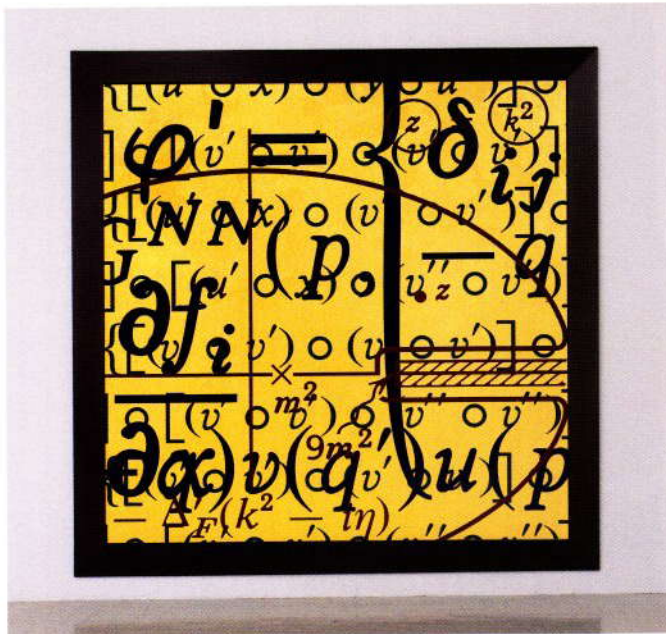


shape but the outcome is unpredictable given the obstinacy of the material.

The experiment continues further still in *GRIBs*. Here the metal 'scribbled' lines are freer, less precise and controlled than their *Indeterminate* forebears. *GRIB 3* is a four-meter-wide monumental black scribble dominating the central first floor gallery wall. The relief radiates power and strength. Its vitality and dynamism, however, belie the arduous task of torch-cutting each piece of waxed steel by hand. From a distance, one might compare the fluidity of the reliefs to that of an Asian calligraphic character. As with each brushstroke, each doodle is unique yet beholden to the will of the artist/calligrapher.

Contrasting dramatically with the sculptural works on the first and third levels, which seem cool and austere by comparison, the paintings on level two are stunning: they exude opulence and warmth. Large-scale canvases—some of unusual shapes—with gold, pearlized-silver or copper fields are populated with layers of enlarged equations, formulae, and mathematical symbols that "saturate" the canvas.

In *Saturation with a Large Bracket* (2006), abstract mathematical texts are depicted in sumptuous colors crimson and midnight blue. The use of



**Bernar Venet, Saturation with a Large Bracket, 2006, acrylic on canvas, 200 x 200 cm. Image: Courtesy of Art Plural Gallery**

color is reminiscent of the divine works of Italian Byzantine painters and, together with the ultra-thick frame, the work is portrayed as something important to behold and respect. Quite simply, Venet has elevated the status of the most abstract of mathematical language and made it into an art form. Earlier works were founded on logic and theory, yet these are executed with pure intuition. Ironically, from a subject matter so cold and un-emotive Venet has produced works that are highly expressive and resonant.

The ultimate paradox must lie in the fact that as an artist committed to avoiding the aesthetic, he has created works that are so alluring and full of spirituality and soul.

**Jo Shropshire**

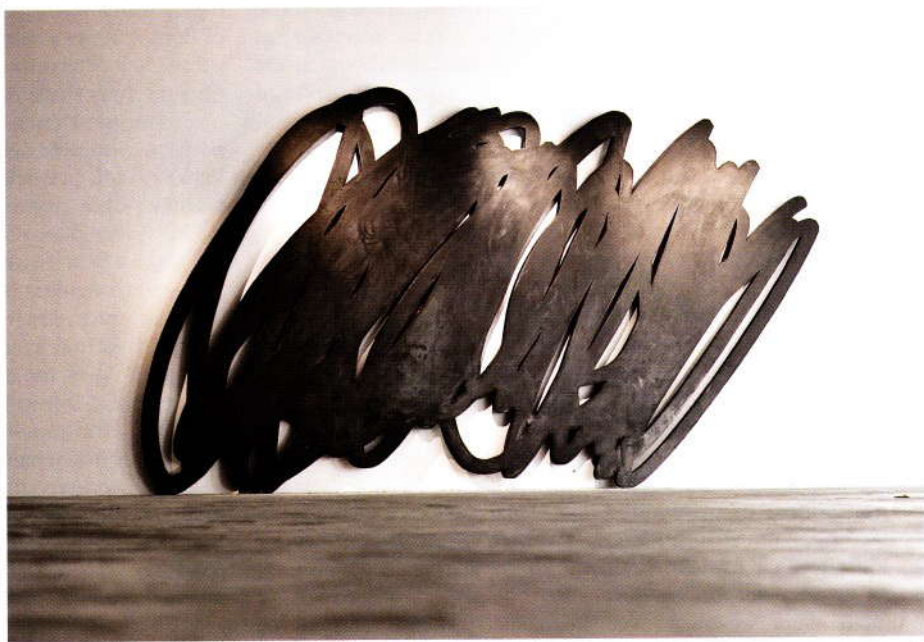
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### **The Experience Machine at Ikkan Gallery**

**N**ew technology is continuously changing the ways we see and do things. The new visions

that artists are making through technology are clearly evident in *The Experience Machine*. The range of works on show encompasses video and digital art, interactive installation, and customized software art. At the heart of the exhibition is the exploration of theories relating to the historical differences between Western and Asian ways of seeing, understanding, and experiencing the world, as well as how new-media artists with technology create new interpretations of space and new forms of expression on a flat surfaces.

