MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 matthewmarks.com

Wade Guyton

Press Packet

Farago, Jason. "Best Art Books of 2023: 'Wade Guyton: Galerie Matthiesen, Ausstellung, Édouard Manet, 1928, 6. Februar bis 18 März, Vol II.'" *The New York Times*, December 14, 2023.

Joselit, David. "Training the Machine." *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 132, December 2023, pp. 216–20.

Tumlir, Jan. "Wade Guyton: Matthew Marks." *Frieze*, no. 223, November/December 2021, p. 156.

Hochdörf, Achim. "Wade Guyton: Museum Ludwig, Cologne." *Artforum* 58, no. 10, July/August 2020, pp. 140–42.

McDermott, Emily. "Wade Guyton Gives Painting a New Edge in Major Cologne Museum Survey." *Wallpaper*, December 20, 2019.

Bollen, Christopher. "The 10 Best Art Shows of 2017: Wade Guyton, 'Siamo Arrivati' at Museo Madres (Naples, Italy)." *Interview*, December 25, 2017.

Russeth, Andrew. "In the Era of the Impossible News Cycle, Artist Wade Guyton Is Translating Screenshots to Painting." *W Magazine*, September 29, 2017.

Bell, Kristy. "Wade Guyton: MAMCO, Geneva." *Frieze*, no. 184, January/February 2017, p. 158.

Baumann, Daniel. "Wade Guyton, Peter Fischli, David Weiss." *Artforum* 55, no. 9, May 2017, p. 157.

Farago, Jason. "Information Overload in Paint, Not Pixels." *The New York Times*, January 6, 2017, p. C25.

Bankowsky, Jack. "Wade Guyton: Le Consortium, Dijon, France; Curated by Nicolas Trembley." *Artforum* 55, no. 4, December 2016, p. 201.

Venturi, Riccardo. "Wade Guyton: Le Consortium/Académie Conti/Le Mur." *Artforum*, 55, no. 2, October 2016, p. 284.

Kim, Seungduk, and Wade Guyton. "Wade Guyton: The Digital Ghosts and The Epiphany of Painting." *Space*, no. 586, September 2016, pp. 88–95.

Simoncelli, Silvia, and Wade Guyton. "Interview with Wade Guyton." *On Curating*, no. 20, Total Abstraction, October 2013, pp. 34–37.

Kertess, Klaus. "Painting in the Age of Digital Reproduction." *Art in America* 101, no. 1, January 2013, pp. 74–83.

Hochdörfer, Achim. "Wade Guyton: Whitney Museum of American Art." *Artforum* 51, no. 6, February 2013, pp. 234–37.

Vogel, Carol. "Painting, Rebooted." *The New York Times*, September 30, 2012, pp. AR1, AR23.

Smith, Roberta. "Dots, Stripes, Scans." *The New York Times*, October 5, 2012, p. C25, 28.

Guyton, Wade. "Wade Guyton." *Artforum*, September 2012, p. 136.

Schjeldahl, Peter. "Man and Machine." *The New Yorker*, April 15, 2012, pp. 94–95.

Rothkopf, Scott. "Wade Guyton: The New Black." *Parkett* 83, 2008, pp. 74–81.

Burton, Johanna. "Wade Guyton: Rites of Silence." *Artforum* 46, no. 10, Summer 2008, cover, pp. 365–73.

Bell, Kristy. "New Forms of Modernism; Ambivalence and Ambiguity; 'an Act of Processing.'" *Frieze*, September 2005, p. 121.

Griffin, Tim. "Tim Griffin on Wade Guyton." *Artforum*, January 2003, p. 126.

The New York Times

CRITICS' PICKS

Best Art Books of 2023

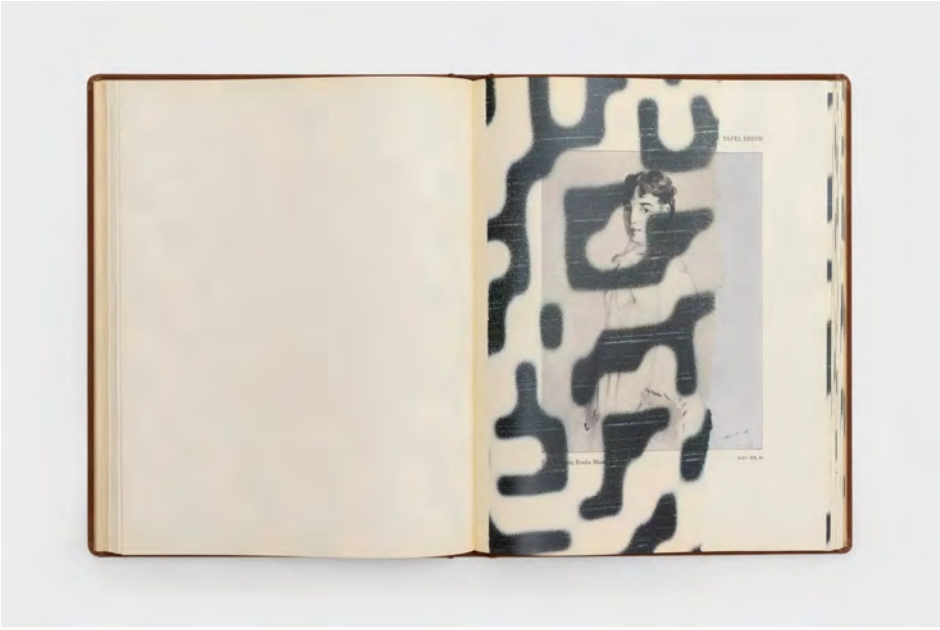
The art critics of The Times select their favorites, from Botticelli to Vermeer, Lucy Lippard's memoir, and Wade Guyton's intelligent rereading of Manet.

By Holland Cotter, Jason Farago and Walker Mimms
Dec. 14, 2023

Have art books, will travel. And this year's prime selections clock up a lot of visual, historical and personal mileage. We get an up-close tour through the Vermeer extravaganza that became the focus of international pilgrimage in 2023. The contemporary American artist Wade Guyton leads us, with a volume of his own drawings, through a lifetime fascination with the work of Édouard Manet. And at last we have the much-anticipated autobiographical account — actually an anti-memoir — of the long, continuing and indispensable career of one of our most influential and personable art writers. — *HOLLAND COTTER*

Jason Farago

'Wade Guyton: Galerie Matthiesen, Ausstellung, Édouard Manet, 1928, 6. Februar bis 18 März, Vol II' (*Galerie Chantal Crousel*).



An example of Wade Guyton's re-interpretation of a Manet work from his new book that overlays the Manets with patterns. Jiayun Deng/Galerie Chantal Crousel

Farago, Jason. "Best Art Books of 2023: 'Wade Guyton: Galerie Matthiesen, Ausstellung, Édouard Manet, 1928, 6. Februar bis 18 März, Vol II.'" *The New York Times*, December 14, 2023.

The show of the year was “Manet/Degas,” but a second great Paris-New York hookup, and maybe the exhibition I think about more, was Wade Guyton’s immensely intelligent rereading of Manet’s full oeuvre in over 100 drawings in France this fall. Forgoing his trusty inkjet printer for a lithography stone, Guyton overlaid 10 catalogs of a century-old Manet exhibition with a pattern of hazy-edged camouflage; this book is one of them, and indeed exhibition and publication are largely coterminous. Over the hands of Émile Zola, over the mouth of Laure in “Olympia,” Guyton’s striated blots and bends stage an infinite regress of media reproduction and artistic retransmission, and enact a thrilling renewal of Manet’s commitment to an art worthy of its time. Some still misunderstand Guyton’s all-surface paintings as mere acts of style (an insult that Manet also frequently faced); in this volume and the nine others like it, he proves again that he is nothing less than the painter of modern life.

Farago, Jason. “Best Art Books of 2023: ‘Wade Guyton: Galerie Matthiesen, Ausstellung, Édouard Manet, 1928, 6. Februar bis 18 März, Vol II.’” *The New York Times*, December 14, 2023.

TEXTE ZUR KUNST

TRAINING THE MACHINE

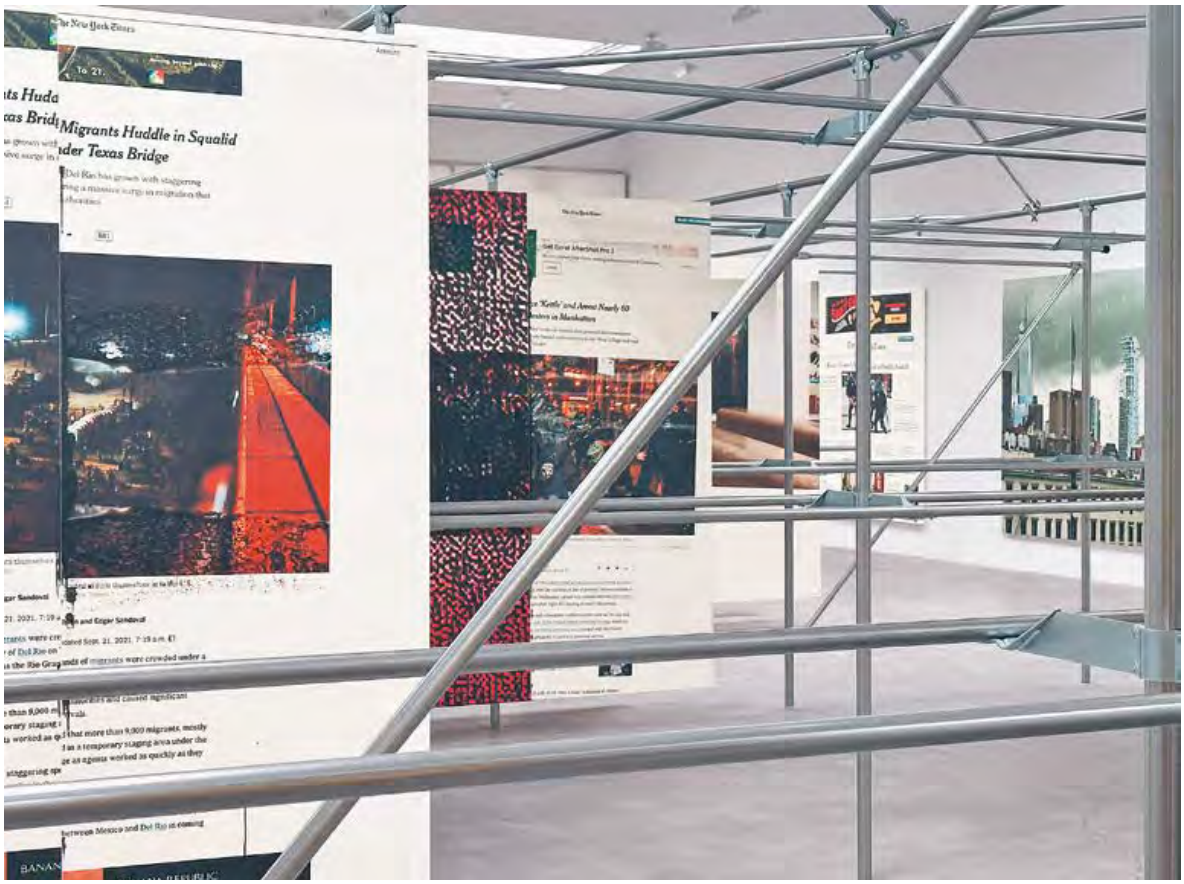
David Joselit on Wade Guyton at Matthew Marks Gallery, New York

The implications of artificial intelligence are controversial and hotly debated. Will machines learn through us and dominate the world one day, or will we eventually learn to evolve intelligently as a species with the help of the machine? While AI art rarely goes beyond predictable mindless gimmicks, David Joselit here associates an artistic oeuvre with the seemingly unrelated concept of machine learning: for decades, Wade Guyton has been using a technological device, a machine – albeit not a very smart one – to not only develop his own signature artistic style but also expand the concept of painting. Joselit presents his observations here, structured around three core aspects and in light of Guyton's recent New York gallery show.

With the rise of accessible AI tools, some in the art world have expressed concern and consternation at the prospect of machines training on works of art – what are the ethics, for instance, of one's work being instrumentalized without compensation? While the economic exploitation involved in scraping archives from the web without permission must be confronted, a corollary fear of machines replacing human-generated expression is misplaced. Since the invention of photography, if not before, artists themselves have trained machines – learned their built-in capacities in order to divert, surpass, or pervert them to realize aesthetic goals. Rather than focusing on how computers train on art, then, we need to understand how art can train machines. This, I believe, is precisely what Wade Guyton has done in his recent paintings. But before I elaborate on this assertion, a word on *training* is necessary. In the *Oxford English Dictionary* one family of meanings of the verb "to train" centers on "improvement or development." My favorite of these, which precedes the rest, is "To direct, treat or manipulate so as to bring to a necessary form." This definition is linked to the realm of horticulture as exemplified by the espaliered tree – not exactly a figure of contemporary aesthetic innovation. But even without stacking the deck in this way, *training* is always involved in submitting a subject to discipline – whose goal is "a necessary form" – and the objective of such discipline is necessarily preconceived. Even if one is not shooting, one trains one's sights on a target. Much art based on machine learning consequently looks entirely preconceived. A prominent recent example of this is Refik Anadol's 2022 installation in the lobby of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Wishfully titled *Unsupervised*, it generates a spectacular output of roiling digital light and color, which was trained on publicly available data on MoMA's collection. Though MoMA's website claims that *Unsupervised* "reimagines the history of modern art and dreams about what might have been,"[1] this exercise looks like a trumped-up version of mall art. Far from "unsupervised," Anadol's work is trained by the machine, not the other way around. It looks like AI should.

I believe that one of the capacities of contemporary painting is to proffer affective experiences of the digital image worlds that we now inhabit. The medium's seeming obsolescence and ostensible stasis allow a painting to stabilize dynamics of image production, circulation, and accumulation that remain in perpetual motion in their native digital forms. Wade Guyton's show at Matthew Marks demonstrates this capacity. His paintings train the machine, but Guyton does not remain content with the machine's own aesthetic rhetoric (as I believe Anadol does). Instead, the language of painting is itself transformed. The machine is trained not as an end in itself, but as

Joselit, David. "Training the Machine." *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 132, December 2023, pp. 216–20.



"Wade Guyton," Matthew Marks Gallery, New York, 2023, installation view

with the erstwhile discipline of grinding one's own pigments, the discipline to which Guyton submits his machine – namely the Epson UltraChrome HDX inkjet printer – is in the service of aesthetic exploration. While Guyton does not use generative AI in his work, he uses an ordinary mechanized tool – the digital printer – in such a way as to transpose its own limited rhetoric into a painterly lexicon. From this perspective he metaphorically reverses the priority of machine over human agency that is embedded in the fears of AI. Following the three dimensions of digital images that I cite above – production, circulation, and accumulation – I will enumerate how Guyton trains the machine.

HURT COLOR

In Guyton's paintings there is a source image (which is photographic) and an output printed on lengths of linen whose width is dictated by the printer's dimensions. A painting therefore results from the convergence of two mechanical procedures – photography and printing. The source photographs are often, but not always, second order: reproductions of artworks, including Guyton's own, or the front page of the *New York Times*, or documentation of his studio practice, or the view from a window. In short, Guyton not only combines digital photographic files with their physical execution via inkjet printer but also embraces established, even formulaic, genres of mechanically reproduced artifacts such as art documentation, periodicals, and personal snapshots. In other words, even before he prints them, his source files are pictures of pictures, and consequently what the paintings "represent" is less the ostensible content of what is represented than a performance of a representation's multiple

Joselit, David. "Training the Machine." *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 132, December 2023, pp. 216–20.

"Wade Guyton," Matthew Marks Gallery, New York, 2023, installation view

material transpositions. And this performance is paradoxically both showy and melancholic. In place of the brushstroke are rectilinear deposits of ink from the printer nozzle that give a pixilated effect to the edges of forms that one would expect to be smooth and sinuous. The adjustment of the CMYK balance is frequently off, sometimes creating moments of hysterical saturation, while at others, as in Guyton's rendering of the reproduction of an Édouard Manet painting in sickly greenish tones, there is an atmosphere of "hurt color" appropriate to what Hito Steyerl called "poor images."[2] The reigning effect of this layered approach to the generation of painted form is a kind of embalming of the source image (if one can even refer to it in the singular). On the one hand there is the picture that disappears into its multiple "performances," and on the other, there is its fixing by Guyton in a melancholy and probably impossible effort to keep it still. The fool's errand of arresting a fugitive image is ultimately suffused with a sense of sadness and failure. Its affect is that of a fossil suspended in amber.

LATERAL PERSPECTIVE

The 35 paintings in the exhibition are all of the same dimensions; each is a diptych composed of two vertical panels of identical size. Sometimes the dividing line between the panels marks the meeting of two different images set side by side, but more often (and to this viewer, more effectively), they create a jump, or stutter, in the registration of a single source image. I like to think of this seam between pictures, and more often within them, as a kind of vanishing point – but one quite different from the vanishing point of classical perspective (which is experienced

Joselit, David. "Training the Machine." *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 132, December 2023, pp. 216–20.

"Wade Guyton," Matthew Marks Gallery, New York, 2023, installation view

as an illusion of depth within the painting as opposed to remaining immanent to its surface). This seam or cut on which the image breaks is the vanishing point of infinite reproduction; its gap, and the disruption it creates, marks a kind of groundlessness of the source image deriving from its multiple transpositions. Renaissance perspective created the illusion of a deep and mappable space during an era of European conquest and imperialism. The lateral perspective that Guyton and other painters, like R. H. Quaytman, establish is one of perpetual circulation endemic to neoliberal times in which meaning and value are produced through the differences that occur when objects, such as money or art, move from one location to another – what the financiers call arbitrage. For Guyton, such arbitrage is enacted aesthetically in the transubstantiation of an image from one format (digital file) to another (painting) and then to another (an exhibition of roughly interchangeable parts). This is what I call lateral perspective.

STORAGE

The paintings in Guyton's show were installed on a grid of chrome hanging racks that were left by a clothing company in his studio building. At the studio he uses the racks for storage, so in a certain sense the exhibition at Matthew Marks is a transposition of private accumulation into a public forum. But this gridded exhibition device distributes the canvases in such a way that the viewer may encounter numerous paintings floating in space at different physical (and focal) distances, almost as though a computer screen with many open windows had been dilated into the deep space of the gallery. In this sense, what I have described as lateral perspective is enacted between

Joselit, David. "Training the Machine." *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 132, December 2023, pp. 216–20.

works as well as within individual paintings. Such a materialization of a virtual principle of composition is further enhanced by the exposure of the ends of the canvases as well as the stretcher bars that support them. Once again, the paintings are submitted to a paradoxical occupation of both virtual and physical space. Moreover, their accumulation in the exhibition is part of the effect here, as though every individual work required the entire assembly of 35 in order to signify.

*

Despite my enumeration of Guyton's procedures for making the machine-generated image perform, he is not practicing an updated painting by numbers. These works would not succeed as paintings if they weren't something more than an arid lesson in how images behave under contemporary digital conditions. I have referred to "hurt color" because I think that image circulation is bruising – not only for poor images, but for the human eyes trained on the visual juggernauts emanating from phones, laptops, or whatever screen wherever. It's possible that we see too much, and that managing this "primitive accumulation" of vision makes it hard for us to see in ways that are not formulaic. What modern painting has given us throughout its history is a multiform technic for seeing beyond, around, or beneath standardized aesthetic typologies, beyond the discipline of visual training. Guyton continues this tradition into the era of AI.

"Wade Guyton," Matthew Marks Gallery, New York, September 15–October 28, 2023.

Notes

1 "Refik Anadol: Unsupervised," Museum of Modern Art, https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5535.

2 See Hito Steyerl, "In Defense of the Poor Image," *e-flux journal*, no. 10 (November 2009), https://www.e-flux.com/journal/10/61362/in-defense-of-the-poor-image/.

Joselit, David. "Training the Machine." *Texte zur Kunst*, no. 132, December 2023, pp. 216–20.

FRIEZE

Wade Guyton
Matthew Marks,
Los Angeles, USA

Wade Guyton is, by now, a household name in the art world. In Los Angeles, however, he has received very little exposure. For anyone, like myself, who has only encountered his work in group exhibitions, and who automatically aligns him with the tradition of monochrome painting via his signature practice (begun in 2007) of passing lengths of canvas through an inkjet printer programmed to reproduce a jet-black JPEG, his recent outing at Matthew Marks, 'The Undoing', was eye-opening.

Of course, Guyton's black paintings have always conjured up the dialectic of nothing and everything that we assign to Kazimir Malevich's seminal *Black Square* (1915). If white light is pure information, then black pigment is its shadow-side complement of pure realization. But that space of sombre abstract equanimity, which once drew thought towards the spiritual, here quickly begins roiling with the backwash of pictorial data flows. No black paintings were included in Guyton's LA debut: these were paintings of everything and anything – the general mixed up with the particular, the incidental with the arbitrary.

For instance, *Untitled* (2020–21) boasts a photographic print of the artist's colour-stained hardwood studio floor taken in close proximity to the printer that would subsequently spit out this picture on that same spot. Several more works served to flesh out this narrative of production, offering representations of freshly printed canvases having landed unceremoniously – sometimes overlapping – on the ground that they, in turn, represent. Captured by the artist on his mobile phone, these images were instantaneously air-dropped into the output device. But when this rapid-fire sequence of events is exported into the realm of painting, it begins to reverberate with historical precedent, recalling the intimist and serendipitously improvised tone of a vast succession of hand-painted studio *tableaux*.

The selection of 26 paintings in 'The Undoing' – uniform in size and hung very close together – could all be factored into this processual plotline. All are essentially paintings of what makes a painting: materials, tools, techniques and the bric-à-brac of the workplace, including its well-appointed kitchen, views out of the window and, perhaps most suggestively, its daily influx of news. Interspersed throughout the show, at more or less regular intervals, was a set of paintings (all *Untitled*, 2021) derived from screenshots of *The New York Times* online that highlighted the recent vintage of the entire ensemble, blaring headlines of pandemic surging and capitol storming. The attempt to address matters of such up-to-the-minute topicality is a risky business that could easily devolve toward political reaction, but not here. What we are given in the end is pigmented sludge pushed through bitmapped rasters tracing, quasi-indexically, the informational circuits and feedback loops within which the studio operates more as a node than a terminal.

Some ancient echo of the cubist conjunction of the journal and wine bottle – Georges Braque's *Bottle, Newspaper, Pipe and Glass* (1914), for instance – persists in these works, having undergone digital refreshment. Alongside alarming reports of cultural implosion, algorithmically generated ads inform us of Guyton's shopping habits – mana from the internet. Such mundane revelations lend a farcical tint to the tragic scene, which is perhaps the most characteristic trait of our moment. At the opening, the show was described as 'epic' by more than one observer: epic in the sense of historically important, but also in the sense of resolutely non-lyrical. Guyton channels the voice of the multitude in his work and the history that it collects is the one made and simultaneously undone by us all.

– Jan Tumlir

Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2020–21, installation view

Tumlir, Jan. "Wade Guyton: Matthew Marks." *Frieze,* no. 223, November/December 2021, p. 156.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

ARTFORUM

Wade Guyton, *Four stacks of fifty-two paintings*, 2008–2018, ink-jet prints on linen, each 84 × 69". Installation view, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, 2019. Photo: Simon Vogel.

Hochdörf, Achim. "Wade Guyton: Museum Ludwig, Cologne." *Artforum* 58, no. 10, July/August 2020, pp. 140–42.

Wade Guyton

MUSEUM LUDWIG, COLOGNE

CURATED BY YILMAZ DZIEWIOR WITH LEONIE RADINE

Achim Hochdörfer

THE DEVIL'S HOLE is a view into the abyss. The diptych's two panels depict reddish light transforming layers of rock into the twists and folds of a bodily orifice, before vanishing in the dark of fathomless depths. It is an empty center, a mysterious receptacle for our projections. The hole, a water-filled cave in Tennessee, is not just an attraction for tourists and scientists. It evokes images of a mythical underworld and triggers thoughts of psychoanalysis and Plato. It conjures the expansionist bravado of Land art and suggests an anal variation of the origin fantasies of aesthetic modernism found in the work of Gustave Courbet, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Marcel Duchamp. Taken from different angles, the photographs, which date from 1999, hung on the wall side by side and stared at us like two empty eyes. It is a bifurcated point of origin, one that programmatically marks the beginning of Guyton's artistic practice. From their position at the end of the long central axis of the exhibition space, the two images cast the sequence of rooms as a bottomless maw, as if all the works to follow sprang from this black source.

Appropriately, visitors to Guyton's survey at Museum Ludwig, Cologne, curated by Yilmaz Dziewior with Leonie Radine, entered by descending a staircase. From a ledge at the top, they gazed down on a nearly forty-foot-wide sculptural configuration of worktables, dollies, primed canvases, and ink-jet printers, all covered by two long strips of blue carpet and a sequence of shiny metal *U*'s. The ensemble, created in 2017, at once brings to mind Guyton's earliest works—the installations recalling the

Guyton devoted himself to painting in the early 2000s, at exactly the moment when Western art history lost those parameters that had hitherto enabled it to maintain a compelling narrative.

Left: **Wade Guyton, *The Devil's Hole*, 1999,** two C-prints mounted on wood, each 29⅝ × 19½ × 11¼". Below: **Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2015,** ink-jet print on linen, 10' 8" × 9' ¼". Right: **Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2002,** ink-jet print on book page, 11 × 8½".

Hochdörf, Achim. "Wade Guyton: Museum Ludwig, Cologne." *Artforum* 58, no. 10, July/August 2020, pp. 140–42.

art of Michael Asher, Dan Graham, and Robert Morris, among others—and displays the equipment and materials that constitute his signature approach: digitally printed canvases, which dominated the show. First there were the stripe, hole, and flame paintings; then the *X*'s and monochrome paintings; and later canvases that extended thirty or fifty feet along the exhibition walls and brought to a head Guyton's staging of the late-modernist play of painting and object, material support and institutional context. Created around the time of his first midcareer survey, at New York's Whitney Museum of American Art in 2012, these large-scale works mark a conceptual tightening-up, a kind of idling of meaning production, which Guyton surely could have pursued further over the following years and decades. Instead, he let it push him into an artistic crisis, which spurred him, starting in 2015, to present to the public a wealth of new series in which he enormously expanded the scope of his approach, from the chair-sculpture paintings to the floor paintings all the way to the *New York Times* screenshots and iPhone paintings of the past few years. No fewer than ninety-four of these new pictures were distributed across the Cologne exhibition, displayed in a way that ensured they were understood not as a break or a new beginning but as an unfolding and multiplication of questions and concerns that informed his early work. Meanwhile, the various side cabinets, corridors, and staircases of the museum cleverly showcased individual series as well as books and posters as independent facets of his artistic practice. The installation was effortlessly integrated with the museum's architecture so that the conceptual throughlines of Guyton's work remained apparent. A focused, strictly chronological exhibition within the exhibition of his drawings was especially beautiful.

The Devil's Hole and the sculptural installation at the beginning of the exhibition served, however, as reminders that Guyton's "origins" are not in painting but in conceptual photography and sculpture, traditions that emerged in, and in opposition to, that medium. So how can it be explained that Guyton was so soon afterward able to occupy such a central position in the discourse of painting? Where did this explosion of image production come from? It seems, at any rate, not a coincidence that Guyton devoted himself to painting in the early 2000s, at exactly the moment when Western art history lost those parameters that had hitherto enabled it to maintain a compelling narrative. A historiographic crisis—one that shook to the core the structural premises of advanced art as they had existed since the 1960s—became manifest. Talk of the death of painting played a central role in this drama. For the neo-avant-garde, a rhetoric of "overcoming painting" could not disguise the fact that these practitioners remained reliant on painting as an underground

Below: **Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2016,** ink-jet print on linen, 84 × 69". Right: **View of "Wade Guyton: *Zwei Dekaden* MCMXCIX–MMXIX," 2019–20.** Photo: Simon Vogel.

Hochdörf, Achim. "Wade Guyton: Museum Ludwig, Cologne." *Artforum* 58, no. 10, July/August 2020, pp. 140–42.

reservoir of power. Indeed, painting came to represent an entire aesthetic and institutional framework—yet this mythologization lost more and more of its credibility in the early 2000s. Digitization served to accelerate this process. The digital's anachronistic leveling released painting from its historical and philosophical ballast, and the death of painting shrunk into a discrete, art-historical episode, one localizable narrative among many. It is painting's loss of power that made it possible for Guyton to turn to the format of the picture on canvas. Appropriated emblems of the death of painting—stripes, *X*'s, the monochrome—are the starting point in his work for an operative system of image production that is designed to be situationally contingent and active across media. Crucially, Guyton does not *think* in painting but defines painting as a site where various discourses can converge: Painting becomes a "devil's hole," a vacuum, a phantasmagoric space that can be strategically filled. Along such lines, Guyton has over the past twenty years established a methodical system, one that in Cologne became for the first time recognizable in its full complexity, where the reciprocal saturation of its constitutive elements is revealed.

FIRST, GUYTON SYSTEMATICALLY PLUMBS the visual and discursive codes of art history. Countless artists and entire genealogies come into play and are overwritten, critically parsed, and confronted. At first glance, the Cologne exhibition evoked a kind of three-dimensional Google search. We could click on each and every picture and link to deeper levels of meaning: Constructivism, Minimalism, Pop art; the history of artistic media and genres; art's relationship with architecture, design, and advertising. Guyton's reengagement with earlier subjects is, however, by no means about postmodern pluralism or ironic distance. On the contrary, each individual motif of a painting is in dialogue with its models and illuminates their discursive framing. Guyton's works enter into an open exchange of blows, put ideas to the test, and emphatically take sides. (This is why I have never understood why so many people find his art cold.) He achieves this antagonism primarily by limiting his repertoire of forms, which can be interpreted in various ways: An *X* can, depending on what imagery it stands in relation to, be seen as a source of resonant tension or ceaseless variation, as interference or cancellation, as an anthropomorphic sign or a signature. Guyton's images also comment on one another and summon new perspectives, depending on how they are hung. Alone, a black painting might call up the legacy of modernist abstraction and '80s appropriation, but combined with one of the *New York Times* paintings, it mobilizes an entirely new set of meanings. The horizontal traces of the printhead's movement suddenly appear endlessly agitated, as if they are failing

Below: **Two posters for Wade Guyton's exhibition "Paintings" at westlondonprojects, London, 2006.** Right: **View of "Wade Guyton: *Zwei Dekaden* MCMXCIX–MMXIX," 2019–20.** Walls, from left: *Untitled* (detail), 2010; *Untitled*, 2017. Floor: *Zeichnungen für ein grosses Bild*, 2010. Photo: Simon Vogel.

Hochdörf, Achim. "Wade Guyton: Museum Ludwig, Cologne." *Artforum* 58, no. 10, July/August 2020, pp. 140–42.

to keep up with a flood of digital information.

Beyond that, Guyton works through various technical possibilities of digital image production. His motifs are based on text and image files, scans, cell-phone snapshots, screenshots, and zoomed-in bitmap files that are mostly reworked in Photoshop. The starting point of his imagery is always what's closest at hand, the infrastructure of the studio and the artist's surroundings. The iPhone paintings, for instance, feature a photo of an Apple advertisement, reminding the viewer of the devices on which important steps of image production are carried out. The floor paintings, meanwhile, are made from a snapshot of a canvas emerging from Guyton's printer—one can make out the artist's right foot at the bottom edge. The artist is photographed the scene from above, from a standing position, just as he did *The Devil's Hole* almost twenty years previously: It is a moment of waiting, staring, judging, surprise.

A further level of Guyton's system is the organizational structure of his artistic practice. Over time—especially after he moved his studio to its current location on New York's Bowery in 2009—the logistics of his process have grown increasingly complex, entailing a range of activities including the preparation and stretching of canvases; the production of photographic documentation; the storage, transport, and installation of finished works; library management; and the publication of catalogues and the writing of correspondence. It is not just these individual activities that thus emerge as the subject of pictures, but also the social dynamics associated with them. We see studio assistants gathering in meetings, carrying the pictures, and standing in the kitchen having an after-work tequila. *Untitled*, 2016, which was prominently placed at the top of the main axis in the Cologne exhibition, is among these images. It is a classic interior scene: In the background, Zach Steinman is preparing a tequila drink; on the left, James Campbell, with his arms folded, is staring at a spot high on the wall, lost in thought; and Jeanette Mundt is caught mid-conversation, her index finger and thumb searching for just the right turn of phrase. Each of the three figures is in his or her own space, and yet they come together as a unit. One might imagine that art exists only for such moments, for a person to encounter themself in others.

Finally, Guyton self-consciously lets calculated strategies of value production suffuse all aspects of his art and its experience. The standard format of his pictures is roughly equivalent to the proportions of printed currency. At Art Basel in 2014, Guyton consigned to each of the five galleries representing him a monochrome painting based on the same digital file of solid black. What at first glance might have seemed a friendly gesture, a generous effort to give equal treatment to his many dealers and collectors, also raised key questions of value: Which gallery would sell it fastest and to whom? Which of the pictures—which differ courtesy of subtle formal nuances—would prove the most desirable? How would the black canvases be contextualized by the various gallerists? And what were the discursive preconditions for the recalcitrant negativity of the black picture becoming the emblem of a financial transaction? Guyton's approach in Basel made clear that economic concerns permeate every level of his system. But Guyton's project is emphatically not about playing aesthetic procedures and their commercialization against each other and tendentiously passing judgment on either as corrupt or idealized. Rather, it makes clear that his system situates the creative act in all possible locations, and that each of those sites comes to bear on the processes of value creation.

