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FEATURE INTERVIEWS WITH: MEG WEBSTER, KOHO YAMAMOTO, FAITH RINGGOLD, JENNIE C. JONES, EUGENIO VIOLA & GUEST CRITIC: LUIGI BALLERINI

Installation view, *Tadaaki Kuwayama*, Alison Bradley Projects, New York, 2022. Courtesy the artist and Alison Bradley Projects.

a thin aluminum line. Texture breaks up the blackness, like layers of sedimentary rock, introducing the idea of an infinite progression, up and down. This painting could conquer the world.

The concept is confirmed in both *TK4612-3/4-64* (1964) and *TK7623-5/8-67* (1967). The first is a small, 12 x 12 composition: "gold leaf on paper on panel." The dazzling gold is not confined to the surface but covers the frame, as if to say, "this frame cannot fence me in." The vertical division of the surface that evenly divides into a diptych is now one of Kuwayama's signature devices. This we see in *TK7623*, where he abandons paper for acrylic on canvas stretched over board. The "polished aluminum frame" is a link to the 1960s, to the frames constructed by Robert Kulicke. With this painting, Kuwayama forces us to focus on his use of yellow but also on serial composition: the three rectangles could be multiplied to infinity.

Kuwayama's next phase involves enhanced serial replication and transforming painting into sculpture. *TK5610-1/2-82* (1982), six isosceles triangles—"metallic oil painted with palette knife on canvas mounted on Masonite board"—float above a datum plane. How many triangles might he have included could be a matter of chance: more space, more triangles. But the work now is sculptural in the sense that the objects now define the space they occupy. This is even more so the case with *TK28-2-1/4-02* (2002). Here the constituent elements are anodized aluminum panels and brackets, their total number (twenty-six) "edited" down to ten in order to fit on the gallery wall. They could of course be reorganized from a straight line into ranks and hung vertically. Kuwayama, perhaps not overtly, invites the viewer to rearrange the work in other configurations.

The two final pieces in the show, *TK37-7/8-16* (2016) and *TK1-61-22* (2022) confirm Kuwayama's aesthetic of infinite possibilities. The first is another abbreviation: four of thirty brackets made of anodized titanium. There could be only one; there could be thirty, or thirty thousand: Brâncuși's infinite column isn't infinite, but it could be. The mauve surfaces remind us that Kuwayama is a colorist, that color gives life to his work. The final piece takes us in spirit back to the 1960s: four stacked panels of acrylic on canvas framed in aluminum. They're going up, and for Kuwayama the sky's the limit. Or maybe not.

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CLAUDE RUTAULT & PETER NADIN

BY CHRIS MURTHA

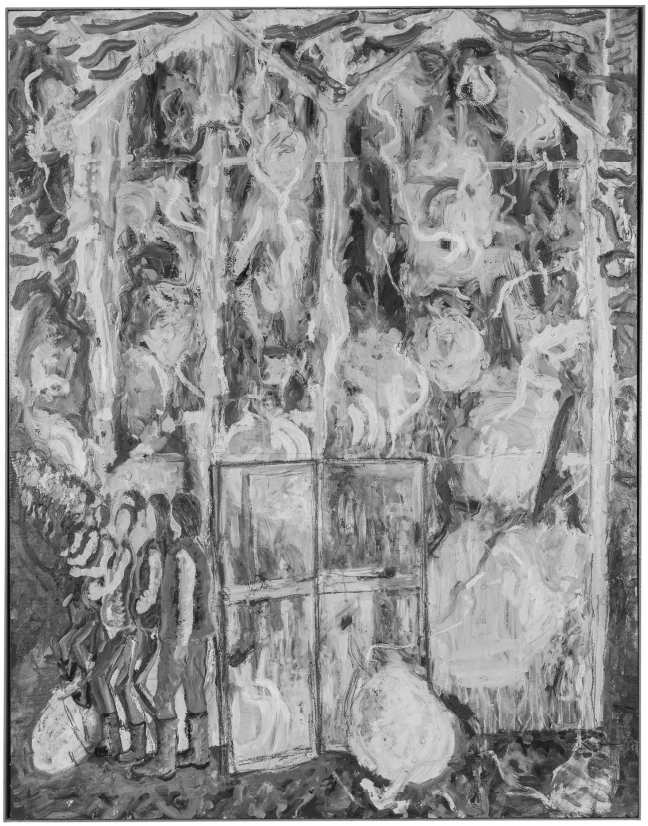
A Proposal to Peter Nadin, 1979; realized 2022
Off Paradise, New York
January 13–February 19, 2022

