Daniel Gordon

SELECTED PRESS

KASMIN

Daniel Gordon: Free Transform

Goings On About Town

JOHANNA FATEMAN
MAY 2023

Daniel Gordon

A twenty-three-foot-long still-life spans this New York artist's latest exhibition, "Free Transform." Its ultra-bright backdrop and array of subjects (houseplants, floral bouquets, fruits, vegetables, lobsters) suggest elements in a giant Colorforms set. The piece is named for a Photoshop tool that allows for fluid image manipulation—but digital editing is only one stage of Gordon's idiosyncratic layering process, which relies on a variety of photographic sources. Images are printed, cut out, and rephotographed into tableaux. For all their grounding in photography, Gordon's pieces invite painterly comparisons: his composites are like stripped-down versions of seventeenth-century Dutch tabletop still-lifes, rendered in a Fauvist palette. The exhibition also marks the début of Gordon's sculptures: urns, pitchers, and vases, whose surfaces appear to be patchworked with ink-jet prints. These objects have a metamorphic, even magical presence, as if the wave of a wand had plucked the most charming props from Gordon's collagelike compositions to show them off in three dimensions.—*J.F. (Kasmin; through June 3.)*

Exhibition Review: Free Transform

MAX WIENER
MAY 03, 2023

Daniel Gordon, *Artichoke and Potatoes,* 2023 pigment print with UV lamination 37 1/2 x 30 inches 95.3 x 76.2 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Kasmin, New York.

As I stepped into Kasmin, the colorful dream of Daniel Gordon's Free Transform immediately moved me into a completely different headspace. The air was cold and wet, and the wind whipped me in my face. Gordon's serenity was precisely the cure that I needed. The Brooklyn-based exhibition opened on April 27 and is scheduled to run until June 3.

KASMIN

Aside from its stunning colors, the exhibition features two and three-dimensional works from the artist, who experimented with different mediums throughout the installation. In his work, Gordon thwarts the contemporary photography process, manipulating color and image before the shutter of the camera closes, leaving the subject unaltered.

His vase work is unique and almost lifelike, with each piece seemingly representing a life force. Small details may represent the folded arms of a scolding mother. Ridges and grooves seem like the dimples on the face of a happy child. They appear to be interacting with you and ushering you into the rest of the exhibition; their presence is inviting.

KASMIN

Daniel Gordon, *Succulents and White Orchid,* 2023 two parts: pigment print with UV lamination 49 7/8 x 80 inches, overall 126.7 x 203.2 cm, 49 7/8 x 40 inches, each, 126.7 x 101.6 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Kasmin, New York.

By an immense margin, this series's focal point is the massive, seven-panel, 23-foot Panoramic Still Life, a delicious photographic print of Gordon's vases amplified. It feels as though it's the field map of the exhibition, showing what we're looking at on a profoundly grand scale; it only adds to the scene's beauty. What he's doing with Still Life is showing what the camera is capable of, far beyond black-and-white stills and simple shots. The colors and the facade are so clearly distorted, warping our imagination and perception of what conventional art could (or may) be. It feels psychedelic in the best sense of the word. The two-dimensional aspect of this series feels as real as his physical work. The plants and scenery breathe, giving off a gorgeous hue that feels ever so real and alive. If you squint your eyes and truly immerse yourself in the world of Gordon's panels, you can almost see the work moving and flowing with your every breath.

KASMIN

Daniel Gordon, *Jade and Lobsters*, 2023, pigment print with UV lamination, 49 7/8 x 40 inches, 126.7 x 101.6 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Kasmin, New York.

On a broader scale, they also represent an homage to Western art traditions and their themes. These tabletop settings, adorned with plant life, vases, and even a lobster, are reminiscent of classic Baroque paintings, where oil on canvas created a beautifully pristine world. Gordon's work is almost shocking compared to this old-style technique, but the similarities are uncanny. It feels like Gordon is adding a splash of humor to it, pointing out the irony of these sometimes stuffy renditions. They also show, much like Warhol did with his prints, the iconoclastic nature, and beauty of such mundane objects that can be seen as profound pieces of art when placed on a figurative pedestal. The more you look at his work, the more you see and the more beauty you notice in the world.

KASMIN

ARTnews

Six Gallery Shows to Catch in Chelsea After Frieze

TESSA SOLOMON
MAY 17, 2023

Daniel Gordon, *Jade and Lobsters*, 2023 COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND KASMIN, NEW YORK

[EXTRACT]

Daniel Gordon at Kasmin Gallery

Daniel Gordon's latest solo exhibition, "Free Transform," at Kasmin Gallery is deceptive, and I mean that as a compliment. Technicolor prints of vases and fruits on tables that soar some 20 feet high span the gallery's walls and seem, for a heartbeat, like standard still life photographs—but these are objects playing at images, or maybe vice versa; "this is not a pipe", and all that. Gordon, whose practice delights in deconstructing the relationship between the second and third-dimensions, sources a found image, prints it out, and cuts and pastes it onto a structure of the same scale. These are arranged in various pleasing tableaux with colors that recall the Fauves and shot from a frontal vantage point.

KASMIN

It's a pastiche—a collage, a photograph, an optical illusion. Its substance is buoyed, thankfully, by a new addition to Gordon's practice. Also on display at Kasmin are a series of 3-D "vessel sculptures." These structures are painted in gorgeous gradients and have a neatly shifting sense of strength. From afar, they resemble Greek amphora, ready to hold the harvest, while closer inspection reveals delicate folds, like life-size pages of a pop-up book.
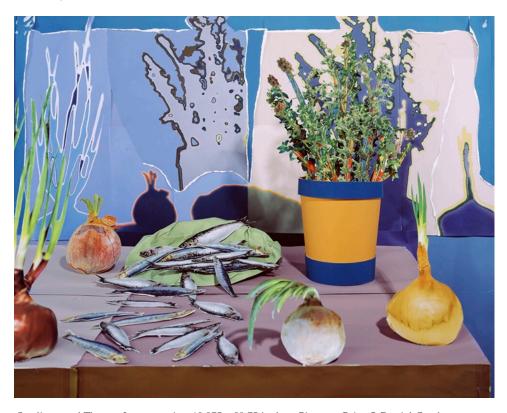
[…]

KASMIN

MUSÉE

The Earth: Daniel Gordon

LARA SOUTHERN
APRIL 14, 2021

Sardines and Thyme, Lemon series, 18.875 x 23.75 inches, Pigment Print © Daniel Gordon

Exploring the traditions of portraiture and still life painting, artist Daniel Gordon creates whimsical, new worlds through a blend of analog and digital techniques. By integrating multiple mediums and methods, combining sculpture, painting, and photography, Gordon pays homage to the organic and artificial, the classical and the modern, all at once.

Abundant with colorful paper sculptures and still lives, Gordon's workspace is an art piece in itself, a vibrant indoor garden constructed from scraps. To create his celebrated series *Night Pictures* and *Lemon*, his process was a multi-pronged one — first, he sourced images online, before constructing paper replications to arrange into elaborate, Baroque-esque tableaux in his Brooklyn studio, which he then shot with an 8x10-inch camera. Once photographed, Gordon continued his artistic process through further printing, rearrangement, and digital manipulation of the scene over and over again, before producing the final print on an oversized canvas.

Along with digital tools like Photoshop and internet-appropriated images, Gordon makes use of the most basic craft apparatuses to construct his pieces, often featuring utilitarian everyday objects in his work. In *Artichokes and Pizza*, for example, he features paper constructions of whole artichokes next to an open pizza box, across which is lain a

KASMIN

pair of scissors — a key tool in the artist's arsenal. In this and many of the other pieces in his collection, *Night Pictures,* Gordon applies his blending of the traditional and the modern to both his technique and subject matter, taking the classic trope of produce portraiture and introducing more modern objects into frame.

