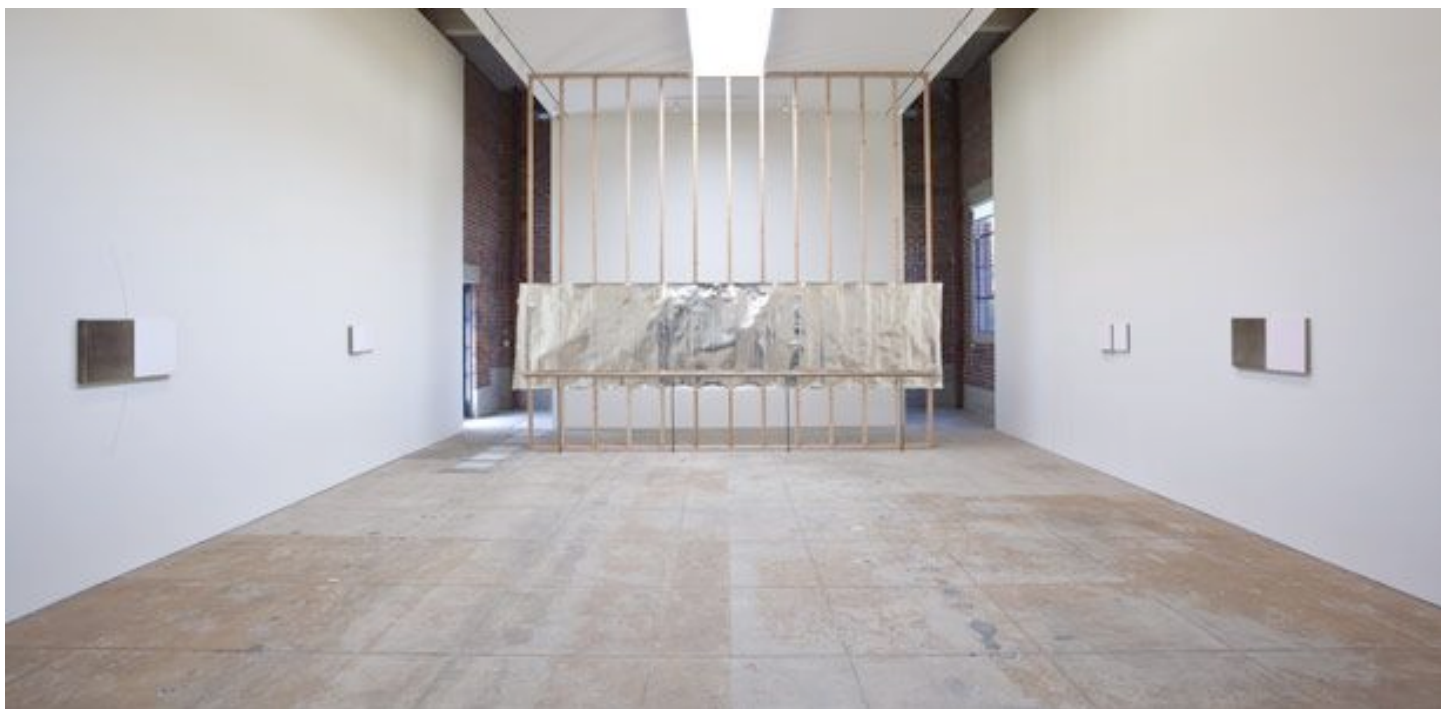


Jacob Kassay's Cloudy Choreography

By Geoff Tuck

August 12, 2011



Courtesy L&M Arts, Los Angeles; Photo by Joshua White/JWPictures

An installation view of Jacob Kassay's show at L&M Arts.

Jacob Kassay

L&M Arts, 660 Venice Boulevard Venice, Los Angeles

July 21-September 2

The five individual pieces and two groupings, all labeled "Untitled" and dated 2011, that line L&M Arts's walls in Jacob Kassay's first West Coast solo show give proof of an artist attending to the details of space and teasing viewers with rhythm. You are confronted first by an ensemble consisting of the unfinished rear wall of the gallery on which is hung, facing the entry, a large rectangular example of Kassay's signature, technically complex silver paintings. It is oriented toward the back of the gallery, where there is a smaller version of the same.

The artist has installed a ballet bar at the bottom of the bigger painting, which thus comes to evoke a room-wide mirror in a dance loft, capturing movement from just below the hips to just above the head. This mirror doesn't reflect much. Rather it seems to soak up images and offer in return vague, tantalizing shapes and diffuse light. The two flanking walls hold six modest-size diptychs (from 10 by 20 to 14 by 28 inches each) in pink, white, and smoky acrylic, one of them paired with a more expansive white canvas with a curved edge. If these smaller paintings represent dancers, then they have disappeared into the mirror's depths, like the viewers.

On the concrete floor on one side of the construction are remains of the building's previous existence as a power station. Traces of braces that once held electrical transformers in place sketch a catwalk or a narrow stair, as if ascending from some unseen space below to the loft full of dancers that Kassay has conjured. Round pole marks lead directly to the smaller silver painting at the back of the gallery, which, in its seclusion, seems to provoke you to muse upon the installation you hold in memory but can no longer see. (A staff member at L&M acknowledges that Kassay took the structure's history into account for his installation.)

The void between the curved canvas and its paired diptych implies a circle, a reading encouraged by an arcing graphite line drawn on the wall behind the latter as well as by a pinhole, revealed on closer inspection, marking its center. This circle grows around you, neatly delineating your field of vision. Turning to view the exhibition in its entirety, it's easy to imagine the paintings in apparent motion: now advancing, now receding, stepping back and switching places, trading size and color — white for pink, smoky-silver for white, and so on. Reflections and remnants, repetitions and replacements become notations for Kassay's ensemble.