



Brandon Holmes will serve as *guest editor* for *Art Practical Picks*.

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Jordan Kantor

JORDAN KANTOR
APR 30 - JUN 12

by George Pfau

Visiting Jordan Kantor's show at Ratio 3, I found myself contemplating a painting's trajectory, from its creation in a studio to a contemporary art gallery. Are the links on that chain finite and distinct? Kantor presents artwork that pulls aside this veil of linearity, revealing multi-pronged, quantum narratives instead. The show conjures up a lot of compartments—including the studio, painting, frame, slide, projection, window, gallery, reception, and storage—and tries to approximate what they look like, as well as whose hands are present in their construction or delimitation.

Kantor's show becomes a template for an art show, as if he is showing us a container and then plugging in content. I felt a bit lost by what I assumed to be art-historical references within the frames. Their inclusion functions somewhat as a hierarchy of investment and obsession, without revealing all of the points of reference for the paintings, films, painting techniques, theories, etc. However, the moments of confusion and obscurity actually worked to highlight this artist-to-audience dynamic, while simultaneously questioning its importance and questioning the potential for what an art show can be.

In particular, I wondered quite a bit about the painting of the bearded man mortaring the bricks. Is the man building a façade or an illusion? Kantor creates tension between the controlling hand of the illusion-maker and the limits or slippages of this same hand, mixed with the sense of sublime that occurs when it is removed. The slide show of trapezoidal shapes of light on the wall of his studio spoke to those moments of naturally occurring, yet compartmentalized, sublimity.



Untitled (builder), 2006; oil on canvas; 28 x 40 in. Courtesy of the Artist and Ratio 3, San Francisco.

The etchings and the paintings also provoked thoughts about the actual hands of the artist: touching, pressing, succeeding, failing, and leaving a trace. They recalled Francis Bacon, repeating the same image again and again—a figural image contained within a cage-like boundary—trying to get it right. I was also reminded of how paintings are photo-documented. All the sloppy edges suddenly flatten out and tighten up. I remember first time I really looked at a Mondrian painting in person and saw that the edges were so much funkier than they looked in a photo.

Overall, Kantor's show calls attention to the fact that the life of an artwork is in a constant state of flux; its multiple trajectories extend in countless directions. Trying to construct the artistic narrative of Kantor, from studio to gallery to storeroom to history book, only reveals the linearity of such a narrative to be an illusion and another series of fabricated compartments.

"JORDAN KANTOR" IS ON VIEW AT [RATIO 3](#) IN SAN FRANCISCO THROUGH JUNE 12, 2010.