

VANCOUVER

Richard Jackson

RENNIE COLLECTION AT WING SANG

Richard Jackson's show at Rennie Collection at Wing Sang, a private gallery that houses the collection of real estate mogul Bob Rennie and hosts occasional exhibitions, activates its venue, to use the artist's term. Wall paintings, sculptural installations, and conceptual gambits—all commissioned by the gallery or drawn from the collection—engage directly with the architecture and its owner, providing an at times biting commentary on art as commodity and visual stimulant.

The largest, and perhaps boldest (though the competition is fierce) work in the show, *Rennie 101*, 2009–10, greets the viewer on the first floor of the gallery. A series of multicolored, semicircular smears applied directly to the wall are partially obscured by eighteen stretched canvases hung face in. Arranged such that one corner of each canvas corresponds to the centerpoint of a smear, the canvases, whose length further corresponds to the diameter of each smear, seem to have been used as applicators. That is to say, the traditional support has become the means of execution for a work that ultimately colonizes its host. What's more, in the finished piece, the canvas and stretcher played a merely supplemental role, and a negating one at that, denying the viewer full access to what would ordinarily be considered the object of the exercise—the painted surface. Context, process, and product are all equally apparent in a visual and cognitive puzzle that messes with art-world conventions of display and reception. In effect, the work represents no less than the problematization of painting. And what of the title, bearing the artist's benefactor's name and the generic reference for a beginner's course work? One suspects the artist is trying to teach his patron a lesson, or at the very least incorporate him into the work's dense reflexivity.

There are many gems of mock-painterly pleasure and provocation in this exhibition, including the bears in the 2004–2005 work titled *Pomp Pee Doo*, variously colored fiberglass figures that piss paint into Duchampian urinals; *Ballerina*, 2009, a crumpled Degas-like bronze dancer that bleeds red paint; and *La Grande Jatte (After Georges Seurat)*, 2006–10, a "painting" that partially mimics the similarly titled pointillist masterpiece, but whose dots have been applied by pellet gun. Yet for this writer, the only work that measures up to *Rennie 101* in terms of scale and critical acuity is *Bob's Pictures*, 2006–10, thirteen hundred painted canvases stacked flat, with only their painterly edges showing. The wall thereby created is wedged between floor and ceiling, bisecting the second-floor gallery space. An exercise in opacity and frustrated desire, this desultory arrangement leaves the viewer and the collector—again the title binds the work to its owner—to ponder the value of artistic labor and the aura of easel painting; value which, like that of real estate, is always subject to the vagaries of the market.

—Clint Burnham

Richard Jackson,
Rennie 101, 2009–10,
acrylic, stretched
canvases, 10' x 33'.