One crucial point about Guyton's art is that the individual levels cannot be considered in isolation from one another but are interlinked. The system is nonlinear and performative, with entrances and exits at the ready at every point. The combination in each case determines an individual piece's aesthetic, institutional, technological, social, and economic effects. When, for instance, a black picture was placed next to one of the floor paintings at the beginning of the Cologne exhibition, completely different conceptions of the image, as well as art-historical lineages, competed against one another: The floor turned perpendicular on the wall effected a phenomenological physicality that vied with the monochrome picture's aesthetics of presence. But the two exhibition posters in the same room shifted values and meanings. Created to advertise the 2006 show at westlondonprojects where Guyton first presented his X paintings—and presented in Cologne as if they, too, were artworks—these broadsides portray a muscular, hairy male torso; the black pictures, accordingly, came to evince a powerful, posing masculinity, as if they were simulating the booming bass of a gay club. Meanwhile, the *X* paintings hanging around the corner, with their rhythmically offset arms and legs, were dancing to the beat. At the end of the exhibition, four stacks of finished canvases leaned against the wall. They appeared as they might in the studio, withdrawn and part of an anonymous mode of production: a provisional arrangement in which only the edges of the image remained visible, like the stripes of a bar code.

I began this review at the outset of the coronavirus outbreak in Germany, and my writing was periodically interrupted by emergency plans, reports of catastrophe, and a flood of video conferences. Seeing the world from my

Hochdörf, Achim. "Wade Guyton: Museum Ludwig, Cologne." *Artforum* 58, no. 10, July/August 2020, pp. 140–42.

home office made me more conscious than ever of the chasm between what is close and what is far away. And in the middle of it all, Guyton sent me, without comment, a snapshot of the view from his studio window, the sky heavy with clouds. He has deployed this motif in many pictures over the past few years; at Museum Ludwig, it appeared, among other places, in a five-panel work commissioned for the museum's stairwell in 2017 that had been reinstalled for the retrospective: Across the forty-five-foot-long piece, we find multiple images of the skyline, including shots featuring One World Trade Center and Herzog & de Meuron's apartment building on Leonard Street. In the foreground, a building with dark windows rises up in the images' lower third, resembling a monumental Guyton installation. The longer I look at that image, the more my eye is drawn to the dark building at its center. It is the windowless, Brutalist Long Lines Building, opened in 1974 for a subsidiary of AT&T, a building that returned to the news in 2016 when it emerged that the structure—first called Project X—was likely being used by the NSA as a covert surveillance hub. The split screen in Guyton's work divides and doubles the dark edifice: a faceless devil's hole in which the pictures and data from Guyton's studio are recorded and surveilled.

ACHIM HOCHDÖRFER IS DIRECTOR OF MUSEUM BRANDHORST IN MUNICH. (SEE CONTRIBUTORS.)

Translated from German by Alexander Scrimgeour.

Hochdörf, Achim. "Wade Guyton: Museum Ludwig, Cologne." *Artforum* 58, no. 10, July/August 2020, pp. 140–42.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

Wallpaper*

ART | 20 DEC 2019 | BY EMILY MCDERMOTT

Wade Guyton gives painting a new edge in major Cologne museum survey

Renowned for his inkjet paintings, the American conceptual artist is the subject of a retrospective at Museum Ludwig charting two decades of his trailblazing practice

Installation view of 'Wade Guyton: Zwei Dekaden MCMXCIX-MMXIX' at Museum Ludwig, Cologne. © *Wade Guyton. Photography: Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln / Marc Weber*

From posters and books to paintings, drawings and sculptures, conceptual artist Wade Guyton is fascinated by printed and digital imagery. He continuously explores both their limitations and possibilities, be it on linen or paper or through cast bronze or manipulated metal. This preoccupation is clearly seen in Guyton's largest exhibition to date, currently on view at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne. Titled 'Wade Guyton: Zwei Dekaden MCMXCIX–MMXIX', the show presents an overview of the artist's work from the last two decades, created in close collaboration with Guyton himself.

McDermott, Emily. "Wade Guyton Gives Painting a New Edge in Major Cologne Museum Survey." *Wallpaper*, December 20, 2019.

The exhibition begins with a large-scale installation, providing the ground on which the rest of the show unfolds. Inkjet printers and black metal tables are covered by two draping blue carpets (*Untitled*, 2017), on top of which stand nine reflective chrome U-shaped sculptures (*U Sculpture [v.1–9]*, 2004–2011). The depth of these three-dimensional letters summons memories of Microsoft Word Art, in turn connecting the singular 'U' to the shortening of 'you' when chatting online or by text. 'U' along with 'X', another letter that assumes symbolic associations in connection with the internet, recur throughout Guyton's practice, most prominently in the works for which he is most well-known: images on raw or primed linen made with inkjet printers, like those covered by the carpet, that he calls 'paintings'.

Many of these paintings are presented in the exhibition, which is arranged thematically rather than chronologically. For example, in the second room, each of five untitled paintings depict the letter 'U' against a black background with flames rising from the bottom. They appear to be a series made at once, yet they were made periodically between 2005 and 2014. In the centre of the room is *Untitled Action Sculpture (Chair)*, a 2001 sculpture of a twisting steel rod, originally from in a Marcel Breuer chair. Similar sculptures appear later in the exhibition, albeit flattened to two dimensions, as they're depicted in five untitled paintings from 2015-2018.

Untitled, 2018, by Wade Guyton. *Collection of Eleanor Heyman Propp. © The artist*

McDermott, Emily. "Wade Guyton Gives Painting a New Edge in Major Cologne Museum Survey." *Wallpaper*, December 20, 2019.

© Wade Guyton. Photography: Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln / Marc Weber

© Wade Guyton. Photography: Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln / Marc Weber

McDermott, Emily. "Wade Guyton Gives Painting a New Edge in Major Cologne Museum Survey." *Wallpaper*, December 20, 2019.

Other printed paintings are less abstract, such as those showing screenshots from the *The New York Times*' website, iPhone advertisements, and the downtown Manhattan skyline. In vitrines created especially for the exhibition are a selection of Guyton's 'drawings' – images printed atop pages of books, art and design catalogues, and other found material – as well as a selection of his artist books. No matter the form the work takes, however, Guyton continues to explore and appropriate digital media and tools, as well as re-appropriate his own work when it feels right or when circumstances present the opportunity. As he opined in the exhibition catalogue, 'Sometimes the artwork decides when it wants to be an artwork.' ✱

Untitled, 2006, by Wade Guyton. *Private collection.* © *Wade Guyton. Photography: Lamay Photo*

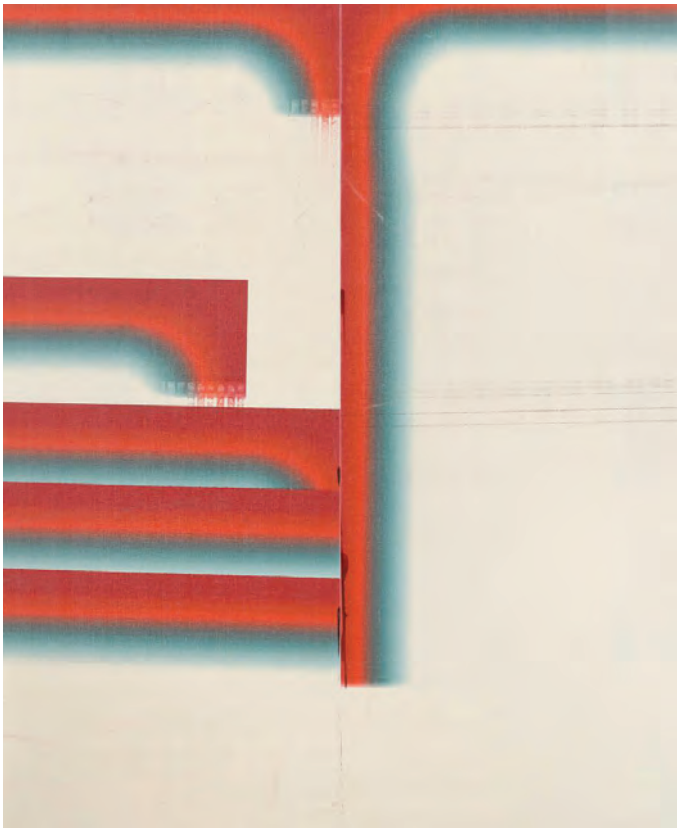
Untitled (Egerlander Bauerhof bei Steinhof 110), 2002, by Wade Guyton. © *Wade Guyton*

McDermott, Emily. "Wade Guyton Gives Painting a New Edge in Major Cologne Museum Survey." *Wallpaper*, December 20, 2019.

© Wade Guyton. Photography: Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln / Marc Weber

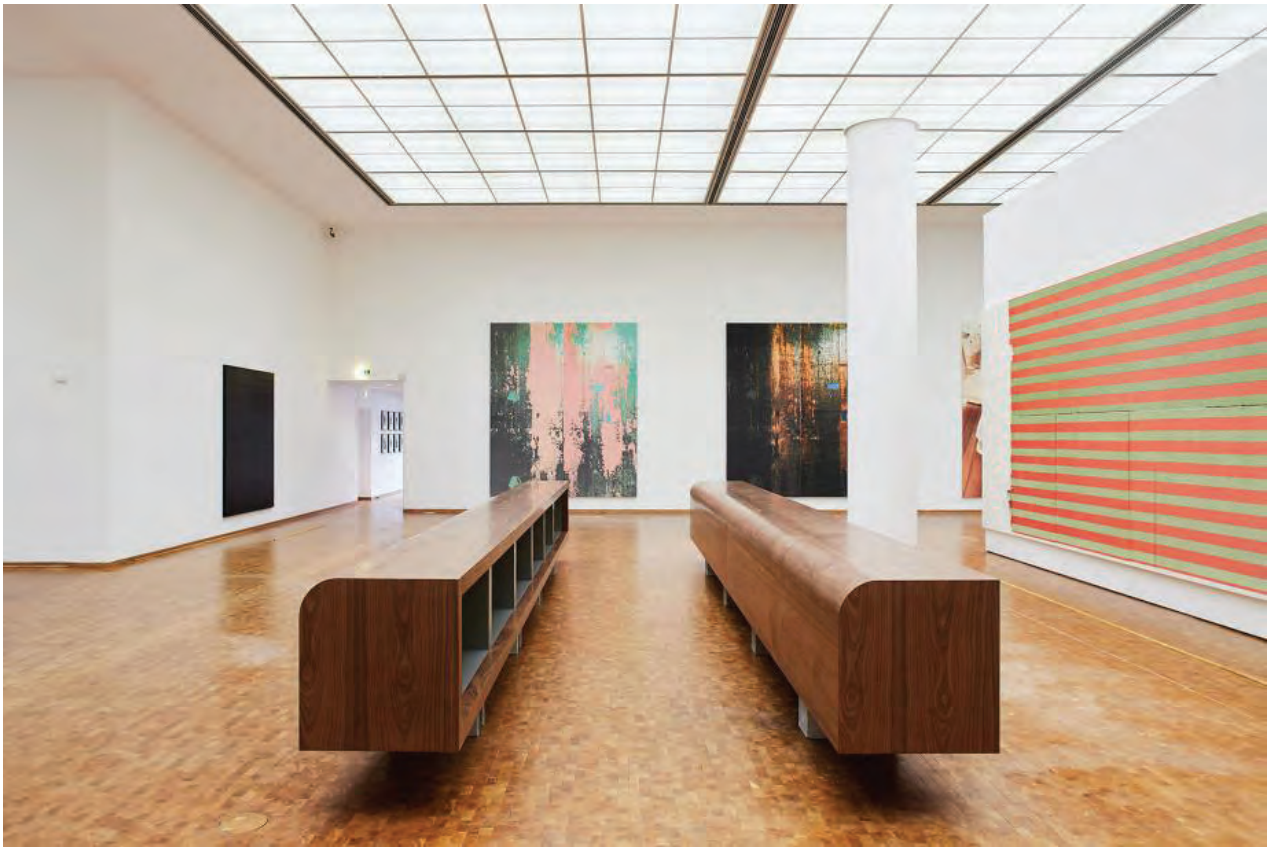
© Wade Guyton. Photography: Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln / Marc Weber

McDermott, Emily. "Wade Guyton Gives Painting a New Edge in Major Cologne Museum Survey." *Wallpaper*, December 20, 2019.



Untitled, 2019, by Wade Guyton. *Private collection. Courtesy of Segalot, New York. © Wade Guyton*

The Devil's Hole, 1999, by Wade Guyton. *© Wade Guyton*



© Wade Guyton. Photography: Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln / Marc Weber

INFORMATION

'Wade Guyton: Zwei Dekaden MCMXCIX-MMXIX', until 1 March 2020, Museum Ludwig. museum-ludwig.de

McDermott, Emily. "Wade Guyton Gives Painting a New Edge in Major Cologne Museum Survey." *Wallpaper*, December 20, 2019.

Interview

The 10 best art shows of 2017

By Staff

December 25, 2017

5. Wade Guyton "Siamo Arrivati" at Museo Madre (Naples, Italy)

The New York artist has been working with constructs of time and place for a while now, using screen grabs of the *New York Times* homepage for his fractured inkjet paintings. But last spring, Guyton spent two months in the city of Naples soaking up the local atmosphere, shooting everything from shellfish to a charnel house on his phone, and ultimately creating a lyrical, mesmerizing exhibition that served as a painterly ode to Italy. — Christopher Bollen

Bollen, Christopher. "The 10 Best Art Shows of 2017: Wade Guyton, 'Siamo Arrivati' at Museo Madres (Naples, Italy)." *Interview*, December 25, 2017.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

CULTURE

In the Era of the Impossible News Cycle, Artist Wade Guyton Is Translating Screenshots to Painting

The artist's new exhibition at the Serpentine Galleries freezes the news cycle into painting.

by **Andrew Russeth**
09.29.17

Wade Guyton makes art in the disorienting space where the digital and analog, the real and immaterial, blur—or jam up. For more than a decade he has been feeding canvas and linen through Epson inkjet printers, generating his black monochromes, letters, and flames from computer files, and letting the works carry the marks where the process malfunctioned. "We recognize them as paintings, but they are really on the very, very edge of what painting can be considered to be," says Rebecca Lewin, exhibition curator at the Serpentine Galleries, where "Das New Yorker Atelier, Abridged," the 45-year-old New York artist's first solo London show, opens September 29 (through February 4, 2018).

Ron Amstutz, courtesy of the artist

The exhibition maps Guyton's practice through an intriguingly diverse range of paintings from 2015 and 2016. One was made with a picture of One World Trade Center that he shot on his iPhone from his studio window, others with photo-saturated screenshots of the *New York Times* home page. Frustrated with his progress on a particular painting, Guyton recalls reading the news and realizing, "I just need to make something."

The resulting works, a few of which debuted in New York in the wake of the Trump victory, are snapshots of both technology and the news cycle, quick-flowing forces eerily frozen in time. "We installed that show the day of the election," Guyton says. Once the winner became known, "suddenly all the work looked completely different."

Russeth, Andrew. "In the Era of the Impossible News Cycle, Artist Wade Guyton Is Translating Screenshots to Painting." *W Magazine,* September 29, 2017.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

Frieze

SWITZERLAND

Wade Guyton

MAMCO, GENEVA

Travelling from its original incarnation in Le Consortium, Dijon, in June 2016, Wade Guyton's solo exhibition at MAMCO in Geneva is his first institutional show of new work after a three-year hiatus. As often happens when an artist takes a pause following a period of intense production and activity, Guyton turned his focus to his immediate surroundings. The result is a series that takes as its motif a snapshot from the artist's studio showing two of Guyton's earlier works: *Untitled Action Sculpture (Chair)* (2001), a sculpture made out of the contorted chrome support of a Marcel Breuer chair, and a recent 'Black' painting. This casual photo, full of narrative incident, brackets 15 years of Guyton's production and as such strikes a stark contrast with the endgame blankness of the 'Black' paintings he made for his last show at Kunsthalle Zurich in 2013.

On the first floor of MAMCO's repurposed industrial building – which Guyton has had stripped of partition walls to leave a broad, open, window-lined space – the works are installed in groups according to scale. Guyton has subjected the show's central studio image to his typical treatment: it has

Bell, Kristy. "Wade Guyton: MAMCO, Geneva." Frieze, no. 184, January/February 2017, p. 158.

image to his typical treatment: it has been printed on a canvas folded along its vertical axis then fed through a large-scale Epson ink-jet printer. The result is a photo on canvas printed in two vertical sections joined by a central seam, which align more or less accurately. Across variously sized canvases, the same image appears alternately divided, staggered, repeated, printed in different degrees of degradation or colour saturation, upright or on its side. This series is punctuated by other untitled works (all from 2015 or 2016). Some depict Guyton's studio floor, rendered in Rothko-esque burgundy reds with bright blue patches. (The glimpse of a shoe in the bottom left suggests it also as a partial self-portrait.) Others feature graphic black and white images generated by zooming close up on a vectorized image file, reducing the digital information to op-art-ish patterns (digital updates of Sigmar Polke's Ben-Day dots?). While Guyton's previous works locked onto the bald facts of a file on a screen and its physical output, these seem to describe the parameters of the artist's enquiry: zooming deep inside the digital matrix, as if scrutinizing its very material, and then pulling out to take in the surrounding production environment.

But the repetition of the central motif becomes relentless, like a question asked over and over again. While a relation to the past has always been intrinsic to Guyton's approach, riffing on or overwriting modernist tropes, here this historical perspective extends to include his own work – which he must now situate not only in relation to preceding traditions but also to his own previous production and its attendant commercial or critical successes and failures. This self-reflexivity, however, is offset by the works' aggressive repetition, suggesting that even this moment of personal contemplation cannot survive the reductive processes of reproduction.

The central activity in Guyton's work is an act of transference, relegating the task of production to the machine. This leaves him to ramp up the possibility of glitches and misreadings on the part of the printing technology, and to edit the results. Consequently, we have a couple of gorgeous, dripping works where the printer has been over-inked and the colour, unable to saturate into the prepared canvas, lies in expressionistic rivulets on its surface. Or grid-like patterns whereby the machine, incapable of reading the zoomed-in-on material, choses unpredictable shades of blue, grey or green. By feeding his industrial printers with information they cannot understand, Guyton forces them to choose. In encouraging interpretative malfunction, he seems to ask if doubt, too, can be transferred to a mechanized production process. The works manifest the problems that mechanical reproduction creates for the status of the artist, making doubt an intrinsic component of artistic labour and giving it centre stage.

KIRSTY BELL

Bell, Kristy. "Wade Guyton: MAMCO, Geneva." Frieze, no. 184, January/February 2017, p. 158.

ARTFORUM

Peter Fischli and David Weiss, *Flowers and Mushrooms* (detail), 1997–98/2006, projection of 162 digital slides.

ASPEN

"WADE GUYTON PETER FISCHLI DAVID WEISS"

ASPEN ART MUSEUM
637 East Hyman
June 22–November 26, 2017

Curated by Heidi Zuckerman

Niklas Luhmann, the influential German sociologist and a pioneer in the field of systems theory, asked us to think of normalcy as implausible. A comparable postulate is at work in the respective practices of American artist Wade Guyton and the storied Swiss duo Peter Fischli and David Weiss, the latter of whom died in 2012. No wonder, then, that the Aspen Art Museum thought to bring the artists together. Fischli and Weiss's oeuvre celebrates normality as a deception that can be productively mined. Guyton's art is an odd ode to the normality of art. Both practices employ distance in the service of annoyingly beautiful artworks. This summer, visitors to the museum's über-normal hometown in the Rockies will have the chance to ponder how they do so, and thus what is at stake.

— *Daniel Baumann*

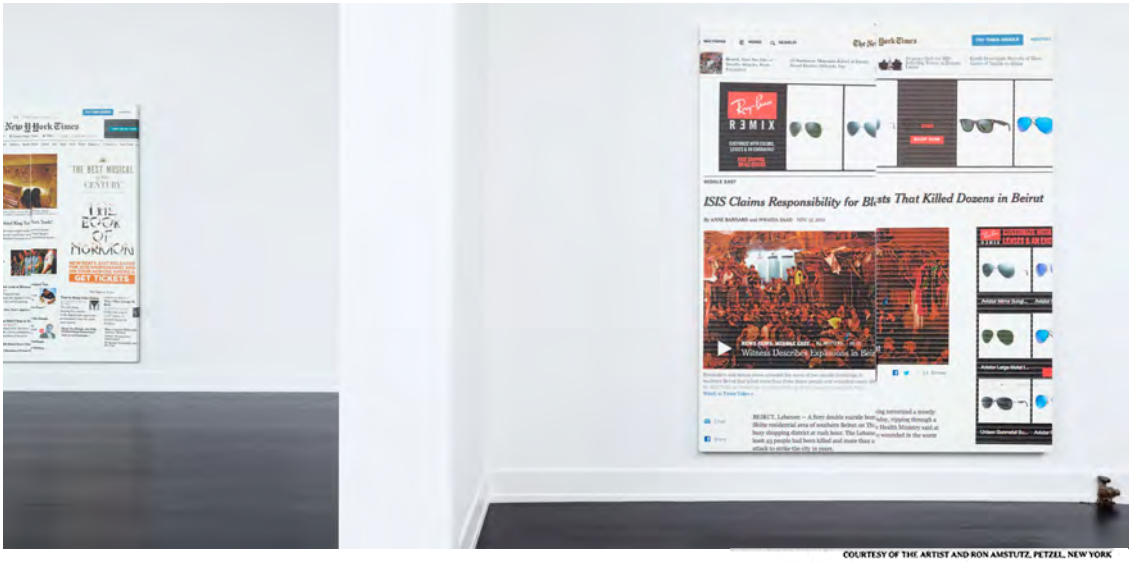
Baumann, Daniel. "Wade Guyton, Peter Fischli, David Weiss." *Artforum* 55, no. 9, May 2017, p. 157.

The New York Times
THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 2017 N C25

JASON FARAGO | ART REVIEW

Information Overload in Paint, Not Pixels

Wade Guyton's series of canvases draws its imagery from a certain news source.



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND RON AMSTUTZ, PETZEL, NEW YORK

Wade Guyton's series depicting The New York Times online speaks to the flow and acceleration of information.

Wade Guyton: The New York Times Paintings: November-December 2015
Through Jan. 14 at Petzel Gallery, 35 East 67th Street, Manhattan; 212-680-9467, petzel.com.

ALL THE NEWS that's fit to paint can be found in the exhibition by Wade Guyton, at the uptown branch of Petzel Gallery. This sly American painter, subject of a poker-faced, challenging retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2012, came to prominence for his printed canvases of black stripes, licking flames and stand-alone Xs and Us, whose repetitive computer imagery was made strange through imprecise edges and wonky ink saturations. But these new works, in contrast to his earlier minimal compositions, are packed with information, as they draw their imagery from ... well, from the website you're now reading. (Or, if you are in the habit of reading print, this newspaper's digital version.)

The series is "The New York Times Paintings: November-December 2015," though to call these works paintings is to give half the game away. Mr. Guyton does not use brushes, but rather produces designs as digital files and outputs them to a large inkjet printer. As with Andy Warhol's silk screens or Christopher Wool's early stencils, his paintings make a virtue of suppressing the artist's hand; where Warhol once said he wanted to paint "like a machine," Mr. Guyton really does it. But just as Warhol never really gave up artistic control when embracing mechanical methods, Mr. Guyton, too, finds a voice in seeming automation. Even the simplest of digital gestures — once typing the letter X, now taking a millisecond's screenshot — has some artistic motive, and the translation from JPEG to canvas introduces its own formal kinks.

His current printer, an Epson 9900, is 44 inches wide, and the paintings here are each 69 inches wide; the canvas, therefore, must be folded and go through the machine twice, which results in a disjunctive central seam. The canvas scrunches as it passes through the printer (intended for thinner papers), so that the words "York Times," in one painting, drip into the section navigation bar.

Frequent shortages of printer ink — far pricier than oil or acrylic paints or even Krug Champagne — leave illustrations gashed by horizontal white bands. And the relatively low resolution of the screenshots produces strange chromatic effects when blown up to gallery scale. The black digital headlines of The Times, set in the Georgia web font rather than the lighter Cheltenham customarily seen in print, have undertones of iridescent blue. Gray bylines become hazy, and the letters emulsify into one another.

Only one painting

Farago, Jason. "Information Overload in Paint, Not Pixels." *The New York Times,* January 6, 2017, p. C25.

reproduces an article: "ISIS Claims Responsibility for Blasts That Killed Dozens in Beirut," written by Anne Barnard and Hwaida Saad and published online on Nov. 12, 2015. The article features an eyewitness video from Reuters, which appears here both striated, thanks to low ink, and bisected at the painting's center. The same striations infect the other images in the painting, of Ray-Ban sunglasses promoted in two large banner ads. Pointing up a disjunction between brutal news and unrelated advertising is familiar, even platitudinous. But in painted form, the white grooves across both the ruined building and the polished aviator frames make the pairing especially jarring.

The other six paintings here reflect the nytimes.com home page. Three of them stutteringly reproduce the page from Dec. 1, 2015, whose lead article concerned the gunman at a Colorado branch of Planned Parenthood; on Dec. 4 and Dec. 5 of that year, the top story was the attacks in San Bernardino, Calif.; and only one painting, from Nov. 30, has a lighter lead, about King Tut's tomb. The home page fits ever so naturally into Mr. Guyton's regular color scheme of black, white and a few cool colors, though these paintings introduce photographs and other representational elements into an oeuvre that has skewed more abstract. In the top-right corner of most of the works is the artist's nytimes.com login, wguyton1 — a substitute signature, and a rare bit of Duchampian humor from a usually deadpan artist. (Further Times paintings go on view later this month in a retrospective at the Museum Brandhorst, in Munich.)

Mr. Guyton's new works owe a heavy, even slavish debt to Warhol's "Death and Disaster" series, in which that Pop artist first painted by hand the front pages of The New York Post and The New York Mirror ("129 Die in Jet!"), and later silk-screened gruesome pictures in numbing repetitions. The best of Mr. Guyton's paintings here features an explicit Warhol tribute: an image of the San Bernardino terrorists' abandoned S.U.V. runs across the central seam, and the smaller half of the picture is tilted about 10 degrees off the horizontal, just as in Warhol's many images of car crashes.

Beyond the day's stories, however, artists have often used (print) newspapers as metonymies for the flow and acceleration of information. The Cubist collages of Picasso, Braque and Gris souped up still lifes with stock prices, horse-racing results and classified ads. Later, Dieter Roth mashed copies of British tabloids like The Daily Mirror into sausage filling, as if information was a kind of cheap nourishment. The artist Pope.L took that sentiment even further with "Eating The Wall Street Journal" (1991-2000), performances in which he swallowed and regurgitated that paper, turning information into both food and poison.

Mr. Guyton's paintings are in that vein, too, though they do not depict pages of a newspaper at all — they depict the website of a media company that publishes news in many formats. That is a significant difference. As he told The Times in 2012, "I chose the computer because it was right here" — and while making screenshots of the website permits this least emotional of painters a rare dose of topicality, Mr. Guyton also treats nytimes.com as a kind of default, like the letters X or U. His "Times" paintings are as concerned with the baseline by which we encounter and absorb all information as they are with the news itself, and they're most powerful when the visceral is drowned in the mundane, as in his San Bernardino painting. Then again, if you want to see the day's news preserved in ink, The Times charges you only $2.50.

Farago, Jason. "Information Overload in Paint, Not Pixels." *The New York Times,* January 6, 2017, p. C25.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

ARTFORUM

5

WADE GUYTON (LE CONSORTIUM, DIJON, FRANCE; CURATED BY NICOLAS TREMBLEY) How do we humans stand in relation to the technological wonders of our own (or, anyway, of our cleverer brethren's) creation? Like victims, most of the time, cursing the jammed printer while the meeting goes on without us. Who could have predicted that this everyday moment of technological (read: human) failure would, with Guyton at the keyboard, provide an avenue to reinvigorate the painterly body as such, or that, a dozen years on, said body would look as hale as it does in this ravishing installation of thirty new unpainted paintings conceived especially for Le Consortium's galleries?

Co-organized with Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva, where it is on view through January 29, 2017.

Bankowsky, Jack. "Wade Guyton: Le Consortium, Dijon, France; Curated by Nicolas Trembley." *Artforum* 55, no. 4, December 2016, p. 201.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

ARTFORUM

Wade Guyton

LE CONSORTIUM/ACADÉMIE CONTI/ LE MUR

The first room of Le Consortium contained a color photograph printed on canvas and exhibited on the floor. The photo depicts both the tubular frame of a Marcel Breuer chair and a detail of a black painting visible in the background. Shot in Wade Guyton's studio in New York, it is the matrix for the twenty-three other works on display here; the same image is also the basis for *North Wall, Bowery Studio, WG3505*, 2016, exhibited at Le Mur in Paris. In each of these works, certain details are isolated, enlarged, and printed employing the artist's usual Epson UltraChrome ink-jet printer. In decontextualized details, the light reflections off the tubular-steel chair and the painting reveal prismatic colors, a crescendo of polychrome and washed-out effects. Installed in the museum's longer room were two horizontal paintings, each about ten feet wide, in which the image is reproduced on the left; the rest of the piece is a white surface stained by traces of ink from the print head, in an effect reminiscent of an abstract film.

Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2015, Epson UltraChrome K3 ink-jet print on linen, 10' 8" × 9'. Le Consortium.

The Académie Conti, occupying a cellar where jugs of wine were once stored, was the setting for seven dark-gray monochromes so large they grazed the wooden ceiling beams. It was evident that their chromatic effects were caused by the depletion of pigment in the printer, or by the way the ink settled into the canvas support, grainier and less absorbent than the paper for which the machine was made. This is Guyton's way of granting materiality to writing, which is now increasingly digital, that is, the result of a touch of the fingertip. And yet it is hard not to read these deliberate glitches as pictorial marks, similar to frescoes worn away by humidity or the milky forms in Yves Tanguy's alien landscapes. Behind these works, in other words, the artist lies in ambush, as was suggested by a rose-colored, faded self-portrait in a side room. While the work is difficult to date, its setting can be easily identified by the facade of the Académie Conti in the background, enveloped in a misty gothic atmosphere.

The artist's gesture was also present in the paintings exhibited at the Consortium, in an exhibition curated by Nicolas Trembley, which travels to the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain in Geneva this month. Apparently diptychs, the paintings reflect the limits created by the size of the printer: The artist folded the canvas and put it through the printing process twice. As a result, there is a gap between the two images, a sense of being out of sync—like looking at two frames of a film that has been lost.

Venturi, Riccardo. "Wade Guyton: Le Consortium/Académie Conti/Le Mur." *Artforum,* 55, no. 2, October 2016, p. 284.

Speaking at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York in 1987, Jean Baudrillard confessed that he found contemporary art to be iconoclastic: "In most of the images I have seen here in New York, there is nothing to see. They are literally images that leave no trace." He then went on to specify, "You cannot add the same to the same and the same, and so on to infinity: That would be poor simulation. You must rip the same from the same." Guyton, who moved to New York roughly a decade or so later, crossed out many images with *X*'s, the most elementary gesture for exorcizing their power. However, these new works, in which the two halves do not come together, show that it would be too reductive to describe his work as iconoclastic. The attempt to reproduce the same gesture twice fails. Something goes awry in the communication between machines, one that writes and one that prints, and in the circulation of information between the surface of the screen and that of the canvas, between the digital file and the printed image, and between the keyboard commands and the printer roller. As the Cesca chair and the black painting photographed in his studio demonstrate—two earlier works that are now protagonists of a new series—what is taking place is not identical reproduction or repetition. Guyton's work is a far cry from what Baudrillard, in his typically apocalyptic, sarcastic tone, called the "Xerox degree of culture."

—Riccardo Venturi

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

Venturi, Riccardo. "Wade Guyton: Le Consortium/Académie Conti/Le Mur." *Artforum,* 55, no. 2, October 2016, p. 284.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

SPACE

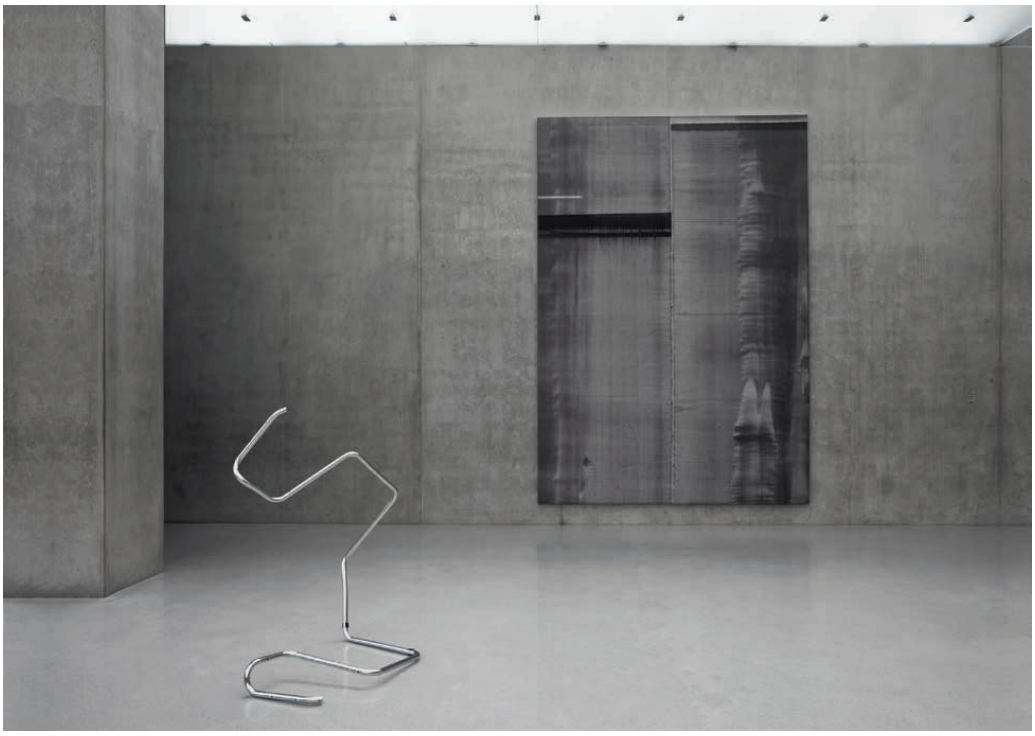
웨이드 가이튼: 디지털 유령과 회화의 강림

Wade Guyton: The Digital Ghosts and The Epiphany of Painting

웨이드 가이튼 × **김승덕**(공동 디렉터, 르 콩소르시움, 컨템포러리 아트센터)
Wade Guyton × Seungduk Kim (co-director, Le Consortium, the Contemporary Art Center)

Wade Guyton, Exhibition view at Le Consortium, 2016
each work: *Untitled*, Epson UltraChrome K3 inkjet on linen, 325 × 274.3 cm, 2016

Kim, Seungduk, and Wade Guyton. "Wade Guyton: The Digital Ghosts and The Epiphany of Painting." *Space*, no. 586, September 2016, pp. 88–95.



