

Fascinated with the progress of technology, yet seduced by nature and the elements, Bennett's approach combines the organizational calm of the grid with the organic nature of smoke. The viewer is not immediately aware of the natural carbon, as the resulting image resembles more technological or scientific matter, such as computer circuitry, pixilated newsprint, or a seismographic reading. Haines Gallery, press release, excerpt, 2002

"The proximity of fire to paintings and works of art on paper stirs up alarming visions of unwanted disasters, if not wholesale destruction. The three artists in *Burning Images*, Andrew Bennett, John Cage and Paul Chojnowski, find means to channel this inherently menacing situation. With exceptional finesse they coax heat into situations where its destructive capability works as a creative device.Bennett's work, on gesso panels uses the soot, sulfur, wax, and wicks. Carbon and trace elements from wood matches and candles to fix sublime and sensuous patterns on his surfaces. These compelling patterns evoke the repetitious acts of striking a match, watching the wax melt and wick burn or following the random curls of smoke. The fixed control of Bennett's pattern-making contrast with the chaos and unpredictability of the fire and smoke. Like the fixed fixation of campfire, Bennett's fields of pattern and consumption focus attention on the beauty and fascination of an inherently unruly medium." -

Briggs, Peter "Burning Images" catalog excerpt, chief Curator Arizona Museum of Art, 2002

"Bennett's multiplicity of metaphors are fresh and innovative and the supreme irony is that at the heart of his mediums there is the implication of that which has already happened or things that will no longer exist. The work lays claim to a reading of painting that is humorous and telling, for Bennett has literally set fire to the painterly composition and his work is that substance of the argument that has been left behind."

Haye, Christian "Preserving the Ephemeral" excerpt from catalog essay, 1998

"His Art contains a language of elaborate sensuousness and luscious danger, becoming an enticing menu of techno-pyro experiments.... Bennett's use of materials is sublime. The viewer's cognitive awareness of Bennett's materials runs parallel with their appreciation of the illusion he creates with his materials. One doesn't surpass the other." -

Freeman, David, Reviews, ARTLIES, Texas Art Journal, Winter 98-'99 p.56, (photo)

"But terse, one - sentenced criticism is a vainglorious exercise, and nobody wants to be too much of a fussbudget. In fact a much more interesting and engaging take on natural phenomena interacting with the artist's endeavor is found in Andrew Bennett's *RITUAL BURNING WITH IN THE CONSTRUCT IF A GRID* (1998), an obsessive series of burnings onto the canvass worked to a high gloss. It's a startling effect and a process that hints at a John Cagean element of chance worked into visual media." -

McCabe, Bret, "State Of Things", Met Arts, The Met, Nov. 17 1999. (photo) "Exhibit Takes A Fresh look At Texas Art" Dallas Morning News, Nov.21, 1999

"These Hauntingly beautiful, luminous pieces capture the ephemeral and act as reminders of the fleeting nature of life." -

Cohen, Keri Guten, "Two shows challenge viewers and art's definition", Detroit Free Press, Gallerie, Sunday, Feb. 22, 1998.

"Andrew Bennett .the one exhibitor not using paint per se, has an effective technique that involves igniting such object as candles or matches and recording the smoke on a gesso surface. Organized on a grid, his four small panels are wonderfully small and luminous." -

Colby, Joy Hanakson, "A diverse Artist Market shows that painting lives" The Detroit News, Exhibits, Thursday, Feb. 8, 1998

"Although his compositions of gestural markings organized along geometric matrices recall to some extent the systemic painting and drawings of the 1960s (by Agnes Martin, Robert Ryman, or Sol LeWitt, for example), they are in reality, not paintings at all. Bennett's markings are composed of soot and smoke, made by "painting" wooden panels with candles or matches. Expanding upon a tradition begun with 1960s process art, each work becomes a record of its own making, only now the resultant images resemble abstract calendars- but without any reference to any particular day." -

David Rubin, excerpt, catalog essay, Phoenix Triennial 1998

Andrew Bennett... emerges this decade with a fresh take on that standby of abstraction, the grid. He makes elegant designs with fire, using the flame, its soot, the burned head of a kitchen match as his brush and pigments on glass - like surfaces prepared with gesso or wax. These ghostly tools possess a unique palette of caramel, charcoal grey and black. -

Johnson, Patricia C. "Galleries Driven to Abstraction", Houston Chronicles, Sept. 16, 1997. (p. 1D)

"Bennett's "Fire Paintings", a new series of works recently exhibited at Inman gallery in Houston Texas. Privilege random occurrence at the expense of total control. In doing so they celebrate the intersection of conscious manipulation and chance. The work seems to reflect the dilemma of contemporary life - there is the desire for the sublime, but too much knowledge of our failures to completely believe in obtaining it." -

Kalil, Susie, "Playing with Fire", Vary Magazine, May/June. 1995 (pp. 99-101, (photo)

"Primordial in nature, smoke evokes both history and memory, Recorded as a moment, the elemental nature of Fire is played out in a microcosm of space and time. Bennett's' incidents are simultaneously brief and perpetual, collapsing history and memory into flicker of flame, leaving persistent and perpetual mark." -

Brandt, Todd "Marking Time", excerpt, catalog essay, 1995

"Andrew Bennett embraces the conventions of painting only to renounce it most familiar features. Flat, wall- hung supports with emphatic picture planes. Bennett's paintings are even organized by the grid, which situates them well within the Western Pictorial tradition. But other than those morphological characteristics, which according to Joseph Kosuth, classify "similar- looking objects... because of a similarity of visual/ experiential 'readings" as art ("Art After Philosophy,"1969), Bennett's work has little in common with painting. He uses neither paint nor canvas, relying instead on fire and wood. Unlike Yves Klein, who put torch to canvas in the 1960s, Bennett uses candles, matches and other burning implements in a constructive manner to evoke the primitive, beneficial connotations of fire. Marked with the miniature astral displays of soot, these silky, cream - colored surfaces are microcosms of a well-ordered universe." -

Colpitt, Francis, "Marking time" catalog introduction, 1995