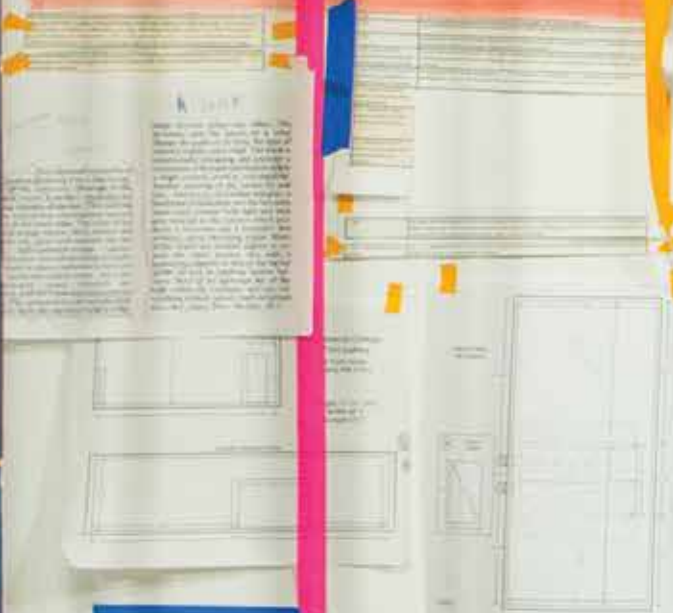
down this sliver of the overall installation, the information he has placed in the corridor begins to speed up before a gentle upward curve slows it down again.

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

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

*This essay was first published by
Art New England Online, October 29, 2014







onald Judd

ate Writings 1959-1975
ws Book Reviews Articles Letters
Reports Statements Complaints



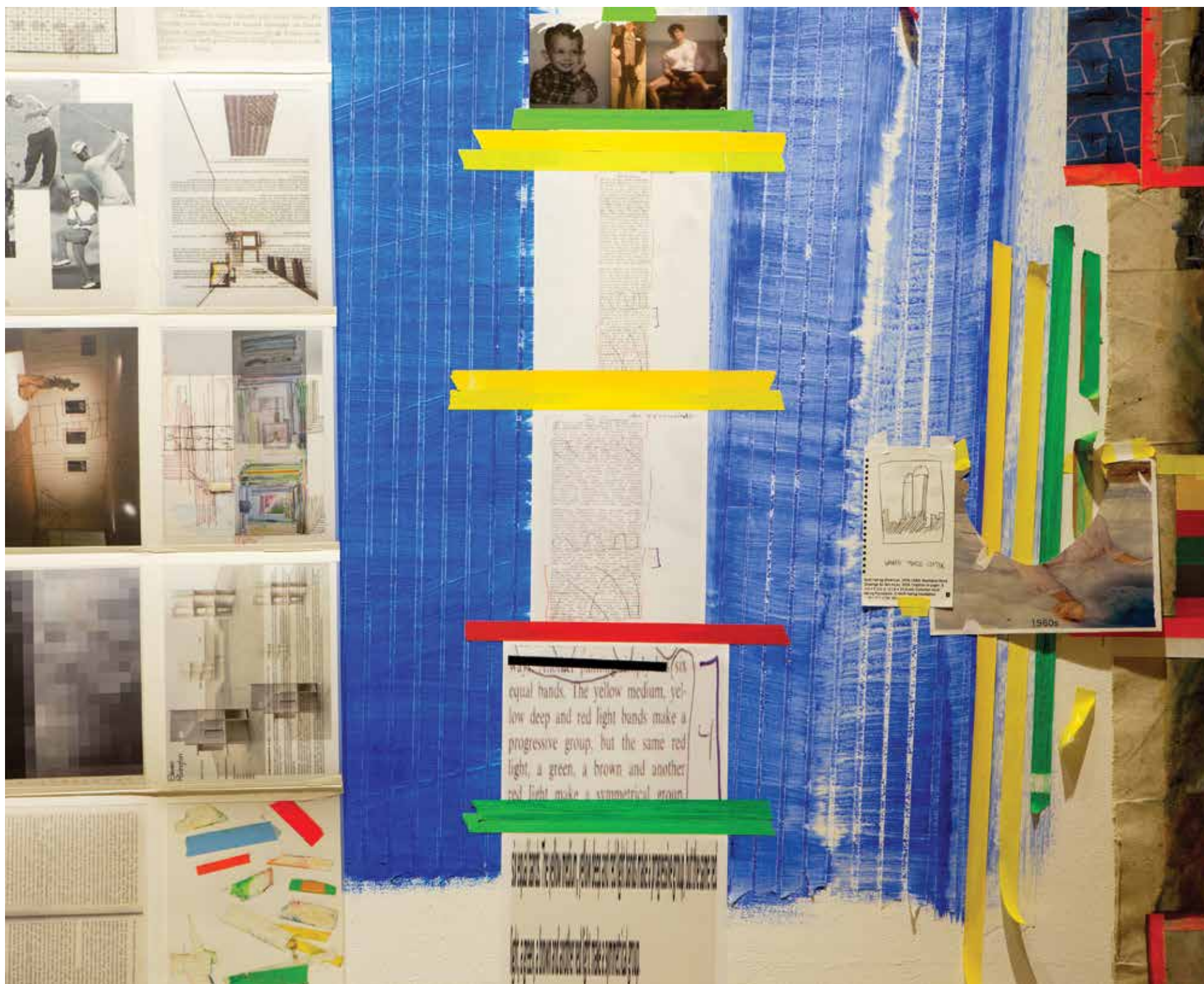
interesting
The Swimming Pool
Correspondent he experienced and experi-
ence terms and one to the others side
of the. This is the most serious of a
room with sand on the floor, a full rub-
ber swimming pool, rather soft, green
and balls, a jukebox, mannequins in
bathing suits and life-sized photographs
of girls, some of which are overpainted
or have flowers and fruit attached. The
purpose of this room, designated Room
Three, is not evident. Anything that
has altered, such as the photo-
graphs, is corny. The rest looks like
any unimpeachable and cheap backdrop
in Canaan (Hobbs, Nov. 12-13)

interesting
The Swimming Pool
Correspondent he experienced and experi-
ence terms and one to the others side
of the. This is the most serious of a
room with sand on the floor, a full rub-
ber swimming pool, rather soft, green
and balls, a jukebox, mannequins in
bathing suits and life-sized photographs
of girls, some of which are overpainted
or have flowers and fruit attached. The
purpose of this room, designated Room
Three, is not evident. Anything that
has altered, such as the photo-
graphs, is corny. The rest looks like
any unimpeachable and cheap backdrop
in Canaan (Hobbs, Nov. 12-13)

interesting
The Swimming Pool
Correspondent he experienced and experi-
ence terms and one to the others side
of the. This is the most serious of a
room with sand on the floor, a full rub-
ber swimming pool, rather soft, green
and balls, a jukebox, mannequins in
bathing suits and life-sized photographs
of girls, some of which are overpainted
or have flowers and fruit attached. The
purpose of this room, designated Room
Three, is not evident. Anything that
has altered, such as the photo-
graphs, is corny. The rest looks like
any unimpeachable and cheap backdrop
in Canaan (Hobbs, Nov. 12-13)

