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Matisse is there as no one else is for ambitious painters in this moment: there as a fixed pole of quality as well as a guiding influence. More than any other predecessor, he establishes a relevant and abiding standard of quality: without being the greatest painter of the past, he tells us in our time, more pertinently than any other master can, what the art of painting is fundamentally about.

So begins Clement Greenberg’s review of the 1966 retrospective of Matisse’s work at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Given these words by Greenberg, and in light of the title of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s recent Matisse exhibition—“In Search of True Painting”—one wonders: does Wade Guyton, the subject of a contemporaneous mid-career retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art, then paint fraudulently? Or conversely, might Guyton, who is perhaps the most visible painter of his generation, teach us, as Matisse once had, about what the art of painting is now fundamentally about.

The differences between Matisse and Guyton are obvious, though these differences are also perhaps overstated by the two exhibitions’ respective curatorial emphases. Met curator Rebecca Rabinow, in collaboration with Cécile Debray of the Centre Pompidou in Paris and Dorthe Aagesen of the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen, makes a plea for Matisse’s process. That process is reflected in the continuity between the exhibition’s original, discarded subtitle “An Exploration of Matisse’s Painting Process,” and the titles of Debray’s and Aagesen’s respective Matisse exhibitions at their home institutions: “Matisse: Paires et Séries” and “Matisse: Doubles and Variations.” The “true painting” of Rabinow’s title is taken
from a letter Matisse wrote to his wife Amélie in 1919, quoted from Hilary Spurling’s monograph *Matisse the Master*. The original passage from Spurling reads:

Work monopolised him from the start. Throughout the first months of 1919, he complained that the road lay uphill, that he was toiling like a carthorse, that his labours exhausted him and made him despair. But he had no doubt that he was on to something. “As for telling you what it will be like,” he wrote to his wife on 9 January, “that I couldn’t say since it hasn’t happened yet, but my idea is to push further and deeper into true painting.”

The seeming inevitability of Matisse’s finished masterpieces, Rabinow’s exhibition suggests, was hard won, and her exhibition focuses on Matisse’s “pairs” and series of paintings that present alternative takes on a single theme. What is specific to Matisse’s process of “pairing,” and what differentiates him from, for instance, Monet, is that his series do not correspond to different moments or instances of perception, nor do they refer to one another in the sense of aesthetic refinement—i.e., that a later variation on a theme is a development of an earlier one. Neither, of course, do they evince the kind of postwar seriality of a Sol LeWitt, in which multiples are the product of an industrial or systematic production process. Instead, Rabinow’s exhibition proposes that, to quote her collaborator Aagesen: “Although the ultimate objective of all the effort Matisse expended on the painting was undoubtedly to reach a definitive conclusion, the Maeght exhibition suggested that he had realized such a goal was unattainable.”

Here, Aagesen refers to the most astonishing illustration of Matisse’s process in “In Search of True Painting”: the exhibition of four paintings by Matisse (not meant to be taken as a series) alongside photographs documenting various stages of their conception. Two of these paintings, *The Large Blue Dress* (1937) and *Still Life With Magnolia* (1941), were originally exhibited in similar fashion at the Galerie Maeght in 1945: the 1937 painting alongside eight photographs taken over the course of seven weeks, and the 1941 painting alongside five photographs over eight and a half months. In these photographs, we encounter not only the development of an easel painting, but also the false starts and alternative or aborted paths it might have taken. Even a single Matisse painting, the current exhibition suggests, is in fact a multiple of its earlier self—that multiplicity being embedded within Matisse’s
compositional process—and this gives us the exhibition itself twice: Matisse as an old master whose paintings are the result of a rigorous compositional process that evinces the “truth” of painting, and Matisse as a modern, existential hero who proleptically produces beautifully provisional work under the weight of the definition of composition _qua costruzione legittima_ that traditionally had been “true” to painting.

