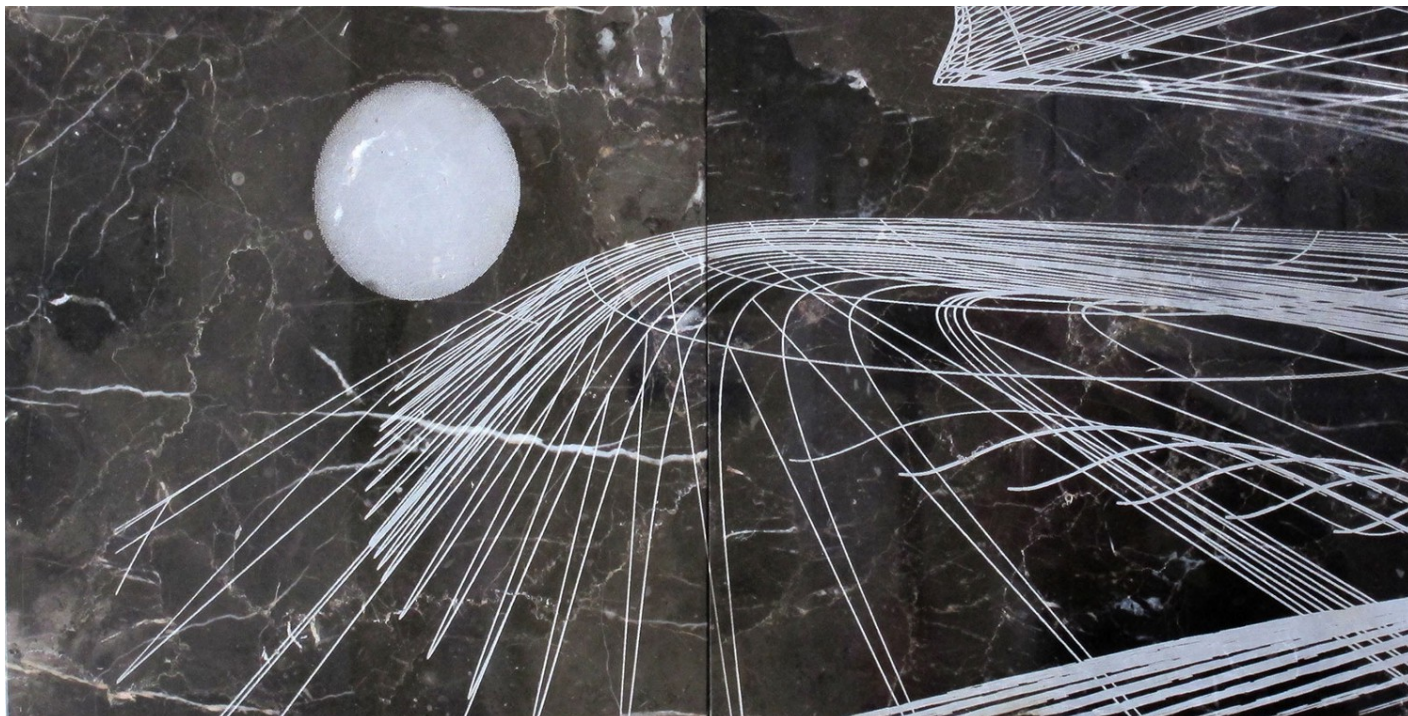


KENDRA VACULIN [BACKCHANNEL](#) 10.10.14 12:00 AM

IF PICASSO HAD A MACBOOK PRO

ARTIST COLIN GOLDBERG'S NEW MOVEMENT MARRIES COMPUTERS AND CRAFT



Wireframe Landscape #2, 2006. Laser-etched marble, 12 x 24 inches.

“There was this guy, Franz Kline,” Colin Goldberg says, smiling, the opening to a story it’s clear he’s told before and that he still loves telling. Kline was a notable American painter in the 1940s who found himself in an artistic rut; stuck, frustrated, with nothing but a pile of tiny charcoal drawings of furniture, he went to visit a friend’s studio, presumably to whine about it.

