

GALERIE
CHANTAL CROUSEL

Wade Guyton

REVUE DE PRESSE | SELECTED PRESS

Wade Guyton : *Wade Guyton*



Wade Guyton, vue d'exposition, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris (2023).
Courtesy de l'artiste et de la Galerie Chantal Crousel. Photo : Martin Argyroglo.

Après plus de deux décennies d'activité, Wade Guyton continue de surprendre par sa capacité à peindre, ou à composer, avec l'imprimante Epson. Il semble même avoir avec elle une liberté que d'autres ont avec une brosse ou un pot de couleur percé. Sans modifier sa méthode de travail consistant à plier la toile en deux pour l'adapter au format autorisé par la machine, à imprimer les deux parties puis à les déplier pour produire une composition ou un genre de diptyque. Il enrichit sensiblement son travail avec la couleur, toujours par calcul et hasard, via Photoshop et les dérèglements du logiciel d'impression. Dans le même temps, il poursuit son exploration de l'atelier, thème et motif, et par un accrochage dense il rapproche l'espace d'exposition du lieu de production.

Une sobre photographie de l'imprimante en action dans l'atelier côtoie une vue du même atelier avec un empilement de toiles pliées sur un plancher comme irradié, des teintes électriques, et de beaux effets à la Richter. On trouve une nouvelle version de la page d'accueil du site du *New York Times* (de mars 2023) maculée d'éclats de couleur, mais aussi des *all-over* flamboyants. Le travail de Guyton prolonge l'écriture d'une longue histoire des rapports photo et peinture où l'encre a depuis longtemps sa place. À la façon d'un maître parvenu à l'âge mûr, il peut glisser une allusion à Courbet (la photo du cerf mort), avec une sensibilité que l'on devine aussi écologique que romantique, ou une autre au cubisme (un cannage de chaise). Autre exemple de photographie pure : une large fenêtre (en vrai, une large ouverture dans un immeuble en construction) ouverte sur la ville qui élargit le point de vue et invite à méditer.

Köln
WADE GUYTON
Zwei Dekaden
MCMXCIX–MMXIX

Museum Ludwig
16.11.2019–01.03.2020

von Jens Asthoff



Wade Guyton, Düsseldorf 2019, Foto: J.L. Cox

Mit „MCMXCIX–MMXIX Zwei Dekaden“ richtete das Museum Ludwig US-Künstler Wade Guyton die bisher größte Überblicksschau aus. Direktor Yilmaz Dziewior kuratierte die Ausstellung in enger Zusammenarbeit mit dem Künstler. Dziewior hat jene zwei Jahrzehnte Werkentwicklung – die gezeigten Arbeiten datieren von 1999 bis 2019 – über weite Strecken verfolgt und begleitet. Nach einem ersten Atelierbesuch in New York im Mai 2004 lud er, damals Direktor des Kunstvereins in Hamburg, Guyton noch im selben Jahr zur Gruppenschau „Formalismus. Moderne Kunst, heute“ ein und widmete ihm Ende 2005 mit „Color, Power & Style“ auch das europaweit erste institutionelle Solo. In Köln kann man nun einzelne dieser frühen Arbeiten wiedersehen, etwa *Untitled* WG1504 (2004) oder die ikonischen U-Flammenbilder wie *Untitled* WG1028 (2005). Insgesamt gelingt der Kölner Ausstellung eine eindrucksvolle Präsentation dieses mittlerweile umfangreichen und komplexen Werks, und sie ist erfreulicherweise nicht bloß chronologisch aufgebaut, sondern macht mit klugen thematischen Verflechtungen Zusammenhänge sichtbar und schafft dramaturgisch spannende Blickachsen.

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Interessanterweise zeichnete sich bereits zwischen Dziewiors beiden frühen Guyton-Ausstellungen ein Wandel ab, der die Entwicklung des Werks maßgeblich prägte: 2004 hatte der Künstler minimalistische Farbdrucke auf Rohleinen gezeigt, die er mit einem Tintenstrahldrucker, damals ein Epson Stylus Pro 9600, herstellte. Bilder dieses Typs sind nicht auf Rahmen gespannt, sondern werden locker fallend an zwei Punkten fixiert. „Ich wollte den Drucker auf eine Art verwenden, für die er nicht geschaffen wurde – um zu sehen, ob er eine andere Art von Objekten hervorbringen könnte“, so Guyton im aktuellen Katalog, aber „nach der ‚Formalismus‘-Ausstellung [...] begann ich, grundierte Leinwände zu verwenden, zog sie auf Rahmen auf, damit sie der Malerei näher kamen.“ Im Kern gilt das bis heute, und im hier präsentierten Werkpanorama wird auf ganzer Breite deutlich, wie Guyton diesen Ansatz seiner Malerei über die Jahre weiterentwickelt hat.

Grundsätzlich bringt er im Bild das Digitale und das Haptische zur Reibung: Die Verwendung von Leinwand und die (anfangs ausschließlich) minimalistisch-abstrakte Bildsprache paraphrasieren oder suggerieren Malereicharakter, doch medial agieren die Arbeiten zugleich auf völlig anderem Terrain. Ihre Bildquellen sind digital, quasi körperlos unendlich manipulierbar. Die Umsetzung im Printverfahren



Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2006, Epson UltraChrome-Tintenstrahldruck auf Leinen, 228,6 × 134,6 cm, WG1059, Privatsammlung. © Wade Guyton, Foto: Lamay Photo



Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2004, Epson UltraChrome-Tintenstrahl-Druck auf Leinen, 187,9 x 109,8 cm, WG1504, Sammlung Haubrok. © Wade Guyton, Foto: Ron Amstutz

ist ein weiterer Transfer mit eigener Logik und birgt Spielräume für vielfältige analoge Eingriffe. Bewusst bringt Guyton den Drucker und das technisch dafür eigentlich ungeeignete Trägermaterial Leinwand zusammen, daraus resultieren Zufallseffekte, und sie sind erwünscht: Beim frühen Stoffbild *Untitled* WG1504 hat die Leinwand im Druckerdurchlauf gar einen Riss davongetragen, rechts baumelt das Stück halbseitig herab. Bezeichnend, dass Guyton das schon damals als Teil des Bildprozesses anerkennt. Die mediale Einschreibung erlangt im „Fehler“ Sichtbarkeit, und genau darum geht es hier. Auch die für Guyton typische Passungenauigkeit der Motive an der Mittelachse ist so ein Effekt: Handelsübliche, auf standardisierte Papierformate ausgerichtete Drucker fassen nur eine bestimmte maximale Breite. Um die Bildfläche zu vergrößern, faltet Guyton die Leinwand der Länge nach und lässt erst die eine, dann die andere Seite durch den Drucker laufen. Das mag man pragmatisch nennen, doch generiert es eben auch eine Art medialen Fingerabdruck und führt zu kompositorisch interessanten Kollateraleffekten. Ob abstrakt, „realistisch“ oder irgendwo dazwischen – stets wird mit fluiden Pixeln und der Deutungskomponente Druckertechnik beziehungsweise -software hantiert, und all das nutzt Guyton als malerisches Instrumentarium. Monochrom schwarze Arbeiten von 2007/08 etwa, die bei Petzel, Crousel und im Portikus gezeigt wurden, beruhen sämtlich auf einer kompakten schwarzen TIFF-Datei. „Realistische“ Motive wie in den Gemälden ab 2014 mit Handyfotos, Screenshots etc. – etwa die Küchenszene in *Untitled* WG3949 (2016) oder der Tisch mit Resten vom Atelierlunch mit Asiakohl in *Untitled* WG4406



(2018) – öffnen und erweitern Sujets und Bildsprache des Werks enorm, haben aber alle die gleiche virtuelle Basis. Guyton begreift das digitale Bild als Simulakrum, als strukturelle Fluidität, an der er die forschende Bildproduktion ausrichtet.

Die Schleifen- und Transferstruktur seiner Verfahren wird in jener Werkgruppe besonders deutlich, für die er Aufnahmen seines Atelierfußbodens machte, etwa in *Untitled* WG4405 (2018). „Für die Bodengemälde“, sagt Guyton, „fotografierte ich mit dem iPhone den Atelierboden, auf dem ich neben dem Drucker stand, übertrug das Bild mittels AirDrop auf den Laptop und schickte es sofort an den Drucker. Ich musste meinen Körper kaum bewegen.“ Über das praktisch unmittelbare Generieren und Zirkulieren des Motivs hinaus kommt bei auf dem Atelierboden liegenden Prints auch eine imaginäre Schleife ins Spiel: Denn das Bild, vor dem man gerade steht, wird kurz nach dem Schnappschuss ebenso dagelegen haben wie die Leinwände, die es zeigt. Mit der motivischen Rückkopplung spitzt Guyton die heute alltäglich gewordene Sofortverfügbarkeit digitaler Information (Stichwort: „kaum bewegen“) zum Kompositionsprinzip zu. Eine ähnliche Kopplung von medialer Flüchtigkeit und Präsenz macht er in Bildern mit Titelseiten von Tageszeitungen zum Thema. In *Untitled* WG4125 (2016) etwa sieht man Trump und Obama auf einem *New York Times*-Cover, die Werkgruppe umfasst zahlreiche weitere Motive: Anschläge, Kriege, Barrikaden der Gilets Jaunes, was die Weltlage so liefert. Guyton berichtet, dass die Bilder lange im Atelier standen, bevor er beschloss, sie zu zeigen, denn „sie stießen die Menschen vor den Kopf. Sie stießen auch mich vor den Kopf. Jeden Tag wurde man beim Mittagessen an den Terrorangriff vom letzten November erinnert oder daran, dass vor ein paar Monaten irgendein Arschloch einen Bombenanschlag auf eine Abtreibungsklinik verübt hatte. Normalerweise aktualisiert sich der Bildschirm, und man kann das Ganze vergessen. Aber die Gemälde sind einfach da.“

Katalog (dt./e.) mit dem Verzeichnis sämtlicher Einzelausstellungen und Abbildungen aller gezeigten Werke; Texte von Johanna Burton, Michelle Kuo, Kerstin Stakemeier und ein Gespräch zwischen Wade Guyton und Yilmaz Dziewior. 584 S., ca. 1.900 farbige Abb., Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, im Handel 65,— Euro, im Museum 54,— Euro.

www.museum-ludwig.de

Wade Guyton, Ausstellungsansicht, linke Wand: *Untitled*, 2018, Epson UltraChrome-K3-Tintenstrahldruck auf Leinen, 325 × 275 cm, WG4405, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Schenkung Eleanor Heyman Propp, *Untitled*, 2008 (Ausschnitt), Epson UltraChrome-Tintenstrahldruck auf Leinen, 8 Tafeln, je 213,4 × 175,3 cm, gesamt 213,4 × 1491 cm, WG1985, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Hintergrund: *Untitled*, 2015 (Ausschnitt), Epson UltraChrome-HDR-Tintenstrahldruck auf Leinen, 213,4 × 175,3 cm, WG4406, Pinault Collection; Wand Mitte: *Untitled*, 2016, Epson UltraChrome-K3-Tintenstrahldruck auf Leinen, 325 × 275 cm, WG4125, Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland. © Wade Guyton, Foto: Rheinisches Bildarchiv Köln/Marc Weber

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Bergisch Gladbach STEFAN WEWERKA Dekonstruktion der Moderne

Kunstmuseum Villa Zanders
14.12.2019–19.04.2020

von Susanne Boecker



Stefan Wewerka, Foto: privat

„Die Erdkugel halbieren, beide Haeften gegeneinander verdrehen und wieder zusammenkleben. Akkra wurde dann ein Vorort von London sein und der Niger wurde in die Nordsee muenden und in London wurde es verdammt heiß werden, oder umgekehrt, kalt in Akkra, es ist schwierig, das Richtige voraus-zusehen. Die restliche Westseite der Britischen Inseln wurde einen neuen Standort in der Naehe des Nordpols haben und die Engländer wuerden dann noch frostiger werden und Paris laege dicht beim Aequator und ueberhaupt wuerde sich alles schlagartig veraendern.“

— Stefan Wewerka, 1962

Wenn es ein Projekt gibt, das die Denk- und Arbeitsweise, den künstlerischen Ansatz und Impetus von Stefan Wewerka (1928–2013) auf den Punkt bringt, dann dieses. Die Welt als Ding sehen, als ein Objekt, das man mit handwerklich-künstlerischen Mitteln dekonstruieren, erkunden und umgestalten kann. Neugierig und ideologiefrei. Verspielt und radikal. Humorvoll und ergebnisoffen.

Numéro

Rencontre avec Wade Guyton, l'artiste radical exposé au musée Ludwig

NUMÉRO ART

En couverture du Numéro art 5, l'artiste américain Wade Guyton, figure d'une génération explorant les possibilités du numérique, s'intéresse à la photo, au dessin, à la sculpture. Son outil de prédilection : une imprimante à jet d'encre Epson taille XXL, dans laquelle il fait passer plusieurs fois ses toiles pour fixer ses motifs. À l'occasion de sa rétrospective au musée Ludwig de Cologne, rencontre avec l'artiste dans son atelier new-yorkais.



Wade Guyton. Portrait : Pierre-Ange Carloti. Retouches portrait de Wade Guyton par Pierre-Ange Carloti

À Cologne est consacrée une importante rétrospective à Wade Guyton intitulée *Zwei Dekaden (Deux décades)*.

Cette exposition, pensée en collaboration avec l'artiste, propose des ensembles thématiques qui répondent à l'architecture du lieu, certaines de ses toiles mesurant plusieurs mètres. On retrouve ainsi les fameux "X" ou les flammes, icônes du répertoire de l'art contemporain de ces deux dernières décennies, ainsi que des œuvres plus récentes réalisées à partir de photographies prises de son propre travail au sein de l'atelier, qui ont été montrées dans les deux expositions *Wade Guyton* au Consortium de Dijon et au MAMCO de Genève (en 2016 et 2017), et dont le livre, constitué d'un long essai écrit par le philosophe Tristan Garcia, vient de sortir aux Presses du réel*. Ces toiles sont la source d'un nouveau vocabulaire pour Guyton et ont généré un métalangage d'œuvres dont le fil rouge est l'atelier et son architecture (le sol, les murs, les fenêtres) ainsi que l'activité qui s'y déroule (les assistants, les machines, le montage).

Né en 1972 à Hammond dans l'Indiana, Wade Guyton (qui vit et travaille à New York) est l'un des représentants d'une génération d'artistes

qui pense et produit des images à l'ère du numérique. Si certaines de ses œuvres renvoient à la structure et au langage de la peinture traditionnelle, elles en modifient néanmoins radicalement les codes et les modes de production. Ses peintures sont effectivement réalisées à l'aide de très grandes imprimantes à jet d'encre. Les erreurs, coulures et défauts d'impression font partie du programme général de composition et assurent l'unicité du résultat. Cette rétrospective propose également des dessins présentés sous forme d'installations, et de nouvelles sculptures en bronze, montrées pour la première fois.



Wade Guyton, "Sans titre" (2006). Impression jet d'encre sur lin, 228,6 x 134,6 cm. Photo : Larry Lamay.

NUMÉRO ART : Quel a été votre parcours ? L'environnement dans lequel vous avez grandi vous a-t-il influencé ?

WADE GUYTON : J'ai grandi dans le Midwest, puis dans le sud des États-Unis. J'ignorais à peu près tout de l'art, à cette époque. Je n'ai hérité d'aucune curiosité particulière pour cette discipline – ni des moyens de me familiariser avec elle. Dans l'enfance et l'adolescence, mon isolement et ma solitude m'ont poussé à vouloir exister au monde autrement, peut-être pour échapper à ce que je connaissais déjà.

Comment avez-vous su que vous vouliez être artiste ?

J'ai le souvenir d'une exposition itinérante à la maison de la culture de ma ville, et qui venait du Hirshhorn Museum de Washington. Je crois me rappeler qu'il s'agissait simplement de tirages papier et de quelques éditions. Il y avait aussi un objet en Plexiglas bleu qui m'avait laissé dubitatif, en bon ado pas très ouvert à l'art. Avec le recul, je me dis aujourd'hui que c'était probablement un Barnett Newman.

Que regardez-vous aujourd'hui ?

Pas mal de mes propres dessins, en me demandant combien vont réussir à trouver leur place au Museum Ludwig. Je teste aussi les limites de mon épuisement, à force d'en regarder trop à la fois.

“Dans l'enfance et l'adolescence, mon isolement et ma solitude m'ont poussé à vouloir exister au monde autrement, peut-être pour échapper à ce que je connaissais déjà.”

Vous semblez à l'aise sur toutes sortes de supports. Avez-vous une préférence pour l'un d'entre eux ?

Le bronze me parle beaucoup ces derniers temps. J'ai travaillé avec une fonderie de Düsseldorf à la réalisation de quelques objets pour l'exposition : la force archaïque du processus, la chaleur, la densité de la matière... J'aime aussi la sensation du bronze au toucher.

Comment abordez-vous les images d'archives et le *found footage* [le recyclage de matériaux vidéo] dans votre pratique ? L'appropriation est-elle encore, à vos yeux, un sujet légitime ?

Aussi légitime ou aussi peu légitime que le reste.

“Les musées et les galeries donnent corps à ce qui est important pour nous. Ils organisent notre compréhension de l'histoire.”

Il vous arrive de produire des œuvres pour un espace ou un musée en particulier. Comment les installez-vous?

L'exposition et le livre restent les principaux vecteurs de notre expérience de l'art, même si, pour la plupart des gens, les expositions sont avant tout un prétexte pour prendre des photos. Cela fait sans doute très XXe siècle, mais les musées et les galeries donnent corps à ce qui est important pour nous. Ils organisent notre compréhension de l'histoire, et cette architecture-là agit souvent de façon très puissante. Dans certains cas, j'ai eu des relations conflictuelles avec le contexte et, dans d'autres situations, j'ai au contraire accepté que l'œuvre absorbe davantage de "pression". Je suis même allé jusqu'à laisser les murs de la galerie donner forme à mon travail. Il en résulte une sorte de précarité, mais il est important que l'œuvre soit amenée à composer avec les circonstances.

Au Museum Ludwig, vous avez refusé l'approche chronologique, préférant regrouper vos toiles par sujets. Pourquoi ce choix ?

C'est le bâtiment qui a rejeté cette approche. L'expo a dû faire des concessions, se déployant de façon inattendue, relevant de trames conceptuelles parfois plus fluides, selon des thématiques épisodiquement narratives, ou dans une optique pédagogique plus traditionnelle. Je devais aussi garder intact mon propre intérêt pour le travail ancien. Une approche rétrospective peut être terriblement ennuyeuse.



Wade Guyton, "Sans titre" (2007). Impression jet d'encre sur lin, 213,4 x 175,3 cm. Photo : Ron Amstutz. Wade Guyton



Wade Guyton, "Sans titre (Action sculpture-chair)" (2001). Chaise en acier altéré, 119,4 x 86,4 x 81,3 cm. Photo: Ron Amstutz. Tony Salame/Aishti Foundation, Beirut, Wade Guyton

Depuis deux ans, les titres de vos expositions sont manifestement plus personnels : *Siamo arrivati* (Madre à Naples), *Fire and Fury* (Francesca Pia à Zurich), *Patagonia* (Friedrich Petzel Gallery à New York), *Natural Wine* (galerie Chantal Crousel à Paris)...

Siamo arrivati était l'intitulé d'une bannière sur le site web du quotidien napolitain *Il Mattino*. L'article traitait du réveil de l'activité volcanique des champs Phlégréens, qui coïncidait avec l'ouverture du tout premier McDonald's de Naples, au moment où j'arrivais moi aussi dans cette ville pour une résidence artistique. Les autres titres avaient à l'origine une signification littérale, mais je trouvais aussi qu'ils sonnaient bien. Sur l'une des images de l'exposition new-yorkaise, Ned [un de ses assistants] portait un T-shirt Patagonia, et dans plusieurs des toiles présentées à Zurich, on voyait apparaître *Le Feu et la Fureur*, le livre de Michael Wolff sur Trump. Quant à *Natural Wine*, nous buvions beaucoup de vins naturels cet hiver-là, et il m'est apparu comme un titre adapté, un peu idiot et potentiellement sujet à controverse pour une exposition à Paris. Tous ces intitulés capturaient aussi très bien l'atmosphère de mon atelier, et celle de la ville de New York.

Lorsque vous préparez vos expositions à Dijon et à Genève, une part importante du travail consistait à choisir et éditer les pièces exposées. Quels sont les principes de cette sélection ?

Ce sont les œuvres d'art et les espaces qui vous disent ce qu'il faut faire. C'est donc souvent une bonne idée d'être à l'écoute.

"Je n'ai jamais ressenti mon travail comme devant conduire "quelque part". L'action n'est pas une notion adaptée à ce que je fais."

Au même moment, vous prépariez le catalogue de votre exposition au Brandhorst Museum de Munich. Vous avez décidé de recourir à un algorithme pour la mise en page. Mais le logiciel soumettait plusieurs propositions, et il vous a encore fallu choisir.

C'était une idée géniale d'Eric Wrenn, le directeur artistique. Il avait probablement déjà remarqué une sorte de processus algorithmique à l'œuvre dans l'atelier. Les toiles changeaient souvent de place, et créaient ainsi à intervalle régulier des agencements non planifiés. Cela nous a aussi beaucoup simplifié la conception du livre. Nous n'avions pas le temps de pousser inutilement la réflexion autour du format.

Vos productions font intervenir des procédés technologiques complexes. Quel est votre rapport à la machine ?

Aujourd'hui, nous nous servons d'ordinateurs, de téléphones, d'appareils photo. J'utilise le WiFi, comme tout le monde. J'adore AirDrop, qui a vraiment rendu tout cela plus rapide. Mon imprimante est peut-être un peu plus grosse que celle que vous avez chez vous mais elle est en fait plutôt banale – et omniprésente. Le processus est donc assez simple, et la technologie fait désormais partie intégrante de notre réalité physique. Nous avons tous les mêmes crampes et crispations, dues à l'utilisation de nos satanés iPhone.

Cela vous intéresserait-il, à un moment donné, de tout lâcher et de laisser la machine décider pour vous ?

Qu'est-ce que je ferais, dans ce cas-là ?



Wade Guyton. Portrait : Pierre-Ange Carlotti. Retouches portrait de Wade Guyton par Pierre-Ange Carlotti



Wade Guyton, "Sans titre" (2017). Impression jet d'encre sur lin, 213,4 x 175,3 cm.

Vous ne photographiez plus seulement vos œuvres, mais aussi votre atelier, ce qui s'y passe et l'équipe qui travaille avec vous...

J'ai commencé par quelques photos de mes deux expositions de *Black Paintings*, en 2008 et 2014, à Paris. Un jour, je les ai simplement transférées d'InDesign à Photoshop. Techniquement et spatialement, les deux logiciels ne sont pas très différents. Puis j'ai fait des toiles à partir de ces fichiers. En attendant qu'une impression se termine, j'ai photographié le sol de l'atelier, à l'endroit où je me trouvais. Quand je travaillais sur l'expo de Dijon, le circuit s'est resserré : j'ai photographié une sculpture qui se trouvait dans l'atelier, puis, dans la cuisine, Jeanette, James et Zach [les membres de son équipe]. Ces nouvelles œuvres étaient à même d'alimenter des débats d'une autre nature sur la peinture.

Vous êtes aussi sorti de l'atelier, avec des vues de New York, ou dans Naples. Est-ce une libération pour vous ?

Je ne me sens pas plus libre qu'avant. Les gens qui regardent mes œuvres, eux, se sentent peut-être plus libérés. Je n'ai jamais ressenti mon travail comme devant conduire "quelque part". L'action n'est pas une notion adaptée à ce que je fais.

"La technologie fait désormais partie intégrante de notre réalité physique."

Vous êtes passionné par les livres. Le dernier que vous avez fait paraître comporte un texte philosophique signé de Tristan Garcia*.

Cela fait cinq ans que j'essaie de lire son essai *Forme et objet*. C'est lent mais captivant, répétitif et dense. Je l'avais entendu donner une conférence organisée par The Kitchen, à New York. Demander à quelqu'un de réfléchir à votre travail, c'est une leçon d'humilité. Une fois qu'il a eu rédigé son texte, affirmant qu'il s'était inspiré d'un ouvrage de Kandinsky, j'ai décidé d'utiliser ce dernier comme forme. Pourquoi ne pas façonner le livre autour de la réflexion de Tristan Garcia ? L'écriture est assez conceptuelle, l'ouvrage devait s'en tenir à cette rigueur, mais en adoptant le même rythme que le texte.

“Nous avons tous les mêmes crampes et crispations, dues à l'utilisation de nos satanés iPhone.”

Beaucoup de vos toiles abordent la notion de répétition. Ce thème est-il chez vous un paradigme d'ordre philosophique ?

Il y a une sorte de retour compulsif à travers lequel l'œuvre se consume d'elle-même. Les dossiers s'ouvrent, se referment, sont recomposés. Pour moi, il y a une forme de beauté dans ce processus.

Où voudriez-vous que s'inscrive votre travail? Dans la “grande histoire” de la peinture?

Mon travail s'inscrit là où les gens voudront bien l'inscrire.

Zwei Dekaden MCMXCIX–MMXIX, du 16 novembre 2019 au 1er mars 2020, Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

**Pixel, Rai, Imprimante*, texte Tristan Garcia, édité par Nicolas Trembley, publié par Les Presses du réel (2019).



Wade Guyton, “Sans titre” (2019). Impression jet d'encre sur lin, 213 x 175 cm. Photo : Ron Amstutz. Courtesy de l'artiste et Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

FIGARO SCOPE

WADE GUYTON, EN COURS D'IMPRESSIONS



GALERIE CHANTAL CROUSEL

10, rue Charlot (III^e).

TÉL. : 01 42 77 38 87.

HORAIRES : du mar. au sam. de 11 h à 19 h.

JUSQU'AU 6 avril.

De son quotidien d'artiste new-yorkais, Wade Guyton expose l'essence même. Photographies de son atelier où ses toiles sèchent sur le sol, empilées, captures d'écran de ses recherches Internet ou encore agrandissement des fichiers bitmap, il sélectionne des clichés qu'il tire ensuite avec une imprimante à jet d'encre sur des formats géants. Mais le travail de création ne s'arrête pas là et doit ensuite plus au hasard. En imprimant sur toile ses clichés il les laisse tomber les uns sur les autres. Les images conservent ainsi le souvenir de leur rencontre fortuite avec les tirages encore humides qui estampent (lors d'une seconde impression donc) un motif accidentel et aléatoire sur les



toiles. Tout ce processus crée un recueil de toiles entre figuratif et abstrait, une esthétique numérique qui flirte avec la peinture. ■

AGATHE MOREAUX

Retrouvez avec Immersion 3D la visite virtuelle de cette exposition.

Wade Guyton is adept at repetition. Since the mid-2000s, the New Yorker has used the same process of printing with an inkjet printer on large linen canvases prepared as for paintings. Used against its purpose, the machine obliges him to bend and manipulate his support to produce the shifts and accidents he is after. But, unlike previous exhibitions at the Chantal Crousel Gallery, which in 2008 and 2014 brought together imperfect monochromes, *Natural Wine* is striking by virtue of the diversity of its iconography. In fact, apparently abstract motifs arising from the manipulation of low-quality digital files are combined with mobile phone photographs and screenshots of internet pages. By this diversity, but especially by these collections, *Natural Wine* seems an extension of two institutional exhibitions of Guyton's work in 2017-18, *Das New York Atelier* at the Brandhorst Museum in Munich and *Das New York Atelier, Abridged* at the Serpentine Gallery in London. Indeed, the *atelier*, or workshop is not only the location of the production of the work, it is also the subject. Multiplying the *mises en abyme*, Guyton's paintings made from photographs often retouched show the work in process, being done. Literally spat out by the printers, poorly rolled canvases lie on the ground where they continue to deteriorate. Hung up to dry, they come alive with drips. These images, however, refer to down time, such as those that characterize the behind-the-scenes of work, like the snapshot of the workshop

kitchen, where a figure seen from the back is doing routine work. At the centre of attention, the workshop isn't however wholly inward-looking. A photograph of buildings in the mist links it to its direct environment while the internet connects it to the rest of the world and inscribes it in time, that of the hot news of the yellow vests covered by the New York Times or that of the immemorial, of the oldest cave paintings discovered in Borneo. This iconographic diversity invites modification of one's view of Guyton. The works on flat tints, the letters X and U and bitmap files had inscribed the artist in a history of painting that, with others resorting to digital symbols and processes, he has renewed. Today, the views of the studio and the screenshots move the work to another story, that of the image, which also intersects with that of photography. The move is all the more necessary as Chantal Crousel regularly shows Wolfgang Tillmans, whom several of Guyton's works clearly brings to mind. But while one would wonder how Tillmans managed to hold a still life with so little, one would say that Guyton is simply indifferent to the image. And while we were fascinated by Tillmans' relentless search for images for today, we regret that Guyton isn't trying to renew his work more profoundly. Unfortunately, some screenshots of websites won't update the work. Worse, they suggest that Guyton sees himself only as the spectator of the renewal of images.