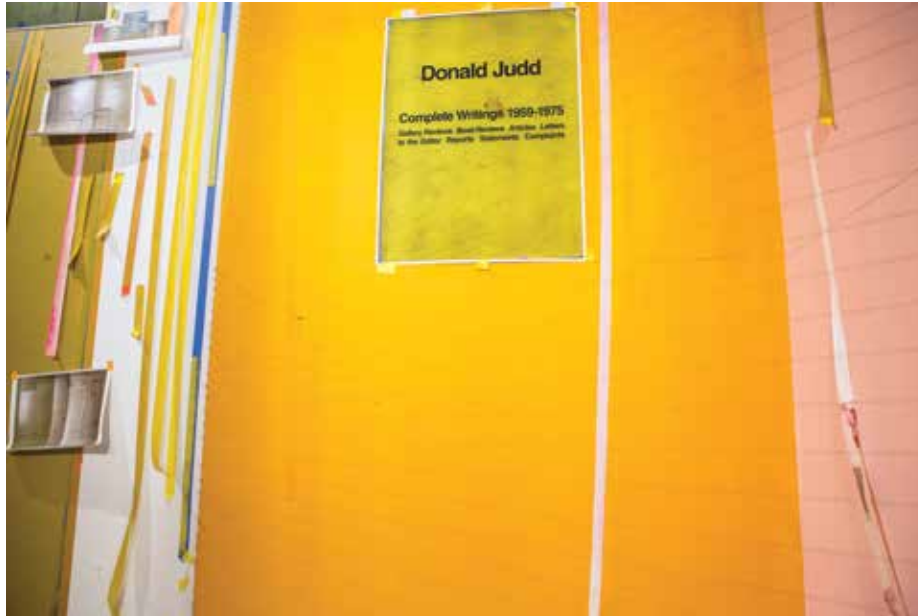
room with sand on the floor, a full rub-
ber swimming pool, rather soft, green
and balls, a jukebox, mannequins in
bathing suits and life-sized photographs
of girls, some of which are overpainted
or have flowers and fruit attached. The
purpose of this room, designated Room
Three, is not evident. Anything that
has altered, such as the photo-
graphs, is corny. The rest looks like
any unimpeachable and cheap backdrop
in Canaan (Hobbs, Nov. 12-13)

The purpose of this room, designated Room
Three, is not evident. Anything that
has altered, such as the photo-
graphs, is corny. The rest looks like
any unimpeachable and cheap backdrop
in Canaan (Hobbs, Nov. 12-13)



Minimalism, Maximalism and Judd as Model

Patrick Neal



To get a clue as to what's on the mind of the artist Franklin Evans, one need only look at the snippets of words and phrases that populate his exhibitions of painting and installation. Evans uses his own studio practices and the process of painting as raw material for his work. This includes all manner of residual painterly activity from cast-off materials and traces of labor as well as source materials like appropriated pictures and text. Amidst bits of personal and statistical ephemera, he likes to theme his shows around art history, particularly thinkers concerned with critical issues surrounding art at a particular time and place. In his last show he had been poring over the essays in Yve-Alain Bois's *Painting as Model* and for the site-specific project at Montserrat College, titled *juddrules*, he is concentrating on the writings of Donald Judd.

Judd, a forerunner of Minimalism, and galvanizing critic and sculptor was a force to be reckoned with and still exerts a considerable influence in 2014. His art and writings are admired by critics as different as Roberta Smith and Jed Perl. Smith, who early in her career, typed and gathered the writings of Judd, recalled in a lecture at The New School his influence on her, "...encountering Judd was sort of like discovering a world where I was both at home and completely shocked by its intensity, its completeness, its level of purely visual criticality. Meeting Judd helped me find something critical in myself...when you come up against someone like that you can either take it or leave it, I took it." (Smith)

Perl writing admiringly of Judd as a key character in his book *New Art City*, considered Judd to be an artist's artist, who appreciated a wide array of his peers work even as he sought a radical simplification of forms within his own work. Perl examines how around the 1950's attitudes had been developing toward artworks that sought to embody a totalizing "all-in-one"

viewing. Judd advocated for this sort of vanguard, unfettered experience even as he never lost sight of craft and his own personal relationship with the sensual, particularities of his sculptural materials (Perl, 517).

Judd's writing took different forms, the majority being reviews written for Arts magazine around the early 60's. With a few blunt sentences, he could size up the successes and shortcomings of a piece as art. He had a great eye, carefully describing what was in front of him noting what had conviction or appeared fraudulent, all informed by a vast repository of art history. Judd valued progress in art and eschewed the irrelevance of the "old European tradition (Judd, 77)." He held the painter Barnett Newman in high esteem as they both shared a radical, pared-down, allusion-free aesthetic that, at the time, was the hallmark of a new sublime in art freed of all historical baggage concerning beauty (Harrison and Wood, 572-574).

Like Judd, Evans began as a two-dimensional painter, and both artists would move into three-dimensions as their work evolved. Different from the imposing, solid objects Judd created however, Evans's extension outward into the gallery space has tended to be more tenuous and conceptual. Similar to Judd, Evans also works out of tradition, invested in craft but also intellectually curious and pushing boundaries. Evans's work is often discussed around "institutional critique" being that it is cognizant of the social forces contiguous with art world commerce and it is interesting to consider this in relation to discussions of "theatricality" that orbited around Judd's work in the 60's. In both cases, questions are raised over how artworks are tethered to the outside world. When Evans introduces fragmented words and sculptural bits into his work, the viewer viscerally experiences the artist's body and mind at work in a to-and-fro network of self and society.

For his project at Montserrat, Evans is perusing a variety of artists that Judd reviewed that range from the obscure to modern masters and, in relation to our current climate, one ponders what Evans finds personally

compelling about Judd. Certainly, the essays get you thinking about why some art lasts or disappears to history and what artists do with innovations from the recent past and present. When Judd mined art history, he was far-seeing enough to know what to keep or discard as he fashioned his own unique works.

