



SALAD BAR VS MELTING POT

— PHOTOGRAPHIC ABSTRACTION
AS DIGITAL MODIFICATION

1. The computer as medium

Computers have characteristic features, which determine the users' thinking, creative (and methodical) approach.

The advantages of computers for practical use are (Gyenes, 2002):

1. Innumerable copies can be made.
2. No quality deterioration.
3. Possibility of more free experimentation.
4. Variations can be created easily.
5. Play is an important part of freeing creativity.
6. The measure of risk is reduced.
7. Deletion happens in an instant.
8. Successive drafts of the work can be preserved.
9. Different versions can be seen at once.
10. Only the important settings have to be saved.
11. It is possible to return to the original starting point or to any variation in a moment.
12. The automatic steps possible in (m)any programs.
13. Unlike analogue media, an element can be inserted anywhere at any time.
14. Associative thinking comes into prominence. This is favourable to the constructive, creative approaches.
15. The process can be followed or recalled in full by the instructor or the student/artist. The working log is preserved in the computer.

2. Remixing and Hybridity

Originally (remix in music):

A remix is an alternative version of a song, different from the original version. A remixer uses mixing to compose an alternate recording, adding or subtracting elements, or changing the components.

Connected notions:

loops, collage, sampling, scratching, sequencing, mashup, bootlegs, bastard pop, blends, re-cut, cut up, hybridizing, montage, appropriation (art)...

Broader context:

The art of remixing - ways of working with information into a multilayered multireferential whole which is much than the sum of its parts.

(Digital) Mashup:

It is a digital media file containing text, graphics, audio, video and animation. It creates a new derivative work. Technically all mashups are remixes.

Video (Mashup) Art:

A video mashup is the combination of multiple sources of video (– which usually have no relevance with each other).

Foregoings in art:

Rejlander combined 30 different elements of photos.

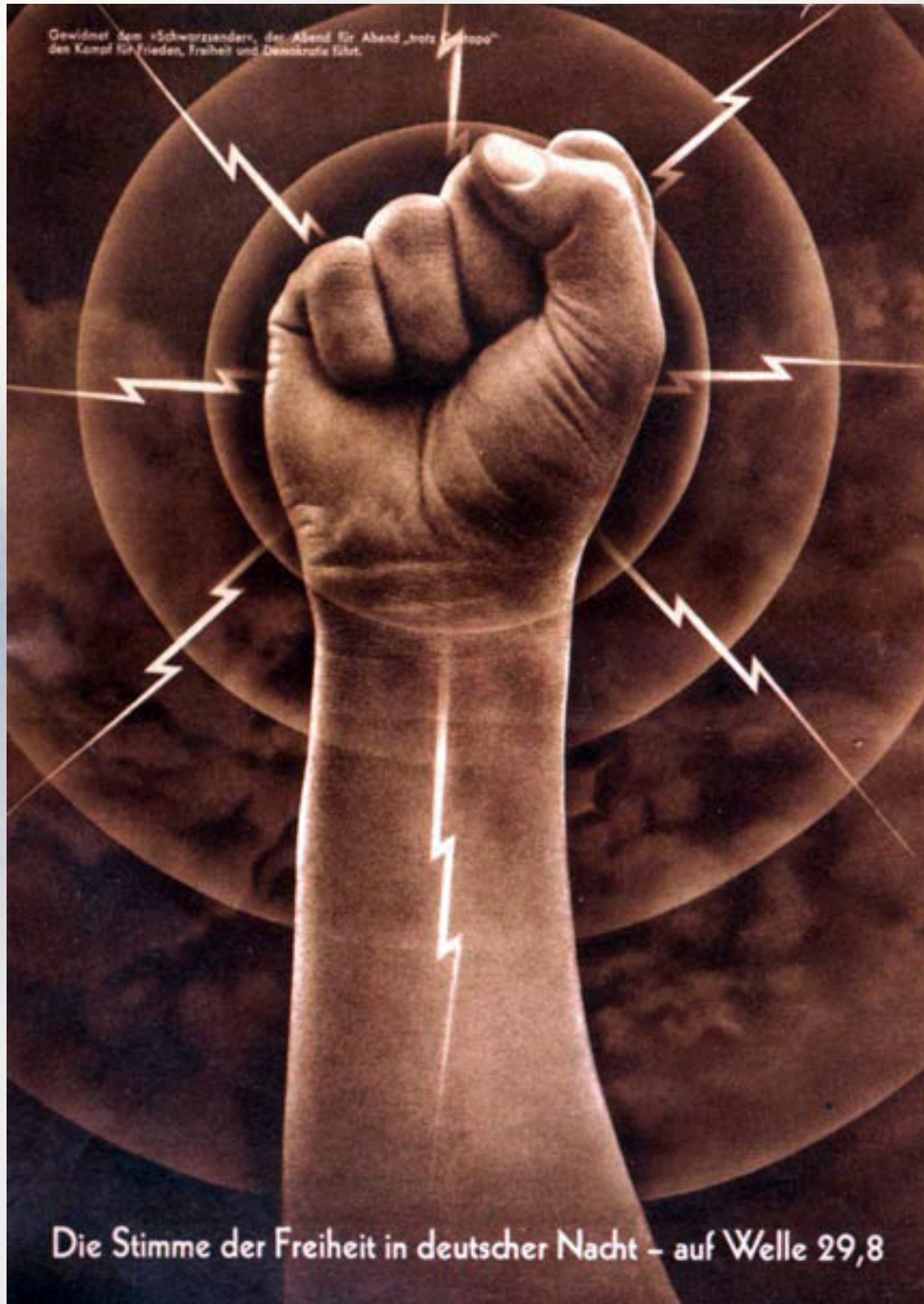


Rejlander: "Two ways of life ", 1857, Tirage au charbon, 42,5 x 79,5 cm



Free, associative “cut up” work.
Contrasts: different contents and
forms.