TeamLab, from Tokyo, which calls itself an ultra technologist group that includes painters, digital programmers, architects, and engineers from various parts of the world, says that ancient Japanese were able to see space in terms of layers. Contrary to the Western approach in painting that considers the rules of perspective, geometry and objectification, Japanese ink painting is drawn in a subjective way that expresses feelings and vitality and takes an ideological approach to depicting space on a flat two-dimensional surface—depicting four dimensions (three dimensions and a time axis.) To support their theory, they turned a traditional two-dimensional Japanese ink painting into a three-dimensional computer-



**Above left: Bernar Venet, Position of an Indeterminate Line, 1981, graphite on wood, 189 x 189 cm. Above left: Bernar Venet, GRIB 3, 2011, torch-cut, waxed steel, 238 x 410 x 3.5 cm. Images: Courtesy of Art Plural Gallery.**



generated virtual animation story as in their *Flower and Corpse Glitch* (2012).

Unlike in Western painting, there is no focal point in traditional Japanese painting, which responds to the Japanese concept of *Narikiri* (entering or visualizing a picture from inside it), or the Chinese concept of *du bua* (to read a painting). The Chinese artist Miao Xiaochun, who appropriated Michelangelo's fresco of the Apocalypse, eliminated the central figure in the original work when he built a virtual model, replacing each of the figures with his own image (he once told me he did not believe in hierarchy and wanted to visualize equality.) Unlike the original fresco which only shows a front image, Miao's *Last Judgment in Cyberspace* (2006) allows the viewer to see the scene from all angles. In the show, however, there was just one image in C-print, which was the view from below.

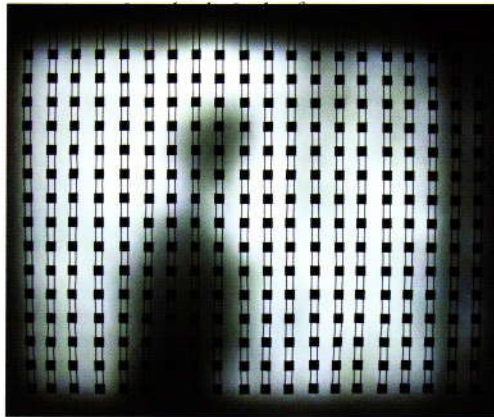
Surely the latest invention by TeamLab, led by Inoko Toshiyuki since 2001, in cooperation with the famous female calligrapher Sisyu, *What a Loving and Beautiful World*, adds yet another innovation. More than just an interactive video installation to look at, it requires the presence of a visitor lest nothing happens in the dark room where *kanji* characters fall randomly down the four walls of a specially constructed room. Only if the shadow of your hand touches a character does the room change. Twenty-two characters—including those for "flower," "bird," "tree," "wind," "moon," "snow," "butterfly," "rain"—fall randomly. Touching the character for flower fills the space with flowers moving on the four walls, which then changes into a flight of birds when the character for bird is touched. Natural scenes emerge as characters are 'touched,' but nothing can be planned, as everything is random. If one happens to touch the character for tree and bird at the same time, the bird will automatically sit on a branch of the tree. Similarly, when the flower and the butterfly characters are touched at the same



**Above left:** TeamLab, *Flower and Corpse Glitch*, 2012, animation 19 min 25 sec. ed of 10. **Above right:** Sisyu+TeamLab, *What a Loving and Beautiful World*.



**Above left:** Miao Xiaochun, *The Last Judgement in Cyberspace* (below view), 2006, C-print, 170 x 212 cm. Ed. of 12. **Above right:** John Gerrard, *Dust Storm* (Manter, Kansas).



**Above left:** Jim Campbell, *Home Movie*. **Above right:** Vuk Cosic, *ASCII History of Moving Images* (*Psyche*), 1999, Ed of 4. All images: Courtesy of Ikkann Gallery.

time, the butterflies automatically seek the flowers.

While this could be a relaxing and wonder-filled entertainment, far from everyday problems, immersion in it may stir the imagination. In this creation by Sisyu and TeamLab, everything is ephemeral, an interpretation of the transient nature of the world. This work won the *Architecture, Art &*

*Culture Award* in 2012 at the virtual reality *Laval Virtual* contest.

I found the work by Slovenian artist Vuk Cosic very challenging. His *History of Moving Images* (1999) is one of the most interesting in the show. Here he uses his own software to convert the pixels from still and moving images into ASCII-characters. ASCII stands for

way the work of art becomes a new film.

Other works in the show demanding attention were Bea Camacho's single channel video *Enclose* (2005), in which the artist is seen crocheting herself into what ultimately appears as the shape of a womb, perhaps a metaphor for the warmth and security she had missed as she left home at an early age. John