© Markus Tretter

Wade Guyton, Installation views, 'So machen wir es: Techniken und Asthetik der Aneignung. Von Ei Arakawa bis Andy Warhol', Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria, 2011

수세기를 지나오는 동안, 다양한 형태의 분신으로 거쳐온 것이 회화의 숙명이다. 근대가 태동한 이후 때마다 회화는 죽어가고 있다든지, 사라질 것이라든지, 없어져야만 한다는 주장은 끊이지 않지만 아직 일어나지 않은 일이다. 이러한 논의는 좋거나 나쁘거나, 도의적이거나 아니거나, 부족한 이론 또는 지나친 상업화와 같은, 양자택일의 문제는 아니다. 벽이 회화를 위해 놓여 있다는 것은 여전한 사실이다. 그것이 최악이든 최선이든 그래왔다. 이젤 위에서 그려진 그림은 생생하지만, 작가들은 다른 방법론을 새로이 적용하거나 그것에 익숙해질 수 있는 상황 속에서 디지털 툴이 작업에 활용되고 있다.

웨이드 가이튼(Wade Guyton)은 1972년 미국 인디애나 주 햄몬드(Hammond)에서 태어나, 1995년 테네시대학교(University of Tennessee) 녹스빌(Knoxville) 캠퍼스에서 학사학위를 받았다. 1996년 뉴욕으로 이주하여 헌터대학(Hunter College)에 입학하였으나 과정을 마치지는 않았다. 2000년대 초반부터 캔버스 위에 우연적이고 기술적 정교함을 동시에 다루는 디지털 프린팅 작업을 해왔다. 연작 기반의 회화는 형식적인 어휘 대신 알파벳 X와 불꽃, 두터운 검정빛 표면, 그리고 요즘에 와서는 사실적이고 뒤틀어진 이미지로 채워졌다.

그는 경매의 레코드를 깨고 경매가에 얘깃거리가 되면서, 그 세대에서 선두주자로 자리매김하였지만, 작품 제작에 있어 사적이거나 공적인 영역에서 (파라노이아 증상 없이) 평정심을 유지하였다.

인쇄하기/그리기

두 작업 모두 신중한 준비 과정이 필요하다. 오프셋 인쇄에서, 잉크 농도의 균형을 맞추고 확정할 때까지 여러 장의 종이를 돌리는 과정은 피할 수 없다. 그러는 가운데 버려지는 종이의 인쇄된 부분들이 어떤 이유에서 미확정의 구성처럼 하나의 유형으로 자리 잡는 순간이 만들어진다. 인쇄가 진행되면서 생겨나는 층위들과 이미지 합성, 퇴색, 잉크의 얼룩이나 튄 자국은 잠재력 있는 회화를 구성하는 전략적 요소다.

붓 없이 그리기

붓 없이 그리는 것이 전후 아방가르드 실천 이후의 반복은 아니다. 대도시의 벽에 겹겹이 쌓여 붙어 있는 포스터 출력물을 가져다가 찢어 작품을 만들었던 '포스터 작가' 레이몬드 하인즈(Raymond Hains), 자끄 빌레글리(Jacques Villeglé), 미모 로텔라(Mimmo Rotella)는 새로운 시대의 영웅들이었다. 그 작업들은 도시의 현실에서 발견된 기억과 버려진 정보들을 다루는 거칠고 겹겹이 쌓여 감춰진 것이지만 여전히 수작업이다. 오늘날 디지털 기술은 더욱더 많은 것을 가능하게 한다.

회화적 추상 이후에, 인쇄물을 활용한 전략은 2000년대에 이르러 새로운 발견과 디지털 프린팅 기계에 대한 새로운 태도를 주도했다. 오해의 소지가 있는 속임수를 끌어내고, 프로그래밍된 실수를 실행했고, 잘못됐다고 인식된 밀폐된 존재들에 대한 '음모'를 꾸몄다. 구성주의적 전략은 다소 어색할 수 있는 PC 소프트웨어가 실험적으로 쓰이면서 회화라는 거대한 장르를 위해 쓰여졌다. 실크 스크린 시대 – 워홀(Warhol)과 크리스토퍼 울(Christopher Wool)의 시대 – 를 한 단계 넘어선 새로운 장난감이자, 매력적이고도 위험한 (그 누가 이 기계가 사용하는 색소의 영구성을 예측할 수 있겠는가) 가정용 도구 상자인 잉크젯 프린팅 기기를 웨이드 가이튼은 완벽히 숙달했다.

기계의 한정된 너비(150cm)때문에 캔버스의 정중앙을 접어 두 번 출력하면 이미지들 사이에 차이가 생겨나고 한 면은 다른 면으로부터 미끄러져 내려오면서 중첩되거나 왜곡된다. 18세기 후반 기술의 여명은 수공예에서 산업으로의 길을 열었다. 기계는 진일보했고, 속도의 문제만 남았다. 기계는 위험한 괴물을 생산해내는 바이러스에 감염될 수도 있지만, 가이튼은 불확실성과 필연성, 구성과 거침없음 사이의 긴장감 안에서 거장으로 자리 잡았다. 프랑스 디종에 위치한 르 콩소르시움에서 신작들을 공개한 웨이드 가이튼을 만나 보았다.

Kim, Seungduk, and Wade Guyton. "Wade Guyton: The Digital Ghosts and The Epiphany of Painting." *Space*, no. 586, September 2016, pp. 88–95.

김승덕(김) : 속도를 늦추고, 예전 작업을 뒤로하고, 더욱 신중하고 드물게 – 상업적인 것뿐 아니라, 공공 기관의 벽까지 – 작품 활동을 하는 것이 과중한 심리적 압박과 작업 속도를 다루는 유일한 방법인가?

웨이드 가이튼(가이튼) : 심리적 압박과 속도의 문제가 반드시 부정적인 것만은 아니다. 오히려 어떻게 하면 이러한 힘이 작품을 만들고 예술가를 만들어내는가를 생각하게 한다고 보는 것이 아마도 더욱 적절할 것이다. 개인적으로 나는 작업을 하는 데 있어서 마찰이 없는 환경을 추구하지는 않는다. 그러나 혼자 조용히 일하고 싶은 때와 공공에 공개되어도 편하게 느끼는 시점을 스스로 결정한다.

김: 이번 아트 바젤에서 작가의 딜러가 마련한 부스에 신작 3점(혹은 4점)이 나오면서 자연스럽게 이번 전시가 사전 공개되었다. 덕분에 많은 사람이 디종에 즉각적인 관심을 보였다. 전시는 본관 2개 층에서 진행된다. 주로 마르셀 브로이어(Marcel Breuer)가 디자인한 캔틸레버 의자 B32(Cantilever chair B32, 1928)의 금속 튜브 부분에 집중한 이미지를 캔버스에 잉크젯으로 출력한 방대한 연작을 중심으로 한다. 신작에 대해 설명해줄 수 있나?

가이튼: 나는 스튜디오에 머물며 은밀히 작업해왔다. 최근 나의 몇몇 전시에서는 공간 자체가 작업에 형태를 부여하도록 강조했다. 2013년에는 작품을 쿤스트할레 취리히(Kunsthalle Zurich) 벽 길이에 정확하게 맞춰 조정해야만 했는데 몇 개의 패널은 15m에 달했다. 2014년 파리에 있는 갤러리 샹탈 크루젤(Galerie Chantal Crousel) 전시에서는 갤러리의 공간적 기억으로부터 완전히 벗어났었다. 스튜디오 내에서 압박감을 느끼진 않는다. 있다 하더라도 그것은 아마 내 안에서 나오거나, 전작에서 나오거나, 스튜디오 자체의 조건에서 나온다.

지금 언급한 작업은 2002년 제작한 구부러진 브로이어의 세스카(Ceska) 의자 조각의 사진으로 만들었다. 내 스튜디오에서 조각은 2X4s[▾1] 목재로 받친, 벽에 기대선 검은 그림 앞에 서 있었다. 휴대전화로 내 과거의 작품을 찍어 사진으로 복제했고, 문득 이 이미지가 다시 회화로 표현될 수 있을지 궁금했다. 이 이미지는 여러 가지로 내게 궁금증을 불러일으켰다. 그것은 나의 작업 속으로 다른 종류의 공간을 집어넣은 것이다. 어떤 면에서는 그것을 '사진'으로 만들기 위해 일부러 프린터를 사용했다. 이 새로운 이미지는 나의 오래된 작업 두 점을 돌이켜보게 했고, 또 그것을 변형시켰다. 형태에 의미를 함축한 조각은 이미지로서 더욱 구체화되었다. 그것은 규모를 바꿔 실물보다 더 크게 만들어졌다. 그리고 검은 그림의 재생산은 그 그림 자체의 물성에 접근하였다. 이 새롭고도 '사진적인' 그림은 또한 소위 '추상화된' 검은 그림에 다른 성격을 부여하였다.

나는 이 이미지가 다양하게 반복됨으로써 전시의 골조가 되도록 했다. 어떤 경우에 그림들은 전체 이미지를 재구성하려는 시도를 한다. 다른 경우에는 파일을 반복해, 중첩되어 나타난다. 또 다른 경우, 다른 공간의 그림들로부터 추출한 비트맵 패턴 파일로 이 그림의 절반을 채운다. 아래층에는 리넨 천을 자르지 않고 이미지를 회전시키거나 늘려 긴 공간을 채운다.

그림에서 볼 수 있는 것 중에는 스튜디오의 바닥도 있다. 여기에는 이 전시에서 보이는 두 작품의 서로 다른 지향점이 드러난다. 나의 모든 그림은 어떤 면에서 캔버스 앞면이 바닥을 마주 보고 있다. 이들은 프린터에서 나와 바닥에 쌓이는데, 이 과정이 그림의 표면에 자국으로 남은 것이다. 나는 프린터 옆에 서서 다른 그림을 만드는 동안 바닥 사진을 찍었다. 사진 속에서 파란 테이프와 내 신발의 일부를 볼 수 있을 것이다. 이는 내가 뭔가를 만드는 동안 종종 발생하는 일이다. 이러한 바닥 그림도 이번에 선보인다.

김: 최근 20년간 해온 당신의 작업 방식을 어떻게 말할 수 있을까? 후기 인쇄물 회화인가, 디지털과 컴퓨터가 이뤄낸 하이퍼리얼리즘에 대한 기술의 비틀기일까?

가이튼: 이 질문은 나보다 더 큰 그림을 볼 수 있는 사람에게 넘겨야 할 것 같다. 나로서는 작품 고유의 구조를 만들기 위해 최종적으로 더하는 수많은 세부 사항들 또는 전환점을 제외한 채 일반화시키기 어렵다.

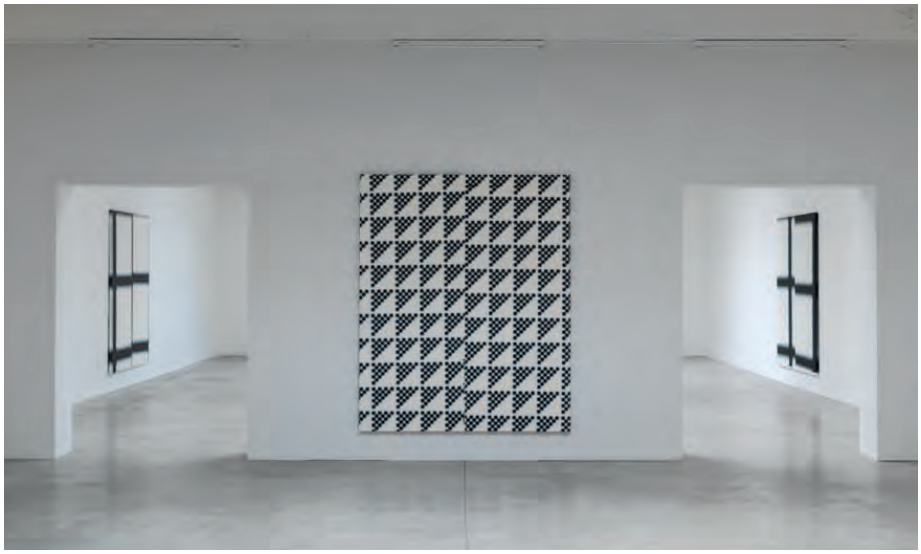
최근 작업을 보면, 내가 작품을 읽어낼 수 있는 구조를 만들어내기 위해 오랜 시간을 들인다는 것이 분명하다. 이것은 부분적으로는 간단한 기술과 소프트웨어를 사용하고, 그것을 물리적 재료로 생각했기 때문이다. 디지털 혹은 기술의 유토피아적인 가능성에 몰두하기보다는 일상적으로 쓰는 도구로서 그것들을 이용했다. 그것이 프린터의 크기든 스튜디오 화물 엘리베이터의 규격이든, 작업하는 데 있어서 언제나 제약이 있었다. 나는 이런 제약들을 작업의 구조로 만들었고, 매개변수에 기반해 결정을 내렸다.

한편으로 나는 언제나 예술 작품을 어떻게 읽고, 경험하는지 그 역할에 관심이 있었다. 작품의 이런 면은 기술이나 물리적 제약으로 제한받지 않는다. 예술 작품의 제작 과정 밖에서는 어떠한 일이 일어나는가? 이미지가 그 자체를 넘어서 어떤 반향을 일으키는가? 그것이 배포되는 방법, 그리고 그것이 등장하는 맥락과 어떻게 반응하는가? 이러한 맥락의 변화에 어떠한 대안이 있는가? 예술 작품은 어떤 면에서는 고정되어 있다. 그러나 그들은 또한 세상을 돌아다니면서 시각적으로 물리적으로 매력적인 의미를 만들어낸다. 작품은 고정된 사물이 아니며 나는 최근 작업을 통해 이러한 것들을 알게 되면서 그 깨달음을 작품에 투영시켰다.

김: 디지털은 고해상도 이미지 복제의 질을 높인 동시에 저해상도 이미지가 우리의 일상으로 침투하게 만들었다(구글 이미지, 스크린 캡처, 저해상도 비디오 등). 당신의 작품 구성과 생산 과정은 디지털 시대의 양면 모두를 다루고 있는 것인가?

가이튼: 나는 둘 중 어느 것도 우위에 두지 않는다. 이미지 품질의 정도를 크게 신경 쓰는 편은 아니다. 오히려 이러한 이미지들이 전 세계로 움직이고 복제가 된다는 것이 중요하다. 작업할 때 300dpi 법칙이나 이미지 복제를 위한 전문적 기준을 따르지 않는다. 이미지는 고해상도화되기도 하고 저해상도화되기도 한다. 나는 작업을 주로 휴대전화나 노트북 화면을 통해서 보며 나중에 출력할 파일을 문자메시지에 첨부해 내게 보내기도 하는 등 다양한 범위의 해상도, 농도, 밀도를 활용한다. 이런 과정의 일부를 디종의 작업에서도 확인할 수 있다. 이러한 비트맵 회화 중 몇몇은 예전에 다양한 각도로 확대해 그렸던 각기 다른 작업을 제작했던 것처럼, 파일들을 확대한 이미지다.

프린터는 더 나은 이미지를 생성하기 위해 계속 발전되고 개선되고 있다. 정기적으로 모델들은 대체되며, 잉크의 기술도 변한다. 엡손의 최근 신조는 "당신의 시각을 넘어선다"이다. 이는 인쇄산업에서 이미지 품질을 어떻게 인식하는지를 보여주는 흥미로운 사실이다.



© Le Consortium, André Morin

Wade Guyton, Exhibition view at Le Consortium, 2016
Untitled, Epson UltraChrome HDR on linen, 213.4 × 175.3 cm, 2015

Kim, Seungduk, and Wade Guyton. "Wade Guyton: The Digital Ghosts and The Epiphany of Painting." *Space*, no. 586, September 2016, pp. 88–95.

김: 회화의 마법은 그림이 마무리되기 전까지 스튜디오 안에서 그려지는 동안 작업의 개방성, 우연적인 사고, 왜곡, 오염을 기꺼이 받아들이는 과정, 그리고 긍정적인 그림의 강림에 있다. 먼지가 날리면서 뭔가 잘못 출력되는 순간, 이 작업은 디지털 파일을 넘어선 회화 작업이 되는 것이다. '페인팅'이라는 용어가 여전히 당신과 상관이 있는 것인가?

가이튼: 나는 회화에 기반을 둔 작가가 아니고, 회화의 물질적 성격에는 그리 관심이 없다. 지적 차원에서 다른 이들이 재료의 무게나 점도에 열광하는 것을 충분히 이해한다. 나는 회화라고 부르는 유형, 유전적 정보가 매우 풍부하고 밀도가 높은 역사적 형식에 관심이 있는 것이다. 나는 변이를 유발하는 요소를 변형시키고 흡수하기 위해 스스로 윤곽을 그려내며 모습을 바꿔나가는 것을 선호한다. 회화 자체는 관념적이지만 유연하고 회복력이 있으며, 반대와 재정의를 허용할 만큼 충분히 실리적이다.

내 작업이 어떻게 그림이면서도 그림이 아닌지, 회화의 이념적 논란에 어떤 태도로 대처할 것인지, 어떻게 하면 순수한 정체성에 대항하면서도 담론으로 들어갈 것인지, 또 디지털, 극사실적, 조각적, 시간 기반과 같은 다른 정체성 등을 어떤 방식으로 강조해나갈 것인지를 생각하는 것은 언제나 가치 있는 일이다.

한편으로, 그들은 출력되지만 출력물은 아니며, 사실적이지만 사진은 아니고, 그림이지만 회화는 아니다. 작품들은 불명료한 상태 속에서 안정적이지만 동시에 자기 입지에 온전히 안주할 수만은 없다. 이러한 회화는 자기 변화의 과정을 자체 기록한다. 먼지, 스튜디오에서의 과정, 그리고 이러한 모든 사건들이 작품의 일부가 된다. 그들을 어떻게 정의할지 어느 정도는 관객의 관점에 달린 것이다.

김: 시각적 요소로 캔버스 표면에 층위 만들기(그리고 겹치기 기법)는 수십 년간 탐구되어온 것이다(한 예로 프란시스 피카비아(Francis Picabia)가 있다). 당신 스스로는 구성주의적 전통에서 어디쯤 있다고 생각하나?

가이튼: 구성주의에 속하는 작품들은 대체로 그 자체의 절차적 논리에 따르기 때문에 선택할 수 있는 방법이 몇 가지로 국한된다. 파일들은 왼쪽에서 오른쪽으로 또는 위에서 아래로 출력되어야 한다. 리넨은 접어야 하고 봉제선은 언제나 중앙에 있어야 한다. 대부분 캔버스는 한쪽 면에만 프린트된다. 때때로 이것은 연속적으로 일어나며, 어떨 땐 미뤄질 수도 있다. 간혹 출력이 불완전할 때도 있다. 이는 구성주의적 선택에서 생기는 일들이지만, 그것이 전부는 아니다. 이를 온전히 따르는 것은 작업에 방해가 될 뿐이며 나는 절차만큼이나 공정에서 일어나는 모든 일이 작품을 이룬다고 생각한다.

포토샵은 이미지를 층으로 본다. 그리고 우리는 스크린으로 겹쳐진 윈도 화면들을 바라본다. 이미지는 눈앞에서 보였다 사라졌다 하며 미끄러져 간다. 이것과 온전히 같지는 않지만, 나의 그림은 이와 유사성이 있다.

김: 이미지나 대상을 선택하는 과정은 매우 신중하게 결정되고 여러 번의 실험에 걸쳐 연작에 포함되기도 한다. 이러한 요소들은 어떻게 선정하나?

가이튼: 이는 실제보다 더 전략적으로 들릴 것이다. 실험을 거듭할수록 이미지들은 그 당시에 생각했던 것보다 더 쓸모 있거나 흥미로워진다. 나는 특정 이미지에 지나치게 중요성을 부여하는 것에 신중한 편이다. 때때로 그것은 주변의 것이거나 쉽게 접할 수 있다. 때로는 키보드의 키가 될 수도 있고, 책상 위의 책에서 찾은 것이기도 하다.

김: 전시는 큰 계획 아래 마련되었다. 이번 전시의 형식적 전략을 어떻게 설명할 수 있나? 디종에서는 다른 천장고를 갖는 두 공간에서 각기 다른 높이의 작품을 내놓았다. 아래층의 미술관 느낌과 비교하면 위층은 상대적으로 사적 공간처럼 보인다. 이것이 이야기의 시작인가?

가이튼: 천장 높이의 차이는 이번 전시를 계획하는 데 주요 요소였다. 큰 작품을 아래층에 놓았고, 작은 작업을 위층에 놓았다. 나는 사적 또는 미술관 규모에서 작품이 해석되길 의도하진 않았다.

대다수 작품이 건물에 맞춰 만들어지지 않기 때문에, 나는 건물이 어떻게 작품을 보여줄 것인지 결정하기로 했다. 벽이나 공간을 활용할 수 있는 방법이 많지 않았기에, 이번 전시 직전에 열린 레미 자우그(Remy Zaugg) 전시를 위해 디자인된 것처럼 보이는 건물 상층부를 쓸 수 있어 좋았다. 많은 경우에 공간들이 어떤 이야기를 만들 수 있도록 했다. 그러나 가끔 전시를 위한 구조가 공간 자체로부터 드러나기도 한다는 것을 발견했다. 그래서 이번 경우에는 공간을 유심히 보았다. 들어오자마자 보게 되는 첫 그림은 바닥에 놓여 있다. 설치 중에 깨달았는데, 작품이 기대어 있는 벽이 애초에 작품을 매달기엔 너무 낮았다. 그래서 바닥에 놓았다. 이것은 미리 계획된 것은 아니었으나, 관객이 서 있는 자리로부터 작품과 전시공간 안팎에서 관심을 이끄는 효과가 있었다.

김: 유명세, 가격, 미술시장에 대한 질문을 빼놓을 수가 없다. 당신은 (예를 들어 아시아와 같은) 중요한 정부 기관들이 미술시장을 그들의 경제에서 중요한 요소로 성장시키려 하는 시도와 주식 상장된 여타의 제품들처럼 미술에 쏟는 투기를 북돋는 것을 도외시하지 않는다. 우리는 이제 (예술가가 새로운 거물이나 아이콘으로 등장하는) TV 교양 프로그램 또는 예술이 일정 부분을 차지하고 돈세탁에 기여하는 세계 금융시장에 살고 있다. 브루클린은 새로운 월스트리트인가?

가이튼: 르네상스 이후에 예술은 돈과 권력과의 관계를 잘 다루어야만 했다. 새로운 것은 아니나 오늘날 대부분이 예술의 금융화와 예술가를 유명인사처럼 홍보하는 게 다소 당황스러운 것일 뿐이다. 예술의 금융화와 함께 후기자본주의의 부정적인 면이 집중되는 것을 볼 수밖에 없다. 때로 예술은 이러한 문제들을 효과적으로 영향력 있게 드러낼 수 있다. 다른 한편으로는 그렇게 하진 못하더라도, 산만한 것들을 무시해버리거나, 불에 연료를 끼얹는 것을 막고, 단지 예술에 집중하는 것에 효과가 있을 수 있다. 또한 오늘날 우리를 당황하게 하는 것들이 미래의 미술사가들을 흥분시킬 수도 있다.

Wade Guyton, Exhibition view at Academie Conti, Vosne-Romanée, 2016
Untitled, Epson UltraChrome K3 inkjet on linen, 274.3 × 134.6 cm, 2016

Kim, Seungduk, and Wade Guyton. "Wade Guyton: The Digital Ghosts and The Epiphany of Painting." *Space*, no. 586, September 2016, pp. 88–95.

Wade Guyton, *North Wall, Bowery Studio, WG3505*, Printed adhesive vinyl applied to a built wall with dimensions of 285 × 390 × 22 cm, Edition of 5 plus 2 AP, 2016

Multiple avatars are a fate faced by painting throughout the centuries, and even if, since the modern era, it has been claimed in every decade that painting is dying or is predicted to die, it still hasn't happened. It doesn't mean that it is good or bad, moral or immoral, due to this or that — a lack of theoretical discussion or excessive commercial trading — it is a fact that walls still desire paintings. And this is the way it has long been, for better or for worse. Easel painting is vivid, but other modes may be made available to artists and employed by painters: digital tools are now at work.

Wade Guyton was born in 1972 in Hammond, Indiana. He received a BA from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 1995. He moved to New York in 1996 to attend Hunter College, and since the early 2000s he has been working with digital printers to create works on canvas, dealing with chance and technological precision. Series-based paintings reduce a formal vocabulary to X, flames, deep black surfaces and more recently photographic distorted imagery. He became, through record-breaking auction stories, the leader of a generation, maintaining control (without paranoia) over production, privately and publicly.

To Print or To Paint

Both require patience in preparation and set-ups. In an offset lithographic business, running sheets of paper to balance the ink levels until they can be agreed and fixed is a normal and inevitable part of the process, up to the point that wasted paper or undecided compositions become additional printed elements to be saved for reasons that may at the time be unclear. Layers of printing runs, super impositions, faded away colours, stains, or splashes of ink are all the strategic components for potential paintings.

Painting Without Brushes

Although not exactly a common process in post-war avant-garde practices: the 'affichistes' Raymond Hains, Villeglé, and Rotella grab and tear down layers of posters tacked to the walls of big cities, and can be considered the heroes of the new era. They are still manual, wild, and undercover, dealing with found memories of cities reality and decayed ephemera. Digital technologies allow much more within this style.

Post painterly and post printed matter strategies lead in the 2000's to new inventions and new attitudes towards digital printing machines. Pioneering strategies of illusion, running programmed mistakes, and plotting against decaying figures, the compositional strategies work with awkward PC software to be twisted to the service of the grand genre of painting. A step beyond the timing of the silk screen — the warholia and the christopherwoolia — ink jet printing machines are the new toys, (who can predict the permanency of colour pigments used in these machines), sexy and risky domestic toolboxes which Wade Guyton has mastered to perfection.

Due to the limited width of the machine (around 150 cm) the printed canvas is folded in its middle and printed twice, causing a discrepancy in the image(s) and with one part sliding down from the other in a duplicated/distorted play. Machinery is clearly the step forward — the mechanical loom at the end of the 18th century marked the passage from craft to the industrial — all as a question of speed. However, machines can be given viruses to produce hazardous monsters, and Guyton has become a master in it, in a perpetual tension between the random and the necessary, between composition and *laisser-aller*.

Kim, Seungduk, and Wade Guyton. "Wade Guyton: The Digital Ghosts and The Epiphany of Painting." *Space*, no. 586, September 2016, pp. 88–95.

Seungduk Kim (Kim): Slowing down, with certain things remaining behind us, being more careful and prizing the rare — not only in commerce but on the walls of public institutions — is this the only way to deal with too much pressure and the rapid rate of progress?
Wade Guyton (Guyton): Pressure and speed are not necessarily negative things. It's maybe more pertinent to think about how these forces shape artworks or artists. Personally, I don't long for a frictionless environment in which to work. However, I do make decisions about when I want to work privately and when I feel comfortable about being more public.

Kim: You decided, along with the guest curator Nicolas Trembley, to make a new public display of your new works at Le Consortium, in Dijon, France. Why there?
Guyton: I have always respected the history of exhibitions at Le Consortium, so when the invitation came I was happy to consider it. And of course I was also promised great food and wine in Burgundy, so the decision was clear.

Kim: The exhibition has been teased, by some, by allowing 3 (or 4) new works to appear in the booths of your dealers at Art Basel. That brought immediate attention to the exhibition in Dijon. Across two floors of the main building a large series of ink-jet printed canvases have been spread, whose images have been mainly taken from a the tube part of the famous Marcel Breuer *Cantilever* chair B32 (1928). What are your thoughts on the genesis of these new paintings?
Guyton: Recently, I've worked more privately in the studio. In my last few exhibitions the spaces themselves placed pressure on the artworks, giving them form. In 2013, paintings became the exact lengths of the walls of the Kunsthalle Zurich, with some panels reaching fifteen metres. In 2014, the show at Galerie Chantal Crousel in Paris came out of the spatial memory of the gallery. In the studio, there is a less specific pressure. It may come from myself, from previous works or from the conditions of the studio itself.
The paintings you mention were made using a photograph of a sculpture from 2002 that is a bent Breuer *Ceska* chair. In the studio, the sculpture was standing in front of a black painting propped up on 2x4s[▾1] and leaning against the wall. I was taking pictures of my work with my phone and then wondered if this image could be used for a painting as well. The image intrigued me for a number of reasons. It introduced a different kind of space into my work. In a way, it uses the printer with its intended purpose in mind — to make a photograph. It also brought two older works of mine back into view and transformed them. The sculpture, which already had such bodily connotations, became even more figurative as an image. It changed scale and became larger than life. The reproduction of the black painting approached the materiality of the black paintings themselves. This new more 'photographic' painting also threw a different light on the black painting that was supposedly 'abstract'.
I decided that this image would structure the show in various iterations. In some cases, the paintings attempt to reconstruct the entire image. In others the file is repeated, appearing doubled. In another a bitmap pattern file of paintings from another room migrate into one half of a painting. Downstairs the linen is not cropped and the image is rotated and stretched to fill a very long room. Visible in these paintings is also the floor of the studio, which appears in a different orientation in two of the other works in the show. All of my paintings at some point lie face down on the floor. They come out of the printer and pile up on the floor, leaving its traces on the surface of the paintings. I took a photo of the floor where I was standing while making other paintings, next to the printer — in the image you can see blue tape and my shoe is also partially visible. It was often what I would be looking at while making something else. These 'floor paintings' also went into the exhibition.

Kim: To return to your last two decades of work, how would you characterize your formal strategy(ies)? Perhaps as post-printed matter paintings? Twisting technology when it comes to digital and computer-driven work into a kind of hyper-realism?
Guyton: I should leave this question to someone else who will be able to see the bigger picture. It's difficult to generalize without omitting lots of important details or distractions that in the end give the work its texture. However, looking at the current work it is clear that I have had to work a long time to be able to create a structure in which the artwork may become legible. This is in part through using simple technology and software, and through thinking about them as you would physical materials. Rather than engaging with the utopic possibilities of the digital or technological I have treated them as everyday tools. There are always limitations in working, whether it is the size of the printer or the dimensions of the studio's freight elevator; I have used those limits to structure the work and to make decisions based upon these parameters.
On the other hand I've always been interested in how an artwork functions and how it is read, how it is experienced. This aspect of the work is not limited by technology or by physical limits. What happens outside the process of making the artwork? How does an image reverberate beyond itself? How does it interact with its method of distribution and the context in which it might appear? What alterations happen to a work through these contextual shifts? Artworks are sticky in a way. They produce but also attract meaning through the way they travel in the world, either virtually or physically. They are not static objects. I think the more recent works acknowledge this more directly and absorb this knowledge into themselves.


Raymond Hains, *sans titre*, 1966

Kim: The digital brought high resolution rendering of images for a far better reproduction quality and at the same time the low resolution images are totally invading our daily life (Google images, screen grabs, low res videos) Your composition and production process has been dealing with both sides of the digital era?
Guyton: I don't privilege one over the other. The range of quality of images isn't disturbing to me. What is significant is the way these images travel and replicate. In practice, I don't really follow the 300dpi rule or professional standards for image production. Things get 'up-resed' or 'down-resed'. I look at a lot of my own work through my phone or on a laptop screen. In some cases I can text a file to myself to print later, and I use a range of resolutions or depths or densities. A part of this process is demonstrated in the works in Dijon. Some of these bitmap paintings are zoomed-in images of files I have used for other paintings in the past that at a different magnification produce different kinds of works.
The printers themselves are being developed and improved in order to produce a better image. The models are replaced regularly and the technology of the ink changes. Epson currently has the motto 'Exceed your vision'. It's interesting to see how businesses perceive 'image quality'.

Kim: The magic of painting also lies in its openness and the welcoming process of accidents, distortion, dirtying… the freedom of the studio phase until its completion, and the ultimate epiphany of the painting. Dust, matter and those moments of physical misprinting take the work as a painting far beyond the printing process of a digital file. Is the word 'painting' still relevant to you?
Guyton: I don't come from a background in painting and I don't have much interest in the materiality of paint. On

Kim, Seungduk, and Wade Guyton. "Wade Guyton: The Digital Ghosts and The Epiphany of Painting."
Space, no. 586, September 2016, pp. 88–95.

an intellectual level — yes, I have an appreciation, and I love it when other people are excited about the weight or viscosity of the stuff. On a material level, personally I just never got into it. I am interested in this thing we call Painting: the category, the densely historical format that has lots of genetic information. I like this shape-shifting thing that allows its own contours to morph and absorb its aggressors. Painting is ideological but also elastic and resilient, and pragmatic enough to allow dissent and redefinition.

For me it has always been valuable to think about how these works that I make are and are not painting; how they stand next to ideological battles of painting and get pulled into the discourse but also resist pure identification; how they still assert their other nature as digital, photographic, sculptural, time-based.

In some ways they are prints and not prints, photographs and not photographs, painting and not paintings. The works are comfortable in this place of uncertainty while at the same time never become totally complacent about their status. These paintings record their own process of becoming. The dust, the process of the studio, and all these events are part of what they are. How they are defined depends upon the point of view of the viewer.

