

## ARTFORUM

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I N T E R N A T I O N A L

## REVIEWS



Warrington Colescott, *The Hollandale Tapes: Down in the Think Tank, 1982*, color soft-ground etching with à la poupée inking and relief rolls through stencils, 39 1/2 x 28 1/2".

crosses multiple registers: At top is the Oval Office, complete with armed security, Fox News reporters, and presidential staff drawn as windup toys, keys bulging from their backs; while below, two lower levels house covert intelligence planning, torture, and officially sanctioned criminalities. The most devious activities are reserved for the bottom rung, cleverly identified by a sign that reads: UNIVERSITY RESEARCH GRANTS.

With the precision and panache of Hogarth and Daumier, Colescott's transgressive humor and rancorous depictions of even the most banal conventions expose our intrinsic shortcomings and our acquired prejudices. Though Warrington's younger brother may have influenced the likes of Kerry James Marshall, Kara Walker, and Carroll Dunham, his own impact is yet to be determined; but for everyone fortunate enough to have seen this retrospective, his work could not help but hit home.

—Michelle Grabner

## LOS ANGELES

Richard Aldrich  
MARC FOXX

The impact of "Slide Paintings," Richard Aldrich's second solo show at Marc Foxx, was slow and cumulative. The works—covering a scattershot range of abstraction—can be coyly obtuse, nonchalantly restrained, and cagey, but they gradually open up onto one another, subtly echoing a nearby shape here or a neighbor's title there. Minute touches, quivering in isolation against the white of canvas and wall, conveyed prolonged deliberation, patience, and ruminative looking in the studio. The joys of viewing were understated and insular: They rested in the minor discoveries of mousy subtleties and nearly hidden lines of interconnectivity. Though obscured, there is carryover among individual paintings, a leapfrogging of formal correspondences and self-reference that the show's title framed in terms of sliding: Not only did aspects of certain compositions slide promiscuously

onto multiple surfaces, but the recontextualization of several older works next to (and as) new ones signaled that temporal shifts were in play as well.

The title also refers directly to the 2010 "Slide Paintings" proper—three blank primed linen surfaces inlaid with photographic slides attached like tiny windows in the surface and backlit with electric circuitry constructed by the artist's father. Each of the slides documents other works by Aldrich (some no longer extant), concentrating the vivid memory of those pieces into translucent luminosities—weird personal icons. The artist's already introverted practice here revisits its infancy and development, as Aldrich resourcefully reincorporates earlier works (either seen in slide miniature or, in other cases, physically present) into his current production to confuse teleological expectations of artistic progress and insist on a nonlinear, even cyclical trajectory of discovering familiar territory.

This hermetic project of quietly instigating synchronic (formal) and diachronic (temporal) relationships among the paintings was at least partly described by one painting's title as an ongoing fascination with *Constructed and Perceived Narratives*, 2010. Commenting in his exhibition notes on that picture's disjunctive pairing with a much larger and sparer collage, *Two Figures*, 2010, Aldrich writes, "One explains the other, the psychological perception of interactions." And he's right: The two seemingly dissimilar works are transformed by the realization that they hold in common a certain roughly torn shape of a corresponding moss green. Suddenly the mind imagines that the two have a lot to talk about, and begins to perceive visual narratives between these interacting abstractions.

On the opposite wall across the gallery, a trio conversed among themselves, trading various conjugations of a black rectangle: A small, coal-like monochrome appeared to have been thrown from the rectangular hole cut out of the large white canvas, titled, *ufo2*, 2006, hanging to its right. The cryptic label ufo, printed in black above the hole, launches the viewer into outer space, which may be exactly where we encounter the black rectangle next, its form detectable in the inky angles of a third canvas's color grid.

As the exhibition title suggested, other such overlapping "constructed and perceived narratives" slid around and glanced off the paintings at tangents, emerging from under perception's radar in bits and pieces. But Aldrich's charged visual concision hardly asks for a full-fledged narrative in prose; rather, it recommends T. J. Clark's ekphrastic intuition that "a good poem about Poussin would be the highest form of criticism." So to get at the deceptive casualness and syncopated, riddle-like economy Aldrich has fine-tuned in these works, I should stand on one leg and simply say:

Darkness cuts a hole,  
Rotates in space and takes off.  
Spotted later up north.

—Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer

Richard Aldrich, *Slide Painting #1 (doubled early installation) (detail)*, 2010, color slide on linen, LEDs, battery, 30 x 20".

