

## Spotlight Reviews

### VERMONT

Spheris Gallery/Bellows Falls

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#### DANIEL KOHN: INTERIORS & PORTRAITS

Daniel Kohn paints with oil the way most people paint with watercolor. But if that statement conjures up images of busy, washed-out colors on small, intimate paper, forgive me for misleading you. Kohn uses big, bright, earthy colors. His canvases are a vast acreage of tone, texture, and light; his subjects are not things, but the space between things. Interiors & Portraits presents paintings from as far back as 1997, along with a large selection of new work done over the past year in Kohn's Brooklyn studio.



Daniel Kohn, *Between Places*, oil on canvas, 82 x 81", 2004.



Daniel Kohn, *New Year's Eve*, oil on canvas, 96 x 120", 2004.

Kohn, a former resident of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's World Views program, grabbed national attention for *Seen From Above*, an installation at Grand Central Terminal's Vanderbilt Hall of two 35-foot-by-28-foot landscapes depicting east and west views from the 91st floor of the World Trade Center. *Seen From Above* is a fantastic example of the role art plays in emotional reckoning: The perfect showcase for Kohn's unique ability to fasten planes of light and color in an evocation that transects worldly and celestial realms.

Against this backdrop, *Interiors & Portraits* provides an opportunity to see what Kohn can do with a smaller, more personable subject. In creating a painting, Kohn first draws a general sketch, the marks of which remain visible in the finished work. He then paints with a variety of brush strokes using a cacophony of colors and tones.

The conveniently titled *Red* (84 inches by 72 inches) is a huge canvas of red bordered by dark tan on the top and light tan on the left. This is a painting of a floor—a bright, burnt red floor; its clean, empty, spacious area would be a solid color were it not for the strokes of blue glazing the canvas. Uneven lines and the artist's original sketch markings give the work a casual feel. The little bit of visible door and walls exist only to tell the viewer, This is a floor.

The effect in *Red* is a piece that meditates on space. *Utensils* (30 inches by 30 inches), by contrast, is a smaller, more enclosed piece presenting kitchen utensils in canisters on a shelf: a ladle, spatula, and spoon. With a palette of black and blue touched by red and ochre, *Utensils* is marked by short gestural strokes and lines that carry across the canvas. Where *Red* is spacious and clean, *Utensils* is closed and cluttered.

Alain Moreau (58 inches by 53 inches) and Thierry Riffis (57.5 inches by 45 inches) offer a chance to compare portraits. Both men, old family friends of Kohn, sit quarter profile. Kohn paints them from the perspective of a man on a step stool, looking down on the subjects. Riffis is reading; Moreau's hands are on his lap as he looks down to his left. In Moreau's portrait, Kohn painted over a small table upon which sits a cup and plate. In Riffis's, something is painted over as well. Such editing leaves the men in a diminished space, aware of their isolation—thoughtful, reflective, and a little sad.

*Ric Kasini Kadour*

#### Also reviewed in this issue:

*Sarah Lutz and Anne Russinof: Shapes* at Phoenix Gallery

*Peter Schumann: The U.S. Senate Reads an E-Mail by The Late Rachel Corrie to Her Parents* at Julian Scott Gallery at Johnson State College