Kim: Layering (and superimposing) visual elements over the surface of the canvas has been explored over decades (Picabia to quote one voice among many…). Do you locate yourself within a certain compositional tradition?

Guyton: Composition-wise, the works usually respond to their own procedural logic. There are few choices for me to make. The files are printed left to right, top to bottom. The linen is folded and the seam always lands in the centre. Usually a canvas is printed on one side, then the other. Sometimes this happens sequentially, other times there can be a delay. There are times when the printing is incomplete. This appears to be a compositional choice, but it is not. It is an interruption to the job. I think of the work as processing as much as a process.

Photoshop sees images as layers, and we look at windows overlapping on our screens. Images slide over each other in and out of view. While not exactly the same, there are similarities in my paintings.

Kim: The selection of motives (images, objects) may have been decided and tested very carefully (X, flames, U, found images) as they will be kept for number of works stored into series. How do you scout these elements?

Guyton: This sounds more strategic than it is. Over time certain images were useful or intriguing depending on what I was thinking about at the time. I would be cautious about giving any image too much importance. Often they were just around and within reach. In some cases, they were a key on the keyboard, in other cases found in a book on my desk.

Kim: Exhibitions are master-planned. How would you describe the formal strategy of the exhibition? In Dijon the two spaces, with different ceiling heights, lead you to scale the paintings across two heights and this makes the upper floor more domestic and the ground level more of a museum. Is this the beginning of a narrative?

Gutyon: The difference in the ceiling heights was an obvious factor in planning the show. Larger works could fit downstairs and smaller ones upstairs. I didn't consider whether they read as either domestic or museum-scale. While the majority of the works were not made for the building, I did make decisions about how the building was to be used to present the works. Very little alteration was made to the walls or spaces, and I liked using the architecture upstairs, which I believe had been designed for a Remy Zaugg exhibition that occurred before mine. In many cases, I let these rooms dictate what the narrative should be. Often I find that structures for an exhibition are revealed in the space itself. So in this case I listened to the space. The first painting you encounter is sitting on the floor. I realized, during the installation, that the wall it leans against was too short to hold the painting in the way I would have wanted if it was hanging, so I placed it directly in the floor. This wasn't planned in advance but it had the effect of drawing your attention to the space inside and outside the painting and the ground on which you were standing.

Kim: We cannot avoid the questions that govern fame, price, secondary markets and so on. You do not ignore the fact that there are serious governmental agencies (in Asia for instance) trying to promote the art market as an important component of their economy, encouraging speculation on it as any other stockmarketed goods. Are we now in a sophisticated TV series (with artists as the new tycoons, iconic figures) or in a global financialized world where art plays its part and contributes to the laundering of money laundry? Is Brooklyn the new Wall Street?

Guyton: Art since the Renaissance has had to deal with its relation to money and power. This isn't new at all. Much of what is happening today with the financialization of art and the publicity of artists as celebrities is rather embarrassing. It's not hard to see the convergence of the worst aspects of late capitalism with the financialization of art. Sometimes art can address these issues effectively and powerfully. Other times it can't and maybe it's useful to just ignore the distractions, resist fueling the fire and to just focus on the art. However, it's possible that what embarrasses us today will excite art historians in the future.

Wade Guyton, Installation views, 'OS', Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, 2012

Kim, Seungduk, and Wade Guyton. "Wade Guyton: The Digital Ghosts and The Epiphany of Painting." *Space*, no. 586, September 2016, pp. 88–95.

Wade Guyton, Installation views, 'OS', Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, 2012

1. 2×4인치 스탠다드로 제작된 나무토막으로 페인팅이 바닥에 직접 닿지 않도록 임시 밑받침대로 쓴다.
1. A '2×4' is a common US standard size piece of wood. It refers to 2 inches by 4 inches. Wade Guyton uses them to hold up the paintings so they don't sit directly on the floor.

웨이드 가이튼은 인디애나 주 햄몬드 출신으로 지금은 뉴욕에서 살며 작업한다. 디종의 르 콩소르시움을 포함해 뉴욕 휘트니미술관, 쿤스트할레 취리히, 퀼른 루드비히미술관, 프랑크푸르트 포르트쿠스, 비엔나의 시세션에서 개인전을 열었다. 이외 주요 그룹전으로는 카네기 인터내셔널(2013), 베니스비엔날레(2013), 리옹비엔날레(2007), 휘트니 비엔날레(2004)가 있다. 그의 작품은 뉴욕 휘트니미술관, 파리 조지 퐁피두 센터, 뮌헨 피나코텍 현대미술관, 바젤 현대미술관, 스톡홀름 현대미술관, 샌프란시스코 현대미술관, 뉴욕 현대미술관에 소장되어 있다.

김승덕은 유럽에서 거주하며 삼성문화재단(현 삼성미술관 리움) 자문 큐레이터(1993~2000)와 파리 퐁피두 센터 객원 큐레이터(1996~1998)를 지냈다. 2000년 프랑스 아트센터 르 콩소르시움에서 국제 전시기획 감독을 시작으로, 현재 공동 디렉터이다. 플라워 파워 문화수도 릴 전시(2004), 발렌시아 비엔날레(2005), 안양 공공예술 프로젝트(2007), 야요이 쿠사마 순회전(2008~2009), 린다 벵글리스 순회전(2009~2011) 등 다양한 국제 전시 프로젝트의 공동 커미셔너이자 큐레이터로 활동하고 있다. 2013년 베니스 비엔날레 한국관 커미셔너를 맡았고, 2011년부터 2013년까지 카타르 도하 도시계획의 자문위원으로 활동했다. 파리 팔레 드 도쿄의 프로그램 자문위원을 맡고 있으며, 2015년 이래 아시아 문화전당에서 공용공간의 예술감독으로(후랑크 고트로 감독과 함께 르 콩소르시움팀으로) 일하고 있다.

Wade Guyton (b. 1972, Hammond, Indiana) lives and works in New York. Solo exhibitions include Le Consortium, Dijon; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Kunsthalle Zurich; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Portikus, Frankfurt; and the Secession, Vienna. Major group exhibitions include the 2013 Carnegie International; 2013 La Biennale di Venezia, 2007 Biennale de Lyon, and the 2004 Whitney Biennial. Public collections include the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Kunstmuseum Basel; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Seungduk Kim was born in Korea, lives in Paris. Joined Le Consortium, the contemporary art center (Dijon, France) in 2000, now works as Co-Director since 2013. Associated Curator in Collection dept. at the National Museum of Modern Art,Georges Pompidou Center (1996–1998); Project Director/ Art Consultant on an overall art strategy for a new urban development in Doha, Qatar (2011–2013); Committee Member of Programmation for the Palais de Tokyo in Paris since 2011; Commissioner/Curator of the Korean Pavillion for the Venice Biennale 2013. And among many important international shows; Lynda Benglis traveling shows; Yayoi Kusama traveling shows, APAP 2007, Valencia Biennale 2005, and Flower Power, Lille 2004. Asia Culture Center, artistic director for common space area (along with Franck Gautherot as Le Consortium team) since 2015.

Kim, Seungduk, and Wade Guyton. "Wade Guyton: The Digital Ghosts and The Epiphany of Painting." *Space*, no. 586, September 2016, pp. 88–95.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

ONCURATING

Wade Guyton
in conversation with Silvia Simoncelli

Pushing the boundaries of painting practice, Wade Guyton has used ink jet printers to produce monochrome works and has included replicas of his studio floor in his shows. His works moves between chance and technological preciseness, in a search for reduction of the artistic production structures.

Silvia Simoncelli: For Abstract Possible you welcomed the invitation of Maria Lind to contribute the black painted plywood floor that, since your 2007 show, at Petzel gallery, New York, has often been included in your solo exhibitions. How did you decide to include in this show a replica of the floor you had in your studio back then? Is there a shift in the meaning of this element for you, now that it has become an independent piece defining the space for other artist's works?

Wade Guyton: When planning my first show of a series of so-called black paintings, it was important for me to consider the installation, the space, and the mode in which they were produced. I was not in fact a painter, and I didn't want to pretend otherwise. These objects were made with a computer and my printer. They are dragged across the floor and often are piled up on the floor for weeks or months before being attached to stretchers. So the floor was always an integral part of their making—the scratches on the surface of the works, the dirt the ink would soak up from the floor—all of this. So it made sense for me to bring this floor into the gallery—to give the paintings a context and to connect all of them to each other. It was also the only painted surface in the room, so you would feel the painting through your feet. For all three of the black painting shows—in New York, Paris, and Frankfurt—the floor was installed. Maria asked if that work could be shown separately from the paintings and I agreed.

In each of my three black painting shows, the floor would adjust its shape to the confines of the room. So in New York it was shaped like a large square with a smaller square attached and an appendage the shape of a long hallway. In Paris, the shape had many more sides and in Frankfurt, it was one large rectangle. So it had the effect of being a liquid that would adapt to the shape of its container. In Malmö, it was rather imperceptible—the room was smallish and one might have paid attention to the other works in the room more. In Mexico, I think the room is much more unusually shaped and rather large, so it might have a more dramatic effect. It's interesting for me to have this piece keep spreading, maybe now being more sculptural or architectural than conceptual or theatrical, because it's now unrelated to my studio works.

Maybe it becomes more and more like a painting, independent, self-referential, but it's hard to tell.

1

I have always been interested in letting my works go into foreign contexts or curated ideas that I might not immediately have an affinity to—what I mean is its good to let people use the works as tools, disrespect them a bit even and let the works go out into the world to do different jobs. Its like human socialization. Sometimes we need to be in situations or mix with people that we might not like or share beliefs with.

Simoncelli, Silvia, and Wade Guyton. "Interview with Wade Guyton." *On Curating*, no. 20, Total Abstraction, October 2013, pp. 34–37.

SS: Your earlier works included flat abstract sculptures made of black painted plywood structures, which were 3D renderings of forms you obtained by colouring black images of houses taken from architectural magazines. According to your description of the black painted floor as a liquid adapting to other pre-existing shapes and the reference you made to sculpture, do you see a relation between your floor piece and these earlier negative spaces?

WG: The works you describe from 2001-2003 were actually only one series of sculptures made from a series of drawings about one sculpture in the landscape. It was a photograph I took of a specific house then blacked out with marker and then taken apart visually and physically built into fragments and shown as objects that would point to a larger unfinished and unrealized sculpture—one the shape and size of a real house. A shadow of the house in a sense, but made out of plywood, painted black—there was also a mirrored version of this sculpture. This was early work by me—trying to bridge the physical, the architectural, and the photographic. Elements of this impulse then remain in later works—I gave up the hand-drawing parts, but the architectural fragments still echo in later works.
The floor piece in Zurich is certainly related materially…

SS: Your practise is constantly challenging what can be defined as the "accepted categories" in art. You call your printed works on paper "drawings," and your printed works on canvas "paintings," giving to the support element the potential to define the status of the artwork itself. Besides practical reasons for preferring a technique among others to produce your works, do you have a specific interest in pushing the limits of these definitions further?

WG: What initially drew me towards art was the fact that it was engaged with language and that this language and these structures seem to always be in a state of fortification and dismantling. Growing up I was never good at art classes, and when I was younger I was often bored with the purely visual or the impulse to render images through drawing or painting.

While my interest hasn't been intentionally about challenging the contours of these categories—drawing, painting, sculpture—nevertheless the work has seemed to push a few boundaries, but only in a minor way. It seems that the history of modern or contemporary art as we know it is itself a history of art defining its contours. So if my work makes any contribution to that its merely an introduction of certain technology and simply maintaining a tradition of material or contextual self-awareness.

2

SS: I read in an interview that you once said "it is necessary to narrow things down to expand." This is clearly an attitude dating back to Minimalism–to which the formal aspect of your work is often compared (I'm thinking of the zip in Barnett Newman's paintings or the system of linear coordinates in Agnes Martin's)–and geometric abstraction, from Suprematism and De Stijl to Constructivism–to which you often paid homage by incorporating reproductions of famous artworks from the twenties and thirties in your works, using them as support for your drawings and also as actual material for your sculptures (as in the case of Marcels Breuers chair). How are these traditions meaningful to you? Do you see your work closer to one of them?

WG: I'm not sure of that source, but maybe I was referring to finding a way to work. At one point I realized that we live in a very pluralistic time, and for me rather than starting with an "anything goes" attitude, I needed to exclude many of the options. This wasn't a decision about formal things—or

Simoncelli, Silvia, and Wade Guyton. "Interview with Wade Guyton." *On Curating*, no. 20, Total Abstraction, October 2013, pp. 34–37.

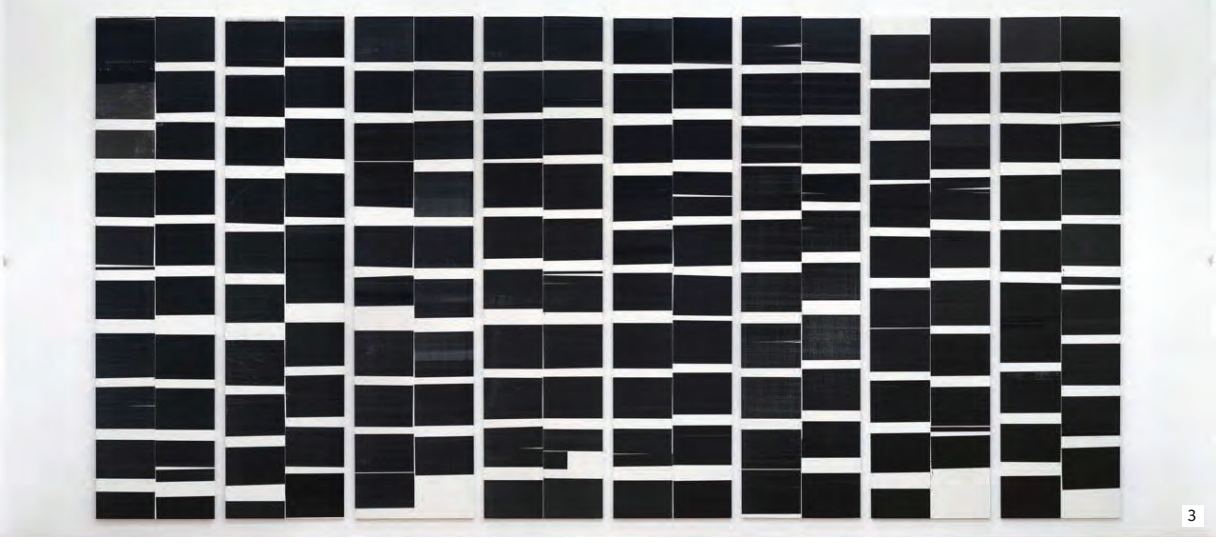
reduction for visual reasons—though it might look that way, but reduction related to structure. If one has things to work against that can be productive. I've used a lot of images in my drawings--they are pages from a variety of books—so while I might be interested in some of them, I wouldn't invest so much into any particular source.

SS: In your work abstraction is a manyfold concept: it addresses the formal aspect of your artworks, which comprise essential graphic elements and appropriated images (abstracted from their original context); the disappearance of the author behind a multiplicity of references and citations and, finally, the immateriality of artistic labour, which derives from the choice of your mode and media of production. Which of these aspects do you find most relevant? How would you describe abstraction as a term pertaining to your work?

WG: I think you've done an excellent job describing abstraction as a term pertaining to my work!

SS: The use of technology in the production of artworks has generally been privileged by artists whose interest was to achieve a formal perfection devoid of any trace of their own intervention. You decided to force the capacities of the mechanical tool you have chosen to produce your works–a common computer printer–in order to do a job for which it was not expressively designed for, printing on large format canvases. This resulted both in the need for you to accommodate the technical capacities of your tool (by folding the canvas, pulling it out of the printer, re-printing it as many times as needed to obtain the intensity of colour desired) and in a series of unpredictable malfunctioning of the printer itself, generating the final look of your works (interruptions in colour, distortions in the images, imprecisions in the overlapping layers of colours). How important are these two elements–chance and technology–important to you? Have you ever been disappointed by the unforeseeable results of their interaction?

WG: There is always some form of disappointment in making an artwork. In my case, there is some expectation, an attempt at translation. A struggle for some ideal–but that ideal may not always be clear, and it is likely in transition.
Because of the process with the works on canvas, I must reject or accept whatever the results are.
I can't work back into them after they are stretched like some painters can.
There are moments during the process when I can intervene. I can add layers, but I can't subtract or erase. So inevitably there are tons of rejections. But a rejection one day could lead to a re-evaluation a couple years later and generate a different series. Or a chance event could lead to a repeatable structure.



3

Simoncelli, Silvia, and Wade Guyton. "Interview with Wade Guyton." *On Curating*, no. 20, Total Abstraction, October 2013, pp. 34–37.

Captions

1 Wade Guyton, Installation view, Portikus, Frankfurt, 2008

2 Wade Guyton, Untitled (CAT.4 CAT.7), 2006, Epson DURABrite inkjet on book page, 22.6 x 30.7 cm

3 Wade Guyton, Installation view, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, 2010. Photo: Maurice Cox.

Wade Guyton *is an artist living in New York City. He has had solo exhibitions at The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Secession, Vienna; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Portikus, Frankfurt; Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurles. His latest exhibition include Kunsthalle Zurich and Kunsthaus Bregenz, both 2013.*

Silvia Simoncelli *is an art historian and independent curator based in Milan and Zurich. She is professor at Brera Art Academy and course leader of the Advanced Course in Contemporary Art Markets, NABA in Milan. She lectures regularly for the Postgraduate Programme in Curating at ZHdK, Zurich. Her research interests comprise the relation between art and economy, institutional critique and art in public space. Recent projects and participations include:* Artists and rights in contemporary art, *symposium, Artissima, Turin;* Visions of Labour, *exhibition, Kunshalle Sao Paulo;* Who is Afraid of the Public, *symposium (together with Dorothee Richter and Elke Krasny), ICI, London, 2013;* Performing Structures, *exhibition, Wascherei, Kunstverein Zurich, 2012;* Deimantas Narkevicius, Revisiting Utopia, *special program, Winterthur Short Film Festival, 2011.*

Simoncelli, Silvia, and Wade Guyton. "Interview with Wade Guyton." *On Curating*, no. 20, Total Abstraction, October 2013, pp. 34–37.

Art in America

PAINTING IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL REPRODUCTION

In his first museum survey, Wade Guyton upends categorical conventions of painting, print, sculpture and installation.

Wade Guyton: Untitled, 2010, Epson UltraChrome inkjet on linen, 84 by 69 inches.

CURRENTLY ON VIEW
"Wade Guyton OS," at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, through Jan. 13.

KLAUS KERTESS is a New York-based writer and curator. See Contributors page.

by Klaus Kertess

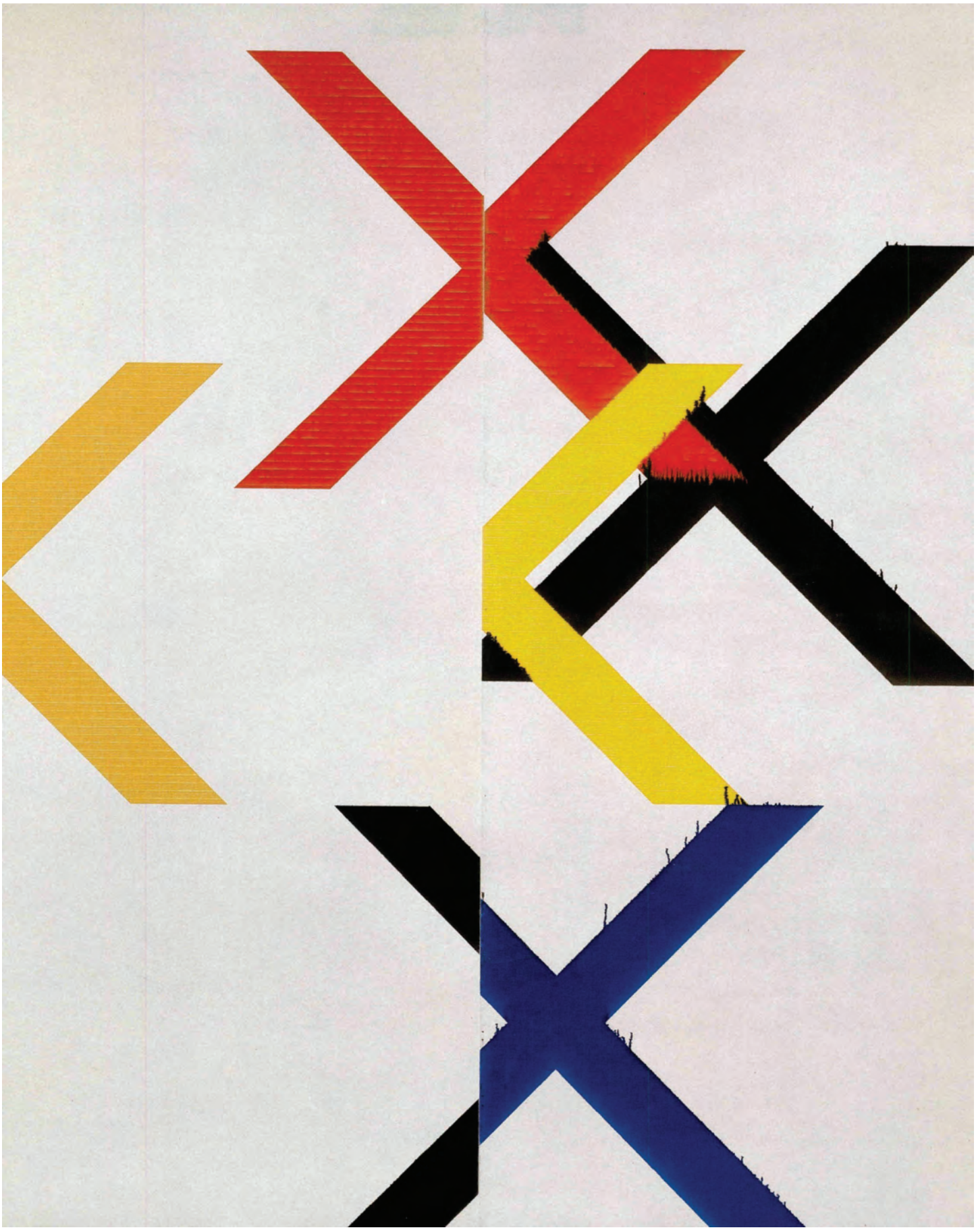
HAVING PURCHASED MY first computer, in the early 1980s, I left it in its packaging for several months. Several more months passed before I found a teacher to instruct me in its use. Three or four computers later, I am still, at least partially, a technophobe. And so it was with a combination of trepidation and anticipation that I took my first journey to Wade Guyton's survey exhibition at the Whitney Museum. When I agreed to write about the show, I was guided by a kind of didacticism that told me I could use a new experience and shouldn't simply accept the opinions of a few negatively inclined friends. I had to resist donning the armor of painterliness, as had long been my wont. And to my surprise, Guyton's exhibition, curated by the Whitney's Scott Rothkopf, by far outshines the monographic exhibitions I had seen in the previous months. Not organized chronologically, the installation incorporates freestanding walls throughout the gallery space that function like giant pages of an illustrated book. It bends the museum's third-floor space in a totally idiosyncratic way and feels personal and coldly calculated almost at the same time. The work energizes the galleries, encourages contemplation, and challenges conventional thinking about what constitutes drawing and what painting.

Guyton was born in 1972 in Hammond, Ind., and now lives and works in New York. While studying in the art department at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and then in graduate school at New York's Hunter College, he immersed himself in criticism about Minimalism, especially sculpture, and in writings by figures such as Roland Barthes more readily than he tested his ability to create actual artworks. Guyton openly acknowledges his lack of manual skills.

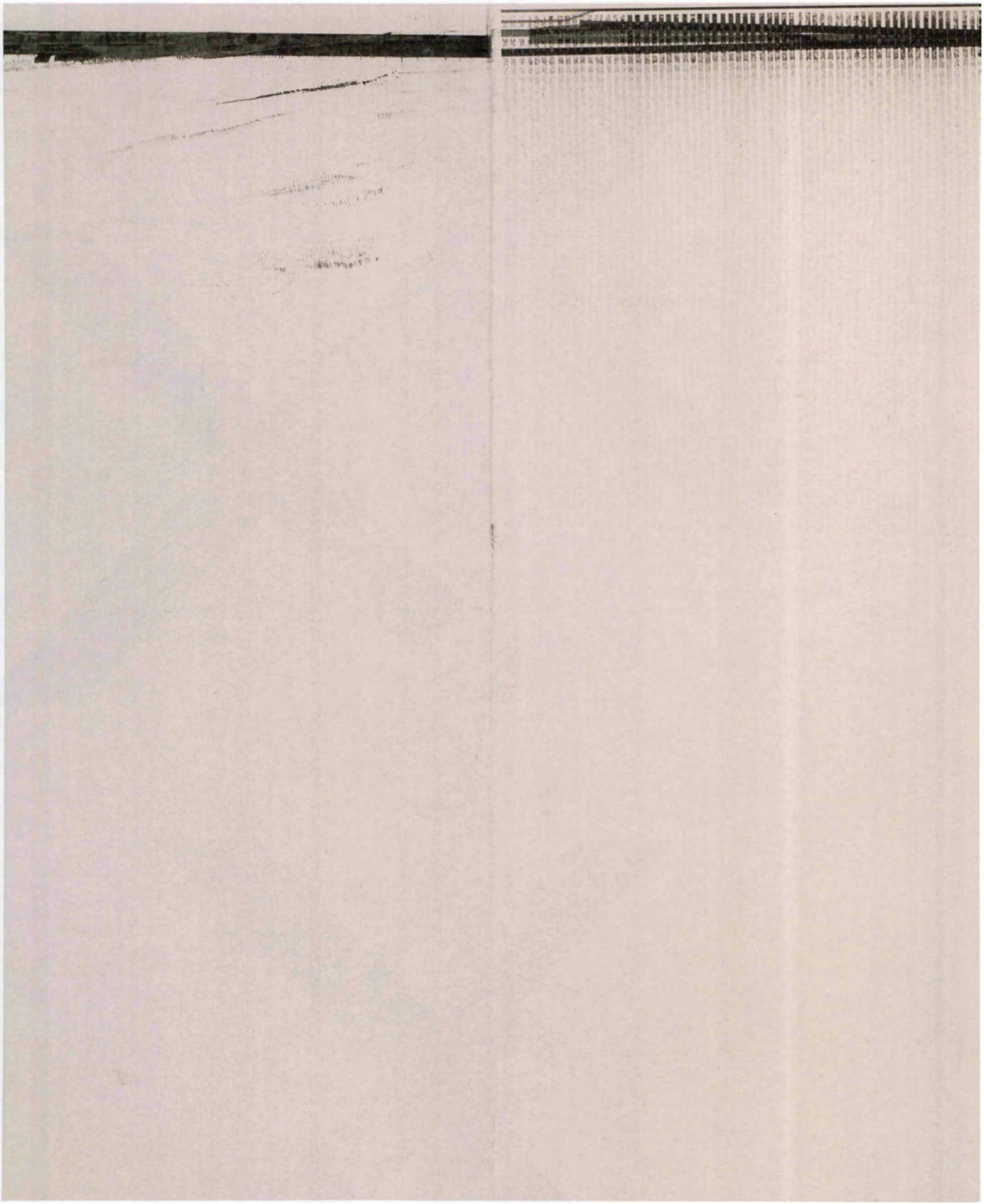
In the first years of his career, Guyton focused on making photographic and sculptural work. The earliest piece in the Whitney exhibition—*The Devil's Hole (left and right)*, 1999, made the year after he graduated from Hunter—consists of two wood-mounted photographs that resemble a surreal rendering of a small excavation and that are hung side by side. He followed this with works not included in the show—faceted congregations of Plexiglas fragments spread across the floor and several tall, angular works made up of alternating vertical strips of black Plexiglas and smoked, mirrored acrylic that refract whatever space the sculptures are placed in.

During this time, he also explored the relationships among photography, sculpture and drawing, as well as the

Kertess, Klaus. "Painting in the Age of Digital Reproduction." *Art in America* 101, no. 1, January 2013, pp. 74–83.



Kertess, Klaus. "Painting in the Age of Digital Reproduction." *Art in America* 101, no. 1, January 2013, pp. 74–83.



Kertess, Klaus. "Painting in the Age of Digital Reproduction." *Art in America* 101, no. 1, January 2013, pp. 74–83.

photograph's ability to flatten objects and condense physical space. In *Drawing for Sculpture the Size of a House* (2001), on view at the Whitney, he intensified this photographic compression by blacking out a house from a snapshot using felt-tip pen, radically collapsing the pictorial space and blocking most of the scene from view.

Guyton further pursues unconventional approaches to drawing in his ongoing series "Untitled Action Sculptures," which he began in 2001. The earliest of these pieces came about by chance, after he had rescued a broken Marcel Breuer Cesca chair from an East Village curbside. He brought the chair back to his studio, removed the back, seat and armrests, and wrestled the frame into a new, dynamic linear form. The sculpture now angles up from the floor in the show, in proximity to five intact Cesca chairs that, together with the reconfigured street find, correspond to the Whitney's building, which, like the chairs, was designed by Marcel Breuer.

IN 2002, SHIFTING HIS focus to the technologies so prevalent in contemporary culture, Guyton took up digital inkjet printing as his primary artistic medium, which provided countless new options for his image-making. A number of his pieces from this time use torn-out book pages—most of them featuring illustrations of architecture, domestic interiors or artworks—as supports. A small, untitled work from 2004, for instance, employs a page featuring an image of a Frank Stella painting from his "Protractor" series, which appears to interrupt and extend the vertical red and green stripes that Guyton has printed over it. Once Guyton adopted the printer as his main artistic tool, forms like the giant, hand-drawn black X that, in a 2002 drawing, crosses out a page showing a living-room space, could now be made almost instantly via computer. His radical move away from the manual and into the digital signaled the beginning of his mature work.

From the small-format works on book pages, Guyton moved to printing on large pieces of raw linen and then, around 2005, primed linen, developing a style that more strongly evokes conventional painting on canvas. One work from 2005 depicts a crumpled piece of printed-upon paper that Guyton placed directly on his flatbed scanner, scanned and printed out on a 51-by-36-inch piece of primed linen. Coincidentally, the scrunched-up form looks like one of John Chamberlain's crushed-car-part sculptures. In another 2005 painting, roughly 63 by 35 inches, the bottom two thirds of the linen ground is filled with red vertical stripes overlapping green horizontal stripes. Two black circular shapes, one behind the other, are set against the pure white of the top third of the composition, above the striped field. This painting borrows from the Minimalist geometries of the 1960s and '70s, but seems to temper their sternness with a lighter, more playful quality. The folds and slight irregularities

Untitled, 2011, Epson UltraChrome inkjet on linen, 84 by 69 inches. Collection Ruedi Bechtler.

View of the exhibition "OS," showing (on back wall) *Inverted Woodpile*, 2002/2012. Courtesy Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Photo Ron Amstutz.

Kertess, Klaus. "Painting in the Age of Digital Reproduction." *Art in America* 101, no. 1, January 2013, pp. 74–83.

Kertess, Klaus. "Painting in the Age of Digital Reproduction." *Art in America* 101, no. 1, January 2013, pp. 74–83.

Previous spread, view of "OS," showing five untitled paintings, all 2006, Epson UltraChrome inkjet on linen. Courtesy Whitney Museum of American Art. Photo Ron Amstutz.

of the linen ground remind us that this is not a painting on canvas, but rather material that has traversed a printer. One of the circles dribbles a stream of black ink into the striped zone below; the second circular shape is like a blurry shadow emerging from darkness. Around this time, process became more visible in Guyton's work, with printing irregularities creating a subtle, disjunctive spatial play that endows many of his paintings with presence. This is particularly the case with paintings that use pieces of linen too large to go through his printer without manipulation. For such works, he folds the material in half, printing on one side and then the other; the material is then unfolded and mounted onto a stretcher.

Alongside his works on paper and linen, Guyton continued to produce sculptural objects, if less often. In 2004, for instance, he began a series of U-shaped sculptures, each one larger and thicker than its predecessor. Fabricated from mirrored stainless steel, the pieces are placed in rows at the Whitney and have a presence somewhere between industrial and ritualistic. They appear insistent—on just what, I am not sure, but they hold their own within the exhibition. They also echo U's that one encounters in other works on view. There are, for instance, the vertical linen paintings from 2006 that feature one or more versions of the letter in outsize form, often amid flames licking up from the works' bottom edges. Different compositional sections and misaligned U's that seem to have slid from one section to another converge. These works, at once playful and visually commanding, push into a more assertive painterliness, celebrating painting more than unsettling its customary techniques and processes. A precursor to these works is found in a 2003 book-page piece that also features multiple U's. The letter is printed twice, in black, on a page showing a photograph of a nearly empty salon space, the smaller U seeming to hang on the back wall, the larger U floating at the entrance to the depicted room.

