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# INTERVIEW: Jeff Elrod on His Show at Simon Lee

BY DARRYL WEE | FEBRUARY 12, 2015



Jeff Elrod exhibition installation at Simon Lee Gallery Hong Kong  
(Courtesy of Simon Lee Gallery and the artist)

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HONG KONG — American artist **Jeff Elrod** is currently holding his **first solo exhibition** in Asia at **Simon Lee**, featuring a body of new work that explores what vestigial traces of 20th century abstract expressionism remain in a digital age of glowing screens and interfaces.

A favorite of the late New York dealer Pat Hearn, Michael Nevin of Brooklyn's Journal Gallery, and the Chinese-American collector Richard Chang, Elrod has captured a particular niche at the junction where analogue painting meets the digital technology that facilitates it, and grapples with it, often in a lumbering, intentionally unwieldy manner. BLOUIN ARTINFO quizzed Elrod on some of his artistic inspirations and processes.

**One of your earliest exhibitions was held in an artist commune in Marfa, Texas. Did the unique landscape, climate, and light conditions there influence your work at all?**

I was an artist in residence at the Chinati Foundation, which is **Donald Judd's** museum. Marfa was where Judd had moved to from New York City in the 1970s in order to make his work, because he was inspired by the landscape. But I've never been affected at all by the light of where I work, because I work on the screen — it's a really specific space, and it never changes. The light I'm influenced by is what is emitted off the screen.

But physically, as a human being, I really like being around the sky and seeing the horizon. Having grown up in California and Texas, I feel claustrophobic if I can't see the line of the horizon. That's why I like hanging out in Marfa and feeling the openness — feeling alone and tiny in the middle of a big landscape that doesn't directly register in the work other than making me feel relaxed and able to concentrate.

**Roberta Smith, writing in the New York Times, described the paintings at your MoMA PS1 “Nobody Sees Like Us” exhibition from 2013 as “moiré patterns without the lines,” and “last-minute, loose-limbed additions to the history of Op Art.” Do you feel that our optical experience of art has been re-conditioned — or perhaps irrevocably tainted — by the ubiquity of screen-based viewing on tablets, laptops, and smartphones?**

I think the world has absolutely changed, and our intimate relationship to the screen has become one of the most important things that we do. My work reflects this comfort with the screen.

**Specifically, how does working with a mouse to make your preliminary drawings make them either more “analog” or “digital” (or neither)? There seems to be something a little retro, as it were, about the manually controlled yet “digital” aspect of this part of your process, akin to the broad, slightly unwieldy strokes of early programs like Paint.**

I'm very comfortable with the mouse and screen. It's sometimes awkward, which I like, and it's frictionless and a very natural way for me to draw. I create handmade copies of digital originals, transferring information from one medium to another. My process combines digital and analog practices. I draw with the mouse using basic editing programs like Photoshop or Illustrator, and transpose these computer designs onto canvas by using “classical” techniques such as painting, drawing, or spraying, sometimes printing them directly onto the canvas. It captures a moment when analogue and digital production clash.

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