In 2005, when Judd's collected writings were republished, the conceptual artist Mel Bochner asked "why now?" the interest in Judd. In a thoughtful essay, Bochner shared Smith's regard for Judd as an authoritative figure with firm convictions and noted the absence of such a character on the scene today. Bochner pointed out that there was a do-or-die urgency to Judd's observations that revealed an artist working out an aesthetic he could believe in Bochner. Fast forward to 2014 and it's hard not to reflect on a situation that is very different; one need only look at the labeling of much contemporary abstract painting i.e. – zombie, casual or crapstraction to get a sense of a more disaffected mood soured by the nefarious influence of money.

There are also new realities confronting artists in the 21st century. David Joselit's recent book *After Art* offers interesting insights on what could be a move away from specific art objects toward the potential for art making to harness the power inherent in various global networks. He makes a case that since the advent of digital technology, images can be recomposed as bytes, disseminated as "populations" and traverse time and space in whole new ways. Images have a newfound "scalability" and "currency" in their global transmission and as such, it may be more appropriate for artists to create "formats" or provisional, connective acts that leverage and capitalize on this newfound plasticity (Joselit, 43, 55). Much of Joselit's ideas align with Evan's art-making practices, but like Judd, I would say Evan's works are further enriched by his facility with materials – particularly paint coupled with a distinct, baroque sensibility.

A case in point is Evans's fondness of watercolor paint. He capitalizes on







the diaphanous, ribbon-like quality of the medium and handles acrylic with a similar light touch working with shadows and residue and overlaying spills, drips, and smudged images. As he moves into the third dimension, he paints with recycled tape that is in turn painted upon and we look at his installations through levitating bands of tape that interact with the surrounding room. One can free associate artists like Robert Irwin or Fred Sandback who also made works that interact with the environment or see traces of Barnett Newman's ideas and process. The illusions keep multiplying as we're swept through scrims and transparencies, recollecting and learning as we do when clicking hyperlinks that propel us through cyberspace or like deKooning's characterization of himself as a "slipping glimpser."

As I write this, Evans is working both in the private and public realm putting together his installation by collaborating with students at Montserrat and inventing stratagems for how the piece will unfold. What the final outcome will be is anyone's guess, but in contemplating Judd, I'm con-



vinced the strength and staying power of Evans's work succeeds on its formal and conceptual complementarity.

WORKS CITED

Bochner, Mel. "Conversation Starter: Mel Bochner on the Republished Writings of Donald Judd" in *Art Forum*. Summer 2005.

Joselit, David. *After Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2013

Judd, Donald. *Complete Writings 1959-1976: Gallery Reviews, Book Reviews, Articles, Letters to the Editor, Reports, Statements, Complaints*. Halifax: The Press of Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. 2005. Print.

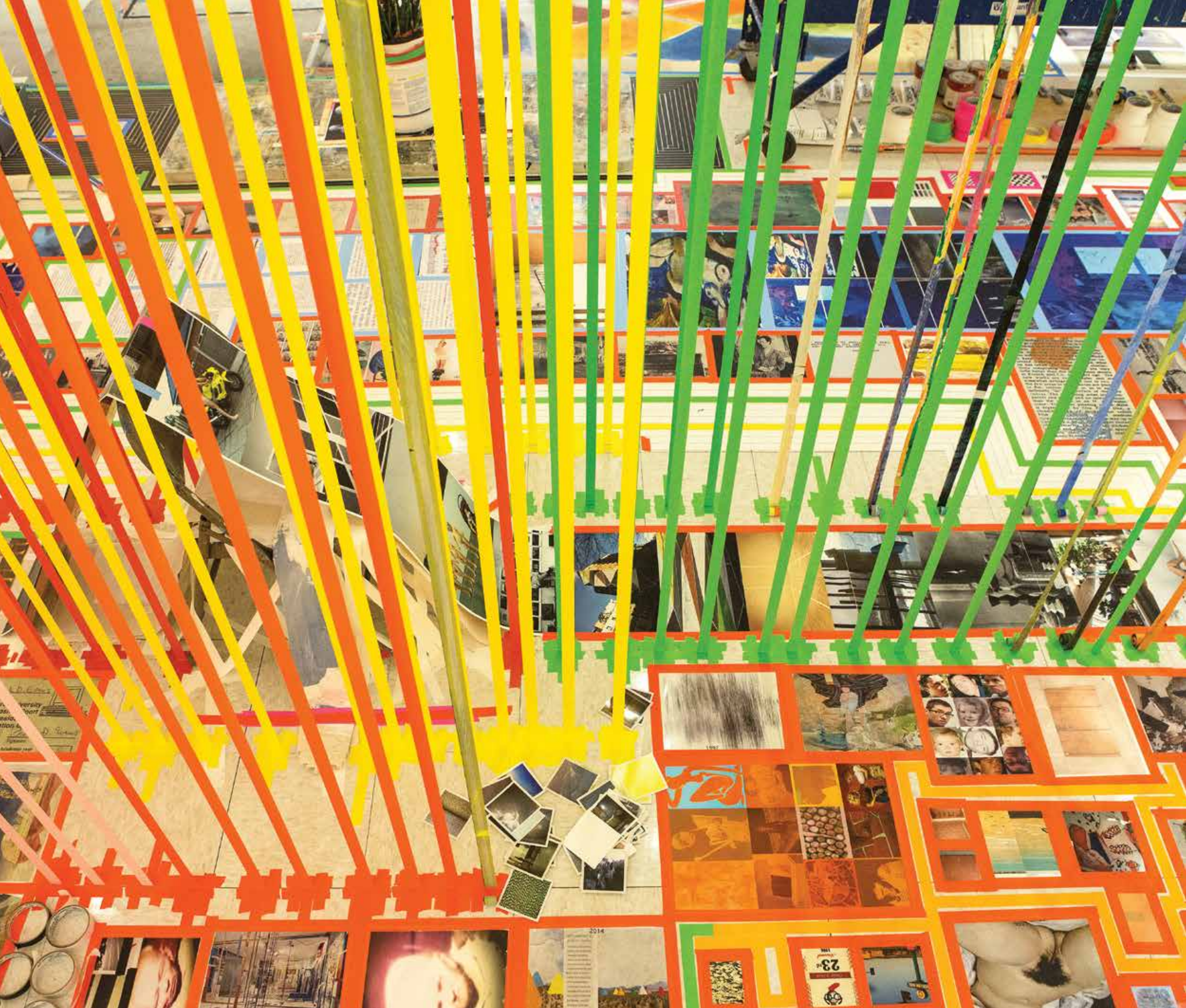
Newman, Barnett. "The Sublime is Now" in *Art in Theory 1900-2000*. Ed. by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood. Malden: Blackwell Publishers Inc. 1993.