In 2002, Guyton created a book-page work in which a simple X was multiplied, layered and spread across the page via inkjet printer. This was a precursor to larger works, begun in 2006, that incorporated the X image in numerous variations—overlapping, interlocking, in uneven rows, and in varying dimensions and condi-

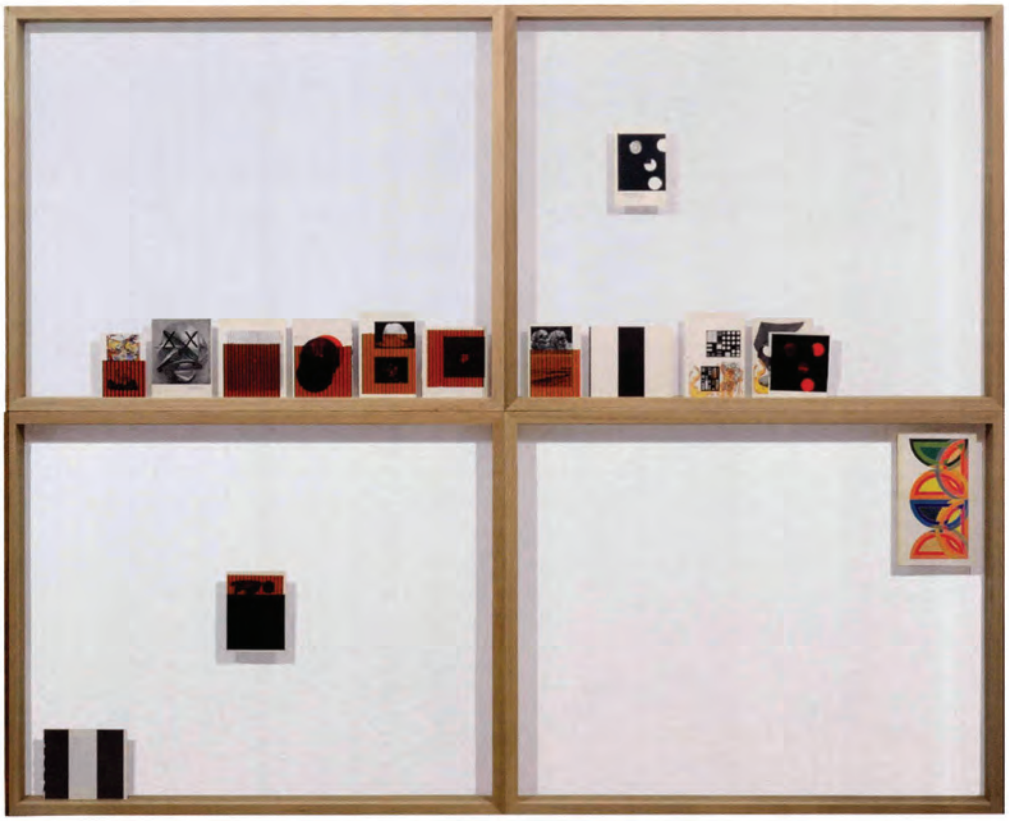
U Sculpture (v. 6), 2007, mirrored stainless steel, 24 by 22 by 53½ inches. Courtesy Whitney Museum of American Art. Photo Ron Amstutz.

Opposite page, view of "OS," showing five Marcel Breuer chairs and five untitled paintings, all 2007, Epson UltraChrome inkjet on linen. Courtesy Whitney Museum of American Art. Photo Ron Amstutz.

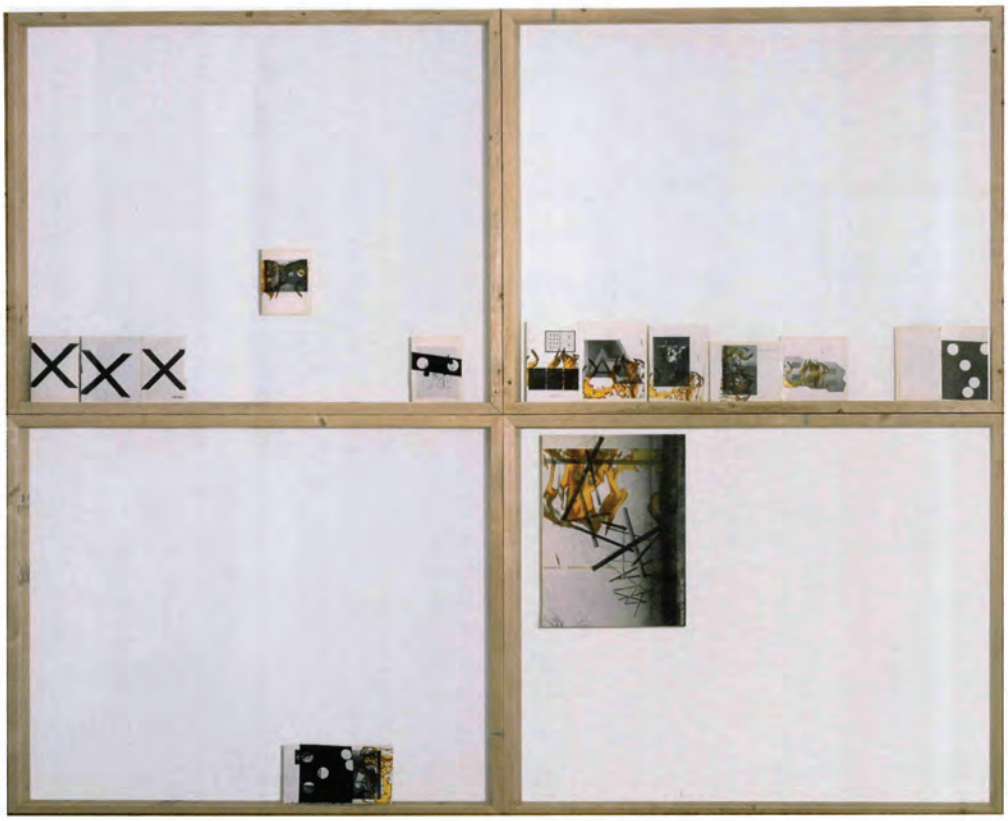
Kertess, Klaus. "Painting in the Age of Digital Reproduction." *Art in America* 101, no. 1, January 2013, pp. 74–83.

WADE GUYTON ART IN AMERICA 81

Kertess, Klaus. "Painting in the Age of Digital Reproduction." *Art in America* 101, no. 1, January 2013, pp. 74–83.



Untitled, 2005, Epson DURABrite inkjet on 15 book pages, acrylic panels and oak frames, 101¾ by 125½ by 3½ inches overall. Collection Peter Remes.



Untitled, 2005, Epson DURABrite inkjet on 13 book pages, Epson UltraChrome inkjet on poster, acrylic panels and oak frames, 101¾ by 125½ by 3½ inches overall. Collection Brigitte and Arend Oetker.

Kertess, Klaus. "Painting in the Age of Digital Reproduction." *Art in America* 101, no. 1, January 2013, pp. 74–83.

tions. The X, often a mark of cancellation, here serves as a nimble protagonist, now single, now multiplied and arranged in rows, sometimes missing a limb or two or being all but hidden in a dark monochromatic field. In two works on view, from 2008 and 2010, the X appears in red, yellow, blue and black, in different degrees of overlapping and completion. With the X's, the artist repurposed a sign with multiple meanings, including negation, into a completely neutral if not positive mark, just as he repurposed the inkjet printer into a tool for drawing and painting.

While Guyton's works often employ the same graphic elements, such as U's and X's, they are never identical. Two paintings created in 2005 have the same composition featuring a diamond shape with a triangle projecting inward from each of the four sides and a smattering of black circular shapes, one painting presenting the composition in meticulous finish, the other dissolving it in dripping painterliness. The pieces appear related at first, then totally different. Then they seem related once again.

bisected X and variously angled sections in which the linen is exposed in parallel lines. Another 2007 monochrome is covered in distinct, slate-colored horizontal bands, occasionally interrupted by more insistently black lines, and features several white spaces at the bottom. A 2009 monochrome is a softer gray-black than the previously mentioned ones, though a dark column runs down the center, alongside the vertical fold. Guyton has looked back to the 1960s monochrome paintings by artists such as Brice Marden and Robert Mangold, while also imbuing his canvases with more unexpected internal marks, such as fugitive lines or unintentional ink drips from his machine. The possibilities of his inkjet medium add to the tension in the paintings and keep the viewer engaged in exploring their varied surfaces.

Guyton is capable of grand gestures as well as more subtle ones. In 2008, he created eight large vertical panels—84 by 69 inches, like the monochromes—that are hung in a row, each with black rectangular bands irregularly placed on a white ground so that they create an almost melodic progression across the wall.

Untitled, 2008, Epson UltraChrome inkjet on linen, eight panels, 84 by 69 inches each. Whitney Museum of American Art.

FOR ONE BODY OF work on view, Guyton mounted groups of his manipulated book pages between sheets of clear acrylic in oak frames and arranged the framed compositions so that they abut each other against a wall. The earliest such work at the Whitney dates to 2003 and consists of two frames, while the later ones, made in 2005, bring together four frames in grid formation. Guyton again plays with format in a 2010 group titled *Zeichnungen für ein grosses Bild* (Drawings for a Big Picture), in which book pages are arranged in long vitrines lined with blue linoleum tiling. Given the context, these vitrines suggest large picture frames removed from the wall and oriented horizontally. The following year, in works titled *Zeichnungen für ein kleines Zimmer* (Drawings for a Small Room) Guyton made similar arrangements in vitrines backed in red linoleum tiling. So here we have the artist challenging the conventions of not only how drawings and paintings are created but also how they are to be framed and exhibited.

Around 2007, Guyton began printing monochrome works on 84-by-69-inch pieces of linen. One of these untitled works is in grayish black and features a partial,

In the camp of intimate gestures are two posters (reproduced in the Whitney catalogue) that he made to announce a 2006 gallery show in London. Both posters feature a photograph of the hirsute, muscular torso of a male nude, as if to emphasize the strength necessary to make this work, and also to indicate the humor in it.

Three paintings from 2011 are almost completely white, except for a narrow band of ink marking the top of each one and some delicate marks underneath each of these bands, black in two cases and red in the third. The paintings, with their feathery details at the top and cool expanse of white below, have a lyric outreach not elsewhere so readily found in Guyton's work. Another 2011 painting features alternating red and ocher stripes across two horizontal stretches of linen measuring, in total, about 9 by 50 feet. Created specifically for this installation, it is the culminating work in the show.

Guyton has devised one of the most varied and ambitious monographic exhibitions I have seen in a while. His exploration of what constitutes a painting, a sculpture and a drawing offers enough information and leaves enough room for rumination to reward multiple visits. ○

Kertess, Klaus. "Painting in the Age of Digital Reproduction." *Art in America* 101, no. 1, January 2013, pp. 74–83.

ARTFORUM

View of "Wade Guyton OS," 2012–13, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Photo: Ron Amstutz.

Reviews

Hochdörfer, Achim. "Wade Guyton: Whitney Museum of American Art." *Artforum* 51, no. 6, February 2013, pp. 234–37.

Wade Guyton

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, NEW YORK

Achim Hochdörfer

THE LOGIC OF THE MODERN ERA demands revolutions: decisive ruptures that enable sweeping paradigm shifts and the introduction of new ways of seeing. In hindsight, such ruptures can often be seen as the outcome of periods of transition, those interregnums that are not dominated by a prevailing narrative and thus allow for an atmosphere of indeterminacy and openness, in which antithetical motives and genealogies can suddenly and surprisingly be connected with one another. Jasper Johns, for example, was buoyed by such a historical constellation: The speed with which his institutional breakthrough occurred in 1958 is matched only by the difficulty of his historical categorization to this day. His work looks back to one period as it looks forward to another, and it is tied as much to European modernism as it is to Abstract Expressionism, neo-Dada, Minimalism, and Pop. This intermeshing of various sensibilities does not run aground in an eclectic "anything goes": In fact, nearly the opposite is true. If a dominant paradigm forfeits its position, only then do the inner historical conflicts of a time become visible in their full complexity.

Wade Guyton seems to have caught one of these fortuitous moments. His rise at the turn of the millennium accompanied the first signs of the disintegration of the critical formation of the 1990s. Around that time, artists and critics affiliated with institutional critique suddenly began to reflect on previously taboo realms such as melancholy, formalism, and affect, and the lines of battle between so-called new media and the traditional genres of sculpture and painting came to seem less and less relevant. In Guyton's work there is a collision of models from different eras: an easy congruence of aspects of Minimalism and Pop, high modernism and commercial design, appropriation art and strategies of institutional critique, preindustrial and postindustrial methods. Moreover, Guyton does not stage the far-reaching digitization of our world as a radical break, as do both technology's progressive apologists and its conservative critics—a fact perfectly illustrated by the purposeful superimpositions of analog and digital techniques in his works on paper. And even the "paintings" that are fed through an ink-jet printer reject simplified polarizations between the analog as mimetic, embodied, and contemplative and the digital as immaterial, dispersed, and abstract.

Indeed, at least as seen from the outside, Guyton's career has developed without a hiccup, reconciling diverse positions not only in his production but in his reception as well. He is embedded in a broad network of artist friends, critics, curators, gallerists, and collectors, and a market for his work emerged with impressive speed. He almost instantaneously attained canonical status in universities and art schools, where he is

From left: **View of "Wade Guyton OS," 2012–13.** From left: *Untitled*, 2006; *Untitled*, 2005; *Untitled*, 2010; *Untitled*, 2006; *Untitled*, 2006. **View of "Wade Guyton OS," 2012–13.** Photos: Ron Amstutz.

Hochdörfer, Achim. "Wade Guyton: Whitney Museum of American Art." *Artforum* 51, no. 6, February 2013, pp. 234–37.

someone against whom students are already beginning to rebel. Accordingly, a considerable burden of expectation fell on his first midcareer survey, curated by Scott Rothkopf at the Whitney Museum of American Art. The occasion raised several questions: How would Guyton's art-historical elevation affect the prevailing view of this relatively young artist? Would the show live up to such high expectations? Would his work be able to pull off the balancing act between its status as a product desired by collectors and its critical seriousness? An explosive mixture of enthusiasm, envy, skepticism, and sheer anticipation created a palpable tension before the opening. But Guyton and Rothkopf were not distracted by any of this and produced a consummately curated exhibition. There could hardly have been a greater contrast between the art-world buzz surrounding the occasion and the serenity and concentrated intensity of the show itself.

Guyton's art is fundamentally physical, even expressive: Its inherent conflicts are forced to the outside.

Upon entering, visitors were presented with a 2006 series of pictures featuring the letter *U* amid raging flames, as if the emptied linguistic vessels were literally being heated up. From the beginning, Guyton seemed to want to make clear that his work renounces the classical oppositions of Minimalist cool and expressionist heat, of Conceptual semiotics and modernist pictoriality. Behind these works lay a system of partitions, as simple as it was varied, which faced the viewer and created an open space that offered different sight lines and routes through the show. Parallel partitions of various sizes were layered behind one another and were reminiscent, as the press text suggests, of the pages of a book as well as of the stacked windows on a computer screen: The idea of interweaving the analog and the digital was thus also made into a leitmotif of the exhibition design.

Examples of Guyton's early works were represented by pieces including installments from the series "Untitled Action Sculptures," 2001–, and a particularly beautiful ripped canvas, *Untitled*, 2004, which hung loosely on one of the temporary walls. Elements within later works, such as the U-shapes, migrated from sculptures to canvases to works on paper, and various series of the already "classic" ink-jet-printed pictures were hung on the long partitions. Two monumental, horizontal-stripe paintings—both *Untitled*, 2012, and made for the occasion of the show—covered the back wall of the gallery and functioned as a framing device for the entire exhibition. Altogether, the installation established a rhythm of conceptual compression and contrapuntal subplots. Every detail of the show was carefully considered, and yet there was still room for surprising cadences and visual discoveries.

From left: **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled***, **2004**, Epson UltraChrome ink jet on linen, 63 x 43¼". **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled Action Sculpture (Chair)***, **2001**, altered steel chair. Installation view. From the series "Untitled Action Sculptures," 2001–. **View of "Wade Guyton OS," 2012–13**. Foreground: *Zeichnungen für ein grosses Bild*, 2010. Background, from left: *Untitled*, 2012; *Untitled*, 2012. Photos: Ron Amstutz.

Hochdörfer, Achim. "Wade Guyton: Whitney Museum of American Art." *Artforum* 51, no. 6, February 2013, pp. 234–37.

This alternation between series and isolated works circled around the antagonism (so central since early modernism) between the auratic charge generated by the singular presence of the image and its diminution or depletion. Take, for example, *Untitled*, 2008, a sequence of rectangular canvases that were hung so closely together that it was nearly impossible to differentiate between the external borders of the constituent panels and the broader connecting structure suggested by the horizontal, slightly off-register bars within the pictures. Indeed, closely related works appeared again and again in various settings throughout the space, as if proliferating, troubling the borders between individual pieces: Guyton's works on paper were in one instance hung traditionally framed on the wall, then encountered as a group in a wooden frame on the ground (*Untitled*, 2005) or lying next to one another haphazardly in vitrines (*Zeichnungen für ein grosses Bild*, 2010). Such migrations and reverberations seemed to enact visually the way we encounter images today, with their endless transposition and mobility between different scales and contexts, between screen and world, zoom and thumbnail.

The Whitney's elegant Brutalist architecture, with its repetitive open-grid concrete ceiling and patterned stone floor, was extremely accommodating to Guyton's aesthetic and became another kind of frame or echo of the work. It seemed a happy coincidence that Guyton has several times included chairs designed by the museum's architect, Marcel Breuer, in his exhibitions. Indeed, the snaking metal tubing from a deconstructed Breuer chair in *Untitled Action Sculpture (Chair)*, 2001, was emblematic of the artist's versatile reception of modernism, which overlays homage and estrangement, elegant functionality and eccentric (dis)placement.

Guyton's works look as if they follow a simple set of rules. There is a "signature style," based on a process that recalls, albeit in a different historical moment, Pollock's drip technique and its dance between chance and control. Guyton enters a set of typographical elements and scanned or found images into a software program such as Photoshop or Word and then merely presses "print"—a winner every time. Yet his method cannot be understood as a gesture of genius akin to a master's brushstroke, or even as its digital equivalent; its success depends far more on the artist's conceptual framing. Guyton lays out the anchor points of the artist's endeavor in such a way that the intentional decisions and accidental effects in each stage of his process become indistinguishable. Unplanned overlaps, machine errors, and physical limitations during the printing process are as important as everything else that gives meaning to the work. Yet this kind of interweaving is more than a nullification of the distinction between the intentional and the contingent. For example, when one sees a blank gap in certain works, it often corresponds to the canvas getting caught or stopped on its way through the printer; Guyton then has to pull at the canvas to keep it going, and that pull is registered as a white space. Guyton thus also "learns" how to adjust or fix certain problems that arise in his process, while remaining leery of allowing such solutions to themselves displace the refutation of authorial gestures in his work.

What sets Guyton's work apart from the current fascination with the seductive surfaces that the digital realm makes possible is that here technological progress does not become an end in itself, nor does it masquerade as creative freedom. To the contrary, Guyton's use of digital technology is based on his systematically demanding more from it than it is able to offer. He mistreats his printer, confronts it with commands that go far beyond the limits of its potential, and feeds it information or material that it is unable to process. In this sense, Guyton's art is fundamentally physical, even expressive: Its inherent conflicts are forced to the outside. Digital code manifests in his canvases in an otherwise unknown form—as moody and unmanageable; as if something were seeping out from these seemingly anonymous signs that one would never have expected there: a subjectivity that has broken free of the subject, and yet is not given over to the machine.

ACHIM HOCHDÖRFER IS A CURATOR AT THE MUSEUM MODERNER KUNST STIFTUNG LUDWIG WIEN.

Translated from German by Alexander Scrimgeour.

Hochdörfer, Achim. "Wade Guyton: Whitney Museum of American Art." *Artforum* 51, no. 6, February 2013, pp. 234–37.

The New York Times

Painting, Rebooted

Wade Guyton at his studio in front of a work produced by an inkjet printer on linen, which will be part of his show at the Whitney Museum. Karsten Moran for The New York Times

By Carol Vogel

THE artist Wade Guyton works on the edge of Chinatown in a commodious light-filled space with windows looking over the Bowery. One portion is dominated by desks with little on them but Macs. Nearby is the biggest printer Epson makes — a hulking Stylus Pro 11880 inkjet. There is no smell of turpentine, no haphazard array of easels, no cans of paint or stacks of used canvases. In fact, there are none of the things one would expect in a painter's studio. Instead all the creating is executed on computer screens and printers.

"I never really enjoyed drawing or art classes," said Mr. Guyton unapologetically as he described growing up in a small town in Tennessee. "I would prefer to sit in front of the TV or play video games."

Vogel, Carol. "Painting, Rebooted." *The New York Times*, September 30, 2012, pp. AR1, AR23.

On a steamy morning a few weeks earlier, Mr. Guyton, 40, wearing shorts, a black T-shirt and sneakers, was anxiously watching while a work of red and green stripes slowly chugged out of the printer, spilling onto the floor. The repetitive pattern was not being printed on paper, but on linen that the artist imported from France because he liked its smooth surface.

Mr. Guyton had found the striped image on an end paper in a book and he tore it out and scanned it. He saw the book "sitting open on a pile of stuff and was attracted to the pattern," Mr. Guyton recalled, adding: "They are weird Christmas colors yet there's an optical buzz to it. It's interesting for me to take something so insignificant and minor and affectless on its own and let it permeate in many different ways."

He elongated the image on his computer and what was now printing out before him had a kind of pattern of Benday dots, reminiscent of something Roy Lichtenstein would have made had he created abstract paintings.

Less than a decade ago Mr. Guyton couldn't get a dealer to pay attention to him. Now he is represented by the Friedrich Petzel Gallery in Chelsea, and has well-known collectors avidly buying his art, examples of which are already in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, to name a few. Starting Thursday Mr. Guyton's work will be the focus of a midcareer survey

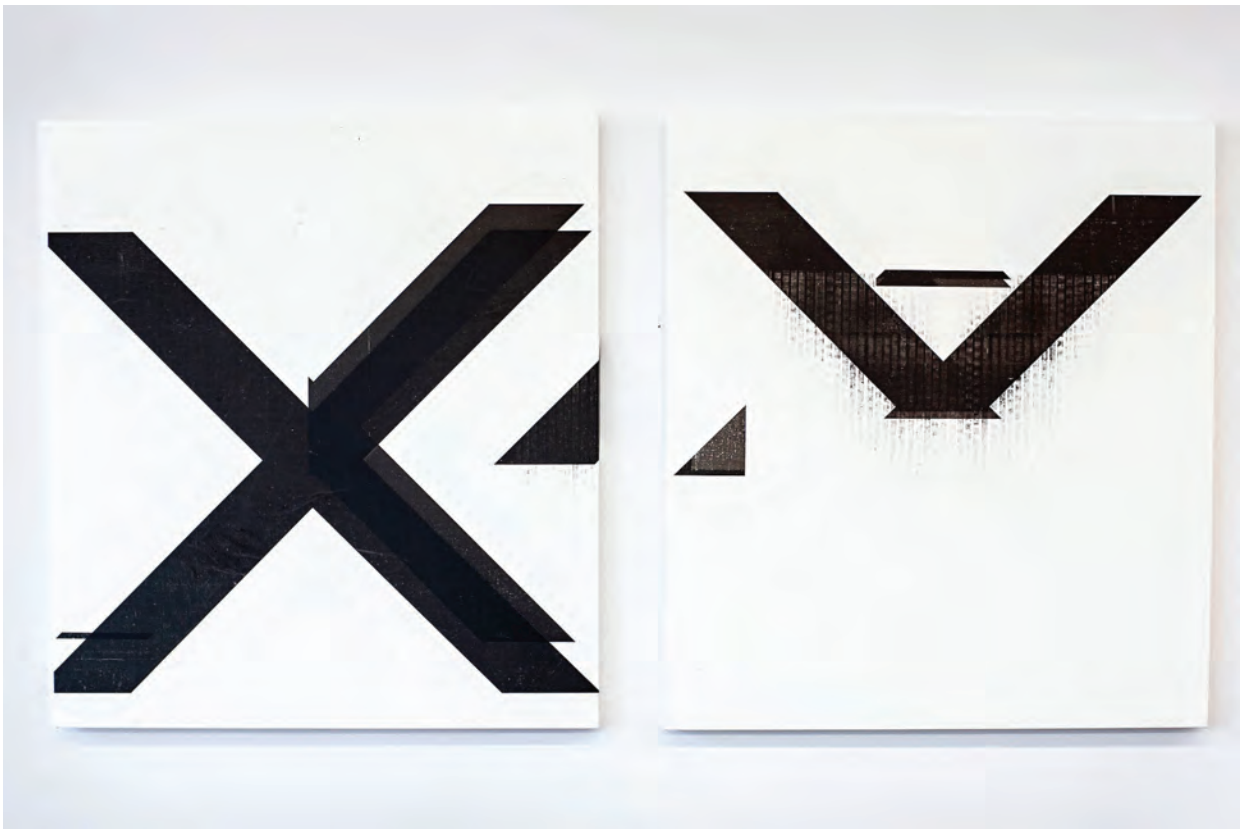
Mr. Guyton at his Epson printer with an assistant, James Campbell. Karsten Moran for The New York Times

Vogel, Carol. "Painting, Rebooted." *The New York Times*, September 30, 2012, pp. AR1, AR23.

One of Mr. Guyton's works on the floor of his studio. Karsten Moran for The New York Times

Mr. Guyton at work. Karsten Moran for The New York Times

Vogel, Carol. "Painting, Rebooted." *The New York Times*, September 30, 2012, pp. AR1, AR23.



Two works from 2007 with X motifs that will be displayed in the exhibition. Karsten Moran for The New York Times

More pieces by Mr. Guyton that will appear at the show. Kunsthalle Zurich

Vogel, Carol. "Painting, Rebooted." *The New York Times*, September 30, 2012, pp. AR1, AR23.

at the Whitney Museum of American Art called “Wade Guyton OS,” with OS standing for operating system, the software that supports a computer’s basic user functions.

Along with artists like Kelley Walker (a friend with whom he often collaborates), Seth Price and Tauba Auerbach, Mr. Guyton is at the forefront of a generation that has been reconsidering both appropriation and abstract art through the 21st-century lens of technology.

“Wade speaks to the way images travel across our visual culture — on our computers and iPhones, televisions and books,” said Scott Rothkopf, the Whitney curator who organized the show. “He has figured out a way to make work that deals with technology but doesn’t feel tricky or techie, rather it’s intuitive. It’s abstract on one hand and Pop on the other.”

It was Warhol, after all, who said: “Paintings are too hard. The things I want to show are mechanical. Machines have less problems.” And today artists as varied as Cindy Sherman, Jeff Koons and even the 80-year-old German painter Gerhard Richter are producing paintings with computers.

The Los Angeles artist Mark Grotjahn recalls seeing Mr. Guyton’s first show in New York six years ago. “I was blown away,” he said. “I must have gone back three or four times. I particularly admire the way he repeats motifs with just the slightest changes.”

A piece from 2008. Karsten Moran for The New York Times

Vogel, Carol. “Painting, Rebooted.” *The New York Times*, September 30, 2012, pp. AR1, AR23.

A "U" sculpture from 2005. Ron Amstutz

The paintings that particularly seduced Mr. Grotjahn were what Mr. Guyton calls his flame paintings — black canvases with a menacing-looking flame shooting up from the bottom (again, something the artist ripped out of a book and scanned). Many of the flame paintings also have the letter U in them.

That letter came from his computer keyboard — typing is another way Mr. Guyton makes paintings. On a wall of his studio are canvases with giant X's on them. On the floor nearby is a gleaming, stainless steel sculpture in the shape of a U — both morphed from letters he had typed and then played with. Ann Temkin, the chief curator of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art, explained her early fascination with Mr. Guyton's work.

"You tap a keyboard with one finger and this very large painting emerges," she said. "It's gone against everything we think of as a painting." Yet, Ms. Temkin went on, "there are so many historical landmarks that precede him, so many artists who took the traditional notion of painting in a new direction."

"Pollock flung it," she said. "Rauschenberg silkscreened it; Richter took a squeegee; Polke used chemicals. Wade is working in what by now is a pretty venerable tradition, against the conventional idea of painting."

Vogel, Carol. "Painting, Rebooted." *The New York Times*, September 30, 2012, pp. AR1, AR23.

In much the same way the Pictures Generation had to deal with figures like Warhol, said Hal Foster, a critic and Princeton professor: “Wade’s generation has to deal with Pictures Generation artists like Cindy Sherman, Richard Prince and Jeff Koons. That’s both a predicament and a promise. People tend to misread his work. They see it as only bound up with media and technology but it’s actually another version of the de-skilled, ready-made work.”

It’s the imperfections that result when the printer jams, or the ink is suddenly gooey or running low that make Mr. Guyton’s canvases more painterly.

“I’m not hoping for an accident or even courting disaster,” he said. “The works on linen are a record of their own making which at times can include accidents in the printing or in the physical act of making them, like when I drag a canvas across a studio floor.”

With his long, wavy hair and affable demeanor, Mr. Guyton is surprisingly candid when he talks about his life and his work. And for someone whose career took off in such a short period, he’s also surprisingly laid back. “It may appear that nothing bothers him but lurking beneath that exterior of calm is actually a perfectionist,” Mr. Rothkopf said.

An untitled work from 2007. Lamay Photo

Vogel, Carol. “Painting, Rebooted.” *The New York Times*, September 30, 2012, pp. AR1, AR23.

One of Mr. Guyton's "X" paintings, from 2008.
Karsten Moran for The New York Times

Growing up in Lake City, Tenn., Mr. Guyton remembers how his stepfather, a Sunday painter who worked in a steel mill, did his elementary-school drawing homework for him. "I didn't have the patience for drawing and he enjoyed it," he recalled.

It wasn't until he was at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where he became friends with students at the art school (among them Meredyth Sparks and Mr. Walker, both respected artists), that he was "seduced by art," he said.

When he moved to New York around 1995 he applied to the Whitney Independent Study Program. "I got rejected twice," Mr. Guyton said. "I ended up going to Hunter because that was the only school I got into."

To support himself he first got a job at St. Mark's Bookshop in the East Village and then became a guard at the Dia Art Foundation in Chelsea. "Dia was amazing," he recalled. "I met a lot of artists there: Dan Graham, Roni Horn, Douglas Gordon, Nate Lowman; some of them worked there and others showed there."

When Dia closed its Chelsea space in 2004 his severance pay was generous enough to allow him to continue renting an East Village studio and apartment without having to look for another job.

Computers came later. After he began making large sculptures he crammed the raw materials in his small studio.

Vogel, Carol. "Painting, Rebooted." *The New York Times*, September 30, 2012, pp. AR1, AR23.

“I had no room to move so I thought I should work on paper because that’s what artists do,” he recalled. He bought a few notebooks, he said, “but I couldn’t figure out what to do with them so I started tearing out pages of books and magazines that were around the studio and started making marks on them or just X-ing out images. Then I realized that the process of drawing didn’t make sense to me. The labor didn’t match up to what I was trying to do. And I thought the printer could make these things better than I could.”

So he opened Microsoft Word and typed an X. He took the torn pages and put them through the printer instead of blank sheets.

“I would drag Web pages over other printed materials,” he explained. “What I realized is that Microsoft Word has a structure to it. It has a language and margins. It has functions and a default size and a default color, which is black. And all those presets I decided to use as the structure for making drawings.”

“I chose the computer because it was right there,” he added. But he says he’s not very sophisticated when it comes to technology: “I don’t do Facebook. My Photoshop skills are rudimentary. I’m lucky to download my e-mail.”

He also has an old-fashioned love of books. He collects them and makes them — impeccably designed with pages and pages of his own images. For the Whitney retrospective he has been particularly hands-on in the layout of the show’s catalog. He also worked closely with Mr. Rothkopf to map out the installation, paying homage to the Whitney’s landmark Marcel Breuer building, especially the third floor where the retrospective takes place. “I wanted the show to feel as though it has been designed for the building,” Mr. Guyton said.

So he created partial walls inspired by temporary partitions Breuer had made for the building in the 1960s. “They evoke the layers of a computer screen with different files,” Mr. Guyton explained.

Rather than presenting his work chronologically, the retrospective is designed for visitors to see connections between different bodies of work simultaneously. As visitors are looking at a red, yellow and blue “X” painting, they will also see in their peripheral vision the same motif repeated in different scales, mediums and colors.

The last wall of the show is where two of the giant red-and-green striped canvases that he was creating in his studio now hang. The largest of them — stretching 50 feet — has noticeable red smears of ink and the illusion of folds where the stripes were printed off-register, giving the canvas a rich, three-dimensional quality.

“It would be wrong to have tried to correct these things,” Mr. Guyton said at the Whitney as he stared at the wall just after a team of about 10 had finished installing the works. “This is a recording process as much as a production process. And I have to live with it, smears and all.”

Vogel, Carol. “Painting, Rebooted.” *The New York Times,* September 30, 2012, pp. AR1, AR23.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

The New York Times

N C25

Dots, Stripes, Scans

The Whitney Museum has a hit on its hands: a beautiful show organized by a young curator that makes a cogent case for the work of a young artist. In a season when many New York museums are devoting a lot of energy to the past, the Whitney's survey of work by Wade Guyton stands out as a cause for optimism. Yes, interesting art is being made here and now. And yes, there are serious ways that museums can present this art that are beyond the scope of even the richest commercial galleries.

ROBERTA SMITH

ART REVIEW

Like many artists Mr. Guyton, who is 40, is both a radical and a traditionalist who breaks the mold but pieces it back together in a different configuration. He is best known for austere, glamorous paintings that have about them a quiet poetry even though devised using a computer, scanner and printer. The show is titled "Wade Guyton: OS," referring to computer operating systems.

Uninterested in drawing by hand, much less in wielding a paintbrush, he describes himself as someone who makes paintings but does not consider himself a painter. His vocabulary of dots, stripes, bands and blocks, as well as much enlarged X's and U's and occasional scanned images, combines the abstract motifs of generic Modernism and the recycling strategies of Andy Warhol and Pictures Generation artists like Richard Prince and Sherrie Levine.

One of his principal themes, which he endlessly cites and parodies yet reveres, is Modernism as an epochal style of art, design and architecture that permeates our culture from the artist's loft to the corporate boardroom. Another is modernity as an inescapable current condition, personified in his case by his adaptation, as just another kind of paintbrush, of the digital technology that pervades our everyday lives.

While clearly not made by hand, his works are

Continued on Page 28

WADE GUYTON, THE RACHOFSKY COLLECTION/LAMAY PHOTO

Smith, Roberta. "Dots, Stripes, Scans." *The New York Times,* October 5, 2012, p. C25, 28.

