

Simon Ingram, *Painting as Machine*

Te Tuhi - The Mark, 12 June – 21 July, 2004

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Installation shot of a component of the exhibition *Painting as Machine*, Simon Ingram, Te Tuhi - The Mark, 2004

Introduction

By Allan Smith

Philip Guston claimed that painting was “the only thing left in our industrial society where an individual alone can make something.”ⁱ I would argue that while Simon Ingram believes in the special efficacy of painting for preserving traces of the individual subject in an industrialised world, he also believes that current painting gains pertinence through internalising aspects of the industrial. I use ‘industrial’ here to cover the so-called post-industrial or hyper-industrial, which today includes various forms of computer technology and digital systemics. Ingram sees himself sitting squarely within the continuing legacy of modernist practitioners as diverse as Le Corbusier, Lazlo Moholy-Nagy, Jasper Johns, Frank Stella, Robert Ryman and Andy Warhol; he is ever cognisant of what Caroline A. Jones has referred to as the materialist and conceptual paradigm of the “machine in the studio”.

One of the foremost concerns of Ingram’s painting practice (note that I’m already assuming the practice’s role of agency here) is to produce paintings that run according to a set of predetermined instructions; paintings that make themselves. It could be said that art always operates according to implicit givens and

recognised limitations. What characterises Ingram’s work however, and the work of various like-minded modern and postmodern practitioners, is the way frictional dialectics between the iterative or calculated, and the unpredictable or affectively charged, are formally addressed as core business.

The first small but cohesive group of works produced after leaving art school were predominantly black and white grid paintings that Ingram thought of as essentially digital, and now refers to as the *Symmetrical Paintings*. The general look of these works, and their Duchampian production according to a process of elimination of all but a very few choices, have recently been taken up, in modified form, by Ingram’s new *Automata Paintings*. The series *Instrumental (Spirit Level Paintings, Paintings with Rules)* that came next was a more complex and substantial series produced in Sydney during 1995 – 1997. (Ingram’s habit of producing works in distinct groupings, in sets or series, conforms to his quasi-industrialisation of the painting process.) The *Spirit Level* works injected humour into the formalist proposition of a self-referential, functional painting containing an inbuilt test of its own structural and presentational rectitude. Not only did each painting have a small, medium or large yellow spirit level affixed to one edge, or a metal set square or ruler let into its plywood surface, but dimensions and colours for the paintings were decided according to characteristics of the relevant tool. The determining role of the levels, squares and rules, along with anonymous yellow enamel (which Ingram refers to as Spirit Level Yellow), natural wood grain and metallic finishes, bestowed the aesthetics of a light-industrial workshop on this body of work.

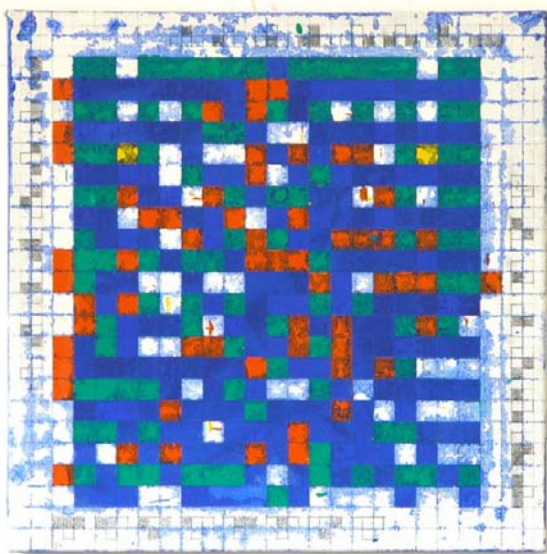
In one way or another play between a simple conceptual proposition and the richly physical ramifications of this proposition at work operates through all the different groups of paintings Ingram has produced since marking out his area of interest early on. Reviewing this work in brief reminds me of how consistent and structurally intelligent this last ten years of work has been.