To my knowledge, there has not been a major study of Matisse’s paintings that relates his innovation to an epistemology of viewing (in the sense that, for instance, Hubert Damisch studies linear perspective, or Leo Steinberg articulates the “flatbed picture planes” of Robert Rauschenberg and his contemporaries). Extremely generative and influential though this innovation was, Matisse’s innovation has long been seen as idiosyncratic, and as a sensual counter-figure to his rival Picasso’s analytic fragmentation of a consistent and centralized worldview. Where the pictorial breakthrough of analytic cubism has been articulated as analogous to the new visual perspectives conditioned by photography, Modernist architecture, and especially the fractured moving image in film, the same claims have not been made on Matisse’s behalf. In Matisse’s flirtations with the industrial images of photography and film—in addition to having his paintings photographed beginning in the late 1930s, Matisse had collaborated with François Campaux to make a film documenting his painting process in the winter of 1945–1946 (not included in the exhibition, but discussed in its catalogue)—these new media are usually thought to be lenses through which to understand the “truth” of Matisse’s paintings, and not vice-versa.

Wade Guyton’s painterly process has little of Matisse’s stress on laborious composition. As has been well-known for at least the last half-decade, Guyton produces his paintings by folding large sheets of canvas (often in excess of sixty inches wide) in half, and subsequently running each side of the folded sheet through his forty-four inch Epson Ultrachrome printer. This, of course, is a radically different kind of process than what is meant by Rabinow’s exhibition. Much of the composition of Guyton’s picture planes—featuring Xs and Us from a Microsoft Word document, images of flames scanned from the cover of a paperback novel, an
alternating pattern of green and red vertical stripes, and in his most famous works a black monochrome rectangle—in addition to the saturation of his colors is determined by the irregular passage of Guyton’s canvases through the printer. Not only are his graphics never properly centered on the picture plane, as they normally would be if printed on fitted paper, but most strikingly most of Guyton’s paintings feature a seam down the middle where the two halves of the Word document or image file do not meet cleanly.

And yet one wonders whether it is Guyton’s paintings, and not Matisse’s, that reveal a truth about painting today. Where Matisse’s painterly vision was idiosyncratic, the Whitney exhibition, curated by Scott Rothkopf, presents Guyton’s work as reflecting the screen world that we now inhabit. In the Whitney exhibition, Guyton’s paintings are mostly exhibited on parallel but staggered free-standing temporary walls. These walls thus do not meet at corners and greet the viewer as if layered but de-spatialized computer windows as much as they serve the traditional architectural function to organize physical space. The exhibition thus suggests the experiential matrix of the operating system—the “OS” of the exhibition’s title—and its fractured layers of interface windows.

Guyton’s actual paintings, however, do not necessarily bear the epistemological weight that Rothkopf’s clever hanging gives to them. We do not see browser windows in Guyton’s picture planes, but rather these paintings greet us as discharge: the disposable material products of our post-industrial information economy. Upon first seeing Guyton’s paintings at his first major solo exhibitions at the Friedrich Petzel Gallery in New York seven or eight years ago, they did not herald to me a radical or new understanding of our media ecology and the patterns of viewing that this ecology conditions. Instead, in the blanket refusal to represent—or, rather, the refusal to transmit information—signaled by the Xs that run along many of Guyton’s paintings and the black monochrome rectangles that sit on the surfaces of others seemed like a relic of the Generation X at the very moment that Ryan Trecartin and the “millennial” generation was emerging. To these eyes, Guyton’s paintings looked steeped in the aesthetic of what the critic Greil Marcus liked to call “radical negation,” and bore more than anything else the

