

Lisa Cianci
Colour Fields
15 September - 8 October 2011

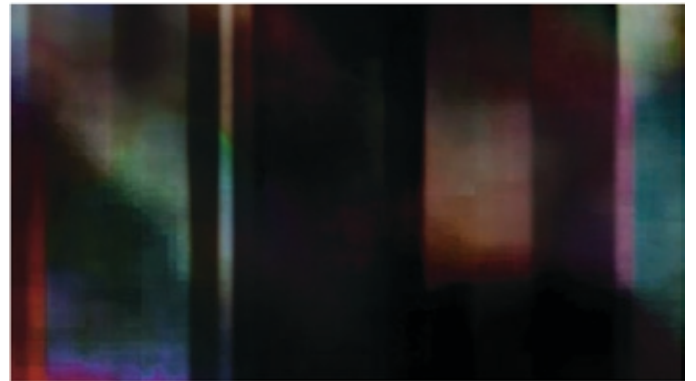
Catalogue Essay
Dr Stefan Schutt
Victoria University

Lisa Cianci makes exquisite works of craft. Her Colour Fields are hand-made, beautiful, evocative.

But Cianci does not use thread, paper or wood. Instead she works with digitised images and videos sourced from her personal archives. An accomplished coder, archivist, painter and web artist, Cianci manipulates her materials with the tools of the programmer - variables, if statements and for loops, probabilities, arrays - to create generative montages. Within these works, to borrow from Eisenstein, "each sequential element is perceived not next to the other, but on top of the other", creating ever-changing panoramas of soft collisions, intersections and resonances.

If such a deployment of computer code sounds clinical, 'digital' as it were, the results are anything but. In orchestrating her layered images via the wand of her hand-written computer code, Cianci generates echoes and loops that appear new yet strangely familiar. She evokes a spectral past that is just beyond reach, close yet elusive, a form of Derrida's hauntology, "the paradoxical state of the spectre, which is neither being nor non-being". At heart, Cianci is a visual artist concerned with memory and aesthetics. The technology is a tool, like a hammer or a crochet hook.

Cianci's concept of the 'digital hand-made' suits our times perfectly: an era that has lost itself in a blizzard of change, a hail of ones and zeroes, and is trying hard to find its way home, adapting the domestic practices and affectations of a lost past. Knitting, pickling, folk strumming: these and more are back in town. So why not apply this way of working to programming itself? Artists have long worked with what was once called 'new media', but few have been inclined to master its logical intricacies, preferring to subcontract others to do this work. Cianci has taken the opposite approach, learning to love the technology she works with, but in a DIY, cottage-industry manner she calls 'kludging it'; combining readily available software applications to create her own engines of yearning. The results, we think, speak for themselves.



Animations (top to bottom):
colourField4 - the wedding
colourField13 - dark stripes
colourField33 - bamboo sisters
colourField31.5 - alien resident

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