



The Khaisman Tapes

USING THE MOST BASIC OF MATERIALS, *Mark Khaisman* CREATES OPULENT IMAGES WITH A MESMERIZING LAYERED SURFACE.

You've gone from being an architect to painting with tape. What's the relationship between the two?

It's strange. It's a love-hate relationship. On one hand, my images are constructed and calculated. On the other, my medium is all about deconstruction, anti-construction. My images imply a fragile, temporary presence, unlike the grandeur that architecture aspires to. Breaking the image into pixels, into layers, and converting matter into a visual illusion – this 'anti-matter' approach to the image is central to my work. Most of my images exist only under certain conditions, such as the presence of light, and may disappear at any moment.

Why the choice of the Louis VX armchairs as a subject?

My installations are open conversations between my tape images and the interior space. Rendering over-scaled Louis XV-epoch chairs in tape, in an old factory brightened by clean 'art walls', is my way of playing with scale, of transforming the factory into a doll's house, and of giving flat chairs an architectural appearance.

How do you create such a painterly effect?

I use layer upon layer of translucent packing tape applied to clear Plexiglas, often placing the work in front of a light box to give the image shadow and depth. I see my tape art as a form of painting. The 5-cm tape acts as a wide brush and the light behind the panels as an alchemist's luminous blending medium.

Your work seems to extract a kind of symbolic significance from tape.

There's a strong counterpoint between the texture and associations of tape with the opulent images I use, like the Louis XV chairs, an opulence ironically belied by the humble medium, like a ball gown made from burlap fabric. The obvious messiness of the tape seems to mesh with the precise image I want, and contrasts effectively with clean or opulent surfaces.

How do people react to your work?

I've been heartened by a recent explosion of interest, through the blogosphere, after working alone for a while. It was a pleasant surprise.

People react to my work because it talks to them on many levels, starting from the very basic level of tactility – almost everyone has held this tape in their hands and is familiar with the sensation of striking a line with it. Many may almost feel it and hear the sound of adhesive being pulled off the roll.

What are you working on now?

Currently, I'm showing a new series, which expands on the themes of film-noir imagery and on how this cinema still sticks with us.

And your ambition for this technique?

I am waiting for the time when people start reacting to my work for the subtler intentions behind my use of tape. I've been working with my invented medium long enough to know it's not just a simple trick, and I enjoy exploring the finer points.

Do you think you have explored all its possibilities yet?

My conversation with tape is still ongoing, and I'm still fascinated by it. Actually, I think I might be stuck with it.

khaismanstudio.com

WORDS *Jane Szita*
PHOTOS *George P. Rausch*



KHAISMAN'S IMAGES OF LOUIS XV FURNITURE HAVE A PAINTERLY PRESENCE.