

Claire Corey: Solomon Projects.

Print

Title Annotation: [ATLANTA](#); artist's digital compositions are printed in ink on canvas

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The digital images on my computer's desktop are not reproductions of paintings by Claire Corey but rather examples of the templates from which her canvases are produced. Corey composes her images by forcing various design software packages to do things they were not intended to do: Many elements of her visual vocabulary originated as glitches and errors. The resulting digital compositions become "paintings" when she prints them in ink on canvas. The artist has said she is engaged in "a dialogue with the history of painting" by means of technology. In particular, she reexamines the tenets of modernism through the lens of the computer screen.

Corey is extremely skilled at layering digital information to evoke different kinds and qualities of paint. Some of her surfaces have the limpidity of watercolor, others the density of oils. Part of Corey's project is to simulate the kind of expressive paint handling celebrated in postwar American art. Passages of her digital abstractions read at first as drips, gestural brushstrokes, or palette-knife scrapings. On closer examination, the edges of these features prove to be too clean to have been produced by a human hand, and the areas of color are too consistent to have been painted. Although it is ironic that these seemingly disparate visual elements all originated as iterations of data deployed across a computer screen, Corey's work does not come across as postmodernist parody. Rather than demystifying gestural painting, Corey tests the ability of computer-generated imagery to deliver a directly comparable visual experience.

[ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

Corey employs modernist conceptions of space, often juxtaposing multiple styles within a single composition. Her titles suggest the impersonality of catalogue numbers: 112N1, 2002, for example blends different versions of Abstract Expressionism with other stylistic references. The picture's horizontal space is defined by a loosely limned, irregular grid within which areas of "stained" color appear. Perhaps in a nod to Hans Hofmann, a large dot just above the center of the image appears to hover in front of the other elements of the composition and thus demarcates the surface of the picture plane. A pattern of oval beads that seems to snake under the "painterly" passages recalls Op art in its eye-teasing juxtaposition of complementary colors. Because these winding ribbons are the most obviously digital elements of the composition, they appear distinct from the "painted" areas in a way that also suggests the patterned wallpaper collaged onto the surface of Picasso's or Braque's Cubist canvases.

In 3Z6N14, 2004, slender, meandering lines and patches of color resemble the veins in marble or the markings on a map. The canvas is an irregular oval shape, rather like an eye, with an ovoid hole at its center. The lines and areas of color blur and dissolve into pale washes, and the image seems to gather around the central void. In this quieter, more contemplative work, Corey manipulates her data to produce delicate colors and subtle textures that contrast with the broad strokes and intensity of her earlier images. This "painting" runs counter to computer artists' more general tendency to abhor a vacuum, fueled perhaps by their ability to fill pictorial space at the click of a mouse. Corey has often been no exception to this rule--most of her compositions are so densely packed as to approach information overload--but her recent work suggests a promising new direction.

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