The Distance from a Lemon to Murder
Off Paradise, New York
March 3–May 8, 2022

A pair of sequential exhibitions at Off Paradise in New York, *A Proposal to Peter Nadin*, and *The Distance from a Lemon to Murder*, exemplify two seemingly incongruous aspects of Peter Nadin's winding career: his early conceptual projects and his ongoing exploration of pictorial conventions and mark-making. The first exhibition realizes, at long last, an instructions-based proposal that French conceptualist Claude Rutault conceived of in June 1979 for Nadin's short-lived gallery, 84 West Broadway. The second presents Nadin's recent paintings, all created during pandemic-related isolation. While strikingly distinct, the two shows nevertheless speak to Nadin's preoccupation with the ways in which thoughts and ideas, conscious or otherwise, become manifest through art.

Between November 1978 and May 1979, Nadin presented a series of successive and cumulative projects at 84 West Broadway, each conceived as a "response to the existing conditions and/or work previously shown within the space." The gallery opened with *30 Days Work* (1978), one of several "functional constructions" Nadin produced with Christopher D'Arcangelo. Solely comprising the manual labor undertaken to convert half of Nadin's loft into a gallery, the "construction" framed the space itself as the work of art. Site-responsive projects by Daniel Buren, Sean Scully, and Peter Fend, among others, followed, culminating with a memorial to D'Arcangelo, who had unexpectedly taken his own life that April (1979). Though Nadin's gallery experiment had run its course by the time Rutault devised his proposal (inspired by his visit to the gallery in late 1978), the historical photographs and records showcased at Off Paradise establish its origins.

Rutault did not typically assign his signature protocols, which he started issuing in 1973, to a specific "charge-taker"—his term for those actualizing his works. His instructions stipulated that Nadin, "as the person in charge of a space," decide the size, shape, and installation of a



Peter Nadin, *Anne and Lemons Leaving the Greenhouse*, 2020. Oil on panel, 43 ⅜ x 34 ⅛ in. Photograph by Alon Koppel. Courtesy of the artist and Off Paradise, New York.

small number of canvases to be painted the same color as the wall(s) they hang on. Fulfilling Rutault's criteria for a "clear and visible idea," Nadin chose to acknowledge the forty-three years that had passed between the artwork's conception and its actualization. Before installing a single rectangular canvas, painted a garishly bright "lemon yellow," on a wall of the same color, he traced its perimeter in forty-two different positions around the gallery. In so doing, Nadin produced an indexical timeline of overlapping outlines that spanned the entire length of the gallery. Rutault's procedures tended to dissolve the painting's edge into the wall, but Nadin turned the edge into an expressive mark and a trace of a presence. In spirit, each outline represents a different enactment of Rutault's proposal, emphasizing the indeterminacy of his project and evoking the countless individuals, or laborers, that have helped actualize his work. Thick with paint and hung low on its own yellow wall, the actual canvas stood witness to the ghostly procession of its past selves.

