



Printer's Devil Review

John Gentile. *Paintings*.
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John Gentile

Text by JESS BARNETT



Three Paper Sculptures.
2011
Oil on canvas
36 × 48 in.
JOHN GENTILE

THE PURSUIT OF MEMORY is a difficult art. Considering John Gentile's pieces, displayed in this edition of *PDR*, it's clear that we each have our own methods for this pursuit.

For some, it's collecting items for scrapbooks or saving photos in albums; for others, it's through savoring smells, which can bring us back to a different time more poignantly than anything visual ever could.

In Gentile's work, he seems to trap images, either memories or visions, within the boundaries of layers. Light and color, shaped in some pieces like a twisted length of telephone cord or a barbed-wire fence, trap layers of meaning behind them, presenting these to the viewer like an offering. In others, the cords of light themselves create the image, as in *Change Up*, which features

disembodied orange flowers of dubious origin.

In *Old Clothes*, the clothes and cords are equal layers, creating a lonely, left-behind feeling that recalls vacant lots behind schools or abandoned train tracks.

Gentile's oil technique creates a faded, slightly blurred-at-the-edges feel that adds to the sense of nostalgia, muted in some pieces and exaggerated in others (as in *Old Clothes* and *Three Paper Sculptures*, respectively).

Gentile's stint as a commercial artist from 1961 to 1971 shows in his occasional inclusion of scraps of words and advertisements in his work. These are always carefully modified, however, to exclude any pertinent information.

Memory cannot be branded.



Old Clothes. 2010
Oil on Canvas, 68 x 92 in.
JOHN GENTILE



Change Up. 2010
Oil on Canvas, 60 x 80 in.
JOHN GENTILE



Study for Old Clothes. 2010
Graphite on Vellum, 13 x 17 in.
JOHN GENTILE



One Through Fifteen. 2010
Oil on Canvas, 74 x 124 in.
JOHN GENTILE