Perl, Jed. "Beginning Again" in *New Art City: Manhattan at Mid-Century*. New York: Vintage Books. 2005. Print.

Smith, Roberta. "Criticism: A Life Sentence." New York: The New School. Vera List Center. 5 November, 2009. Lecture. <http://vimeo.com/9651694>







Franklin Evans : A Moment of Complexity

Leonie Bradbury

Introduction

Traveling, wandering, meandering, Franklin Evan's creations spread across the gallery walls and floors like an ever-growing organic mass. Evans' practice involves the bringing together of items ranging from fully finished large scale paintings, digital printouts, tape scraps, and string from the studio. While on site in the gallery or museum, he then adds even more items, including site-specific blocks of color painted directly onto the wall, printed-out texts from art books and gallery press releases, layering and connecting the various elements into a site-specific installation. Evans describes his installations as, "walking into a painting" and "snapshots of the studio at any moment in time."¹

In the fall of 2014, Evans was invited to be in residence at Montserrat College of Art in Beverly, MA. For three weeks he spent ten to fifteen hours a day compiling images, printed text, tape screens and a small selection of objects, resulting in the exhibition *juddrules*. Evans considers himself first and foremost a painter, but his installations go beyond any traditional definition of painting. Continuously transitioning, between assembled and dismantled – reconnecting and disconnecting, configuring and reconfiguring form temporary moments of "congealance" in their site-specific installations, whether in the studio or in the gallery.²

As the viewer approaches the gallery entrance, they are confronted with an overwhelming presentation of materials that cover the entire gallery floor, each of the seven walls, and part of the ceiling. The overall color palette is bright and broad ranging from earthy yellows to neon pinks and oranges. Brightly colored strips of painters tape hold down and adhere printed reproductions of pages of books, found images, personal photographs and vinyl album to the gallery floor. Visitors are immediately surrounded by



more images on the walls and ceiling and feel themselves become part of the all encompassing installation.

Upon entering *juddrules*, your eyes try to settle on a place of focus and as you are trying to understand what it is you are looking at, you are physically confronted by a large structure that spans from floor to the ceiling. It is a large piece of blue metal and wood scaffolding that has been partially covered with strips of painted painter's tape that connects it to both the ceiling and the floor. On the three-foot high scaffolding platform the artist has placed ten paint trays that show paint remnants in the colors used on the gallery walls.

The painters' tape 'screens' are created by the artist by adhering the end of the roll of tape on the ceiling and rolling out the roll until it hits the floor, where it becomes secured. Evans' excessive use of the ubiquitous tan masking or blue painters tape, a medium used to assist the painter in making clean, 'professional' straight lines, is the visual focus of the installation. A product usually relegated to walls in the artist's studio has now been allowed to come into the gallery space, where it is no longer a substrate, or mere tool to aid in the production of a painting, but rather the primary medium.

The tape is used not only to create visual screens but also throughout the installation to adhere the images to the floors and walls of the gallery. Small leftover strips and bits are places on the walls throughout visually referencing the artist's studio walls, as well as, providing a playful color element in the exhibition. The strips of tape move gently and subtly as the result of the airflow in the room. Although visually arresting, the rolls of tape appear fragile and could be easily damaged by a sudden movement by a viewer or collision with a backpack or elbow.

A second wall features a partially defined grid of color blocks, mostly in the mustard yellow color (the color of the artist studio floor), with the exception of a block of purple on the far left. Parts of the grid are paint-

ed, other delineated in tape. The painted grid on the gallery wall roughly uses the floor and tape measurements of the studio floor, but transposes them onto the wall. On the upper right hand corner of the grid blocks of a brighter hue of yellow paint are alternated with 14 x 17 inch printouts. Some are abstract textural details of photographs of the artist's studio and loft (both printed to scale and enlarged), another features the partial torso of a nude male, one image placed sideways at the top of the grid features Henri Matisse's painting *Romanian Blouse* of 1940. Reproductions of this image are repeated throughout the installation and in a variety of colors and states of distortion. At the center of the grid we see a large, mediocre quality print out 'collage' of one of Evans canvas paintings, comprised of a grid of nine rows of nine 11 x 8.5 inch sheets each (the ubiquitous copy machine or home printer dimension).

This paper grid is interrupted in the middle by a gap where the white wall of the gallery partially peeks through and one can see some of the mustard under paint as well. At the center of the gap, Evans has placed a finished stretched canvas painting, the only one in the exhibition. The painting features the same image as the one on the paper grid. It consists of many, multi colored horizontal bands that look like a printed version of the vertical tape screens placed on its side. Near the top of the painting one of the bands is a realistically painted metal ruler from the looks of it covered in paint and strips of painters tape. At the near center of the painting Evans has painted a trompe l'oeil version of one of the Polaroid reproductions as if it's held onto the canvas with painters tape. It reveals part of this painter's process of placing photographic images on the canvas and then copying them in great detail right next to it. As is normally the case for Evans, the original is removed leaving only the copy. Elsewhere in the exhibition, though, the artist has left the printed out image in place next to its painted copy.

The viewer is asked to consider two versions of the same image in different states and different material manifestations. One a highly finished painting, the other a pixelated enlarged version of that same image printed out and















taped together as the interrupted paper grid. On top of the painting itself Evans has placed two laminated images of a work of street art, a graffiti cartoon sun spray painted on a metal garage door, which was located downstairs of the artist's studio and apartment for many years. The images are nearly identical, although one is extremely pixelated and the other less so. To the right of the painting, the grid is interrupted a second time. This time the gap is small (about three inches wide) and features not an image group but rather a tape strip at the width of two strips of tape stuck together. Instead of stretching from floor to ceiling it starts in the middle of the wall and extends out to the floor where after about 20 feet it is held in place with a half full paint can. On top of the can Evans has stacked another laminated image and three rolls of unused painters tape. The image is black and white and features an unidentified painting.

Evans' process is in its essence a blend of traditional and digital technologies. He effectively combines Realist painting methods with computer technology and the Internet, the latter two functioning as tools, sources for inspiration and information simultaneously. They also form a filter through which information is transformed from one form to another. Evans has a sincere interest in the peripheral, ephemeral materialities that evidence one's life and collects digital images and texts in an effort to rematerialize them in his art works. As part of this process, he draws attention to a contemporary or historical occurrence that is individual and/or cultural.

juddrules comes across as a giant, trans-historical mashup of high and low culture: fine art meets digital printout.³ Evans incorporates elements that could be classified as belonging to each of these binary categories. For example, his exquisitely painted trompe l'oeil paintings are an example of 'fine art' and can thus be classified as so-called 'high culture.' Evans juxtaposes these paintings with popular culture ephemera, or lowbrow images, such as the pixelated print outs of drag queens, porn stars and additionally includes family snapshots and portraits of himself ranging from the artist as a child to a recent photo of Evans at an opening reception of one of his exhibitions.

