

BORTOLAMI

The Upstairs:

Richard Aldrich, Ei Arakawa, Virginia Overton

29 October – 18 December 2021

Richard Aldrich, known for his expansive and multidisciplinary practice which references concepts and visual language from art history to popular culture, includes a triptych of paintings in the exhibition.

In thinking about these works he writes:

Triptychs were originally attached to a mantel piece or an altar, these were pre-determined because of the architecture, and often depicted a scene, where each panel represents a time or section of the narrative. In the 60s, a Joan Mitchell triptych would be a variation on a theme of color or composition or brush stroke. Basically, the same as a renaissance painting just with a different set of concerns.

For me, it is still the same thing, it's just my concerns aren't style, composition, or narrative, but rather painting as a reflection of an understanding of the role that specific events/moments/things play in our perception of our own lives. Each painting is a self-contained entity that visually records a series of decisions that were made, but also this represents experience in a more metaphorical way—becoming a stand-in for the means that structure that understanding... a day in the life. Here there are three observations or reflections placed together. Understandably these could seem arbitrary, but only in the sense of (and I wrote more on this for a press release or something in the past) that when you walk to work you could have three very different and also arbitrary conversations... you see a friend on the street, talk to the shop keeper in the store, a tourist asks you for directions—each has its own set of protocols and expectations, but added together make up your walk to work that morning. This is what I have often thought to describe in art—how an accumulation of experiences adds up to more than an experience taken on its own.

These three were made basically at the same time, and intuitively felt like they belonged when they were sitting around my studio, even though it wasn't the intention from the get-go... there is of course like a variety—a painty one, a sculpture one, and a design/text one. And I like them separately, but at a point they seemed a group and when I tried to think of them separately it felt off.

I have only done one other triptych, but it was a bit more obvious—three large “faces”, as well as one diptych from the early 2000s which was two paintings with a series of black squares painted on them.

Richard Aldrich was born in 1975 in Hampton, VA, and currently lives and works in New York. He has a forthcoming solo exhibition at Fondazione Giuliani, Rome, Italy, and a solo exhibition currently on view at Stuart Shave Modern Art, London. Other solo exhibitions of Aldrich's work have taken place at Museum Dhont-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium, 2017; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA, 2011; and the Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis, MO, 2011. His work has been included in group exhibitions at museums including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, Santiago de Compostela, Spain; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. His work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art; the Whitney Museum; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; The Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester; The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan; The Dallas Museum of Art; and the Smithsonian.