None of this is to discount the purchase that Guyton’s paintings have on the present moment, however stylistically distant they now seem from—or rather, however now restyled as “retro” by—the current generation of cultural producers. Rather, I would like to be more precise about what specifically Guyton’s picture planes might contribute to an epistemology of viewing in the 21st century. In the exhibition catalogue, Rothkopf describes Guyton’s site of artistic creation as an “on-screen space of communication, research, cruising, and shopping.”10 This is reflected on the walls of the Whitney, where Guyton’s paintings are presented to us as multi-tasked layers of computer “windows.” But the exhibition strategy of “Wade Guyton OS” does not account for the clear unlikeness between those Word and image files as originally seen in the interface windows of Guyton’s computer and the printed end result of his picture planes. A more accurate interpretation of the messy transfers observed in—or, perhaps, on—these picture planes can be found in David Joselit’s articulation of Guyton’s process as exposing the “mutability of digital information,” countering the digital metanarrative of the perfect transfer of information through circulatory networks.11 This mutability, Joselit goes on to argue, reflects the condition of contemporary painting’s “transitive practices” that “remind us of the enormity of the procedures of abstraction that also characterize the digital network’s translation of cultural artifacts into code”—a condition that he also extends to contemporary paintings by Cheyney Thompson, Rebecca Quaytman, and Amy Sillman, among others.12

If, as Joselit succinctly puts it, the condition of contemporary art is its itinerancy, and if the current moment is characterized by the copper wire and satellite networks through which art travels as transitive binary code, then the epistemological relevance of Guyton’s paintings would seem to be less about images and our viewing of those images on screens and more about their circulation. Furthermore, this implies that the medium of painting is largely incidental to Guyton’s larger enterprise, which is analogous with these two passages by Joselit on Seth Price, an associate of Guyton’s who transposes found digital images from the Internet into a number of different material forms, few of which can be thought of as continuous...
with the medium of painting:

... in Hostage Video Still with Time Stamp [2005], Price curbs the frictionless motion and instantaneous spatial jumps characteristic of navigation on the Internet and allows them to pile up in unruly masses; the gruesome decapitation he represents is also the figure of an acephalous media.

and:

A contemporary art devoted to circulation, is, of course, a creature of a specific ecology: the market. But instead of either giving up or selling out, Price, like more and more artists, games the market by surfing it.

Relating Joselit’s characterization of Price’s work to Guyton, the question is begged: is the phenomenology of navigation and “surfing” described here a technological evolution of Leo Steinberg’s theorization of the “flatbed picture plane” in 1968 as “a radically new orientation in which the painted surface is no longer the analogue of a visual experience of nature but of operational processes”? And moreover, is it here where the visual matrix of the screen in Guyton’s work truly lies?

In his foreword to an anthology of articles and graphic design from Ray Gun magazine, the novelist William Gibson writes:

We are told that typography, this potent interface’s most intimate design, its “look and feel,” has tended for the past two centuries, to evolve toward transparency, the optimal interface being viewed as one which the reader is least conscious of. To accept this too literally is to rule out designs which allow our awareness of the interface to constitute a major and ongoing aspect of textual pleasure.

Gibson goes on to describe the Ray Gun aesthetic of which David Carson was the progenitor as the “event horizon of futurity, as close as any windshield, its textures mapped in channel-zap and the sequential decay of images faxed and refaxed into illegibility.” If I am correct in identifying Carson’s (anti-)design work as stylistically continuous with Guyton’s paintings, perhaps those paintings speak to an earlier stage of digital transfer—we might perhaps even characterize Guyton’s paintings as a monumentalizing of the cumbersome fax machine in the era of the seamless
online interface.

This would be to revert to that digital metanarrative of the perfect transfer that Joselit wants to disrupt. Joselit’s stakes are economic: the “transitive process” that he characterizes in the practice of Guyton, Cheney et al, is ultimately rooted in his former dissertation advisor at Harvard Yve-Alain Bois’s theorization of medium-specificity in Modernist painting as a defense against the generalizing transitivity of capital. Transitivity is not a perfect transfer but instead a mutability of form: in capitalist exchange, the unit of currency can manifest itself in an almost unlimited number of forms. (This meta-transitivity of capital is perhaps best related to the transfer of digital information not by one of Guyton’s paintings, but by the name of his most famous image file: big-black.tif, “a comically unassuming little black rectangle,” as Johanna Burton puts it.)