Hannah Höch: (Dada-collage), 1919-1920.



Heartfield merged different elements of photos.



John Heartfield: Voice of Freedom in the German Night, 1937.



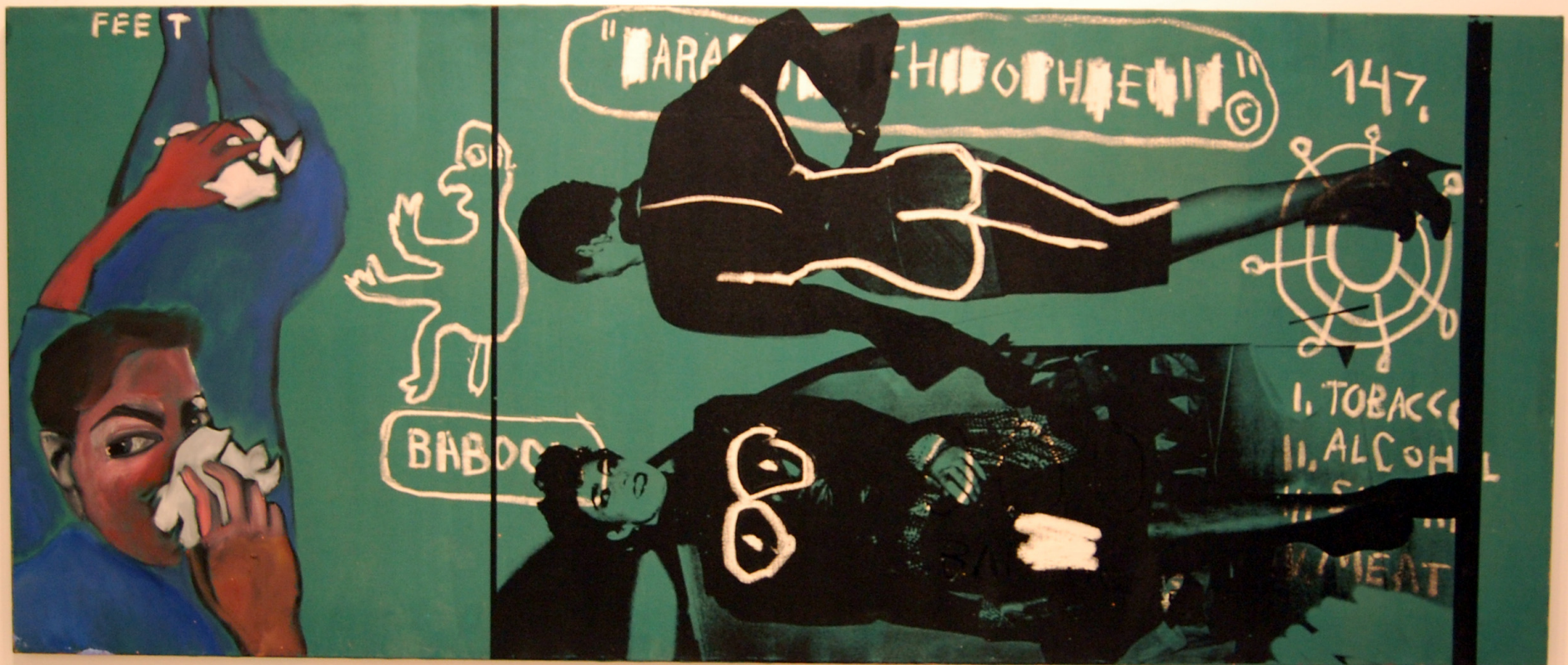
Eisenstein: Battle Ship Patomkin, 1925.

The best-known example of the “intellectual montage”.



Vertov: The Man with a Movie Camera, 1929.

Editing in sequencing.



Jean-Michel Basquiat, Andy Warhol, Francesco Clemente: Horizontal painting, 1984.

Three different individual styles create a new entity with assembling together.



