

The minimal press for any end of year graduation show, is well, certainly sparse – if any. This is unfortunate for the few works that happen to shine from the rest – from the familiar subjects and the house styles, from the over-the-top-esque or the not enough-esque, After seeing numerous, tiring and unfulfilling work from the many photography or fine art graduation exhibitions throughout United Kingdom, from various art institutions, academies or universities – the work which I still remembered the most, for all the good reasons, was by a Japanese artist studying in Bournemouth, Akira Rachi. The piece of work was titled untitled (between).

Untitled (between) was installed at the Text and Work gallery within The Arts Institute in Bournemouth during June 2007. In the work, a clear division was created, which visually separated him from the rest of the graduates' work that was showing. Creating a wall with three pieces of MDF board, painted white, two back boards facing at least 6 foot tall and one square floor piece attaching them, placing it meters in front of the only bright window emitting natural light, then blocking it, the division seems almost obnoxious in a sense, but necessary. The walls represent the white cube space – plain, non-distracting, its purpose used for installing and hanging work. The walls are not beautiful and the space is almost suffocating. Rachi's wall is a corner standing away from the other partitioned walls, as if it has turned its back on them and the work hung from them. The corner being separate from any walls leading to and from it, creates a space for the viewer to walk behind, around and in front of it, it becomes un-natural and assumes the place as a sculpture and a new space. Rachi explains that the wall is as important as the photographs that are presented onto it.

The wall is permanently incomplete and cut, as too are the photographs. Bringing emphasis towards the traditions of photography, both technical and its unavoidable

means - Cropping and editing, important aspects towards questioning the photograph as a document. It seems like this whole project focuses and points towards the edges of something and incompleteness.

When arriving at the show, Rachi showed me around his own work. He seemed most excited and intrigued by the footprints that were left on the white flooring he had made and the natural light that shun and warmed the back of the wall. For me the idea of what lies between and behind the wall was an important aspect of the work, one being natural and the other being artificial – I feel this is best relieved by Milan Kundera in a simple saying, “on surface, an intelligible lie, underneath, the unintelligible truth”.

On the wall three separate photographs are presented. Two are presented in frames on either facing walls, one is positioned in such a way that the edge of the frame is against the edge of the wall. However, each frame is unfinished, one side has been left incomplete leaving the frame open, cut, and without a permanent edge. These sides seamlessly end too where the wall ends, showing the innards of the work. Thus, Devoiding the traditional purpose of frame - to protect and conserve whatever lies beneath its glass and wood. The frames look physically damaged, as if the artist had tried to pry the photographs back out in attempt to set them free and pin them back onto the wall, after originally framing them.

The two photographs in the frames display an exhibition; I understand it being his own. They represent edges and divides of photographs pinned on a plain wall. In a minimalist, sparse and hazy approach Rachi has managed to present photographs that look like his previous imagery, not just documents or supporting work. The two framed photographs show a past exhibition, suggesting the (between) in the confusing titled. Allowing the

audience to create an idea of the original installation. The frames then are used to show a divide between, there and now - now being the third photograph.

The third photograph again focuses on a clear divide; it depicts a perfectly composed white separation between two objects. The photograph shows two walls, or a photograph and a wall. The photograph, dare I say is abstract and shows similar qualities to a painting. This picture has been pinned to the lower half on the left wall. This is typical of Rachi's past installations and expresses a connection between the two documented and the single pinned photograph. Essentially, Rachi's aim is significant; he has tried to show how the documenting photograph works in its own environment, teasing the audience with the notion of experiencing photographs – how one can experience something from something else. For me the installation brought me no closer to experiencing any of the photographs, it just presented a separated wall with photographs attached to them – it didn't offer any unique or controlled way of seeing or feeling the photographs. The project for me, strangely reminisces, One and Three Chairs by Joseph Kosuth. Showing a depiction, the actual, and a description of an object. Although I feel the perception of the audience is essential to Untitled (between) I believe this project is not concerned with phenomenology, it is connected closer to how we see and interpret than to how we experience. However, I feel that I should say that I am completely unaware of the artist's intention in this project - I could be just rambling. Essentially to conclude you could argue that it was three pieces of wood and three beautiful photographs. Concept or concept-less I would still admire and remember the remarkable, poetic imagery that Rachi can produce so seamlessly.

Akira Rachi's photographic work is awe-inspiring, pleasing and humbling. Visually, there are obvious connections to Wolfgang Tillman's work, both from subject to installation.

Rachi's opus yet provides a tighter, more poetically pleasing conciseness through his imagery, unlike some of Tillman's more grimy portraits or situation shots. His photographs show staged elements and traces of past, landscaping people's remains and purposes throughout the everyday. The photographs themselves are light, plain and calm. I feel much of Rachi's photographic work looks towards the photograph as being flat and two dimensional, providing an appreciation towards the photographs true surface – this is seen more evidently in his installation work. His photographs are without frames, carefully pinned on a wall. Most would see this action as a clear defacement of a photograph, not seeing it's qualities and value, however, in Rachi's work we see it as him letting you see the photograph without burden. It truthfully stands there, not suffocated and appears completely free. I find it hard to draw a clear and concise connection between his ongoing photographic works seen in *Field 6x7*, to his most recent installation, *Untitled (between)*, apart from the obviousness that two of the photographs depict his past exhibition. It is even more difficult to try and express this in an apparent short introduction.

One thing I feel the most from Rachi's work is his playfulness to express the two dimensions of a photograph, often using it to his own advantage to create a situation that arouses the viewer. Emerson once argued that Fine – Art Photographs had to be natural: that is un-staged and crucially depicting a scene as the eye one saw it. I feel Rachi's work is, but obviously contains staged and installed elements. He looks closely towards the flatness of the photograph and most importantly understanding its purpose in the world. Rachi's work presents to us photographs, expressing the very nature of the medium, both reflectively and physically. His photographs show a naturalistic response to painting, showing the very nature, surface and purpose of a photographic print.