The obsessive referencing to outside source materials, visual, and textual is an embracing of information overload rather than a critique. Certain sections of the exhibition read like an art history textbook with many reproductions of well-known paintings. Others read more like a Google image search, but one where the images are interrupted, and conjoined by color test prints and strips of tape. Evans' process reflects our ability to actively consume and produce information using the Internet as a tool. It simultaneously addresses its utility and its overwhelming complexity and contradictory nature.

Gallery as Studio

Evans materializes information that was once immaterial, Internet content and its limitless distribution now fixed in material form, statically suspended on the canvas or momentarily detained in a temporary gallery installation. Likewise he digitizes his own work, photographing it, scanning it, uploading and downloading it, before presenting it next to (or as part of) the original in a gallery setting. The boundary between the studio as a place of production and the gallery as its displaying counterpart is intentionally and creatively blurred.

In 1971, when Daniel Buren wrote that the "analysis of the art system must inevitably be carried on in terms of the studio as the unique space of production and the museum as the unique space of exposition. Both must be investigated as customs, the ossifying customs of art" he was correct in including the artist's studio as part of the art system (Buren 1). The museum or gallery would eventually become a space of production. Buren briefly addresses "those curators who conceive of the museum as a permanent studio" (3). He presents the studio as a "place of multiple activities: production, storage, and distribution" (Buren 3). The gallery is presented as a place of promotion and consumption. The objects need to be portable to move between the two. Buren mourns:

The loss of the object, the idea that the context of the work





corrupts the interest that the work provokes, as if some energy essential to its existence escapes as it passes through the studio door, occupied all my thoughts. [...] In the studio we generally find finished work, work in progress, abandoned work, sketches – a collection of visible evidence viewed simultaneously that allows an understanding of process; it is this aspect of the work that is extinguished by the museum's desire to 'install' (6).

When we consider Franklin Evans' environments in the context of Buren's post-studio essay, they seem to be an effort to combat this loss of truth through the inclusion of many of the components of his studio – his visible evidence – and presenting them as part of the gallery installation, as part of the work. For Evans, even the works in progress, the sketches and his various collections go out the studio door and land in the gallery space where they are rearranged in new and different configurations. Nicholas Bourriaud's 2002 statement that "the exhibition is no longer the end result of a process, it's 'happy ending,' but a place of production" seems to ring true in regards to Evans' site-specific environments (69). Once in situ, Evans spends days in the gallery working and creating additional connections between the elements he has brought in. Although, Franklin Evans' installations are not interactive and socially motivated in a different way as the exhibitions Bourriaud is referring to in this statement, the gallery has indeed become the studio. For Bourriaud: "In our daily lives, the gap that separates production and consumption narrows each day" (39). In Evans' practice this gap is extremely narrow, as he is simultaneously the producer and consumer of the elements that comprise his works.

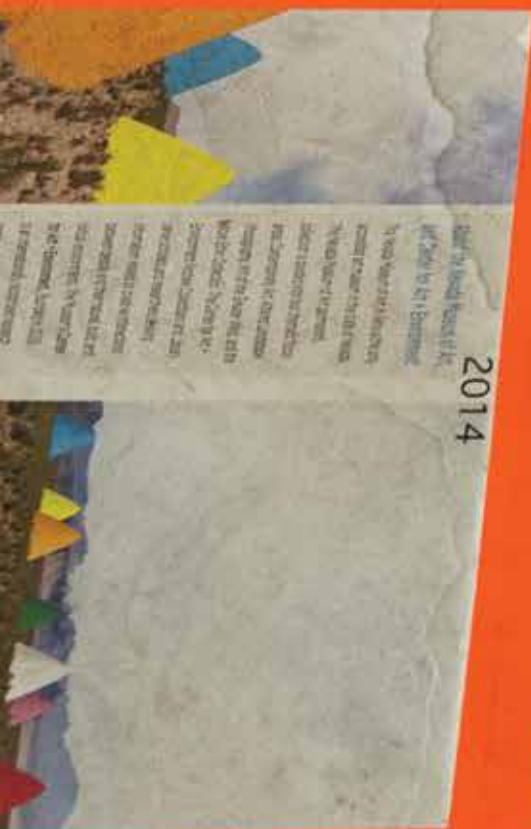
Central to Evans' practice is the materializing of the immaterial, whether he is using trompe l'oeil effects to create the illusion of a photograph taped to his canvas or is printing out images by other artists included in the exhibition as part of his own work. These so-called feedback loops create a disorienting effect. According to Alexander Galloway and Eugene

Thacker in *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks*: "In the cybernetic feedback loop, in the communications channel of information theory, and in the organic whole of systems theory there exists a dual view of information as both immaterial and materializing, abstract and concrete, an act and a thing" (57). Evans' process of making the abstract concrete, his looping or conceptual doubling and mirroring of information into various states of mediatization is where his work functions as a site of convergence between traditional artistic practices and internet cultures. But how exactly do these feedback loops relate to the culture or structure of a network? Are his installations a visualization of a network; do they simply provide a metaphor for network? Or, as is my argument, do they constitute a network?

Artwork = Network

The concept of 'network' is rapidly becoming the dominant cultural mode. The term network originally was employed in the 16th century to represent the weaving together of sets of material strands (metal, fabric leather, etc.).⁴ In the 21st century, 'network' is a way to see and frame everything around us. For example our communications and transportation systems, our social networks, both physical and virtual, even the natural world can be considered examples of networks. Network now also stands for a non-centered, decentered, distributed, multiplicitous, on-linear system of nodes or plateaus that are endlessly connected to each other and inform much of what we see around us. According to cultural theorist and architect Kazys Varnelis, network culture is defined as a broadly historical phenomenon and that the network has become the dominant cultural logic of our times. He argues, "Although other ages have had their networks, ours is the first in the modern age in which the network is the dominant organizational paradigm, supplanting centralized hierarchies" (Varnelis 147). The cultural framework of network has become the way to understand and organize our complex global world.

Connectivity, flexibility, changeability, and mobility are the key concepts of our times and are also key identifiers for a network. We are experiencing



a culture of sharing, of data transfer and instant communication. It is all about the relationships between 'things.' Furthermore, the collision and disintegration of binary realms – high: low, digital: tactile, real: imaginary, private: public – is a signature element of network culture. Networks are in motion, growing, shrinking, but never ending. Varnelis remarks: "In contrast to digital culture, under network culture information is less the product of discrete processing units than of the outcome of the networked relations between them, of links between people, between machines, and between machines and people." (146). He argues that network culture succeeds postmodernism and describes network culture as delivering "remix, shuffling together the diverse elements of present-day culture, blithely conflating high and low [...] while poaching it as found contents from the world" (Varnelis 151). Evans' work is precisely an installation concerned with the space between things, (i.e. objects, people, images, materials, ideas) and it is clear that his practice is closely related to this larger cultural phenomenon of networked connectivity.