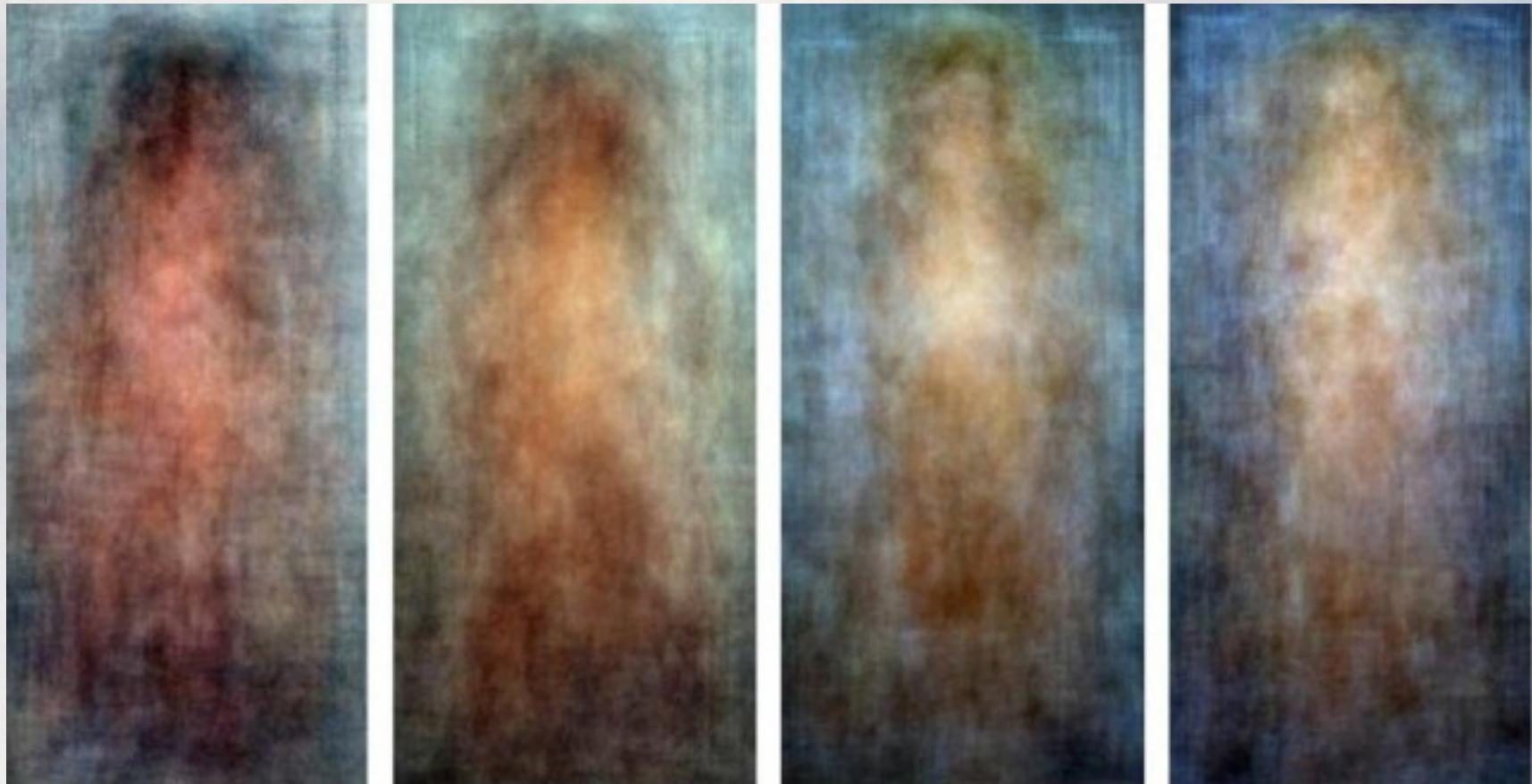
Andy Warhol: Blackglama (Judy Garland), 1985 (serigrafia); Volkswagen, 1985 (serigrafia).

Appropriations and (early examples of) remixes.

Remixing and hybridity – some examples of media-art:

Jason Salavon (1970, USA)

His images generated by „algorithmically abstracting”. He develops his own programs in order to process data extracted from mass culture. Salavon merged the similar colors and forms of dozens or hundreds images. We see artifacts of culture in composition and colors, warm to cool, with lighter skin and hair emphasized in later decades.



Jason Salavon: Every Playboy centerfold, by decade. From the left: 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s., 2002, Digital C-prints, 152x75 cm each.

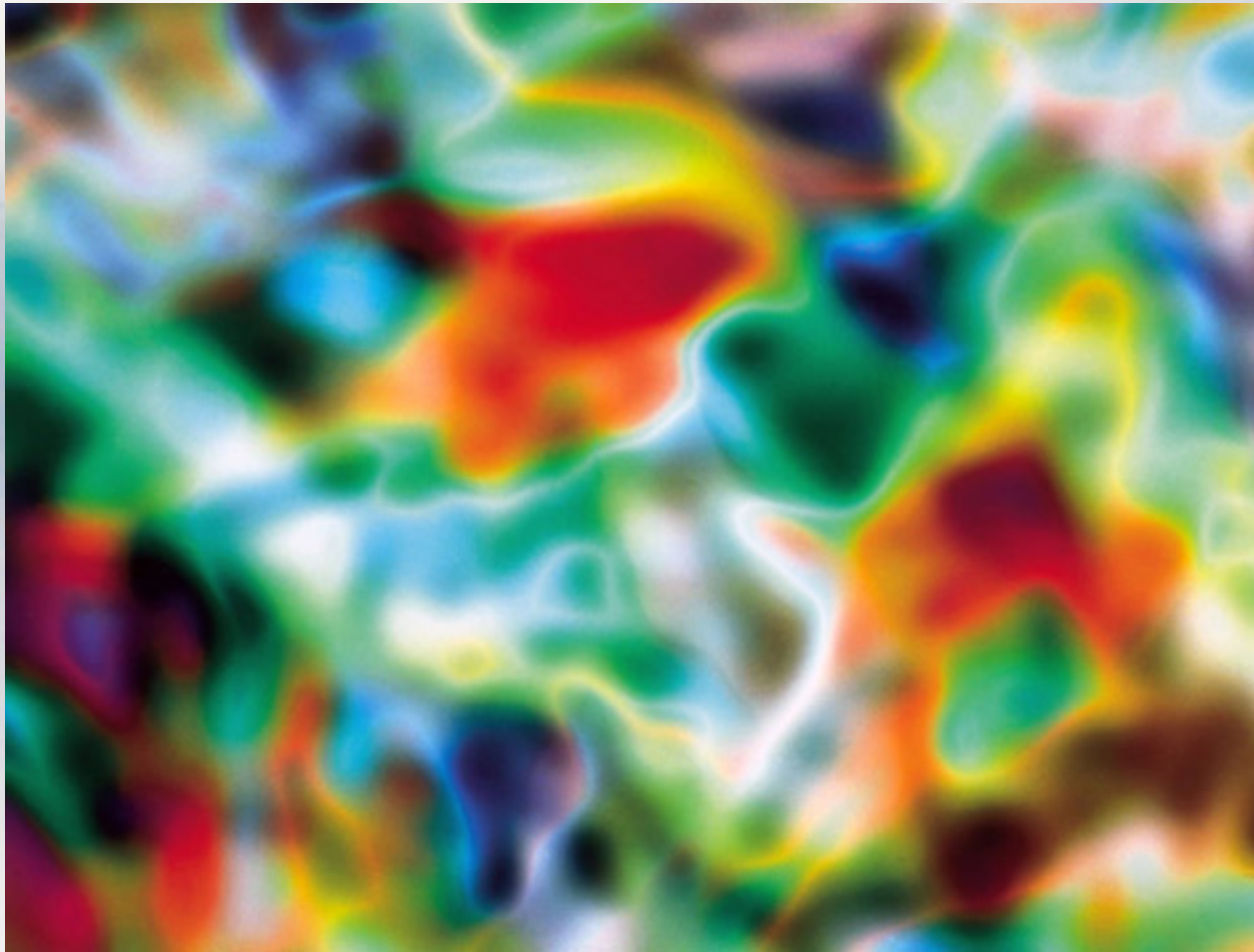
All the photographs were taken by realtors. We can see the green grass of Dallas contrasting with the brown-yellow lawns in Chicago, and the blue skies of Miami and Los Angeles stand out against the gray atmospheres in Seattle and New York City.



