Raster Raster

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Any post-postmodernists who dared hope that contemporary art had become 'post-movement' must have been dispirited, in recent years, to see the tag 'post-Internet' growing in ubiquity. Art magazines have done their best to nail down a definition of this vague field, in some cases recruiting the same curators who are bold enough to try to identify its principal characteristics and exponents through group exhibitions.

The artist and scholar Marisa Olson, curator of *Raster Raster* at Aran Cravey, claims to have coined the term 'post-Internet' in 2006. She wisely stops short of positing *Raster Raster* as a survey of the movement, leaving that unenviable task to Karen Archey and Robin Peckham, whose exhibition *Art Post-Internet* at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, opened in March. Olson's art was in the UCCA show alongside that of Petra Cortright, Bunny Rogers and Artie Vierkant, who also feature in *Raster Raster*. Meanwhile, an improbable trifecta of concurrent group shows across town – at Honor Fraser, Perry Rubenstein and Anat Ebgi – includes work by Cortright; Marc Horowitz, also in *Raster Raster*, features in two, and Travess Smalley in another.

The exhibition at Perry Rubenstein is titled, appropriately, *Too Soon*. Much of the art in these exhibitions, though spirited, seems jejune. Most of the artists in *Raster Raster* were born during the 1980s, and two – Rogers and Jasper Spicero – in 1990. Not all of us can claim to be true 'digital natives', but if you were born in 1990, you would barely remember a world without the Internet. The fact that, in the developed world at least, connectivity is so ingrained into daily life raises the question: what part of contemporary cultural production does it *not* affect?

Raster Raster convenes a pool of artists who, by and large, are not making 'Net art' (as we once called it) but who draw from the proliferation of images and signs online, who shuffle fact and fiction, who translate between media and who seem to relish the losses in quality (image- and otherwise) that take place during those processes of translation and transference. Rasterisation is the technique by which digital images are prepared for pixelated output, but it also involves scanning. Smalley's prints (described in the checklist as 'digital paintings on vinyl') depict sculptures by Alexander Calder, scanned from a book and then exported with added overlays and tonal modifications. More sophisticated is *Loops* (2014) by Alexandra Gorczynski, which combines a low-resolution photograph of a fabric floral wreath with a video image of the same. The screen, embedded in the photograph, shows a projectile smashing the video image before dissolving into static.

The disparity between styles in this show makes the grouping seem almost meaningless. For example, Vierkant's dourly cerebral monochrome painting, based on a patent for an air conditioner screen, is a world away from Mehreen Murtaza's grotesquely overwrought *Triptych* (2009), a digital collage depicting a sci-fi dystopia of global exploitation. Christine Sun Kim's large, quiet drawings – apparently relating to her deafness – are ill-contextualised here. And despite the buzz that currently surrounds her, Cortright's contribution, a composite image of a figure printed on fabric, is underwhelming.

It may be the case that these busy artists were unable to supply their best work. We must leave it to Hennessy Youngman, aka artist Jayson Musson, to illuminate the zeitgeist with his video *Art Thoughtz: How to Make an Art* (2011), in which he haplessly guides us through "this age of Internet-based artistic-type productions and shit". *Jonathan Griffin*

Alexandra Gorczynski, *Loops*, 2014,
archival pigment print with embedded screen, 86 × 86 cm.
Courtesy Aran Cravey, Los Angeles