Artichokes and Pizza, Night Pictures series, 12 x 18 inches, Pigment Print © Daniel Gordon

His curiosity isn't in the pursuit of a hyper-realistic product — rather, he states that he is interested in "formal challenges….[a]t the heart of what I do is photographic transformation…[w]hat happens when you put this color with that color? How does the camera capture depth?" The clumsiness of the paper edges is part of their appeal, as if the re-construction of the thing, rather than the thing itself, makes it somehow more personal.

This newfound intimacy is on full display with his recent collection, *Green Apples and Boots.* Though his work often responds to technology, Gordon doesn't necessarily consider himself a "technical" artist —but with this, Gordon's first solo exhibition in the UK, he began playing with a digital camera, unable to process film during the 2020 pandemic lockdown. Produced on a smaller scale than his earlier works, they naturally possess a more personal quality, but retain the occasional tongue-in-cheek absurdism that is his trademark — an aquamarine watermelon slice in *Summer Still Life with Lobsters and Fern, or* an awkward surrealist replication of lobster antennae in *Maine Still Life*.

Whether shot on film or digital, small or grand scale, Gordon's images are exquisitely playful, a cacophony of textures, depths, and colors with a universally engaging appeal to the viewer. Simultaneously tropical and Francophilian, at once resembling Cezanne while also referencing a Caribbean color palette, each image is a celebration of the old and the new, a testament to Gordon's mastery of harmonious juxtaposition.

KASMIN

'Right Now, I'm Just Asking Questions': Photographer Daniel Gordon on How to Stay Inspired After Decades in the Studio

As part of a collaboration with Art21, hear news-making artists describe their inspirations in their own words.

CAROLINE GOLDSTEIN
JANUARY 7, 2021

Production still from the Art21 "New York Close Up" film, "Daniel Gordon Looks Back." © Art21, Inc. 2016.

Like many artists, the Brooklyn-based photographer Daniel Gordon sometimes has trouble keeping things interesting. You'd think he would have a wealth of source material since his work involves a maximalist combination of collage, photography, and sculpture—but hey, he's only human.

In an exclusive interview aired as part of Art21's "New York Close Up" series back in 2016, Gordon reminisced about how his approach had changed since his early days as an artist.

"Back then, I was trying to figure out what my voice was," he says. "I really was trying to mimic reality." Now, however, mimesis "is something that I have become less and less interested in."

The artist, whose work looks like a cross between Matisse and Jonas Wood, builds two- and three-dimensional props from source material he finds on the internet. He photographs these tableaux—surreal still lifes populated by fish, colorful plants, and gaudy patterns—to make his lively images.

At the beginning, Gordon notes, he was trying to hide the hand-crafted aspect of his work. Now, he welcomes those cracks in the facade of perfection.

Production still from the Art21 "New York Close Up" film, "Daniel Gordon Looks Back." © Art21, Inc. 2016.

Like the generation from which he hails, Gordon's work straddles two worlds: one is rooted firmly in the analog, the other fully invested in digital technologies. He describes his focus as on the "in-between things" that question the boundaries between photography, painting, and sculpture.

A new book published by Aperture—a work of art in itself—delightfully spans these mediums, featuring pop-ups of Gordon's images. If a rut forces him to rethink his approach, he's open to change—but "right now," he says, "I'm just asking the questions."

KASMIN

Galleries–Downtown

Daniel Gordon

ANDREA K. SCOTT
JULY 2, 2018

The New York artist enters his blue period. Gordon is best known for piling on colors and patterns in still-life photographs that begin with image searches online and result in paper sculptures of fruit, flowers, vases, and shadows – trompe l'oeil tableaux, which he shoots with a large-format camera. He also makes digital works based on analog images, trading scissors and blue for cut-and-paste. The two photographs and three computer-based prints in this show are restricted to blue, although red and yellow sneak in, as grace notes of purple and green. The five pieces hang on four walls, which are wallpapered with enlarged details of the digital files. It's a picture of a picture of a picture that is also a room. Gordon's palette sparks thoughts of cyanotype, an early photographic process also used for architectural blueprints. William Gass wrote that blue is "most suitable as the color of interior life" – a good epigram for Gordon, as he juggled deep thoughts on photograph and considerable visual pleasures.

Review: Cut, folded, pasted: Photography takes a twist and turn in the Getty's 'Paper Play'

LEAH OLLMAN
APRIL 24, 2018

Daniel Gordon's "Clementines," 2011, chromogenic print. (Alison Bryan Crowell / Daniel Gordon and M+B Gallery)

[EXTRACT]

"Cut! Paper Play in Contemporary Photography," a delightful teaser of a show at the Getty Museum, divides neatly into two complementary halves.

Three of the six artists in the show photograph collages or constructions they've made out of paper. Their works present as straight pictures, even if they've been composed through circuitous means.

The other three artists start with more or less conventional pictures and then set to dismantle the veracity and transparency that photography implicitly carries.

[…]

The most engrossing piece in this first section is Daniel Gordon's "Clementines" (2011), a tabletop still life with a charismatically funky sense of space. Gordon fills a crumpled paper basket with the fruit of his hands, scissors and internet searches. He sets these little orbs with patchwork photographic skins against a background that poses multiple-choice options for defining place. This glorious ode to the unsettled nature of two-dimensional representation is what Cezanne might have made, had he used Photoshop.

KASMIN

Art and Museums in NYC This Week

Daniel Gordon: New Canvas

ROBERTA SMITH
FEBRUARY 16, 2017

Daniel Gordon's "Simple Fruit" (2016).

'DANIEL GORDON: NEW CANVAS' at James Fuentes (through Feb. 26). Mr. Gordon constructs elaborate still lifes out of paper, photographing them and printing them out at blown-up sizes. They have a tropical redundancy, featuring pieces of fruit with Cézannesque fractures. Mr. Gordon then edits these images on the computer, making spare abstractions from the outtakes. Completely digital, these are printed on canvas and resemble painted collages of the Motherwellian kind. Here, in his first show at the James Fuentes gallery, real and unreal play tag, and both win.

KASMIN

ArtReview

Daniel Gordon

Hand, Select & Invert Layer

AOIFE ROSENMEYER
OCTOBER 2016

Still Life with Fish and Oysters, 2016, pigment print on luster paper, 126 x 101 cm. Photo: Thomas Strub. Courtesy the artist and BolteLang, Zürich

The American artist Daniel Gordon, born in 1980, is a little too old to be a digital native; nevertheless, his photographic practice has expanded as the potential of online image sourcing has grown. Now that a Google Image search has become an easy reflex, Gordon's exhibition at BolteLang has an old-fashioned subject, dominated as it is by four large photographic still lifes, as well as two wallpaper installations and nine smaller framed *Screen Selections* (all works 2016), all generated by some processes of digital research, sampling and collage.

The largest work, *Still Life with Fruit and Ficus,* is 151 cm tall and 188 cm wide, while the other three are in portrait format, all 126 cm tall and 101 cm wide. Each is the sole document of a set pieced together only for the camera's eye, in which block colors and graphic scribbles brightly frame traditional still-life subjects the artist found online –

509 West 27th Street New York NY 10001   + 1 212 563 4474   kasmingallery.com

KASMIN

emblematic ancient clay vessels and symbolically laden perishable fruit, fish, and plants. In the background of the aforementioned work, for example, a jagged pattern frames the upper section of the picture, and similar patterns are printed onto paper wrapped around blocks ono which sit various jugs, amphora, two pots holding bouquets, gourds, and fruit. The still lifes offer a lexicon of image presentation and reproduction: some of the objects are propped, cutout flat images; other flat printed things are overshadowed by duplicate prints just behind, destabilizing the edges of the object; while some forms – pears or rotting bananas, say – are reconstructed in three dimensions from taper-together prints of pears and bananas. Some shadows fall naturally, confirming the real depth in the staging; others are reworks and reprinted silhouettes – appearing, for example in *Still Life with Oranges, Vessels, and House Plant*, as if the shadow were burning through the back of the tableau. The 20 x 25 cm camera print clarifies the imperfections of other graphic manipulation at previous stages of the image's construction, such as a pixelated Photoshop selection or the lined grain produced by a defective printhead reproduced on paper props.