Dots, Stripes and Computer Scans, All With Glitches

From Weekend Page 25

noticeably imperfect. The paintings in particular clearly tax the equipment that generates them; they emerge with glitches and irregularities — skids, skips, smears or stutters — that record the process of their own making, stress the almost human fallibility of machines and provide a semblance of pictorial incident and life.

The line between what the artist has chosen and what technology has willed is constantly blurred. For one thing, to achieve paintings of substantial width, Mr. Guyton must fold his canvas and run it through the printer twice; this gives nearly every image halves that are rarely in sync. You will notice this right off the elevator, where the exhibition's first wall features five paintings of oddly

are apparent in an extended eight-panel work in which thick black horizontal bands alternating with white ones skittishly slant every which way but level; their jangling patterns form a rhythmic, slow-motion Op Art.

The Guyton show has been organized by Scott Rothkopf, a 36-year-old Whitney curator who has also written a convincing if overlong catalog essay illuminating this artist's development, and he plotted, in collaboration with Mr. Guyton, a brilliant installation. More than 80 works are on view, mostly paintings but also computer drawings and a few sculptures. Dating primarily from the last decade, they are displayed on and among a series of parallel walls, some quite narrow. As you move around, works seem to slide in and out of view, like images in different windows on a computer screen. The changing vistas reveal the artist's motifs migrating restlessly from one scale or medium to another. The U's from the fire images are extruded into three dimensions in a group of 17 sculptures of mirrored stainless steel in 10 different sizes. Placed in a tight row they form the show's one instance of physical perfection and suggest an irregular sculpture by Donald Judd but are in fact individual works, temporarily brought together.

Born in Hammond, Ind., Mr. Guyton absorbed the critical theory of the 1970s and '80s as an art major at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville before seeing much art. And according to Mr. Rothkopf's essay Mr. Guyton still enjoys looking at paintings in books as much as at the real thing, intrigued by the ways photographs alter and distort them. He came to New York in 1996 to attend graduate school at Hunter College, and his first exhibited works here were sculptures that evoked an ersatz Modernism, most effectively in pieces casually executed in smoked and mirrored plexiglass.

In 2002 he began appropriating images by a method more direct than his Pictures Generation elders. Instead of rephotographing photographs, he simply tore illustrations from books or auction catalogs and ran them through his printer, superimposing lines, X's,

Smith, Roberta. "Dots, Stripes, Scans." *The New York Times,* October 5, 2012, p. C25, 28.

thick bands or grids on their images. In one drawing here two dark yellow X's printed on an image of a modern kitchen perfectly match a cabinet, suggesting that color-coordinated abstract art is essential to a stylish home. In another, a series of thick horizontal bars partly obscure an old half-timbered building whose geometric patterns are structurally necessary, not decorative.

By 2004 Mr. Guyton was enlarging these motifs and printing them on canvas, making paintings that are rife with ghosts. His black monochromes evoke Ad Reinhardt and the Black paintings of Frank Stella (especially when the printer goes slightly awry and starts imposing white pinstripes). His more diaphanous gray ones can summon Mark Rothko's veils of color, while paintings featuring the blunt, fragmented X's can summon more Stella Minimalist sculpture or eroding corporate logos.

A field of red and green stripes scanned from the end papers of a book conjures the work of Color Field abstractionists like Kenneth Noland and Gene Davis as well as Christmas wrapping paper. They first appear in two vertical paintings exhibited side by side, where they are printed in similar scales but with quite different results in tone and texture. In both paintings two large black dots in the wide white margin above the stripes lend a clownish air.

The same stripes appear again, in something close to their original scale, in several computer drawings that are sandwiched between plexiglass in a big four-square frame that mimics both a window and a canvas stretcher. (They mask images of a Stella aluminum stripe painting and sculptures by Naum Gabo and Anton Pevsner.) And the stripes culminate in one of the show's grander moments, running horizontally and much enlarged across two immense paintings — one 50 feet long, the other nearly 30 — that cover most of the north wall of the gallery. Here they seem extravagant and bold, yet they also resemble large bolts of fabric, unrolled, with

"Wade Guyton: OS" runs through Jan. 13 at the Whitney Museum of American Art; (212) 570-3600, whitney.org.

Above, an untitled Guyton work from 2007; left, an untitled work from 2006. Both are inkjet on linen, and both are among the more than 80 images in "Wade Guyton: OS" at the Whitney.

the starts and stops of the printer creating trompe l'oeil folds. Up close you encounter another digital mystery. The extreme magnification creates an illusion of two kinds of textile: the green as a twill pattern, the red as tweed fuzzy with little orange dots.

In what seems to be a typical Guyton touch the big-statement grandeur of these works is played down. They seem to be deliberately crowded by "Drawings for a Large Picture," which consists of 85 unframed computer drawings displayed in nine vitrines lined with eye-popping blue linoleum. The drawings are casually arranged — laid out in rows, piled in corners — suggesting the constant flux that is the natural condition of images in our time.

Smith, Roberta. "Dots, Stripes, Scans." *The New York Times,* October 5, 2012, p. C25, 28.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

ARTFORUM

MEDIA STUDY

WADE GUYTON

IN MY WORK, I use a number of machines and programs: ink-jet printers, scanners, Photoshop, Microsoft Word, even Safari. But I don't think my work is really about embracing the potential of the technology or "the digital." In fact, I'm probably underutilizing the technology. I'm more interested in how something becomes legible and meaningful as an artwork, and how it's shaped by different languages or structures.

Not wanting to make drawings by hand, I chose Word as a substitute for the pencil. My logic was that if a pencil can draw as well as write, so should Word. (There is a drawing tool in Word already—so Microsoft and I had the same idea.) Using Word might also just reflect the larger role technology plays in our day-to-day lives. My handwriting has gotten terrible.

The files I use to make works on canvas or paper have an immaterial quality, a shape-shifting ability. They're distributable and flexible. I can compress them or stretch them out and duplicate them. But I still make somewhat conservative objects, still use structures that are already known. I'm still relying on the architecture of bricks-and-mortar spaces to shape my works (their size is often determined by certain aspects of a room, like the height of a wall), still flipping through real books and tearing them apart to make "works on paper," still stretching printed canvas to make paintings.

These conventional categories are put under pressure by newer technology. We could alternatively think of my paintings as photographic works or as records of activity. The execution of a file could be analogous to the performance of a score.

The computer, the printer, and the software—the language that makes the machines do what they need to do—are just what was at hand when I started these printed works. I've become interested in seeing how flexible—or inflexible—the language can be, or in locating concrete limits that we can push off of. □

Wade Guyton, *Untitled (THE BEST BMW 3 SERIES)*, 2012, ink jet on book page, 9⅛ x 6¾".

Guyton, Wade. "Wade Guyton." *Artforum*, September 2012, p. 136.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

THE NEW YORKER

THE ART WORLD

MAN AND MACHINE

A Wade Guyton retrospective.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

The still early career of the American artist Wade Guyton has starred a trio of gadgets. They are the small, medium, and very large ink-jet printers with which he strangely rejuvenates the aesthetic philosophy, and the dramatic beauty, of classical abstract painting. A terrific new survey of his work at the Whitney Museum includes sculptures and installations, but the pictorial works dominate. These aren't really paintings or drawings: they are canvas swaths or pages torn from books and magazines which have been forced through the printers, acquiring overlays of Guyton's rudimentary digital designs—from a repertoire of shapes, lines, stripes, and typed "X"s or "U"s—and incurring smears, stutters, registration errors, and other happy glitches. But they sure look like paintings and drawings, ranging in style from busily geometric to near-monochrome black. Stretched or framed, they evoke the noble rawness of a Pollock or a Rothko. The work is ingenious, and also moving, as a counterattack of the spirit on a culture whose proliferating technical means, by eclipsing the handmade, disembody imagination. By making machines do lovely things that they weren't designed to do, Guyton scores comeback goals for primitive wonder.

Guyton was born in Hammond, Indiana, in 1972, and grew up in the small town of Lake City, Tennessee. His father, who died when Guyton was two, and his stepfather, also deceased, were both steelworkers. Guyton's mother, a homemaker, sometimes worked as a secretary at the Catholic church the family attended. As a child, Guyton was so uninterested in art, he has said, that he was pleased to have his stepfather do his elementary-school drawing homework for him. That changed while he was a student at the University of Tennessee, by way of intellectual excitement: the early nineteen-nineties were a heyday of academic critical theory, when thinking skeptically about art could seem as good as, if not better than, making it. The artists who counted were image-recycling gravediggers of tradition, chiefly the Pictures Generation of Cindy Sherman, Sherrie Levine, and Richard Prince. A prevailing scorn for handcraft encouraged Guyton, who readily confesses his own manual ineptitude. But something dramatic happened in the circle of his artist friends at the university, which included two others who became successful, Kelley Walker and Meredyth Sparks: they decided that the grandparents were cool. It often happens that, in youth, we glamorize a past that our immediate elders tell us is over and done. So it was with

Guyton (center) installing his show at the Whitney, with Scott Rothkopf (rear right).

Schjeldahl, Peter. "Man and Machine." *The New Yorker,* April 15, 2012, pp. 94–95.

Guyton and his peers.

Guyton came to New York in 1996. Twice rejected for admission to the Whitney Independent Study Program, which was at the time a virtual think tank of critical theory, he attended Hunter College. There he studied under the formerly minimalist, always inventive sculptor Robert Morris. Guyton also became immersed in the art world while working for seven years as a guard at the solemnly avant-gardish Dia Art Foundation. His early New York work—sculpture (most of which he later destroyed) and photographs of architecture—was minimalism redux. A re-created example at the Whitney show is "Inverted Woodpile" (2002/2012), a leaning stack of scrap lumber that Guyton found on the street and simply turned upside down. Since 2004, he has continued to fashion sculpture, in a series of fat, mirrored stainless-steel "U"s in various heights. They're pleasant enough, but I can't imagine what, except perhaps market demand, keeps them coming. For me, they provide only trace elements of the formal and imaginative tensions that inform Guyton's achievements in two dimensions.

In 2002, frustrated, he has said, by his failure at drawing, Guyton hit on using his computer, scanner, and printer to alter pages from old art and design publications. In the show, scores of the results are hung on walls or arrayed on blue vinyl tiles in a row of handsome display cases. There are vaguely Constructivist geometric shapes, the inevitable "X"s, and random-seeming blotches overlaid on images of modern architecture and, occasionally, on the works of Goya, Ensor, or other Expressionist masters. The gentle vandalism stirs poetic qualities of yearning in and for the orphaned material. Stick with it. The emotional reward is a gradual simmer.

Guyton is a bibliophile, though not an especially discerning one. The edges of some spectacular works on canvas from 2006 that feature scanned images of flames reveal their source: the beat-up cover of a book, minus the title and the author's name. A stern superego of rigorous taste, instilled by Guyton's academic training, keeps his art's apparent attitude distanced and cool. His passions sneak up on you and, when they take hold, can feel like your own—as if, at a formal social event, you found yourself suddenly and awkwardly in love with the host. There's a remarkably civilized lightness about the experience, which transcends the familiar winks and nudges of complicity that are found in so much only-too-well-schooled contemporary art. Rather, there's the ardor of a connoisseur who hopes to convert you to his vision but is too respectful of both you and himself to impose a hard sell.

In 2004, Guyton decided that what worked as a surrogate for drawing might serve for painting, too. Experimentation led to several series on primed linen canvas. Large works—the topper being a fifty-foot-long pattern of red and green stripes, blown up from the endpapers of an Italian design catalogue—are made by folding canvases, as tall as nine feet, in half horizontally and sending them through his biggest printer twice. The machine's struggles with the unwieldy cloth produce glories of textural incident that recall the imperfections in Andy Warhol's silk screens. Warhol looms large for Guyton, as for all artists who deal with issues of image reproduction. So may Gerhard Richter, the German master of painterly blurs, whose new show of computer-derived prints, at the Marian Goodman Gallery, makes for a chance tag team, with Guyton, of artists who are forty years apart in age. Both address the historic task, urgent in art today, of coming to sensible and sensitive terms with the global juggernaut of the digital medium.

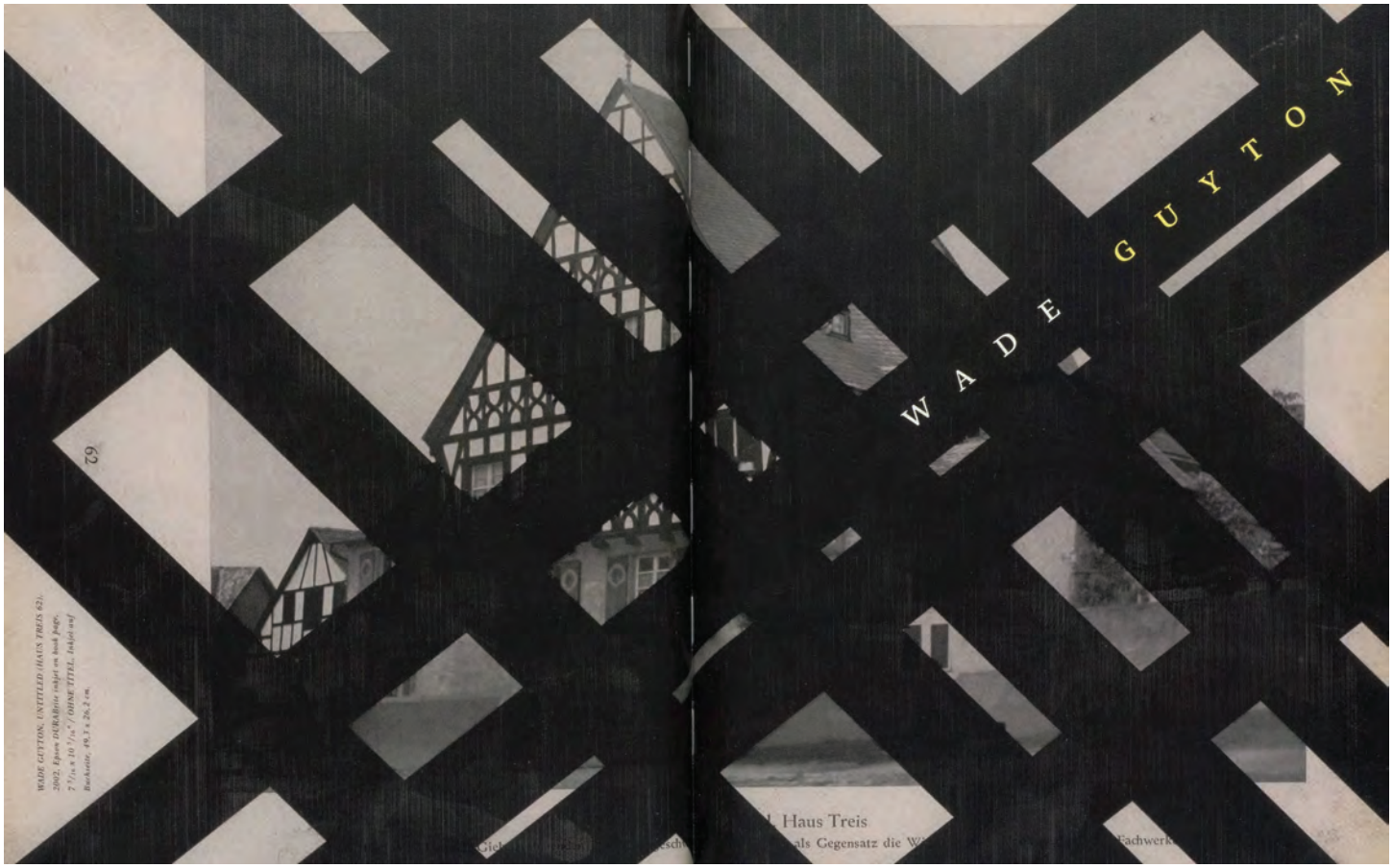
Guyton hardly accepts every result of his process. He rejects many, he told me when I met him at the Whitney. He added that recent advances in technology pose a threat of too much sophistication. "They're getting smarter," he complained of the printers. To make gray pictures, for example, he must take tortuous measures to disable his newest printer's insistence that black is a combination of nine colors. With a mental squint, I heard him talking about his high-tech gear in a tone like that of painters discussing paints and brushes—always a sure sign of maturity in a new medium. Most computer-generated art to date has been marred by a tedious infatuation with novel effects, which turn passé in a twinkling. With Guyton, the electronic becomes a class of workaday studio tools.

The show, as installed by the artist in collaboration with the Whitney curator Scott Rothkopf, is an over-all art work in itself. An arrangement of temporary walls creates a palimpsest of visual echoes and comparisons, affirming Guyton's temperamental forte as a critical assessor of his own production. He visually footnotes his sensibility by including in the show a row of five tubular-steel Cesca chairs, designed by Marcel Breuer, in 1928. Breuer, the architect of the Whitney building, has long fascinated Guyton. A wall text states that these specific chairs, upholstered in sickly decorator colors, once belonged to the Enron Corporation. I don't know what to do with that fact, but it is charged with something. Also on view is the frame of a Cesca chair which, in 2001, Guyton wrestled by hand into a free-form sculpture. The work is no great shakes, but its burlesque of a love-hate, Oedipal struggle with the modern tradition signals Guyton's ambition. He wants nothing less than to weave the art-historical past, as a challenging presence, into art's emerging future. Perilously, he's a leader. ♦

Schjeldahl, Peter. "Man and Machine." *The New Yorker,* April 15, 2012, pp. 94–95.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

PARKETT



Rothkopf, Scott. "Wade Guyton: The New Black." *Parkett* 83, 2008, pp. 74–81.

THE NEW BLACK

SCOTT ROTHKOPF

WADE GUYTON, installation view / Installationsansicht, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2008. (ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF WADE GUYTON)

Forgive me for beginning with an imaginary *New Yorker* cartoon. Two sketchily drawn men stand facing a pair of nearly identical, large black canvases. The caption below them reads: "Well, the one on the right is a failure, but the one on the left is clearly a masterpiece." Now, forgive me for following with a confession: I'm one of the guys and Wade Guyton is the other. We're in Guyton's studio parsing the relative merits of his new series of black paintings, and I can't help feeling a bit like the butt of a withering joke, perhaps the dapper man studying a quasi-Pollock in Norman Rockwell's 1962 canvas THE CONNOISSEUR or the beleaguered protagonist of *Art*, the nineties Broadway hit that turns on the dated conundrum of whether a plain white canvas can count as art. You'd have to be a hidebound reactionary at this point to think that it couldn't, but you'd also have to be a touch crazy to spend the better part of an after-

SCOTT ROTHKOPF is a senior editor of *Artforum*.

Rothkopf, Scott. "Wade Guyton: The New Black." *Parkett* 83, 2008, pp. 74–81.

noon, as Guyton and I did, puzzling over the successes and failures within a group of strikingly similar canvases, all identical in size and covered almost entirely with wide swaths of fuliginous ink. The problem was not so much that one could log long hours examining the paintings (we're accustomed to doing precisely that with Reinhardts or Rymans) but rather that any one of them might be deemed qualitatively better than any other. On what basis were such value judgments to be made? And if the criteria could, eventually, be discerned, what would that tell us about a group of canvases that seemed to push Guyton's painterly practice to both its formal and conceptual outer limits?

WADE GUYTON, installation view / Installationsansicht, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2008.

Guyton began making paintings around four years ago with the desktop inkjet printer that he had been using to produce drawings by marking the pages of old art books with letters and simple geometric forms. To create paintings, he figured, he needed only to replace paper with canvas—a support that had long been the de-facto signifier of the medium, whether or not paint happened to be involved. As in many of his drawings, Guyton rendered simple colored bars and grids in Microsoft Word, and he passed unprimed linen through his printer several times so that chance would determine what compositions arose. But "composition" turned out to be the problem since the resultant canvases nodded perhaps too vigorously to the very abstractions—whether pre-war Russian or post-war American—that were often reproduced in his appropriated book pages, without registering critically their distance from those historical precedents. How could one know that chance—or, for that matter, the printer—was involved when the work seemed to summon, without quotation marks, the history of abstraction

Rothkopf, Scott. "Wade Guyton: The New Black." *Parkett* 83, 2008, pp. 74–81.

and was thereby all too easily understood within a wave of more recent "neoformalist" art? What Guyton needed, he came to realize, was a resistant ground that could register his mechanical means, as well as a pictorial device that might function not just abstractly but that would also attest to its status as a pre-existing artifact, one plucked like his catalogue pages from the ever-expanding universe of pictures and their myriad reproductions.

Before long, Guyton began manipulating on his computer a limited repertoire of scanned images, such as a green-and-red striped endpaper and a row of flames from a book cover, as well as bands of Xs taken from his earlier drawings. When output with photoreproductive clarity on smooth sheets of primed linen, these motifs betrayed telling details—a printed source's slightly yellowed paper or exaggerated halftone screen—that signaled their prior life as images and objects on the other side of the digital continuum. To these building blocks, Guyton would add graphic elements in Photoshop, such as pitch-black disks and candy-colored Us, which created a tension between his readymade imagery and his subjective digital interventions. Sometimes this disconnect took the form of a subtle semiotic inquiry into the visual vocabulary of his technical apparatus, as when Guyton overlaid jagged scanned and enlarged Xs with those newly and crisply typed in Photoshop. Yet each painting could never be executed exactly as planned on screen since the printer would falter as it disgorged ink onto sheets of canvas far thicker and wider than its intended supports. These "errors" in physical alignment and color consistency imbue the finished paintings with a sense

WADE GUYTON, installation view / Installationsansicht, Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York, 2008.

Rothkopf, Scott. "Wade Guyton: The New Black." *Parkett* 83, 2008, pp. 74–81.

of chance and physical process both at odds and strangely in keeping with Guyton's chosen technologies, which are known as much for their slick reproductive powers as for their inclination toward mechanical mishap.

Guyton's art has always been characterized by his particular sensitivity to these unexpected failures, as well as by a knowing wariness toward the kind of sophisticated trickiness that might seem to predestine pictorial success—and it is these paired impulses that may have helped generate his subsequent body of work. His next series of large X paintings suggested that he had grown somewhat skeptical of the brainy showiness implicit in his previous paintings' juxtaposition of different forms of visual information. To that end, he dispensed with his scanned imagery and his residual compositional quandaries, such as where to place his Us and what color they might be. He reduced his preliminary digital manipulations to the bare minimum: typing one hefty X and then hastily dividing it in two on screen. This vertical splitting was crucial because, as with many of his previous paintings, in order to run a wide sheet of canvas through his printer, now capable of covering an area some forty-four inches across, he had to fold the material in two and print each half of the image at a time. Given the difficulties in aligning the on-screen print area with its actual output, and given that the printer sucks in the material until its sensor determines the optimum point at which to begin discharging ink, the Xs wound up fractured by the canvas' central seam. Sometimes Guyton tried to correct his or his printer's mistakes by running the material through once more. Yet this usually only added another splintered fragment to the mix, so that his boldest, most literal declarations on canvas to date can also seem his most hamstrung, like exclamations caught in the throat or rickety paeans to the off-kilter beauty of twenty-first century mechanical breakdown. These paintings, more than any before them, demonstrate a level of focus and a honing of decision to such an extent that we are left with the simple record of Guyton's not-so-simple grappling with his means. But even this rather economical system still depended on a kind of projective relationship between a predetermined image (the X) and its eventual materialization (the painting), and it was not long before the first term of this equation was pared down even further, before, that is, Guyton's screen went blank.

Guyton's black paintings, like nearly all his work thus far, were born of an accident, though this one had less an air of serendipity than of misfortune. Over the years that he had been making paintings, he had gained a subtle feeling for how various batches of his preferred pre-primed linen duck registered the marks of his printer with slight differences. Yet new shipments of the material unexpectedly failed to take the ink as he had grown accustomed, despite assurances from the manufacturer that nothing had changed. Suddenly, in the midst of his large X canvases, painting after painting failed to achieve the crispness that so crucially tied his abstractions to the quotidian technological landscape that spawned them. With a show looming, a crisis ensued, and Guyton feared he might have to abandon his signature painting process as briskly as he had adopted it. Frustrated, he drew a black rectangle in Photoshop that was roughly the proportion of one half of his double-width canvases, and he began to blot out his failed paintings with layer upon layer of black ink—an iconoclastic violence evident in the phantom Xs that lurk just barely perceptible beneath the surface of his first all-black canvases. Guyton, it turns out, had somewhat inadvertently stumbled onto the terrain of modernism's undead painting par excellence—the monochrome—a form that would ironically allow him to perpetuate rather than to terminate his still young engagement with the medium.

"Ostensibly black monochromes" is the way that Guyton described his new paintings in press releases for exhibitions in New York and Paris, where they were eventually shown. The phrase was presumably meant to cast doubt on how neatly the canvases could be appended to the nearly century-old tradition of the "monochrome," and there is some validity to this hesitation, given that his printer often produces black by mixing together a range of colors that can lend the paintings a green or bluish tone. But the adverb "ostensibly" can ring a bit coy (or defensive?), as though Guyton wanted to signal his remove from the modernist tradition at the very moment

Rothkopf, Scott. "Wade Guyton: The New Black." *Parkett* 83, 2008, pp. 74–81.

he once again appeared to veer rather too closely toward it. After all, with few notable exceptions, nearly all monochromatic paintings are only ever ostensibly so, and Guyton's are certainly no more so than those of Brice Marden, for example, which reverberate with the accumulation of their myriad waxy undertones, or those of Ad Reinhardt, which gradually reveal their variously purple or umber casts. Indeed, the fact that Guyton's paintings are only ostensibly monochromatic makes them more rather than less aligned with this vaunted (if admittedly diverse) strain of modernism, since they invite and even demand a kind of perceptual engagement that we have been well prepared for over the past hundred years, despite many artists' admirable challenges to those viewing habits over the past forty.[1]

Looking closely at the finished paintings, one cannot help but become trapped in a slow excavation of their surfaces. Each canvas is a patchwork accretion of multiple sooty layers, with the two halves often overprinted a different number of times so that tonal distinctions arise between them. The paintings, again like Marden's, reveal their aggregate nature most obviously at their perimeters, where two planes overlap incompletely to generate four quadrants of varying darkness, which shift from a dense, almost sticky, black, where the layers are superimposed; to a penumbral gray, where they diverge; to white, where bits of blank canvas altogether escape receiving ink. Sometimes these reserves form narrow angular slices along the left and right edges of the painting so that the whole canvas looks not orthogonal but slightly out of whack. And sometimes these rapier-thin fissures drop down the central seam, so that the painting appears on the verge of being cleaved apart. Peeking around the sides of the canvases, we find even more clues to the surfaces' strata since the various layers are generally most skewed where they round the stretcher bars. Meanwhile, Guyton often crops the tops and bottoms of the paintings so that a lopsided margin is left to demonstrate the uneven movement of the canvas' two sides as they made their way through his machine.

There's something slightly perverse about paying quite so much attention to the edge conditions and surface subtleties of mechanically produced canvases by an artist whose spare, often appropriative gestures might signal altogether different concerns. Too much talk of cropping and the "framing edge" threatens to return us to the formalist discourse of Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried, as they adumbrated painting's inherent attributes in an attempt to arrive at its irreducible essence (and we could just as easily make mention of the canvases' bifurcated "deductive structure"). We're not, after all, looking at a 1960s Jules Olitski, or at Larry Poons in Emile de Antonio's 1972 documentary *Painters Painting*, as the artist faced a mammoth unstretched mess of a canvas and laughably barked at his assistants to crop just one more inch off the right or the left. Still, I couldn't help but recall this scene with slight embarrassment on that fateful afternoon when I saw the new black paintings in Guyton's studio. At the time, he seemed most drawn to those canvases that divulged clues to their material histories along their edges, to those canvases flaunting enough pictorial incident, even if arrived at by happenstance, to encourage us to linger. To encourage us, that is, to look at these paintings *as paintings*—not *ersatz* paintings or signs of paintings, but good old-fashioned modern paintings. But never too old-fashioned ones, of course.

Indeed, if Guyton had waded rather deeply into the waters of the modernist mainstream, he had no more interest in blindly espousing that tradition than he had had in making poker-faced abstractions when he first ran canvas through his printer. For although he was clearly courting the painterly and perceptual conditions of "classic" modern icons, he just as clearly wanted to avoid relinquishing his hard-won critical purchase on the world of readymade images and his refracted view onto the history of received styles. This is a fine line to walk. On one side lies the peril of an ahistorical return to a kind of prelapsarian aesthetic state, and, on the other, a glib conceptualism, a danger of lampooning a mode of making and beholding that has by now been subjected to four decades of assiduous critique. Still, this latter tradition must not be forgotten in the face of Guyton's work. For as much as each painting might invoke Reinhardt or Marden, it also gestures to those artists—from Marcel Broodthaers, Piero Manzoni,

Rothkopf, Scott. "Wade Guyton: The New Black." *Parkett* 83, 2008, pp. 74–81.

and Blinky Palermo to Sherrie Levine, Rudolf Stingel, and Richard Prince—who in their own ways challenged the primacy and sanctity of modernism's most enduring signpost. Guyton is both historically and temperamentally closer to this latter gang who understood the monochrome as the kind of ready-made Greenberg worried it might become and who treated it with a wry and disputatious irreverence.

Guyton follows this line of thought not only in his paintings' digital and mechanical conception, but also in the way he treats them as they are born. His black paintings are marred with the scrapes and scratches that form as they are extruded jerkily and head first from the printer, before being yanked across his studio floor and flipped over, only to endure this ignominious genesis once more. These scars are traces of his process, and also a beat-up rebuff to transcendence, to naïve sincerity, or merely to over refinement. The elegant grandeur of the canvases is revealed to be something of a macho bluff. If an *informe* trope of horizontality famously emerged in the tabular surfaces of Dubuffet or Twombly and in the gravitational fields of Pollock and later Warhol, it's hard to imagine any of these artists—let alone any of the monochrome makers already mentioned—dragging their canvases face down across the floor. And as if to make sure this sacrilege did not go unnoticed, Guyton recreated his own black-

WADE GUYTON, X SCULPTURE, 2004, wood, Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York / X SKULPTUR, Holz.

WADE GUYTON, X SCULPTURE, 2004, wood, Lebanon, Tennessee / X SKULPTUR, Holz.

Rothkopf, Scott. "Wade Guyton: The New Black." *Parkett* 83, 2008, pp. 74–81.

WADE GUYTON, X SCULPTURE, 2005, wood, Cincinnati, Ohio / X SKULPTUR, Holz.

painted, plywood studio floor in the two galleries where the canvases were shown. With each muffled and slightly destabilized step, one sensed that Guyton was hedging his bets a bit as a painter, cautioning us against taking his most abstract canvases as regressive bids for some discredited notion of autonomy and casting them instead as props or players in a slightly stagy *mise-en-scène.*

Guyton's monochromes serve, then, as tense indexes of his negotiation with these dual inheritances—a modernist fascination with formal, perceptual, and technological discovery, on the one hand, and, on the other, a more recent and more skeptical understanding of this legacy, now distorted with reverb and parallax. This contrariety was abundantly clear when Guyton and I studied his new paintings fresh from the printer. If he prized surface subtlety in sifting the keepers from the dross, he certainly didn't want too much ostentation in this regard. In some paintings, the overlapping black veils created rectangles of varying tones, which, though beautiful, seemed a bit too fussy and grandiloquent to make the cut. One I dubbed the "Latin American," for its proximity to a southern strain of abstraction; another's planes abutted too starkly, which is to say that the picture overall was not quite stark enough.

Rothkopf, Scott. "Wade Guyton: The New Black." *Parkett* 83, 2008, pp. 74–81.

Pictorial incident could be tolerated—and was even required—but it had to be clearly legible as accident, as when the printer's feed stuttered to create horizontal bands that lent some canvases an Op vibration reminiscent of a flickering monitor or an old TV's wonky vertical hold. In other paintings, the ink heads jammed to yield faint pinstripes evocative of ruled paper or a trippy Agnes Martin. And so, despite great variation, an underlying criterion emerged that allowed this or that canvas to make the grade. The painting should be variegated enough to attest to its underlying mechanical process and to compel one to draw close; but it should be black (or, in rare cases, white) enough to function as a monochrome, or, at the very least, it should be "all-over" enough to keep it from lapsing into the realm of compositionality that had haunted his very first works on canvas.

It's not, of course, that there's anything wrong with composition per se; a wholesale interdiction against it would be hard to justify in this age of promiscuous pluralism. But Guyton wants to lend his paintings a kind of inner logic—necessity, even—by ensuring that we don't mistake the vicissitudes of his printer's activity with his own design. In his fire, stripe, and X paintings, there wasn't really the risk of this confusion since the productive tension between a scanned or typed image and its ultimate manifestation was comparatively easy to discern. We could tell that the image came from somewhere, that it was not hatched *alla prima*, so we could know (or imagine) what went wrong. The problem with the black paintings is that there is no "image" against which to gauge this breakdown, no obviously imported source to ward against the creeping specter of "neoformalism." The answer, then, was to make the monochrome itself that image, a kind of *a priori* form against which Guyton's variations might be judged. The painting may display all the surface subtlety and perceptual intrigue of the modernist monochrome, but the very details that invite this engagement reveal the canvas strangely to be a kind of mediated, printed picture of that unmistakable paragon.