Similar to Gibson’s characterization of Carson’s design work, Guyton’s paintings, Joselit suggests, make us aware of the interfaces that support the image rendered digital; one such interface, though Joselit does not use that word, is the art market. But the “infinite dislocations, fragmentations, and degradations” that Joselit ascribes to “transitive process” can be more appropriately related to the machinations of the market—as forms of reification—than to the messiness of Guyton’s transfers, which speak to a breakdown of the mechanical process that our current digital interfaces (Facebook and Twitter, for example) have largely corrected. That is, we are far afield from the fax machine.

Viewed in this light, the truth of painting in Guyton’s paintings, if we can indeed find such a thing, is neither the screen comprised of layered windows, as in Rothkopf’s exhibition strategy, nor the phenomenology of interface navigation in Joselit’s model. If it exists, Guyton’s paintings speak to the medium’s true nature as obsolete; this obsolescence is mobilized in Guyton’s work as the medium’s own defense against the new media that have eclipsed it. It is the materiality of canvas and paint—the physically cumbersome surface that must be folded and the ink that coats his surfaces differently in each instance of the series—that defends against the transitivity of the digital file. That he delegates his composition to the machine, whose materiality is also foregrounded, makes him no less of a Modernist in Bois’s sense. To return to my coupling of Guyton with Carson, Carson’s aesthetic was inseparable from what we used to call the “postmodern.” But the obsolescence of that critical term is instructive of the Modernism embedded in Carson’s enterprise,
which Guyton shares: in his deformation of typography, the linguistic sign is rendered visually material; it exceeds linguistic exchange. The same can be said not only of Guyton’s obstinate Xs and Us, but also of his works’ many references to Modernism, both expressed and implied: the slightly tilted printed rectangles of his black paintings, of course, call to mind Malevich; elsewhere Guyton prints graphics of fire and vertical stripes on images of abstract paintings by Mondrian, Kenneth Noland, and others taken from art magazines and auction catalogues (superimposing upon those Modernist sources references to the neo-Modernist abstraction of, respectively, Yves Klein and Daniel Buren); and he even goes so far as to create an eccentric sculpture from the metal tube frame of a broken, discarded Marcel Breuer chair.

The post of postmodernism, whether articulated by Fredric Jameson as a travestying of Modernist aesthetics via pastiche or by Nicolas Bourriaud as an aesthetics of cultural “remixing,” is fully represented here. But the character of postproduction inherent in Guyton’s practice disavows the screen and interface windows that are, as Rothkopf notes, the “spaces of his artistic creation.” His tools— and his epistemology—are of the 21st century, but his processes are everywhere backward looking: to the utopian industrial production of the Bauhaus Guyton inserts manual craftsmanship; to the semiocapitalism of our digital image economy Guyton reinserts print capitalism and, indeed, what was still Modernist in the paintings that Steinberg characterized by their flatbed picture planes (the materiality and excess of the silkscreened image transfer), while disrupting that paradigm’s anticipation of the present (data entry and operational processes). I am reminded of the possibly apocryphal anecdote, recounted on a number of occasions by Rosalind Krauss, of Michael Fried’s plea for the distance of that other black painter Frank Stella from his Minimalist peers: “What [Stella] would like more than anything else is to paint like Velázquez. But what he knows is that that is not open to him. So he paints stripes.” Here is the heroic, existential Modernism that Dorthe Aagesen had characterized of Matisse.