Two gallery walls are covered by repeat-pattern wallpaper, *Zig-Zag in Black* and *Zig-Zag in Blue* respectively. The blocky broken lines, like a cartoon of disrupted transmission, generate movement behind the superficially calm portrait still lifes. Similar jagged forms are found in *Screen Selection 11*, in which added striations of layers picked up by the computer colour selection make the print – while in entirely different media – even more reminiscent of poor television reception. All the *Screen Selections*, 50 by 40 cm in size, are composed of elements digitally culled during Gordon's process of photograph construction and are equally nostalgic, albeit tuning into the early to mid-twentieth century, with cheery, blunt rhythmic shapes being printed onto canvas, then crisply mounted on aluminum.

Gordon's still lifes dominate the show, thanks to their detail and the labour evidently involved in their creation. He does not force comparisons to the umpteen precursors in the genre; he is also clearly indebted to Warhol's generation and artists such as John Baldessari and John Stezaker who are incisive with scissors and selection. Yet in his construction, dissection and reconstruction of subjects, and the creation of enclosed, fractured, and immersive scenes, he makes on think also of the anatomy illustrators of the Renaissance who combined science and memento mori when they flayed and revealed their human subjects. Just as they did, Gordon is peeling back an anatomy that is both familiar and strange.

KASMIN

FRIEZE

Construction Sight

How a generation of artists is re-ordering the building blocks of photography

AARON SCHUMAN
MARCH 18, 2015

Daniel Gordon, *Skull and Seashells*, 2014, c-type print, 1.5 × 1.7 m. Courtesy: the artist and Wallspace, New York

[EXTRACT]

Similarly, Daniel Gordon's series of still lives, exhibited in 'Screen Selections and Still Lifes' at Wallspace gallery in New York in 2014, determinedly rejects the transparency and clarity of the traditional picture plane. But rather than interrupting the structure of the images via the camera or print itself, Gordon borrows photographs from the internet and digitally manipulates, enhances, repeats and prints them. He then builds elaborate studio sets out of them, which echo traditional still-life compositions, and ultimately photographs the sets themselves to create a dizzyingly multilayered yet singular image. The works explicitly reference the painterly approaches of Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso (amongst others), in which classical perspective and realism are ignored and relationships between objects take precedence. Yet, because Gordon has originally culled each element from an ever-growing online archive of digital images, his is a new vision of our contemporary visual landscape: one in which photographic representations, rather than objects themselves, are the subject of composition and contemplation; one where images have become symbiotic with, rather than symbolic of, the physical world itself.

KASMIN

WIRED

Trippy Collages Blur the Line Between Real and Fake

Daniel Gordon's photos put viewers on the slope of a sort of uncanny valley, a glitch between the real and the fabricated. Instead of real items, Gordon uses printed photos of the items folded to mimic (or not quite) their real world appearance, creating a sort of mockery of the original object in beautifully constructed collages.

DOUG BIEREND
JANUARY 14, 2014

Pink Ladies and Pears (30x40). Photo: Daniel Gordon

Daniel Gordon's photos put viewers on the slope of an uncanny valley, a glitch between the real and the fabricated. In place of authentic objects, Gordon uses printed photos of the items folded to mimic their real-world appearance, creating a mockery of the original object in beautifully constructed collages.

"I like photographs that aren't just one thing," says Gordon, "that are complicated, with blurred lines between themes such as the grotesque and the beautiful, humor and terror, wholeness and fragmentation, or innocence and corruption."

In the photos from his book *Still Lifes, Portraits and Parts*, the elements of the foreground and background are carefully constructed from printed images. The lighting is meticulously arranged to relate with the printed textures.

KASMIN

This adds realism that is immediately betrayed by a deliberately misaligned facet, or an inverted choice of color scheme. Backgrounds often are flattened in a dizzying array of colors and materials, cast upon by objects' eerie neon shadows. It's a balancing act between truth and invention that informs the entire series.

"This duality is something that I've been interested in from the very start," says Gordon. "I think that every photograph deals with this on some level—particularly in searching for the line between truth and fiction."

Still Life with Fish and Forsythia. Photo: Daniel Gordon

Gordon cites the bold compositions and dissonant color palettes of Matisse, and the physical objects-turned-graphics in the photography of Barbara Kasten among his inspirations for the project. They offer reimaginings of what we viewers can take for granted in an image, and although Gordon's work is deeply rooted in traditions of sculpture, collage and painting, his education and interest remain centered in photography. "Ultimately I'm interested in the transformation of what is in front of the lens through the act of photography," he says.

Unlike a painter, Gordon does not have to recreate the likeness of an object every time he sets out to create a new image. The fabricated objects used in his photos are repurposed, borrowed or otherwise recycled among other photographs in the series. "I'm trying to challenge myself by developing and expanding upon a language that is hopefully unique," he says. "I'm usually just following one foot in front of the other, trying to build upon the last thing I made."

Gordon is not out to specifically challenge aesthetic norms or reinvent photography, but is happy exploring the strange corner of visual reality that he's uncovered. His work may rub some the wrong way, but it wouldn't be interesting if it didn't. "I would say reactions have run the gamut -- from loathing to loving. Both and all in between have been valuable in helping me to gain a deeper understanding of my own work."

KASMIN

Daniel Gordon: 'Screen Selections and Still Lifes'

KAREN ROSENBERG
NOVEMBER 6, 2014

"Still Life With House Plants and Pink Vase" (2014), by the photographer-sculptor Daniel Gordon, at Wallspace.Courtesy of the artist and Matt Grubb/Wallspace

In a new group of large-scale still lifes that may be his best works yet, the photographer-sculptor Daniel Gordon hops back and forth across the analog/digital divide with a combination of playful insouciance and dogged determination.

Mr. Gordon starts in the most innocuous, inauspicious of ways: with Google searches for still lifes. He then prints the results — images of fruits, vegetables and vases — and turns them into three-dimensional photo-sculptures with scissors and glue. Those objects are then arranged on punchy, patterned backdrops, à la Matisse, and photographed. In yet another stage of picture making, the photographs are tweaked through digital editing; colors are changed with Fauvist abandon and background features — shadows, a studio window — added or erased.

KASMIN

Smaller photographs in the show look at first like textbook neo-Formalist abstractions, but reveal themselves as enlarged details of the still lifes. (Mr. Gordon calls them "Screen Selections.") They are best treated as a kind of guessing game, little clues to the spatial puzzles of the bigger compositions.

Mr. Gordon's still lifes benefit from good cheer, good execution and good timing. They arrive amid authoritative new tellings of the story of Cubism, while suggesting that chapters have yet to be written.

KASMIN

Going On About Town

Daniel Gordon

DECEMBER 1, 2014

Large, pattern-on-pattern photographs make Matisse look like a minimalist. Each of Gordon's pictures is an elaborate construction involving the classic subjects of still-life (vases, flowers, shells, a skull) lifted from the Internet and refashioned as wonky sculptural objects. Arranged on stepped-up platforms as if in a shop window and backed with a crazy-quilt patchwork of dots, plaids, and squiggles, the entire setup is then photographed and Photoshopped until the distinction between reality and artifice completely dissolves. Gordon also isolates and blows up elements of the backdrops in smaller graphic abstractions, which can't compete with the still-lifes when it comes to delirious visual pleasure.