Jason Salavon: Homes for Sale. Clockwise, from top left: Seattle, Miami, Los Angeles, New York City, Dallas, Chicago, 2002.

Thomas Ruff (1958, Germany)

He took images of Japanese anime and manga from the cyberspace and manipulated them into abstract color fields. It's a visual simulation of information. The pictures themselves retain nothing but the neon cast of this repetitive genre of cartoons.



Thomas Ruff: Substratum 1II, 2001; inkjet on paper

What is the different between of remixing and hybrid technique?

“Typical remix combines content within the same media...

(...)

United within the common software environment, cinematography, animation, computer animation, special effects, graphic design, and typography have come to form a new metamedium.

(...)

We may think of this new metamedium as a vast library of all previously known media techniques.”

(Manovich, 2007)

Darío Urzay (1958, Spain) experiments with the photographic medium, the computer imaging and the scanning of paintings (“hybrid-media”).



Darío Urzay: Insider - dispersion rojo., 2003 Técnica mixta sobre madera 210 x 320 cm.



Darío Urzay: Red leap – negativo., 2003 Técnica mixta sobre madera (díptico) 70 x 120 cm.



Darío Urzay: Melted Field, 2003 Técnica mixta sobre madera 180 x 300 cm

Nam June Paik (1932-2006)

“Beatles Electroniques” (1966-69) was shot from live broadcasts of the Beatles while Paik electromagnetically improvised distortions on the receiver. The soundtrack derived from four electronically altered loops of Beatles sound material.



The artist remixed the pictures of different channels: “Global Groove” (1973).

Paik’s first international satellite “installation”: “Good Morning Mr. Orwell” (1984). This work mostly a chaotic collages of art and pop culture, the avant-garde and television.



Nam June Paik: Global Groove, 1973.

„Salad Bar” technique

„Melting Pot” technique

Technology

Older (electronic) technology (e. g. Video)
Montage (blue-box)

Still- and motion pictures

Medium

New(er) (digital) technology (e. g. softwares, Web 2.0)

Animation and live action

Still pictures (and “the feeling of the motion”)

Metamedium (Postmedia)

Philosophy/Approach/Appearance

Fragments,
„Horizontal transitions” (motion pictures),

Cuts, clips
No story

Hybridity, melting elements, remix/mashup,

„Vertical /and horizontal/ transitions” (motion pictures: “moving paintings”),

Unobserved transitions, continuous change, loop, non-linearity,

Live cinema (interactivity - VJ culture)

Style (Summary)

It is presented without a “real” overlaps.

It is combined in any manner, resulting in freely structured hybrid content (still pictures and motion paintings - animation).

Artists (semi-/abstract art style)