For Varnelis, the contemporary subject – unlike its predecessors in the autonomous modernist subject and the fragmented postmodern subject – is "constituted within the network" and has become the networked subject (152). He states that "the subject is increasingly less sure of where the self begins and ends, the question of what should be private and shouldn't fades" (Varnelis 154). For the networked subject, boundaries between self and other, private and public, real and virtual are increasingly blurred. So too in the art world, as it is increasingly less sure where an artwork begins and ends, the question of what should be considered art and what shouldn't fades. Artists with practices as diverse as multi media artists Sarah Sze, Zsuzsanna Szegedi and Kate Gilmore are redefining their artistic practices with notions of artwork as network.

The work of art is now distributed across multiple sites, multiple nodes of content. According to Galloway and Thacker, the notion of connectivity, "is so highly privileged today that it is becoming more and more difficult

to locate places or objects that don't in some way fit into a networked rubric" (26). The relational element is that 'something' which exists between two or more things. They further stated, "a network in a sense is something that holds a tension within its own form – grouping of differences that is unified" (Galloway and Thacker 61). This is a phenomenon I recognize in today's art world and in the work of Franklin Evans' in particular.

This notion, however, is not without historical precedence. In September of 1968, the seminal article *Systems Aesthetics* by Jack Burnham was published in Art Forum. In it he discusses a new art world phenomenon he terms Systems Art. What Burnham means with systems art is really an expansion of the work of art from an autonomous, singular object to a system. He stated, "we are now in transition from an object oriented culture to a systems oriented culture" (Burnham 31). And he follows this with: "Art does not reside in material entities, but in relations between people and people and the components in their environment" (Burnham 31). An example Burnham provides is the exhibition Art by Telephone held at the museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago where "the recorded conversation between artist and manufacturer was to become part of the displayed work of art" (32). He brings up Robert Morris at the 1966 68th American Show at the Chicago Art Institute, who had a piece recreated via instructions rather than shipped from NY: "In the context of a systems aesthetic, possession of a privately fabricated work is no longer important. Accurate information takes priority over history and geographical location" (Burnham 32). Burnham introduced the concept of the distributed work of art, a concept central to the understanding of an artwork as a network.

Aesthetics of Networks

How do aesthetics and networks interact? What does a network look like? There are at present a few dominant modes of visual representation when using the term network. The three primary modes are centralized, decentralized and distributed. It is worth establishing an understanding of these terms. First created by network pioneer Paul Baran while he worked



for the RAND Corporation in the 1960s where he was trying to build a new system of communication using computers. At the time the first two notions of network, centralized and decentralized were already in place. In the process of his research, Baran developed a third model, the distributed network where all the nodes were connected to several neighboring nodes and able to communicate with each other directly without going through a centralized hub first. Each node would have several routes to and from which to receive and send data.

Media theorist Anna Munster in her essay *The Image in the Network* (2007) argues that “there can be no coherent, global ‘aesthetics of the network’, and yet there are collective and shared experiences – aesthesias – of networks” (6).⁵ She further declared that the vectorial diagram “has come to function as a dominant image of and for networks” (Munster 6). Munster describes the representational dilemma of the diagram as image of the Internet as follows:

The diagram is therefore not a set of instructions – a blueprint – for mapping or building relations between objects. It is instead a representational mode that hooks one class of objects – perhaps links and nodes – to another class, potentially peoples, cultures and their processual relations within networks. This, of course, is why the network diagram is so thrilling – its spatiality and vagueness harnesses the potential to make it work as a representation of something it is not. [...] In other words, if we really believe that the network diagram provides us with an accurate depiction of networks, then we are forgetting the very relationality of both diagram and network (13).

Additionally, the vector diagram is limited in that it chooses to represent something that is multi-dimensional, ever changing, and relational as a fixed two-dimensional image.

In general, and by nature, visualizations of networks are reductive and questions of their topology are notoriously problematic. For instance, the Internet is usually diagrammatically presented as a distributed network that looks like a decentralized network. Perhaps works of art are better suited to accurately representing networks? Is it useful to think of Evans’ work as a three-dimensional depiction of a network? If so, what type of network? Are the large canvas paintings hubs from which all other are connected and thus form a decentralized network? Or is their organization more rhizomatic and emblematic of a distributed network? Perhaps Munster’s theme of relationality offers an interesting way to open up this discussion in relation to Franklin Evans’ practice. Her statement: “This is why the network diagram is so thrilling – its spatiality and vagueness harnesses the potential to make it work as a representation of something it is not,” (13) makes me realize that Evans work is not a diagram (an abstract representation or deduction) of a network, or a visualization or image of it, it is in fact a network, or perhaps more accurately a collection of networks both decentralized and distributed that intersect, interconnect and disconnect at various points.

According to Galloway and Thacker, “In networks the individuation of all the nodes and edges that constitute the system, for while the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, it is nevertheless the parts (or the localized action of the parts) that in turn constitute the possibility for the individuation of ‘a’ network as a whole. The individuation of the network as a whole is different from the individuation of the network components. However, both concern themselves with the topology of the network” (59). Although some elements can be extracted, most of Evans’ installation materials comprise a network of connected parts that only function as a work of art when presented as part of a system of objects. For example, think of the strips of painters’ tape or the Internet printouts. Like a network though Evans’ installation does not present an autonomous whole, but rather a temporary, networked system.