ARTFORUM

Critics' Picks

Daniel Gordon

COURTNEY FISKE
DECEMBER 2014

Daniel Gordon, *Summer Fruit*, 2014, chromogenic print, 60 x 70".

Daniel Gordon locates his photographs through a triangulation of painting, collage, and cutout. His C-prints compose still-life fare in complex tableaux, which he lights in-studio and captures on large-format film. Sourced from the Internet and cut freehand from printer paper, each element is inserted in a topography that makes little effort to disguise its seams. Plants sport skeins of hot glue; vases build up from clipped geometries; and apples resemble disused origami. Paper figures as a material at once volumetric and planar, drawn into space through facets and folds or collapsed into flatness by an abruptly scissored edge.

In *Summer Fruit* (all works 2014), Technicolor edibles occupy a field of clashing dots, checkers, and stripes. If the still life has historically been keyed to imaginative consumption, presenting spreads for the viewer to fictively digest, Gordon's scene precludes the same. His watermelons are conspicuously shrink-wrapped, his strawberries an unculinary cyan. Nature is made luridly artificial, as if to parody the still life as an art-historical cliché, wherein foodstuffs become vehicles of symbolic elaboration: a peach for fecundity, a peeled lemon for transience. Like the other photographs on view, *Summer Fruit* courts overdetermination. Apples and artfully rumpled tablecloths recall

Cézanne's late still lifes, while jars with doubled, upturned lids invoke Cubism's signature mode of de- and recomposition.

This is to suggest that, for all their disjuncture, Gordon's C-prints are deeply familiar. Photographic space is dispersed only to be consolidated under the sign of modernist painting and papier collé. It's a seductive gesture, though one whose implications, both for photography and for modernism, are not entirely clear.

KASMIN

AD

Bright Prospects: Daniel Gordon

Up-and-coming artist Daniel Gordon is making waves and heading for stardom

MICHAEL SLENSKE & JAMES TARMY
DECEMBER 1, 2014

Daniel Gordon's 2014 work *Summer Fruit*. All photography by the Artist and Wallspace, New York.

Meticulously arranged and undeniably gorgeous, the work of this Brooklyn photographer requires almost a perverse amount of preparation. Cutting up hundreds of images from magazines, newspapers, and printouts, he constructs elaborate three-dimensional collages – primarily still lifes or portraits – and photographs them against graphic backdrops, enhancing colors and shadows in post-production before making a final chromogenic print. (His latest pieces are on view through December 20 at Wallspace gallery in New York.) His time-intensive labors haven't gone unnoticed: earlier this year he received the prestigious Form Paul Huf Award for a photographer under the age of 35.

KASMIN

SLATE

A Photographer's Nod to Matisse

DAVID ROSENBERG
JUNE 13, 2013

Portrait with Blue Hair, 2013. Daniel Gordon, courtesy of M+B

For Daniel Gordon's latest series "The Green Line," the artist used photography and collage as tools to create works referenced from Matisse's well-known 1905 portrait of his wife titled *The Green Stripe* (*La Raie Verte*).

"The title is a nickname for the painting because of the artificial shadow displayed as a line down the center of her face," Gordon wrote via email.

To create each piece, Gordon sorts through photographic images found on the Internet, prints them, and builds 3-D tableaux he then shoots with an 8x10 view camera. He said he is inspired by not only Matisse's art but also his philosophies.

KASMIN

"I'm interested in taking ideas that were radical in Matisse's day (collapsing space through the blending of foreground and background, multiple angles viewed at the same time, and Fauvist color and expression, among others) and moving them into a contemporary photographic space," Gordon wrote via email. "I suppose it's a kind of physical version of Photoshop that's playing with a big history and multiple mediums."

Tropical Still LIfe, 2013. Daniel Gordon, courtesy of M+B

"The Green Line" is Gordon's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles, on view at M+B until June 29, but it isn't the first time his colorful, reconstructive collage work has been seen. In 2009 Gordon's work was shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York as part of their New Photography 2009 exhibition. During an interview with MoMA, Gordon described his role in creating work as "playing Doctor Frankenstein, putting the parts together and using photography to bring all of these various parts together, to bring it to life in a way." The pieces on view at the MoMA during that time were from his "Portrait Studio" series, inspired by medical images he saw while growing up (both of his parents are doctors, his father a surgeon).

Unlike surgery, creating transformative and imaginative imagery such as Gordon's raises the question of whether the final product corresponds to the initial vision in the artist's mind.

"I have to just start and then I can figure out what I'm really making. I make a lot more images than I choose to show," Gordon wrote.

As a teenager, Gordon knew he wanted to be a photographer. After studying at two prestigious schools—Bard and Yale—Gordon wrote that "everything I make stems from my initial and continued interest in the medium of photography."

KASMIN

Hotshoe

The Green Line

SPOHIE BALHETCHET
JANUARY 1, 2013

CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY

Hotshoe

KASMIN

Daniel Gordon sources his paints and fabrics, wallpapers and patterns on the internet - his purpose not home decorating, but the gathering of the raw materials for his complex paper and glue assemblages. Some are turned into exuberant still life of fruits and flowers; others disturbing deconstructed portraits suggesting the skull beneath the skin.

Gordon stages his tableaux in his Brooklyn studio, lighting and photographing them. It's a patently fabricated world which makes no attempt to disguise its homespun construction. It's a conceptual tease and a delicious paradox that Gordon's images exist in some nascent sense in the real world as scissors and paste constructions, but only become "real" when staged, lit, and recorded by his camera on a two-dimensional plane. As Gordon puts it: "when the totally impossible becomes possible through the medium, then that thing I made becomes real."

Gordon's work is complex and layered in both conception and production. Take *Portrait in Orange and Green* which presents a series of profile cut-outs of a woman's face - there's a latent suggestion of a flip book paused, of movement arrested, the orangey-reds and greens evoking visual perception tests. The graduated silhouettes set-up an alternation between the raw "ugly" elements and the "perfect" profile; the cut-out body parts - the ear, the lip, the blonde locks, the blue eye – suggest fetishized "bits" of female beauty. There's something of the anatomy textbook too, which Gordon ascribes to growing-up with parents who were surgeons.

Crescent Eyed Portrait, 2012

KASMIN

He explains why this construction is literally "made" for the camera: "The shadow in all of the profile pictures is "real", or the actual shadow produced by the profile or silhouette. I shoot with a large format view camera, and *Portrait in Orange and Green* is a perfect example of the use of this camera because I could not have made the same image with a camera that has fixed film and lens planes. In other words, in order to line up all of the parts and include the shadow I had to use the lateral shift - moving the film plane to the right while the lens remained in its original position."

Midnight Blue Bust is suggestive of a studio tone study. The face, with its partially rendered features, hints at the dream and dread images of de Chirico and Magritte. It's an image that might at first glance appear colour-tinted using Photoshop. But from his earliest series - *Flying* - (literally photographs of the artist caught in an airborne instant, hurling himself into space before crashing to earth), Gordon's practice expressly eschews after-the-fact digital manipulation of the image.

So in this image the various shades of blue are obtained by printing internet images, then ripping them, the white tear edges used to model the features of the bust. "The rips, tears and drips of glue are an essential part of the understanding of the process as well as the composition", says Gordon. "I'm not pursuing seamlessness or perfection, but rather the parts that make an image human. To me, fiction is not compelling unless it connects to our movement through the world and our understanding of it."

Anemone Flowers and Avocado, 2012

KASMIN

Midnight Blue Bust is intended to form the left side of a diptych with *Anemone Flowers and Avocado*, suggesting "Joy and Sorrow" to Gordon, his work characterized by dualism - the play between the decorative and the disturbing, the grotesque and the beautiful. "The idea of transformation has always been important to me - the raw ugly bits are transformed through light (and shadow) into an idealized form." Illumination allows the moment of perfection to be recorded in the photographic instant, whilst simultaneously capturing its imperfect antithesis.