Still Pictures

E. g.
Darío Urzay

Transitional (“melted”, but not hybrid media):
Jason Salavon, Thomas Ruff

Motion Pictures

E. g.
Nam June Paik, Peter Greenaway

E. g.
Jeremy Blake
Takeshi Murata

Zack Snyder: 300 /2007/

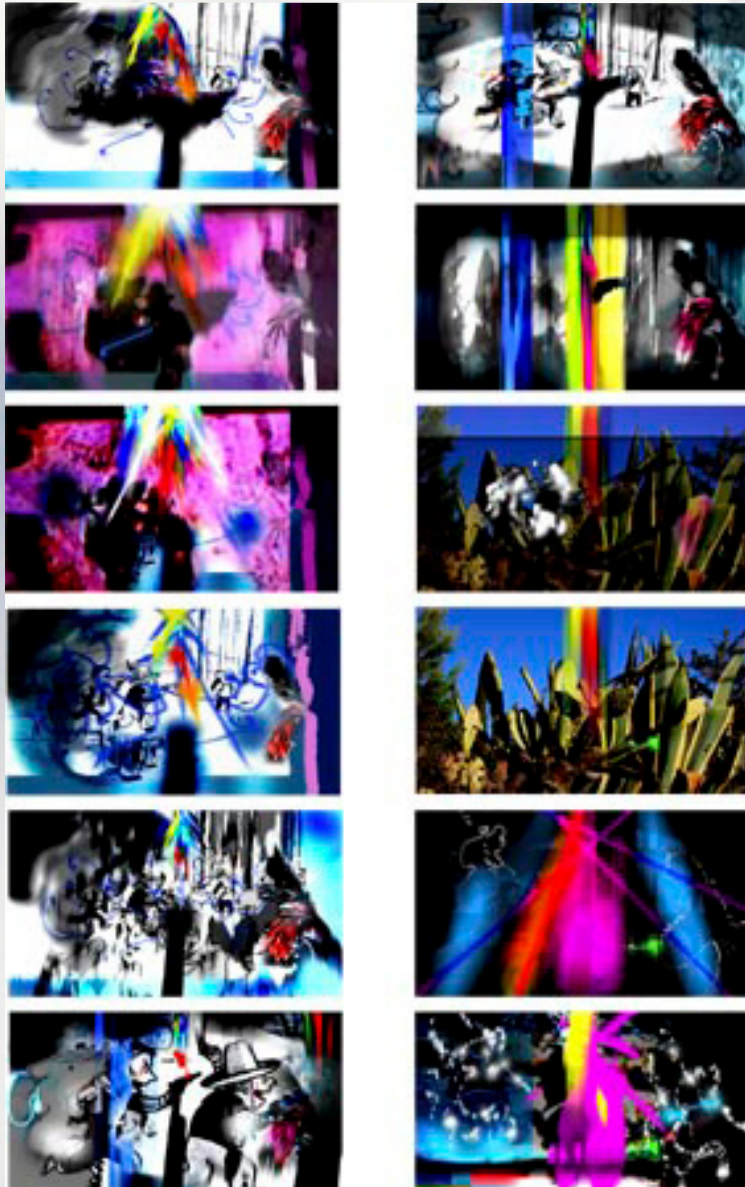
The high cult/art is the avant-garde

The pop-cult is the “avant-garde” (progressive)

Jeremy Blake (1971-2007, USA)

Century 21 (12 minute continuous loop, 2004.)

It is the third work in Blake's Winchester trilogy, which also includes "Winchester", 2002 and "1906", 2003.



Blake continuously fades in separate parts of an image.

The characteristic features of this aesthetics are:

continuity, erasing, gradual superimpositions, transformations of image layers...

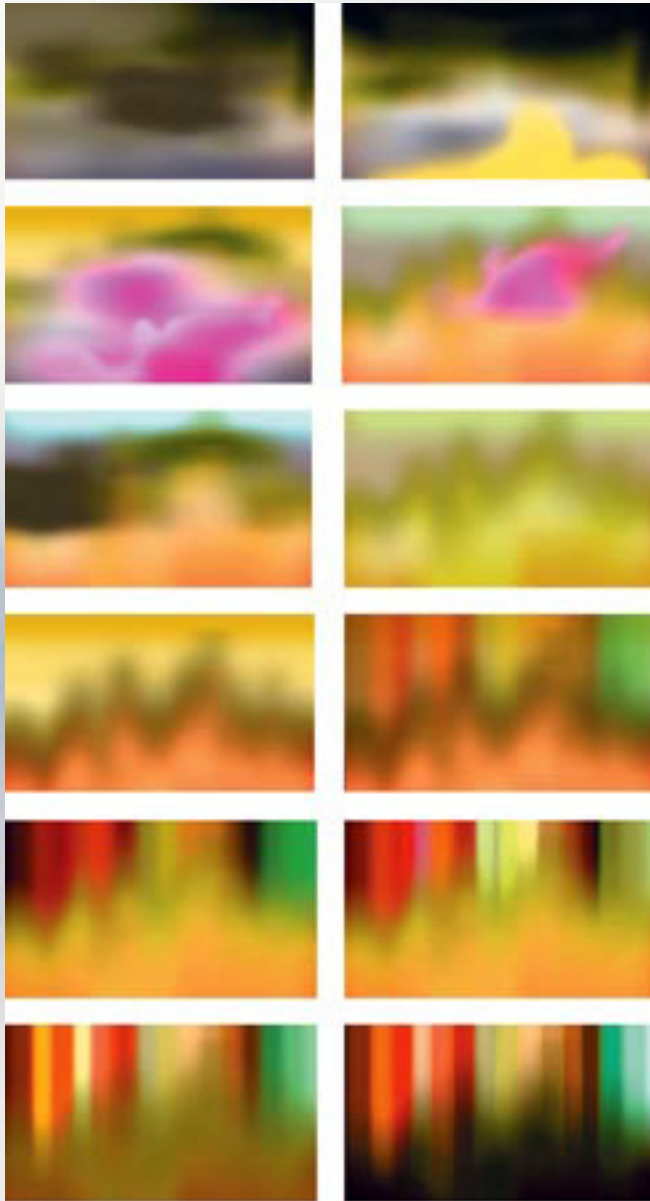
Blake favors calm, slow dissolves, like a slow-burn acid trip.

Each frame is constructed in layers.

