

## Chairs are for Shirts.

An Introduction to Jivan Frenster

Daniel Caleb Thompson, 2012



In the rooms of our lives we often find ourselves confronted with things that we like. These **likes** often find themselves arranged in proximity to other likes that share relevance.

Sometimes we put our likes in order and other times we put them out of sight when we no longer want to **thing** them. Whether it is a shared quality such as relative size, comparative color or temporal use, the fact that compartmentalization pervades our collections of likes is verifiable in absolutely every human culture that ever existed, be it pre-Neanderthal or post-Facebook.

Not so removed from ancient hearths strewn with animal bones and stone tools covered by the sediment of time or ashtrays full of bottle-caps and half-smoked filter cigarettes in empty bars, Jivan Frenster's newest collection of spatio-temporal paintings is as telling as it is comforting. His pictures thing the performative act of arranging juxtapositions of urban culture's (by)products in such a visceral way that to see them is to be caressed by the fabric of our time.



These swaths of color, qualities of material and **strict aesthetic code** become the nouns, adjectives and verbs glued together with a grammar commonly known as artistic voice. In order to peel back the surface and get to the meaning of these artistic vocalizations, we must use this dialect as a reference to peer into the rich depths of the shadows, reflect light off of the sharp of the razor and ultimately plunge into our **personal** worlds of meaning and relevance.

By applying the strategic and necessarily unexpected displacement of denotata, the works resensitize us to artifacts of our contemporary world. This is accomplished through distinct and repetitive disparate combinations of likes that under normal circumstances should not *like* each other. It is the combinatorial power of the language of art that carves away the artifice of meaning normally attributed to these clumps of material causally bound to this epoch. The syntax of this strangely familiar semantic space (albeit one characterized by wandering designata) vibrates like the overlapping concepts of visual depth to be found in cheap hologram paper taped to a ventilator.

Jivan Frenster's artistic dialect enables us to decontextualize the sum parts of our private worlds to the point at which we can confront the likes that we thing from a perspective no longer attached to causality.

His brazen endeavor is entirely justified in the context of our human art history that has time and time again borne witness to the commonplace application of absolutist aestheticization of temporal form, color and space. As with other pioneers before him, his strict dialect expands the language of art in more ways than merely adding to its vocabulary. His use of the language actually allows us to formulate any number of questions normally forbidden by the mores of consumer culture and logic of the sciences, for example:

***“How does the chair feel about all of this?”***

*Daniel Caleb Thompson, 36, is an artist, programmer and art critic who received his Diplom in the Fine Arts in 2004 at Bauhaus-University Weimar. He was the founder and editor in chief of the Eigenheim Journal of Culture. Today he defends the role of art as a pure language and considers extreme programming to be the best sport. This essay is an excerpt from his forthcoming book: “Morgensprache”.*