In *Shadows and Pears*, Gordon pushes further his study of how we read what is "real" in a photographic image. Here he devises "pictorial" shadows rendered by yellow and brown decoupages which mimic the shadows that would be made by an actual light source. Of course, Gordon layers the reading of the image still further by having actual shadows cast by a light source incorporated as well.

The purple pears are a nod to the Fauvists, the apples directly quote Cezanne and the flat patterns of tablecloth and backdrop reference Matisse's graphic planes. Gordon explains that the gladioli flowers are 2-D photographs printed and glued onto a cylinder acting as a "stalk". These 2-D images are well focused and printed with a high enough resolution that they create the illusion of space. A painterly vocabulary confidently co-exists with the hyper-realism associated with photography and plays tricks with the brain and the eye.

Pink Eyed Portrait, 2012

In his essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, T.S.Eliot said that as principle of aesthetic criticism "you cannot value him [the artist] alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead."

KASMIN

Collage is an intrinsic part of Gordon's practice, so his images set-up an associative flicker to artist associated with the medium like Hannah Hoch, Juan Gris and John Stezaker. But Gordon is not interested in using pre-existing imagery and iconography for quotation, irony, or surreal slippages. The source of his raw stuff remains largely impersonal and unidentifiable. There's no discourse on commodification – in fact his world seems culturally non-specific with generalized signs and signifiers of gender and beauty and body parts, foodstuffs, and generic domestic objects. The aesthetic - his use of patterns and colours in particular - suggests a Caribbean or Latin American vivacity, the pop of sunlit places; the would-be historic period redolent of the late '50s or early '60s.

Gordon readily acknowledges Matisse as a key influence and the Cubists in general, but also invokes other large format masters of photography such as Stephen Shore. Gordon says he does not see himself as a collagist, affirming himself first and foremost as a photographer. "I am much more interested in colour, space, light, and form – and photography's ability to transform these elements into something that is both a record of what was in front of the lens, and a fiction simultaneously."

Daniel Gordon's work has a gestural quality. It's not a post-Modernism sensibility nor does it offer-up a deliberately impoverished reference to the original source inspiration. His is in many ways a painterly eye which find photographic equivalences for the brush stroke, the density of paint, the inflection of light to depict the natural world and the human form.

"The idea of appropriation not as a critical tool, but rather one of optimism is very attractive to me. I have been exploring traditional modes of portraiture and still life through the filter of contemporary image culture and technology. Hopefully in some way using all of these found images reflects back on the greater world and explores tradition without trashing it."

But for Gordon the gestural impulses go hand in hand with a laborious method. Starting with a general idea for a picture he begins the process of making by printing found images as well as using "recycled" materials from past pictures. Inevitably the picture changes from the initial intention and starts to develop into something. At some intuitive moment, Gordon decides to frame and eventually set the picture with the camera. Constantly moving from the computer/printer, to the debris on the studio floor, to the camera, to the tableau, to the lights, Gordon over and over again adjusts, adds, subtracts. And when the picture is complete, he shoots a large format transparency. This print is laminated and framed so that there is no glass in front of the image, making the print into an object. John Stezaker, an artist whose collagist practice conjoins appropriated images in what seems an overtly intentional manner, rather surprisingly says: "I see my work as quite impersonal because I don't know where the work comes from. That's the whole mystery to me". Gordon identifies with Stezaker's words. His own practice a constant oscillation between purpose and accident, intention and chance: "I try not to create and analyze at the same time. This way I can improvise within a general structure."

Daniel Gordon's work manifestly embraces the intellectual and aesthetic tradition to which it belongs. But like a great jazz player, his riffs and improvisations take flight in a uniquely new way - a delicious tension between the familiar and the unexpected, a fabulous construction of his own devising.

KASMIN

Rip it up and start again

Daniel Gordon takes a sculptural approach to photography

© Daniel Gordon

Education has played a pivotal role in Daniel Gordon's career. He attended "an extremely experimental high school," which used Gestalt theory as a means to teach emotional growth alongside a more traditional curriculum, altering the course of his life and opening him up to new possibilities – "of which being an artist was one." From there he went on to study for an MA at Yale University, where the tutors include Gregory Crewdson, Philip-Lorca deCorcia, Paul Graham, Tod Papageorge, Jock Reynolds, and Collier Schorr. Yale is known for a. certain type of staged photography, in which set-up shots blur the boundary between fact and fiction, but Gordon never felt under any pressure to follow suit. "I guess I don't really see [my work] either fitting it or in opposition to any particular heritage," he says.

KASMIN

In fact, Gordon's deliberately gauche images look like the antithesis of Crewdson and deCorcia's polished work – but they also probe the boundaries between fact and fiction, questioning the veracity of photography and the nature of its link with reality. Gordon downloads images found online, prints them out, then constructs them into 3D sculptures depicting still lifes or people. He photographs the sculptures, turning them back into 2D objects that fool the eye. "If I look at what I'm making now and what I've made in the past, on a fundamental level I see a continued investigation into this phenomenon that seems like magic. But in truth, I think it's a complex combination of factors that create the possibility of allowing the camera to transform what's in front of its lens," he explains. "I'm interested in transforming space, light and time photographically to make something that never existed the way we see it in a photograph."

Gordon downloads the images from the internet for convenience, and also because he likes the idea oof making immaterial objects material; once he's made a sculpture he lets it fall apart over time, then re-uses the elements for other work. His studio has become "a big mess of images all jumbled up through years of searching and printing found images," he says, and as the images decay he finds new ways of using them. "A kind of improvisation is possible," he says. "But I always make the joins visible, to reveal my hand."

KASMIN

Art in America

Photography and the Object Manqué

CLAIRE BARLIANT
FEBRUARY 23, 2012

Daniel Gordon: *Nectarines in Orange and Blue*, 2011,

[EXTRACT]

IN 1978, IN THE PAGES of this magazine, sculptor Robert Morris bemoaned the "malevolent powers of the photograph to convert every visible aspect of the world into a static, consumable image." Today, when pictures captured by mobile phones or digital cameras are ubiquitous and photography so pervasive as to have become practically invisible, it's worth parsing Morris's statement. Note the vehement stance against photography—he calls its powers "malevolent." And his other adjectives, "static" and "consumable," are almost as harsh. Morris called the photographs Robert Smithson made of his outdoor mirror works "perverse," saying they effectively mislead us as to what the pieces are about. Freezing the mirrors' reflections and thereby rendering them moot, the photographs deny the phenomenological experience that lies at the heart of the work. Still, according to Morris, in requiring the viewer's direct experience, the site-specific sculpture of his generation of artists was uniquely positioned to challenge photography's adverse effects. "Space," wrote Morris, "has avoided [photography's] cyclopean evil eye."

Ironically, nearly 35 years after Morris published his article, photography is our main, if not only, conduit to much of the work that he was addressing. Already in 1947, André Malraux, while compiling the images that made up his

KASMIN

"museum without walls," posited that art history, especially the history of sculpture, had become "the history of that which can be photographed." In 1989, the art historian Donald Preziosi wrote, "Art history as we know it today is the child of photography." For many contemporary artists, a relentless flood of reproductions of artworks raises issues that cannot be ignored. Tino Sehgal, who choreographs live actions (he doesn't call them performances) that encourage viewer participation, refuses to let any of his work be photographed. In a 2008 conversation in *Bomb* with artist Nayland Blake, sculptor Rachel Harrison lamented that the photograph inhibits the possibility of really grasping an art object: "Maybe I'm starting to think that artworks need to unfold slowly over time in real space to contest the instantaneous distribution and circulation of images with which we've become so familiar."