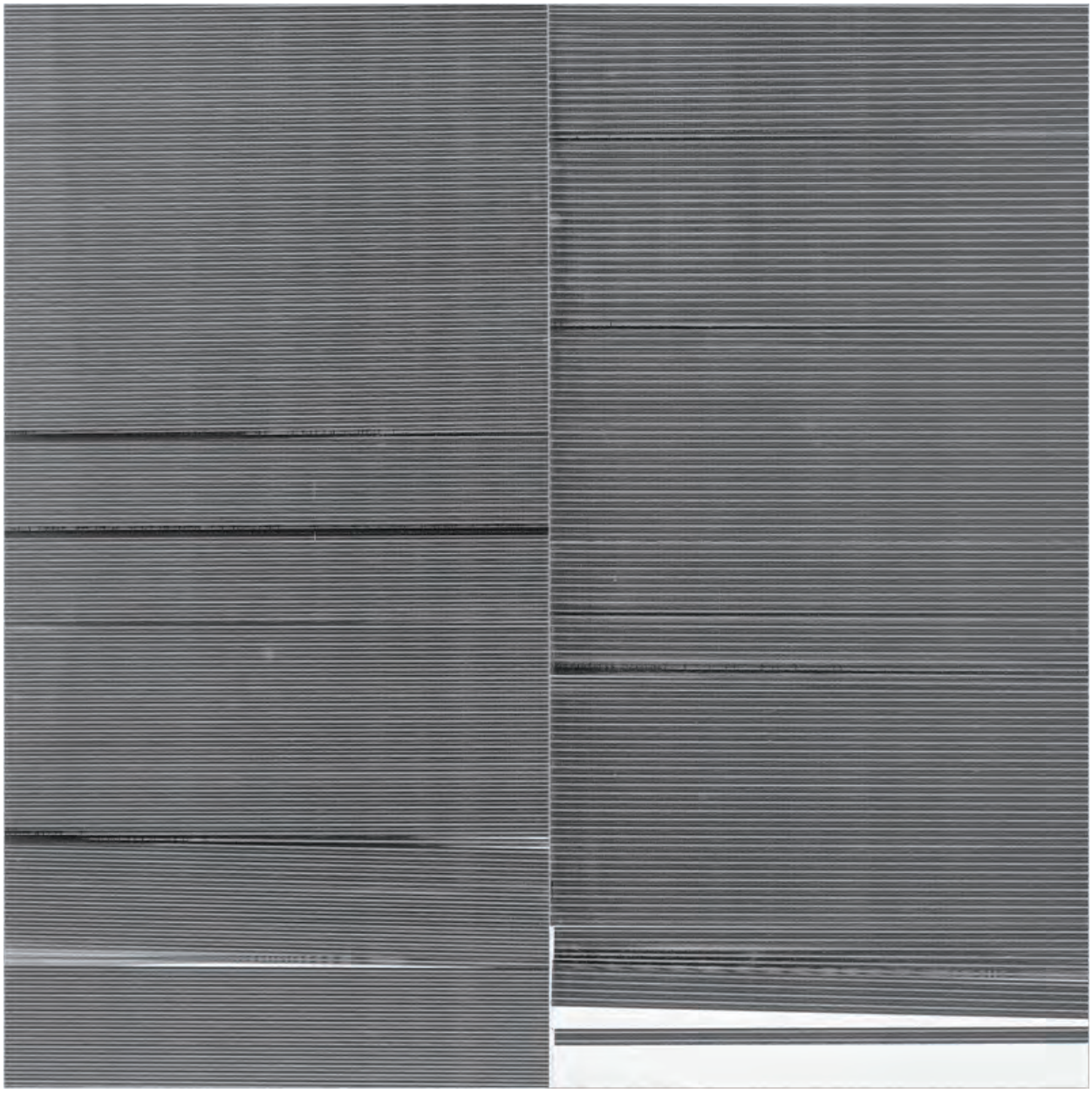
This is how Guyton's black paintings manage to retain the fundamental quotational character of nearly all his canvases to date, even as they speak more declaratively in the modernist language that his work has long addressed. What is being recited is not an image scanned from a book but the term "monochrome," though there is never a one-to-one correspondence between this unstable concept and its utterance. The black field—thanks to its uneven margins, aggregate layers, and multiple printing errors—sits a bit uncomfortably and never quite conterminously on its ground. It feels put there, printed there, on the canvas though not exactly of it. Like an actor who stumbles over his lines or a musician who misses a note, each painting represents the interface between a received idea and its imprecise manifestation in the present—a present that is as much the moment when the canvas wends its way through the printer as it is a particular art-historical and technological context. Guyton's black paintings are not *mélanges* of individual references and allusions, like so many abstractions are today; nor are they stillborn straw men or smirking stand-ins for a modernist orthodoxy that was never as univocal as many of its belated antagonists still tirelessly maintain. Rather, his monochromes suggest a way of making abstract paintings that are alive with the contingencies of their creation and delectation yet are neither innocent of the lessons of postmodernism nor duplicitous about their roots in an infinitely, if imprecisely, replicable digital DNA. Each painting is insistently aware of its distance from its graphic template and from some quasi-mythical model that we may construe only patchily from a museum's gallery, a line of text, or a crenulated JPEG on the Web. The archetype, Guyton knows, is no more fixed than its imperfectly printed instantiation, and his monochrome less absolute than self-consciously penultimate, always ready to be output once more.

1) Johanna Burton analyzes Guyton's use of the word "ostensibly" in a recent essay on the artist. Although I agree that his black paintings gesture "to monochromes without ever really getting there," I believe this to be a fundamental premise of many of the so-called monochromes that she invokes as foils for his canvases. See Burton, "Rites of Silence" in *Artforum* 46, no. 10 (Summer 2008), pp. 365–73. My understanding of the monochrome here is indebted to the writings of Yve-Alain Bois on Ad Reinhardt and Robert Ryman, and especially to his "Painting: The Task of Mourning" in *Painting as Model* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1990), pp. 229–44.

Rothkopf, Scott. "Wade Guyton: The New Black." *Parkett* 83, 2008, pp. 74–81.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

Burton, Johanna. "Wade Guyton: Rites of Silence." *Artforum* 46, no. 10, Summer 2008, cover, pp. 365–73.



Burton, Johanna. "Wade Guyton: Rites of Silence." *Artforum* 46, no. 10, Summer 2008, cover, pp. 365–73.

Rites of Silence

JOHANNA BURTON ON THE ART OF WADE GUYTON

JUST WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS? Poised in front of Wade Guyton's work, admirers and detractors alike often find themselves asking the same question. It's not so much a query regarding the artist's character—though of course it's partially that, too—but rather the expression of a genuine quandary, one that can feel so basic that it's hard to find the way to frame it. *Where is he coming from?* is another way to put it, and it may be a little closer to the mark. But the real question is rather, and perhaps simply: How are we to understand Guyton's relationship to what he makes? And following from that: Why do the oblique contours of this relationship seem to announce themselves as the very content of the work?

Consider two of Guyton's one-person shows mounted in the past six months, the first at Friedrich Petzel Gallery in New York, the second at Galerie Chantal Crousel in Paris. While a group of unique works was produced for each, Guyton would seem at first glance to have presented nearly carbon-copy exhibitions. In both instances, the artist laid down a false floor made of plywood sheets painted a dense black, the kind of black that seems at once to reflect and suck up light. On the walls were hung large-scale paintings, described in the respective—also nearly identical—press releases as "ostensibly black monochromes." Ostensible is a fantastic word, and it goes some way in addressing Guyton's work. Etymologically, it derives from the Latin *ostensus*, "to show," but this connotation of transparency is joined by one of skepticism. There's something being shown, but there's also something that is not being shown, that's being blocked from view. Synonymous with *allegedly*, *ostensibly* also implies that a claim has been made, that a statement has been drafted, but that there is simply no verifiable proof to back it. That which is ostensible looks like, sounds like, even feels like what it purports to be, but it flashes doubt like a striptease, asking that we believe *and* interrogate simultaneously.

Opposite page: Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2007, Epson UltraChrome ink-jet on linen, 84 x 69". This page: Wade Guyton, *Inverted Wood Pile*, 2002, scrap wood, dimensions variable.

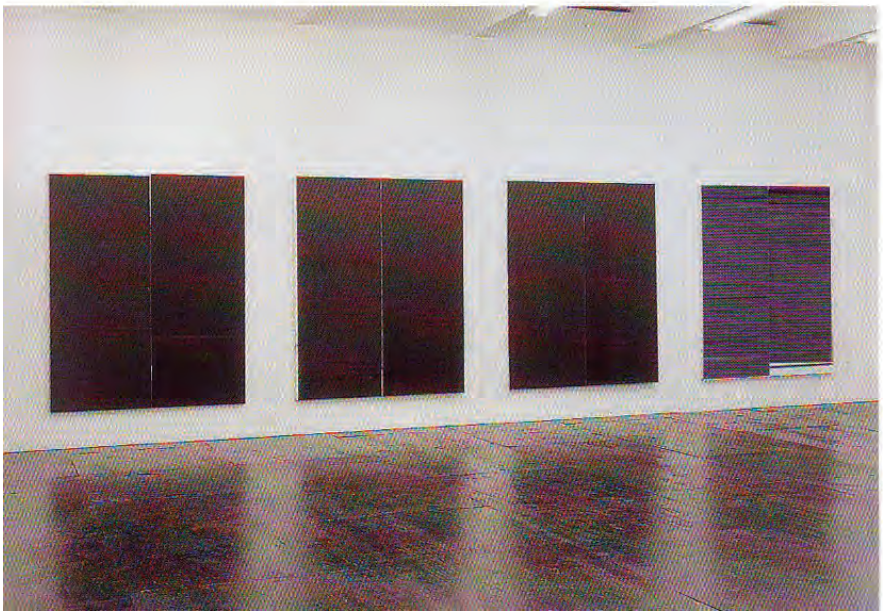
Burton, Johanna. "Wade Guyton: Rites of Silence." *Artforum* 46, no. 10, Summer 2008, cover, pp. 365–73.

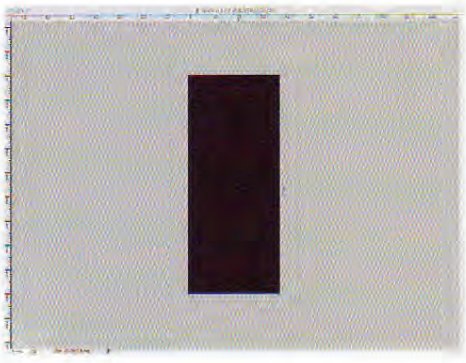
Such operations, though seemingly discovered afresh every decade, have long been the purview of certain practices of painting. Indeed, the past forty years of critical discourse have taken as foundational the idea that it is perhaps *only* its ostensible nature that keeps contemporary painting from relinquishing all relevance. This doesn't mean that a deeply held, intuitively argued belief in painting qua painting is not still in effect. (These days, a phrase like "the function of painting" has a fifty-fifty chance of being met with an eye roll—one more eerie similarity between this era and the 1980s.) What it means, rather, is simply that those who can't quite accept the notion of painting's radical authenticity have long looked for its first principles outside the frame. Take, for instance, the following passage, which would seem to address Guyton's ostensible monochromes astutely enough:

> *It is fundamental to X's work that it function in complicity with those very institutions it seeks to make visible as the necessary condition of the artwork's intelligibility. This is the reason that his work not only appears in museums and galleries but also poses as painting. It is only thereby possible for his work to ask, What makes it possible to see a painting? What makes it possible to see a painting as a painting? And, under such conditions of its presentation, to what end painting?*

My tell-tale substitution of the generic placeholder "X" for a proper name is likely clue enough that this is borrowed text and that it doesn't describe Guyton's paintings at all. As it happens, these are Douglas Crimp's words, from his 1981 essay "The End of Painting," with the subject of his analysis being, perhaps unsurprisingly, one Daniel Buren.[1] Who better to exemplify the contextual turn born of the 1960s and '70s—a shift that allowed for the very conditions of artistic production and reception to become content? And how useful might it prove to think through the implications of one of the original purveyors of institutional critique for an artist, in this case Guyton, whose practice would seem, if not exactly aligned with, nonetheless clearly indebted to the older figure? Buren had his factory-produced textile stripes, Guyton has his equally terse black squares spit out of an ink-jet printer; surely this is a neat transposition of strategies from an industrial to a postindustrial context. In the end, though, while the comparison is indeed quite useful, what turns out to be most illuminating are the differences, not the correspondences, that it reveals.

For however uncannily germane to Guyton's practice Crimp's language might initially seem, the critic's analysis ultimately proves wholly inapplicable to the younger artist's work, and the very disjunction in fact





Burton, Johanna. "Wade Guyton: Rites of Silence." *Artforum* 46, no. 10, Summer 2008, cover, pp. 365–73.

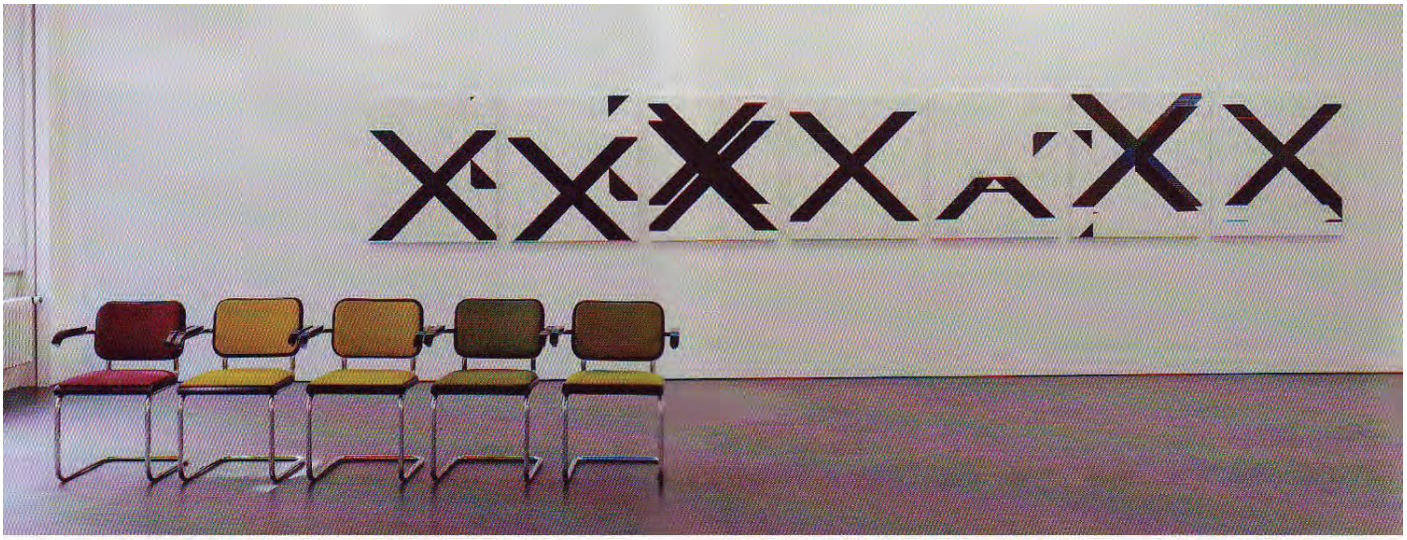
Opposite page, from left: **View of "Wade Guyton," 2007**, Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York. **Screenshot: bigblack.tif, the source file for Guyton's monochromes.** This page, from left: **Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2007**, Epson UltraChrome ink-jet on linen, 80 x 69". **Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2007**, Epson UltraChrome ink-jet on linen, 80 x 69".

sheds some light on greater shifts in the terms of artmaking during the past forty years. If in 1981, Buren continued to hold out promise for critical practice, it was precisely because his work did not read legibly within the language of painting it alluded to. As Crimp put it in his essay's closing gambit, while Buren's work was of course literally visible, it was at odds with any historicist account of painting and therefore did not register within painting's terms. Crimp's projection for the future was clear: "At the moment when Buren's work becomes visible, the code of painting will have been abolished and Buren's repetitions can stop: the end of painting will have been finally acknowledged." Buren was just as confident about the deep ramifications of his own ideas. Quoted in Crimp's essay is a passage from the artist's 1977 volume *Reboundings*, wherein Buren claims the highest stakes for his work: "It is no longer a matter even of challenging the artistic system. Neither is it a matter of taking delight in one's interminable analysis. The ambition of this work is quite different. It aims at nothing less than abolishing the code that has until now made art what it is, in its production and in its institutions."[2] Whether Buren succeeded or failed in these aspirations and whether his subsequent anointment by the very "art history" against which he chafed signals an abolishment or an expansion of said code are questions for another time (and I am certainly not the first to raise them). But the fact that Buren is today so much acknowledged by art-historical discourse—such that the tenets of institutional critique are now readily accepted by institutions themselves—presents a conundrum of sorts for any artist who would seek to make "critical" art. Pointing to the context for painting, or for artmaking more generally, as Guyton does, is inevitably attended by the peril of merely mimicking gestures of the past that, in this changed historical situation, are reduced to motif. We therefore need to ask how artists might best extrapolate from the discursive tussles of Buren's time, pondering how and to what end an artist such as Guyton might be keeping the "end of painting" at bay or, perhaps more aptly, keeping the death of painting alive.

Pointing to the context for artmaking now, as Guyton does, is inevitably attended by the peril of merely mimicking critical gestures of the past that, in this changed historical situation, are reduced to motif. We therefore need to ask how and to what end artists might best extrapolate from yesterday's discursive tussles.

Looking closely at the works in question, one notes that if Guyton is himself working toward the dismantling of

Burton, Johanna. "Wade Guyton: Rites of Silence." *Artforum* 46, no. 10, Summer 2008, cover, pp. 365–73.



codes (or, perhaps more realistically, the rerouting of them), he is not founding his project on the nullification of painting or on its transformation into an illegible cipher: If his are "ostensibly" black monochromes, in other words, it's not due to any confusion whatsoever about the status of these objects as paintings. That is to say that what is "ostensible" here really is the denomination "black monochrome" and not painting itself. Though obviously following a format, Guyton's monochromes have none of the built-in regularity of, say, Buren's stubborn 8.7-centimeter-wide alternating cloth stripes (which have in their way taken on uber-aesthetic status despite their original somewhat anti-aesthetic premise). In fact, the opposite is true. Despite being produced by way of a set of predetermined, extremely limited rules and without a drop of paint or a single brushstroke, they bear all the obvious residues of spontaneous (and therefore "immediate") mark making. Having folded lengths of factory-primed linen so that each half equals the width of his Epson UltraChrome large-format printer (forty-four inches), Guyton runs them through the machine, which deploys hundreds of individual ink-jet heads. Together, these tiny, dumb mechanical soldiers labor at Guyton's behest to produce just as dumb an "image": A black rectangle, drawn and then "filled" by Guyton in Photoshop, is printed twice, once on each side of his folded linen, doubling, in essence, the image of the rectangle (at the same time as trying to unite its parts on one field). Depending on the effects of the initial printing process, Guyton opts to run one side or the other (or sometimes both) through the machine a second and sometimes third time (or more), smoothing and filling prior snags and drags on the one hand and on the other providing an even denser surface on which new anomalies can occur. To the extent that Guyton's enterprise could be seen as one invested in the technics of image production, it figures technology's tendency to complicate, rather than simplify—that is, to make its own kind of mess. And truth be told, Guyton aids and abets the glitches, gagging his printer with material not meant for it and asking it to lay uniform sheets of ink over an expanse twice its size—feats hardly enumerated in the user's manual. In fact, if Guyton has a technical skill per se, it might be defined as encouraging malfunctions.

Once the canvas has been fed through the printer, it drops unceremoniously to the floor and accordingly picks up evidence of its time there in scratches, dings, and dust. The resulting two sides of the rectangle—given the imprecise procedure of simply folding the canvas in half and temporarily taping its edges together—are rarely if ever perfectly aligned; rather, one side typically is slightly higher or lower than the other. And one side, or both, may register the marks of having wandered diagonally off track

Burton, Johanna. "Wade Guyton: Rites of Silence." *Artforum* 46, no. 10, Summer 2008, cover, pp. 365–73.

during printing before being pulled back into alignment; this sometimes produces a kind of shuttered effect, almost photo- graphic in its unintended illusion of light (the primed canvas) peeking out from between regimented lines that no longer match up to form an uninterrupted solid. The ink, trying to fix itself to a ground that is designed to hold thicker pigment, also occasionally pools, smudges, and drips. And of course, every piece of linen, once unfolded, bears the mark of the central seam, not so much a "zip" as a kind of vertical navel.[3] Each painting thus bears proof of its process—the one real constant in every iteration of the series. (Or at least, the only readily apparent one: There is also the single digital "source" that is the foundation of all the monochromes—an image file on Guyton's computer with the hardcore-sounding name "big-black.tif," which, when opened, reveals a comically unassuming little black rectangle.)

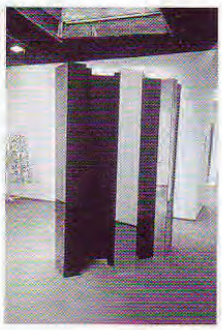
The urge to act the connoisseur and genealogize in the face of these works is palpable as, somewhat counterintuitively, all these procedures result in unadulterated visual pleasure of the kind often associated with abstraction in its more luscious manifestations. Hung sparingly on white walls, the paintings take on the stark elegance we attribute to a whole lineage of morphologically similar items. Names, from Rothko to Reinhardt and Stella to Marden, are apt to fly. But let's not forget that these are ostensible monochromes only. They are, none of them, fully resolved, not *really* monochromes, because the measure of their success rests largely on their gesturing to monochromeness without ever really getting there. Indeed, a few of the most beautiful canvases—which register thread-thin lines spread nearly an inch apart from one another—are also the most minimal. They were not, however, produced because the cartridge was running dry, as one might think—the problem is not too little ink but, in a sense, too much, as the machine overloads itself in an attempt to carry out Guyton's bidding over and over again.

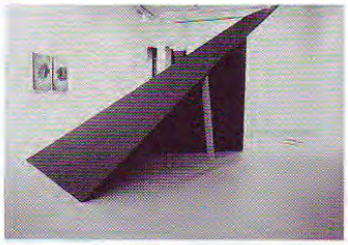
If it seems that Guyton has reached this point too early—what avenues has he left open for himself, one wonders while looking at so many iterations of the high-culture sign for "That's all, folks"—it is worth considering how his career has proceeded by way of such impasses, with such seeming foreclosures levied to hold open future possibilities.

With nearly all its jet heads clogged by ink that has built up and coagulated, the printer barely sputters out a trace of the image it is asked to compulsively repeat. The delicate, visually complex composition that accrues is nothing more than evidence that the Epson "self-clean" function has not kicked in when it ought to.

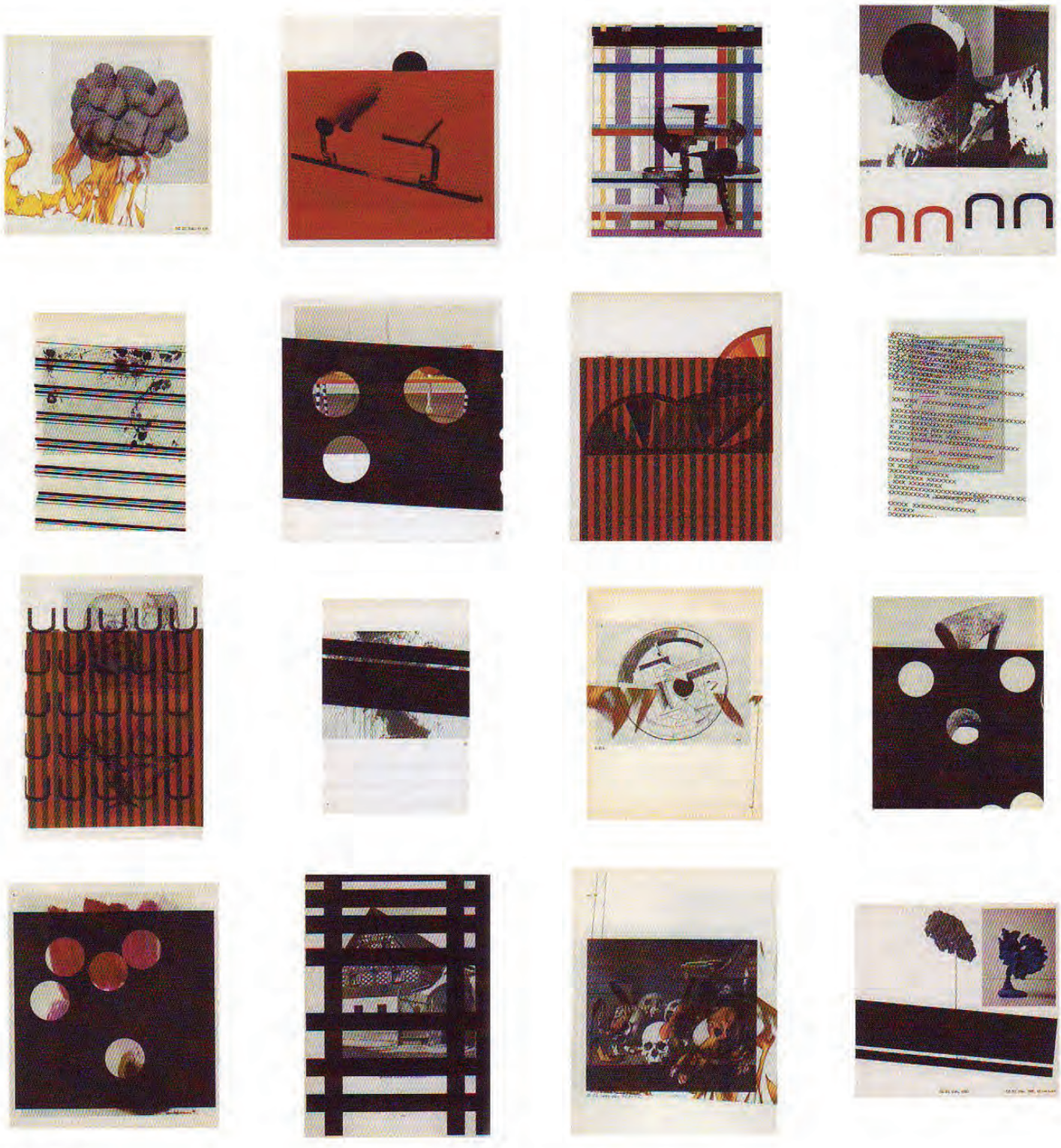
So what are we to make of all this? Guyton's process is steeped in embarrassingly elementary moves: Preselecting basic parameters such as whether to print "draft" or "economy," at "speed" or "quality" rate, and according to "normal," "fine," or "photo" standards—and then simply pushing "print"—comprises most of the artist's control over the work he produces. (The critic inevitably wonders whether it is, after all, worth spilling this much ink on, well, the vicissitudes of spilled ink.) And yet he pairs this embarrassment with another one: that of making

Opposite page: **View of "Wade Guyton," 2007**, Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich. Foreground: *Untitled Action Sculpture (Five Enron Chairs)*, 2007. Background, from left: *Untitled*, 2007; *Untitled*, 2007; *Untitled*, 2007; *Untitled*, 2007; *Untitled*, 2007; *Untitled*, 2007; and *Untitled*, 2007. This page, from left: **Wade Guyton, *Untitled Mirrored Sculpture (Gold, Bronze, Black)*, 2000**, Plexiglas and mirrored acrylic, 86 x 64 x 60". **Wade Guyton, *Fragment of Sculpture the Size of a House (Black Plywood)*, 2002**, plywood and aluminum, 8 x 10 x 12'. **Wade Guyton, *Drawing for Sculpture the Size of a House*, 2001**, marker on photograph, 4 x 6".





Burton, Johanna. "Wade Guyton: Rites of Silence." *Artforum* 46, no. 10, Summer 2008, cover, pp. 365–73.



Burton, Johanna. "Wade Guyton: Rites of Silence." *Artforum* 46, no. 10, Summer 2008, cover, pp. 365–73.

undeniably aesthetic products. (Here Guyton's works would seem to perform themselves as decoys inciting the urge for art-historical roll-calling—a kind of bald "ostensibility" that might appear all too well attuned to the current vogue for generic "appropriative" gestures.) Taken together, however, these qualities imply an awareness that a work of art's motioning toward another that came before it does not necessarily bear out much meaning; and an assumption that the binary poles of pining homage and violent erasure are the only two ways to read such allusions is just another mode of marketing. Guyton's recent series of black paintings nods, if mutely, toward this crossroads, in which engagements with discursive history and profiteering usurpations of it look more and more similar. For if today it is impossible not to recognize the lessons handed down by Buren and others, it is likewise impossible not to see how those lessons themselves have been incorporated as a kind of affirmative content. If the language of "abolishing the code" has itself *become* code, what can one say in retort or even in response?[4]

FINALLY, A PERSONAL INCIDENT, *which will nicely introduce the figures to come: Thursday, March 9, fine afternoon, I go out to buy some paints (Sennelier inks) → bottles of pigment: following my taste for the names (golden yellow, sky blue, brilliant green, purple, sun yellow, cartham pink—a rather intense pink), I buy sixteen bottles. In putting them away, I knock one over: in sponging up, I make a new mess: little domestic complications. . . . And now, I am going to give you the official name of the spilled color, a name printed on the small bottle (as on the others vermilion, turquoise, etc.): it was the color called Neutral (obviously I had opened this bottle first to see what kind of color was this Neutral about which I am going to be speaking for thirteen weeks). Well, I was both punished and disappointed: pun- ished because Neutral spatters and stains (it's a type of dull gray-black); disappointed because Neutral is a color like the others, and for sale (therefore, Neutral is not unmarketable): the unclassifiable is classified → all the more reason for us to go back to discourse, which, at least, cannot say what the Neutral is.*[5]

The spring of 1978 found Roland Barthes doing his own ruminating on the vicissitudes of spilled ink and giving his second lecture series at the Collège de France. Over several months, he introduced and expounded on a term that, nonetheless, he had no intention of ever fully pinning down: "the Neutral."[6] Summing the course up for the school's compulsory annual report, Barthes wrote of his topic that "one studies what one desires or what one fears; within this perspective, the authentic title of the course could have been: *The Desire for Neutral*." He continues, "The argument of the course has been the following: we have defined as pertaining to the Neutral every inflection that, dodging or baffling the paradigmatic, oppositional structure of meaning, aims at the suspension of the conflictual basis of discourse." Presented not as a progressively building argument but instead as an offering of twenty-three figures or "twinklings," Barthes's exploration of the Neutral includes an argument for silence as one of the incarnations of his fugitive concept. The word—*silence*—should perhaps be treated with some circumspection here; as Barthes points out, he is himself *speaking* about it. Indeed, silence as defined by Barthes, like many of the figures he presents,

However much the artist laces his found images with varia printed atop them, they remain partially their own, pulled rudely from their bindings and thus displaced into their new, not wholly transparent contexts.

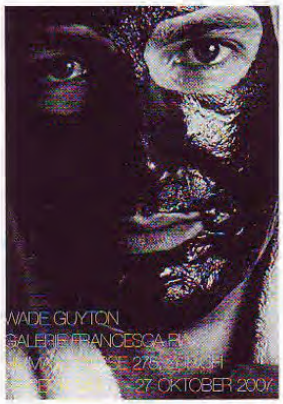
First row, from left: **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled (SE 22, blau, 41 cm)***, **2007**, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 7½ x 7⅛". **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled (25 Caro, PIECE #33, 1967)***, **2004**, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 9 x 8⅝". **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled***, **2005**, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 8⅛ x 6⅛". **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled (23)***, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 11 $^{23}/_{16}$ x 9¼".

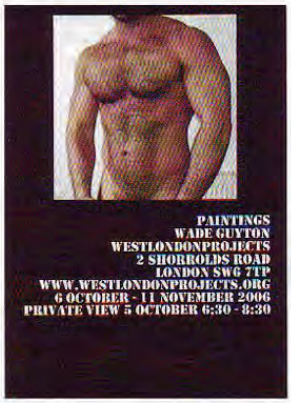
Second row, from left: **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled***, **2008**, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 8½ x 6". **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled (86)***, **2007**, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 9¾ x 8⅜". **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled***, **2004**, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 10 x 8 $^{23}/_{16}$". **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled (1973)***, **2007**, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 7⅛ x 5".

Third row, from left: **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled***, **2005**, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 10¾ x 7⅜". **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled (39 9)***, **2007**, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 8¼ x 5¾". **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled (A.31 k 100)***, **2007**, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 8½ x 6⅜". **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled***, **2007**, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 8 $^{15}/_{16}$ x 6⅞".

Fourth row, from left: **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled (6.)***, **2006**, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 9¾ x 8⅜". **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled***, **2003**, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 10 $^{15}/_{16}$ x 7½". **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled (cat. 28 A.B. van der SCHOOR)***, **2007**, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 9⅛ x 7½". **Wade Guyton**, ***Untitled (SE 93. blau, 1960 SE 33, blau, 1960, 42 cm hoch)***, **2007**, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 7⅛ x 7⅞".

Burton, Johanna. "Wade Guyton: Rites of Silence." *Artforum* 46, no. 10, Summer 2008, cover, pp. 365–73.





This page, from left: Wade Guyton, exhibition poster (Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich), 2007. Wade Guyton, exhibition poster (West London Projects), 2006. Opposite page: Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2006, Epson UltraChrome ink-jet on linen, 80 ½ x 69".

does not conform to our likely expectations. Silence—like the Neutral itself—is not a passive condition but rather one voluptuously active, so active in fact that it refuses to settle into or onto a singularly readable position. If this sounds dangerously close to a kind of willy-nilly, fleeting lack of commitment, it of course risks being so (but only when it is not *actually* Neutral); for an active silence, as Barthes puts it, is what lies at the heart of all rigorous discourse. It opposes dogmatic speech *and* dogmatic silence alike.

