

Yestin Gray, digital artist statement

My digital artwork has no meaning else than being a source of aesthetic feelings. I am not concerned with ideas, concepts, people or politics. I slowly develop a digital painting by aesthetic decisions only and without conscious thoughts.

In my work words, meaning, intention and context are irrelevant. Of importance is what I see, the object or painting in itself, as it is. In my view history of art is only relevant when it is about technique. Techniques evolve. Meaning, intentions and stories, how important they may be in a social context, often change but do not evolve. I am sure we will never discover a new feeling but we surely will discover new techniques of making images and paintings. An object exists by itself and is independent of what we think about it, independent of the purpose it is made for. Yves Tanguy, the great French surrealist, once said: "The painting develops before my eyes, unfolding its surprises as it progresses. It is this which gives me the sense of complete liberty, and for this reason I am incapable of forming a plan or making a sketch beforehand". He is the master of the surrealists who try to eradicate thought when they work, try to eliminate all control exercised by reason and moral preoccupation.

There are other painters, along with the already mentioned Tanguy, that made a lasting impression on me. In my work I like to discover fascinating and enticing combinations of colours (Hockney) and try to be conscious of the feelings of enjoyment and satisfaction the developing work generates in me (Hopper). In making (digital) paintings, space, structure and form are essential. Wassily Kandinsky excels in this. Fractals (the fusion of mathematics and art) are a leading principle when I make digital art: the method of repeating a simple process that results in magnificent complexity.

All my digital artwork is made for publication on Instagram (my account: <https://www.instagram.com/yestingray/>). I started to make artwork in August 2018. After seeing Jeff Koon's first exhibition of his Gazing Ball (Perugino's Madonna and Child with Four Saints), in De Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam. Koons brought the over five hundred year old masterpiece with advanced digital image processing and colour analysis to the 21st century. My first publication was a collage made with Excel. I started with Excel because I had become acquainted with the work of Tatsuo Horiuchi who made his marvelous digital paintings in Excel.

Slowly I started to experiment with various software packages (like photo editors) and now my artwork is mainly produced with a combination of my own software written in Python and filters from known editors. Since January 2023 I use AI software to generate figurative pictures, after which I submit them to my procedures. But in contrast to Generative Artists my work is not dictated by mathematical formula only. On several moments in the making process I intervene and make aesthetic decisions. Compare it to a backgammon game: the result of the dice thrown is translated into a human decision where to move the checker. Often my aim is to make the result resemble a real painting on canvas. Like painters that need paint they can put on a canvas, I need pixels from photographs. My work consists of duplicating pixels and transforming sets of pixels. #