Partly in resistance, a rash of artists born after 1970—Talia Chetrit, Jessica Eaton, Daniel Gordon, Corin Hewitt, Alex Hubbard, Elad Lassry, Yamini Nayar, Demetrius Oliver, Erin Shirreff and Sara VanDerBeek among them—are addressing (or redressing) the issues attendant on becoming familiar with an artwork through its photographic reproduction. Most of them have a studio-based practice that involves more than one medium—some are not even primarily photographers—but thinking about photography is central to what they do. Often their work includes handmade objects as well as photographic reproductions from any number of sources. They might build a sculpture based on a reproduction of an existing sculpture. They might videotape or photograph an object or setup they have created, destroying it after (and sometimes during) its documentation, or create an installation whose sole purpose is to generate photographs. Viewers consider the artwork before realizing that the object or situation they are contemplating no longer exists (a realization that is sometimes accomplished by reading some form of accompanying text). All that is left is the photographic trace—an *objet manqué*, as I think of it, using a somewhat antiquated art historical descriptor.

Today everybody knows that a reproduction is divested of a transparent relation to an original, yet that doesn't stop collectors from judging and buying work simply by looking at jpegs; indeed, most of us first experience an art object by seeing an image of it in an advertisement, a magazine or online. For artists, it seems natural to start with an object that they then drain of significance *as an original* through its reproduction and circulation. By absenting the referent, they would assert control over a system of circulation that they see as generally depriving the artwork of its autonomy.

These artists take the virtual, and the idea of the simulacrum, for granted. For them, there is no "punctum," as Roland Barthes termed it—no lacerating detail that connects the image to a particular time and place. There are precedents in work by Hirsch Perlman, Barbara Kasten, Thomas Demand, James Casebere and James Welling, to name just a few. Going further back, one might cite the abstract photograms of Laszló Moholy-Nagy—the polymath Bauhaus artist who dubbed photography "the new culture of light." Brancusi's sculptures survived, but not the studio arrangements in which he photographed them.

In our postmodern age, the image, the copy and the notion of what is "real" have been problematized many times over. These issues—surrounding the simulacrum and the trivializing of experience as a result of the pervasiveness of photography—came to the fore in the late 1970s, when many of these artists were growing up. Following is a discussion of four of them: artists who *begin* with the understanding that an image is based on a purely provisional object. They are proving the *objet manquè* newly relevant.

[…]

DANIEL GORDON

KASMIN

Gordon, who graduated with an MFA in photography from Yale in 2006, has long played with the artifices of photography. As an undergraduate at Bard College he made a series of self-portraits "in flight" in various landscapes. Taking a running leap, he would launch himself in the air, torquing his body so that it was parallel to the ground. An assistant photographed him in midair before he came crashing back to earth.

Lately he has turned to a studio-centric (and safer) mode of working. For a show at Wallspace gallery in New York last fall, he created a series of C-prints called "Still Lifes, Portraits & Parts," based on three-dimensional setups constructed of images culled from Google Image searches. The photographs are monstrous, Frankenstein-style heads or arrangements of fruit and flowers that allude to classical still-life paintings. Some of the images Gordon cuts and tears apart are naturalistic; others have a glossy sheen and vibrant colors that create an illusion of slick digital effects. A row of potted plants is composed of a range of photographs of succulents, while a bouquet of lilies is made of pictures of unconnected petals. Gordon finds imagery online, prints it out, crafts it into an approximation of the object it represents, and then creates a flat, two-dimensional image of the result.

Gordon has called his studio a "physical manifestation of the Web." He embraces a slightly rough esthetic, saying that he is interested in "showing my hand and letting people see the imperfection." In *Portrait in Red, Blue and Green* (2011), cut-out profiles cast silhouettes on surfaces behind them, making the third dimension of his setup explicit. Some of the images he cuts and tears apart are naturalistic, others have a glossy sheen and vibrant colors that create an illusion of slick digital effects, yet the overall quality of the construction announces, "Someone made this."

KASMIN

Daniel Gordon's Collage Grotesques

MARIA LOKKE
DECEMBER 16, 2011

I'm inspired by cooking and food, Matisse, and being in the ocean, among other things," the artist Daniel Gordon says. Gordon's photo collages, or more accurately, pictures of sculptures made of photo collages, can look like layered casseroles of art historical references and finely diced printed matter. "I begin with an idea of something I'd like to make, search for images online, print them, and then construct a three-dimensional tableau that is then lit and photographed with a large format camera," he explains. Improvisation is central to his constructions, which combine newly found images with the scraps of old, previously used pictures, and often feature grotesque, cartoonish anatomies.

Gordon was included in MoMA's seminal "New Photography" show in 2009, and his recent "Still Lifes, Portraits, and Parts" series is on view this month at Wallspace gallery.

Going On About Town

Daniel Gordon

NOVEMBER 28, 2011

Gordon constructs assemblages out of magazines and then photographs the results in lurid color. The portrait busts, which dominate his show, are unstable patchworks of facial features, hanks of hair, bit of blue, red, and peach-colored skin, and other random body parts that draw upon Romare Bearden, Hannah Hoch, and punk graphics. Still-lifes–tulips and zinnias in crumpled paper vases, lumpy clementines tumbling from a bowl–mock tradition without trashing it. Weird beauty and cartoon grotesquerie flip back and forth like a lenticular images, keeping us happily off-kilter.

ARTFORUM

Critics' Picks: Daniel Gordon

BRIAN DROITCOUR
OCTOBER 2014

Daniel Gordon, *Nectarines in Orange and Blue*, 2011, color photograph, 24 x 30".

The subject of *Woman with a Blue Eye* (all works cited, 2011)—like all the "sitters" for Daniel Gordon's recent portraits—is a bust built from photographs. The woman they form is scarred with seams and rifts. One of her eyes is bigger and more brightly blue. Her hair is blonde and thickly pixelated in some spots, softly unfocused and brown in others. A purplish pattern—blue particles emerging from a red feld like sandpaper's grit—interrupts the skin in a swath of color from the right temple to the left cheek. I wondered if the artist had drawn the pattern with software. "There is no digital manipulation!" a gallery worker snapped. Softening, she added: "He probably found it on the Internet and printed it out."

What's at stake in editing and its absence? By printing, Gordon transforms the fluidity of the digital image into paper's crisp substance; then he rips and folds to give several fat images the shape of what they collectively depict. Photography is photography. Cutting and pasting belong to sculpture. This distinction gives reason to marvel at the dexterity of Gordon's compositions—at how a pair of profile cutouts can cast shadows to form a fan of four silhouettes, or at how spatial reality dissolves in the quasi-abstract in *July 20, 2009,* and how paper scraps seem to float between light and darkness. But the artist's declared abstinence from "digital manipulation," even though his pictures have visible traces of digital files, also suggests that the finished photograph has an untouchable surface, lying above—but still connected to—its inner workings.