The 1997 *Industrial Watercolours* exhibition used the disassembled components of plywood doll’s house furniture as templates to etch large sheets of proprietary ‘hot rolled’ steel with hydrochloric acid, and included a looped video of faltering hands putting the furniture together part by part. In the *Informational Space paintings* of 1998 overlaid, obliterated and masked texts were used to create opaque fields which failed to deliver on their hints of legibility. Between 2000 and 2001 the *Vowel Paintings* and *Line* works subjected the alphabetical sign and sentence structure to further extrapolations of superimposition, transparency and disjunction through a form of abstract painting, filled with sound, as Tony Green has noted, and operating “outside the usual bounds of pure abstract painting.”ⁱⁱ

Since returning to New Zealand, Ingram has re-established his exploration of the structural and the machinic in contemporary painting. 2002 and 2003 saw the initiation of several related groups of work that treated the painting as a machine in itself and as something produced by machinic procedures. Numerous works were made that incorporated gestural marks issuing from Proceate's Painter software and applied to canvas via the spray jets of the Elam painting machine. Some of these works were augmented with painterly swatches made with stencils.

This experimentation eventually split into a large body of works called the *Space Paintings*, all produced on the painting machine with the aid of painting and 3D software, and the complex and on-going group of *Machinic Paintings*. One subset of the *Machinic Paintings* comprises hybrid assemblages proposed as paintings made with *Lego* components, *FAC* engineering components, expanding foam and other material ingredients of conventional paintings on stretchers. Parallel to this group Ingram is developing a series of paintings that operate according to different types of complex self-organising systems such as Langton's Ant and Cellular Automata. In this series, the sorts of systems mapped by computer scientists that displaying 'emergent phenomena' are opportunistically put to work for a painting methodology, which continually encounters and wilfully incorporates all sorts of procedural errancy, manual glitches and material resistances into its end products. Materiality is understood as being capable of partially thwarting or derailing the determinism of such systems.

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Simon Ingram, *Automata painting No 1*, synthetic polymer on canvas, 2004

TOWARDS A PAINTING THAT THINKS

Allan Smith interviews Simon Ingram



Simon Ingram, *Spirit Level painting*, Spirit level, plywood, enamel paint, 1995 - 2004

Allan Smith: Simon you mentioned that Mike Parr once told you your paintings were like “procrustean beds.”ⁱⁱⁱ I gather he was referring to the jamming together of some sort of logical system or process with another more subjective or emotionally generated form of painting – or was it that he was talking about the way you cut things up to fit into your paintings, that your work gained a formal tension through this? I find Mike’s analogy very revealing in terms of characteristics your paintings have shown over a number of years. I’m thinking about the way you made paintings to accord with the exact dimensions of differently-sized spirit levels; of the way you cut shallow recesses in plywood paintings for the snug fit of metal squares. But, more importantly, the image of a procrustean bed on which a body is forced to conform to a rigid grid or frame, opens up all sorts of connections between the Duchampian bachelor machine and your ongoing interests. As Michel Carrouges has argued, Duchamp’s ‘master’ bachelor machine has numerous proto-surrealist literary antecedents in the descriptions of strange machines from stories by Edgar Allan Poe, Franz Kafka, Comte de Lautréamont and Raymond Roussel. Essentially bachelor machines, as Carrouges explains, have an oppositional scenario at the heart of their operation – usually parsed out through a conflicted male to female interaction – and most of them subject a body to some form of torture on a rack, or bed. We can think of Duchamp’s *Large Glass* in which the mechanically circumscribed and disassembled bachelors below are subject to eternal frustration in their repeated attempts at union with the unattainable bride suspended above them. Or, we can recall Kafka’s capital punishment machine that tattoos

the crime onto the body of the supposed criminal strapped to a rotating bed.

How did you respond to Mike's analogy of the procustean bed? And, do you think this notion of painting being about the subjection of the affective life, or the body, or even spirit, to an objective system, is getting close to what you are on about?

Simon Ingram. The comment was a sort of criticism, in the sense that the *Spirit Level Paintings* were like the bed in the Greek myth of Proustes where weary travellers were invited to sleep, and if their legs hung over the end, they would be cut off to fit. The thing is that the kind of torture that this scenario conjures up is something I think some of Parr's performances enact as protest, and in relation to what I was thinking about at the time it was actually a backhanded complement.

