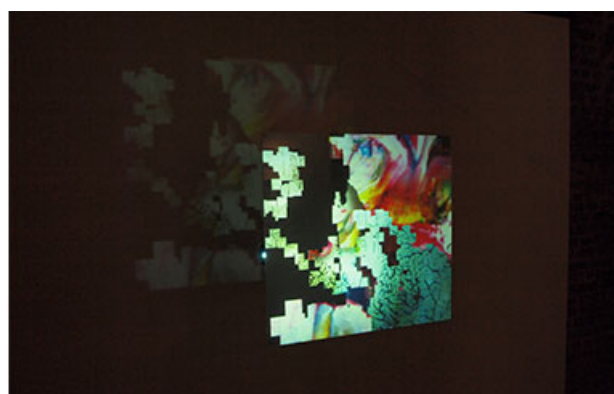
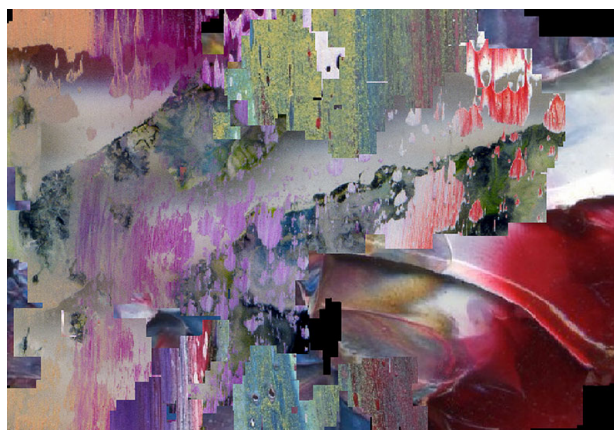


## CURRENTS

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## SHAPING THE DIGITAL

by Serena Porrati | November 26, 2014



In the realms of computational technology a machine rarely remains in a single pattern of operational procedure, unlike automated machines of the industrial age. Not only is today's technology able to adjust its behaviours to our needs but, when exposed to



minimal forms of control, contemporary machines can amaze us with innumerable unexpected reactions. The subtle disruption of technology reveals an exciting premise for human and machine to meet. This new type of creative collaboration is taken up by Shinji Toya whose 'Automatic Abstract Painter No.3' utilises a specially created computer program, in which the projected image on a screen is composed and recomposed by layering three randomly selected images. The artist produced several paintings that were subsequently digitally scanned and

cropped in random shapes, and the programme contains over three hundred of these digitised images.

"I use paintings for my work as I'm interested in the question of how we perceive the digital image, and how this perception may appear differently from the perception of the texture of physical materials," Toya explains. "In 'Automatic Abstract Painting No.3', this perceptual exploration results in a kind of cognitive disorientation. When we look at the composed images, it can sometimes be difficult to see the boundary between the surface of the physical material (painting), and the digitally manipulated part of the image which has no material existence. The looking leads to a disoriented sense of seeing. This interplay of looking and (not) seeing seems to be a rather popular subject for painters today, but my work explores the subject on a digital platform."

Toya's algorithm includes random variables, in this way introducing irregularity into the operation. From the random selection of the painted images, to the selected images' cropping selection and speed, the variables ensure that the picture is unlikely to repeat. While a state of constant change is upheld, a certain style in the patterns of depiction can be recognized. There is a sense of order in composing the images, meaning that the operation of the program is not entirely chaotic. In this sense, the random variables introduce a tension between order and chaos, and it is precisely from this tension that the unseen compositions emerge.

"In the artwork, there is a sense of originality in the innovative configuration of the algorithmic system," Toya says. "By combining the procedural rules of the program with the kind of images used, the system and resulting imagery is originated as it is uniquely configured. The algorithm is the point of origin that distributes versions of the work, which are a variety of screenshot images. These images are residues of the program's operation – the real-time event of information processing."

Toya's work undeniably breaks the dualistic order of natural-artificial, object-subject, and original copy, deepening itself in the nowness of the digitalised era where objects are images, and images are information. His colourful proliferations are self-composing and self-connecting, subverting the logic of the copy and the original, breaking the limit of the frame and crossing any predictable dualism. They are realer than real.

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