As the foregoing may hint, an obvious tension regarding politics is characteristic of much of Barthes's late work.[7] His suggestion that endlessly articulated battles between opposing opinions might be less potentially subversive than what remains unstated ("the implicit is a crime, because the implicit is a thought that escapes power") is understandably met with frustration by those in circumstances demanding nothing less than out-and-out activism. But Barthes's was, again, not a dictum to be consumed and applied. It was a methodological manifestation of *desire*—full if unfulfilled, and quite analogous to his (disappointed) dream of a truly neutral ink, without color or body; a desire that had all manner of political implications, not the least being that, as one commentator put it, Barthes's writing marked a lifelong project with "no motor other than desire."[8]

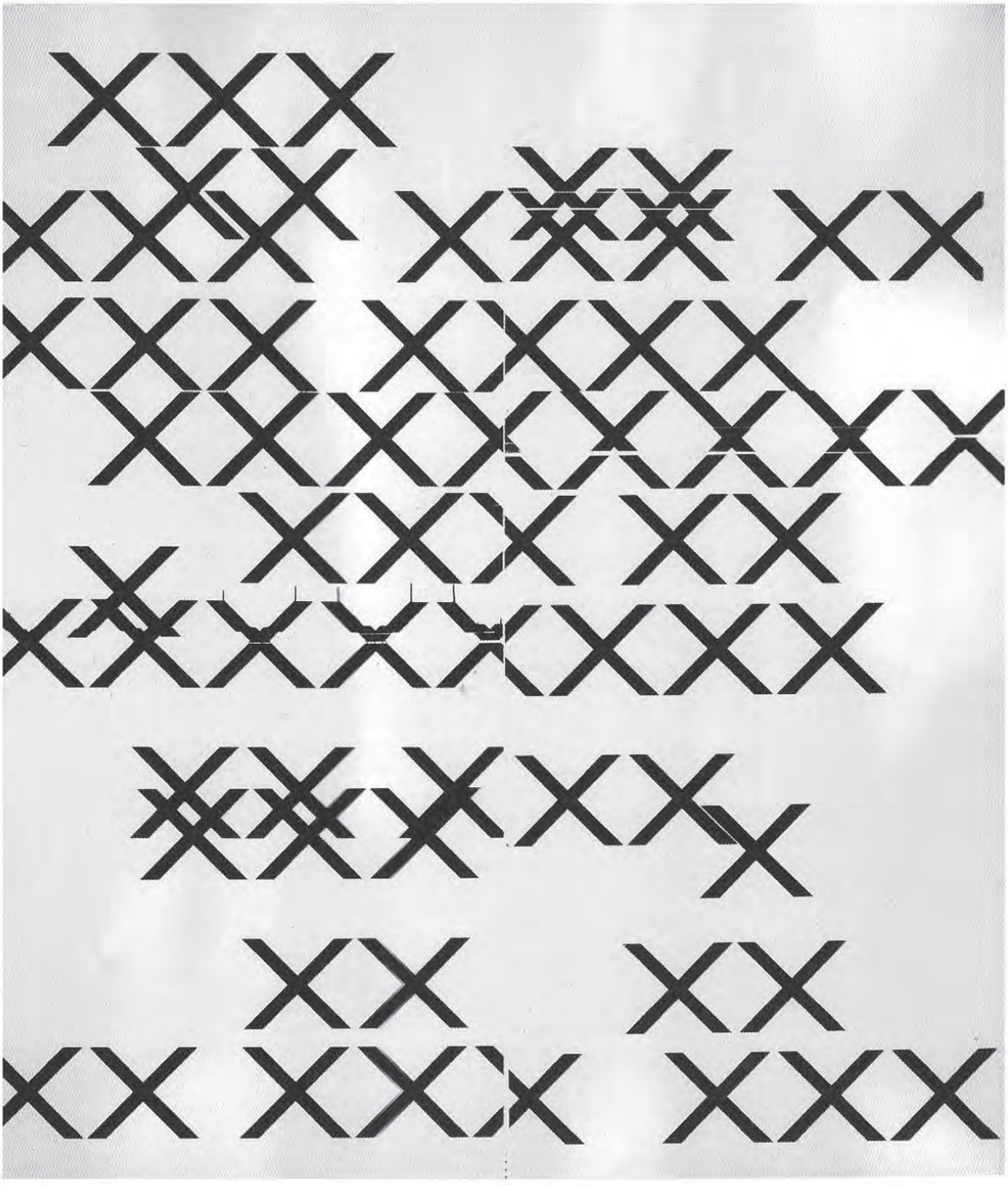
Guyton, too, seems, if not programmatically, to put forward a kind of Neutral deportment, one that, per Barthes, "postulates a right to be silent." That does not, of course, keep his commentators from ascribing, almost compulsively (and often aggressively), content and intent. (Indeed, Barthes's worry about silence is that while it begins as a "weapon assumed to outplay the paradigms," it too "congeals itself into a sign.") It's hard to imagine a more overdetermined space than the site of the monochrome—the *black* monochrome no less, that tried-and-true image that now virtually screams out its simultaneous status as tabula rasa and tabula finitum. But if it seems that Guyton, at thirty-six years old, has reached this point much too early—what avenues has he left open for himself, one wonders while looking at so many iterations of the high-culture sign for "That's all, folks"—it is worth considering the ways in which his career has proceeded by way of such impasses, with such seeming foreclosures levied to hold open future possibilities.

Not pristine or even simply "ostensible," Guyton's monochromes take their place within the narrative of "painting," understanding that to deny doing so would be bad faith. Scratched, scumbled, in some instances stepped on, they are at once vaguely expressionistic in tone, elegiac in their relation to their (presumed) lineage, and, frankly, also a little the worse for wear.

It's not unfair, I hope, to characterize Guyton's oeuvre to date as evincing a certain productive panic when it comes to rendering transparent the reality of being an artist who is faced with the task of making things. He absorbed the lessons of modernism and then postmodernism as an undergraduate in Knoxville, Tennessee, only to arrive in New York in 1996 with a head full of images and ideas that, learned as they were at a slight delay, were no longer quite contemporary. With a certain wariness, Guyton—who for the record, no matter how much attention this essay pays to painting, is not strictly a painter— then set to work entering the dialogue he had previously engaged almost exclusively by way of mediation (art-history books, theoretical anthologies, this magazine). He made sculpture: quirky quasi-Minimalist forms in wood or

For notes, see page 464.

Burton, Johanna. "Wade Guyton: Rites of Silence." *Artforum* 46, no. 10, Summer 2008, cover, pp. 365–73.



Burton, Johanna. "Wade Guyton: Rites of Silence." *Artforum* 46, no. 10, Summer 2008, cover, pp. 365–73.

cork that took up too much or too little space; barely held-together strips of mirrored Plexiglas whose accordion forms reflected viewers back in tall-skinny sections (a pathetically glittery effect at once carnivalesque and dance-clubby). By 2001, some of Guyton's sculptural renderings had taken a turn toward the disembodied. He found or took photographs—mostly of architecture, mostly banal—and then altered them using a black Sharpie to blot out selected features of the images, producing studies for sculptures that could never be realized, except possibly through some science-fictional techniques, since the sculptures he envisioned were essentially holes in space. Voiding the image but leaving its method of excision visible, Guyton's *Drawing for Sculpture the Size of a House*, 2001, made the contours of a low-slung American ranch house into a nameless one-dimensional shape, its jutting angles now mere geometry. (An unusually dramatic version of this kind of rendering was produced in *Drawing for Perpetually Burning Object*, 2002, in which an image of a blocky *something*, presumably a building, ravaged by angry flames becomes, with the architecture Sharpied out, a kind of Dantean nightmare.) For an "actual" sculpture, which he was asked to make for a public-art show in Brewster, New York, the artist, after scouring the area to no inspirational avail, landed on a heap of scrap wood in an alley, more or less neatly abandoned by its previous user when whatever task he or she was working on was finished. Guyton de- and then reassembled the pile, arranging it exactly as he had found it, except turned precisely on its head. (The resulting "sculpture" looked almost identical to the raw materials.) That Guyton wasn't really making a particular kind of material "his own"—or better said, that his use of the ready-made or found object seemed to result mostly in disappearing objects rather than claiming or really "transforming" them—seems fundamental to his practice in retrospect.

But this reaching toward things only to partially and rather heavy-handedly efface them was after all a *grasping*, and it offered itself as an insight that could be deployed procedurally only after Guyton worked more circumspectly than usual, one day in 2002, to mark a large black X over a page he had ripped from a design magazine. He used a ruler, and the lines were more or less straight, but not really, and the unevenness of the ink made the X look more handmade, less dispassionate, than he'd wanted it to. It also took much too long to produce, considering how dumb a gesture it was meant to be. Ripping another page from his stack of magazines and books, he fed it through his home printer (this one little and cheap: an Epson, but no Ultra) after plugging in a ridiculously high point size and typing one giant letter into an otherwise blank Word document: X.

To say that suddenly Guyton's hands were thus untied would make the change too profound and too definitively liberating. In fact, the rounds of "Printer Drawings" that ensued and that have continued apace, all of which use book or magazine pages as supports, may let Guyton off the hook for producing their "content"; but in so doing, they render more visible, and thus put more pressure on, this choice to let other images speak to some extent on his behalf. However much he laces his found pages with varia printed atop them, they remain partially their own, pulled rudely from their bindings and thus displaced into their new, not wholly transparent contexts. The imagery Guyton generated to superimpose on these backgrounds was limited at first to oversize X's but was soon joined by U's, colored dots and lines, squares, holes, grids, and other such not-designs constructed with letters or shapes made using Microsoft Word's "drawing tool." Also entering the mix in a few instances were three-dimensional objects, such as a wooden triangle, placed directly on the scanner, and, more often, a handful of "generic" images scanned from other sources and vetted through Photoshop (consistent favorites being "fire" and alternating green and red stripes, both swiped from book jackets). Take for example an untitled drawing from 2005, in which Guyton imposes his forcefully cheery green and red stripes over a page from an art book bearing a picture of a pastel Morris Louis painting from 1962. The placement of Guyton's stamp (one that is of course borrowed, not quite his own) on that of Louis (for a Louis is always recognizable as such, and here doubly so, since its caption is visible) neither cancels out the "first" image nor fully articulates a relationship to it. Yet this doubling gesture is still seemingly "readable," in much the same way that a series of "Action Sculptures" the artist has produced since 2002 is: High-design midcentury furniture is taken apart and manhandled into a lyric but ridiculous new form, but will always remain, and will always be recognizable as, Breuer chairs.

Guyton's decision in 2003 to also begin producing what would eventually become "paintings," first on raw, unstretched linen and soon thereafter on primed and stretched canvas, would seem to be distinctly different from the kind of tête-à-tête pairings of background source image and added superimposition created by the drawings, with their strangely tender yet proprietary urge. But Guyton's stretched paintings of the past few years, no less than the pages torn directly from books, acknowledge what writer Bettina Funcke has called the "risk of images," which she describes as the ethical

Burton, Johanna. "Wade Guyton: Rites of Silence." *Artforum* 46, no. 10, Summer 2008, cover, pp. 365–73.

and conceptual precipice arrived at by artists who participate in image recycling.[9] Some of these paintings appear stridently minimal, X's alone or multiplied and advancing in uneven rows, their typeface bodies subtly shifting under the eye (since some were printed directly from digital files and so are crisp and clear, while others are scans of previous works Guyton has produced and have thus experienced "loss"). Others are nearly baroque: Multiple, nauseously Pop-colored U's are consumed by Guyton's flame; a black square and four random white circles overtly court anthropomorphism, the seemingly gaping holes approximating open-eyed vacuity even while insisting that this is just abstraction after all. What is imported from the world of preexisting imagery becomes confused with what is mapped out within the purview of Photoshop and Word. The printer drawings' back- and foregrounds are more clearly distinguished by such overdetermined content as pages occupied first by Broodthaers, Farnsworth, Caro, and Stella and subsequently by Guyton; the paintings appear to have flattened such distinctions. Yet in producing through their more general nature—their ability to conjure a Rodchenko or a Black Flag logo or anything in between—even more references, they seem ever more tethered to citation, if less stably so. A "Printer Painting" in which the ink-jets have almost sputtered out, leaving us with an ostensible black monochrome that has nearly become an ostensible white monochrome, discloses nothing, and so discloses everything.

"If I were to describe it in a word I should say that I have been like a cartridge that's jammed." So says Henry Miller, in "The Angel Is My Watermark!," a semiparodic, nearly twenty-page episode in Black Spring in which the author relates "the genesis of a masterpiece."[10] Living before the Staples epoch, Miller was presumably referring to a firearm, not a balky LaserJet. Yet his mention of a jammed cartridge is serendipitous on several levels. In their too-muchness and not-enoughness, Guyton's works are almost uncannily illuminated via a reading of Miller's characteristically manic reflections on the necessary interplay of erasure and inscription in the (supposedly purely additive) "act of creation." Poking fun at—yet clearly enamored of- myths of genius, Miller enumerates a process of conceiving, in his artist's notepad, a complex layering of drawn and painted images, all of them symbolically ripe but none of them working. Having decided after two excruciating days that the endeavor has failed, he finally scrubs the wretched thing in the sink and, of course, what does not wash away is the unexpected magnum opus—"It's like a splinter under the nail," he says. Despite the tongue in cheek, Miller—that self-professed jammed cartridge—concedes that there is truth to his parable: "I have never been able to draw a balance. I am always *minus* something. I have a reason therefore to go on."

That there is a certain romanticism to quoting Miller on painting (writing in 1936 as he was, an expat in France, surrounded on all sides by the good and the bad of avant-garde heroics) is unavoidable, but in the end this is perhaps a fair—if also perhaps an unexpected—treatment of Guyton's work. Emphatic discussions of his art have focused on his clear attendance to "modernism," by way of his recycling some of its images (or what we think are its images), and on his interest in up-to-date technologies and modes of mediation (given his obvious debts to the machines on which he relies and to whose vocabularies he cannot help but subscribe). Yet there is nonetheless a minus that is glossed over in this reading. That minus is why Guyton's recent monochromes are not send-ups of—or even ironic commentaries on—finitude, despite their seeming courtship of degree zero. (Like the Neutral, Miller's minus takes its pleasure from being generatively deficient: Barthes calls pluses and minuses "intensive degrees.") They are, akin to Miller's dingy "masterpiece," scrubbed back down to basics while still having clearly been put through the ringer. Not pristine or even simply ostensible, they take their place within the narrative of "painting," understanding that to deny doing so would be bad faith. Scratched, scumbled, in some instances stepped on, they are at once vaguely expressionistic in tone, elegiac in their relation to their (presumed) lineage, and, frankly, also a little the worse for wear.

But there is another way to think about this lenticular affect, this display of wear and tear that looks melancholic from one angle and parodic from another. One thing that is displaced (one might even say denied) in interpretations of Guyton's work that focus on the precedents, or on the technology and the process, is desire. To really look squarely at this artist's work is to find desire staring you in the face—"outplaying itself," Barthes might say, which means desire is not locatable in the image, exactly, but is still felt within its nimbus. Desire largely proceeds, as Lacan and Louis Vuitton know equally well, according to what one does *not* have, by making objects and ideas (and even oneself) into what they are not.[11]

Guyton's usurpations and representations of images—actual and "types"—proceed quite blatantly in this vein, a now-you-see-it-now-you-don't admission that he's

only partially delivering the goods. The negotiation gives rise to funny, queer, unexpectedly campy side effects, which are present in all the work but more evident in some. Take the posters Guyton creates to announce his exhibitions. The one for his 2006 show at West London Projects—an elegantly composed installation of X paintings—uses an image likely pulled from some cheesy soft-core site, a beefy, hairy guy cropped at the neck and thighs, his thick torso giving what is precisely the "wrong impression" of what was to be shown at the gallery. Similarly, Guyton's poster for a solo show in 2007 at Galerie Francesca Pia, in Zurich, handed over its entire surface to the pampered visage of an anonymous '70s fitness hunk, his face coated in a thick—vaguely scatological—mud mask, his eyes soft with performed relaxation. If this content seems utterly incompatible with the rest, which seems so general—or so specific—as to resist the kind of reading suggested, it's important to remember just how many of Guyton's drawings and paintings are given over to literally "flaming" effects and, less literally, how his entire practice is predicated on questions about "passing."

Susan Sontag, of course, had the last word on camp even when she first articulated it, in 1964. As she explained and as we all know well by now, camp traffics in exaggeration, in the "off," in "things-being-what-they-are-not." Less rehearsed, but even more pointedly relevant here, is another of Sontag's arguments: Camp is the purview of "style," of, therefore, the "ostensible": "To emphasize style is to slight content, or to introduce an attitude which is neutral with respect to content. It goes without saying that the Camp sensibility is disengaged, depoliticized—or at least apolitical."[12] But this attitude which is neutral with respect to content is, she goes on to say at the essay's very end, "a tender feeling." Perhaps the question of where to place Guyton's practice in the field of contemporary art is only answered, then, by taking seriously the kind of neutrality that Barthes—and I think Sontag, too—marks as "active." So to begin again, just who does Guyton think he is? A better question might be, How does he go on, when every image looks like it will be the last? Driven by no motor other than desire.

—Johanna Burton is an art historian and critic based in New York, and associate director and senior faculty member at the Whitney Independent Study Program.

NOTES

1. Douglas Crimp, "The End of Painting," October 16 (Spring 1981). Reprinted in Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 84–105. Crimp's essay specifically addresses Barbara Rose's review of the show "Eight Contemporary Artists," held at MoMA in 1974, which included Buren. For Rose, Buren stood as emblematic of a group whose overly political aspirations bred "disenchanted, demoralized artists" producing mediocre work. In 1979, Rose curated an exhibition at the Grey Art Gallery in New York, titled "American Painting: The Eighties." Crimp argues that the show was meant as retaliation against Conceptual practices such as Buren's and aimed to reinscribe traditional ideas about the legacies of painting.

2. From Daniel Buren, *Reboundings: An Essay*, trans. Philippe Hunt (Brussels: Daled & Gevaert, 1977). Cited in Crimp, 103.

3. This folding of the canvas—with the result that paintings can double in size—began well before Guyton's monochromes, manifesting in paintings that include X's, flames, etc., so the "navel" is itself not unique to this most recent series. However, while the X's and flames resulted from one large file being split in half (and thus printed in two sections, one on each side of the canvas), the monochromes are in fact the result of two iterations of the same bigblack.tif file printed one after the other.

4. See on this topic, for instance, Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, who has long written on Buren and Buren's reception, "The Group That Was (Not) One: Daniel Buren and BMPT," in Artforum (May 2008), 310–313. He writes succinctly there: "It will be one of the questions for our decade to ponder why the spaces and practices of contestation and critique that Buren (and Hans Haacke, Michael Asher, Marcel Broodthaers, et al.) opened at the end of the '60s were—or so it seems now, at least—irredeemably hijacked. . . ."

5. From Roland Barthes, *The Neutral*, trans. Rosalind E. Krauss and Denis Hollier (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 48–49.

6. The seminar, *Le Neutre*, was not compiled and published in France until 2002; it was subsequently translated into English in 2005.

7. Questions regarding the relationship between one's politics and one's practice have long been asked. An interesting article appeared in *Artforum* (November 1977: 46–53) by Moira Roth, whose "The Aesthetic of Indifference" looked closely at "cool" practices by Duchamp, Cage, Cunningham, Rauschenberg, and Johns. Roth argues that though their practices do not comment directly on the cold war during which they thrived, they, like "others of a more liberal and self-critical persuasion, found themselves paralyzed when called upon to act on their convictions, and this paralysis frequently appeared as indifference." I am arguing not for a paralyzing indifference but instead for a kind of personal, even amorous politics, but it is interesting that there is similarity when it comes to how and even whether signs of the political are perceived.

8. This is Thomas Clerc's phrase, in his preface to The Neutral, xxiii. Clerc is referring explicitly to the way in which Barthes uses such a wide array of sources from all areas of culture. He similarly discusses the wide net of Barthes's inquires and citations as proceeding by way of a kind of "secondhand erudition" and a "joyous dilettantism," neither of which undermines Barthes's rigor as a thinker but both of which do highlight the unconventional nature of his method.

9. See Bettina Funcke's 2006 essay "The Risk of Images," which focuses on Guyton's work and is included in the catalogue *Guyton, Price, Smith, Walker* (Kunsthalle Zurich: JRP/Ringier, forthcoming, 2008). There she writes provocatively, "It remains to be seen what the appropriate response of artists will be to a new and particular risk of images. The zero dimension of the digital gives the power to manipulate to both the politician and the artist, to the terrorist and the activist, to popular culture and its critique, alike."

10. Henry Miller, *Black Spring* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 57–76.

11. Guyton takes up the question of desire as it pertains to commercial goods and advertising somewhat differently in his work for Guyton\Walker, his collaboration with artist Kelley Walker. Utilizing materials including the logo and marketing slogans for Ketel One vodka, Guyton\Walker takes up more overtly the address of cultural signs. Walker, in his solo work, can also, as Scott Rothkopf argues, be read through the logic of desire, though this is a desire thoroughly vetted—even produced—by the machinations of popular culture. See Rothkopf's essay in exh. cat. *Kelley Walker* (Le Magasin—Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Grenoble: JRP/Ringier, 2007), 105–125. In addition, for a valuable discussion of Guyton's work—and, more specifically, working procedures— see Rothkopf's "Modern Pictures," in exh. cat. *Wade Guyton: Color, Power & Style* (Kunstverein in Hamburg: Walther König, 2006), 64–83. Also, see my "Such Uneventful Events: The Work of Wade Guyton," in exh. cat. *Formalism: Modern Art, Today* (Kunstverein in Hamburg: Hatje Cantz, 2004), 54–61.

12. Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp'" (1964), in Sontag, *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966), 275–292.

Burton, Johanna. "Wade Guyton: Rites of Silence." *Artforum* 46, no. 10, Summer 2008, cover, pp. 365–73.

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY
523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

FRIEZE

Wade Guyton

New forms of Modernism; ambivalence and ambiguity; 'an act of processing'

by *Kirsty Bell*

'Tradition ... involves, in the first place, the historical sense ... a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence.'
T.S. Eliot 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', 1922

With its citations from the history of Modernism, the pastness of the past is as much apparent in Wade Guyton's work as the past's continued presence re-articulated with an awareness of the critical strategies of Postmodernism. Guyton's *Untitled Action Sculpture (Breuer)* (2005) could be seen as an emblematic sculpture. The tubular steel frame of a Marcel Breuer chair is partially un-bent and stretched out to form a tall free-standing abstract sculpture. Enough of is distinctive original shape remains for it to still be recognizable, but its new form implies a random indeterminacy at odds with the structural utilitarianism of its origins. The Modernist fetish object is translated into an essentially useless art object that points towards a tradition of abstraction, but its abstract convictions are troubled by its culturally loaded source material. Its meaning is determinedly open-ended and Guyton's relation to his source remains ambiguous. The iconic object is neither celebrated nor wholly desecrated; the significance of the original remains clear while the deconstructive gesture seems rather to explore the limitations of transformation within the individual's reach.

Guyton's ongoing series of 'printer drawings' enact a similar type of low-key intrusion into the graphic evidence of Modernist history. Pages from books showing (mostly) black and white reproductions of key Modernist art works, or sometimes timber-frame houses, are fed through a home-office ink jet printer and marked with thick black or red marks, drawn up on a word document. A black rectangle blots out half of a Moholy-Nagy construction; a group of smudged black circles disturb the pleasing geometry of a Kenneth Noland painting; a 'U' blown up to an exaggerated scale straddles another image. The overwhelming impulse is to recognize the 'true' picture beneath the clumsy surrogate geometries superimposed on it; the tradition beneath the contemporary doodlings. As with the Breuer chair, Guyton leaves this possibility open, merely encumbering his images with traces of more recent artistic activity. While these drawings could be read as refelctions on the soft geometry of word processing and photoshop versus the hardline conceptual geometries of Modernism, or of the readily available technological means of home reproduction versus the limited possibilities of photographic reproduction that first appeared in art books in the mid 20th century, such easy dichotomies are weakened by the ambiguity, and apparent randomness, of the final images. They do not imply a superceding of the past but rather lay it out to suggest its contiguous 'presence' and 'pastness', as well as the complexities facing a young artist in confronting it. As Eliot first put it, and the rest of the century confirmed, 'no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists.'

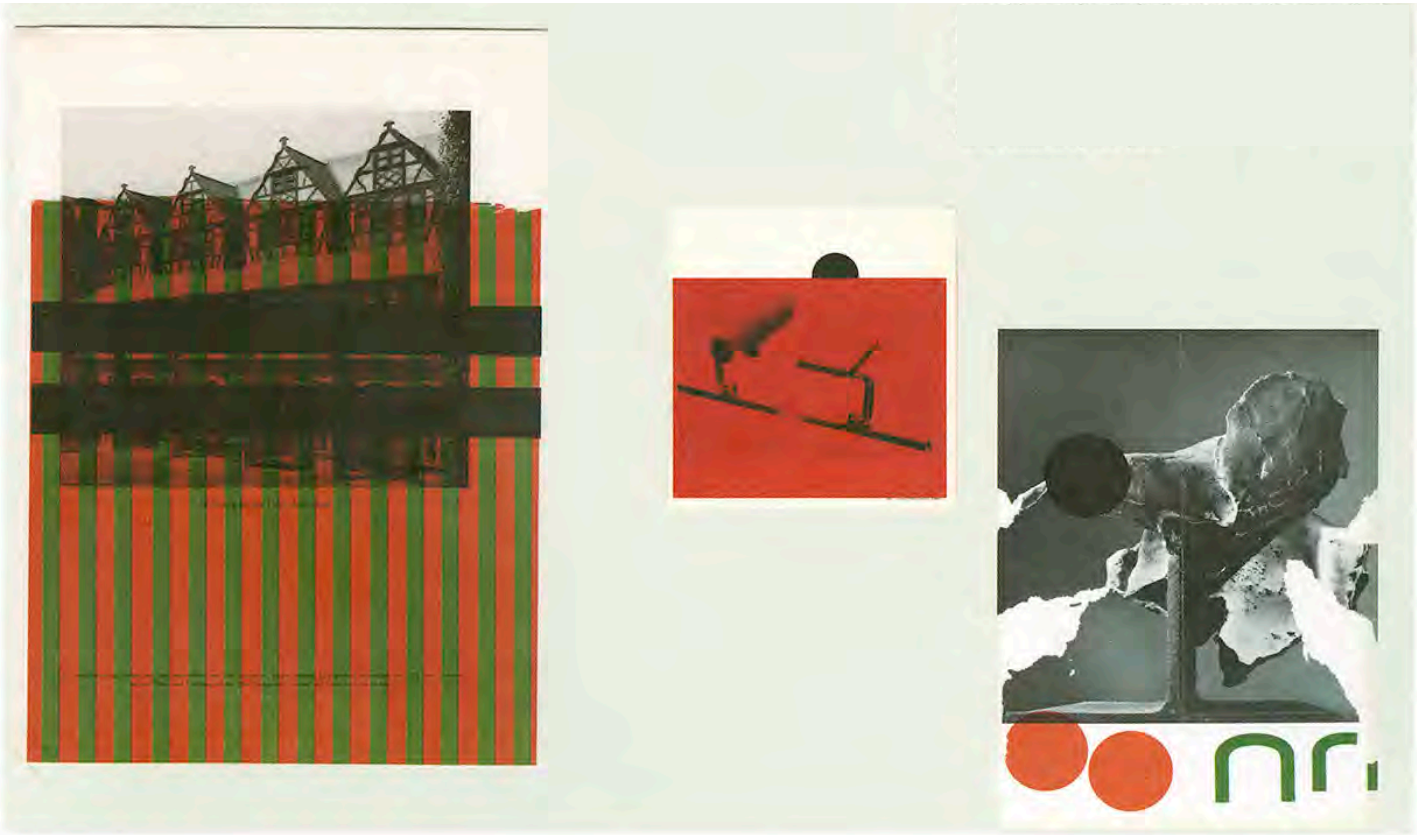
Ambivalence is a central characteristic of Guyton's work. He makes a point of choosing pages at random to over-print, or signs with no singular meaning, and is at pains to avoid an easy elegance. As a result, there is nothing simple or neat about his works and rather a sense of endgame whereby narrative is alluded to but not concluded. It is partially obscured but thereby all the more present, as John Baldessari described it: 'the point is – the return of the repressed. The more you try to blot it out, the more its going to be there.' But his relation to the sources he chooses remains open-ended, confused by the apparent lack of intention of his creative decision-making. A circular process ensues of self-conscious citation overlaid with unsophisticated sign-making, where formal decisions are handed over to the rather less than perfect technology of the ink-jet printer, and ensuing smears, blots and misalignments are absorbed into the final design. Arranged in series between panes of glass in heavy wooden frames, the narrative codes of the art books as much as the textual codes of the computer-printer process are broken and the works stutter in dumb looping repetition. The effect is somewhat like Richard Prince's joke paintings, bad jokes repeated and repeated until the words themselves seem alienated and meaningless, and humour gives way to an aching melancholy. But Guyton has described his works as 'an act of processing', not 'negation' which results in 'stasis' rather than nihilism; the stasis of tradition perhaps where the past is absorbed by the present as much as the present is determined by the past.

Bell, Kristy. "New Forms of Modernism; Ambivalence and Ambiguity; 'an Act of Processing.'" *Frieze*, September 2005, p. 121.

Left:
Untitled (Weilburg an der Lahn, Schlosshof)
(Weilburg on the River Lahn, Courtyard)
2005
Inkjet print on book page
28×19 cm

Middle:
Untitled (25 Caro, PIECE # 33, 1967)
2004
Inkjet print on book page
23×22 cm

Right:
Untitled (Somaini)
2003
Inkjet print on book page
30×25 cm



Bell, Kristy. "New Forms of Modernism; Ambivalence and Ambiguity; 'an Act of Processing.'" *Frieze*, September 2005, p. 121.

ARTFORUM

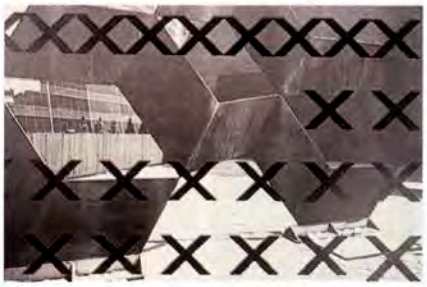
FIRST TAKE

Tim Griffin on WADE GUYTON

WADE GUYTON HAS REFERRED TO HIS SCULPTURES AS drawings in space. No doubt this assertion has something to do with his three-dimensional works' frequent status as studies. (Indeed, in the past couple of years Guyton has made a number of pieces individually titled *Fragment of Sculpture the Size of a House*, each corresponding to a structural component of the suburban home the artist intends to construct and paint completely black, sometime in the future.) Yet his statement has as much to do with the physical character of the objects, which can seem crudely superimposed on space, at once underscoring the sculptural aspect of *seeing* and demonstrating Guyton's interest in the dynamics of sculpture transposed across media. In his "Fragments," 2000–, for example, the artist inserts into the gallery environment a large aluminum-and-plywood plane whose irregular geometry and matte black surface interrupt the sight lines and flow of light through the room. The object's severe angles are totally incongruous with the surroundings, composing a form that apparently slices through space or, more accurately, blots it out like ink on paper. It's a brilliant kind of dead-zone sculpture: If Gordon Matta-Clark generated disruptions of space by eliminating portions of the built environment—incising the walls or floors, even chainsawing an entire house in half—Guyton does the same using an additive process.

Inspired in part by the odd flattening of his sculptures when they are reproduced in pictures, the artist has lately made a number of "printer drawings," which will appear in March at Artists Space in New York. These consist of simple patterns printed on photographs taken from art and interior design books of the '70s and '80s. A massive *X* hovers above viewers contemplating a Minimalist sculpture in a gallery at the Walker Art Center in one drawing. In another, a sequence of *X*s runs across the image of a public sculpture by Charles Ginnever. (Guyton marks the spot of his art-historical origins and defaces it at the same time.) Elsewhere, one sees how the page might be considered simply one more viewing plane in space: Some drawings depict *X*s to be placed in windows, blocking the perspectival view, crossing out the landscape as if it were merely a picture. Paper becomes glass, while art history, re-presented in Guyton's copies, turns into decor.

Decor is nothing if not desire sublimated into the living environment, and Guyton's works, which are often strangely anthropomorphic, harbor deep psychological charges. The inanimate borders on the animate, whether objects or art history. The dead is somehow alive in Guyton's hands. Perhaps that tension arises



Griffin, Tim. "Tim Griffin on Wade Guyton." *Artforum*, January 2003, p. 126.

from the artist's youth. Raised on slasher flicks—as a child in the '70s, every Friday he went with his parents to the drive-ins around Knoxville, Tennessee—he admits that his project for a suburban home may have been partially inspired by the bucket-of-blood thriller *The Last House on the Left*. The shining blades of other such celluloid dwellings also come to mind when one considers Guyton's columns made of vertical strips of black Plexiglas and mirrored acrylic in gold, smoke, and bronze. The angular works seem to have knifed up violently through the ground. And, as viewers move, reflective surfaces make the sculptures seem to expand and contract as if alive, both consuming architectural space and disappearing into it (with murderous logic).

If there's a telltale heart buried within this practice, one photographic diptych from 1999 might be it: The pair depicts the Devil's Hole, a small cavern in Tennessee. The deep focus on rippling rock surfaces makes the pictures verge on abstraction, and lurid inflections of red light and sub-zero flecks of turquoise create a pictorial paradox, with the tunnel at once cold and hot. Stark walls seem sensuous, providing an analogy for all of Guyton's work, which resuscitates a Minimalism whose heart is still beating under art history's floorboards. Guyton may have made photographs in caves, but there's no way he'll remain underground for long. □

Tim Griffin is associate editor of *Artforum*. A poet, critic, and curator, he is the author of *Contamination* (Alberico Cetti Serbelloni Editore, 2002), a collection of essays on art, architecture, design, and technology, produced with Peter Halley.

Clockwise from top left: **Wade Guyton, *Drawing for Sculpture the Size of a House*, 2001,** marker on color photograph, 4 x 6". **Wade Guyton, *Untitled Drawing (Sculpture #2)*, 2002,** ink jet on paper, 7 x 10". **Wade Guyton, *Fragment of Sculpture the Size of a House*, 2002,** painted plywood and aluminum, 8 x 12 x 10'. **Wade Guyton, *The Devil's Hole* (detail), 1999,** two color photographs, each 30 x 20". **Wade Guyton, *X for the Window/Cityscape (study for sculpture)*, 2002,** color photograph of drawing, 20 x 24".

Griffin, Tim. "Tim Griffin on Wade Guyton." *Artforum*, January 2003, p. 126.