Most improbable about the coinciding of the Met’s Matisse exhibition with the Whitney’s Guyton retrospective is not that Guyton turns out to be a very late-Modernist, but—to return to the quotation by Clement Greenberg that was this
essay’s epigraph—the relevance of Matisse for the present. The Met exhibition focuses on the alternative paths not taken in Matisse’s paintings, and most astonishing is a pair of still lifes from 1910 and 1911 exhibited at the previous Pompidou and Statens Museum exhibitions that did not make it to the Met. These paintings, Seville Still Life I and II (the latter sometimes known as Spanish Still Life), display Matisse’s then-newfound preoccupation with the Arabesque and all-over decoration, most recognizable in his famous Interior with Eggplants (1911) and, less explicitly, in Harmony in Red (1908) (neither of these latter paintings is featured in the exhibition). In the still lifes, the perceptual distinction between flowers on a table top, and an Arabesque table cloth and flower patterned couch cover that serve as those flowers’ backdrop is dissolved. The second still life is tightly cropped to the table top and couch, the all-over dissolving of flowers into decoration perceptually deemphasizing the flowers even as they sit in the dead center of the painting. This is in keeping with Matisse’s canonical paintings of this period, such as those just mentioned, where the picture plane is flattened by the all-over effect. However, the first still life integrates negative space into the composition: what in Seville Still Life II appeared to be a pink wall is in Seville Still Life I an indistinct ground: a negative visual space, as opposed to depicted negative space. Rather than flattening out the composition, here the almost monochromatic watermelon pink that takes the place of where the architectural wall and floor would be begins to advance as the patterned Arabesque surfaces take on a grounding effect, as if wallpaper. This “figuring” of negative space, anomalous in Matisse’s oeuvre, destabilizes the perceptual certainty of figure and ground—a strategy also taken on by Picasso’s contemporaneous synthetic cubist collages, Piet Mondrian’s abstract Neoplastic paintings of the following decade, and ultimately the transposition of observed negative spaces (silhouettes and shadows) as positive figures on the white ground of the gallery wall in Ellsworth Kelly’s monochromatic shaped paintings.

A triangular wedge of negative space between the table cloth, couch cover, and a blue Arabesque blanket draping the right arm of the couch occupies an imagined horizon line two-thirds of the way to the right edge of the canvas, directly opposing on that same horizontal axis the flowers, which Matisse has shifted to the left half of the painting. This pink triangle, more saturated than the watermelon color of the ground that frames the composition, jumps out at the viewer—like a Kelly?—as its complement, the flowers, recedes. This push and pull of figure-turned-ground and
ground-turned-figure creates a "pulsing" visual sensation reminiscent of Paul Sharits’s description of his 1960s structural films and the resonance of Matisse’s larger oeuvre in his aesthetics:

The delicate shifting of hue inflection and identity, so characteristic of Matisse’s work, which gives his paintings a sense of being alive and “moving” and which is accomplished by the proximity of color areas, can be even more directly actualized in temporal sequentiality. Very rapidly altering frames of different colors in a film can produce an apparent infinity of iridescent color “chords,” shimmering time-color fields. Sequential tensions and balances of these chords and solid units of a color characterize my so-called “flicker” works.

The "flicker" works by Sharits, though superficially resembling the rapid-fire day-glo aesthetic of today’s young video makers such as Ryan Trecartin, were in fact a slowing down of film in order to draw out the subliminal pulsating flicker of its apparatus. But what is contemporary about this path not taken in Matisse’s painting—nor by the Met exhibition—is neither its resonance with the filmic apparatus, nor to the contemporary projected video that has eclipsed it. Instead, the pulse in Seville Still Life I suggests to me an aspect of the phenomenology of navigation that Joselit did not articulate. Instead of the rhythmic on/off alternations that Sharits drew out in T.O.U.C.H.I.N.G. (1969), among other films, we now live with—or, better said, live through—a different kind of reception in a state of distraction: the computer user’s navigation in and between interfaces on the screen, punctuated by the subliminal clicks of a mouse.

