

that does not seem a take-it-pop art stand-in for a hypertext construct of conceptual economy. As counterpoint to an art's relationship to lived reality (and perhaps a pun on "art as material object"), the distinction between object/(let)/art was blurred in the accumulation of discarded personal belongings, having been stripped of associative meaning and re-contextualized as alien effects. Visible from the gallery's exterior window was that which is generally considered as remaining in commodity culture (the residual conglomerate of use-value), the signs emptied of meaning but for the principle of attraction. As nature with any adequate interpretation, both of the exhibition's intent and its physical manifestation, the reflective and indeterminate surface of the exterior window mirrored the surrounding community's architectural space, obfuscating the contents of the gallery. The conceptual shift in perception, between viewing a three-dimensional commodity (in this case the found-object), and the illusory overlay (the glass reflection), suggested the superrealist "lost works" of Richard Diebenkoff or Malcolm Morley, philosophically disjunct visual critiques that conceptually recontextualized lived experience through ambient perceptual readings.

In what may appear on the surface to be a contradiction in terms, Kim's second concurrent Chicago exhibition comprises two black-on-black wall paintings commissioned by the Museum of Contemporary Art. Kim's earlier painted works emphasized the nuances of coloration and the synthetic significance of color gradation within culture, conveying sociological concerns through the minimalist, lexical vocabulary of the monochromatic color-field. Here the artist has taken as his inspiration the three hues (red/black, blue/black, and black) composing Ad Reinhardt's abstract painting located on the museum's fourth floor. Working from a composite description of the colors provided by four MCA staff members, the acrylic panels were executed directly on the museum wall surfaces. Appearing initially as prescriptive, monochromatic color field works, the panels recall Mark Rothko's late, virtually black monochromes such as those at the Rothko Chapel in Houston that suggest a critical, monochromatic monochromism even as they eliminate the underlying matrix of illusional relations, the figure/ground

orientation. Kim's MCA works, however, harbor none of the elegiac solemnity of excluded relics subject to an entryway's acrophony and cluster; the two monochromes flank the museum's front entry vestibule and reception area. Exposed to fluctuating available light, the placements of the panels requires the viewer to move around and to simulate the works from various viewpoints, even as the confined area limits one's ability to do so. Concerning the ultra-reductive purity of his own work, Reinhardt had written, "No lines or imaginings, no shapes or compositions or representations, no visions or sensations or impulses, no symbols or signs or images, no descriptions or colorings or paintings, no phrases or joints, no accidents or trademarks, no things, no ideas, no relations, no attitudes, no qualities—nothing that is not of the canvas." As a subtle (yet fundamentally) departure from Reinhardt's subtractive, unified imagery, Kim's wall paintings depict the night sky as it might be seen through a canopy of tree branches, abstractly entitled *Night Sky (Black/Blue)*, *Night Sky (Red/Blue)* suggesting the irregular, trailing capes of Cleveland Hill's wooded pine applications, the nearly invisible imagery is made available only through prolonged disorientation, as subtle rational differences in coloristic gradation and meet against white surfaces. Delicate hand-rendered lines in the two panels' weathered demurred surfaces, evidencing the front-to-back inseparability between the painted skins and its walled support. Relying a displaced opticality, the works seemingly hover and wobble, suspended as weightless voids against the support's structural rigors.

Questioning the material nature of the art object as illusional construct, Kim's two projects embody the philosophically congruent devices of minimalism and pop art in an aesthetic play between what is and is not being represented; as though in a post-Barthes response to technologically mediated visibility, meaning is re-evaluated via cumulative modes of perception, making any single coloration toward the works impossible.

Olga Zakarewicz, South Holland, Illinois

ILLINOIS

Byron Kim

Gallery 400, The University of Illinois at Chicago
 February 9 - March 14

Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago
 February 20 - August

Interested in the processes by which culture acquires aesthetic knowledge, Byron Kim utilizes tropes of realism, idealism and abstraction in ways that shift the structures of artistic commodification, widening the margins of modernism to include the multi-perspectival. "Deposit" encompasses a participant-activated project as part of an artist-in-residence program (the second of a series), transforming the gallery space into a receptacle. Kim collaborated with students and faculty of the School of Art and Design and the Chicago community-at-large, encouraging participants to bring personal belongings into the gallery and symbolically cast them away by depositing the objects over a partition and into a narrow space visible from street-side plate-glass windows. As an archival record to the cultural, psychological process of disabusement, an audio recording was made by each participant, describing the objects' history and personal significance. The accompanying oral narratives filled the gallery with layered and (re)materialized counterparts to the newly dispossessed objects, ungraspable but for their proliferation to fragment an otherwise fragment. The objects (which might be variously interpreted as detritus or found-object) were allowed to accumulate free-form within the exhibition space, so that the shape and magnitude of the monochromes metamorphosed over the project's duration.

Indeed with the assistance of a somewhat displaced storefront window display, the depos-



Byron Kim, *Night Sky (Black/Blue)*, 1998, acrylic, 20' x 20'
 (photo courtesy of Museum of Contemporary Art)