KASMIN

Off the Shelf: Flying Pictures

KRISTINA BUDELIS
AUGUST 11, 2010

If I could choose one superpower, it would be flying. My new three-year-old acquaintance Adam, who was wearing Superman pajamas (complete with cape) when I met him the other night, agrees. As he flitted around his apartment, cape flying, he seemed almost to soar. Regrettably, I never had Superman pajamas, but I spent many a summer day dashing to the edge of the swimming hole near my home. When I reached the edge I'd jump and close my eyes: for an instant, I was flying.
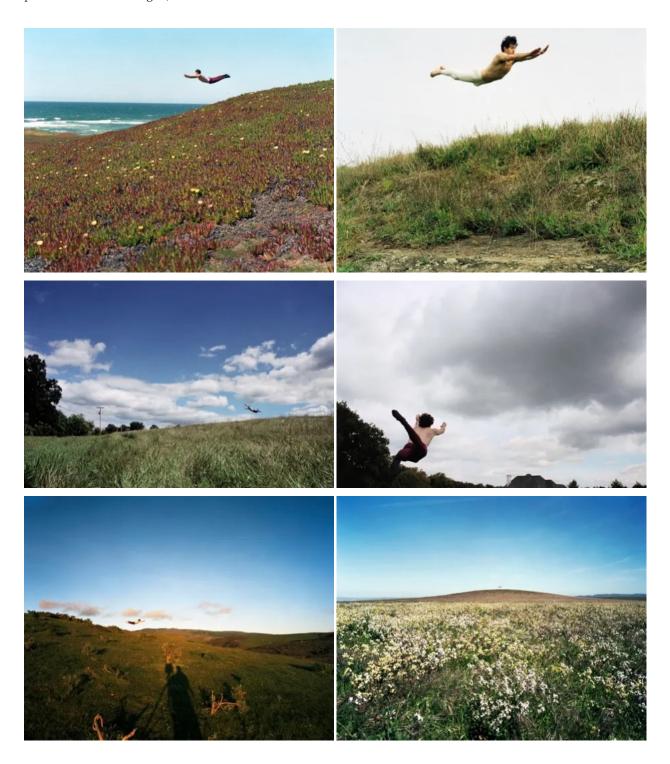
When I asked the photographer Daniel Gordon the superpower question, he promptly replied, "Compressing TIFF files into JPEGs with my mind." But Gordon hasn't quit trying to fly just because he's a grownup. For five years, Gordon roamed the lush countryside of the Hudson Valley, staking out pretty take-off spots. When he found a landscape that caught his fancy, he would return with a large-format camera and tripod, leap into the air and—with the help of an assistant—capture his ephemeral flight on film. The most triumphant of these images comprise his book "Flying Pictures."

"I think what appealed to me about flying is that I shouldn't be able to do it, but through photography it is possible," Gordon told me. "I don't think of myself as a magician, or even really an illusionist, but there's no doubt in my mind that the camera is both." He describes the endeavor of creating the images as "part performance, in which for most of it I just look like a crazy person flopping around on the horizon line of the landscape." The act of capturing the

picture, he adds, "was the only place that 'flying' really existed." His flights always began hopefully, and ended tragically as he crashed down to earth.

But in between lie the photographs, impossible scenes in lush landscapes, invitations to suspend disbelief and to pause—in mid-thought, if not in mid-air. Here's a selection.

KASMIN

Into the Darkroom, With Jam and Snakes

KAREN ROSENBERG
NOVEMBER 5, 2009

"Red Headed Woman" (2008), a color print by Daniel Gordon, on view in MoMA's "New Photography 2009" show. Credit Museum of Modern Art

[EXTRACT]

Back when Andreas Gursky was on the rise, the art world buzzed about the supposedly unfair advantages of digital photography. Photoshop and other computer manipulations were seen as performance-enhancing drugs, an impression fostered by Mr. Gursky's gargantuan, hyperdetailed prints.

We have since learned that these processes need not poison the medium. Some young photographers have made a point of going digital in transparent ways. Others have disappeared into the darkroom, emerging with works that bear legitimizing traces of chemicals. Abstract photographs are everywhere, sidestepping the whole truth-in-representation issue.

Three current shows, at two major museums and a university art gallery, outline the manifold choices available to contemporary photographers. They might even provoke the kind of debates about gesture, process and intent that used to coalesce around painting.

"New Photography 2009," at the Museum of Modern Art, is an excellent place to begin. The curator, Eva Respini, steers this installment of MoMA's annual series away from street and documentary photography, a refreshing departure from tradition. Ms. Respini has also expanded it to include six artists rather than the usual two or three.

[…]

For other artists photography is the final stage of a process that might be called sculpture or collage in a different context. Before he pulls out the camera, Daniel Gordon makes crude figurative sculptures from cut paper and Internet printouts. The body (often a female nude) slips back and forth between two and three dimensions. Mr. Gordon has a gift for cruel-comic exaggeration that's reminiscent of Cindy Sherman and the Dada photomontage artists John Heartfield and Hannah Höch.

KASMIN

Daniel Gordon Interview

BRAD PHILLIPS
FEBRUARY 2009

Photos by Daniel Gordon are at Groeflin Maag Galerie in Zurich.

Brad Phillips - Hi Danny. Daniel? You just opened a show at Groeflin Maag Galerie in Zurich. I know you usually take a while to work on a single body of work - so what's this body of work about?

Daniel Gordon - Hey Brad. Yeah Danny is okay. It's funny, we've never met in person, but I've seen a lot of your work in the flesh and we've definitely spent time in some of the same places with the same people--I'm thinking Zurich, Claudia and Davia etc. We've probably been in the same room together at some point and just not known it, so I hope we get a chance to hang out next time you're in New York... Anyway, yes, I just opened a show at Groeflin Maag Galerie in Zurich, and I also made an artist book with Onestar press to accompany the exhibition. Both the book and the show are titled Portrait Studio--I'm really psyched about how they turned out. The truth is that with my new pictures, I had no real direction until I started making work. So I was in the middle of the project when I began to see the threads of what "The Portrait Studio" could be. In other words, this project didn't start as an idea, the idea came after I had started. I think that's why it took me a while to finish. Initially I saw an artist/muse relationship

emerging in the way I was approaching my "subjects" in the studio. Eventually, I started researching that element, taking more direct inspiration from historical relationships that have had that dynamic. I think Alfred Stieglitz and Georgia O'Keeffe are a good example of this. Another one is Dr. Frankenstein-who's "practice" is similar to mine when creating his monster: slamming together body parts to create a new being. I became aware that how I put these pictures together drastically influences what kind of artist/muse relationship, or story would be told, from horror to exploitation to love and beauty. I tried to combine and complicate those themes.

BP – You've definitely managed to connect horror to beauty in these works. There is something both scary and tender in many of the pictures. In a way it relates to your earlier photographs where you were 'flying' - I felt immediately scared for you, and there was an element of horror in wondering just how you were going to survive the jump. But at the same time they were tender and beautiful, just you in your long underwear soaring through nature. Are the new works a permanent move away from 'straight photography'? Do you think that in making these sort of collaged works that you've closed a door in your practice? And on a technical note, are these pictures spliced together manually or digitally? I really have to say that when I saw these works in person in Zurich, I felt confident that they were something I had never seen before, something brand new and fully formed. It's funny to me how fucking with our sense of dimensionality can become very unnerving.

DG - Mmmm. Well, there's a lot of questions there. Let me first say that I'm glad you brought up my flying pictures, because as you touched on, I think they relate to what I'm doing now. I believe that the art of photography has to do

KASMIN

with making ordinary moments extraordinary. If I look at what I'm making now, and what I've made in the past, on a fundamental level, I don't see varying degrees of 'straightness' in my work, but rather a continued investigation into this phenomenon that seems like magic--and it's easier to just call it magic, but in truth, I think it's really a complex combination of factors that create the possibility of allowing the camera to transform what is in front of it's lens. And this isn't a new idea at all--even for old school street photographers like Friedlander, Papageorge, Arbus, Winogrand, etc. etc. I mean, I know I make pictures in different time and in different ways than that crew, but deep down I am interested in what they were interested in: Transforming space, light, and time photographically in order to create something that never *really* existed the way we see it in a photograph. So when I'm in my studio, and I'm printing pictures mostly found on the Internet, cutting them up, combining them in different ways to create a kind of 3-D collage, I don't really know if this thing I made will work until I look at it through the camera--sometimes it comes to life, and sometimes not. This process is not dissimilar to photography sometimes enabling me to achieve human flight, and other times I'm just an idiot flopping around a few feet off the ground in long underwear. So, I think that I'm as straight a photographer as you can be--I photograph what's in front of my lens and don't alter anything once I've made the exposure. For me, the magic is in the moment.