Whereas the realization of Rutault's *Proposal* revived the ethos of 84 West Broadway, the oil on panel paintings in Nadin's *The Distance from a Lemon to Murder* (all 2020) recall the imagery he began producing in the 1980s after the project dissolved. Some paintings, like the expressionistic *Staghorn Fern* and *Lemons and Mountains*, resemble conventional versions of those he originally exhibited in *Still Life* (1983) at Richard Prince's Spiritual America gallery—unsettling images of oversized apples and bananas looming ominously over a cottage in a picturesque landscape. Most, however, harken back to the chaotic canvases he produced around 1992, just prior to (partially and temporarily) withdrawing from the artworld. Like those works, the new paintings playfully combine styles, genres, and technique to create patchwork tableaux, often imbued with hazy narrative details.

This body of work is a product of the farm he operates with his wife, Anne Kennedy, in Upstate New York—right down to the ad hoc, yet colorful frames made by his handyman. Painted while sequestered on the farm during the first year of the Coronavirus pandemic, the series assembles into a portrait, not just of Nadin's physical environs—his greenhouse, neighbors, and the surrounding landscape—but also of the psychological headspace of these strange, unsettling times. Nadin's imagery, which he has referred to as "cognitive landscapes," derives as much from his imagination as from observation. In *Red Figure Walking to Red Boat (Volcano Erupting)*, for instance, a silhouetted hand tries in vain to hold back the smoke and ash of a volcanic eruption (certainly not a local feature). *Anne and Lemons Leaving the Greenhouse* converts a prosaic moment into a fevered vision: as Nadin's wife exits the greenhouse, her body multiplies and recedes into the background, while captive lemons take the opportunity to escape through the open door.

Lemons, which Nadin grows in his greenhouse, predominate in several compositions, referencing the foreboding fruit of Nadin's earlier still lifes and the color he selected for Rutault's *Proposal*. Across the two exhibitions, lemon is both color and fruit, a product of the mind and matter—one still life is even titled *Lemon or Yellow*. As Nadin writes in an accompanying poem: "I eat the lemon, it moves through the body / I paint a lemon, it moves through the mind." To cultivate the citrus in his greenhouse, Nadin grafted a scion from a Marrakesh lemon onto the rootstock of a sour orange (a horticultural process he illustrates in one painting). Here, the graft is a metaphor, not only for two exhibitions spliced together, but also for how the world implants itself in the root of the mind, bearing fruit in the form of art.

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JULE KORNEFFEL

BY ANDREW L. SHEA

Here comes the night
Spencer Brownstone, New York
February 26, 2021–April 16, 2022

Today people speak of a "golden hour," when the sun is low on the horizon and emits a soft, warm light, as the best time to snap a selfie. For his part, Pierre Bonnard preferred "l'heure bleue" occurring immediately after sunset. In this transient moment of paradoxical stillness, ambient light reflects off the sky and bathes the world in cool, hushed tones, causing nature to appear almost as if illuminated from within. One can guess why this appealed to Bonnard, whose paintings emit not the depicted effects of some external light source, but rather their own more mysterious and internal glow.

With *Here comes the night*, an exhibition of eight acrylic paintings now at Spencer Brownstone, Jule Korneffel declares a similar infatuation with twilight atmosphere. The gallery's press release states that in making these new works Korneffel painted "primarily but not exclusively" in the darkening hours, and that she used direct observation of the waning light in the studio to inform her selection of tones and colors. These abstract, minimalist canvases are muted, matte, and closely toned. Their hues skew cool as a rule.

Cold and forbidding, however, the paintings are not. Quivering fields and fleeting suggestions of geometric forms are inscribed with a sensitive hand. Thin films of translucent paint accumulate into generous, almost milky surfaces. Occasional flecks of texture, likely bits of dried paint picked up off the palette, are left on but painted over, giving the skins pretty pimples that you want to touch but not pop.

The paintings vary substantially in size. A predominantly blue painting the size of a paperback book hangs next to a blacker one that's nine feet tall. The phenomenological effects of these differences are striking, and with time one gets lost in the larger work, *Another Tragic Moment in History (Detail of a Flower Still Life)* (2021), its scotopic atmosphere concealing and revealing forms that drift in and out of periphery as the eye meanders at will.