In 1911, Matisse must have found the perceptual flicker of Seville Still Life I to be unsatisfying. Yve-Alain Bois notes as much, citing an unpublished 1941 statement by Matisse to Pierre Courthion that the Seville still lifes were the product of “a nervous man.” Looking retrospectively from Interior with Eggplants, completed shortly after the Seville pair, Matisse was pursuing—in search of?—a truly all-over decorated picture plane that would cause the total eclipse of pictorial figure, something that for Pierre Schneider is a process by which “the small piece of cloth with its floral motifs, which is the initial cell [of] the floral pattern, gradually invades the entire canvas,” and which Jack Flam describes as “cover[ing], unit[ing] and fairly overwhelm[ing] the areas that are supposed to denote wall and floor, transforming...
the scene into an abstract meditation on a ‘higher’ dimension of space and time.” 24

The perceived failure of Seville Still Life I, perhaps the product of a kind of nervous hesitation that Matisse retroactively identified as impeding what he had called “true painting,” must have lay in the fact that while the figure of the flowers was made almost indistinguishable from its Arabesque grounds, the painting’s true ground—the indistinct space that is neither wall nor floor—had not been “overwhelmed.”

But if we are to view the deleted still life the way the exhibition in which it was not included would have wanted us to, here lies Matisse telling us in our time what the art of painting should fundamentally be about. What Matisse could not have seen in 1911, but which his painting teaches us to see today, is the radical promise of its slowing down of our visual perception. Bois describes the all-over surface of Interior with Eggplants as a “labyrinth of varying scales.” 25 That labyrinth is comprised of, among other elements, the planar surfaces of a window, wallpaper, and a folding screen that serves as the still life arrangement’s depicted ground. The other elements most prominently feature a still life on a decorated table cloth, the image of that still life in a mirror, a piece of patterned cloth tacked to the farthest right section of the already patterned folding screen, and an empty, back-less picture frame (or is that a painting of wallpaper hanging over the very wallpaper that it represents?) Window, wallpaper, and screen; background and backdrop; decoration and architecture; mirror, picture frame, and painting all become, in a masterful feat of synecdoche, one continuous, all-over surface that has wholly absorbed its one represented element that is not planar: the still life itself, with the titular eggplants least noticeable of all. But one does not truly see these all-over paintings of Matisse’s on the white walls on which we normally view them; to see one is simultaneously to imagine it expanding, covering that entire wall, overwhelming it—another masterful feat of synecdoche: becoming wallpaper. 26

Yve-Alain Bois has perhaps described this best:

The best of Matisse’s canvases are tensed to a maximum, like the membrane of a balloon ready to explode. . . . [H]e renders the diffusion of his gaze, placing the periphery in the center of his picture and making it impossible for our eye to come to rest. He sets out to blind us, so to speak, to work below the threshold of perception and slip into the subliminal. . . .
We would call this an aesthetic of distraction.

*Interior with Eggplants, Harmony in Red,* and those other paintings that rank among Matisse’s “best” blind us with their Modernism. In these paintings, our eyes restlessly navigate between windows, wallpaper, and screens. The pink triangle in *Seville Still Life I* that gives us a reprieve from all-over decoration also allows us to blink. Its rhythmic pulsing of ground–turned–figure and vice-versa enacts a focusing and re-focusing of our eyes as we attempt to look into the ground and as we alternately perceive it as the flat surface that it is. But like the best of Sharits’s films, this happens slowly and deliberately, in contrast to what happens to our eyes when they adjust and re-adjust to the changing scales of different interface windows as we navigate through the meta-interface of the screen. If the hand-eye coordination of navigation can also be said to achieve a hypnotic subliminal rhythm—we unconsciously click as we unconsciously re-adjust our eyes—*Seville Still Life I* reminds us how to perceive what has become subliminal.

