

DANIEL GORDON

NIGHT PICTURES

June 1–July 1, 2020



James Fuentes is proud to present *Night Pictures* a new body of work by **Daniel Gordon**, on view concurrently at jamesfuentes.online and the Art Dealers Association of America's new online viewing room platform. In *Night Pictures* Gordon crisscrosses between digital and analogue techniques, experimenting with the manipulation of files found via Google image searches. Digital files become printed images only to be cut and paste again—this time with scissors and glue—to create the scenes for Gordon's lens-based photographs.

Recalling an earlier project, *Thirty-One Days* (2009) which also features digital images of everyday objects arranged in awkward situations, a decade later *Night Pictures* comes as a surprise on the heels of Gordon's more recent ventures into abstraction (*Blue Room*, 2018 at James Fuentes). Once again tightening the focus of his tableaux, in *Night Pictures* Gordon resumes his investigation of still life in vignettes that openly show the utilization of digital tools and the artist's handicraft. Here, "close-ups" of a pizza, a kitchen sink, an N-95 mask, tables scattered with books, or legs relaxing on a carpeted floor, only seem to offer a view into the artist's private abode. Instead, the domain of the domestic serves as a motif directed by Gordon's selections from his image search (for a sink faucet or a bottle of Windex) to reveal a fantasy of daily life in quarantine.

Known for his youthful "flying pictures," around the mid 2000s, Gordon began experimenting with making the digital image file the fundamental element in his practice as a lens-based photographer. Paradoxes emerge as Gordon moves between 2-D and 3-D formats doubling down on what it means to manipulate the file. In works like *Artichokes and Pizza* Gordon pokes fun at the digital gesture by showing a hot delicious pizza in an inverted cartoonish pizza box or a pair of scissors that look as if they are made out of paper. These visual jokes both nuance and problematize seeing by revealing illusions that provoke questions about what appears real or natural on the screen.

While employing a cut and paste technique reminiscent of Matisse's late-period abstract cut-out collages, the power clash patterns in the photographer's gradient rich backgrounds make works like *Eyeliner Lilies* burst with kinetic buzz. Testing the effects of pixilation, patterns, and added noise against photographed textures, color, and shape for his staged setups, Gordon's experiments play with layering both in computer applications as well as with parts and wholes of cut paper prints. For example, while the collaged fruit in *Apples and Avocados* may make for unappetizing representations, their recognizable historical presence as elements of still life allow for their glitchy vegan aesthetic to take center stage.

In *Windex and Magnolia* the illusion of refraction is forcibly inserted by design hinting at the impossibility of transparency and the flat shape of a sharply photographed blue Scott brand sponge appears out of place against the feigned yellow counter-top and deep blue-green gradient resembling fake wall tile. What might be perceived as natural to the eye is frustrated between seeing the digitized printed image of a hand unable to convincingly grip the steel end of an overly flattened blade in *Saw, Fruits, and Magnolia*. Across his oeuvre, Gordon continues to grapple with layers of optical fields between digitized image files, the appearance of digitized images printed on paper or canvas, and how the viewer interprets these encounters. Over the course of the series deciding on criteria for believability in the 'real' may become less important than noticing the multiplicity of sensations happening between the eye and the algorithm.