Translation: Chloé Baker

Wade Guyton 12.10.16–29.1.2017

Organisée par Nicolas Trembley,
en collaboration avec Le Consortium
de Dijon et le soutien de Phillips

□ Dans les espaces réaménagés du premier étage le MAMCO présentait une trentaine d'œuvres inédites de l'artiste américain Wade Guyton (né en 1972 à Hammond, Indiana, vit et travaille à New York), l'un des représentants les plus importants d'une génération d'artistes qui pense et produit des images à l'ère du numérique. Si certaines de ses œuvres renvoient à la structure et au langage de la peinture, au sens traditionnel du terme, elles en modifient néanmoins radicalement les codes et les modes de production. Les tableaux de Wade Guyton sont en effet réalisés à l'aide de grandes imprimantes jet d'encre dans lesquelles il fait passer plusieurs fois la toile, un processus dont les erreurs et défauts font partie du programme général de composition et en assurent l'unicité. « Les premiers travaux que j'ai réalisés sur ordinateur, c'était comme de l'écriture, le clavier remplaçant le stylo. Au lieu de dessiner un 'X', j'ai décidé d'appuyer sur une touche. »

Avec cet ensemble de pièces conçues entre 2015 et 2016, il abordait un nouveau chapitre de sa démarche : l'image centrale de l'exposition, déclinée sous divers formats, était une photographie que l'artiste a réalisée dans son atelier. Au premier plan, se dresse l'une de ses sculptures, l'armature tubulaire d'une chaise de Marcel Breuer modifiée et posée à même le sol ; à l'arrière-plan, on aperçoit la partie droite d'une des peintures de la série des « Black Paintings », ainsi que le mur sur lequel l'œuvre est adossée. « Pour comprendre mon travail autrement, j'ai commencé à le photographier dans l'atelier et à produire des peintures à partir de ces images. C'est parfaitement logique d'utiliser une image photographique avec les outils dont je me sers. Mes imprimantes ont été conçues pour remplacer la photographie qu'on développait en chambre noire... une sorte d'opération commerciale hostile déguisée en progrès technologique et en amélioration de l'image. »

D'autres images représentant le sol de son atelier new yorkais ainsi que différents zooms dans des fichiers « bitmap »

■ In its newly renovated first floor, MAMCO presented over thirty new works of the American artist Wade Guyton (1972, Hammond, Indiana, lives in New York), one of the most influential representatives of a generation of artists who reflect on and produce images in a digital era. Although some of his works question the structure and language of painting, in the traditional sense of the word, they still radically modify codes and modes of production. Guyton's paintings are indeed realized by putting canvases several times through huge inkjet printers to print motifs and letterings. Errors, drips, and misprints are part of the general composition process and ensure the result's unicity: "The first works I created digitally, it was like writing, but the keyboard replaced the pen. Instead of drawing an X, I decided to push a key."

With this new body of works created between 2015 and 2016, he started a new chapter in his work: the central image of the exhibition, spanning various dimensions, was a photograph taken in his studio. In the foreground lying on the floor is one of his sculptures, a modified tubular framework from a Marcel Breuer chair. In the background, we make out the right side of one of his "Black paintings," as well as the white wall on which it is resting. The series is completed with representations of the wooden floor in his New York studio, as well as close-ups of bitmap files. "In order to understand my work from a different angle, I started photographing it in my studio and producing paintings from these images. It's perfectly logical to use a photographic image with the tools I'm using. My printers have been designed to replace photographs that used to be developed in a darkroom. A kind of hostile commercial operation disguised as a technological progress that is supposed to improve an image." The sudden upsurge of biographical elements drawn from the reality of his daily practice disrupts the iconography usually deployed by this artist



complétaient l'ensemble. L'irruption d'éléments issus du réel et la dimension biographique qu'ils prennent dans le contexte de l'atelier bouleversent l'iconographie à laquelle l'artiste nous avait habitués et ouvrent de nouvelles perspectives. A travers la mise en abyme de son propre travail, Wade Guyton interroge l'ensemble de la chaîne de production et de représentation de l'art — confronté à son inéluctable devenir-image.

Wade Guyton*
Tristan Garcia

Les œuvres de Wade Guyton se présentent comme des énigmes visuelles. (...) Comme de toute énigme, il existe de celle-ci une explication *généalogique* et une explication *logique*.

Par *généalogie*, il est possible de comprendre comment et pourquoi l'artiste a conçu et réalisé ces œuvres. Après avoir délaissé la peinture puis l'écriture pour le clavier, imprimant d'immenses reproductions des lettres X ou U, ou d'échantillons de photographie numérique d'une flamme, Wade Guyton a commencé à recomposer ces signes dans une forme de syntaxe visuelle sans sémantique. Puis il a décidé de réfléchir sur l'élaboration de son propre travail. Il a pris une photographie de son atelier, dans lequel était posé un ancien monochrome noir, ainsi qu'une chaise du designer moderniste du Bauhaus Marcel Breuer, dont l'armature tubulaire avait été démantibulée, redevenue une ligne métallique serpentine. De cette image photographique, il a tiré de gigantesques copies, grâce à des imprimantes laser, dont le format excédait les possibilités de la machine : Wade Guyton a donc découpé chaque image en deux parties, imprimées successivement, jusqu'à obtenir des effets de décalage entre les moitiés d'images, dont il a conservé les irrégularités, les coulures, les défauts d'impression. Enfin, après avoir extrait les éléments de base de documents qu'on appelle « bitmap », c'est-à-dire d'image informatiques matricielles définies point par point, il a agrandi le plus possible ces pixels et les a imprimés.

De cette généalogie, on pourra déduire un discours critique des modes de fabrication et de production industrielle des images

and opens new perspectives. Through a *mise en abyme* of his own work, Wade Guyton keeps questioning the entire chain of production and representation as well as the becoming-image of art.

Wade Guyton*
Tristan Garcia

Wade Guyton's works come over as visual enigmas. (...) As with any enigma, there is a *genealogical* explanation of it, as well as a *logical* one. Via *genealogy*, it is possible to understand how and why the artist has conceived and produced these works. After having abandoned painting then writing for the keyboard, printing out huge reproductions of the letters X and U, or samples of digital photographs of a flame, Wade Guyton started recomposing these signs into a semantic-free, visual syntax. He then decided to think through the elaboration of his own work. He took a photograph of his studio, which contained an older black monochrome, as well as a modernist designer chair by the Bauhaus' Marcel Breuer, whose tubular framework had been dismantled, turning it back into a snaking metallic line. He then made gigantic copies of this photographic image, using laser printers, whose format exceeded the possibilities of the machine: Wade Guyton subsequently cut each image into two parts, printed successively, until he obtained shifting effects between each half of the images, whose irregularities, drips and printing errors he kept. Finally, after having extracted the basic elements of the documents, called a "bitmap," or in other words a digital matrix image, defined point by point, he enlarged these pixels as much as possible then printed them out.

From this genealogy, we could deduce a critical discourse of the modes of production and the industrial manufacturing of contemporary images. We could then consider that the artist is exhibiting the processes of digital decomposition and visual re-composition, of standardization and of the copying of digitized, photocopied images. But this is not the path that we have decided to take.

For, any enigma also calls for a *logical* solution: rather than explain the mystery by the conditions of its production, the

contemporaines. On estimera alors que l'artiste exhibe les processus de décomposition informatique et de recomposition visuelle, de standardisation et de copie des images numérisées et photocopiées. Mais ce n'est pas la voie que nous choisirons d'emprunter.

Car toute énigme appelle aussi une résolution *logique* : plutôt que d'expliquer le mystère par les conditions de sa production, on décide alors de le recevoir comme donné, et de l'affronter à la façon d'un défi. On tâche de trouver dans l'énigme elle-même, et non pas dans la façon dont elle a été formulée, les ressources pour l'élucider. En traitant l'énigme toujours comme un produit plutôt que comme une production, on

decision is then made to receive it as it is, and confront it as a challenge. An attempt will then be made to find the resources for elucidating the enigma in the enigma itself, rather than in the way it was put together. By always treating the enigma as a product instead of a production, we lose the very sense of its being enigma, which is to incite an enigmatic feeling. In the case of Wade Guyton's work, it seems to us that this enigmatic feeling is the very form adopted by the aesthetic feeling. And an enigma is no longer an enigma when all we can do is expose its genealogy, without confronting its logic; resolving the origins of what is being presented as a mystery, or

Ce qui est livré au regard par le travail de Wade Guyton, ce sont les éléments de construction de l'espace idéal, de l'espace perçu, de l'espace pictural et de l'espace numérique

perd le sens même de l'énigme, qui est de susciter un sentiment énigmatique. Dans le cas de l'œuvre de Wade Guyton, il nous semble que ce sentiment énigmatique est la forme même que prend le sentiment esthétique. Or une énigme n'en est plus une quand on ne se trouve plus capable que d'en exposer la généalogie, sans en affronter la logique ; résoudre en amont ce qui se présente comme un mystère en reconstituant les faits qui ont conduit à l'apparition de ce mystère, ce n'est pas résoudre en aval ce à quoi le mystère nous mène. Toute énigme possède deux sens : le sens qui préside à son énonciation, et le sens qu'elle énonce. De sa généalogie, on ne déduit jamais tout à fait sa logique. Prenons cette logique-là au sérieux, et faisons un temps abstraction de ce que nous savons de la fabrication des images de Wade Guyton, contemplons cette énigme visuelle comme si nous ne savions plus qui en a exposé les

reconstituting the facts that led to its appearance, does not explain the place where this mystery subsequently takes us to. All enigmas have two meanings: the one that precedes its announcement, and the one it announces. We can never completely deduce its logic from its genealogy. So, let's take this logic seriously, and pass over for a moment what we know about how Wade Guyton's images are produced, and instead contemplate this visual enigma as if we no longer knew who presented its terms, or how and why he claimed to have done so. What do we see then, and what do we think? We are now in front of portions of space, exhibited frontally before our eyes. They seem to be irregularly covered with ink. And this ink forms figures.

To begin our investigation, we need to identify the smallest constituent part of these figures. So, let's take a closer look at the pixel blow-ups made by Wade Guyton,

termes, comment et pourquoi il affirme l'avoir fait : alors qu'est-ce que nous voyons, et qu'est-ce que nous pensons ? Nous nous trouvons devant des portions d'espace, exposées frontalement à notre regard. Elles apparaissent couvertes irrégulièrement d'encre. Cette encre forme des figures.

Pour commencer notre enquête, il nous faut identifier le plus petit constituant de ces figures. Regardons d'un peu plus près les agrandissements de pixel réalisés par Wade Guyton, qui font ressembler des unités d'image numérique à de grands carrés flous. Fixons un instant du regard cette figure. Nous pensons : c'est un point. Pourtant nous voyons une tache. L'enquête est lancée.

Notre hypothèse (...) sera la suivante : cette œuvre de Wade Guyton est en fait un répertoire visuel d'éléments fondamentaux qui exposent la transformation de l'espace pictural en espace informationnel ; la construction de l'espace pictural en trois temps, point, ligne et surface, comme dans le traité de Kandinsky, est poursuivie par le pixel, le rai et l'impression.

Ce qui est livré au regard par le travail de Wade Guyton, ce sont les éléments de construction de l'espace idéal, de l'espace perçu, de l'espace pictural et de l'espace numérique. Alors que Kandinsky attestait du projet moderne de déconstruire et de reconstruire l'espace pictural à partir du point, de la ligne et de la surface, Wade Guyton montre, fait voir que la construction de l'espace, après un siècle, s'est poursuivie : du point pensé et de la tache perçue, qui donnaient la tache voulue et peinte a émergé le pixel ; de la ligne pensée et du ligneux perçu, qui donnaient le trait voulu et peint, a émergé le rai, et plus particulièrement le rayon laser ; de la surface pensée et de l'empreinte perçue, qui donnaient l'image voulue et peinte, a émergé l'image imprimée. C'est l'impression qui est la plus ancienne, mais transformée par le laser puis par le pixel, elle produit l'image-énigme de Wade Guyton, qui est comme le révélateur optique des strates de construction de notre espace numérique, qui en conserve la mémoire picturale, la mémoire perceptive, la mémoire idéale.

* Extrait du texte de Tristan Garcia pour la publication éditée conjointement par le MAMCO et Le Consortium, Les presses du réel, Dijon, à paraître.

which make the units of digital images look like large hazy squares. Let's stare at this figure for a moment. We say to ourselves: it's a point. And yet what we can see is a blotch. The investigation has begun.

Our hypothesis (...) is as follows: this work by Wade Guyton is in fact a visual repertory of the fundamental elements that display the transformation of pictorial into informational space; the construction of pictorial space in three phases, point, line, and surface, as in Kandinsky's treatise, has been extended through the pixel, ray, and print.

What we are given to see by Wade Guyton's work are the constructional elements of ideal space, perceived space, pictorial space, and digital space. While Kandinsky attested to the modern project of deconstructing and reconstructing pictorial space based on the point, line, and plane, Wade Guyton shows and reveals that, a century later, the construction of space has continued: from the reflexive point and the perceived blotch, which led to the intentional, painted blotch, the pixel has now emerged; from the reflexive line and perceived ligneous matter, which led to the intentional, painted stroke, the ray has emerged, and in particular the laser ray; from the reflexive surface and the perceived imprint, which led to the intentional, painted image, the printed image has emerged. Printing might be an ancient procedure, but it has been transformed by the laser and then the pixel, and now produces Wade Guyton's enigma-image, like an optical development of the strata in the construction of our digital space, while retaining the pictorial, perceptive, and ideal forms of memory.

* Excerpted from Tristan Garcia's text for the forthcoming book published by MAMCO Geneva & Le Consortium, Les presses du réel, Dijon 2018.

Vues de l'exposition au MAMCO,
hiver 2016-2017



FEATURE



Wade Guyton

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?

Interview
by
Seungduk Kim,
photography
by
Wade 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.

— You decided, along with the curator Nicolas Trembley, to make a public presentation of your new works at Le Consortium, in Dijon, France. Why there?

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.

— The exhibition has been criticized, by some, for allowing three (or four) new works to appear in the booths of your dealers at Art Basel. That brought immediate attention to the exhibition in Dijon. Spread over two floors of the main building was a large series of ink-jet printed canvases, whose images were taken from the tubing of the famous Marcel Breuer cantilever chair, B32 (1928). What are your thoughts on the genesis of these new paintings?

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 15 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, which is a bent Breuer Ceska chair. In the studio, the sculpture was standing in front of a black painting propped up on 2 in. x 4 in. lengths of wood (Wade Guyton uses this standard wood format to keep the paintings from sitting directly on the floor) 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





Kim Seungduk
Interview: Wade Guyton
Frog, N°17, Fall-Winter, 2017-2018, p.92-101.

I am interested in this thing we call Painting: the category, the densely historical format that has lots of genetic information.

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.

— *To return to your last two decades of work, how would you characterize your formal strategy, or strategies? Perhaps as post-printed matter paintings? Twisting technology when it comes to digital and computer-driven work into a kind of hyper-realism?*

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.

— *Digital media brought high-resolution rendering of images for a far better reproduction quality, and at the same time, low-resolution images are totally invading our daily life (Google images, screen grabs, low res videos, etc.). Your composition and production process has been dealing with both sides of the digital era.*

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 was 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, which 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 'Exceed Your Vision' as its motto. It's interesting to see how businesses perceive 'image quality'.

— *The magic of painting also lies in its openness and the welcoming process of accidents, distortion, dirtying, etc, 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?

I don't come from a background in painting, and I don't have much interest in the materiality of paint. On 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, they 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.

— 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?

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 they are not exactly the same, there are similarities in my paintings.

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

That 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 Seungduk

Interview: Wade Guyton

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

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 leaned against was too short to hold the painting in the way I would have wanted if it were 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.

— 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 with any other stock-marketed goods. Are we now in a sophisticated TV series (with artists as the new tycoons, iconic figures), or in a global financial world where art plays its part and contributes to the money laundering? Is Brooklyn the new Wall Street?

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 fuelling 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.

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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 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 looked 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, chooses 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



ARTFORUM

DIJON/VOSNE-ROMANÉE, FRANCE/PARIS

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.

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.

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."

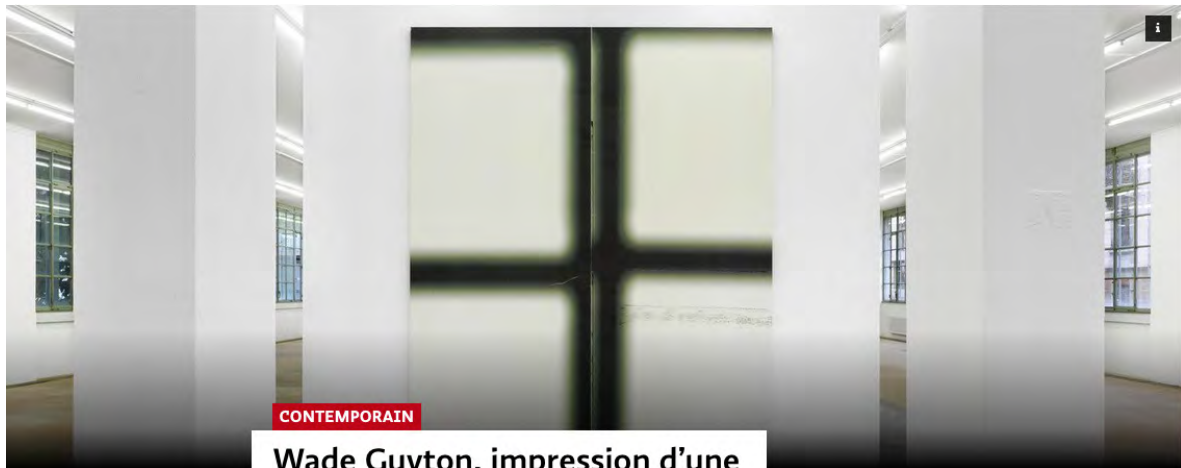
—Riccardo Venturi

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

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



LE TEMPS



Wade Guyton, impression d'une exposition

Le Mamco consacre un accrochage événement à l'un des artistes les plus excitants du moment dont les tableaux sont réalisés avec des imprimantes à jet d'encre

Tout un étage rien que pour lui. 1000 m² d'espace pour y exposer ses derniers travaux, soit une trentaine de toiles dont certaines dépassent les 10 mètres de long. Coproduite avec le Consortium de Dijon et organisée par le commissaire indépendant Nicolas Trembley, le Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Genève (Mamco) accroche Wade Guyton sur ses murs. Il est Américain et depuis quinze ans l'un des artistes les plus en vue de la scène contemporaine. Son style? Reconnaisable au premier coup d'œil: Wade Guyton réalise ses œuvres avec des imprimantes à jet d'encre.

Emmanuel Grandjean
Wade Guyton, impression d'une exposition
Le Temps, October 7, 2016.
<https://cutt.ly/d8JqSme>

«Au début je faisais de la photographie mais surtout des sculptures qui prenaient une place folle dans mon minuscule atelier de l'époque. Et puis je me suis mis au dessin. Mais ça n'allait pas, je cherchais un moyen de me passer du travail de la main. J'avais cette petite Epson sur mon bureau que j'utilisais comme tout le monde pour sortir des images et des e-mails. Je me suis dit qu'elle ferait parfaitement le job», reprend l'artiste, physique pas du tout geek de beau type aux cheveux longs. «J'ai pris des pages de magazine sur lesquelles j'imprimais des caractères et des motifs. C'est ainsi que tout a commencé.»

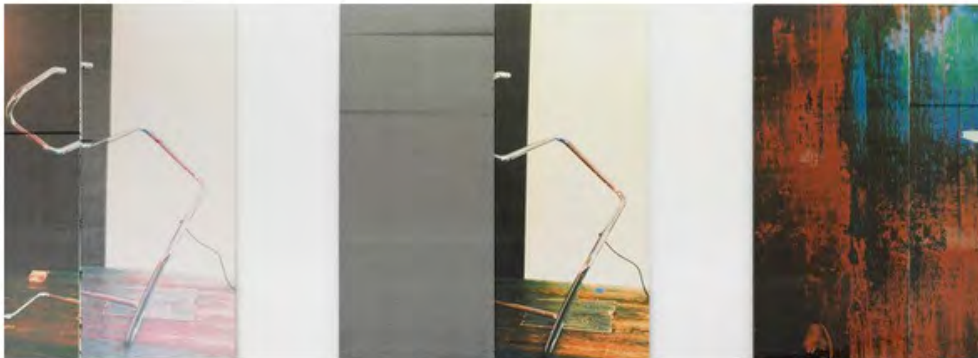
Tous uniques, tous différents

Si, à la fin des années 1990, Wade Guyton n'est sans doute pas le premier à détourner l'imprimante comme un outil au service de l'art, il est en revanche le seul qui va en faire son médium privilégié. Dans l'absolu, la photographie numérique peut aussi difficilement s'en passer, mais l'imprimante, chez l'artiste américain, n'est pas qu'un simple objet utilitaire: elle contribue à sa démarche artistique. «Une imprimante sert à deux choses: à reproduire des images et du texte, continue Wade Guyton. C'est un processus photographique dans le fond, mais qui a supprimé la chambre noire de la chaîne de production. Mes premiers travaux avaient plutôt rapport avec l'écriture. Au lieu de tracer un X ou un U – qui sont des lettres très significatives en langue anglaise – je les tapais sur le clavier de mon ordinateur. Je les agrandissais, les multipliais et je les imprimais sur de la toile.»

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La suite? Elle est déléguée à la machine, qui n'est pas prévue pour fonctionner avec un autre support que du papier ou du plastique fin. Ce qui va produire une image avec tous les accidents que cela suppose. Taches d'encre, mauvais alignement des têtes d'impression, lignes laissées vides: les bugs appartiennent au principe de création.

«Plusieurs facteurs jouent. L'humidité, par exemple, donne des images au traitement très pictural. J'assume ces erreurs, mais ce n'est absolument pas ce que je recherche. Une fois que la machine est lancée, rien ne l'arrête. En fait l'œuvre est un fichier que je peux utiliser autant de fois que je le veux, mais qui, une fois imprimé, donnera des résultats toujours différents.»



Accrochage en série, typique de Wade Guyton avec la fameuse image de sculpture et une vue du sol de son atelier.

Mamco/Annik Werter

D'où ces objets étranges, difficiles à classer. Fruit de la reproduction mécanique, mais de fait toutes uniques, ces pièces ne sont ni vraiment des multiples imprimés, ni des peintures, ni strictement des photographies. Mais un peu des trois à la fois. Certains critiques parlent d'abstraction à l'ère numérique ou de «peinture digitale». Ils voient dans ces grands monochromes noirs et ces compositions géométriques une lecture de l'art qui balayerait l'histoire du suprématisme russe du début du siècle jusqu'aux tableaux d'Ad Reinhardt dans les années 1960. Wade Guyton, lui, ne se prononce pas. «Disons que je ne viens pas de la peinture et que je ne me considère pas comme un peintre. Que les gens articulent un discours sur la peinture à travers mon travail ne me dérange pas.»

Atelier mausolée

Par contre, qu'on le qualifie d'artiste abstrait le contrarie davantage. «Cela m'a fait beaucoup réfléchir, c'est vrai.» Dans son exposition du Mamco, il montre ainsi pour la première fois des travaux représentant des objets réels. Notamment une sculpture en tubulure exposée en mai dans le musée genevois. En fait les restes d'une chaise du designer du Bauhaus Marcel Breuer. «Je l'avais trouvée dans une rue de l'East Village. Elle était en mauvais état et je m'étais juré de la réparer, raconte Wade Guyton. Sauf que je ne l'ai jamais fait. Au final, je me suis dit que cela ferait une bonne sculpture. Une manière pour cette chaise de quitter son monde fonctionnel pour le champ dysfonctionnel de l'art. Je l'ai désossée et posée devant une de mes anciennes toiles, une Black Paintings. Et j'ai pris une photo avec mon téléphone portable. J'aime bien ce rapport entre deux objets venus du passé, mis en scène dans mon atelier.»

L'atelier, plus qu'un lieu de travail, un mausolée. «C'est le meilleur endroit pour voir mes tableaux parce que c'est là d'où ils viennent.» Au point qu'en 2008, pour son exposition dans la galerie parisienne Chantal Crousel, Wade Guyton va reproduire au sol la réplique du plancher de son atelier new-yorkais. Lequel est aussi le sujet d'une série de tableaux exposés au Mamco. «Mon atelier est un lieu capital. Je pense que c'est le cas de tous les artistes; c'est l'endroit de la création, de la réflexion et du repos.»

Il se trouve aussi que ces deux dernières années, Wade Guyton y a passé le plus clair de son temps. Il faut dire que dès ses premiers succès, l'artiste américain n'a pas cessé d'enquiller les expositions. Il a été montré dans les plus grands musées du monde. Son œuvre appartient aux plus prestigieuses collections. Une vie pleine de trépidation pour ce natif de la très tranquille ville d'Hammond dans l'Indiana, qui débarque à New York en 1996 à l'âge de 24 ans. «Je n'ai pas grandi entouré d'art. Enfant, je n'y connaissais pas grand-chose. Je ne me souviens pas pourquoi je m'y suis finalement intéressé. A New York, j'ai suivi des cours à Hunter College. L'art conceptuel était ce qui me parlait le plus.» En 2003, il expose pour la première fois ces toiles imprimées. La suite vous la connaissez.

Après Dijon, le résultat de cette retraite s'expose donc dans le musée genevois. Wade Guyton a retenu quatre images de base qui se répètent et s'associent dans des tailles et sur des rythmes différents. Dans son atelier new-yorkais, l'artiste produit ces impressions à la chaîne sur des Epson grand format standards (il est resté fidèle à la marque). «Je plie la toile en deux dans le sens de la longueur pour la faire entrer dans la machine. Une fois l'opération terminée, je la retourne pour utiliser la face laissée vierge.» Ce qui explique cette ligne tacite qui sépare symétriquement chaque tableau en deux côtés. Reste à choisir parmi ce nombre incalculable d'œuvres, qui parfois se ressemblent, lesquelles seront exposées ou pas. «Comme dans toute production artistique, il y en a de mauvaises. Les plus ratées ne sont pas perdues: je réimprime autre chose par-dessus.»

A voir

Wade Guyton, vernissage mardi 11 octobre dès 18h,
exposition jusqu'au 29 janvier 2017, Mamco, 10, rue des
Vieux-Grenadiers, Genève, 022 320 61 22, www.mamco.ch

SPACE

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Art Prism _ Talk

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)



Kim Seungeduk
Wade Guyton: The Digital Ghosts and The Epiphany of Painting
Space, N°586, September, 2016, p.88-95.

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

수세기를 지나오는 동안, 다양한 형태의 분신으로 거처온 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 틀이 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 풀꽃, 두터운 검정빛 표면, 그리고 요즘에 와서는 사실적이고 뒤뜰어진 이미지로 채워졌다.

그는 경매의 레코드를 깨고 경매에 애깃거리가 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 확장할 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 총위들과 이미지 합성, 퇴색, 잉크의 얼룩이나 흰 자국은 잠재력 있는 회화를 구성하는 전략적 요소다.

벗 없이 그리기

벗 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), 자크 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 풀어내고, 프로그래밍된 실수를 실행했고, 잘못됐다고 인식된 밀폐된

존재들에 대한 '음모'를 꾸렸다. 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 넘어서 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 짚어 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 과물을 생산해내는 바이러스에 감염될 수도 있지만, 가이튼은 불확실성과 필연성, 구성과 거침없음 사이의 긴장감 안에서 가장으로 자리 잡았다. 프랑스 디종에 위치한 르 콩소르시움에서 신작들을 공개한 웨이드 가이튼을 만나 보았다.

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 하는데 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 사진 공개되었다. 덕분에 많은 사람이 다종에 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(Kunsthalles Zurich) 벽 길이에 정확하게 맞춰 조정해야만 했는데 몇 개의 패널은 15m에 달했다. 2014년 파리에 있는 갤러리 산탈 코루젤(Galerie Chantal Crousel) 전시에서는 갤러리의 공간적 기억으로부터 완전히 벗어났었다. 스튜디오 내에서 압박감을 느끼진 않는다. 있다 하더라도 그것은 아마 내 안에서 나오거나, 전장에서 나오거나, 스튜디오 자체의 조건에서 나온다.

지금 언급한 작업은 2002년 제작한 구부러진 브로이어의 세스카(Ceska) 의자 조각의 사진으로 만들었다. 내 스튜디오에서 조각은 2X4s** 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 자르자

고고 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 자극으로 남는 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 이번엔 선보인다.

김: 최근 20년간 해온 당신의 작업 방식을 어떻게 말할 수 있을까? 후기 인쇄를 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.

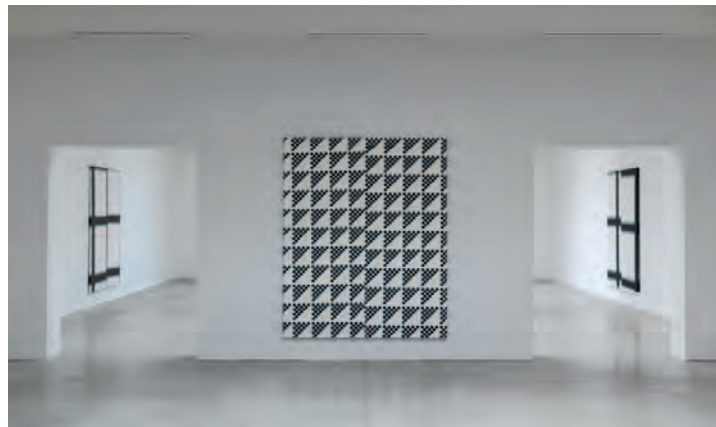
최근 작업을 보면, 내가 작품을 읽어낼 수 있는 구조를 만들어내기 위해 오랜 시간을 들인다는 것이 분명하다. 이것은 부분적으로는 간단한 기술과 소프트웨어를 사용하고, 그것을 물리적 재료로 생각했기 때문이다. 디지털 혹은 기술의 유토피아적인 가능성에 몰두하기보다는 일상적으로 쓰는 도구로서 그것들을 이용했다. 그것이 프린터의 크기든 스튜디오 화물 엘리베이터의 규격이든, 작업하는 데 있어서 언제나 제약이 있었다. 나는 이런 제약들을 작업의 구조로 만들었고, 매개변수에 기반해 결정을 내렸다.

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 다종의 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. 엘손의 최근 신조는 "당신의 시각을 넘어선다"이다. 이는 인쇄산업에서 이미지 품질을 어떻게 인식하는지를 보여주는 흥미로운 사실이다.



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

© Le Consortium, André Kohn

김: 회화의 마법은 그림이 마무리되기 전까지 스튜디오 안에서 그려지는 동안 작업의 개방성, 우연적인 사고, 왜곡, 오염을 가까이 받아들이는 과정, 그리고 긍정적인 그림의 강령에 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 재정의의 허용할 만큼 충분히 실리적이다.

