

University of Dallas Haggerty Gallery

*SLIDE: Model Behavior*

"Sometimes all you have to do is look differently to see better."

- Paul Virilio

In contemplating the idea raised by the cultural theorist Paul Virilio of "the progressive disintegration of faith in perception," one begins to understand our present moment with its multiple realities offered by media culture. When the *New York Times* gives space to explain the film "The Matrix" as the philosophical exploration of Jean Baudrillard's "Simulacra and Simulation," one can't help take notice that mainstream America has finally wakened to the fact that what they see might not be what they think it is.<sup>1</sup> Current films such as "Attack of the Clones," "Spider-Man," and "The Matrix" truly manifest this shadowing the real through the virtual reality of digitized film. Photography, which once offered us what we thought was fact, now can create fictions easily through electronic means, appearing more lifelike than reality itself. Computers, printers, digital cameras, and the latest crop of electronic gadgets offer artists new ways of representing a simulated world or what Andy Grundberg calls a "second-degree reality with little or no connection to the unmediated world."<sup>2</sup>

With a wired studio of electronic creativity, artists are creating new codes of representation embodied in pictures. Similar to the Cubist experiments of Braque and Picasso attaching newspaper clippings and real objects onto the surface of their paintings, artists today are sampling and recontextualizing forms from their original source.<sup>3</sup> Filtering through technological media, they can alter, break down, and recreate images. In this process representational forms can be mechanically manipulated from their primary sources and morphed into new altered abstracted states. The five artists in *Slide* work in the interface between painting, photography, and computer imaging. They create works in which the aesthetic is mediated mechanically, signifying our pop-techno culture. Through studio visits, discourse, and viewing each other's exhibitions over the past few years, they have informed or infected each other's work visually and intellectually. In this exhibit a dialogue emerges among images that are more than just the visual recording of technology: They are ethereal, sensual, and personal models of recorded forms.

Ted Kincaid and Jin-Ya Huang filter, distort, and collapse space into motifs and images willfully informed with modes of painting. Their photo-derived, indeterminate visual images mysteriously weave fact and fiction, somewhere between blurred, Warholian iconography and an electronic sublime. Scott Barber embraces technology in his studio practice by rendering cell structures on the computer and producing them as ink jet prints. He then transforms these biological forms into glossy, flat, graphic paintings. His work addresses the look of the screen in its cool, reflective surface as well as the glossy attributes of current graphic design. Standing before the works of Brian Fridge we are placed in a visual holding pattern contemplating forms of altered fabrication. Still shots from a previous video overlaid on a figure-ground reversal, appear as astronomy or sci-fi imagery in deepspace. His exaggerated models change into new hybrid strains. The experience is one that mesmerizes while never allowing the viewer any clear reading of the image or its original source.

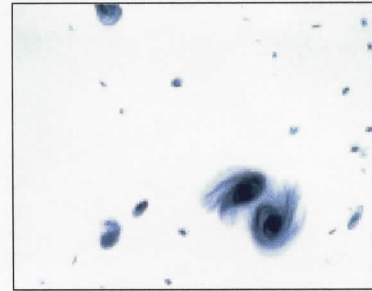
The artists in *Slide* all use abstraction derived from some form of connection to the world, from the smeared transmissions of electronic media to micro- and macroscopic environments. They alter, layer, and rearrange imagery through various technical strategies transforming one reality into another. The enigma of technique employed by each of these artists compels us to look further, to question what it is we really see before our eyes. The significance lies not in how each of these artists mirrors reality but in how they create new virtual forms from it. In doing so, perhaps we will begin to make new connections to the world around us and, in the words of Paul Virilio, "see better."

John Pomara - Guest Essayist

<sup>1</sup> Brent Staples, "A Philosopher Talks Back to Hollywood and the Matrix", *New York Times*, May 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Andy Grundberg, *Crisis of the Real*, Aperture, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Simon Wallis, *Hybrids*, Tate Gallery and Publishing Limited, 2001.



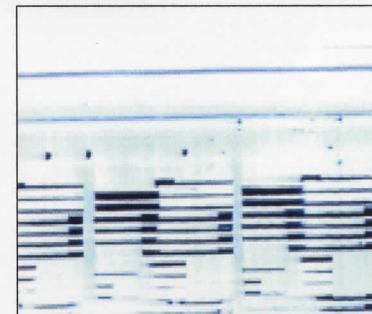
Brian Fridge



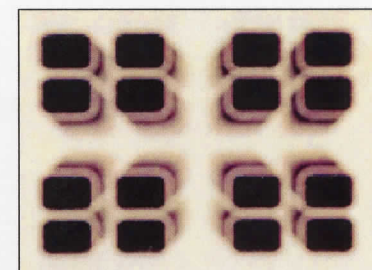
Jin-Ya Huang



Scott Barber



John Pomara



Ted Kincaid