



<< BACK



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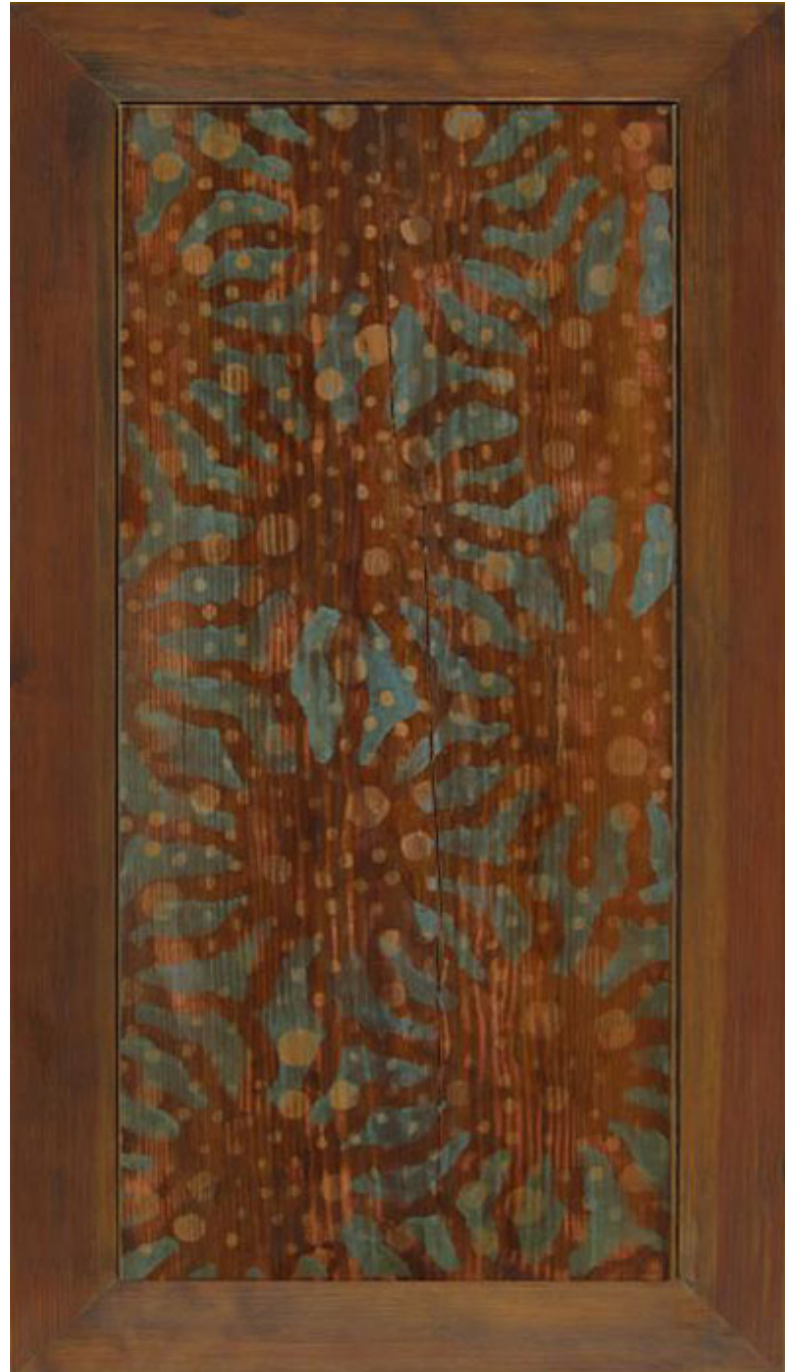
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**Jack Rees, Optical Algorithm C48.**



## Visual and Verbal Communication, Small Craft Warnings for the Digerati



Jack Rees, Balibu Tower 4126sm.

**Kansas City Jewish Museum of Contemporary Art  
Epsten Gallery at Village Shalom  
5500 West 123rd Street (at Nall Avenue)  
913-266-8413  
Overland Park  
*j.m. rees: quasi-objects of mental kind*  
May 16-June 27, 2010**

**By BLAIR SCHULMAN**

The Internet is a Pandora's Box of readymade information. In quasi-objects of a mental kind, Jack Rees connects societal interactions with ideas that imbue history, architecture, theology and straightforward visual impact. Our need for information is the center of his theme here -- information that we tend to massage and manipulate to our own ends

An architect, artist, designer and thinker, Rees uses this exhibition to prick up our senses. One can see, feel and smell this blending of organic and manmade materials that scores a catchy musical cadence. Painted antique pine panels are the rhythm, but his 18-foot installation, Balibu Tower, is the hook.

In the original Tower of Babel, Babylonian society wanted to create a "stairway to heaven." Following the Great Flood, according to the Book of Genesis, an enormous tower was built with the intention of uniting humanity by speaking a single language. Displeased with the builders' intent, Yahweh (God in Hebrew) came down and confused their languages and scattered the people throughout the earth (Genesis 11:5-8).

