

'Time Machines' and Live Painting, Time Travel Still Impossible

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By [Hannah Brehm](#)

If anyone is having trouble remembering a time when art simultaneously addressed the past and the present, you are probably not alone. It is certainly not headline news to say that contemporary art is staunchly, almost blindly rooted in the present, and to be more specific, in the personas, tics and hangups of the artists themselves (The New Museum's [The Generational: Younger Than Jesus](#), I'm looking at you).

But, for those of you who are nostalgic for simpler times, who long for art that encourages you to think about where we have been and where we are going, [Jason Brammer](#) might be a good place to begin.

His most recent series of hybrid painting explores the relationships between technology, history, and a host of visual media, striking a delicate balance between the future and the past, art and science, fact and fiction.

Next Saturday, May 9, from 8-11 pm at the [Star Lounge](#) in Chicago, Brammer will open [Into the After](#). The exhibition will feature his ["Time Machines"](#) series. You should see the show, regardless, but if you attend the opening reception, there is a particularly engaging incentive ...



"Time Machine XXVI" by Jason Brammer

Brammer will be presenting a live painting. Drawing from a rich tradition of painting as performance, the artist will use the reception as an opportunity to demonstrate his technique, engage the audience, and amalgamate the sometimes disparate genres of performance art, sculpture, and painting.

I think this is partly what makes Brammer's practice so intriguing. Clearly, his work is greatly indebted to the found-object sculptures of [Joseph Cornell](#), the *Anthropométries* painting series by [Yves Klein](#), and the organic sculptures of [Eva Hesse](#), but criticizing or pastiching these artists is not the point of his found object-sculpture-paintings.

Rather, Brammer is attempting the lofty goal of traversing space and time by rooting his pieces in a particular moment -- the act of the live painting and the instantaneous results of airbrushing -- but at the same time, bridging the gap between the beginning of the 20th and 21st centuries by using antiqued materials and the formal language of Surrealism.

Into the After prompts the viewer to ponder questions such as: What does our industrial past mean for our diminishing future? How can our perception of the past help us imagine an alternative future? And to what extent can art prompt imaginary time travel between what was and what could be?

Prints and paintings will be available at Star Lounge, partial proceeds from the show will benefit the [Chicago Coalition for the Homeless](#).