I didn't realise all this at the time. I left New Zealand in order to test painting, in order to continue, to make it interesting I wanted to develop a practice of making and viewing painting that would be capable of generating the kind of dialogue with the grid (machine) and 'humanness' (subjectivity) that you can find in the examples you gave. However, the surrealism of those examples is too pictorial for me; I'm working with something less literary I suppose... And I don't really have an interest in pain, so much as difference. Pain is possibly a sort of trope/idiom of the industrial period. It also implies a perspective of emphasising painting as somehow fascistic; for instance, are the beds in the examples of Kafka and the Greek myth interchangeable with the grid in painting?

AS: If this was the case it would make painting a kind of torture apparatus...

SI: Sure... and this is a sensational, performance derived-scenario that does and doesn't hold true for me, it's a complex thing. When you talk in terms of an oppositional scenario, then that makes more sense. With the *Spirit Level Paintings* I wanted to abut these two things, a plywood panel and an off-the-shelf spirit level – have one colonise the other, the tool undertaking a task of levelling and interpreting the state of the panel (level/not level), while the panel and the gallery aesthetised the level. This sort of difference is a kind of engine. The machine systems that I am thinking about now, Cellular Automata and Turing Machines, are involved in this same sort of self definition. There's a reciprocal action in this which underpins painting as a machine.

AS: The works I have referred to as your 'language paradigm' works were produced in Australia. It's probably fair to say that although you studied under, and later worked with, Mike Parr for a while, it was artists involved with CBD Gallery – Vincente Boutron, Stephen Little, John Nixon, Hany Armanious among

others – with whom you really identified. Can you talk a bit about how you read the Australian scene – what made the strongest impression on you and what has been a lasting influence on your practice, and how this part of your history differs from anything that you found in New Zealand before leaving, or on returning?

SI: Well, Sydney was much tougher than Auckland and I think this made an impression. Between about 1994 and 1997 the artist-run gallery CBD did a line in unrepentant formalist materialism and a sort of wacky formalism. What was going on was serious and very interesting, totally unlike anything being done in Auckland. So when I arrived in 1995 a whole range of work was being made locally along the lines of abstract art that had nothing to do with, or didn't emphasise, the sort of metaphysics of presence that some New Zealand abstraction often does. I had a clear sense of wanting to escape that sort of emphasis. The sort of theological haze that abstraction can find itself shrouded in was nowhere to be seen in Sydney. It's not that what was going on was particularly ironic either; it's just that people were working out of a different tradition. In Australia the conceptual and implicitly Marxist implications of involvement with materiality, including the materiality of language, proved to be very interesting to me, and it is this interchange of contexts that the *Spirit Level Paintings* came out of. An example of materiality in language would be Parr's *150 Programmes and Investigations* from the 1970s. These works were instructions written by typewriter on paper, presumably addressed to viewers but also I expect to the artist, giving instructions for simple performances often involving the body. These had major resonance for me, and still do, as corporeal conceptual art. An example of materiality in painting would be Nixon attaching a violin or mallet to a monochrome. These paintings have an urgency, or insurgency, that sets the act of viewing and making alongside other acts in the world, such as bashing something with a mallet or playing violin in the street.

AS: You spent some time in L.A. – could you tell me a bit about how that went. I gather you found it a pretty stimulating time, meeting Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe for instance, and later on I know you developed some points of difference with his attitudes towards painting and technology. Maybe you could talk about how you see Gilbert-Rolfe's ideas of current painting in relation to computers, the virtual/digital worlds etc. Would you say his ideas suited L.A. and its legendary addiction to shiny surfaces, speed and sensuality rather than a more introverted interest in the knottier and labyrinthine psychology usually associated with American East Coast intellectuals?

SI: America was great. It allowed me to consider the differences between Australia and New Zealand in relation to what I was doing; it also allowed me to see new work and meet new people. Gilbert-Rolfe's

interests seem to me to be that painting can be expected to be an instance of the kind of surfaces we find in technologised environments. Here we're talking surfaces of objects that offer no clues on production, inner workings or component parts. So a mix of beauty and glamour, the sublime, technology and the kind of plasticised opacity one finds with new cars – whereas I'm interested in structure more than surface, and this has led me to consider how machines operate rather than how they look. Where Gilbert-Rolfe talks about a painting's fascination with the look of contemporary technology I think more about inner workings and material realities. Speaking of which, I have a vivid mental picture of seeing components of Richard Serra's *Torqued Ellipses* on flat bed trailers up and down the length of 548 West 22nd Street, waiting to be hauled to Los Angeles after having been shown at the Dia. The materiality of these massive impassive curves straddling a street of trailers is a good example of why virtual experience excludes so much that is interesting.

