

PRESS RELEASE

John F. Simon, Jr.

OUTSIDE IN. Ten years of Software Art

8 March – 3 May 2009



Visions, 2009

OUTSIDE IN, the first Italian exhibition of US artist John Simon, explores ten years of research into software art. Five of Simon's pieces are on display: from *CPU (Chromatic Pattern Unit)* made in 1999 and exploring the endless possibilities of visual space, to the chromatic geometry of *Visions (2009)* which relates geometric variations of figures with complementary colors.

The artworks on display show how the artist has established with time an increasingly meaningful relationship between analogic and digital elements, shifting from the direct display of codes on wall-mounted screens, to the enclosing of LCD screens into material structures (frames, wall reliefs and plastic and Formica boxes) which, although processed and prepared with the help of the computer, offer us the vision of real pictures/sculptures constantly changing.

All this shows that in the digital quality of Simon's project the computer becomes a way to present an aesthetic research on the nature and structures of systems.

All the projects by John Simon start with drawings and preparatory sketches which are later “encrypted” into a code. The focus here is the fusion of the image with movement (dynamic imaging) which becomes a creative platform for the exploration of systems.

Simon's background (he studied geology, cartography, he worked on the mapping of Mars for NASA) has certainly had an impact in fostering his on-going interest for the creation of systems which, translated into the artistic experience, outline the personality of an explorer of the complexity of human experiences.

Simon has progressed from the interest for coded encryptions and their display to the research on how display becomes part of an interactive process: ideas become software which in its turn becomes image becoming object fostering new ideas. The system then becomes the paradigm of fluidity and vitality to the point that the artist has posited that the artistic process is a sort of new mapping of the world, and the display of the code, a new mapping of data. His work becomes a clear and interesting example of fusion between technology, aesthetic and intellectual honesty.

Simon has said *“Software art is not like the video, the motion picture where sequences of images are recorded. The images which are displayed through my software are created while they are displayed. Instead of seeing the reproduction of scene, the software is the scene which develops and never repeats itself... Writing software as a work of art follows the traditions of the 20th century. It would find its correspondence in the analytical art of Klee, Albers and other Bauhaus artists, besides the conceptual art of Sol LeWitt, Weiner and Kosuth. Software art aims at expanding and activating practices started by artists who have codified their artistic experience. In software writing I have learned that a set of well defined rules may result in unexpected effects. Usually I start a software project with an idea, which then I draw on paper, which helps me defining the rules which I encrypt in the software. The software numbers which control shapes and colors grow incrementally, while I add new rules which are inspired by what I see. In this way I explore the limits of the model; then a new mind model emerges from the process and a new feedback starts again”*.

Simon's software generates compositions, moving colors, shapes in vibrant and ongoing patterns, in an endless range of combinations which never repeat, thus producing a

plurality of visual experiences. With these works, Simon explores what may become the 21st-century painting, by transforming it from a time-dependent medium to another which develops continuously on and endless time and spatial plane.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalog published by Gli Ori, with text written by Mario Diacono and reproduction of pieces on exhibit.

With this exhibition, the Maramotti Collection continues its activity in the project space *Pattern Room*. Invited artists present their works which will be part of the permanent Collection, in order to combine acquisition practices and the expansion of iconographic material in view of their exhibition. *Pattern room* is the premise where in the past – when the building was a manufacturing plant – models and prototypes were prepared. Project dimension and experimentation represent the mission of this venue, from the past to the present day.

John F. Simon, Jr. (Louisiana, 1963).

Lives and works in New York City. In 2000 was selected for the *Aldrich Museum Trustee's Award for an Outstanding Emerging Artist*.

His works have been collected by the Guggenheim Museum of New York, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The artist has exhibited in the United States and Europe.

Inauguration by invitation only: 7 March 2009 at h. 6.00 pm at the artist's presence.

The exhibition, admission free, may be visited from 8 March to 3 May 2009 in the opening hours of the permanent collection.
Thursday and Friday 2.30 pm – 6.30 pm;
Saturday and Sunday 9.30 am - 12.30 and 3.00 pm – 6.00 pm.
Closed: 25 April 2009.

Info:

Collezione Maramotti
Via Fratelli Cervi 66, 42100 Reggio Emilia, Italy
tel. 0039 0522 382484
info@collezione maramotti.org
www.collezione maramotti.org