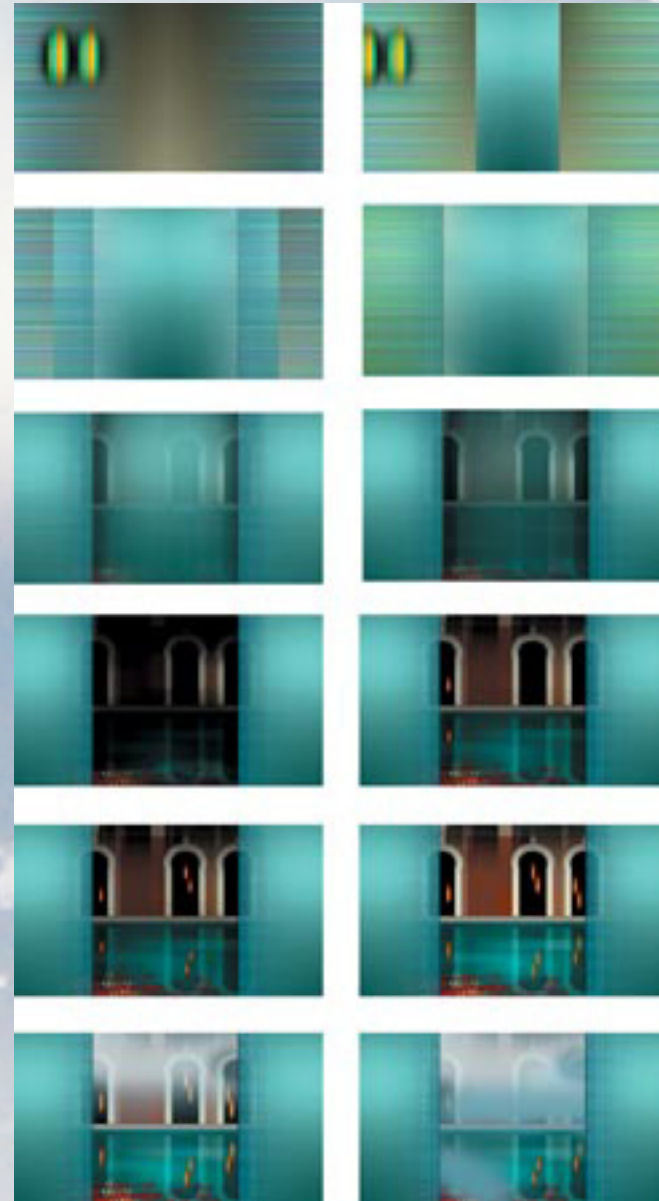
Blake combines video, drawings, still photography, film, CG graphics and frame-by-frame digital retouching.

His visually dense images combined abstraction and representation in fresh and exciting ways.

He created hybrids of new media works, new genres, and a new kind of art experience. Jeremy Blake made films that were "moving paintings".

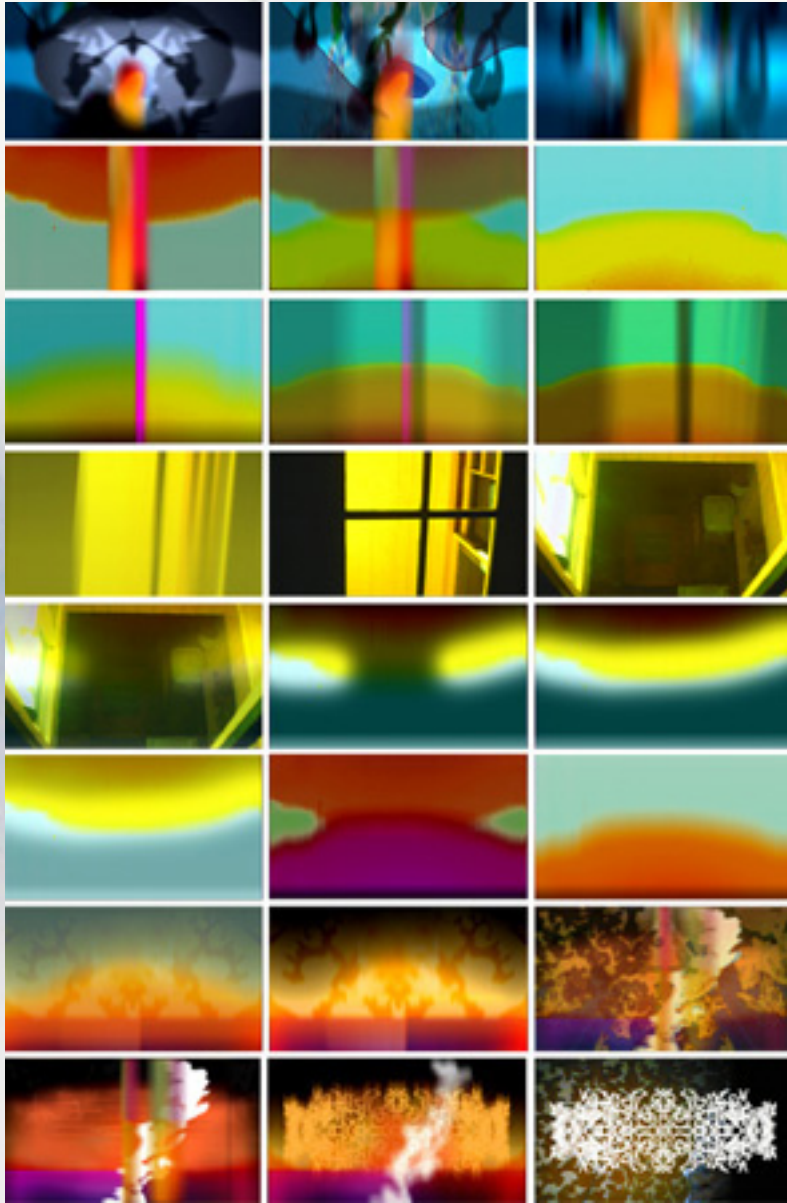


Guccinam (2000, DVD with sound on for projection or plasma screen, 7.5 minute continuous loop)