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

한편으로, 그들은 출력되지만 출력물은 아니며, 사실적이지만 사진은 아니고, 그림이지만 회화는 아니다. 작품들은 불명료한 상태 속에서 안정적이지만 동시에 자기 입지에 온전한 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 층층이 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 출력력이 불완전할 때도 있다. 이는 구성주의적 선택에서 생기는 일들이지만, 그것이 전부만은 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 원도 화면들을 바라본다. 이미지는 눈앞에서 보았다 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



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

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? 다중에서는 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 의도하지 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 내놓을 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 복돋는 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 다루어왔만 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, *North Wall*, Bowers Studio, WG3505, Printed adhesive vinyl applied to a built wall with dimensions of 285 x 390 x 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 *laissez-aller*.

Kim Seungeduk

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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 2x4s¹ 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



Raymond Hains, *sans titre*, 1966

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.

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

GALERIE CHANTAL CROUSEL

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?

Guyton: 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.

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

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

1. 2x4인치 스탠다드로 제작된 나무토막으로 페인팅이 바닥에 직접 닿지 않도록 임시 밀받침대로 쓴다.
1. A "2x4" 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 가이톤은 인디애나 주 햄몬드 출신으로 지금은 뉴욕에서 살며 작업한다. 다종의 트랜스미디어를 포함해 뉴욕 휘트니미술관, 콘소르티움에 취리히, 쾰른 루트비히미술관, 프랑크푸르트 포르트루스, 비엔나의 시세션에서 개인전을 열었다. 이외 주요 그룹전으로는 카네기 인터내셔널(2013), 베니스비엔날레(2013), 라중비엔날레(2007), 휘트니 비엔날레(2004)가 있다. 그의 작품은 뉴욕 휘트니미술관, 파리 조지 퐁피두 센터, 뮌헨 피나코텍 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. 플러워 파워 문화수도 릴 전시(2004), 발렌시아 비엔날레(2006), 안양 공공예술 프로젝트(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 Programming for the Palais de Tokyo in Paris since 2011; Commissioner/Curator of the Korean Pavilion 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.

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Numéro

Art

Dans l'atelier de

Wade Guyton

**RÉALISANT AVEC DES TECHNIQUES D'IMPRESSION DES ŒUVRES
RESSEMBLANT À D'AUTHENTIQUES PEINTURES, L'ARTISTE
AMÉRICAIN JOUE AVEC LES NOTIONS D'ORIGINAL, DE COPIE ET
DE SÉRIE. IL PRÉSENTE AU CONSORTIUM SA PREMIÈRE GRANDE
EXPOSITION MONOGRAPHIQUE EN FRANCE.**

Propos recueillis par Nicolas Trembley, photos Van Sark

Les différents signes générés par ordinateur que Wade Guyton utilise comme matrice, que ce soit des X, des U ou encore l'image d'une flamme scannée dans un livre, font désormais partie des icônes contemporaines. Né en 1972 à Hammond, dans l'Indiana, Wade Guyton, qui vit et travaille à New York, est l'un des représentants les plus influents d'une génération d'artistes qui pense et produit des images à l'ère du numérique. Pour sa première exposition monographique d'envergure dans une institution française, il a choisi de proposer une série de plus de 40 travaux inédits conçus spécialement pour les espaces du Consortium à Dijon et ceux de L'Académie Conti à Voivre-Romanée. Si certaines de ses œuvres assument la structure et l'apparence de peintures au sens traditionnel du terme, elles en modifient néanmoins les codes puisqu'elles sont produites à l'aide d'imprimantes jet d'encre dans lesquelles Guyton fait passer plusieurs fois la toile pour y imprimer des motifs – les erreurs, les coulures et les défauts d'impression faisant également partie de la composition. Avec ses récentes pièces, toutes conçues au cours des six derniers mois, l'artiste aborde un nouveau chapitre. L'image centrale de l'exposition – répétée sous différents formats – est une photographie que l'artiste a réalisée dans son atelier et qui représente une de ses sculptures ainsi qu'un de ses tableaux en arrière-plan. L'irruption soudaine d'éléments biographiques liés au réel et au quotidien bouleversent son iconographie habituelle et ouvre un nouveau pan créatif et historique dans la production de Wade Guyton. Nous l'avons rencontré dans son atelier de Brooklyn afin d'évoquer ce nouveau projet.

Numéro : Quel est votre parcours ? Comment vos origines ont-elles influencé votre identité ?

Wade Guyton : J'ai passé mon enfance dans le Middle West, plus précisément dans le nord-ouest de l'Indiana. Les gens de ma famille travaillaient dans les aciéries d'East Chicago. À l'adolescence, je vivais dans les montagnes de l'est du Tennessee, où je suis également allé à l'université. Je n'avais pas de centre d'intérêt précis. Je me suis beaucoup cherché. J'ai vécu dans des villes industrielles et dans des villes rurales. Ma famille appartenait à la classe ouvrière. J'ai changé d'école pas mal de fois et nous avions très peu accès à l'art. Cela dit, quand j'étais à l'école élémentaire, nous avons fait un voyage à l'Art Institute de Chicago. Plus tard (c'était bien sûr avant Internet), afin de me documenter sur l'art, je me suis appuyé sur ce que j'entendais, des livres trouvés ici et là, des magazines à la bibliothèque, et, de temps en temps, un enseignant engagé.

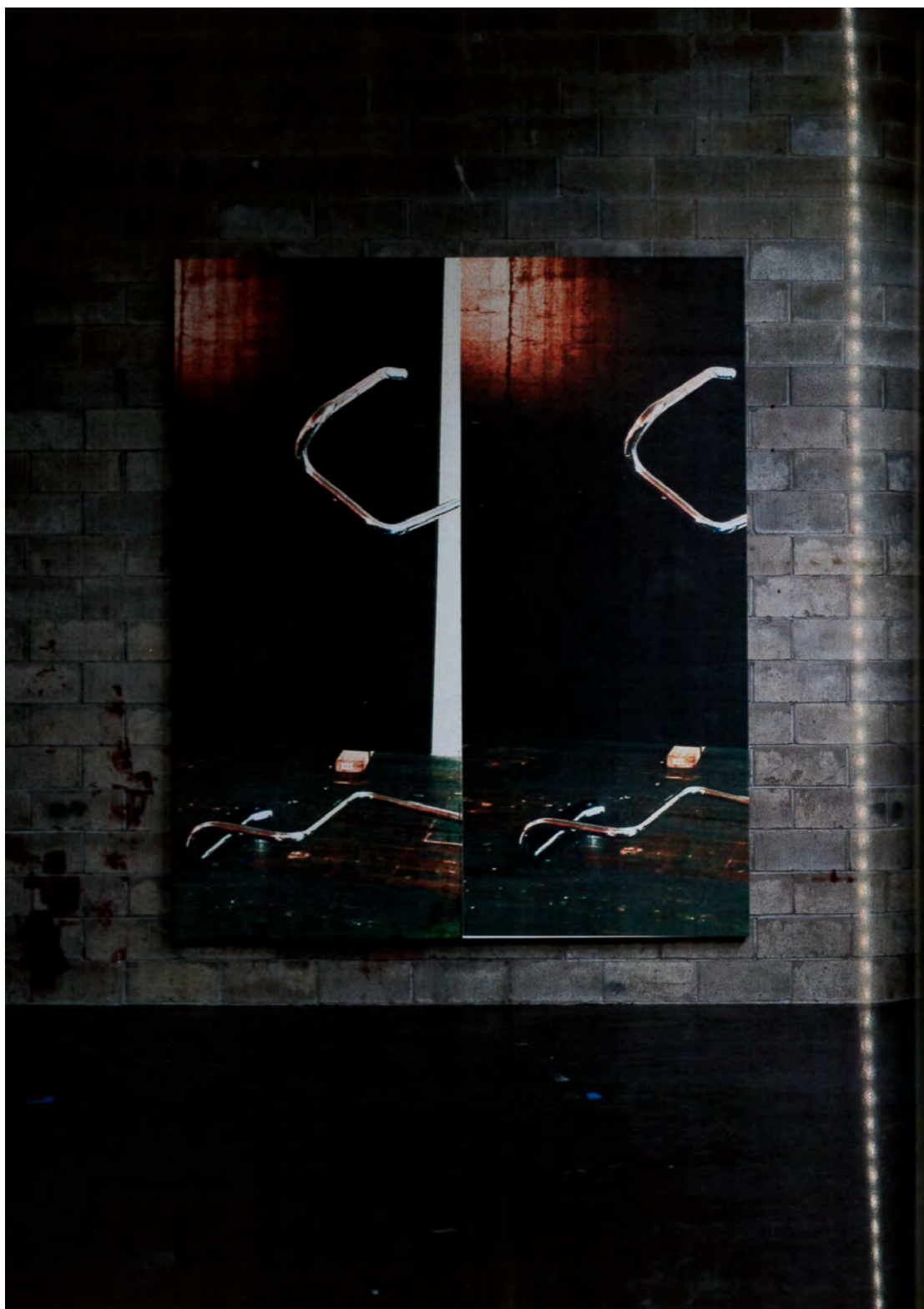
Vous produisez des sculptures, des installations, des dessins, des peintures. Vous êtes célèbre pour avoir imprimé sur vos toiles des signes abstraits générés par ordinateur comme des X ou des U, ou des formes géométriques noires. Comment avez-vous choisi ces formes et quelle est leur signification ?

Célèbre, c'est beaucoup dire, mais les premiers travaux que j'ai réalisés sur ordinateur, c'était comme de l'écriture, le clavier remplaçant le stylo. Au lieu de dessiner un X, j'ai décidé d'appuyer sur une touche.

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Nicolas Trembley
Dans l'atelier de Wade Guyton
Numéro, N°174, June-July, 2016, p.102-105.



Nicolas Trembley
Dans l'atelier de Wade Guyton
Numéro, N°174, June-July, 2016, p.102-105.

“Mon travail ayant été à tort assimilé à de l'abstraction, j'ai alors utilisé le motif de la flamme. Ce qui est bien avec le feu, c'est qu'il est à la fois générateur et destructeur. Et puis il retient l'attention.”

Vous utilisez aussi une iconographie plus figurative comme les “flammes”, qui sont des images trouvées, scannées dans un livre. Le fait de les répéter en série les transforme presque en logo, les rend abstraites, coupées de leurs origines. Pourquoi ?

Beaucoup d'œuvres que j'ai réalisées à la même époque ont été prises à tort pour de l'abstraction. J'ai alors pensé qu'il me fallait un motif plus “imagé”. Ce qui est bien avec le feu, c'est qu'il est à la fois générateur et destructeur. Et puis il retient l'attention.

Récemment, vous avez utilisé des photographies prises par vous-même, de vos propres œuvres dans votre atelier. Considérez-vous cela comme un changement dans votre pratique ?

Pour comprendre mon travail autrement, j'ai commencé à le photographier dans l'atelier et à produire des peintures à partir de ces images. C'est parfaitement logique d'utiliser une image photographique avec les outils dont je me sers. Mes imprimantes ont été conçues pour remplacer les techniques de tirage en chambre noire... une sorte d'opération commerciale hostile déguisée en progrès technologique et en amélioration de l'image.

Vous produisez par séries, en réutilisant les mêmes images “originales” dans différentes œuvres que vous exposez parfois ensemble. Pourquoi la notion de série est-elle si importante ?

Certes, on peut parler de séries, mais je n'utilise pas souvent ce mot. Je parlerais plutôt de répétition et – possiblement – de compulsion. Les fichiers peuvent être ouverts, fermés et rouverts indéfiniment. J'aime l'idée de re-relire, de revenir à nouveau sur le fichier. On pense qu'il y a un original, mais est-ce réellement le cas ? Je ne suis pas assez calé techniquement pour dire si c'est vrai.

Vous proposez aussi différents formats avec les mêmes motifs, parfois dans des dimensions très vastes. Pourquoi ?

Les formats sont principalement des réponses aux limites. Les limites du matériau, du logiciel, de l'imprimante... Et, parfois, aux limites architecturales : des pièces, des portes, de la taille de mon ascenseur.

Vous utilisez une imprimante numérique, qui est culturellement associée à la reproductibilité mécanique, à la copie à l'infini, à l'abolition des originaux, etc. Mais vos peintures sont toutes “uniques”. Pouvez-vous expliquer cette dichotomie ?

Abolir l'original n'est pas un but pour moi. Mes œuvres sont les originaux. Bien que j'aie une nature autodestructrice et que je puisse être irrespectueux envers mon propre travail, je ne cherche pas cela. De nombreuses machines sont conçues pour répéter et gagner en productivité. En outre, répéter n'est pas forcément reproduire et n'aboutit pas toujours à une copie.

Quel est l'enjeu de votre prochaine exposition au Consortium ?

Je n'avais rien exposé de neuf depuis deux ans et, au Consortium, je ne vais exposer que des œuvres nouvelles. L'enjeu de ma présence me semble dès lors assez clair.

WADE GUYTON AU CONSORTIUM (DIJON), DU 24 JUIN AU
24 SEPTEMBRE, WWW.LECONSORTIUM.FR

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les Inrockuptibles



Vue de l'exposition Wade Guyton. Photo Florian Kleinmann, courtesy de l'artiste et galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

autocopie

Peut-on être radical deux fois ? La preuve que oui avec l'artiste américain Wade Guyton.

Pour sa nouvelle expo parisienne à la galerie Crousel, l'artiste américain Wade Guyton a reproduit à l'identique la première exposition réalisée au même endroit six ans auparavant. On y retrouve un sol en contreplaqué peint en noir et dix peintures monochromes noires posées exactement aux mêmes endroits. La différence tient au statut de cet ensemble : il y a six ans, les toiles étaient vendues séparément, aujourd'hui, le tout forme une seule et même installation.

Certes, Guyton n'est pas le premier à "refaire l'expo" : l'été dernier à Venise, la Fondation Prada avait organisé un minutieux remake de *When Attitudes Become Form* curatée par Harald Szeemann en 1969, nous rappelant que la reconstitution d'expositions est une pratique instituée des historiens d'art. En 1997, Maurizio Cattelan avait reproduit à l'identique chez Perrotin le show de l'artiste Carsten Höller qui exposait à côté, chez Air de Paris. Plus récemment, chez Art : Concept, le New-Yorkais Jakob Kassay avait rejoué en 2013 l'expo montrée en 2010 – mais cette redite était aussi alors le signe d'un artiste un peu perdu, coincé dans une production à la chaîne mais *successful* de toiles métalliques argentées. Ici, le résultat est d'une beauté plastique, d'une force visuelle époustouflante. Tant il est vrai que la sérialité et la répétition sont les armes dures de la radicalité conceptuelle. *Less is more*.

Pomme C, pomme V : le geste est d'autant plus simple que les toiles de Wade Guyton sont injectées d'encre noire par des imprimantes Epson que l'artiste maltraite en multipliant les passages. Il lui aura donc suffi de réutiliser le fichier numérique utilisé en 2008. Mais entre-temps, la technologie a évolué, passant d'une Epson 9600 au modèle 9900, et d'une qualité d'encre à une autre, si bien que l'artiste doit *updater* sa pratique et brutaliser ces machines toujours plus sophistiquées pour provoquer à la surface de la toile accidents, taches, défauts d'impression. Et depuis, également, Wade Guyton s'impose comme le plus puissant de la nouvelle génération des peintres new-yorkais. **Jean-Max Colard**

26 avril-7 juin 2008 jusqu'au 19 avril
à la galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris III^e, crousel.com

Jean-Max Collard

Autocopie

Les Inrockuptibles, N°97, March 26, 2014.

WADE GUYTON bis repetita placent ?

Erik Verhagen

À quoi bon peindre à l'aide de pin-
ceaux et de peinture à l'huile à l'ère
des systèmes opérationnels ? Mais
encore faudrait-il que les nouvelles
technologies, en voulant se débar-
rasser des techniques prétendument
obsolètes, ne cherchent pas à en re-
créer les qualités charnelles et la
présence. Wade Guyton a parfaite-
ment compris l'ambiguïté de la si-

tuation, d'où, lors de sa récente ex-
position à la galerie Chantal Crousel,
à Paris, la présentation d'une ré-
plique jet d'encre de son exposition
des huiles sur toile dans cette même
galerie en 2008. Cependant, un autre
accueil guette l'utilisateur des nou-
velles technologies : leur propre ob-
solescence au regard de l'accélération
de l'innovation technique.

Vues de l'exposition
« Wade Guyton, OS ». Whitney Museum
of American Art, New York,
2012-2013. (Ph. R. Amstutz).
Exhibition views at Whitney Museum
of American Art, New York



■ Le hasard du calendrier a voulu que la dernière exposition de Wade Guyton à la galerie Chantal Crousel ait plus ou moins coïncidé avec la sortie française du film *Her* de Spike Jonze, long-métrage de science-fiction narrant une histoire d'amour entre un certain Theodore Twombly (!) et... son « système opérationnel » dénommé Samantha, dont la voix suave est interprétée par Scarlett Johansson. De système opérationnel il est justement et abondamment question dans la production de Wade Guyton. Le sous-titre de son exposition au Whitney Museum of American Art, à New York (2012-2013), s'intitulait d'ailleurs *OS (operating system)*. Quel rapport entre ces deux œuvres ? L'OS mis à part, on notera que le film de Spike Jonze et les travaux de Guyton tournent autour des enjeux de l'originalité et de la reproduction, le personnage campé par Joaquin Phoenix ayant pour profession la rédaction de lettres pseudo-manuscrites, adressées à des proches de clients réfractaires aux exercices épistolaires. Aussi bien dans les « fausses » lettres « à l'ancienne » rédigées à l'ordinateur – notons à ce titre la pointe d'ironie dans le choix du patronyme du personnage principal – que dans les abstractions de Guyton, conçues à l'aide d'une imprimante, on assiste au télescopage entre des « valeurs », pratiques et genres ancrés dans le passé et des modes de (re)production tributaires d'avancées technologiques innovantes.

FINI, LE MONDE D'HIER ?

À quoi bon écrire des lettres manuscrites à l'ère des systèmes opérationnels, voire pire, tomber amoureux d'un être en chair et en os, alors que des substituts numériques dotés d'intelligence artificielle peuvent en partie répondre à nos besoins affectifs ? Quant à l'abstraction, quel est l'intérêt d'avoir encore recours à des pinceaux et une peinture à l'huile quand on a à sa disposition une imprimante Epson 9900 avec son encre Ultrachrome et sa technologie Vivid Magenta ? Ces substituts n'ont cependant de sens qu'à partir du moment où ils témoignent, pour reprendre la formule de Jean Baudrillard, d'un « crime parfait ». Qu'ils fassent illusion et renvoient, à défaut de pouvoir les supplanter, aux réalités, dont la désuétude reste à prouver, auxquelles ils se réfèrent. Là réside tout le paradoxe des nouvelles technologies : elles prétendent « ringardiser » le monde d'hier, mais veulent en conserver la saveur, aussi lointaine et désincarnée soit-elle. L'histoire d'amour entre Twombly et Samantha connaît, à cet égard, un tournant décisif et tragique quand le premier apprend qu'il n'est pas le seul à bénéficier d'une forme d'intimité avec la seconde, celle-ci étant non seulement le système opérationnel de milliers d'interlocuteurs, mais aussi et surtout la « compagne » de 641 d'entre eux.

Ce rapport ambigu au monde d'hier, nous le retrouvons dans les abstractions de Guyton, compte tenu du fait qu'elles ont certes été produites avec le concours d'un logiciel et d'une imprimante sans pour autant renier les nombreuses histoires de l'art qu'elles ambitionnent de revitaliser. Celle du monochrome noir bien entendu : on songe à Ad Reinhardt ou à Frank Stella mais aussi à Pierre Soulages ou Julie Knifer, ces deux derniers n'étant, faut-il s'en étonner, jamais mentionnés par les exégètes de l'artiste. Celle touchant aux procédés d'impression inusités et décontextualisés : viennent à l'esprit les *Working Drawings and other visible things on paper not necessarily meant to be viewed as art* (1966) de Mel Bochner, le *Xerox Book* (1968) de Seth Siegelaub ou *News of Hans Haacke* (1969), pour s'en tenir à des exemples conceptuels auxquels peuvent être greffés des propositions pop ou inhérentes à la Pictures Generation. Celle d'artistes ayant eu recours à des technologies, etc. Mais Guyton est aussi un créateur de sa génération partageant avec nombre de ses confrères, à l'image de Kelley Walker et Meredyth Sparks, des interrogations qui transgressent le clivage entre originalité et reproduction censé départager les ères modernistes et postmodernistes. Guyton ne crée en effet pas de faux originaux, mais bel et bien de fausses reproductions. Car, quand bien même ses abstractions noires sont nées de l'application d'un fichier Photoshop identique (*bigblack.tif*), aucune d'entre elles ne se ressemble, un écart se creusant invariablement entre les différentes concrétisations. Les accidents de parcours de type bourrage, les impressions pâles ou encrassées liées à un déficit ou un trop-plein d'encre, les traces du mouvement des têtes et des roues de l'imprimante sans oublier les inévitables « mésaventures » engendrées par d'éventuels passages répétés et l'inadéquation du support en toile de lin (autre référence à l'histoire de l'art et de la peinture occidentale en particulier) avec la machine utilisée par l'artiste concourent à placer la gestation de ses œuvres sous le signe d'une esthétique de l'aberration et du ratage qui lui permet de déjouer les pièges d'une démultiplication aliénante.

Ses travaux s'avèrent en effet non seulement originaux, mais ils jouissent d'une indéniable aura. Et s'il convient de désolidariser la démarche de Guyton du fameux essai de Walter Benjamin qui sert (trop) souvent de canevas théorique inapproprié aux commentateurs de son œuvre, force est de constater qu'à l'ère des imprimantes Epson, les termes de reproductibilité technique et d'aura ne sont plus inconciliables. Le modèle 9900 n'est après tout qu'un outil. Outil manipulé par l'artiste, la manipulation devant être comprise au sens le plus étymologique du terme. Ses

peintures ne sont dès lors pas *acheiropoiètes*. De plus, Guyton ne délègue jamais la production de ses œuvres. Il est systématiquement présent dans son atelier, mettant la main à la pâte, contrôlant et intervenant si nécessaire dans le processus d'impression à proprement parler, laissant aussi, sans pour autant les provoquer, les éraflures et salissures des toiles traînées au sol, pliées et réintroduites dans la machine, alimenter son répertoire « formel ». Car les supports sont lourds et encombrants et nécessitent une assistance humaine. Son assistance. Partiellement et en aucun cas exclusivement autogénérées, ses œuvres ne relèvent donc pas plus d'une logique *post-studio*. Bien au contraire. Et c'est pour cette raison que l'artiste a souhaité, pour ses présentations parisiennes reproduire le sol noir de son atelier. Histoire de signifier que les œuvres réalisées dans son espace de travail puis décontextualisées dans un autre environnement répondent respectivement à un *hic et nunc*.

UNE TRAJECTOIRE INQUIÉTANTE

Une preuve supplémentaire du *hic et nunc* est le dispositif particulier retenu par l'artiste pour son exposition à la galerie Chantal Crousel en mars et avril 2014, Guyton ayant produit une sorte d'impossible réplique de son exposition à la galerie en 2008. Or la dernière présentation, à l'image de ses impressions, ne saurait être la copie conforme de la première. Et ce pour deux raisons. D'une part, parce que, comme nous l'avons vu, aucune de ses œuvres ne s'avère identique. Et d'autre part, en raison du travail de mémoire effectué par l'artiste, celui-ci ayant conçu les œuvres en s'appuyant sur ses souvenirs évanescents de l'exposition de 2008. Deux raisons auxquelles s'ajoute une troisième : le remplacement de l'Epson 9600 (2008) par le modèle, bien plus « performant », 9900. L'écart n'en est que plus prononcé. Se profile en conséquence une prise en considération de facteurs temporels en porte-à-faux avec la *doxa* moderniste, passé et présent ne cessant de se heurter au sein d'une même dynamique, cette nostalgie d'un temps révolu étant au cœur du *propos de l'artiste*. Révolution enfin hypertrophiée par l'obsolescence technologique, pour ne pas dire programmée, de notre société contemporaine. Le fait que son œuvre évolue au gré des progrès techniques rend sa trajectoire à la fois passionnante et inquiétante. Car si lesdits progrès n'ont rien d'exceptionnel dans d'autres cas de figures, notamment photographiques, sans parler des arts d'obédience technologique, il est

Vues de l'exposition « Wade Guyton, OS ». Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2012-2013. (Ph. R. Arnstutz). Exhibition views at Whitney Museum of American Art, New York



Erik Verhagen
Wade Guyton bis repetita placent?
Artpress, N°415, October, 2014, p.53-58.



rare, exception faite des avancées « techniques » décisives qui ont jalonné l'histoire de la peinture, que telle ou telle démarche picturale en ait été dépendante. Il me semble qu'un Reinhardt pouvait passer six ans sur une peinture sans se soucier du moindre facteur exogène. Un Guyton est quant à lui, comme Theodore Twombly, obligé de tenir compte des modifications induites par l'évolution, les éventuels dérèglements et mises à jour des logiciels et périphériques dont il

dispose. C'est dire que l'idée même d'une peinture autoréférentielle, aussi fantasmagorique soit-elle, n'est plus de mise chez cet artiste. Et cela vaut autant pour ses *black paintings* que pour toutes ses œuvres antérieures conçues à l'aide d'imprimantes inévitablement reliées à un système opérationnel. Initialement, en 2002, Guyton avait commencé à recouvrir des pages de livres et de magazines déchirées de formes cruciformes tracées à l'aide d'un feutre et

d'une règle, avant de soumettre ses images reproductibles à une petite imprimante Epson. Ce basculement évoque celui d'un Buren dans la seconde moitié des années 1960, si ce n'est que le contexte n'est bien évidemment pas comparable. Au climat iconoclaste de l'ère conceptuelle s'est substituée une ère iconodoule. Et l'éloge d'une image reproductible n'a rien d'exceptionnel au regard des profondes mutations qui ont chamboulé le paysage artistique postconceptuel. Aussi n'est-il pas étonnant que l'artiste ait renoué avec un mode de production générant des images plus ouvertement « originales », quand bien même elles ont été réalisées à l'aide d'une imprimante. À regarder de près, les impressions de Guyton ne diffèrent pas de certains « objets » prétendument photographiques, conçus par exemple dans les cercles de l'École de Düsseldorf, à commencer par les travaux de Thomas Ruff. Ce dernier réalise ses « photogrammes » en se servant d'une chambre noire « virtuelle » ; Guyton des abstractions avec une Epson. Le pouvoir des images n'est pas diminué dans les deux cas. Il se pourrait même que les coups opérés par l'un et l'autre tendent à le renforcer. Du moins dans l'immédiat, car à force de jouer la carte de la prouesse et de l'innovation techniques, ces artistes risquent à terme de plier leurs œuvres au danger de l'obsolescence qui guette déjà leurs outils. À suivre... ■

Erik Verhagen enseigne l'histoire de l'art contemporain à l'université de Valenciennes.

Wade Guyton

Né en / born 1972 à / in Hammond, Indiana

Vit à / lives and works in New York

Expositions personnelles récentes / Recent shows:

2010 Museum Ludwig, Cologne

Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore

Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York

2011 Galerie Guy Bärtschi, Genève

Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich

Grafisches Kabinett, Secession, Vienne

Gio' Marconi, Milan ; Galerie Capitain Petzel, Berlin

2012 OS, Whitney Museum of American Art, NY

2013 Kunsthalle Zurich ; Kunsthau Bregenz, Bregenz

2014 Fondation Pinault, Punta Della Dogana, Venise ;

Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne ; Galerie Chantal

Crousel, Paris ; Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York

De haut en bas / from top:

Vue de l'exposition à la / exhibition view at galerie

Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2014 ; Ph. M. Argyroglo)

« Untitled » (détail). 10 peintures monochromes noires

(jet d'encre Epson Ultrachrome sur toile de lin),

sol en contreplaqué peint en noir.

Vue de l'exposition à la / exhibition view at galerie

Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2008. (Court. de l'artiste et

galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris ; Ph. F. Kleinfenn).

10 black monochrome paintings (Epson Ultrachrome

inkjet on linen) and 1 plywood floor painted black



Erik Verhagen

Wade Guyton bis repetita placent?

Artpress, N°415, October, 2014, p.53-58.

Wade Guyton's Black Paintings If it's worth doing it's worth doing twice

It is pointless to work with a paintbrush and oils in the age of operating systems, but the new technologies cannot get rid of supposedly obsolete mediums as long as they keep trying to recreate painting's corporality and presence. Wade Guyton has understood the ambiguity of the situation perfectly. Consequently, his recent show at the Chantal Crousel gallery in Paris featured an inkjet-printer replica of his 2008 show of oil paintings on canvas at the same gallery. But any user of new technologies faces another pitfall as well: their inevitable obsolescence in the face of accelerating technological innovation.

It was just chance that Wade Guyton's last show at the Chantal Crousel gallery more or less coincided with the French release of the Spike Jonze movie *Her*, a science fiction comedy about a love affair between someone named Theodore Twombly (!) and his "operating system," named Samantha, sweetly voiced by Scarlett Johansson. Operating systems, of course, are central to Guyton's production. In fact, his exhibition at the Whitney (2012-13) was subtitled "OS." What is the relationship between the movie and his work? The OS issue aside, both focus on the issues of originality and reproduction. The character played by Joaquin Phoenix is a professional letter-writer for clients who find it difficult to write personal missives themselves. His "old-fashioned" letters, however, are not handwritten as they appear to be (note the ironic choice of his last name) but rather produced on a computer, just like Guyton's abstractions made with a printer. In both cases, there is a clash between "values," practices and genres rooted in the past and modes of (re)production based on innovative, advanced technologies.