AS: In an essay I wrote on your *Informational Space Paintings* I referred to the way you always provide “grit in your formalist/conceptualist sandwich.”^{iv} I was looking at the way you had thickened up the materiality of the linguistic/alphabetic sign to such an extent that it was almost completely opaque to any agreed meaning. It was as though you were trying to turn a rigorous, paired-down conceptual practice back into something tactile and idiosyncratically physical.

SI: Well, that's what I intended. I was also out to take a swing at the habit we developed in the eighties and nineties of discussing visual art in terms of 'reading.' It seemed to me that us art geeks bracket ourselves off from risk of corporeal exposure by insisting on reading art instead of experiencing it. Reading is part of the experience, but it's not all there is to the experience. I wanted to say that reading is too *simply* cerebral. I'm interested in a kind of corporeal thought and that's why I made some paintings with the building blocks of language, letters of the Roman alphabet, which didn't sign as writing so much as a pile of language, which recalls a drawing by Robert Smithson in the sixties, *A Heap of Language*.

AS: Can we give some consideration now to the different ways in which you've tackled the issue of what painting is as a physical form?

Obviously critical and metaphysical implications follow from the sorts of physical distinctions you have examined. You have physically cut into the wooden support; you have attached objects to the paintings – like the Cubists, the Dadaists, Jasper Johns (brooms, brushes, rulers), or John Nixon; you have often literally worked on the paintings from different sides or forced the viewer to mentally rotate the work to decipher it. Your *Space Paintings* depended on the transposition of a computer-generated image, which evoked both a

pictorially deep and a projective space onto a canvas surface via a painting machine. Your painting machine works involved a series of horizontal passes – separating the painted image out into stratified components like a computerised weaving machine. Your *Vowel paintings* also reminded me of the vowel-producing machine illustrated in Friedrich Kittler's discussion of the materiality of the spoken and written sign – Kittler's example rendered speech operable through a concatenation of discrete audible parts, through a 'gearing' of language.^v Some of the software you have used, *Painter* for instance, puts the subjective gesture – the corporeal event – in quotation marks, de-realising the mark and the history of painterliness. You have also used different forms of plotting other than Photoshop programmes – I recall the portraits you once did with multiple concentric circles.

Do all these different tactics indicate a generative anxiety about the condition of painting for you? Do you, along with Thierry de Duve, labour under the conviction that any painting which 'counts' today must seriously engage the Duchampian assertion of painting's impossibility? Has it been your wish to make something that states and embodies its physical condition in an almost tautologically complete way (I'd say the *Spirit Level* works do this) – thereby grounding painting's anxieties in something indisputably concrete?

SI: From one perspective, I'd say that such 'problems' are where the action is. As I mentioned earlier I want to test painting, to expose its interests to those forces that would overcome it. This is why I work with sets of ideas and objects and also in lines of work. I try to develop models or prototypes that expose what have been regarded as painting's distinguishing features to forms of difficulty or cross-examination. I remember something that Phillip Guston said about painting needing to argue for its existence, and I think that the switch he made in the late sixties to his cartoon style paintings was him letting painting live in the world, rather than sort of hunkering down and defending a position. Its interesting that back then he received a lot of criticism for that shift.

AS: Let's take another angle on this play between the programmatic and the pain – more recently you have been reading about systems theory, Luhmann and others, autopoiesis, Langton's Ant and Turing Machines. You have also talked about different levels of behaviour that apply to computers, such as 'low' and 'high' level operations, and how this might be suggestive of a way of thinking the digital as materially and corporeally indexed. For many of us the rhetoric and visual artefacts surrounding the digital and virtual worlds seem to promise a euphoric disembodiment that erases the physical and conceptual intrigue of earlier modes of thinking and making. It is as if a hyped-up opticality can render all physical and

temporal difference as interchangeable effects on yet another frictionless surface.

SI: Yes, and I suppose the *Space Paintings* were an example of my engagement with that; in a way they're special effects paintings, but they're not solely constrained by the depthless techno-surface scenario that Gilbert-Rolfe talks about. However, they are theatrical versions of virtual flatness so to speak.