BP - The magic in the moment, that's something that keeps coming up lately. It makes you wonder about the shift between research based artists and artists that are still interested in what you called 'magic'. A bit of a modernist hangover in a way. I'm very interested in that moment you're talking about, as it relates to intuition, which is something I've always thought was invaluable when it comes to making good work. Have you reached a point in

KASMIN

your working life where intuition is enough for you? Can you start working on a scrap of instinct and trust that the idea will sort itself out in a rational way over time? Because the shift in subject matter in your work over the past few years would imply to me at least, that you are comfortable going wherever your imagination takes you. And imagination has almost become a dirty word.

DG - Yeah, it's totally a dirty word. It's funny, when my girlfriend, Ruby Stiler, was in art school she and a friend had an ongoing competition to see who could use the word 'imagination' the most times during a critique. I'm not sure if there was ever a winner declared, but, in the midst of such a critical environment it was definitely good for laughs. In a way, the word 'imagination' negates the intention of the artist, and can potentially minimize the content of the work. But don't get me wrong, I value imagination, I'm just not sure if it's a constructive way to talk about art. As for intuition, I'd say that most of my favorite artists worked/work intuitively, from Philip Guston to Stephen Shore, whose work is very conceptual. I think the important thing to realize about intuition is that it is a place to begin, and when it's brought me somewhere that I believe is interesting, I then have to work really hard to figure out what it means to be there, and to develop the aspects that seem meaningful. For me it's much more interesting to feel my way around than to plan and execute. I'm not suggesting that an artist shouldn't be critical or smart, I guess I just wonder, why make something if you know exactly what it's going to be like when it's done. That just seems so boring to me. So yeah, I'll follow a scrap of intuition until it leads to a dead end, and then I'll follow another one, and another one- following the scraps might be the most compelling part of making the work.

BP - Well I definitely agree with you that following the scraps of intuition can be the most compelling aspect of making work. But for me, process based work, work about getting to the product, ends up being a bit of a boring object lesson. There are a lot of similarities here between what you're saying about arriving at a body of work, and eastern philosophy. And more and more lately I'm making this connection to the activities of artists I really admire. Anyway, you are also sort of a magician, or an alchemist. So you are supposed to keep the methodology of the trick hidden. The flying pictures are perfect examples of a magic trick, and emblematic of sort of 'putting one over' on the viewer, which I like. I like some antagonism towards the viewer. In your piece 'Orchid' - there is so much going on, and I can't imagine how it was made, and I don't understand the lighting, and I don't understand the shapes, and this culmination of misunderstanding can often lead to at least a vague new kind of understanding. Not to ask you to reveal your secrets, but for example, how was that piece made?

DG - I searched for images on the Internet, printed them, constructed some of them into 3-D objects sometimes using foam core as an armature, while I let other found pictures remain 2 dimensional. So in a sense I make a 3-D collage, light it, and then photograph it either with a 4x5 field camera or an 8x10 view camera. For me though, it's the things that give away the illusion that complicate things, and make the pictures more interesting. Recently I've been pushing my pictures more and more in the direction of revealing as opposed to concealing. So when I talk about magic, I'm really just talking about how amazed I am at what the camera can do. When I think about illusion on the other hand, that seems to be more about the artist's hand. In the case of my flying pictures the illusion is pretty well concealed, but there are glimpses into the physicality and the mental struggle of going through with such an experience over and over again. There's one picture in particular where you can see on my face how difficult it was to mentally maintain this idea that I can fly, knowing full well that I'm about to hit the ground pretty hard. I'm currently working on an edit for a book of my flying pictures that is hopefully going to be released in the fall, and at this point I have enough distance from the project that I can see the value in giving up a little bit of the illusion in some pictures as a way to complicate the project as a whole. I don't think of myself as a magician, or even really an illusionist, but there's no doubt in my mind that the camera is both.

KASMIN

ARTFORUM

Critics' Picks: Daniel Gordon

COURTNEY J. MARTIN
MAY 2007

Birth, 2007, C-print, 30 x 40"

For "Thin Skin II," his first solo show at LFL, Daniel Gordon presents photographs of collages and sculptures—both composed of other photographs. Each is a tight diorama of figures in a stated narrative, like *Bee Eater* (all works 2007), a head whose face is covered in bees, likely the ones that he will consume, against a patterned sofa.

Gordon's process recalls that of Romare Bearden's early Photostats and Richard Hamilton's bawdy photo collage *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?*, 1956. For those artists, collage and rephotography were about reassembling fractures caused by war, sexuality, or the divide between representation and abstraction in painting. However, Gordon's fractures stay on the surface. They are (excuse the pun) about epidermal angst, featuring images of humans whose fragile, fragmented skin is in duress, as in *Bee Eater*, *Headless Man*, and *Birth*. The latter is a simulation of a baby being wrenched from a body, its skin torn apart by the baby's freakishly large head. If Gordon's title, "Thin Skin II," is read as "thin skin again," as in regeneration (what skin does), it becomes a proposition of hope, a way to foil the fissures that he's assembled. If at times some of the jarring bits, like the images of real hands next to the sculpted paper limbs, are not really allowed to rub against one another, in other places they cause so much friction that the photographs feel less like a film set and more like an inescapable panorama.

KASMIN

A World of Scissors and Paper That's Captured in Photographs

ROBERTA SMITH
JUNUE 30, 2007

"Bee Eater," from "Daniel Gordon: Thin Skin II," an exhibition of large color photographs that often deal with the body and its discomforts.

Daniel Gordon's large color photographs, the subject of a solo exhibition at Zach Feuer Gallery in Chelsea, have several things going for them. They operate in the gap between collage and set-up photography, which is a lively place to be at the moment. They benefit from an impressive if not entirely original way with scissors that involves creating figurative tableaus from cut paper and cut-out images that Mr. Gordon then photographs.

In addition, he seems motivated by a deeply felt obsession with the human body and the discomforts of having one. Not for nothing is this show titled "Thin Skin II." He likes to depict the body in extreme situations: a woman giving birth, for example, or a man cowering under a table in a work titled "Quake." A certain interest in crime scenes is indicated, as in the pile of little girls, seemingly dead, in "Rock Garden" and the body twisted in the corner of a suburban house in "Headless Man."

The images in this show are a bit like ransom notes, with different parts coming from different places, and the whole barely hanging together. They are both unsettling and goofy, even when they seem relatively benign. Less violent subjects scamper from the generic to the abjectly erotic ("Rubber Plant") to domestic weirdness, like the gangly hands and arms stretching across the red-checkered tablecloth in "Pomegranate," a fruit that is being shared by two or more people.

The undercurrent of discomfort bordering on self-loathing that runs through much of Mr. Gordon's work is clearest in "Man in Grass," which portrays an aroused, naked sunbather whose thighs are covered with insect bites.

KASMIN

In an odd way, the problem with Mr. Gordon's work lies more with context: His images and themes hew too closely to what seems to be the Feuer Gallery's house style of faux-naïve, often appealingly grotesque, figuration. They evoke the tubular limbs, simplified faces and brusque techniques already seen at Feuer, most notably in the paintings of Dana Schutz (see Mr. Gordon's "Bee Eater" and "Birth"), Jules de Balincourt and Christoph Ruckhäberle; the cut-paper sculpture of Ryan Johnson; and the videos of Nathalie Djurberg.

There are other, also bothersome echoes from further afield, like the discombobulated collage figures of the talented graphic designer Stephen Kroninger and the cobbled-together figures of Red Grooms.

But the show mostly accents the dangers when a gallery's taste   or "program" as it is often called today   becomes so clearly defined and consistent that the art it represents starts looking a little too much alike. This makes a newcomer's work feel predictable, though it is barely out of the gate.

KASMIN