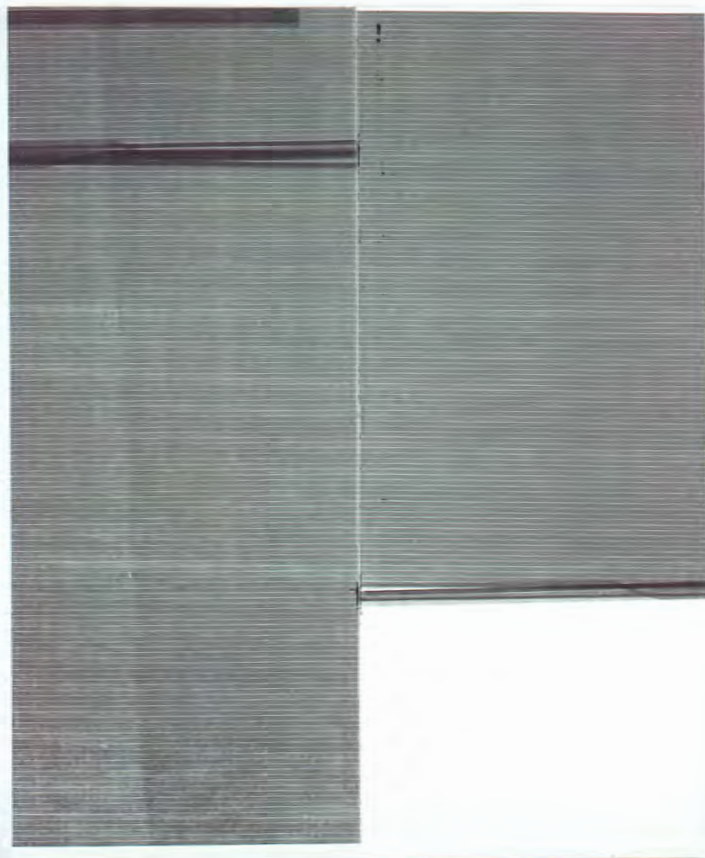
IS YESTERDAY'S WORLD SO YESTERDAY?
Is there any point to writing letters by hand in the age of operating systems, or, even worse, to falling in love with a real live person when we have digital surrogates equipped with artificial intelligence to cater to some of our emotional needs? As for abstraction, why bother with brushes and oils when you have an Epson 9900 printer that uses Ultrachrome ink and Vivid Magenta technology? But such substitutes only make sense when they can be used to

commit what Jean Baudrillard called "a perfect crime"—when they deceptively refer us back to the realities they reference, realities they cannot replace and whose obsolescence remains to be proven. Here we have the paradox of the new technologies: they claim to consign yesterday's world to the trash bin of history, but they want to keep its flavor, no matter how distant and disembodied it may be. In this regard, Twombly and Samantha's relationship reaches a decisive and tragic turning point when he learns that he is not the only person with whom she is on intimate terms. Not only is she the OS for thousands of other people, she is "dating" 641 of them.

FAKE REPRODUCTIONS

We find this same ambiguous relationship to yesterday's world in Guyton's abstractions. Even though they have been made with the help of software and a printer they do not disown art history. In fact, they seek to revitalize some of its currents. One, obviously, is the history of black monochromes that includes not only Ad Reinhardt and Frank Stella, but also Pierre Soulages and Julie Knifer. Astonishingly, the latter two are never mentioned in scholarly exegesis of Guyton's work. Another is the use of unusual, decontextualized printing methods, which brings to mind Mel Bochner (*Working Drawings* and other visible things on paper not necessarily meant to be viewed as art, 1966), Seth Siegelaub (*Xerox Book*, 1968) and Hans Haacke (*News*, 1969), just to name a few Conceptual artists, without mentioning Pop practitioners and the Pictures Generation. Artists' recourse to technologies has its own history, and so on.

But Guyton is also an artist of his generation who like many others of his cohort (such as Kelley Walker and Meredyth Sparks) interrogates and transgresses the split between originality and reproduction that is supposed to divide the modernist and postmodernist eras. In fact, what Guyton produces are not fake originals but fake reproductions. Even though his black abstractions are made from a single Photoshop file (*bigblack.tif*), they are all different, and this difference invariably becomes more pronounced from one printout to the next. Various factors—accidents like paper jams, over- and under-inked prints due to the state of the cartridge and the traces of printer rollers, not to mention the inevitable mishaps that come from repeated run-outs and the incompatibility between the printer and the surface to be printed on (linen canvas, another reference to art history and Western painting in particular)—come together to mark his work with the signs of an aesthetics of aberration and failure, and thus allow him to avoid the perils of an alienating identical reproduction. Not only is his work, as it turns out, original; it is endowed with an undeniable aura. This alone distinguishes Guyton's approach from Walter Benjamin's famous essay that all too often serves as a theoretical framework to analyze his art. It must be acknowledged that in the age of Epson printers, the terms mechanical reproduction and aura are no longer irreconcilable. After all, the 9900 model is just another tool wielded by an artist. His paintings, therefore, are not *acheiropoietes*, the opposite of artifacts. Further, Guyton never delegates the making of his pieces. He is always present when they



Untitled. 2011. Impression jet d'encre Epson
UltraChrome sur lin. 213 x 175 cm. (Coll. particulière;
Court. de l'artiste et galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris).
Epson UltraChrome inkjet on linen

are made in his studio, taking part, checking and intervening in the printing process when necessary, accepting, while never directly causing, the scratches and dirt marks that enrich his formal vocabulary, the result of canvases falling on the floor and then being put through the printer again. These surfaces are heavy and clumsy and need a human hand to guide them. His hand. His work is partially but never exclusively self-generating. Definitely not post-studio. Just the opposite. That's why for his latest Paris show Guyton wanted to reproduce the blackened floor of his studio, to signify that artworks made in his workspace and then de-contextualized in another environment are still the result of a particular here and now.

A DISTURBING TRAJECTORY

Further proof of this *hic et nunc* is what Guyton did for his show at the Chantal Crousel gallery in March and 2014, an impossible replica of his show at that gallery in 2008. Just like his printouts, this recent show could not be an exact copy of the earlier one, for two reasons. First, because, as we have seen, none of his pieces is identical to any other. And second, because he worked from memory, making the new pieces based on his sometimes hazy recall of the 2008 show. And then there is a third reason: instead of using an Epson 9600, as he did in 2008, this time he used the more advanced 9900 model, further widening the gap. Clearly he took temporal factors into consideration, in opposition to postmodernist dogma. Past and present ceaselessly clash within the same dynamic—and nostalgia for a bygone time is a signature element in his art. This revolution

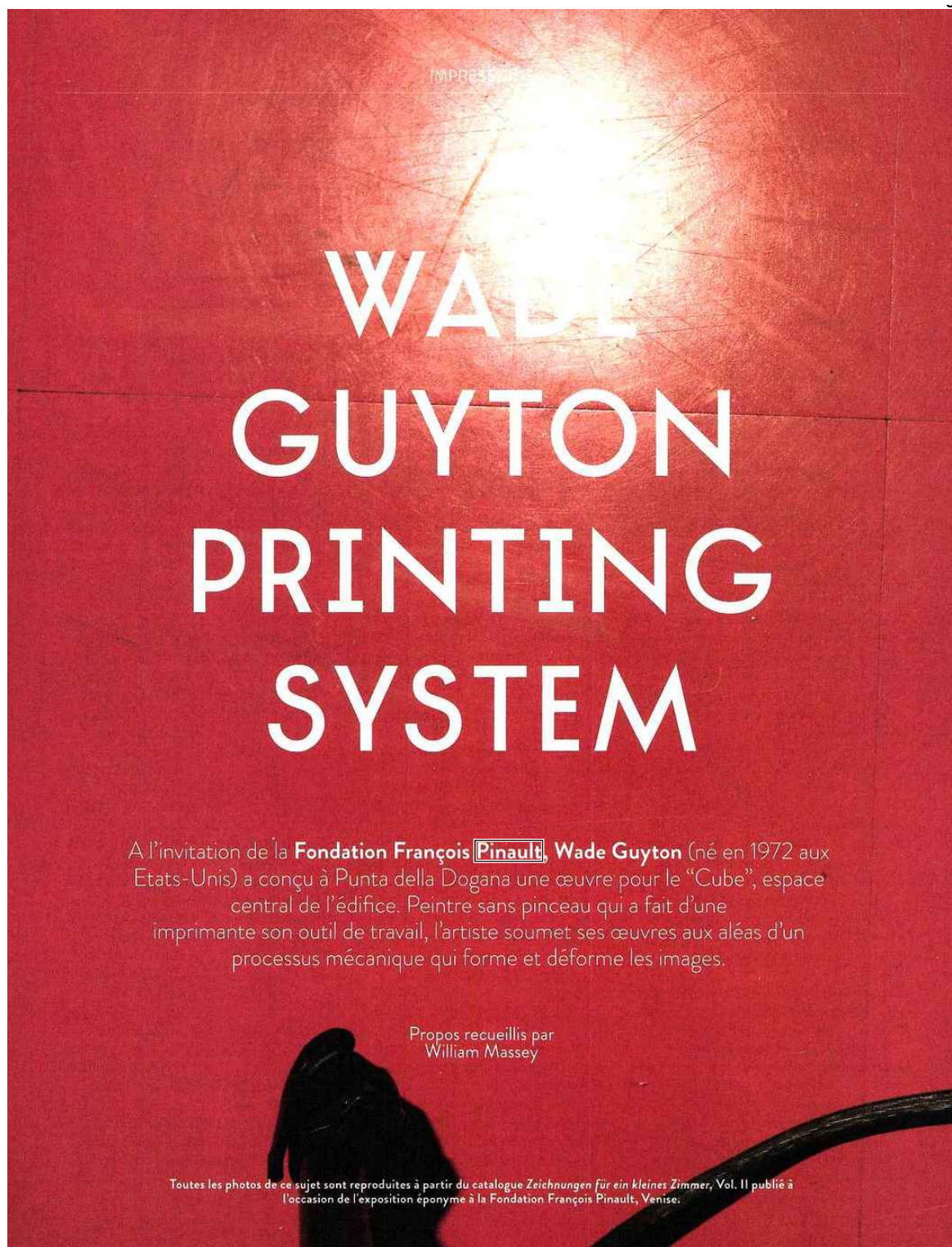
undergoes a process of hypertrophy due to our contemporary society's programmed technological obsolescence. The fact that technical progress is what drives the evolution of his work is simultaneously fascinating and disturbing. While such progress has often occurred in other cases, notably for photographers, not to mention even more technologically-reliant art forms, nevertheless, even taking into account the "decisive" technological advances that have marked the history of painting, it is rare for an artist's evolution to be so dependent on it. Someone like Reinhardt, it seems, could spend six years on a painting without worrying about a single exogenous factor. Guyton, in contrast, like Theodore Twombly, must take into account the sequential versions, possible bugs and updates of the software he uses. In other words, while the idea of self-referential painting might be a chimera, this artist has dropped it entirely. That applies not only to his black paintings but to all his previous work made with printers, which are inevitably linked to an operating system. Initially, in 2002, Guyton began to cover torn-out pages of books and magazines with cruciform shapes drawn with a marker and ruler, and then scanned them and printed them out on a desktop Epson.

This shift brings to mind Buren in the later 1960s, although of course the context is totally different. The iconoclastic climate of the conceptualist age has given way to icon worship, and eulogies to the reproducible image are not unusual in light of the profound upheavals that have transformed the postconceptual artistic landscape. Thus it is not surprising that this artist has gone back to a mode of production that generates more avowedly "original" paintings even though they have been made with a printer.

Closely examined, Guyton's printouts are not very different than other supposedly photographic "objects," conceived, for example, by proponents of the Düsseldorf School, with Thomas Ruff the outstanding example. Ruff makes his "photograms" using a "virtual" darkroom, whereas Guyton's abstractions are made with an Epson. The power of the images is undiminished in both cases. The tricks they both perform may even tend to strengthen it. At least in the short run, because by playing the card of technological prowess and innovation, in the long run these artists risk having to yield and inflect their art to avoid the danger of obsolescence that already besets their tools. ■

Translation, L-S Torgoff

Erik Verhagen teaches contemporary art history at the University of Valenciennes.



A l'invitation de la **Fondation François Pinault**, **Wade Guyton** (né en 1972 aux Etats-Unis) a conçu à Punta della Dogana une œuvre pour le "Cube", espace central de l'édifice. Peintre sans pinceau qui a fait d'une imprimante son outil de travail, l'artiste soumet ses œuvres aux aléas d'un processus mécanique qui forme et déforme les images.

Propos recueillis par
William Massey

Toutes les photos de ce sujet sont reproduites à partir du catalogue *Zeichnungen für ein kleines Zimmer*, Vol. II publié à l'occasion de l'exposition éponyme à la Fondation François Pinault, Venise.

GALERIE
CHANTAL CROUSEL



William Massey
Wade Guyton Printing system
L'Officiel Art, June-August, 2014.

On vous a proposé de créer une nouvelle œuvre pour le cube central de Punta della Dogana à Venise. Vous avez choisi d'exposer dans quinze tables vitrines vos "dessins" : des pages arrachées à des magazines ou des livres d'art que vous avez fait passer dans une imprimante à jet d'encre. De quelle manière ce travail s'insère-t-il dans votre pratique ?

Pour cette exposition à Venise, j'ai décidé de réinstaller une œuvre que j'avais réalisée pour Secession en 2011 : *Zeichnungen für ein kleines Zimmer* (dessins pour une petite chambre). Les dessins étaient exposés à l'étage, dans le Grafisches Kabinett. Comme il s'agit d'une petite salle qui ne pouvait contenir que quatre vitrines, beaucoup de dessins étaient invisibles car j'avais dû les empiler. Au total, l'œuvre compte cent seize dessins sur papier. Vu sa surface, le Cube de Punta della Dogana m'offrait une occasion exceptionnelle d'exposer l'intégralité de la série, ainsi que la possibilité de la découvrir vue d'en haut. Les artistes qui m'ont précédé ont utilisé les murs, j'ai décidé, quant à moi, d'utiliser le sol. La salle peut recevoir quinze vitrines, aussi j'ai pu répartir les cent seize dessins dans tout l'espace. Cela fait plus de dix ans que je réalise des dessins avec cette technique, aussi cela n'a rien de nouveau. Et j'ai l'habitude

d'adapter mon travail aux salles dans lesquelles il est présenté. J'ai exposé des œuvres sur papier dans différents lieux – le musée Ludwig à Cologne, la Kunsthalle de Zurich, le Whitney Museum...

Les dessins sont réalisés en imprimant, sur des pages arrachées à des livres, soit des aplats ou des formes obtenus sous Microsoft Word, soit des informations figurant sur des pages Web ouvertes par mon navigateur.

Mais il arrive parfois que des pages ne comportant aucune impression se retrouvent par hasard dans la pile.

Croyez-vous au pouvoir des formes ? Les formes que vous tracez sur votre ordinateur sont-elles le résultat d'une décision artistique consciente ?

Je ne sais pas très bien ce qu'est le pouvoir des formes. Dans mon travail, les formes ne sont que les véhicules de l'encre. Il y a si peu de volonté qui entre en jeu dans ces dessins qu'il serait embarrassant de parler de

"design", de démarche délibérée. Cela se réduit souvent à la simple frappe d'une touche. Mais c'est moi qui prends les décisions, et généralement de manière consciente.

Votre travail semble explorer une sorte de paysage visuel de l'ère des écrans et remettre en question la perception du spectateur en remplaçant le pinceau par l'imprimante. Comment en êtes-vous venu à inventer ces nouvelles règles du jeu ?

Je ne me suis quasiment jamais servi de pinceaux, aussi il n'y a de ma part aucun acte de remplacement d'un outil par un autre. Quand j'ai commencé à réaliser ces dessins, j'avais le sentiment qu'ils avaient un rapport avec l'écriture, et le clavier, ici comme dans la plupart des aspects de notre pratique de l'écriture, a remplacé le stylo.

"DANS MON TRAVAIL, LES FORMES NE SONT QUE DES VÉHICULES DE L'ENCRE. IL Y A PEU DE VOLONTÉ QUI ENTRE EN JEU DANS CES DESSINS."

Mes œuvres imprimées ne peuvent donc voir le jour que parce que nous sommes dans l'ère des écrans, je ne vois pas comment elles pourraient exister sans cela. Elles ressemblent parfois à des peintures ou à des dessins, mais au fond ce sont surtout des objets d'une espèce différente. Le fait que je les qualifie de dessins ou de peintures n'est qu'une sorte de sténographie, un raccourci, et en tout cas cela ne doit pas limiter leur identité. On pourrait tout aussi bien les qualifier de photos ou de sculptures, ce qui ferait alors ressortir d'autres aspects importants de ces œuvres.

On utilise souvent pour décrire votre travail un vocabulaire qui évoque une certaine forme de violence. On dit par exemple que vous trompez les imprimantes pour qu'elles impriment sur des supports que vous choisissez au préalable, que vous manipulez les images que vous arrachez dans les livres, que vous jouez avec les

limites de la machine. On fait remarquer que l'encre peut baver et que vos œuvres sont en fait le résultat du hasard, de l'échec et d'incidents imprévus survenant pendant l'impression.

Peut-on considérer votre travail comme un combat à la fois contre et avec la technologie ?

Tout cela paraît singulièrement dramatique !

Il y a toujours combat quand il s'agit de réaliser de l'art de qualité, et comme la technologie contemporaine fait partie intégrante de mon travail, il peut lui arriver d'être prise dans la bagarre. Mais ce n'est qu'un aspect du travail. Il s'agit autant d'un enregistrement que d'un processus de production, et les peintures et dessins sont le résultat de ce processus – tout en n'étant encore qu'un commencement.

On a pu vous définir comme adepte de l'appropriation, diriez-vous pour autant que vous êtes lié à une tradition particulière ? Etes-vous plutôt radical ou plutôt traditionaliste ?

Si j'étais vraiment un artiste appropriatif, je serais sans doute en mesure de répondre à cette question !

Ce projet a donné lieu à la production d'un livre édité par Walther König. Comment l'avez-vous conçu ?

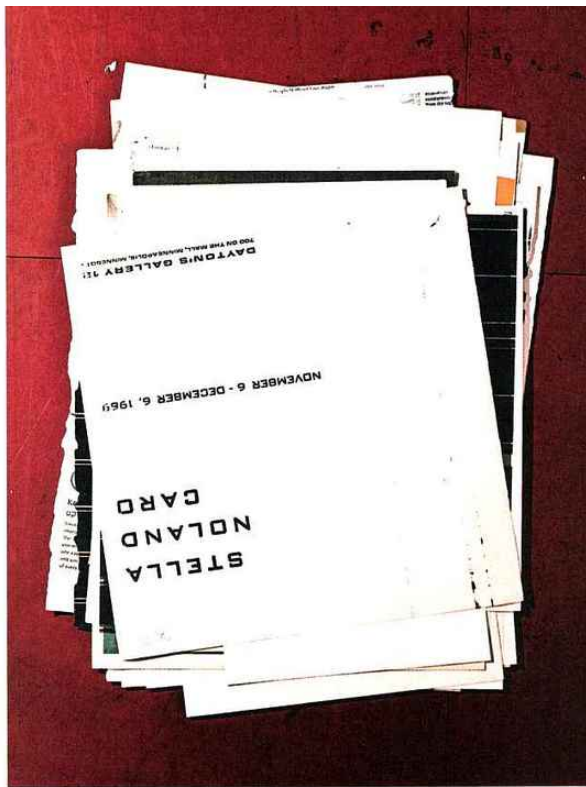
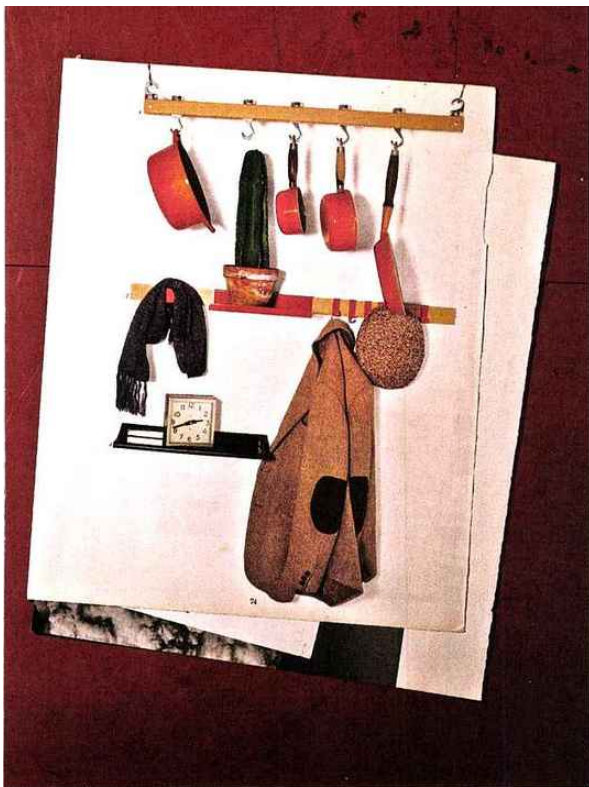
Le livre constitue le second volume des photographies que j'ai faites de mes dessins sur le sol de ma cuisine. Pour le premier volume, publié pour Secession, j'étais arrivé en haut de la pile. Le second volume reprend là où le premier s'était arrêté, et quelques événements surviennent en cours de route.

À VOIR

"Prima Materia", jusqu'au 31 décembre, Punta della Dogana, Dorsoduro, 2, 30123 Venise, arrêt vaporetto: Salute (linea 1), www.palazzograssi.it

Wade Guyton est représenté par les galeries Chantal Crousel (Paris), Gisela Capitain (Cologne), Francesca Pia (Zurich), Gio Marconi (Milan) et Friedrich Petzel (New York).

GALERIE
CHANTAL CROUSEL



PHOTOS JAMES CAMPBELL. COURTESY THE ARTIST AND WALTHER KÖNIG, KÖLN.

William Massey
Wade Guyton Printing system
L'Officiel Art, June-August, 2014.

ArtReview

Great Critics and Their Ideas

No 28

Walter Benjamin on Wade Guyton

Interview by Matthew Collings



Walter Benjamin, born in 1892, was a German literary critic and philosopher associated with the Frankfurt School. Originally published in German in 1936, his essay about the transformations of art in the modern era was first translated into English, as 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in 1968, and became popular in art circles over the following decade. On the run from the Nazis, Benjamin committed suicide in 1940.

ArtReview

ARTREVIEW *Hang on. I'm looking at notes someone gave me from Google. The owl of Minerva...*

WALTER BENJAMIN Preoccupation with notions of aura and authenticity, and perception tied to changes on the economic level seem somehow beside the point when you are confronted by David Shrigley's contribution to last year's Turner Prize. Or by Adrian Searle doing one of his *Guardian* podcasts about Frieze London. It's the defeat of the ponderous by the lighthearted. The gift of frivolity, which such artists and art writers (processors of meaning) bestow upon humanity, makes everything important unimportant. Searle's ill-advised Max Wall trousers...

AR *Can I stop you there, and ask about The Arcades Project?*

WB Developments in iron production and textile manufacture in the nineteenth century – do we really need to go into it? As a collector of fables I'd prefer to analyse the media's coverage of the Grillo sisters. Are they not inescapably mythic, ambivalent and tremendously Sadean? Originating from a simple village in the mountains and entering Bluebeard's castle for 12 years of service – well, we are practically commanded to see them in a frame of depravity. Let the lawyers note I say absolutely nothing about any legal dimension. I speak only of literature. Mere fantasy. My goodness, what a fantasy! I love the older one.

AR *Sorry to interrupt again, but I suppose a great figure in current art for you would be Wade Guyton, whose paintings are produced by the use of scanners and printers.*

WB They possess a kind of materiality that can only speak of loss, being so close, as it is, to the immaterial. He retreads aspects of Modernism and American architecture. And with his flames motif you see something like American popular dreams of destruction: apocalypse, the flame that consumes instead of illuminating. You come away from his shows with something in your mind: an impression of arrangements, grids and lineups. Yet in front of individual objects the excitement runs out and you're faced with something that looks like a blank, and so you couldn't care less if you ever saw one again. Of what vacuum does he speak? What situation has he seen? He deserves his success as a sort of pervert responding to perversion. If his art is a symptom, it is of art's own new relentless nullity relating to branding, marketing and capital expansion beyond art. The group exhibition at Gagosian in London recently, of prancing negativity, entitled *The Show Is Over*, in which Guyton was included, demonstrated the same syndrome. He is in control of his

meanings but we must question the benefit of being confronted by yet another operator who knows what he's doing with emptiness.

AR *Everyone respects John Berger's Ways of Seeing. I think it's got something to do with your essay about mechanical reproduction, hasn't it?*

WB Well, that essay from 1936 is about the fact that the arrival within a period of about 50 years both of the mechanical means whereby works of art might be reproduced, on the one hand, and of the art of film, on the other, had important repercussions on art and its traditional form. From a Marxist point of view, in which the operations of capitalism are analysed in order to see where capitalism is likely to lead, this is important. (We shall return to this point later, I hope.) The reason is that the 'shattering of tradition', as I call it, which these linked phenomena (filmic art and art's technological

Culture is instrumentalised
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reproducibility) represent, can themselves be linked – not of course causally; but different events cast light on each other – to the rise of mass movements whose purpose is directly to address the crisis of humanity and the possibility of humanity's consequent renewal. This is after all what capitalism is, if you think of it as something to be overthrown.

AR *I guess.*

WB By the way, I like Art & Language's line-by-line hostile deconstruction of *Ways of Seeing* in one of their pamphlets. Its cover image is a Magritte painting, in which word and image are mismatched, drawing attention to the enigma of language. The original words have been sarcastically altered to read things like, 'The

facing page Walter Benjamin

Walter Benjamin'. And where explanations of elementary meaning of a Janet-and-John sort are required, instead of those common names, others redolent of the lifeworld of left artistic liberals in 1972, the year of *Ways of Seeing*, are substituted, such as 'Sebastien' and 'Che'.

AR *Ha, ha, that's funny.*

WB Indeed. However, one must observe that 1978, the year when this parody was enacted, is a long time ago.

AR *Absolutely. Who cares, really?*

WB What I meant was that you'd have to set up new targets today. Berger has written very well about such issues as cave art. I don't think he is the worst enemy of a genuinely socially progressive ideal that exists at this moment.

AR *Oh, yes, I see. Well, or... who is the enemy, then?*

WB The whole system of contemporary art must be considered. You know, Theodor Adorno was 11 years younger than me, but for a long time we met regularly to discuss ideas. You could say he was my only pupil, since I was unable to reach at an institution. In any case, he wrote scathingly about the 'culture industry', employing the term when he first used it, in 1944, 20 years after our first meeting, to penetrate an illusion: industry and culture were not widely considered to be a unity. Certainly there is a different view today. Culture is instrumentalised for its value-producing spinoffs. As far as industry is concerned, art has become the magic porridge pot, a great boon to neoliberalism. Since the issue of where capitalism is leading was raised earlier in our interview, we should say that the artworld is subsumed now within that global profit system, which exploits everyone on earth to the maximum degree regardless of any notion of humanity, and in fact seeks constantly to destroy that notion.

AR *Oh, come on!*

WB It is not an exaggeration to view contemporary art production in this way. And of course it is one of the great difficulties for a student to get to the point where the scales fall from your eyes and you realise art is not what you thought it was when you were an adolescent and wanted to be an artist.

AR *I think there's a lot more on offer for them now: you can get picked up by a major gallery at art-school level now, you know, and young people make up by far the greater proportion of visitors to Tate Modern. They love the performance events.*

WB Talking of them, I think a student during the 1970s might well have been confused about the point of having to hear all the time about *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological*

Reproducibility (as it is now more correctly translated). And then over the following years, looking back, that same student probably only felt the confusion deepening. What were the things you were supposed to get in the 1970s? 'Aura', being bad, because connected to masterpieces of oil painting whose time is past – that is, connected to mystification because of that other connection, will now be challenged by photography, which is not bad but good: what kind of serious or sustaining thought is that? Wasn't the essay tied precisely – that same student could well claim – to something that was going to happen in art anyway during the 1970s, regardless of it, which was art's preoccupation at that point with photos? As a justification of a mannerism, the essay was a big cannon: you knew you had to be in awe of the sound of its rumble. But what on earth did it mean?

AR *Hmm, yeah.*

WB The name it was connected to besides Berger was Burgin. That same student confused by the artworld's reification of my essay would have been awed simply by the style – because it was the dominant one at the time – of Victor Burgin's photos of a section of an art gallery floor, on a 1:1 scale, exhibited on the same bit of floor; and by his arrangement in a grid of photos showing nothing but the effects of the aperture stop being altered. And then impressed just as mindlessly by Burgin's next stage of work, consisting of glossy advertising imagery with statistics indicating what section of society possesses all the wealth.

AR *Sounds great.*

WB But trends alter. Awe at the essay is replaced by cynicism. The cynical view suspects it only meant anything at all at the time it was written, because of obscure issues that weren't obscure then. And it never really illuminated anything happening even during the 1970s – when it was supposed to be the primary illumination; widely consumed as it was in the Penguin paperback collection called *Illuminations* – let alone any notion capable of transcending a brief 1970s fashion moment about what an artist is supposed to do politically.

AR *Vic Burgin is like John Stezaker: there's always a market comeback for those old guys. We'll definitely have an article about him in ArtReview soon. It will be a draw for the trendies along with James Franco's great regular column.*

WB I agree: he is valuable. And James, too, of course: he is beautiful and funny. I loved *Spring Breakers*, as well as the one about the world ending, with marvellously crystalline self-parodies by Michael Cera, among others. His

observations on art are for readers whose sensibility is, as I mentioned at the beginning, perhaps geared to a reality-transcending giddiness different to my own. Different strokes for different folks – so long as the magazine's overall packaging continues to nullify all difference, of course.

AR *Uh?*

WB Well, let us return to the essay. Esther Leslie, professor in political aesthetics at Birkbeck, has observed that the problem with its reception by art students is that they don't realise its meaning must be unpacked in relation precisely to a network of ideas and events that, yes, was indeed specific to a period. Rather than being deflated by that truth, you should realise it's only by doing the initial mental work that you can hope to identify meaningful principles that can usefully be applied, via a creative mental leap, to your own time.