Conclusion

If we compare common images of the American Internet to one of Evans’

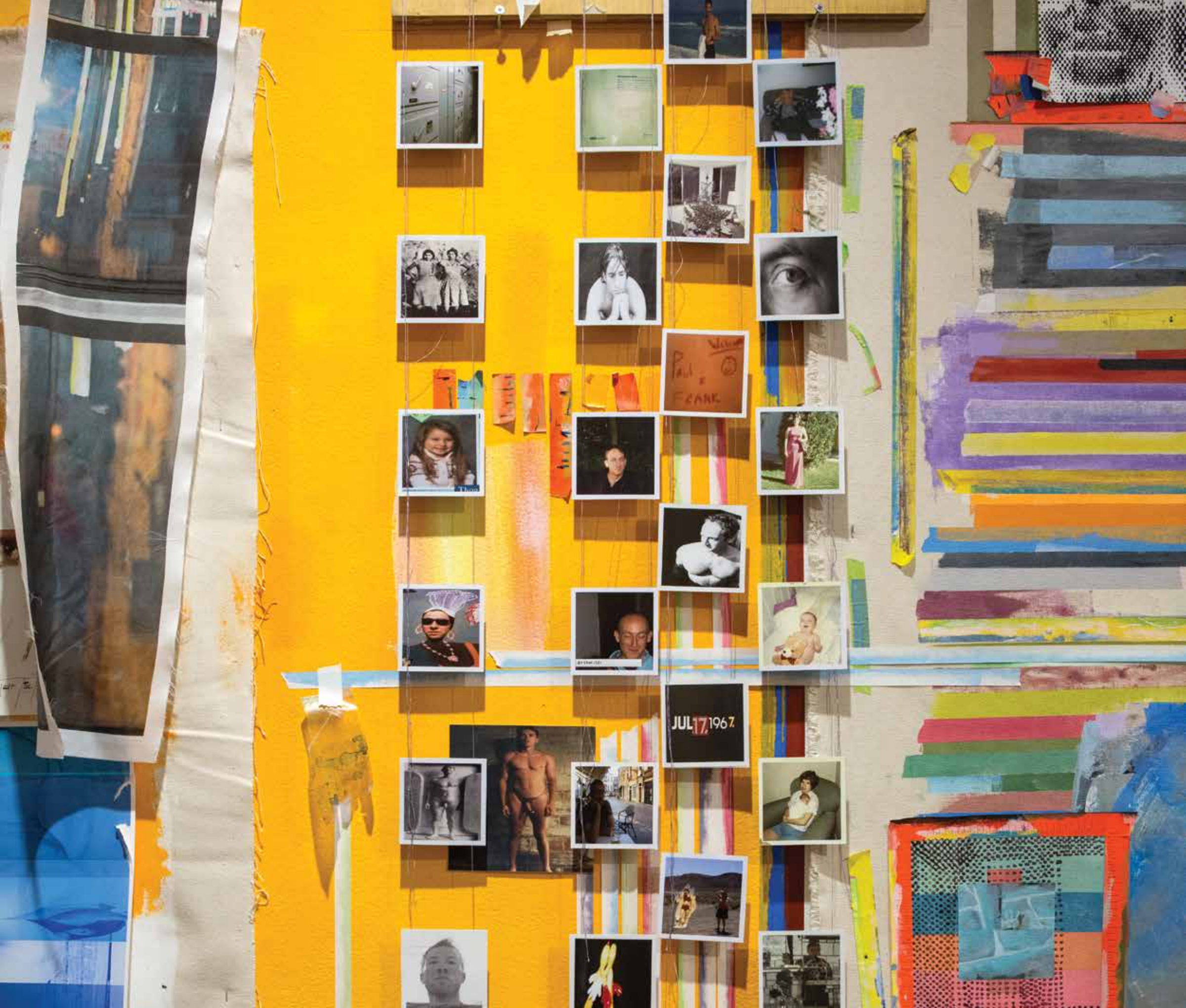
installations, there are indeed some similarities in terms of the webbing or creation of pathways. The most obvious difference is that Evans' installation is three-dimensional whereas diagrams are all two-dimensional renderings of something that is in reality multi-dimensional, spatial and temporal. The diagram closes off the temporal, rhythm of movement across and collapses it into a two dimensional spatial abstraction. Networking 'things' move at different speeds, says art historian and network theorist Philip Armstrong: "the network is the spacing of time and the temporality of space."⁶ How do Franklin Evans' environments engage with different modes of spatiality and temporality?

The artist addresses space, for example, in multiple modes: symbolic or narrative space, the two-dimensional pictorial or visual space, and the three-dimensional physical or architectural space. In terms of time there are also multiple frameworks to consider: virtual, historic (both personal and art historic) and the present, and the tension between issues of permanence and temporality that Evans' practice brings to the fore. There is a compression of time that happens once the artist gets into the gallery space and begins the installation process. The usual pace of studio of seemingly limitless time is compressed into a limited production window of time within the gallery. Once completed as a work of art, there is evident a refusal of linear temporality in the presentation of hybrid, multiple sections or networks of objects and segments of information whether sound, text or image.

As is immediately evident there are multiple spatialities and temporalities at play within *juddrules*, some of them contradictory. The installation is nomadic, temporary, conglomeration of objects and ideas, auditory and visual ephemera. The way the viewer interacts with the piece is also a multipath, multi-sensory and self-selecting experience. Wandering and meandering, both your eye and feet drift through the installation as if a 21st century flâneur, having exchanged the dense streets of Paris for the text and image filled forest of *juddrules*. Another example is provided on the wall to the right when entering the gallery where large sheets of painted paper are

the residue of paintings made in the past year. The artist tapes the paper onto the floor of the studio and uses it to clean brushes as a result abstract builds up over time. Sometimes this occurs systematically (discrete color areas) at other times they are more accidental. These particular pieces of paper were shown similarly along the hall at Ameringer McEnery Yohe gallery installation in New York. According to Evans, "They become both a measurement of time and a transposition of time and space (AMcY hall) to new site (Montserrat)"⁷

Evans' installations embody the dissolution of boundaries between different media, dimensionalities temporal, spatial, and the virtual. They refuse to be singular. Each installation, once installed, is in a temporary state of suspension of its fluidity. They refuse everlastingness as they are merely waiting to be dismantled, disconnected, disassembled and return to the studio to be reconfigured, recycled back into a new network of relations. The installations are, to borrow network theorist Mark Taylor's term, "moments of complexity" and can be described as the embodiment of an onto-topology meaning a system of convergence, connection, and confluence.⁸ They are multiplicities, networks, networked, they are collections of objects that are networking mash-ups of the present and the past, the historic and the personal, the provisional and the permanent, time and space. These contradictions, or tensions within the work do not function however, as a series of binaries as listed above, but rather exist within the work as a complex web of interconnectedness, overlapping, conflicting, doubling, continuously looping into a conglomeration of networked networks.