As one continues to look, straining to make sense of the work's barely evoked structures, it's impossible not to think of Ad Reinhardt and his black paintings of the late 1950s and '60s. Yet with Korneffel one finds little of Reinhardt's stentorian demand for purist negation. Here comes the night, but day lingers yet, and we can be pretty sure that the sun will rise again, so long as we give it the chance. Indeed, these subtle paintings seem more closely aligned with Guston, who in 1960, while still painting abstractions, dismissed the "ridiculous and miserly" myth "that painting is autonomous, pure and for itself," arguing instead that "painting is 'impure.' It is the adjustment of 'impurities,'" he wrote, "which forces its continuity."

That Korneffel, like Guston, aspires to both impurity and continuity is apparent in her titles, which allude to a handful of influential painters from Western art history, folding a personal canon in with the contingent experiences and situations of the present: *Chagall without Goat, From Vuillard with Love (Rome 1996), Sky, Sun, and Moon in a Giotto Fresco (Looking Southern on 2nd Ave)*, *Ppl Leaving (Fantin-Latour Blues)* (all 2021). The press release notes other influences such as Botticelli, Bellini, Monet, and Rothko. The smallest painting in the exhibition, *The Unicorn in its Garden (at Night)* (2022), stands erect on a plinth so that we can see its verso, where Korneffel has tucked into the stretcher bars a postcard of the Met Cloisters' enigmatic late fifteenth-century French tapestry, *The Unicorn Rests in a Garden* (1495-1505), depicting a delicate unicorn held captive in a field of resplendent flowers.

On the cloudless afternoon that I visited, the verso of *The Unicorn in its Garden (at Night)* faced the gallery's pebble-strewn courtyard space. Hanging on a cinderblock wall outside was the large *Sky, Sun and Moon in a Giotto Fresco (Looking Southern on 2nd Ave)* (2021). Against a predominantly dark-turquoise field, a ball of light-purple marks glows in the bottom right corner, and dash of pale yellow hangs in the top left. Shaded from direct sun by city buildings, the painting found light that was soft and even, yet remained perceptibly alive to the passage of natural time.

Jack Tworkov, whose nuanced late paintings also pit inscriptive, painterly gestures against self-imposed formal limitations, once wrote that "subtlety is to profundity what prettiness is to beauty." The meditative quietude of work like this can easily become anodyne or placid. But at her best, Korneffel finds real music within the austerity of her self-imposed parameters. On these lower frequencies, Korneffel has the precision of a great swing band playing pianissimo, its muted horns speaking at the level of an emphatic whisper.

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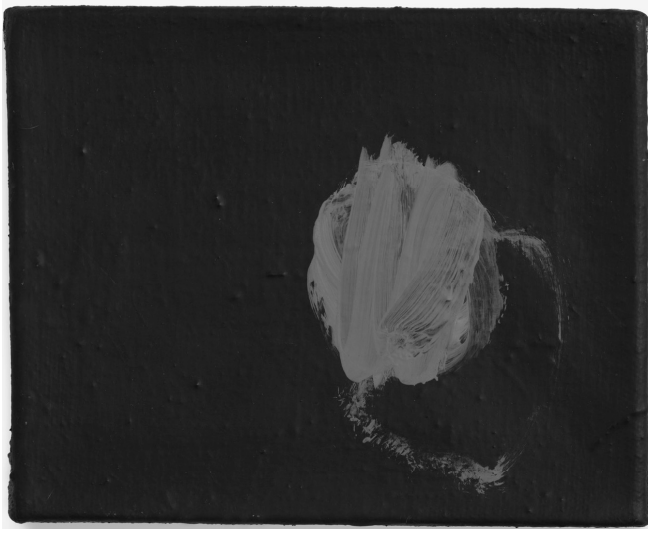

Julie Korneffel, *The Unicorn in its Garden (at Night)*, 2022. Photo: Daniel Greer. Courtesy Spencer Brownstone Gallery.