AR *The past is just for historians, though, isn't it?*

WB What is history? My work in making everything unfamiliar is about the proposal

that, although it might seem we're doomed to suffer the same way forever, this needn't be so. I lived in a time of horror, and my death was caused by the twentieth century's greatest horror, but my writings envisage a world that isn't condemned to repeat its horrors. You can enter the past and find new meaning. The old is inherent in the new. The future is open precisely because of such reencounters.

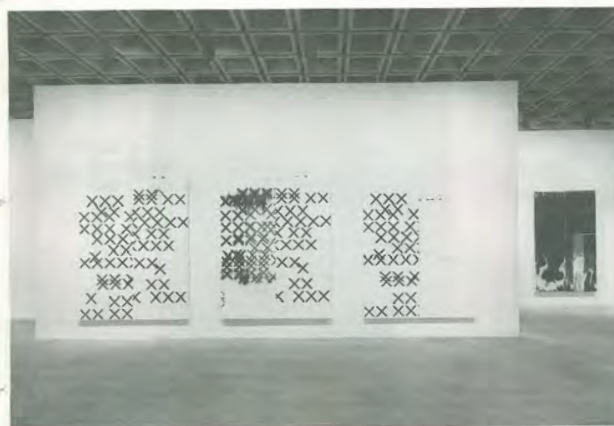
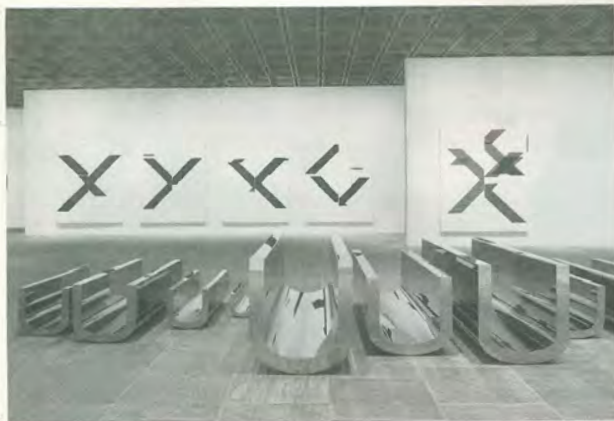
NEXT MONTH Apollinaire gets to grips with Kanye West



Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2011, Epson UltraChrome inkjet on linen, 213 × 175 cm.
Courtesy the artist and Petzel, New York

MOUSSE

MOUSSE 38 ~ Talking About



(A)

PRINTING PROBLEMS

BY LINDA MAI GREEN

One fundamental question asked by art history is whether art produces, or reflects, the technological and societal conditions of its time. This tension fuels the present comparison between a 15th century series of gothic letters printed by Master E. S., and Wade Guyton's contemporary printer paintings and sculptures. By contrasting the earlier 15th century artwork, created at the genesis of image and text multiplication, with Guyton's present-day production, indebted to the advent of home computing, it becomes clear that reproducibility opens, and closes, doors to self-expression.



The written word is a complicated constellation of image, sound and concept. Letters, the fundamental building blocks of text, crystallize this complexity: for the literate, the letter is no longer a mere shape, nor is it just a symbol for a noise. It is precisely on this unstable ground that artists have found a place for imagination and invention to take root. New methods of communication produce new ways of



(B)

di Linda Mai Green

Una domanda fondamentale che la storia dell'arte pone è se l'arte produca, o rifletta, le condizioni sociali e tecnologiche del suo tempo. Questa tensione alimenta il confronto, che segue, fra una serie di stampe di lettere gotiche, opera del cosiddetto Maestro E. S., e le sculture e i dipinti di lettere alfabetiche prodotti attraverso l'uso di una stampante contemporanea da Wade Guyton. Comparando l'opera dell'inizio del Quindicesimo secolo, creata alla genesi della moltiplicazione dell'immagine e del testo, con l'attuale produzione di Guyton, debitrice dell'avvento del personal computer, diviene chiaro che il concetto di riproducibilità apre e chiude le porte dell'auto-espressione.



La parola scritta è un insieme complesso d'immagine, suono e pensiero. Le lettere dell'alfabeto, fondamentali mattoni del testo, cristallizzano questa complessità: per il letterato, esse non si riducono a una mera forma, né al semplice simbolo di un suono. Ed è proprio su questo terreno incerto che gli artisti hanno trovato un luogo dove radicare la loro immaginazione e la loro creatività. Nuovi mezzi di comunicazione producono nuovi modi di rappresentare la lingua per immagini. Prendiamo l'*Alfabeto Figurato*, opera del tardo quattrocento dell'incisore tedesco noto come il Maestro E. S., insieme alle X e alle U di Wade Guyton, da lui scolpite e dipinte con una stampante a inchiostro in questo nostro secolo. Entrambe le opere si propongono di raffigurare le lettere dell'alfabeto in epoche che vedono una significativa innovazione tecnologica dei media: ovvero la nascita della cultura alfabetica e l'epoca del personal computer. L'idea che i cambiamenti nei mezzi di comunicazione creino nuove visioni della società, e relativi attriti sociali, è già stata ampiamente analizzata. La *Galassia Gutenberg* di Marshall McLuhan (1962) e *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* di Elizabeth Eisenstein (1980) analizzano l'avvento della stampa in relazione alla Riforma luterana, all'illuminismo e all'uomo contemporaneo. Oggi, non si è ancora arrivati a un'interpretazione sufficientemente condivisa circa le conseguenze del digitale, ma possiamo senz'altro affermare che il passaggio dai media analogici a quelli digitali ha generato un nuovo Selvaggio West per quanto riguarda la privacy, il diritto d'autore e la proprietà intellettuale. OS, la recente retrospettiva che il Whitney Museum ha dedicato all'opera di Guyton, ribadisce che la sua pratica artistica è l'equivalente, ma anche il risultato, di un OS, cioè di un sistema operativo. L'artista utilizza una Epson a getto d'inchiostro per

visualizing language. Take the late 15th century *Fantastic Alphabet* by north German engraver Master E.S., and the X's and U's of Wade Guyton's 21st century inkjet printer paintings and sculptures. The works of Master E.S. and Guyton both depict letters of the alphabet at times of significant technological innovation in producing and reading media: the birth of print culture and the era of the home computer. The idea that shifts in media create new visions of society, and also social friction, has been explored before. Marshall McLuhan's *Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (1962) and Elizabeth Eisenstein's seminal *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1980) both examine the advent of the printing press and its relationship to the Reformation, the Enlightenment and the contemporary human. Today, no clear consensus has been reached about the consequences of the digital, but the switch from analog to digital media has certainly created a Wild West of privacy, copyright, and intellectual property. Guyton's recent midcareer retrospective at the Whitney Museum, *OS*, reiterated that his practice is synonymous with, and also the output of, an *OS*, an operating system. He uses the Epson inkjet printer to type smeared X's and U's across primed canvases, and blows up scanned images of book covers. This is art about packaging and imparting meaning, all while denying any inference of meaning. There is an



attention to the process, or rather the easy processing afforded by the digital age.

It is hard to imagine a time, hundreds of years before the computer and the printer, when multiplying images was a groundbreaking technology. Dated around 1450 to 1467, Master E. S.'s *Fantastic Alphabet* is a series of small, single-sheet prints of gothic letters and is one of the earliest examples of engraving. Engraving, as opposed to woodblock printing, is an intaglio printing method produced by pressing the etched and inked copper plate against the increasingly common and affordable material, paper. Not much is known about Master E.S., except that he was probably active near Mainz, where Johannes Gutenberg made significant leaps in printing technology only years before.

With the arrival of the printing press, the book culture of Europe did not change overnight. Manuscripts were rare and costly luxury items. Although a new focus on personal devotion, university education, and the rising class of upwardly mobile burghers fueled a growing demand for texts, the elite continued to commission manuscripts after the arrival of the printing press because they remained expressions of wealth and power.¹

During this period before printed books became the norm, Master E.S. was a prolific maker of single-sheet prints. These prints may have been lucrative for several reasons. Single-sheet prints were "revolutionary, versatile objects" because of their portability, their relatively low price and their reproducibility. They could also imitate more costly media.² All of a sudden, 15th-century print consumers could paste decorative motifs on their walls at home, recreate tapestries, line the inside of boxes, own a set of playing cards, pin pilgrim's badges to their clothes, consult a map of their area, or keep private devotional or scientific images for reference.³ Images were no longer unattainable luxury items, or visible only inside a church.

Aside from their decorative appeal, the single-sheet print was a blank space to formulate and distribute less serious ideas—no monks,

stampare su tele appositamente preparate delle X e delle U con evidenti sbavature, ingrandendo anche immagini scannerizzate di copertine di libri. La sua è un'arte di compattamento e conferimento di senso, che a un tempo rigetta qualunque inferenza di significato. L'attenzione è rivolta al processo, o piuttosto al facile processing determinato dall'era digitale.

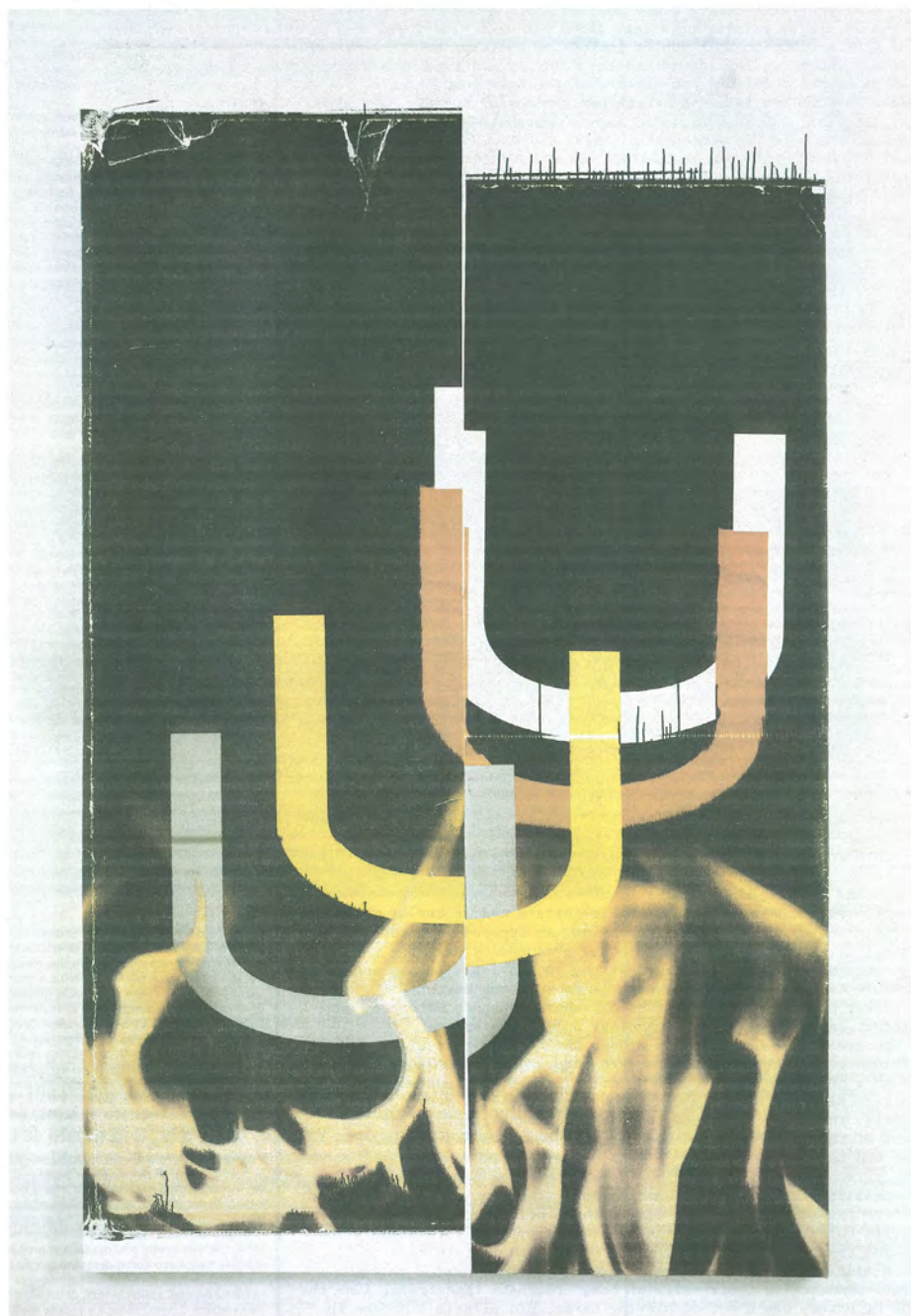
Ci è difficile immaginare un'epoca, centinaia d'anni precedente il computer e la stampante, in cui la moltiplicazione delle immagini fu una rivoluzione tecnologica. Datato intorno al 1450-1467, l'*Alfabeto Figurato* del Maestro E. S. consta di una serie di stampe di piccole dimensioni, riproduzioni di singole lettere gotiche, nonché di uno dei primi esempi di stampa a incisione. Quest'ultima, a differenza della stampa su matrice in legno, è un metodo che consiste nel pressare una lastra di rame incisa e impregnata di inchiostro sulla carta, materiale che allora si andava sempre più diffondendo. Non si sa molto del Maestro E. S., a parte che probabilmente era attivo nella zona di Magonza, proprio dove pochi anni prima Johannes Gutenberg compì significativi passi in avanti nella tecnologia della stampa. Con l'avvento della stampa, la cultura del libro in Europa non cambiò dall'oggi ai domani. I manoscritti erano rari ed erano ancora costosi oggetti di lusso. A dispetto del nuovo interesse per le pratiche devozionali private, l'istruzione universitaria, e la crescente domanda di testi scritti da parte dell'emergente classe borghese, l'*élite* continuava a commissionare manoscritti anche dopo l'invenzione della stampa, in quanto rimanevano un'espressione di ricchezza e potere.¹

Durante questo periodo, prima che i libri stampati diventassero la regola, il Maestro E. S. fu un prolifico creatore di singole stampe, che si sarebbero poi rivelate redditizie per svariate ragioni. Si trattava, infatti, di "oggetti rivoluzionari e versatili" in virtù della loro praticità, del prezzo relativamente basso e della loro riproducibilità. Potevano inoltre imitare i più costosi disegni e pitture.² Tutto a un tratto, gli acquirenti di stampe del XV secolo avevano la possibilità di incollare motivi ornamentali sulle pareti delle loro case, riprodurre arazzi, decorare l'interno di scatole, possedere un mazzo di carte, appuntarsi sui vestiti i segni distintivi del pellegrino, consultare una mappa della propria regione, o tenere con sé immagini religiose o scientifiche.³ Le immagini non erano più quegli oggetti lussuosi e inaccessibili, o che magari si potevano ammirare soltanto dentro una chiesa.

A parte l'attrattiva per il suo uso ornamentale, il foglio di stampa era uno spazio vuoto dove formulare e diffondere idee non necessariamente impegnative; infatti per produrre e replicare un'immagine non occorreavano più monaci, sale di scrittura dei monasteri o anni di duro lavoro. Ecco dove gli effetti sociali della riproducibilità dell'immagine cominciano a farsi interessanti. La casualità con cui l'*Alfabeto Figurato* meschia le forme auliche e popolari prendendosi gioco del clero, è un segnale di anticipazione delle vaste possibilità sociali che si aprono grazie alla moltiplicazione di testi e immagini. L'*Alfabeto Figurato* si muove tra due mondi: quello del fatto a mano e quello del fatto a macchina; si appropria delle lettere maiuscole miniate e delle grottesche note a margine dei costosi manoscritti, liberandole in una forma autonoma debitrice alla nuova tecnologia. Tutte le stampe dell'*Alfabeto Figurato* presentano una lettera gotica centrale, il cui disegno si compone mettendo insieme un serraglio di figurine familiari nelle contrade germaniche del XV secolo: selvaggi, giullari, animali, monaci e monache, personaggi che da sempre popolano i manoscritti, ciascuno con il proprio ruolo secondo la cosmologia olistica del libro.

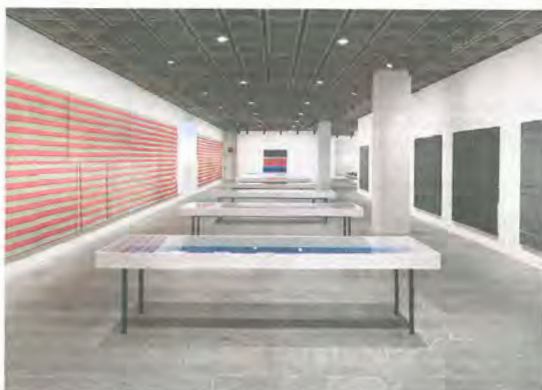
Il Maestro E. S. trae queste figurine mostruose dalle note a margine dei manoscritti. Monache lesicive, monaci e giullari formano le lettere N e G. Nella lettera N, un monaco se ne sta a quattro zampe, in tenzone con un uccello che gli ha appena pinzato la lingua col becco dopo che lui l'aveva bloccato a terra, alle sue spalle una monaca si prepara a scuoiare il monaco con il deretano per aria. Dall'altro lato di queste tre figure, un giullare fa penzolare i suoi genitali sulla chierica di un altro monaco. Nella lettera G, una monaca è seduta sulle spalle di una consorella, ignara delle avance che le rivolge un monaco nudo dalla cintola in giù. La monaca in alto tiene il braccio disteso su cui è appollaiato un falcone cercando di afferrare una scimmia fuggita via con la biancheria intima del primo monaco.⁴

Nel 1938, lo storico dell'arte Samuel Cauman de-



ⓑ

scriptoria or years of labor were needed to produce and replicate an image. This is where the social effects of image multiplication become interesting. The casual nature with which the *Fantastic Alphabet* mixes high and low forms and satirizes the clergy, speaks presciently to the social possibilities opened up by image and text multiplication. The *Fantastic Alphabet* straddles the worlds of the handmade and the machine-made: it appropriates the illuminated capitals and grotesque marginalia from expensive, handmade manuscripts, and liberates them in an autonomous form reliant on print technology. Each print in the *Fantastic Alphabet* features a central gothic letter, composed from a menagerie of figures familiar to 15th-century German kingdoms: wild men, jesters, animals, monks and nuns, who could all be found populating earlier books, playing some role in the holistic cosmology of the book. Master E. S. puts these freaks from the fringes of manuscripts front and center. Lascivious nuns, monks and jesters form the letters N and G. In the letter N, a monk bent over on all fours is busy having his tongue pinched by the beak of the bird he has pinned to the ground, while behind him stands a nun ready to spank the monk's bare ass. Across from these three figures, a jester dangles his genitals on the tonsured head of another monk. In the letter G, a nun sits on another nun's shoulders, oblivious to a bare-bottomed monk's advances. The



(A)

upper nun's outstretched arm hosts a falcon and reaches for a monkey who has absconded with the missing underwear of the first monk.⁴ In 1938, art historian Samuel Cauman called Master E.S.'s *Fantastic Alphabet* "the most ingenious and attractive of Late Gothic fantastic trifles",⁵ and cited it as proof of the 15th-century German tendency towards "complete emancipation" of the letter from the illuminated frame and its "reformulation as an organism" unto itself.⁶ *Fantastic Alphabet* shows how the ability to print-to make copies-allowed for a space where letters could live outside of a religious context, where poking fun at the clergy is celebrated, and where the authority of the elite is destabilized.

fini l'*Alfabeto Figurato* del Maestro E. S. "la più geniale e divertente bagatella del Tardogotico", citandolo come la prova della tendenza del XV secolo germanico "a una completa emancipazione" delle lettere alfabetiche dalla cornice miniata e della sua "riformulazione in quanto organismo" a sé stante.⁶ L'*Alfabeto Figurato* mostra come la capacità di stampare, ovvero di riprodurre copie, tenesse conto di uno spazio in cui le lettere potevano vivere al di là del contesto religioso, dove fosse celebrata la satira nei confronti del clero e destabilizzata l'autorità dell'élite.

Tornando al XXI secolo, vediamo che Wade Guyton realizza una coreografia precaria producendo insieme alla sua stampante Epson, tele che recano traccia della tensione a richiamare, appropriarsi e riprodurre immagini e testo ad altissima velocità. Percorrendo la linea sottile tra il tentare e il non tentare, le tele rappresentano una sorta di triumvirato di agenti resi inabili. Ci sono Guyton, la stampante Epson, e il caso. Nessuno di loro in realtà è in grado di adempiere al proprio compito. Guyton non può controllare in quale punto della tela vanno a finire i suoi segni, e per lui le X e le U non significano niente, la stampante è sovraccarica, e non si può dire che le opere siano frutto soltanto del caso ma nemmeno che si tratti di uno specifico genere di pittura. Gli elementi espressivi delle opere di Guyton hanno inizio quando le prerogative del "sistema" di stampa cessano. Ecco allora gli im-



previsti: la stampante che si inceppa, l'inchiostro che rilascia il colore, macchia e gocciola. È come se le sue tele portassero in sé l'impronta del contatto con una sorta di centrifuga, e i dipinti usciti dalla stampante non sono colpa di nessuno.

Se le opere di Wade Guyton danno un'idea di malinconia, forse è perché costituiscono un'elezione dell'analogico. Nella mostra del Whitney, le U sono poste a terra, in fila, sculture metalliche, alte fino al ginocchio che danno come l'impressione che una U piatta sia uscita dallo schermo di un computer dilatandosi a ritroso nello spazio. Benché riecheggino le sculture minimaliste, le U evocano anche un ammasso di vecchi caratteri tipografici mobili, ingranditi e fossilizzati come eleganti oggetti di design.

A questo punto la differenza fra il Maestro E. S. e Wade Guyton diventa chiara. Il richiamo populista delle stampe del XV secolo permetteva alle idee sovversive, benché vaghe, di esprimersi attraverso l'espedito della leggerezza e della cultura popolare. Probabilmente quelle stesse idee si erano concretizzate anche prima, in altri modi, ma quei singoli fogli stampati rappresentavano una nuova possibilità di veicolare prospettive individuali attraverso la carta. Dato che le immagini e i libri erano rari, le stampe durante il declino del manoscritto e l'affermarsi della nuova cultura determinarono la riduzione e l'inflazione del valore dell'immagine: un'immagine era potenzialmente più rivoluzionaria a causa della sua riproducibilità.

Mentre allora l'attività di stampa liberava nuove forme di espressione e riflessione, oggi giorno la capacità di raffrontare, assorbire, copiare, appropriarsi e riprodurre è paralizzante. Nel catalogo

Back in the 21st century, Wade Guyton performs a precarious choreography with his Epson printer. Together, they produce canvases that bear the anxiety of being able to summon, appropriate and reproduce images and text at breakneck speeds. Treading a thin line between trying and not-trying, the canvases represent a triumvirate of incapacitated agents. There are Guyton, the Epson printer, and chance. None can truly fulfill its calling. Guyton doesn't control where his marks fall on the canvas, he doesn't mean anything by the X's and U's; the printer is overburdened, and the works are neither entirely randomly generated nor completely one-of-a-kind paintings. The expressive elements of Guyton's works begin where the abilities of the printing "system" end. Accidents happened: printers jammed, inks bled and smeared and dripped. It's as if his canvases bore the stamp of contact with a churning machine, and the printer paintings are nobody's fault.

If Wade Guyton's works seem melancholy, perhaps it is because they form an elegy for the analog. Arranged in a row on the ground in the Whitney show, the chrome, knee-high U sculptures look as if a flat U from a computer screen had been extended backwards in space. Although they echo minimalist sculptures, the U's also evoke a bric-a-brac of leftover movable type pieces, blown up and ossified as sleek design objects.

Here the difference between Master E. S. and Wade Guyton becomes clear. The populist appeal of 15th-century prints allowed subversive ideas, however faint, to be expressed under the subterfuge of levity and mass culture. Although these ideas may have been performed earlier in other ways, the single-sheet print was a new avenue for spreading individual perspectives via paper. Since images and books were scarce, prints made between the decline of manuscript and the ascent of print culture simultaneously cheapened and inflated the image's worth: an image had more revolutionary potential, because of the existence of its multiples.

While early printmaking loosened up a new form for expression and reflection, nowadays the ability to reference, absorb, copy, appropriate and reproduce is paralyzing. In the exhibition catalog for *OS*, Wade Guyton says that his work is "about trying to figure out how to make a mark or how to make a drawing or how to do anything when you were overwhelmed by the history of art".⁷

Guyton's work has certainly made a mark on the cultural consciousness at large, and it wears the residue of his wrestle with art history on its sleeve: his oeuvre has been characterized as the ambivalent offspring of most artistic movements of the 20th century-Dada, Bauhaus, Minimalism, Conceptual Art. With digital tools, the options available to a contemporary artist are crushingly infinite, yet trying any one of them is entirely effortless. Although Guyton makes novel use of the inkjet printer, it is not innovation that drives his practice. Instead, he lingers on the dual nature of the contemporary maker, who is a navigator choosing one preordained path out of many, and an operator standing by, facilitating a machine's execution of a concept.

NOTES

1. Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010). Kindle edition, location 469.
2. Suzanne Karr Schmidt, *Altered and Adorned: Using Renaissance Prints in Daily Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 9.
3. Karr Schmidt, p. 36.
4. Holm Bevers, *Meister E. S.: ein oberrheinischer Kupferstecher der Spätgotik* (Munich: Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, 1986), p. 93.
5. Samuel Cauman, "Two Drawings of Bohemian Alphabet Figures," *Bulletin of the Fogg Art Museum*, Vol. 8, No. 1, Studies of Master Drawings (Nov., 1938), p. 7.
6. Cauman, p. 6.
7. Scott Rothkopf, "Operating System," *OS* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), p. 19.



della mostra *OS*, Wade Guyton afferma che la sua opera ruota intorno al "tentativo di capire come fare un segno o un disegno o qualunque altra cosa quando si è sopraffatti dalla storia dell'arte". La pratica artistica di Guyton ha senz'altro lasciato un segno nella coscienza culturale in genere, e mostra apertamente ciò che resta della sua lotta con la storia dell'arte: tutta la sua opera è stata definita come l'ambivalente discendenza dei maggiori movimenti artistici del XX secolo - Dadaismo, Bauhaus, Minimalismo, Concettuale. Con gli strumenti digitali, le possibilità a disposizione dell'artista contemporaneo sono soverchianti e infinite, e tuttavia non comportano alcuno sforzo. Sobbene Guyton faccia un uso insolito della stampante a inchiostro, non è l'innovazione a guidare la sua pratica. Al contrario, egli risponde a questa doppia natura del creatore contemporaneo, a un tempo navigatore che sceglie un percorso preordinato fra i tanti, e operatore che sostiene, facilita l'esecuzione di un concetto da parte di una macchina.

NOTE

1. Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010). Kindle edition, collocazione 469.
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6. Cauman, p. 6.
7. Scott Rothkopf, "Operating System," *OS* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 19.

© Master E. S., *Fantastic Alphabet*, c. 1465-1475.
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A "OS", installation views, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2012. Photos: Ron Amstutz

B Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2006. Courtesy: Fredrich Petzel Gallery, New York

C Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2010. Courtesy: the artist and Chantal Crousel Gallery, Paris

ARTFORUM

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, 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 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

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

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.

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 semantics 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



From left: View of "Wade Guyton 05," 2012-13. From left: Untitled, 2006; Untitled, 2005; Untitled, 2010; Untitled, 2006; Untitled, 2006. View of "Wade Guyton 05," 2012-13. Photos: Ron Arnstutz.



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 leit-motif 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.

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.

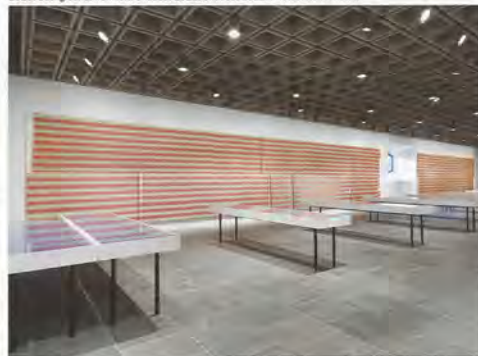
What sets Guyton's work apart from the current fascination with the seductive surfaces that the digital realm makes possible is that here technological progress does not become an end in itself, nor does it masquerade as creative freedom. To the contrary, Guyton's use of digital technology is based on his systematically demanding more from it than it is able to offer. He mistrusts 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. □

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Translated from German by Alexander Scrimgeour.



From left: Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2004. Epson UltraChrome ink jet on linen, 63 x 43 1/2". 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 Arnstutz.



