

An abstract painting in shades of blue, with numerous white, gestural brushstrokes and scratches scattered across the surface. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

MARCO BREUER
CONDITION

VON LINTEL GALLERY · NEW YORK

The Rectangle Mines

They labor all day in the rectangle mines. Strips come peeled free from frozen, phosphorescent falls. One tap shatters them into piles of perfect, parallel, crystal sheets which are polished, stacked, and hauled away. Since that fateful Friday in 1739—when Nissefor, a Bobo tribesman from the Niger river island city of Djenne, fell down a dark shaft, and struggled to the surface with a perfect rectangle which froze an image of his straining face—the history of culture has been written on these rectangles. Almost everyone on earth has known the pleasure of unveiling the rectangle from its black velvet cowl, wresting authored images from the unpiloted flux. It turns out images are an utterly renewable resource. The more rectangles, the more meaning. As long as we can see, we can mean.

But what about the miners? They're underground, in the utter dark, unionized but subject to horrific cuts and amputations. Some have gone on to become great rectanglists themselves. And of course there is Breuer. This now-famous artist began in the lowest job in Landshut, the deepest Bavarian rectangle mine, carting off unusable, scuffed, and chipped plates. But instead of disposing of them, he dragged them to the surface. He built a mud-wattle studio in Djenne, at the exact spot of Nissefor's descent, and has been filling it for years with these cracked, scratched, mistreated rectangles. Every morning, Breuer goes to work in the rectangle mines. What he comes home with is meaning.

Tim Davis