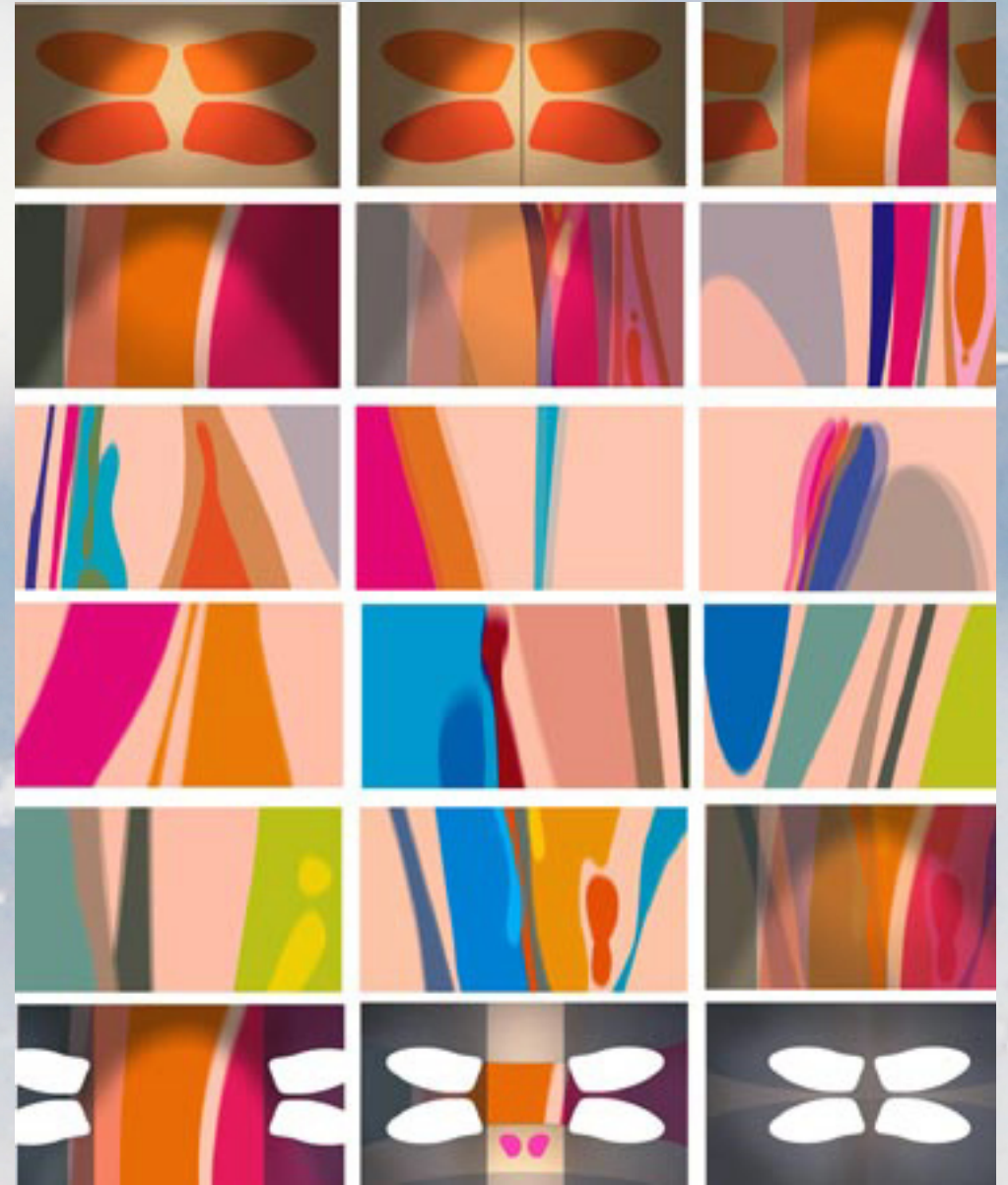


Liquid Villa (2000, DVD with sound for projection or plasma screen, 7.5 minute continuous loop)

Blake made “time-based paintings” - creating images that transform over time.



Jeremy Blake: “1906” (2003, DVD, sound, 21 minute continuous loop)



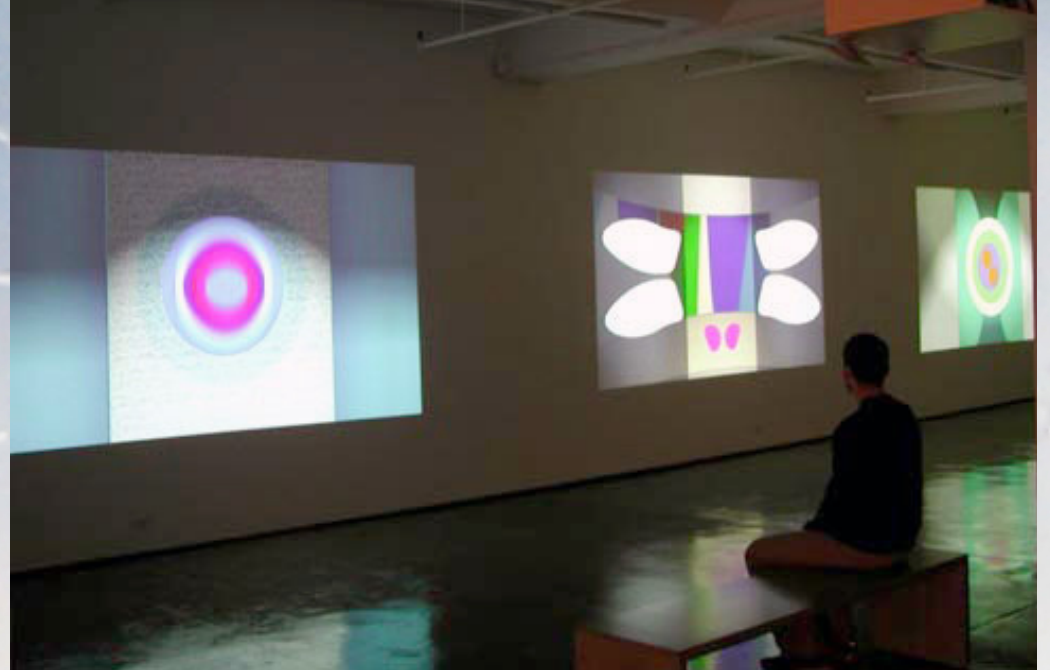
Jeremy Blake: “Mod Lang” (2001, DVD, sound, 16 minute continuous loop)