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Wade Guyton, vue d'exposition, Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York, 2007, courtesy Wade Guyton, Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York, photo Lamay



Wade Guyton, vue d'exposition, galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2008, courtesy Wade Guyton, galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, photo Florian Kleinfenn

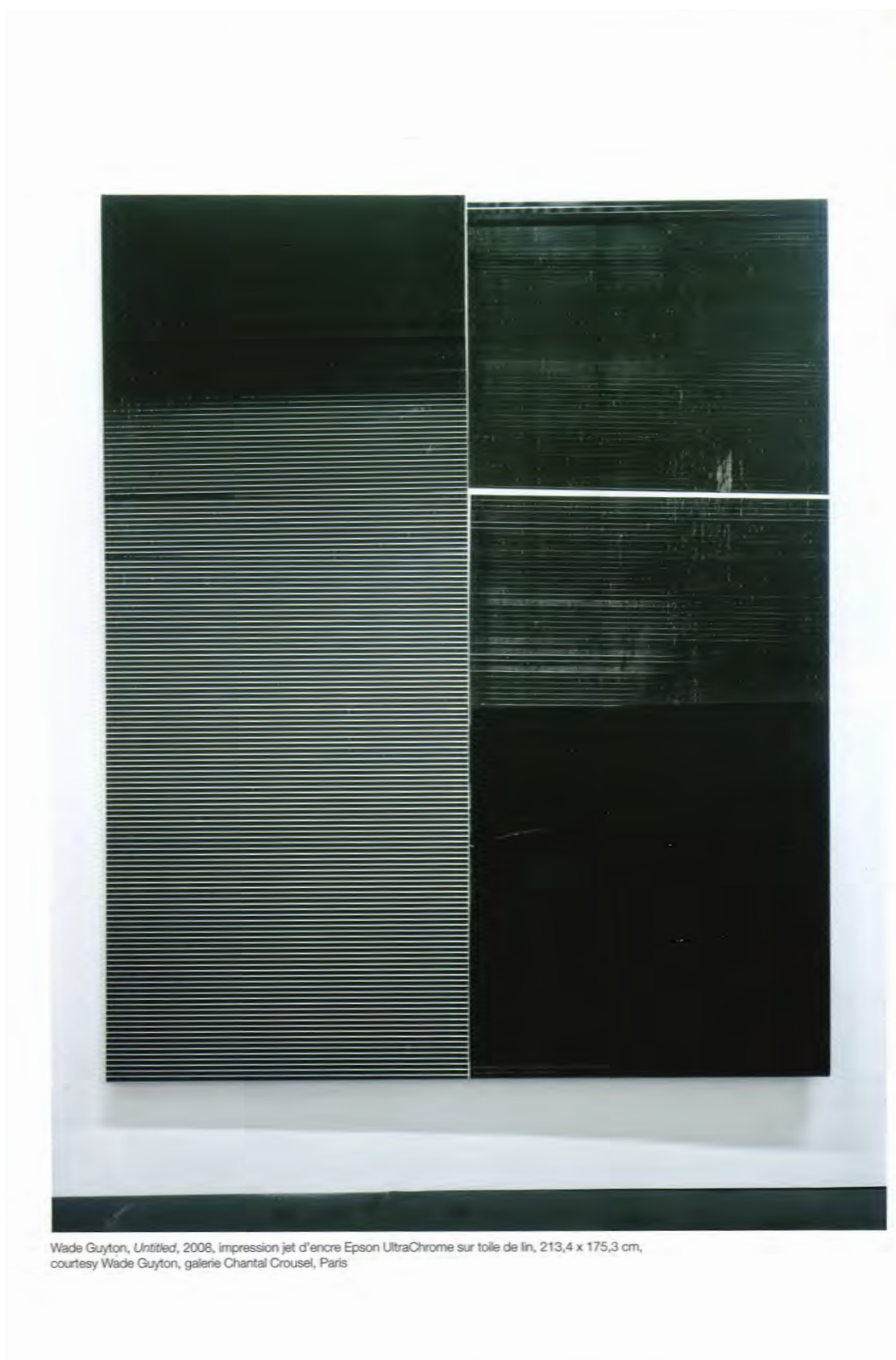
Marjolaine Lévy

GUYTON/EPSON : EXCEED YOUR VISION

Démarrer Photoshop. Ouvrir fichier, copier, coller, recadrer, dupliquer, nouveau calque. Créer une forme, enregistrer sous (bigblack.tif). Remplir, extraire, redimensionner. Scanner, plier, rescanner, ouvrir fichier. Format d'impression, imprimer, réimprimer, re-réimprimer. Jet d'encre. Epson DURABrite, Epson UltraChrome, toner vide. Voilà quelques-unes des « actions » opérées par Wade Guyton¹ pour réaliser ses peintures. Prenez des logiciels de base, des outils numériques efficaces, n'exigeant aucune technique particulière et assez peu d'efforts, et vous obtiendrez l'œuvre de Guyton. Durant l'hiver 2007, à la galerie new-yorkaise Friedrich Petzel, et au printemps 2008, à la galerie Chantal Crousel (Paris), l'artiste présente une série de « monochromes noirs » aux dimensions identiques : 213,4 x 175,3 x 3,75 cm. Guyton a également recouvert le sol d'un matériau de la même couleur. De loin, le spectateur peut penser avoir affaire à une énième exposition de *black paintings*, d'un énième émule de Ad Reinhardt ou de Frank Stella. Mais, à mesure qu'il se rapproche, son œil s'arrête sur une multitude d'imperfections, de défauts, de taches grises, de traces de doigts, de salissures, de lignes blanches et de rayures qui éloignent ces grandes toiles du strict modèle monochromatique. Les informations fournies par les cartels mettront définitivement ces tableaux à distance du canon de la *black painting* : non pas « Huile sur toile » mais « Impression jet d'encre Epson UltraChrome », non plus donc, comme on le chantait en 1966, « Paint it black », mais « Print it black ». Guyton ne serait donc qu'un peintre de plus à se servir de l'ordinateur pour produire ses œuvres². Toutefois, la machine, par-delà l'ordinateur, joue chez lui un rôle qui n'est pas d'ordinaire le sien.

Le conservatoire des ratages

L'art de Guyton s'inscrit, on l'a compris, dans une histoire, d'ailleurs essentiellement européenne, de la mécanisation de l'art, dont les *Tableaux téléphonés* (1922) de László Moholy-Nagy – l'un des grands militants de l'industrialisation de l'art dans une perspective de démocratisation propre à l'utopie constructiviste – pourraient être l'un des premiers jalons. En effet, l'artiste commanda par téléphone des peintures en émail à une usine spécialisée dans la fabrication d'enseignes. Avec le croquis du dessin sur une page quadrillée sous les yeux, il dicta par téléphone les positions des dessins et des couleurs au technicien, qui prenait les informations sur une page identique³. Plus de trente ans après, en 1958, les centaines de mètres de toiles produites par la machine à peindre de Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio offrent à la mécanisation de la peinture une étonnante, quoique moins fameuse, consécration⁴. Grâce à une curieuse machine, mise



Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2008, impression jet d'encre Epson UltraChrome sur toile de lin, 213,4 x 175,3 cm,
courtesy Wade Guyton, galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

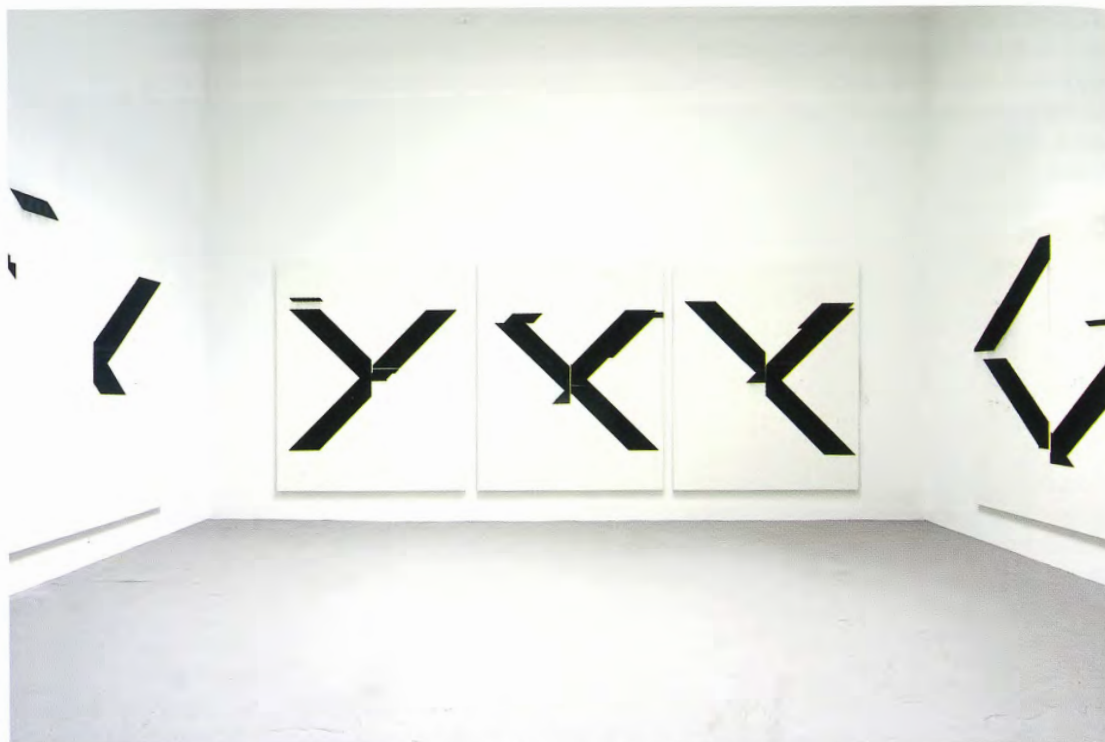
20/27 n°3 Marjolaine Lévy WADE GUYTON

au point après de longues recherches chimiques, la peinture peut être fabriquée au mètre, dans le but proclamé de faire disparaître « l'ancien monde pictural »⁵. La chaîne de la peinture industrielle est parfaitement rodée. Le mélange du hasard et de la mécanique fait de la peinture au mètre une œuvre originale et non reproductible, découpée sous les yeux de l'acheteur, vendue la plupart du temps en plein air, ou dans des boutiques, loin des galeries que Pinot-Gallizio détestait. En 1959, autre temps fort de la mécanisation de la peinture, Jean Tinguely met au point les *Méta-matics*, machines à dessiner, qu'il présente à la galerie Iris Clert. Grâce aux *Méta-matics*, les spectateurs deviennent producteurs. Ils réalisent des dessins abstraits de manière automatique, « l'intervention humaine étant limitée au choix d'un ou de quelques paramètres, et éventuellement, à la fourniture de l'énergie motrice »⁶. La même année, pour la Biennale des Jeunes de Paris, Tinguely réalisera la grande *Méta-matic n° 17*, qui exécutera plus de 40 000 dessins, et la *Cyclomatic*, présentée lors d'une conférence à l'Institute of Contemporary Arts de Londres, une machine actionnée par deux cyclistes, produisant un dessin abstrait d'une longueur de 1 500 m. Peu importe ici la qualité de la peinture, c'est, comme chez Pinot-Gallizio, la production machinique de l'œuvre qui compte.

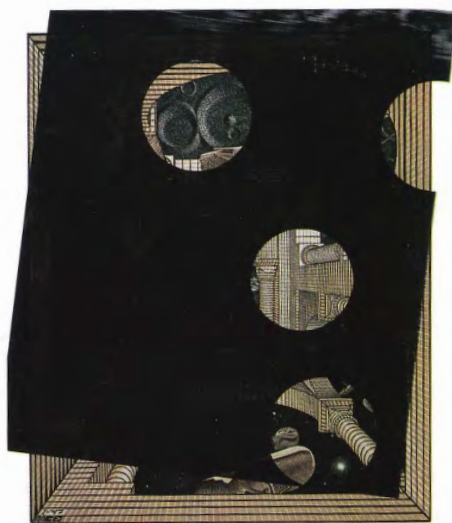
Alors que le roi Tête-de-Pipe, comme Guy Debord appelait Pinot-Gallizio, préparait ses couleurs, tel un chimiste, avant d'en remplir la machine et que Tinguely concevait ses sculptures interactives, Guyton, cinquante ans plus tard⁷, introduit les cartouches d'encre dans l'imprimante. Le geste n'est pas le même, le résultat non plus. Si, comme chez ses prédécesseurs, la machine est devenue le principal outil du peintre Guyton, il n'y a pas chez celui-ci le souci de la performance, ni le désir de fabrication en masse des tableaux. Mais surtout l'artiste ne craint pas les caprices de la machine, les éventuels incidents et accidents. En effet, pour lui, la machine et la technologie sont paradoxalement synonymes de ratages et d'imperfections. Et ce monochrome que la main ne saurait rater, c'est la machine qui va réussir à en produire d'imparfaits spécimens.

Dès 2005, Guyton fait l'expérience de l'impression Epson sur toile de lin. Il crée, tout d'abord, des documents Photoshop donnant à voir diverses formes, comme, par exemple, des bandes vertes et rouges, des ronds noirs ou la lettre U en police 72 – des flammes venant même parfois embraser le bas de l'image. Puis il plie une toile de lin pour l'introduire dans une imprimante reliée à l'ordinateur. L'impression du document est lancée une première fois, avant d'être renouvelée sur le côté non imprimé lors du premier passage. Morris Louis, dans son petit atelier de Washington, pliait, lui aussi, les immenses toiles de ses *Unfurled Paintings* (1960-1961) pour ne peindre en ayant sous les yeux, comme l'imprimante de Guyton, qu'un côté de la future peinture. Les formes produites avec Photoshop vont rapidement se simplifier. En 2006, tout d'abord, avec des X noirs disséminés sur la toile blanche qui, en emblèmes du vide et de la signature de l'illettré⁸, semblent rendre la peinture plusieurs fois « nulle ». Un an plus tard ne subsiste qu'un document sur l'écran de l'ordinateur : un simple rectangle noir, nommé sobrement *bigblackfile.tif*. La suite du processus reste la même : la toile est pliée en deux, pour un ou plusieurs passages dans l'imprimante. Les premières peintures, une fois dépliées, mettent en montre le fameux rectangle noir, avec toutefois, au centre, la marque du pli. Celles qui suivent, victimes de l'épuisement progressif de la cartouche d'encre, laissent d'abord apparaître la trace du mouvement des têtes de l'imprimante, leur état d'encrassement, les marques des roues sur l'encre humide puis, au final, la toile de lin simplement salie. Déflorée par l'imprimante, elle n'est plus vierge, mais aucune forme, aucune image n'ont été engendrées. L'outil numérique est donc loin d'être l'outil d'une quête de la perfection chez Guyton, qui affirme à ce propos : « Les performances techniques de l'imprimante ne m'intéressent pas. En réalité, les œuvres travaillent parfois contre la machine. La preuve en est : la surface de la toile porte les traces de cette lutte⁹. »

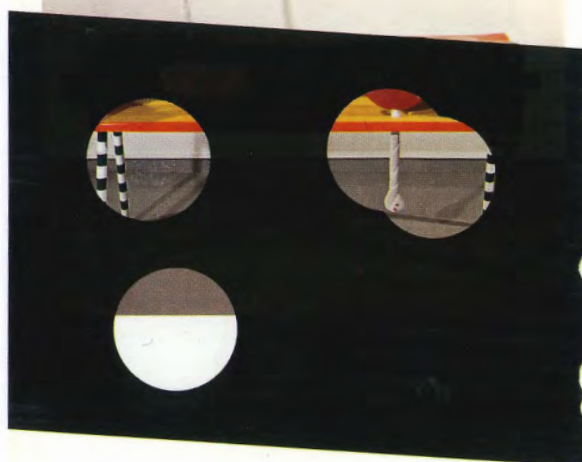
Rater des peintures abstraites n'est que la manifestation de la tendance désublimatrice qui trouve dans l'inattention à la qualité formelle du produit final un efficace moyen de s'exprimer.



Wade Guyton, vue de l'exposition « Painting: Now and Forever, Part II », Matthew Marks Gallery, New York, 2008, courtesy Wade Guyton, Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York, photo Thomas Mueller



Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2005, impression jet d'encre Epson DURABrite sur page de livre, 23,8 x 16,8 cm, courtesy Wade Guyton



Wade Guyton, *Untitled (86)*, 2007, impression jet d'encre Epson DURABrite sur page de livre, 19,1 x 21 cm, courtesy Wade Guyton

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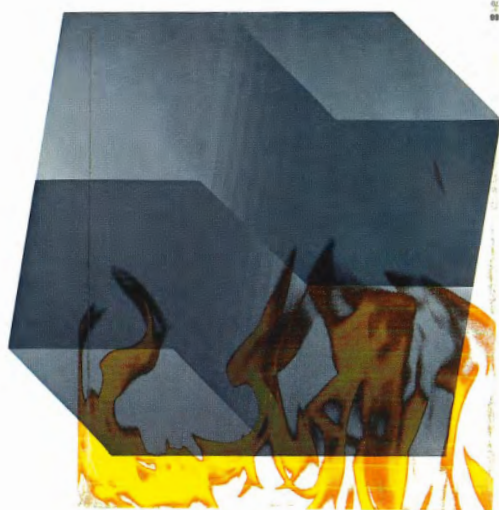
Warhol, même si, contrairement à la légende, il ne les simulait pas, n'a jamais été contrarié par les accidents de ses impressions sérigraphiques sur toile, ni cherché à dissimuler les très visibles imperfections qui en résultaient¹⁰. Plus explicitement, Ross Bleckner avait entrepris de rater son Bridget Riley en 1987 : *Unknown Quantities of Light*. Rater des monochromes a, de toute évidence, une autre portée. Tout d'abord, parce que le monochrome est, si l'on en croit Clement Greenberg, une peinture par définition ratée. En 1962, il explique que le respect des deux normes qui définissent la peinture – la planéité et la délimitation de la planéité – ne suffit pas à garantir la réussite d'un tableau. Autrement dit, le monochrome, seule peinture à s'en tenir aux deux paramètres essentiels de la peinture, est un tableau raté¹¹. Ainsi, grâce à Epson, Guyton trouve-t-il le moyen de rater une peinture ratée. Tout se passe donc comme s'il demandait à la machine de rater le monochrome pour faire de lui une peinture enfin réussie.

Mais le monochrome incarne aussi, et c'est précisément la raison pour laquelle Greenberg le rejette, le dernier tableau, la peinture de la fin de la peinture. En arrachant le monochrome de son châssis ; en le décadrant puis le froissant, comme il fit dès le début des années 1980, Steven Parrino avait le sentiment, et la volonté, d'agir en nécrophile – une toile de 1983 s'intitule *Red Death*. Il violentait le cadavre de la peinture¹². Son influence sur Guyton semble très réelle. En 2006, ce dernier perce de quatre grands trous circulaires une plaque de contre-plaqué noir qui apparaît comme une citation de *Stockade : Existential Trap for Speed Freaks* (1988), une peinture noire perforée de cinq trous de même type. Toutefois, entre le satanisme pictural de Parrino et le *bigblackfile.tif* de Guyton, il y a sans doute plus qu'une nuance. À l'actif du vandalisme du premier répond la passivité processuelle du second. Les péripéties de l'impression viennent, dans la plus grande indifférence de l'artiste, redonner vie au cadavre de la peinture moderne. Guyton laisse la cartouche d'encre se vider, jusqu'à ce que le monochrome noir devienne presque blanc. En outre, que l'utilisation d'une même touche du clavier de l'ordinateur débouche sur des résultats différents arrange bien l'artiste, à propos duquel Scott Rothkopf remarquait : « Il est tellement suspicieux devant n'importe quel type d'investissement créatif trop évident que même le geste le plus basique le plonge dans une crise existentielle¹³. » Quand il y a de l'encre dans la cartouche, c'est bien ; quand il n'y en a plus, ce n'est pas plus mal, voire encore mieux. Sous cet angle, la posture de Guyton pourrait ne pas être trop éloignée de celle d'un Martin Creed, qui éprouve une gêne fondamentale à l'idée que l'art puisse ajouter quoi que ce soit au monde¹⁴. L'indifférence à l'égard de l'objet produit peut à l'occasion confiner à la dépréciation de celui-ci : « Je fais juste des signes idiots¹⁵. » L'œuvre de Guyton nous confronte ainsi à une singulière figure esthétique : un néo-dadaïsme qui, pour se dire, emploierait le vocabulaire du dernier modernisme américain – un Picabia parlant la langue de Ryman.

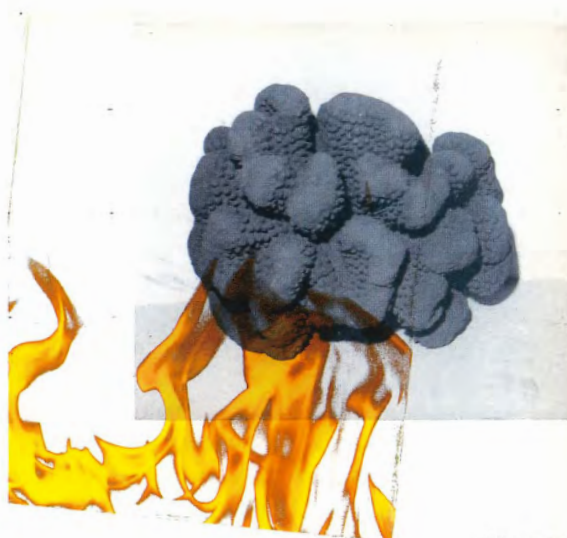
Une autre particularité des *black paintings* de Guyton est que le monochrome, ce tableau aux origines iconoclastes, l'emblème d'une peinture résistant à la logique de l'icône, est devenu, avec elles, une image. Car, c'est bien avec un logiciel de traitement des images que Guyton le réalise. Que rien n'échappe à l'image, que l'image soit toujours déjà là, c'est le cœur même de l'autre grande partie de l'œuvre de l'artiste, les impressions sur page de livre ou de magazine.

Le laboratoire des images

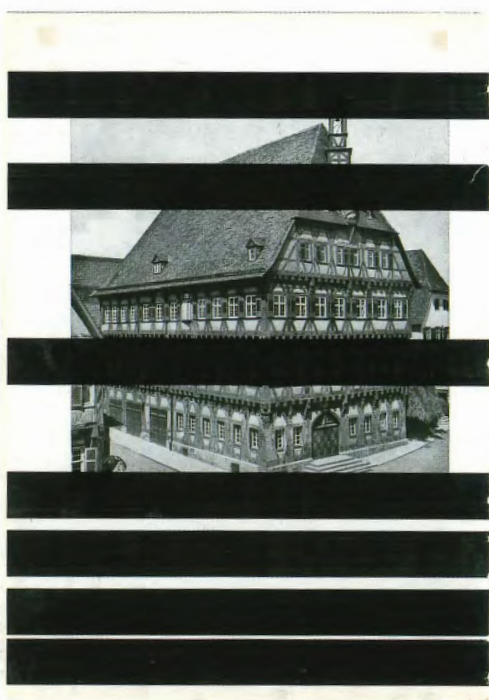
Guyton n'a pas la toile de lin comme seul support de ses impressions. Depuis, 2005, il glisse aussi souvent dans une imprimante de bureau des pages de livre sur lesquelles figurent des images d'œuvres d'art. Ainsi les motifs conçus grâce à Photoshop, les mêmes que ceux destinés aux toiles – bandes rouges et noires, cercles noirs ou flammes, pour n'en citer que quelques-uns –, vont-ils aller s'imprimer sur des reproductions de pièces de différents artistes



Wade Guyton, *Untitled (88 79)*, 2007, impression jet d'encre Epson DURABrite sur page de livre, 21,4 x 20,5 cm, courtesy Wade Guyton, galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris



Wade Guyton, *Untitled (SE 22, blau, 41 cm)*, 2007, impression jet d'encre Epson DURABrite sur page de livre, 20 x 19,1 cm, courtesy Wade Guyton, galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris



Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2002, impression jet d'encre Epson DURABrite sur page de livre, 18,4 x 26,4 cm, courtesy Wade Guyton



Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2004, impression jet d'encre Epson DURABrite sur page de livre, 22,1 x 25,4 cm, courtesy Wade Guyton

du XX^e siècle, de Duchamp, Stella ou Warhol à Alexander Liberman¹⁶ ou Ronald Davis¹⁷, plus rarement sur des images d'un autre genre – reproductions de vaisselle ancienne ou de papier peint¹⁸. Parfois il n'est pas possible d'identifier l'œuvre reproduite, soit parce qu'elle n'est pas célèbre, soit parce que le motif surimprimé n'en laisse apparaître qu'une trop faible portion. Si, lorsque le *Printer Drawing* (c'est le nom que donne Guyton à pareille impression sur page de livre) donne à voir des flammes venant lécher *Sinjerli II* (1967) de Stella, il est facile d'interpréter la superposition des deux images, dans l'immense majorité des cas, il n'y a pas de rapport, ni formel ni conceptuel, entre l'image déjà imprimée et celle que lui superpose Guyton. L'artiste a parfois présenté ses *Drawings* en les répartissant de manière aléatoire dans de larges cadres en bois à double vitrage de plexiglas, posés contre le mur. Mais, le plus souvent, il les montre simplement punaisés sur une cimaise.

Les *Printer Drawings* de Guyton s'inscrivent dans un moment de l'histoire de l'art où nombre d'artistes utilisent des images déjà imprimées. Certains ne font subir aucun autre traitement que la soustraction à la publication où elles étaient originellement parues. C'est le cas de Saâdane Afif avec *Fountain Archives*, vaste entreprise, commencée en 2008, de collecte des reproductions photographiques de *Fontaine* (1917) de Duchamp – la page de livre ou de revue où se trouve une image de l'urinoir étant prélevée, encadrée et mise sous verre. Le plus souvent la reproduction photographique utilisée est soumise à telle ou telle intervention. Le *Zeitgeist* est, en effet, à l'inscription de formes abstraites sur des images photographiques préexistantes. C'est en 1996 que Gabriel Orozco, employant plusieurs techniques, superpose des disques diversement colorés sur des images sportives trouvées dans la presse. L'année précédente, il avait disposé ces mêmes formes circulaires sur des billets d'avion. Plus récemment, Bojan Sarcevic, avec *1954* (2004), s'est emparé de photographies d'architectures privées ou publiques, salon ou bibliothèque municipale, édifiées en Allemagne en 1954, parues dans la revue *Baummeister*. Muni d'un cutter, l'artiste a soigneusement découpé dans ces images des formes géométriques – losange, cercle, triangle, carré, rectangle troué – qu'il a ensuite recollées dans une nouvelle position, donnant ainsi naissance à de petites formations kaléidoscopiques qui tout à la fois appartiennent et sont étrangères à l'architecture photographiée. Autre artiste qui se plaît à investir picturalement des images préexistantes : Kelley Walker¹⁹ qui, depuis quelques années, répand, à la manière d'un *dripping*, du chocolat noir, blanc et au lait ou du dentifrice sur des images de presse ou publicitaires. L'artiste scanne ensuite le résultat obtenu et met en vente l'œuvre sous la forme d'un CD-Rom – les images étant ainsi reproductibles à volonté par leur heureux propriétaire. Josh Smith, pour sa part, assemble, au même moment, sur des panneaux rectangulaires dessins abstraits de sa main, originaux ou photocopiés, petites peinturlures, pages de journaux et posters, en une cacophonie proprement insensée. Il faudrait aussi évoquer Meredyth Sparks, qui pratique le collage de formes abstraites sur des photographies de musiciens de rock. Quant à Stefan Brüggemann, il imprime sur toile, dans sa série *Notes* (2001), des images de magazine de mode qu'il oblitère et annoté. Autrement dit, une large part de l'abstraction contemporaine, et peut-être la plus vivante, se donne la photographie comme support.

Bien sûr, une telle pratique n'est pas sans précédents historiques. S'il n'est pas question d'en faire ici l'inventaire, il est néanmoins permis de rappeler quelques occurrences d'importance. Si, dans les toiles cubistes, le fragment de papier journal vient prendre place sur la peinture, la situation, quelques décennies plus tard s'inversera : la peinture aura la page imprimée pour support. C'est le cas, en 1952, avec Franz Kline qui réalise quelques formes abstraites à l'encre et à l'huile noires sur les pages jaunies d'un annuaire. Mais c'est avec les *Combine Paintings* de Robert Rauschenberg que le dépôt pictural sur la page imprimée va connaître quelques-unes de ses manifestations les plus remarquables. Ainsi, *Small Rebus* (1956) donne à voir une surface qui « juxtapose des images aussi disparates que des photos de manifestations sportives provenant de magazines, un fragment de carte géographique



Wade Guyton, *Untitled* (6 Spring 1966 h 30 1/2), 2007, impression jet d'encre Epson DURABrite sur page de livre, 17,5 x 24,6 cm, courtesy Wade Guyton



Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2008, impression jet d'encre Epson DURABrite sur page de livre, 12,1 x 18,1 cm, courtesy Wade Guyton



Wade Guyton, *Untitled* (23), 2003, impression jet d'encre Epson DURABrite sur page de livre, 23,5 x 29,7 cm, courtesy Wade Guyton



Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2003, impression jet d'encre Epson DURABrite sur page de livre, 23,5 x 29,7 cm, courtesy Wade Guyton

montrant le centre nord des États-Unis, des timbres, un dessin d'enfant représentant le cadran d'une horloge, et une reproduction de *L'Enlèvement d'Europe* du Titien », ainsi que des marques picturales. Rosalind Krauss ajoute que chacune de ces images « possède le même degré de densité en tant qu'objet ». « Toutes offrent à l'expérience une épaisseur égale²⁰ », que les traînées de peinture indifférentes à leur support viennent encore renforcer. En 1963, la *Braunkreuz-Serie*²¹ de Joseph Beuys éclaire d'une nouvelle lumière la cohabitation de la peinture et du document imprimé : des pages de journaux sur lesquelles il a peint des motifs variés, notamment des croix, à l'aide d'un médium qu'il fabriqua lui-même, à partir de peinture industrielle, d'huile, de rouille et de sang. Si, chez Beuys, cette épaisse substance semble avoir pour mission d'occulter l'actualité allemande de l'époque, Marcel Broodthaers, cette même année 1963, dans une perspective totalement différente, colle des morceaux de papier colorés aux formes géométriques (rectangles, carrés, cercles) sur les pages d'une plaquette de poèmes, intitulée *Pense-Bête*, afin d'occulter le texte²². Dans la généalogie des opérations picturales ou plastiques prenant l'image ou le texte imprimé pour support, on évoquera, pour finir, *The Picadillies* (1969) de Dieter Roth. À partir d'une carte postale montrant Picadilly Circus, qui appartenait à Rita Donagh, épouse de Richard Hamilton, Roth a réalisé un ensemble de plus de cent cinquante images imprimées. Pour chacune des six éditions, la carte postale originale a été soumise à de multiples traitements : agrandissements, impressions multiples, peinture, encres colorées, surimpressions. Un véritable acharnement faisant dire à Hamilton : « En tant que graveur, il [Roth] n'a pas d'égal, que ce soit l'eau-forte, la lithographie, l'offset, le Polaroid ou le photocopieur – si un médium n'existait pas, il l'inventerait²³. » Entre ces quelques exemples et la situation présente, un épisode s'est produit qui modifie notre façon de regarder les inscriptions picturales sur des photographies préexistantes et, à ce titre, des œuvres comme les *Printer Drawings* de Guyton. L'épisode en question, c'est l'appropriationnisme, qui marque l'acmé du sentiment postmoderne.

