

Art in America



DAVE MIKO AND TOM THAYER

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ELEVEN RIVINGTON

by noah dillon

NEW YORK At Eleven Rivington's 195 Chrystie Street location, Dave Miko and Tom Thayer's exhibition of collaborative hybrids, "Baseless Legion of Architects Rent Asunder," was exciting, disruptive. It expanded greatly on similar works by the pair shown at the Kitchen in 2011. Paintings by Miko, hung low on the wall, served as screens for projected videos by Thayer, forming amalgams that address the motif of bodies moving through architectural environments. Prompted by dialogues that preceded the project, the artists worked together closely on the pieces and their long, poetic titles.

Miko's gestural abstractions on aluminum—accreted smears, swipes and splatters of bright paints and inks—collide and collude with Thayer's strobing,

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vibrating montages of ranch-style homes, rolling bullet trains, trees and the artists themselves. The video footage (shot with cell phones or taken from the Internet) is often so manipulated and integrated with the paintings that it is difficult to distinguish from Miko's blotches of scarlet, cadmium yellow and iridescent purple. The painting-videos are arousing and deliver immediate haptic satisfaction.

Some works are especially effective. In *Walking Bags of Chemicals Nurtured by an Environment of Chemistry* (all 2013), driplike marks help enunciate a house projected onto the painting's center. Other drawn lines, nearer to the right edge, describe figures, shown later in the video. Some works, such as *Baseless Legion of Architects Rent Asunder*, have a tension exclusive to the admixture, as the procession of projected images variously enhance, confuse and elicit colorful patterns in the painted surface or vice versa. In *The Tender Color of the Raspberry Darkens, Slowly Obscured by the Pale Mold*, dappled orange and grass-green trees give way to blobs of claret and lime, though it's hard to know where the colors and forms of Miko's brushy strokes end and those of the looped video begin. The paint appears to move, and the video casts wavy outlines.

A comparable group show at Ramiken Crucible last summer, "A Child's Guide to Good and Evil," also used paintings as screens, which received projected music videos by artist and musician Brendan Majewski (1973-2011) to great effect. (The paintings were made by several artists, not for this purpose.) Miko and Thayer's works are far more rigorously controlled and thematized. They can be too direct sometimes, as when the videos resolve clearly into shots of tract housing or elevated trains. The application of moving images to action paintings is enough an articulation of time, movement and space without added didacticism.

At the gallery's Rivington Street space, the artists staged a complementary installation, inviting 15 artist friends to the gallery to create in silence the night before the opening. Their sprawling hodgepodge of magazine cutouts, cardboard, tempera and plastic seemed interrupted or unfinished. The cadre was given only a limited set of materials and the titles of the painting-videos as inspiration. The results didn't successfully expand upon the painting-videos' evocations of bodies moving through man-made space, feeling instead abstruse and constricted.

Beyond the immediate pleasure of Miko and Thayer's work, one concern remains. The unique power of painting, according to John Berger, rests in its stillness and silence. Does this combined form of animated video and static painting add as much to the latter medium as it overrides?

PHOTO: Dave Miko and Tom Thayer: *The Tender Color of the Raspberry Darkens, Slowly Obscured by the Pale Mold*, 2013, acrylic on aluminum with video projection, 4 1/2 minute loop; at Eleven Rivington.