Installations:

Jeremy Blake: Sodium Fox (Feigen Contemporary, 2005)

Jeremy Blake: Mod Lang (Feigen Contemporary, 2001)





Jeremy Blake: Station to Station, "BitStreams" (installation, Whitney Museum of American Art, 2001)

Takeshi Murata (1974, USA)

His experiments (in hypnotic perception) appear at once organic and totally digital. Murata relies on “codec-error”.

He (supposedly) employs an exacting frame-by-frame technique. The movie reconstitutes itself thirty times per second.

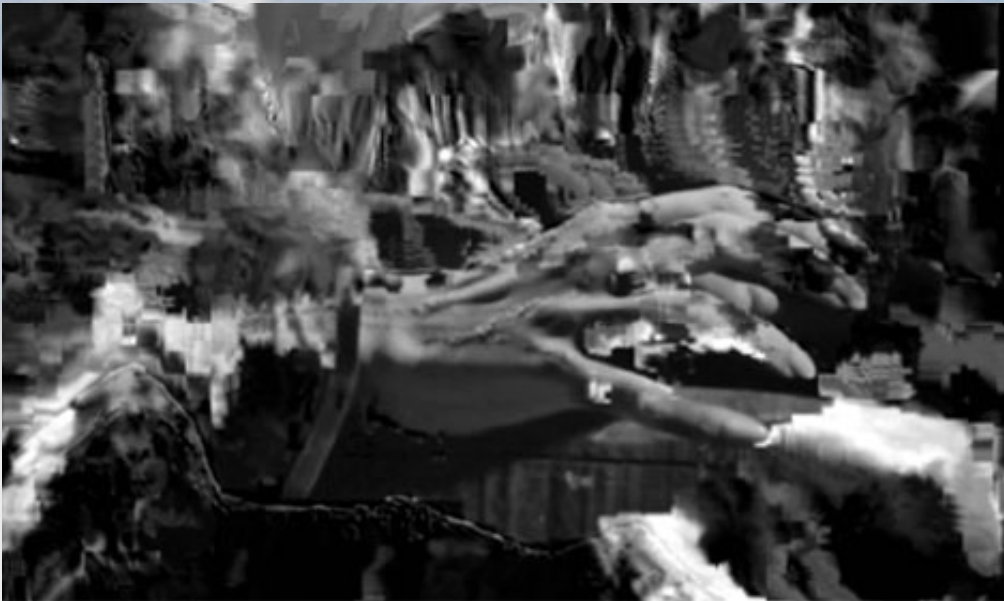
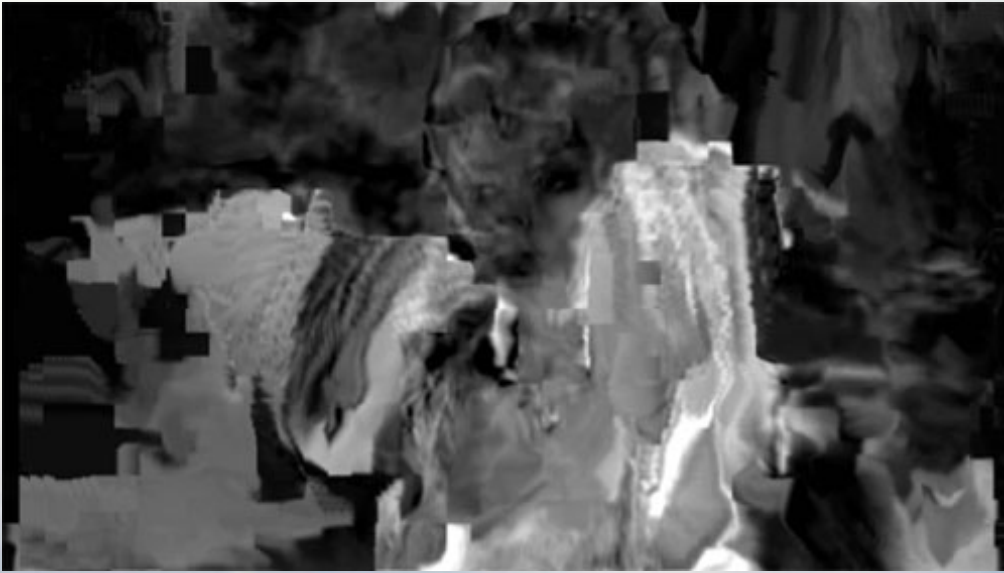
Monster Movie (2005, 3:55 min, color, sound)



Murata employs precise digital processing to create hallucinatory visions. It is continuously morphing and oozing abstraction. The distortions is initially shocking.

Untitled /Silver (2006, 11 min, black and white, sound)





Takeshi Murata: Stills from *Untitled (Silver)*., 2006,
Single channel black and white digital video on DVD, 10 minutes; sound by Robert Beatty and Ellen Mollé

THANK YOU FOR THE ATTENTION!



<http://www.gyenes62.hu>