Quand, au début des années 1980, Sherrie Levine photographie dans des livres des reproductions de Walker Evans ou de Edward Weston, elle signale que le temps de la production est clos et que l'art est voué à la reproduction. Plus précisément, et pour utiliser le lexique genettien²⁴, ses photographies de reproductions de photographie indiquent que, si l'activité artistique ne se situe plus du côté de l'invention de nouveaux textes, elle a pour lieu d'exercice le *paratexte*²⁵ : la même photographie, mais avec un autre nom d'auteur, dans un autre contexte. L'appropriationnisme de Sherrie Levine ou de Richard Prince, qui, à la même époque, photographie l'image du cow-boy Marlboro dans les magazines, prend aussi acte du fait que le référent des pratiques représentatives n'est plus le réel, mais une image. Les *Printer Drawings* appartiennent indubitablement à la période ouverte par les pratiques appropriationnistes : les images existantes par leur prolifération, leur disponibilité constituent désormais l'horizon obligé de la production artistique. Le spectateur éprouve d'ailleurs souvent l'impression, lorsqu'il parcourt les salles d'un musée, qu'il a affaire moins à l'œuvre qu'à l'aimable matérialisation des images qu'il a vues dans les livres et autres catalogues. Toutefois cette situation historique n'a plus pour effet sur un artiste comme Guyton de confiner l'art au seul geste reproducteur. Elle engendre plutôt l'apparition d'une intertextualité sauvage : si les reproductions d'œuvres d'art tissent un incontournable fond, de nouvelles formes peuvent venir s'y déposer en toute liberté et sans égard pour l'intégrité de ce substrat. Un magnifique tableau de Philip Taaffe donnait en 1984 une première idée du statut de palimpseste qui allait être celui de l'œuvre d'art. *Green/White Stoppages* reproduit *Green White No.381* (1964) de Ellsworth Kelly en le recouvrant des *Trois stoppages étalon* (1913-1914) de Duchamp. Nouvelle, la sensibilité dont témoignent les *Printer Drawings* l'est non en raison de la conscience, déjà datée, de la fatalité d'un hypotexte que par une totale indifférence à celui-ci. En 1953, Rauschenberg, pour exister, gommait le dessin de Willem De Kooning, Guyton ne se donne pas même cette peine. Les reproductions de compositions surréalistes, d'une affiche dadaïste, de sculptures minimalistes,



Wade Guyton, *Untitled (44 Double no. 125)*, 2003, impression jet d'encre Epson DURABrite sur page de livre, 17,8 x 25,4 cm, courtesy Wade Guyton

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de toiles de Vasarely, des *Rotoreliefs* (1935) de Duchamp, d'une architecture polychrome de Stella ou d'une image de Warhol forment un hypotexte qui ne saurait empêcher l'impression d'un insouciant, d'un cavalier hypertexte – les formes réalisées grâce à Photoshop. Aussi est-il incompréhensible que son travail ait pu être apparié au présent *revival* des avant-gardes historiques. Et, en 2004, lorsqu'il est invité à participer à l'exposition « Formalism. Modern Art Today », au Kunstverein de Hambourg, Guyton ne comprend pas les raisons de cette invitation²⁶. L'une de ses *Untitled Action Sculptures* (1998) a certes pour objet la célèbre chaise *Cesca* dessinée par Marcel Breuer en 1928. Mais Guyton ne la mobilise que pour déformer, martyriser son armature en acier tubulaire, qu'afin de poser la curieuse équation « Pollock sur Breuer », pour reprendre la formule de Vincent Pécoil²⁷, en un geste au fond semblable à celui des *Printer Drawings* : l'irrespectueuse superposition de deux formes. Il ne faut pas confondre l'irrévérence de l'hypertexte à l'endroit de l'hypotexte que lui impose la conscience historique du temps avec un *revival*.

Bien plus, ces ostensibles palimpsestes que sont les *Printer Drawings* donnent naissance à une authentique esthétique du parasitage, qui n'est pas sans dimension politique : le bruit contre le message, la superposition désinvolte, sinon vandale, contre la raison communicante. Une esthétique qui, pour Guyton, a ses origines au moins autant dans le graphisme que dans l'art, au moins autant chez Peter Saville que chez Rauschenberg. La pochette de l'album de New Order, *Power, Corruption and Lies*, réalisée en 1983 par Saville, consiste en la surimpression d'une barre de contrôle de couleurs, comme l'extrait d'une *Color Chart* de Gerhard Richter, sur le coin supérieur droit de la reproduction d'un célèbre tableau d'Henri Fantin-Latour, *Une corbeille de roses*²⁸ (1890). Guyton a d'ailleurs revendiqué cette dette en intitulant « Color, Power and Style » des expositions au Kunstverein de Hambourg et à la galerie Friedrich Petzel. À ainsi se confronter à un fond déjà occupé, qui ne l'attend pas, l'abstraction retrouve une raison d'être qu'elle avait peut-être perdue. Soyez-en sûrs : bientôt vous ne souffrirez plus des formes abstraites ayant pour support autre chose qu'une page imprimée, et si possible montrant des reproductions d'œuvres d'art.

*

Appuyez trop souvent sur la touche « Print » pour reproduire le monochrome noir qui apparaît sur votre écran et vous deviendrez assez rapidement un peintre inventif, peut-être même subtil. Et si vous n'avez pas de papier blanc pour imprimer les autres compositions abstraites que votre ordinateur vous a facilement permis d'obtenir, n'hésitez surtout pas à vous servir de pages sur lesquelles d'autres n'ont eu aucun scrupule à imprimer des reproductions photographiques d'objets d'art. Le résultat est garanti. Si, à l'ère de sa reproductibilité technique, l'œuvre a perdu son aura, il se pourrait bien que, comme l'*action printing* de Wade Guyton nous le laisse entrevoir, les choses ne soient plus aussi simples à l'heure de sa sur-reproductibilité technique.

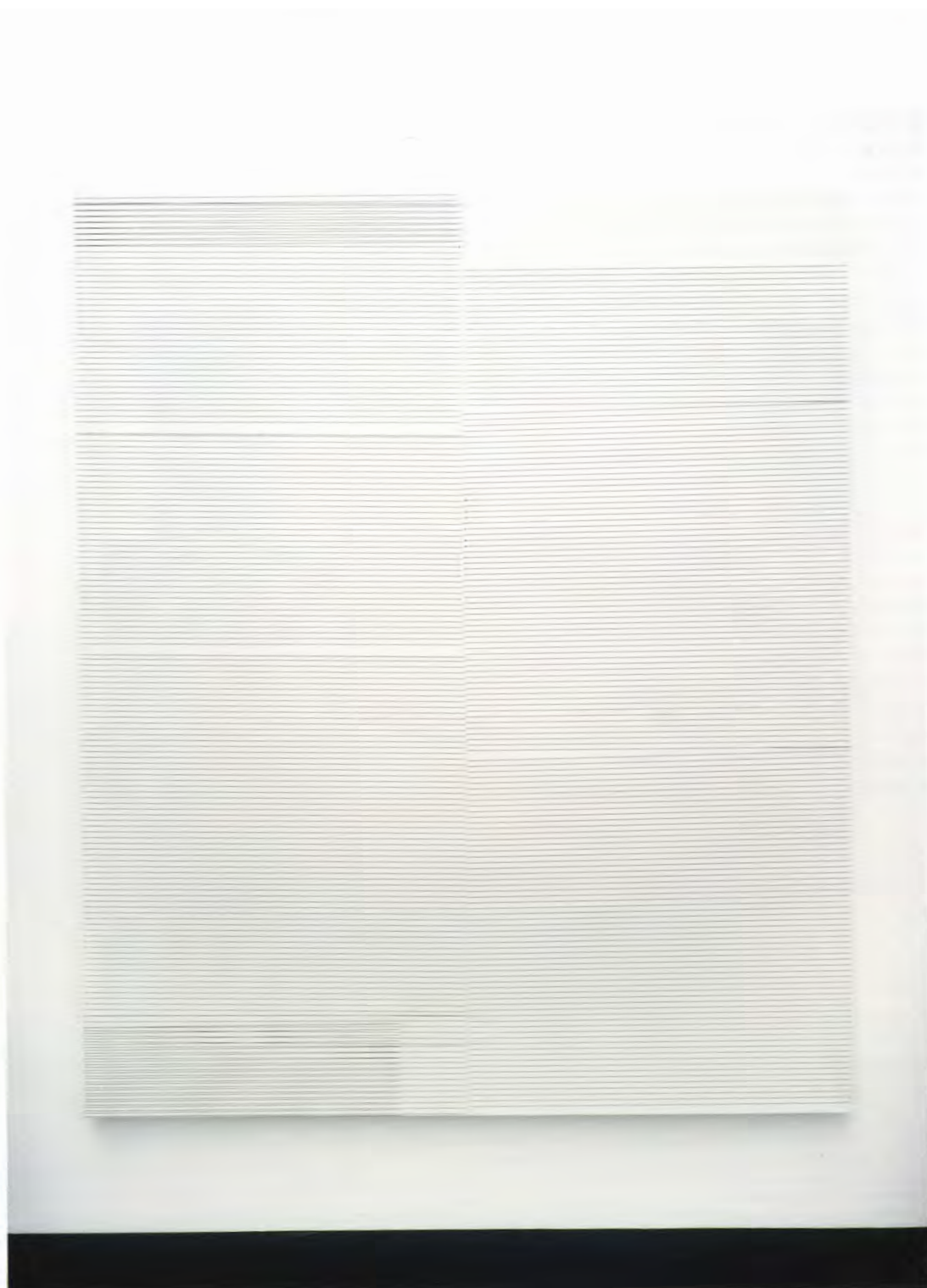
1 Né en 1972 à Hammond (Indiana), Wade Guyton vit et travaille à New York.

2 Sur cette question voir, par exemple, cat. exp. *Painting Pictures. Painting and Media in the Digital Age*, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, 2003.

3 « En 1922, j'ai commandé par téléphone cinq peintures sur porcelaine émaillée à un fabricant d'enseignes. J'avais le nuancier de l'usine devant les yeux ainsi que mon dessin, réalisé sur papier millimétré. À l'autre bout du fil, le directeur de la fabrique tenait devant lui une feuille de ce même papier, divisée en carrés. Il y transcrivait les formes que je lui indiquais dans la position adéquate. (C'était comme jouer aux échecs par correspondance.) L'un de ces tableaux me fut livré en trois dimensions différentes, ce qui me permit de voir les subtiles variations provoquées dans les relations de couleur par l'agrandissement et la réduction. » László Moholy-Nagy, *The New Vision and Abstract of an Artist* (New York : Wittenborn, 1947), p. 79 [ma traduction].

4 Voir Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio, « Discours sur la peinture industrielle et sur un art unitaire applicable par Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio », *Internationale Situationniste*, n° 3, décembre 1959.

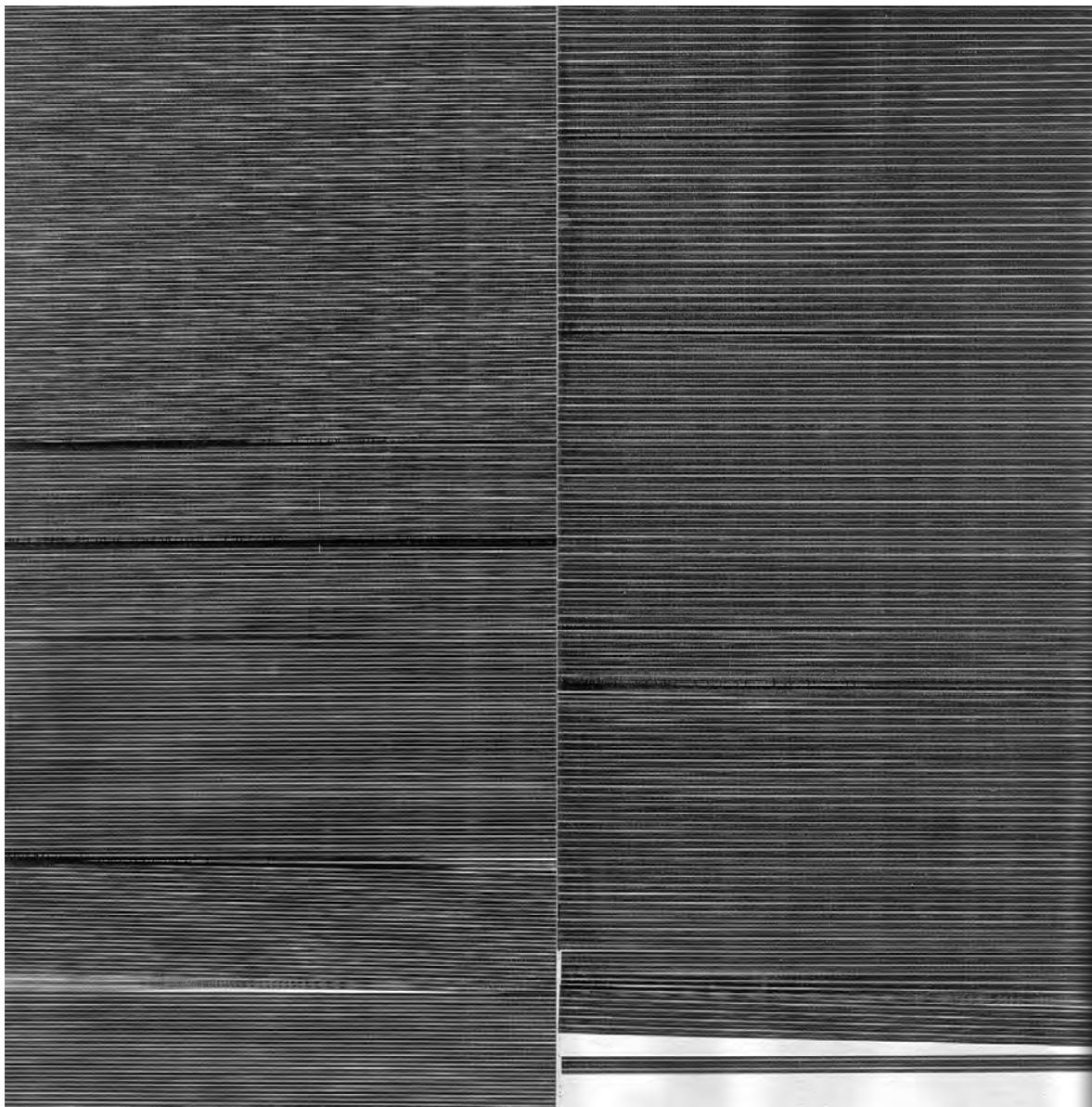
5 Expression utilisée par Michèle Bernstein, *Elogio di Pinot-Gallizio*, publié pour la première fois en français aux Éditions Notizie à Turin à l'occasion de l'exposition de peinture industrielle, en 1958.



Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2008, impression jet d'encre Epson UltraChrome sur toile de lin, 213,4 x 175,3 cm,
courtesy Wade Guyton, galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

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- 6 K.G. Pontus Hultén, *Tinguely. Méta.*, Londres, Thames & Hudson, 1975, p. 84.
- 7 Le triomphe de l'expressionnisme abstrait et de l'action painting dans les années 1950 interdisait que ne se développent aux États-Unis des entreprises de mécanisation de la peinture comme celles de Pinot-Gallizio ou Tinguely. Il faudra attendre Warhol pour que cette possibilité s'ouvre.
- 8 Si Josh Smith couvre ses toiles de sa signature, Guyton, quant à lui, semble ne pas même pouvoir écrire son nom. Rappelons que Guyton travaille avec Josh Smith (né en 1976), mais également avec Kelley Walker (né en 1969), et Seth Price (né en 1973) au sein du collectif Continuous Project.
- 9 Wade Guyton, « A Conversation about Yves Klein, Mid-Century Design Nostalgia, Branding, and Flatbed Scanning », *Guyton\Walker. The Failever of Judgment*, Zurich, JRP Ringier, p. 49 [ma traduction].
- 10 Voir à ce sujet Marco Livingstone, « Do It Yourself : Notes on Warhol's Techniques », cat. *Andy Warhol. A Retrospective*, éd. par Kynaston McShine, 1989, New York, MoMA, p. 63-78.
- 11 « En d'autres termes, la simple observance de ces deux normes [la planéité et la délimitation de la planéité] suffit pour créer un objet qui peut être perçu comme tableau : ainsi la toile tendue ou clouée [sur châssis] existe déjà en tant que tableau, sans autant être nécessairement un tableau réussi. » Clement Greenberg, « Après l'expressionnisme abstrait » (1962), *Regard sur l'Amérique des années soixante*, éd. par Claude Gintz, Paris, Territoires, 1979, p. 18. Sur cette question, voir le texte de Michel Gauthier, « Rodtchenko à Las Vegas », *Olivier Mosset Travaux/Works 1966-2003*, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne/Kunstverein St. Gallen Kunstmuseum, 2003, p. 7-11.
- 12 Sur Steven Parrino, voir l'étude de Michel Gauthier, « Le foyer mis à sac », *L'Anarchème*, Genève, Éditions du Mamco, 200 p. 150-172.
- 13 Scott Rothkopf, « Modern Pictures », *Color, Power and Style*, New York, Friedrich Petzel Gallery, 2006, p. 66.
- 14 Sur cette dimension de l'art de l'artiste anglais, voir l'article de Manou Farine et Michel Gauthier, « + / - . Martin Creed ou la solution zéro », *20/27*, n° 1, 2007, p. 106-123.
- 15 Wade Guyton, *Guyton\Walker. The Failever of Judgment*, op. cit., p. 49.
- 16 Alexander Liberman (1912-1999), s'il fut un peintre et surtout un sculpteur reconnu à partir des années 1960, a été avant tout un éditeur. Il fut même de 1961 à 1999 directeur éditorial de Condé Nast Publications, l'une des plus grosses sociétés de presse du monde. Aussi y a-t-il quelque logique à voir son œuvre apparaître ainsi par le biais d'une reproduction dans une publication.
- 17 Ronald Davis (né en 1937), figure mineure de la peinture américaine, dont Michael Fried fit toutefois imprudemment l'égal de Stella dans un article de 1967, « Ronald Davis : surface et illusion » (repris dans M. Fried, *Contre la théâtralité. Du minimalisme à la photographie contemporaine*, trad. de l'anglais par F. Durand-Bogaert, Paris, Gallimard, 2007, p. 97-101).
- 18 Quelques pages de livre ressortent toutefois indemnes des mains de Guyton. Ainsi d'une reproduction de Leo Castelli (1966) de Stella. La cartouche d'encre de l'imprimante était-elle vide ?
- 19 Kelley Walker a réalisé un certain nombre de pièces avec Wade Guyton qu'ils ont montrées dans diverses expositions – « X BBB XXXXXXXXXX FFFF » à Saint Paul (Minnesota) (2004), « The Failever of Judgment » à Cologne, chez Greene Naftali (2006), « Mystery » à Bruxelles, chez Rodolphe Janssen (2006), ou plus récemment « Guyton\Walker », au Mambo, à Bologne (2008).
- 20 Rosalind Krauss, *L'Originalité de l'avant-garde et autres mythes modernistes*, trad. de l'anglais par J.-P. Criqui, Paris, Macquarie, 1993, p. 301. Kelley Walker insiste sur cette même dimension déhiérarchisatrice, dont il crédite, lui, son scanner : « Je considère le scanner comme une machine reproduisant n'importe quoi, sans distinction, qu'il s'agisse d'une image imprimée sur une page de 1970 ou d'un réel objet fait en 1989. Le scanner n'émet pas de jugement et reproduit pareillement tout et n'importe quoi. Il y a dans la façon dont il opère une dimension démocratique ou égalitaire, me rappelant Richard Prince, qui a eu une influence évidente sur moi. Ce que j'aime dans son travail, c'est que, techniquement, n'importe qui pourrait le faire » *The Failever of Judgment*, op. cit., p. 49 [ma traduction].
- 21 Joseph Beuys, *Spuren in Italien*, Kunstmuseum Luzern, 1979.
- 22 L'année suivante, Broodthaers plâtrera le solde invendu de cette édition, transformant ainsi la poésie en sculpture. Voir à ce sujet l'ouvrage de Jean-Philippe Antoine, *Marcel Broodthaers, Moule, Muse, Méduse*, Dijon, Les presses du réel, coll. « L'espace littéraire », 2006.
- 23 Dieter Roth, *The Picadillies*, Hansjörg Mayer, Londres, 2005, n. p., [ma traduction].
- 24 Sur les notions d'hypertexte et d'hypotexte, voir Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1992.
- 25 Gérard Genette, *Seuils*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1987.
- 26 Cette information est donnée par Scott Rothkopf dans son essai « Modern Pictures », cat. *Wade Guyton. Color, Power and Style*, Cologne, Walther König, 2006, p. 71.
- 27 Vincent Pécoil, « The American Action Printer », cat. *Wade Guyton*, Lyon, La Salle de bains, 2006, p. 73.
- 28 Voir la notice de cette pochette dans l'ouvrage de Matthew Robertson, *Factory Records. Une anthologie graphique*, Paris, Thames





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.

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

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.

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:

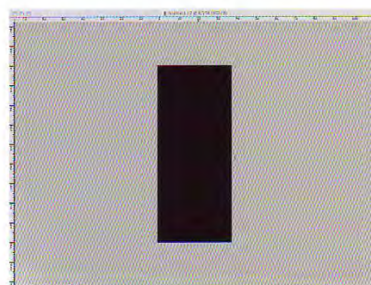
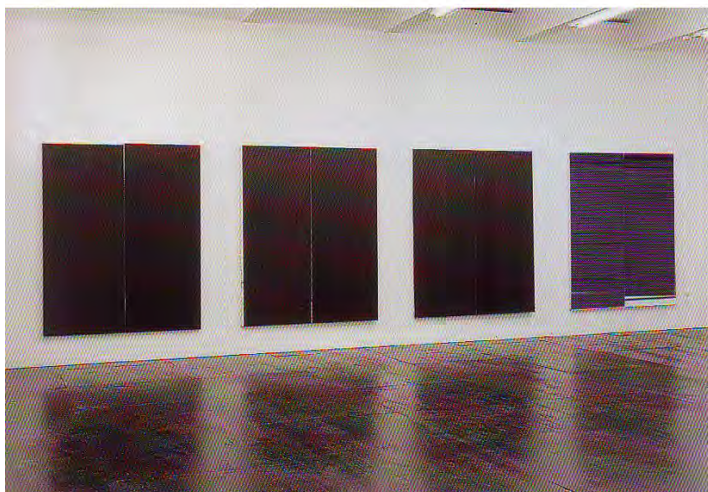
It is fundamental to X's work that it function in complicity with those very institutions it seeks to make visible as the necessary condition of the artwork's intelligibility. This is the reason that his work not only appears in museums and galleries but also poses as painting. It is only thereby possible 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 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.

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



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".



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 during printing before being pulled back into alignment; this sometimes produces a kind of shuttered effect, almost photographic 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 hard-core-sounding name "big-black.tif," which, when

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.

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. 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 embarrassing 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 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 vermillion, 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: punished 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, 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.

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 exclu-

sively by way of mediation (art-history books, theoretical anthologies, this magazine). He made sculpture: quirky quasi-Minimalist forms in wood or 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

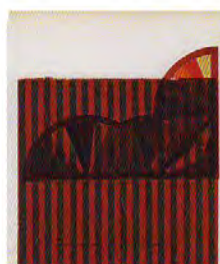
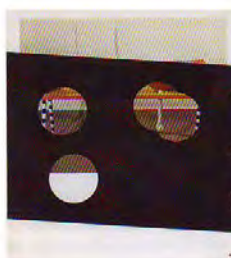
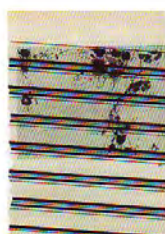
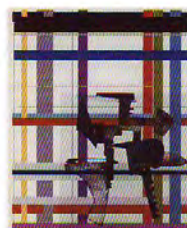
If it seems that Guyton has reached this point too early—what avenues has he left open for himself, one wonders while looking at so many iterations of the high-culture sign for "That's all, folks"—it is worth considering how his career has proceeded by way of such impasses, with such seeming foreclosures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

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 heavily-handedly efface them was after all a *grasping*, and it offered itself as an insight that could

Opposite page: View of "Wade Guyton," 2007, Galerie Francesca Pia, Zurich. Foreground: Untitled Action Sculpture (Five Brown Chairs), 2007. Background, from left: 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".





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 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

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.

"Printer Painting" in which the ink-jets have almost spluttered 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."

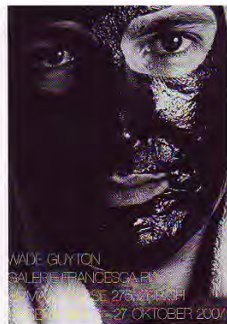
That there is a certain romanticism to quoting Miller on painting (writing in 1936 as he was, an expat in France, surrounded on all sides by the good and the bad of avant-garde heroics) is unavoidable, but in the end this is perhaps a fair—if also perhaps an unexpected—treatment of Guyton's work. Emphatic

First row, from left: Wade Guyton, *Untitled* (SE 22, blue, 41 cm), 2007, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 7 1/2 x 7 1/2". Wade Guyton, *Untitled* (28 Caro, PIPCE #33, 1967), 2004, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 9 x 8 1/2". Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2005, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 8 1/2 x 6 1/2". Wade Guyton, *Untitled* (23), Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 11 1/4 x 9 1/2".

Second row, from left: Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2008, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 8 1/2 x 8". Wade Guyton, *Untitled* (86), 2007, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 9 1/2 x 8 1/2". Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2004, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 10 x 8 1/2". Wade Guyton, *Untitled* (1973), 2007, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 7 1/2 x 5".

Third row, from left: Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2005, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 10 1/2 x 7 1/2". Wade Guyton, *Untitled* (38 9), 2007, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 8 1/2 x 5 1/2". Wade Guyton, *Untitled* (A 32 in 100), 2007, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 8 1/2 x 6 1/2". Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2007, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 8 1/2 x 6 1/2".

Fourth row, from left: Wade Guyton, *Untitled* (6), 2006, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 9 1/2 x 8 1/2". Wade Guyton, *Untitled*, 2003, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 10 1/2 x 7 1/2". Wade Guyton, *Untitled* (cat. 28 A. B. van der SCHODR), 2007, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 9 1/2 x 7 1/2". Wade Guyton, *Untitled* (SE 93, blue, 1960 SE 33, blue, 1968, 42 cm each), 2007, Epson DURABrite ink-jet on book page, 7 1/2 x 7 1/2".



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 inkjet on linen, 80 1/4 x 69".

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

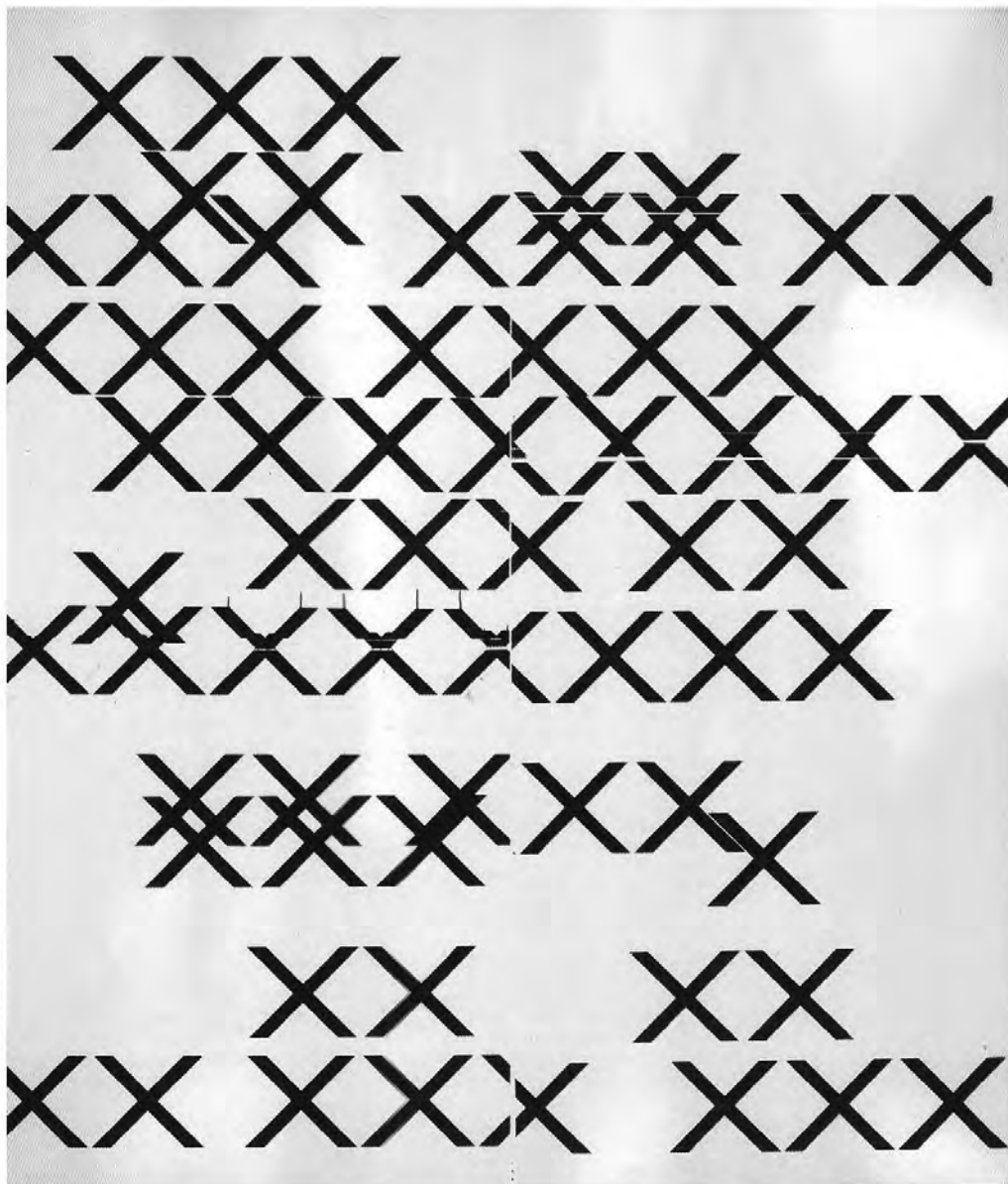
traffics in exaggeration, in the "off," in "things-being-what-they-are-not." Less rehearsed, but even more pointedly relevant here, is another of Sontag's arguments: Camp is the purview of "style," of, therefore, the "ostensible": "To emphasize style is to slight content, or to introduce an attitude 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

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.