The structural frame of wood and steel Rees uses is actually the top stage of a windmill tower, contrived to support "ribbons" made from polycarbonate, an engineered plastic that retains its memory. This tower facilitates the manifestation of ribbons as an improvisational piece. Latin, Hebrew and Arabic letters in gray, blue, red and orange colors are created with sign printing technology. A "great collector of patterns", Rees has worked on this idea for last two years, calling it an "ongoing investigation of forms that are comprised of surfaces..." Soaring upward in the center of the 31 x 21 foot gallery, one is instantly drawn to the tower in a gasp of 'Excelsior!' Balibu unifies the fundamentals of communication. Our differences, like the ribbons, remain inexplicably tangled, leaving us to repeat history.

Rees is owner of an architecture and construction company in Kansas City, Missouri. He holds a Master of Science degree in Architectural Studies from the University of Texas and attended Cooper Union, School of Architecture in New York City. In 2007, he edited and published *The Sixth Surface: Steven Holl Lights the Nelson-Atkins Museum* (topograpic press) which



Jack Rees, Optical Algorithm B54.

discusses the museum's world-famous 2007 addition. His work has been seen around the globe, including a 1982 group installation at famed PS1 in Long Island City, New York that designed and installed Manhattan Miniature Golf, a playable miniature golf course made by nine different sculptors.

Optical Algorithm explores batik textiles, Maori tattoos, Modernist painting and woodblock print patterns through sixteen wood panel drawings. Composed of antique pine measuring about 22" x 45", they line the gallery walls, guarding the tower on two sides. The pine was salvaged from the wood columns of a 19th century furniture factory in Kansas City's commercial West Bottoms neighborhood. These pieces pay respect to the carpentered spaces of 18th and 19th industrial architecture.

Rees uses a seven coat process similar to furniture finishing. He paints, scrapes it off and starts over until a satisfactory image emerges. The finished design is an organic integration to the wood's natural grain.

Pieces like Optical Algorithm z85 (2010, casein, shellac, lacquer, UV ink on antique pine) respect the order of the grain and add another layer of aural sensation to enhance a sense of volume. Optical Algorithm n845 (2010, casein, stain, enamel, oil, lacquer on antique pine) highlights the imperfect shape of the wood.

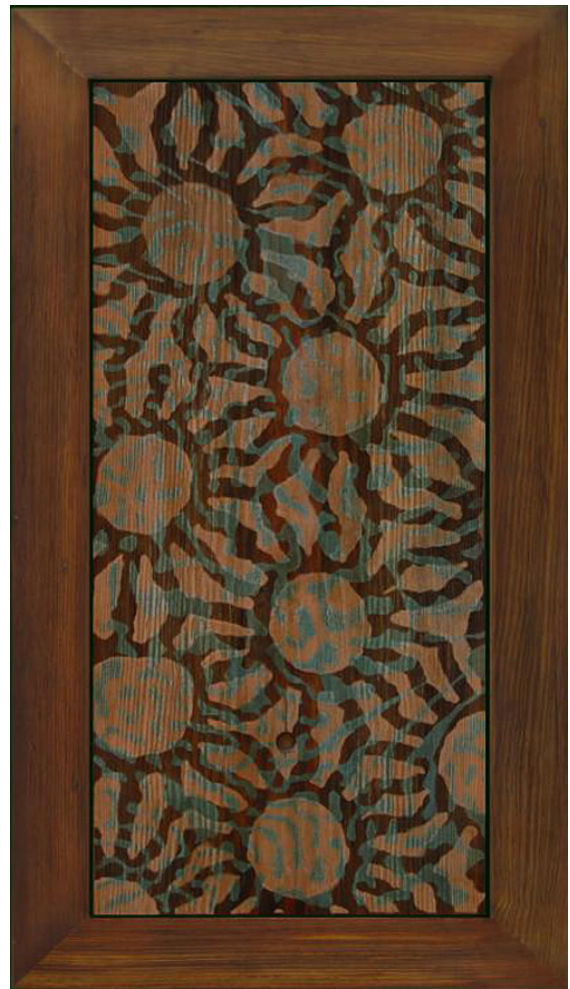
The frames for each piece are also crafted by Rees and fitted to absorb the potential for growth or shrinkage as wood is apt to do. Stained lightly or darkly ebonized, each frame is organic to the panel.

Although the body of panels holds a certain grace, as a group the abundance of mutated colors are too cerebral. Their total beauty is recognized when lined up, adding strength to Balibu and all its historic aspects.

Making the case that "we live in a two ½ dimensional world," Rees says pattern is a characteristic to our perceived thickness of the way the world exists. It helps us read a little further than we are expected to and can be seen as another dimension of communication. His work reaches out to show us how humanity uses, and lives by, this impact.



Jack Rees, Optical Z85Msm.



Jack Rees, Optical Algorithm E44.





Jack Rees, Optical Algorithm G78sm.

Jack Rees, Optical Algorithm G57.