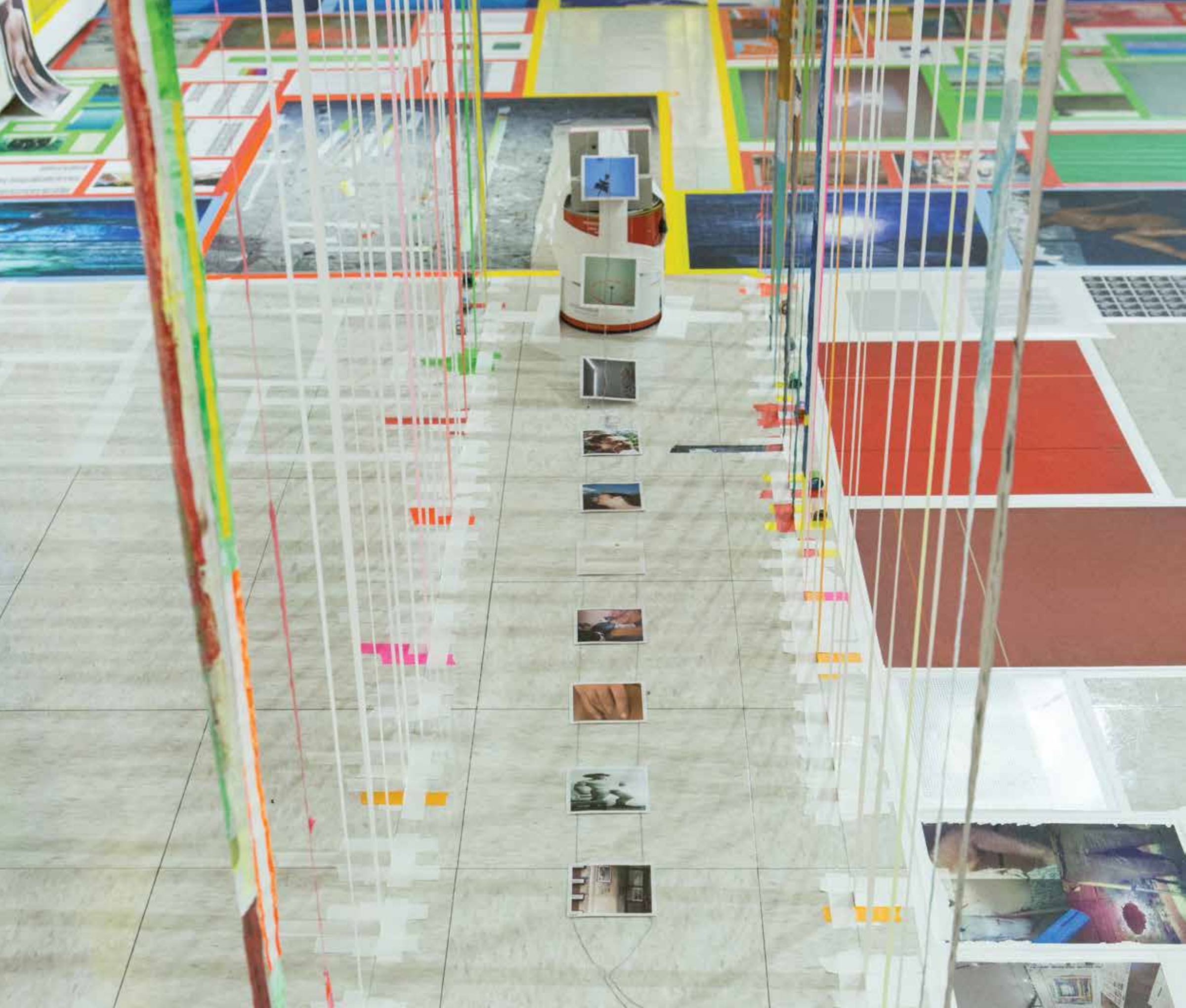
NOTES

1. Franklin Evans, lecture at deCordova Museum, Lincoln MA 3/23/13.
2. Congealance refers to transformation of a liquid from a fluid to a fixed state.
3. Mashup is a term originally used within the music industry where it signifies the practice of mixing multiple songs together into a new song without one song dominating. Within web culture the term refers to data mashups that use open application programming interfaces that integrate information from multiple sources to create new web services.
4. The use of the term as a synonym for a set of interrelated people, by contrast, is a recent invention. The verb "to network," meaning to introduce and be introduced to other people outside of one's immediate social circle, made its first appearance in the 1970s after the deployment of ARPAnet, the precursor to the Internet. See Warren Sack, "From Networked Publics to Object Oriented Democracies," in *Networked Culture*, institute etc. 18.
5. Aesthesia: "The normal ability to experience sensation, perception or sensitivity."
6. Philip Armstrong, Assistant Professor of Comparative Studies at Ohio State University, in phone conversation with the author, March 21, 2013
7. Artist correspondence 11/9/2014
8. Term is used as defined by Leslie Kavanaugh in *The Architectonic of Philosophy: Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz*, Amsterdam University Press, 2007, 278.

WORKS CITED

- Bourriaud, Nicolas. *Postproduction. Culture as Screenplay: How Art reprograms The World*. New York: Has & Sternberg, New York. 2002.
- Buren, Daniel. *The Function of the Studio*. Translated by Thomas Repensek in October 10, 1979. (original text 1971).
- Burnham, Jack. "Systems Aesthetics." In *Art Forum*, September, 1968.
- Castells, Manuel. *Internet Galaxy. Reflections on the Internet, Business, and Society* (Clarendon Lectures in Management Studies). Oxford University Press, USA. April 3, 2003.
- Galloway and Thacker. *The Exploit. A Theory of Networks (Electronic Mediations)*. University Of Minnesota Press. October 1, 2007.
- Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Wiley-Blackwell. 1991.
- Jenkins, Henry. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, NYU Press; Revised edition. September 1, 2008.
- Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford UP. 2005.
- Law, John and John Hassard (eds.) *Actor Network Theory and After*. Oxford and Keele: Blackwell and the Sociological Review. 1999.
- Lovink, Geert. *Networks Without a Cause: A Critique of Social Media*. Polity; 1 ed. March 19, 2012.
- Munster, Anne. "The Image in the Network." In *New Network Theory, Collected Abstracts and Papers*, Amsterdam, June 28-30, 2007. Amsterdam: Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA) Media Studies, University of Amsterdam and Institute of Network Cultures, HvA Interactive Media.
- Packer, Jeremy and Wiley, Stephen B. Crofts. *Communication Matters: Materialist Approaches to Media, Mobility, and Networks*, Routledge. 2012.
- Rubinstein, Raphael. "Provisional Painting." In *Art In America*. May, 2009.
- Relyea, Lane. "Studio Unbound." In *The Studio Reader: On the Space of Artists*. Edited by Mary Jane Jacob and Michelle Grabner. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2010.
- Varnelis, Kazys, *Networked Publics*, The MIT Press; Reprint edition. August 17, 2012.









CREDITS

Director, Exhibition Curator: **Leonie Bradbury**

Assistant Curator: **Pamela Caampanaro**

Curator of Education: **Maggie Cavallo**

Assistant Curator of Education: **Savery Kelley**

Photography: **Bethany Acheson**, bethanyacheson.com

Design: **John Colan**