It's clear that some of the discussion that surrounds virtuality and cybernetics was buoyed by the Internet economy in the second half of the 1990s. So the euphoria you mention is on the one hand a symptom of that. On the other hand there's no real reason to be so excited about technology because it's always been around. There are some very old examples of devices that belong loosely to the class of things known as computers. I'm thinking of the Babylonian dust abacus of around 3000 BC (whatever it may have looked like), and also of Napier's Bones in 1617, which were a series of rods made of bone allowing complex multiplication. Both devices when coupled with a user provide answers to questions according to a system.

AS: Ok, and what about these systems, Langton's Ant and Cellular Automata for instance?



Simon Ingram, *Langton's Ant painting*, Oil on canvas, 2004

SI: Langton's Ant is a kind of Cellular Automata, as is another, called The Game of Life; there are others too. Cellular Automata are two-dimensional diagrammatic machines that run according to a given set of very simple rules. They come from a branch of computer science; they're simple programs that can be plotted to generate complexity and show signs of what they call emergent phenomena and observable signs of

component parts having cooperated – the way in which a colony of termites appear to 'cooperate' to build a nest for example. So, cooperation and emergence relate to a system's thinking, or thinking plain and simple.

All sorts of things in nature might be thought of as systems that materialise a set of rules, and, in the process, think. This leads into the idea of the computational universe – the universe as a computer program, which is either scarily deterministic or otherwise interestingly animistic. I guess it depends on the perspective one takes on these things.

AS: So how does this relate to your painting?

SI: I've made a series of works that run various rules on canvas as painting. What I'm in effect doing is applying a set of rules as software and instead of running these on a computer I'm running them on canvas. The painting environment is characterised by a kind of complexity that the virtual space of the computer isn't, so the results are quite different.

AS: Recently you've mentioned John Ralston Saul to me and an idea of complexity which worked against the endless mobility of multi-national capitalism. You talked of differences or particularities which high capitalism rides roughshod over. Can you unravel some of these threads for us? And could you explain why you think these alternative models are important for painting now – and how, in fact, painting can enact them?

SI: Well I think that one of the strongest reasons why painting is interesting is its complexity. Let me give an example of what I meant by complexity. Ralston Saul is a Canadian writer on issues relating to democracy and globalism who visited Australia in 1999. In *On Equilibrium*^{vi} he gives an example of the dangers of a 'simplexification' of Fordist techniques in the fishing industry. There are now large factory ships that ply the world's oceans and, in the name of technology and efficiency, indiscriminately vacuum up fish. Along with these fish are a range of other creatures that comprise vital parts of the food-chain for fish but for humans are no more than fertiliser. As well as depleting the earth's fish stocks, this practice also helps put fishing and other smaller scale enterprises out of business. By comparison the complexity of the Icelandic fishing industry's method – which trades in nets for lines – ensures employment and also that only what is needed is taken from the ocean. Ralston Saul talks about the shared knowledge of common sense as complexity; obviously factory ships are a bad idea, yet because of a kind of societal panic for efficiency over complexity there's no chance we'll adopt Icelandic fishing practices. So complexity relates to local or community specific behaviours, rituals, customs, and historical practices. Valuing complexity is a basic precondition of democracy and attempts to cram lots of different

practices into one practice, which the simple minded adoption of technology and the deregulation of markets has tended to do, can be seen to put the aspirations of democracy and the earth's resources under threat. So having an interest in complex concrete or material practices is an action in the face of this reductive situation.

AS: So tell us how you think your paintings champion this kind of complexity.

SI: Well for me painting does enact an engagement with technology, albeit an ambivalent one. I believe painting is a kind of technological malcontent that is able to antagonise the smooth virtualised space of money and the new technologies by its particular way of being in the world. It doesn't fit simply into technological models. At the same time, like us, painting has also been altered and its meanings circumscribed by the technological situation. What I think of as painting's machinic mode of operation has to do with painting enacting the subjection of something very complex to a more or less reductive system – but in the process painting anticipates the production of a remainder; those qualities not readily reconciled to structure. What fascinates me about the idea of the Babylonian Dust Abacus and Napier's Bones, is that their complexity as objects has something to do with an idiosyncratic gritty physicality that remains after serving their abstract arithmetical operations. In my own paintings I'm holding out for a kind of sentient quality that paintings can stimulate. By embodying and enacting feeling, painting can provide a form of frictional resistance to abstract thought and idealist models of running the world. At the same time, my recent *Automata Paintings* and *Machinic Assemblages* appropriate computational systems that some computer scientists and mathematicians claim enact life, so structurally these paintings are computers – they've crossed over so to speak, they've swallowed chips.