One imagines Guyton aspiring not to the condition of the screen-as-meta-interface as his Whitney retrospective suggests, but to the condition of the blank, unlit screen. If they could, his paintings would yank the monitor’s cord out from the wall, but the mechanical fractures in his black monochromes suggest the impossibility of this condition of “turning off”—there remains always the smartphone in the pocket. Our only reprieve from the “blinding,” then, is what Matisse would have given us had he followed the path he abandoned in 1911: that pink triangular wedge of negative space becomes, a little more than a century later, fleeting nanoseconds of blank screen. This is the flicker that accompanies the mouse click; the space between the frames, windows, and screens; or the blinking of my reddened eyes as I am up past midnight writing this on my Macbook. Guyton has not yet found this aesthetic promise of the liminal, but one hopes, picturing him restlessly clicking in front of his computer screen, that its wallpaper is *Seville Still Life I.*

**Przypisy**


4 Dorthe Aagesen, “Painting as Film,” in Matisse: In Search of True Painting, 163.


7 For one example of Picasso’s analytic cubism and its reflection of the epistemological viewing habits of modernity, see the discussion of Picasso’s cubist paintings and the visual syntaxes of Modernist architecture and film in Anne Friedberg, The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 118-123. Friedberg quotes Siegfried Giedion: “Cubism breaks with Renaissance perspective. It views objects relatively that is from several points of view, no one of which has exclusive authority. And in so dissecting objects it sees them simultaneously from all sides—from above and below, from inside and outside”; and Gyorgy Kepes: “The ‘close up’ [of film] broke up the transitional continuous space unity inherited through painting and theatre and extended the picture space to an amplified dimension. In a sequence of ‘close-up,’ ‘medium shot,’ and ‘long shot’ bring a living, moving variety of expanding and condensing space.” Giedion, Space, Time, Architecture (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 436; and Kepes, Language of Vision (Chicago: Paul Theobold, 1944), 91; quoted in Friedberg, 118, 121.

9 Those first two solo Guyton exhibitions at Petzel were "Color, Power, & Style," Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York, February 23 – March 25, 2006; and "Wade Guyton," Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York, November 13 – December 15, 2007. To great acclaim, the 2006 Whitney Biennial featured the first major work by Ryan Trecartin, the video *A Family Finds Entertainment* (2004). Trecartin (b. 1981) was actually born just early enough to fall under certain definitions of Generation X and, for the sake of accuracy, is too old to be a true "millennial." However, the frenetic pacing of Trecartin's video work, in concert with his distribution of that work through digital networks and interfaces, has become a key point of aesthetic identification for those millennial artists currently beginning their careers.


11 David Joselit, "Painting Beside Itself," in *October* 130 (Fall 2009), 132.

12 Ibid., 134.

13 David Joselit, "What to Do with Pictures," in *October* 138 (Fall 2011), 86, 93.

14 Leo Steinberg, *Other Criteria*, 84. The volume's title essay was adapted from a lecture presented at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1968, and an earlier version of the chapter was originally published as "Reflections on the State of Criticism," in *Artforum* 10:7 (March 1972).


16 Bois writes: “. . . the insistence of the integrity of specific media that occurs in every art of the last quarter of the nineteenth century was a deliberate attempt to free art from its contamination by the forms of exchange produced by capitalism. Art had to be ontologically split not only from the mechanical, but also from the realm of information—it had to be distinguished from the immediate transitivity of

17 Johanna Burton, “Rites of Silence,” in Artforum 46:10 (Summer 2008), 367.

18 See Fredric Jameson, “Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” in New Left Review 146 (July/August 1984); and Nicolas Bourriaud, Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay, or How Art Repograms the World, trans. Caroline Schneider, 2nd edition (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002).


20 The exhibition’s catalogue notes that Seville Still Life I and II were only exhibited at the Copenhagen exhibition, but a Google search reveals that they also were shown in Paris. Matisse: In Search of True Painting, 203-204; http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/03/07/us-art-matisse-france-idUSTRE8260L120120307 (last accessed March 2013).


26 As Frank Stella has famously stated, a Matisse painting often “feels bigger than it [really] is.” Quoted in Lebensztejn, 74.

27 Bois, Matisse and Picasso, 29. Elsewhere, Bois has articulated this “aesthetic of distraction” as opposite to absorption, in the sense that Michael Fried uses the term. Bois, “On Matisse,” 81. See also Fried, Absorption and Theatricality (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).