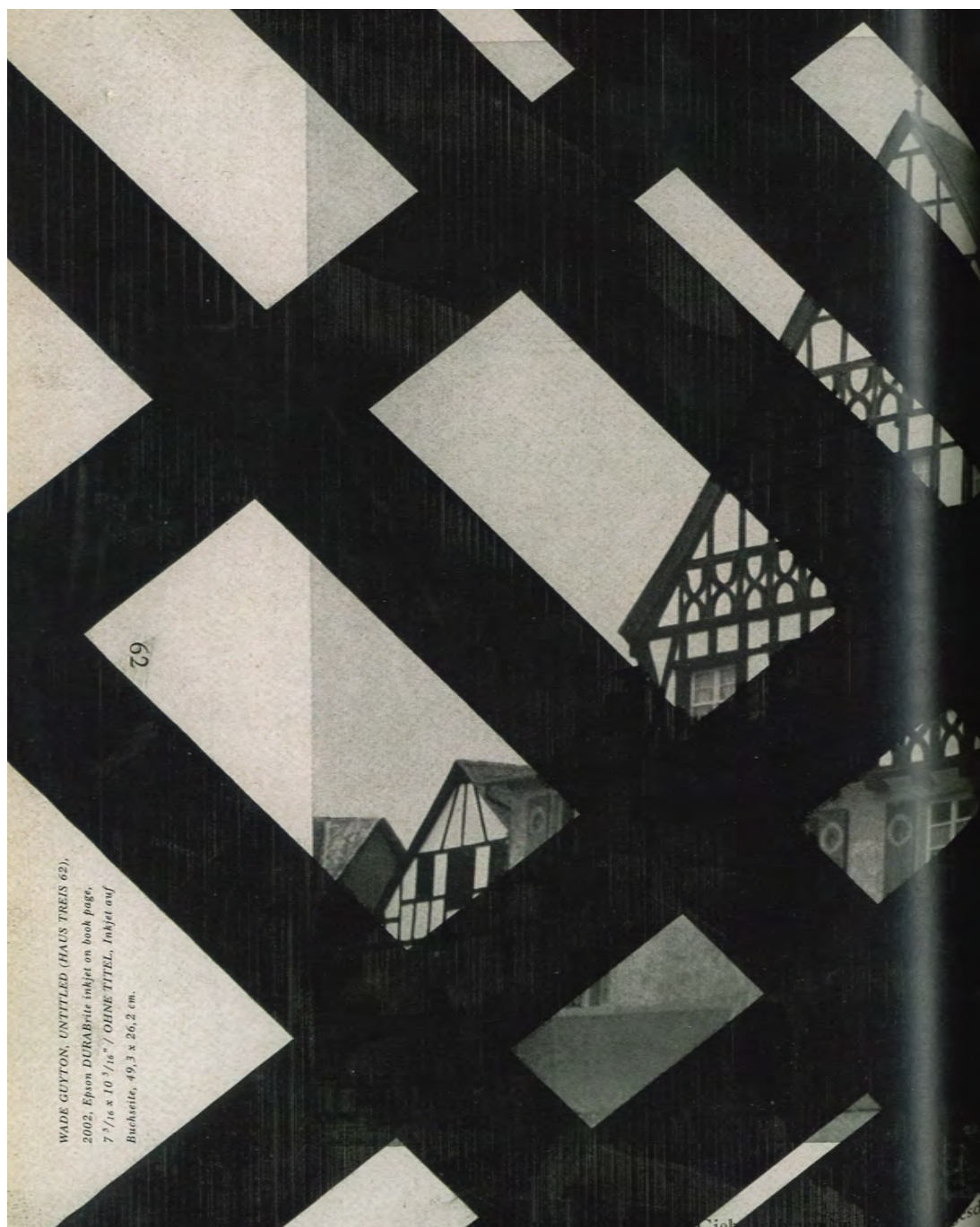
with respect to content is, she goes on to say at the essay's very end, "a tender feeling." Perhaps the question of where to place Guyton's practice in the field of contemporary art is only answered, then, by taking seriously the kind of neutrality that Barthes—and I think Sontag, too—marks as "active." 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. □

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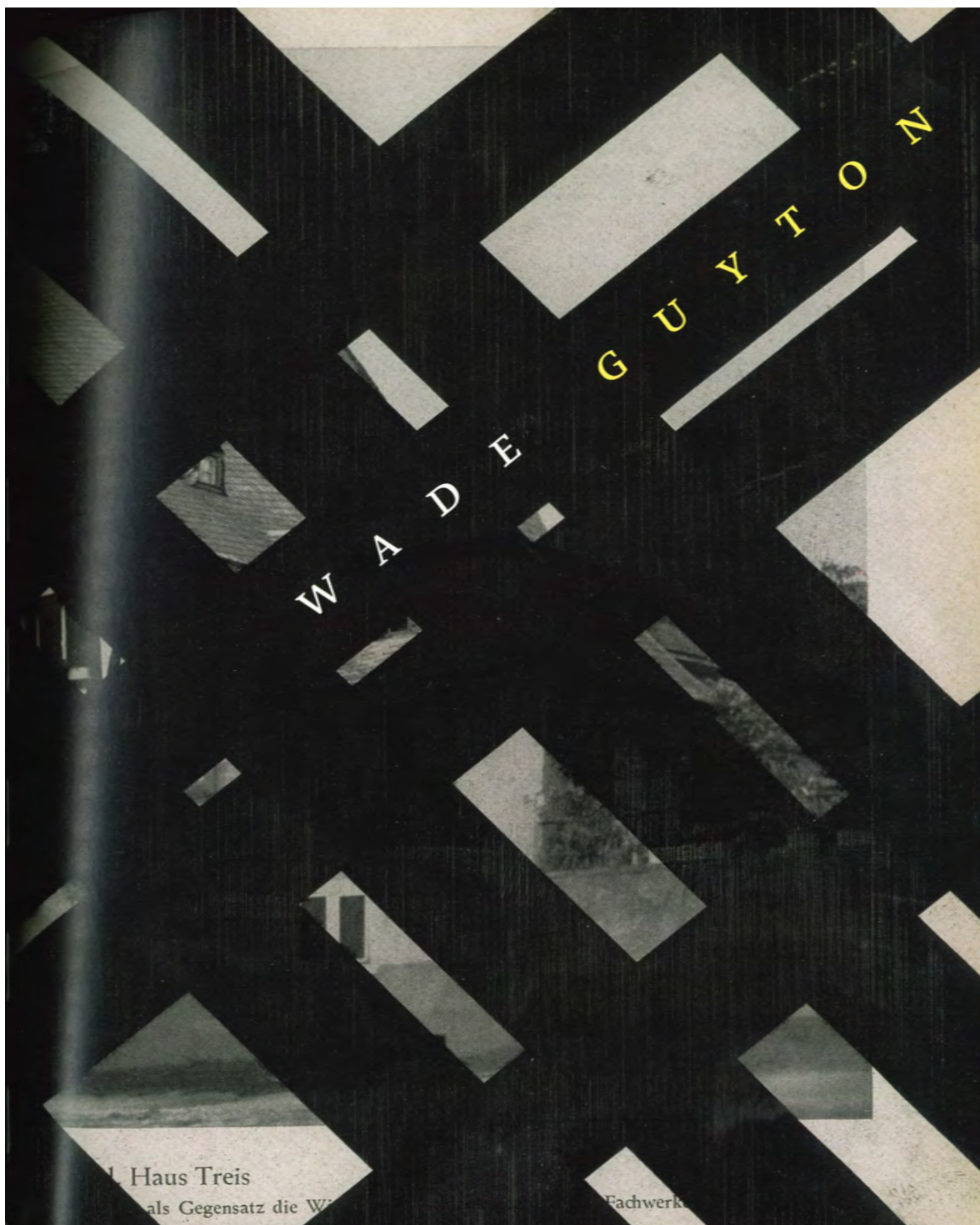
For notes, see page 464.



PARKETT



WADE GUYTON, UNTITLED (HAUS TIREIS 62),
2002, Epson DURABrite inkjet on book pages,
7 7/16 x 10 3/16" / OHNE TITEL, Inkjet auf
Buchseite, 49,3 x 26,2 cm.



Wade Guyton

THE NEW BLACK

SCOTT ROTHKOPF



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 rela-

SCOTT ROTHKOPF is a senior editor of *Artforum*.

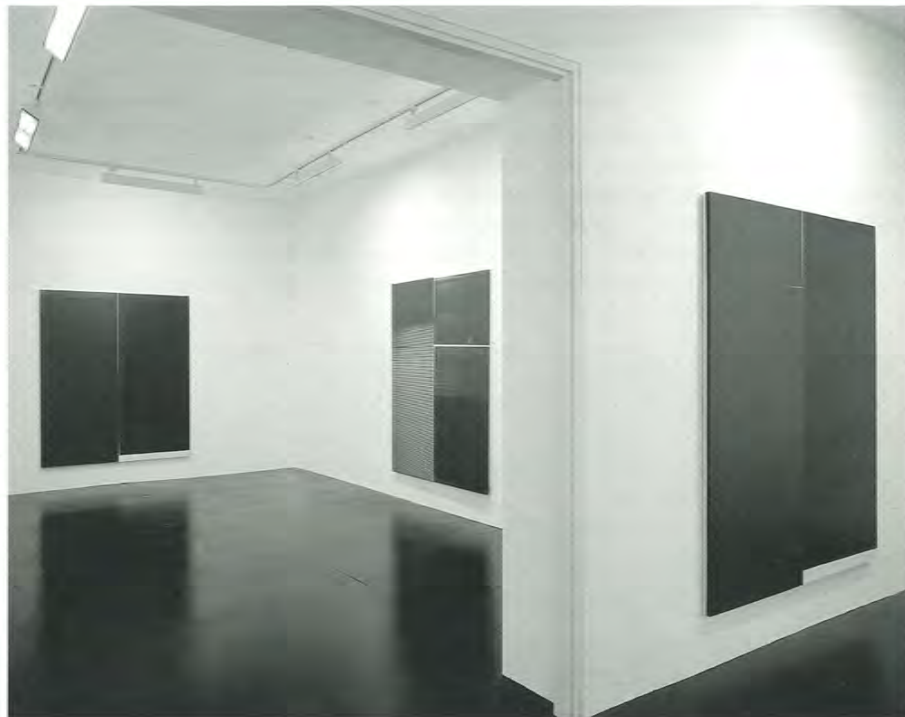
tive merits of his new series of black paintings, and I can't help feeling a bit like the butt of a withering joke, perhaps the dapper man studying a quasi-Pollock in Norman Rockwell's 1962 canvas *THE CONNOISSEUR* or the beleaguered protagonist of *Art*, the nineties Broadway hit that turns on the dated 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-

Wade Guyton

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

metric 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

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



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?

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 geo-

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

Wade Guyton

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 exag-

gerated 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.

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 Xs 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

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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,

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-

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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.

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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.

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 continuously 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.

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Double Negative

SUZANNE COTTER

In 2007, a work by Wade Guyton appeared, intriguingly, in the exhibition *Very Abstract and Hyper Figurative* at Thomas Dane Gallery in London's St. James. In a play on the conventions of curatorial display, curator Jens Hoffmann presented what were, ostensibly, small-format paintings by over forty contemporary artists based in Europe and the U.S. Taking his cue from Marcel Broodthaers' MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, DEPARTMENT OF EAGLES (Musée de l'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, 1968–1972), Hoffmann arranged the paintings in two free-standing display cases, as if part of an anthropological or ethnographic collection of artefacts. True to the museological conceit, the paintings were classified by type, either "figurative" or "abstract." In the vitrine devoted to abstraction alongside paintings by Laura Owens, Albert Oehlen, and others, was a work by Guyton, a small primed and stretched canvas printed over in black ink with a repeating motif of Xs.

For anyone familiar with the ambivalent nature of Guyton's practice, it was both amusing and typical that he would take part in an exhibition that was purportedly about painting today, albeit one based on an ambiguous curatorial ploy piggy-backed on the critical project of Broodthaers from almost forty years earlier. One can certainly imagine Guyton being attracted to the Belgian artist's absurdist mimicking of curatorial practice in his museum enterprise, which undermined the very meaning of classi-

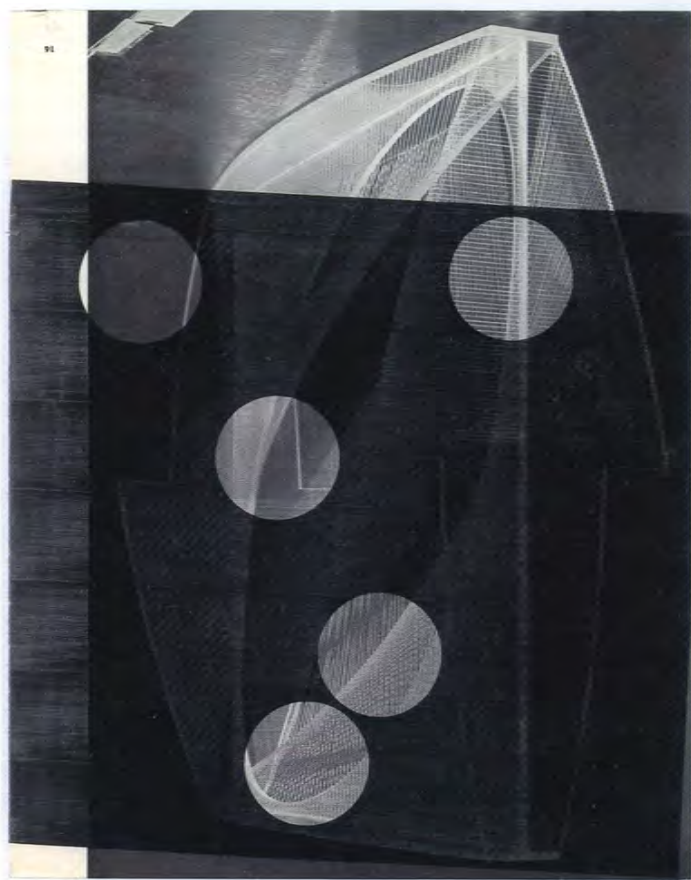
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WADE GUYTON, FRAGMENT OF SCULPTURE THE SIZE OF A HOUSE (BLACK PLYWOOD), 2002, plywood, 8 x 12 x 10" / FRAGMENT EINER SKULPTUR VON DER GRÖSSE EINES HAUSES (SCHWARZES SPERRHOLZ), Sperrholz, 2,4 x 3,6 x 3 m.

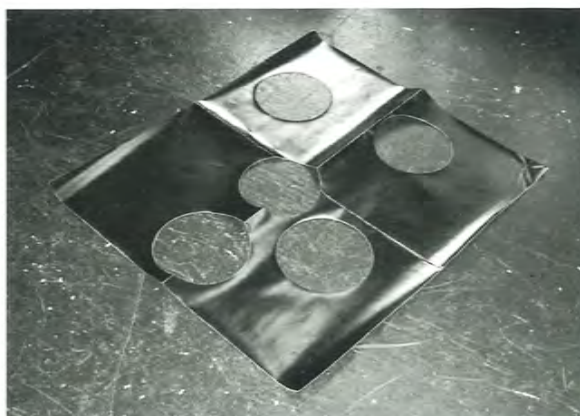


WADE GUYTON, FRAGMENT OF SCULPTURE THE SIZE OF A HOUSE (BLACK PLYWOOD), 2002, plywood, 7 x 10 x 5" / FRAGMENT EINER SKULPTUR VON DER GRÖSSE EINES HAUSES (SCHWARZES SPERRHOLZ), Sperrholz, 2,1 x 3 x 1,5 m.

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WADE GUYTON, UNTITLED (16),
2007, Epson DURABrite inkjet on book
page, 9 7/8 x 7 1/2" / OHNE TITEL,
Inkjet auf Buchseite, 25 x 19 cm.



WADE GUYTON, UNTITLED, 2007,
offset on paper, 34 1/2 x 29 3/4" /
OHNE TITEL, Offset auf Papier, 87,6 x 75,5 cm.

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fication and reduced the objects in its collection to a relationship of multivalent equivalence.

Guyton is an avowed conceptualist, attracted to forms and structures that, in his words, "contain their own internal logic."¹⁾ While it is true that his use of an ink-jet printer—from his inaugural forays printing letters of the alphabet in standard computer fonts over pages from books on twentieth century art and design, to his recent ink-jet-printed, stretched linen works—has invited discussion of his work in painterly terms, Guyton's practice encompasses a broader formal and conceptual terrain than strictly painting. His early elaborations of sculptural or sculpture-like form, his provocative recycling of the tropes of Modernism and its contaminations (by which I mean contemporary art practice since the 1960s, although especially artists such as Dan Graham and Robert Morris), not to mention his staged, improvised readings, collaborative work, and publications with Continuous Project, point to a more complex and distinctly un-medium-specific practice, one to which Rosalind Krauss' term "post-medium" might more aptly apply.²⁾

Guyton's practice has consistently defied easy categorization, operating instead from within an accumulation of formal and conceptual slippages. He uses terms such as "unease," "embarrassment," and

"awkwardness" articulating a general reticence, what Johanna Burton has termed, "a neutral deportment,"³⁾ which has come to define his work. Guyton also confesses to having "no natural skills in actually making things" and that he received most of his knowledge about art through books and reproductions. His earliest works suggest a parody of modernist, minimalist, and post-minimalist forms, made from the simplest of materials and most basic of gestures. As a graduate student at Hunter College in New York in the late 1990s, he made objects using found photographs. For his graduate thesis exhibition, he created a floor piece using parquet tiles in the form of a solid block, or platform, obstructing one of the entrances into the gallery space. A mirrored, rectangular column extending from floor to ceiling stood along its side—its structural possibilities supposedly usurped by the dematerialized action of its reflective surface.

In the early 2000s, Guyton's literal blocking of space became a hypothetical "blacking out" of space, as he began to combine sculptural dimensionality with reproductions of architectures, interiors, and modernist sculptures, filling in, for example, the contours of a photograph of a suburban house with a black marker. The resulting *DRAWING FOR A SCULPTURE THE SIZE OF A HOUSE* (2001) became a model



WADE GUYTON, *DRAWING FOR SCULPTURE THE SIZE OF A HOUSE*, 2001, marker on photograph, 4 x 6" / *ZEICHNUNG FÜR EINE SKULPTUR VON DER GRÖSSE EINES HAUSES*, Marker auf Photographie, 10,1 x 15,2 cm.

for a series of planar plywood structures, painted black and propped up by pieces of 2 x 4, which represented fragments of the scale of the proposed house-sized sculpture. In turn, the act of drawing over existing photographic images would become the impetus for his "Printer Drawings," at which point Guyton began using a simple office printer as a means of mark-making, while introducing a system of chance that was to prove generative.

At the same time as he was making his "fragments," he expanded his repertoire to include vertical towers made from mirrored panels alternating between gold and black Plexiglas, works that articulated his interest in fragments and voids. Elaborating on the willed "dumbness" of his earlier propositions, he also drew on the found photograph, primarily from books and art magazines, reframing moments from the history of Modernism and Conceptualism, producing what might be considered cultural-artefact-turned-sculpture. *NEW DESIGN* (2003) replicates (in hinged oak) the structure of one of Dan Graham's pavilions for viewing videos (*NEW DESIGN FOR SHOWING VIDEO*, 1995). Instead of creating an architecture in which subjective perception is implicit to the work, Guyton produced a free-standing, linear framework that resembled a set of interconnecting door thresholds. Instead of investing the work with a promise of intersubjectivity (as did Graham), Guyton produced a structure for the viewer to merely walk through. Similarly, with his "Action Sculptures," he removed the seat and back of one of Marcel Breuer's patented Cesca chairs (this time a real one rather than a photograph) and bent its tubular chromed steel frame into a freestanding linear form that could assume a variety of poses.

Guyton's confounding of the relationship between "form and function" or "figure and ground" has been a persistent quality in his work. Like the repetitive labeling in Broodthaers' *Museum* collection, Guyton's forms are recycled in a continuing array of contexts: a sculpture, an imprint, a horizontal, a vertical, on a plinth, on the floor. Early on, he used the figure X as a structure to create works that were both architecturally scaled and, at the same time, physically vulnerable. Proposing to exist as interventions in either buildings or landscapes, these

forms were also eminently reproducible. As with his earlier "fragments," the X sculptures relate as much, if not more, to the space of the image, be it of an architectural interior or of sculpture in a public setting. These casual gestures of insertion, predicated on a supposedly neutral if not anonymous form, would come to invite a variety of readings, the most obvious being that of cancellation or negation. Trumping his X with the letter U, he assumed yet another variable and outwardly reflecting form. The U sculpture, as either a three-dimensional object or two-dimensional sign, functions as an emblem of reproducibility. Like the X, the letter U (along with other pre-existing motifs) would find its way into the two-dimensional realm of ink-jet registration.

It is of significance that X is one of the most rudimentary marks of acknowledgment or signature. For Guyton, the notion of authorship is a pertinent question, whether it be the distance he assumes with regard to making the work or his varying artistic roles: as himself, as Guyton\Walker, or a part of the publishing collective Continuous Project. History—as it is authorized and perpetuated through the archive and document (their circuits of distribution)—underpins the absurdist, parasitical interventions of Continuous Project, be it through its elegantly folded bulletins or the re-enactments of transcribed events from past artistic moments performed by a complicit cast of characters. Here, Guyton espouses the collaborative process, personal anonymity, and a spirit of masquerade.

It has been argued by Scott Rothkopf that Guyton's aesthetic operates on the threshold of information, simultaneously reflecting and offering a critique of contemporary spectatorship: "For artists and critics of Guyton's generation—one for which there was no 'Life Before Pictures'—the concept of a world made up of representations *en abîme* seems so natural as to be taken less as received wisdom than self-evident fact."⁴ Rothkopf is referring to Douglas Crimp's influential exhibition *Pictures* and essay of the same title from the late 1970s. But it is also worth considering Guyton's oeuvre thus far as having exploited many of the ideas on processes of anti-form articulated a decade earlier by Robert Morris. In his "Notes on Sculpture," Morris writes:

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WADE GUYTON, *UNTITLED No. 2*, 2006, 10 drawings (Epson DURABrite inkjet on book pages), 4 frames (oak and Plexiglas), 94 1/2 x 118 1/8 x 3 1/2"; *UNTITLED No. 3*, 2006, 13 drawings (Epson DURABrite inkjet on book pages), 4 frames (oak and Plexiglas), 94 1/2 x 118 1/8 x 3 1/2", installation view, La Salle de Bains, Lyon / *OHNE TITEL Nr. 2*, 10 Zeichnungen (Inkjet auf Buchseiten), 4 Rahmen (Eiche und Plexiglas), 240 x 300 x 8,9 cm; *OHNE TITEL, Nr. 3*, 13 Zeichnungen (Inkjet auf Buchseiten), 4 Rahmen (Eiche und Plexiglas), 240 x 300 x 8,9 cm, Installationsansicht.

"The notion that work is an irreversible process ending in a static icon-object no longer has much relevance." He goes on to declare, "This reclamation of process refocuses art as an energy driving to change perception... What is revealed is that art itself is an activity of change, of disorientation and shift, of violent discontinuity and mutability, of the willingness for confusion even in the service of discovering new perceptual modes."⁵⁾

There is a biographical as well as academic link here, as Guyton took classes with Morris in his Combined Media department at Hunter. According to Guyton:

"At the time I think I was trying to locate exactly some kind of crack in art and forms I was familiar with... I was really entering that program without any formal training or hands-on, art-making experience—only some art history and lots of theory and criticism. My guess is that because Morris was always asking himself philosophical questions and never seemed committed to ways of making things, in the way Judd as a contemporary did (or anyone else for that matter), he somehow had some sympathy for me..."

Nor is it irrelevant that the name "Continuous Project" has been borrowed from the title of Morris' published writings—although the coincidence of nomenclature can't necessarily be considered a form of homage. More so, it is a part of his reverberating,

playful, reflexive strategy of using acknowledged cultural moments as basic formal elements. Many of the tenets of Morris' discussions on sculpture and "anti-form" find fresh interpretation in Guyton's approach. In Morris' words:

"Considerations of ordering are necessarily causal and imprecise and unemphasized. Random piling, loose stacking, hanging... Chance is accepted and indeterminacy is implied, as replacing will result in another configuration. Disengagement with preconceived enduring forms and orders for things is a positive assertion."⁶⁾

Similar is Krauss' definition of medium "as a recursive structure, that is, some of the elements of which will produce the rules that generate the structure itself."⁷⁾ This description further illustrates how we might consider Guyton's conceptual practice, the formal imbrications of which would seem to culminate in the most recent works.

Following Morris' line of thinking on materials and process, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Guyton uses the ink-jet printer as a brush in the same way Pollock used sticks. Critic David Frankel has described Guyton as a "virtuoso of the ink-jet the way Pollock was a virtuoso of the pour..."⁸⁾ Just as the process for Pollock was inherently sympathetic to the physical properties of enamel paint—it pours, it drips, its splatters—the Epson printer provides the ideal properties for Guyton's use of reproducibility

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as a formal and conceptual device. The disruptions to the printing process caused by the folded, primed canvas produce what might be interpreted as the work's expressivity. But, true to Guyton's position of "neutrality," the printer's stutters, starts, and registration failures (caused when folded fabric gets caught and tugged loose from its rollers) are, in fact, the result of unpredictable moments of mechanical distress.

Guyton's twin exhibitions at Friedrich Petzel Gallery (New York) and Galerie Chantal Crousel (Paris) in the spring of 2008, presented a new series of black ink-jet paintings. There was no paint involved, nor "painter," unless one counts the soft-

ware that generated the X reproduced through Guyton's commercial Epson printer. The resultant impressions were made on lead-primed linen that had been folded longitudinally and passed two or more times through the printer, first on one side, then on the other. The fabric was later unfolded and mounted onto wooden stretcher bars to produce an impressive set of visual structures with a range of densities of blackness: from total saturation to a vaporous white striated with razor-thin lines of ink.

These works—from an impenetrable black broken up with a central vertical seam (revealing where the linen was folded in order to pass through the printer) to the fine, horizontal lines that repeat

WADE GUYTON, *STUDY FOR
NEW DESIGN 2002*, Photoshop document /
STUDIE FÜR NEUES DESIGN,
Photoshop-Dokument.



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WADE GUYTON, UNTITLED ACTION SCULPTURE (CHAIR),
2002, steel, variable / OHNE TITEL AKTIONS-SKULPTUR
(STUHL), Stahl, variabel.

down the length of the linen's surface—flashed referential snapshots from the history of twentieth century painting: the black on black of Kasimir Malevich, the "zip" of a Barnett Newman, the existential transcendence implied by Rothko's use of pigment, or the restrained linear coordinates of Agnes Martin. While subscribing to the conventions of traditional painting in their support and presentation, it seems truer to describe them as "painting-like." It is precisely this likeness to things-as-we-think-we-know-them that fuels Guyton's art. The galleries' press releases explained that Guyton had overlaid a second floor directly on top of the galleries' real floors com-

posed of plywood panels painted in a semi-gloss black, replicating the floor in his Manhattan studio. If the reception of the two shows emphasized painting, a less obvious read brings one full-circle back to Guyton's earlier, architecturally-scaled interventions.

There is a risk, however, of defining Guyton's output in purely formal terms, while so much is still at stake in his wide-ranging practice. Duchampian disavowal, the dematerialization of art as object, and a reframing of institutional critique in terms of the operating conditions of the site itself are some of the strategies implicated in his practice. Artistic agency becomes an act of splicing content with context. This is where Guyton's work gets its charge. Along with the elegance of his output and the artist's pose of indifference, we are compelled to interpret Guyton's eschewal of the simple description of things as an elaboration of the mechanisms of how they function. If we are to understand these mechanisms as relating to a form of healthy cynicism of the visual and its systems of circulation, then we might also see in Guyton's work an articulation of the "post-medium condition" enacted by artists such as Morris and Broodthaers, as well as a retort to current trends in its rejection of the artist as idealized, fixed, and intractable. In this respect, Guyton's work is of its time, a necessity in the face of competing imperatives. In its multiple and mutable forms, it becomes a particular kind of discourse that is both instructive and conversational, persistently eluding us while speaking something of this world.

1) This and the subsequent quote by Guyton come from e-mail exchanges with the artist in July 2008.

2) Rosalind Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*, Walter Neurath Memorial Lecture, 1999 (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000).

3) "Rites of Silence: Johanna Burton on the Art of Wade Guyton" in *Artforum*, vol. XLVI, no. 10 (Summer 2008), pp. 364–73.

4) Scott Rothkopf, "Modern Pictures" in Yilmaz Dziewior (ed.), *Wade Guyton: Color, Power & Style* (Hamburg: Kunstverein Hamburg, 2006), p. 74.

5) Robert Morris, "Notes on Sculpture, Part 4" in *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993), pp. 68–69.

6) Robert Morris, "Anti Form" in *Continuous Project Altered Daily* (see note 5), p. 46.

7) Krauss (see note 2), p. 7.

8) David Frankel, "Wade Guyton: Friedrich Petzel Gallery" in *Artforum*, vol. XLVI, no. 7 (March 2008), p. 358.