AS: I wonder whether what you're doing is best thought of as an embodiment, a translation or a transposition? Furthermore, isn't this search for motivation outside of painting itself, or at least outside of systems of belief (religious, philosophical, political, social) which ran painting for centuries – a key modernist concern which hasn't left us? Though in your work, while there's something of what Yve-Alain Bois called the 'search for motivation' within the disassembled components of paintings formal language, there's also a clear intent to internalise aspects of the industrial/technological age – which Thierry de Duve suggests formed the basis of Duchamp's obtuse and on-going consideration of the im/possibilities of painting.

SI: Yes, I do want to internalise this. It makes sense to me when Warhol wants to become a machine. I'm interested in the idea of subjectivity incorporated into

the informational loop, as something translated into the system. This is what I had in mind with the *Anagram Self Portraits* where the name Simon Ingram was interpreted by a web-based anagram generator as *Riming Moans, Siam Morning* etc.

I'm interested in the material outcomes of the systems that I have chosen to use. When you talk about the *Vowel Painting's* 'gearing of language' that's fairly close to what I intended. I had this idea that vowel sounds are both 'in common' in the sense of being shared, while also being particular to individuals, because they're sounds made in our bellies. So they're social and at the same time a product of our interiors. Sometime after making a set of these works as yellow on black ground, I made some more using the colours of the offset printing process. The idea was to adopt the standard colour system of printed material and about that system to that of vowels. This use of standardised colour is something I also adopted in the *Space Paintings*, where I used yellow and magenta – you can also see it in the *Spirit Level Paintings* where the yellow colour of the level and various other hardware related products formed the basis of all subsequent colour choices in that set of work.

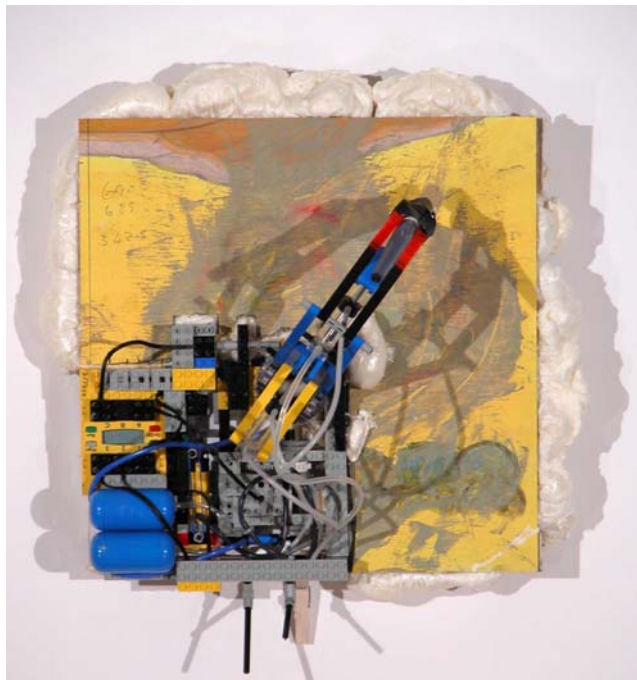
What I can't get away from is that although painting might want to become a machine it also wants to become a person, in the sense that painting is a proxy for a body or a face that addresses a viewer in a way that is really quite uncanny.

Going back to our discussion on pain, in a book called *Mind Children*, the American robot scientist Hans Moravec wrote about the scenario of human consciousness as an informational pattern that might just as easily reside in a computer as in a human body. In this sci-fi/horror scenario the body is no more than a substrate, like linseed oil for example. I figure that this kind of subjection to a system wouldn't cause pain, because a body we no longer have couldn't hurt, but 'we' might experience another feeling we don't know about yet. I think this feeling might be abstraction in the sense that Marx intended when he talked about abstract human labour. Also abstraction in the sense of software design, which is the view of a problem that extracts essential information and discards the rest. So I'm thinking in terms of abstraction not pain.

