

CYBERNETIC CANVAS – AN OPEN FRAMEWORK

Some processes begin with an attraction, an indeterminate impulse. A form of fascination, a thought that settles in the mind without revealing why. My artistic practice is applied systems theory. It unfolds within a field of continuous interactions between control and chance, between calculation and the unforeseen. Although many of my works appear on screens or projection surfaces, they are not films or video pieces, but digital process-based painting. This is not a merely formal consideration, but a fundamental paradigm shift: from pigment to light, from reflection to emission, from object to process, and from the panel painting to the (audio)visual system. In this context, the fragment is not merely a rupture, but the building block of a new structure.

I employ cinematic modes of thinking—time, duration, perception—without submitting to the conventions of film: narration, montage, goal-directed progression. What emerges is a hybrid image form between digital painting and experimental cinematic procedures, in which the image does not narrate but exists as a process.

My approach to painting is both analytical and processual. I understand painting as an interplay of dematerialisation and re-materialisation, of analysis and re-synthesis. It is not a finished object but a dynamic system of overlapping processes. I ask myself: Where lies the threshold of coherence within an autonomous image? When does its disintegration begin? How much heterogeneity can it sustain in order to appear as a unity, and how much does it require to generate a vital tension?

Time as Material

Time is a central material in my work. But which time? There is the cyclical recurrence of nature, the slow processes of erosion and sedimentation. And there is the time of technology—linear acceleration, constant overwriting. Both spheres converge in my works. I often conceive of an image as a sedimentary layer, as a deposit containing traces of earlier decisions. Many of my works evolve over years, pass through prolonged phases of abandonment and reactivation, resurface in altered form and continue to develop. The image is not an endpoint but a temporary state within an open system.

The structure of time is a palimpsest: pasts overlap, relics and artefacts from different epochs coexist within a single pictorial space. Superimposition makes visible the paradoxical relation between space and time, between vectors and coordinates: fixed states are liquefied, apparent finality is rendered provisional. Each image is a form of condensation in which heterogeneous temporal layers merge into a new, hybrid present.

Systemic Practice & Machines as Instruments

My artistic process is interwoven with an ongoing interaction with machines. I do not use machines as passive tools, but as active agents within an open, cybernetic system. I am interested in the non-systemic, the unpredictable, the anarchic autonomy that machines develop when pushed beyond their intended functions. I let them produce errors, provoke disturbances, work deliberately with their limitations.

Where I work with artificial intelligence, it assumes two different roles. On the one hand, it functions as a tool—an instrument of precision and transformation that allows structures to be sharpened, stretched, distorted or destabilised (Topaz AI, Runway, Gigapixel). On the other hand, I use AI as a generator, as a procedure of image mutation that produces new visual variants from genealogical material—such as Artbreeder hybrids or algorithmically generated intermediate forms. These two functions are complementary: as a tool, AI extends my manual interventions; as a generator, it expands my reservoir of image components and compositional elements. In no case does it produce a finished work; it provides material that acquires its final form only through further interventions, loops and re-materialisation.

Sound as the Dark Matter of the Visual

Sound is a complementary dimension of my practice. It is not an accompaniment but an alternative coding system. Many of my works are deliberately also created in a silent version, in which the absence of sound emphasises the invisible. The sound versions, however, are not mere soundtracks, but forms of image-sound entanglement: a visual pole enters into a tension-charged aesthetic and phenomenological interaction with a sonic pole. This is the structural principle of my dynamic Cybernetic Canvas works.

Image and sound operate as autonomous systems that coexist within a shared perceptual space. Sound does not follow the image, nor does the image comment on sound. Their relationship does not arise through synchronisation, but through structural resonance. Image and sound are two sides of the same coin: two poles of one aesthetic system. Sound is the dark matter of the image: not visible, yet effective; not explanatory, but formative. It acts like an invisible force that holds the visual system together, condenses it, or destabilises it—an energy behind the visible form.

Processes: The Paradoxical & the Hybrid

I am interested in hybrid systems in which cultural history and natural history, artefacts and relics, structures and chaotic formations collide and overlap. I use found materials, diagrams, maps, scientific visualisations and biochemical processes as starting points for new formations. My works investigate boundaries: between material and structure, between order and dissolution, between persistence and transience.

The static Cybernetic Canvas works undergo several phases: a physical phase of material manipulation (collage, shredding, chemical processes), a numerical phase of digital transformation (editing, scaling, algorithmic modification), and a phase of re-materialisation, in which the work attains its final presence through inkjet printing on aluminium. The dynamic works, by contrast, exist as fluid image processes that take shape in projections and screen-based environments. They are paradoxical still-images of unrest and instability, loops in permanent transformation.

In the dynamic Cybernetic Canvas, the image begins to move as if following its own perception. This creates a double kinetics: the viewer's gaze moves, and the gaze of the image moves back. This interaction is not a "dialogue" in the conventional sense but a reciprocal perceptual loop. The work responds to the gaze—not through meaning, but through movement.

No longer does the viewer perceive the image; the image absorbs the viewer into its movement. A choreography of interaction emerges: the work becomes a living perceptual system—not an object, but a processual counterpart.

Tondo, Loop & Play Space

The circular format revives an ancient image form from antiquity and the Renaissance: the tondo. It disrupts conventional pictorial grammar and intensifies perceptual dynamics by challenging the classical coordinate system. In the dynamic Cybernetic Canvas works, circle and loop form two complementary expressions of the same idea: the circle fixes movement in space, the loop extends it through time. Together they create the continuum of a dynamic digital painting, in which form, process and perception merge into an organic system.

While the rectangular format establishes a primacy of coordinates, the tondo is governed by vectors: directions of movement, drift, rotation, and relational forces. In a present in which technical systems not only provide tools but also impose logics of operation and modes of consumption, the circular form also becomes a reclamation of play space. Circle and loop, in this sense, are not merely formal decisions but forms of resistance against the pure execution logic of technology.

The Genetic as Artistic Principle

My works are based on an open gene pool of pictorial components that continually evolves. I use fragments of older works, discarded details, microstructures and intermediate stages as genetic material for new pictorial formations. These "seeds" are recombined, interpolated and transformed through algorithms until they coalesce into a new configuration. In this way, genealogical lines emerge within my practice—motifs transform, mutate and reappear in new contexts.

... Crystallisation ...

I compose my images from those substances (materials, elements, fragments) that have resisted the destructive forces of time. Each work is a crystallisation point of processes, a condensed moment of transformation. Some works are sealed in their state; others continue their movement—but all arise from an open system. Cybernetic Canvas is not a closed pictorial category but a processual approach.

Gerald Trimmel, 16 February 2026