AS: Tell us about the Lego and FAC systems – what have you made with them? Have they been useful to actually make artworks you want to keep or more as three-dimensional drawing tools? Did your interest in Lego come before you did the experiments with Robotics?

SI: I'm a bit reluctant to talk about them as they're on the drawing board so to speak, but I am fabricating assemblages that perform simple tasks as related to their own material conditions. I've been looking at the

Turing Machine, which is something capable of reading, writing and erasing symbols on a tape according to a set of instructions. It's an early theoretical model for modern computers. I'm working on a group of assemblages proposed as paintings which will accompany paintings made using Cellular Automata.



Simon Ingram, *Machinic Assemblage No 2*, Lego components, wood, expanding foam, 2004

AS: Fundamentally the shift from an industrial or even a post-industrial paradigm to a digital one is signalling an irreversible shift in terms of how we perceive and live in the world. Are you looking for a painting practice that in fact refuses such an opposition.

SI: Yes I am, because I find it reductive.

AS: Perhaps we could think of the viral formations you have plotted using the Langton's Ant Formula – the colours look like squares on a demographic map. Do you want them to be generated at a noticeable distance from your subjective/aestheticised regard? When De Duve says Duchamp made painting to be about choices – that is choices made according to an intractable grid of options – does this leave the door open for the unconscious impact on such 'choices'? Is subjectivity as chaos or unpredictability possible in your current work? Is this important?

SI: Yes it is. Subjectivity or aesthetics, call it what you will, ends up being absorbed into the system. At the same time the computational models I am looking at claim to enact those very qualities. As mentioned before I am working on a series of geometric paintings and have applied various rules from Cellular Automata. These rules make key choices in the painting, which displace subjective and aesthetic qualities. What

interests me is that invariably these rules are not so much broken as contextualised by simple absentmindedness, a lack of ability to process information flawlessly. So this misapplication of the rules, 'one wrong move' in what is really a game of painting, alters each successive move, because each move is made according to a previous state. So those qualities re-enter as a function of the system. Also, whereas these rules were written for the potentially limitless grid of the computer, I am applying them to painting and in this new context the grid is rendered finite by the concrete reality of the canvas. The rules are altered by these limits, so much so that they create new patterning contingent on dimensions of the ground – this situation is exactly that of the Procrustean Bed.

To sum up I'd say that the qualities you mentioned are absorbed into this new machine I've tried to outline here – which we could say is powered by the concatenation of differences of the various subjective, aesthetic, historical and computational systems we've talked about. So systemics are only interesting to the extent that they are disassembled by painting to become something else. Another thing worth mentioning: I'm not making painting machines in the sense of a device whose configuration insists on its separability from the drawing/painting it produces as an output. Sure, the sorts of machines that interest me and which I'm modelling in painting (Turing Machines and Cellular Automata) produce outputs, but they are of a special kind because paradoxically they're also inputs. What I mean is they become instructions for the machine... So these machines produce outputs that are interpreted as inputs and this reflexive scenario alters the way the machine runs. This situation is closer to thinking than it would be were separability available. The work that I'm doing incorporates a machine in painting, so the painting is the machine, not an outcome of the machine.

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ⁱ Philip Guston in Caroline A. Jones, *Machine in the Studio: constructing the postwar American artist* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1996) p 1. Also in 1957 critic Meyer Schapiro said painting and sculpture were "the last hand-made, personal objects within our culture." Schapiro quoted in Richard Shiff, "Puppet and Test Patter: mechanicity and materiality in modern pictorial representation," in Bruce Clarke and Linda Dalrymple Henderson, eds. *From Energy to Information: representation in science and technology, art and literature* (Stanford University Press, California 2002) p 342.

ⁱⁱ Tony Green, "Simon Ingram: Lines," *Postwest*, No 18, (School of Contemporary Arts, University of Western Sydney, Sydney, 2001) p 68

ⁱⁱⁱ Simon Ingram and Mike Parr conversation Feb 1998

^{iv} Allan Smith, "Information Space," *Like Art Magazine*, No 11 (Faculty of Art Design and Communication, RMIT, Melbourne, 2000) p 57

^v Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz, (Stanford University Press, California, 1999).

^{vi} John Ralston-Saul, *On Equilibrium: The six qualities of the new humanism* (Penguin, Ringwood, Victoria, 2002)