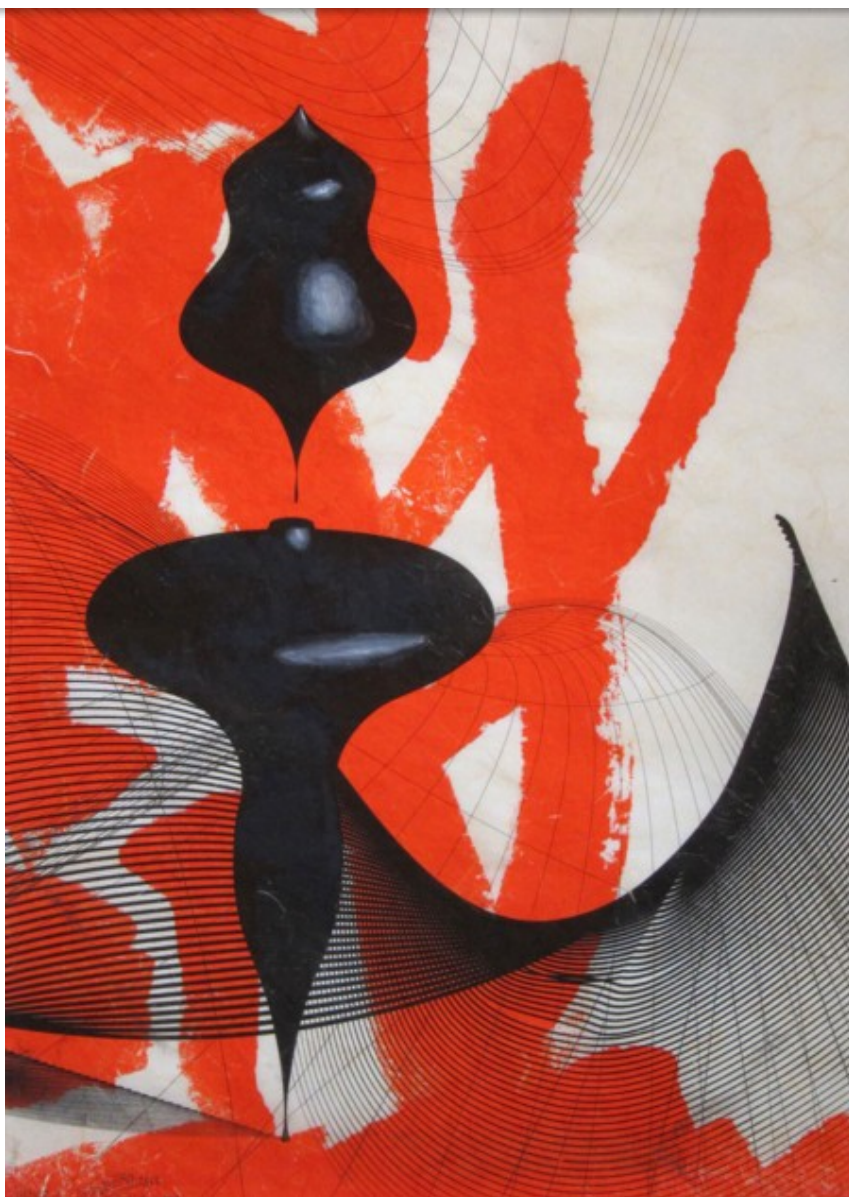
The friend was Willem de Kooning, himself an abstract expressionist painter, who bulldozed Kline’s roadblock with a simple shift of perspective. Taking one of Kline’s sketches, he blew it up on the wall with a Bell Opticon projector —the little chair, magnified beyond recognition, became huge black calligraphic strokes. “I always thought [Kline] was just going crazy on the canvas, painting like a madman,” says

results would become Kline's iconic style.

It sounds like an art history lesson, or even a pep talk for anyone struggling creatively (*Look at it a *new* way!* the inspirational poster version would read), but coming from Goldberg, the story is a parable. Instead of traditional art and technology at odds with each other — a big robotic mouth swallowing painting whole — Kline is an example of the way the two can work together to inspire entirely new forms.

So, it turns out, is Goldberg.





Left: *Dynamic Dispatch*, 2011. Acrylic and pigment on canvas, 20 x 32 inches / Right*: *New Plastic Shodo #5**, 2013. Sumi ink, acrylic and pigment on Kinwashi paper, 12.25 x 18.75



Colin Goldberg was born in 1971 in the Bronx and raised on Long Island, before moving upstate to study studio art at Binghamton University. Under the tutelage of professor [Angelo Ippolito](#), he began to focus on process and materials rather than product, a shift that has stayed with him ever since. After graduation, Goldberg moved to New York City, where his work in digital design for advertising firms (coupled with the tight quarters of his East Village apartment, not an ideal space for

techspressionism.

Goldberg's method lies at the intersection of paint and digital print-making. "I start with an under-painting in oil or acrylic, on paper, canvas or linen," he explains, "and then print vector drawings that I create on a [Wacom] tablet directly on top of that, using a large format printer." The drawings are completed in Adobe Illustrator, and printed with the 44-inch Epson in his studio in Long Island's North Fork, which the Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant helped fund. The result is an arresting mix of geometric and fluid layers, abstract but often easily interpreted as futuristic, space-y scenes.

Goldberg created the term 'techspressionism' in 2011, when he was looking for a title for a self-produced show: "I needed a way to talk about my art that addressed not only the process, but the style and ideas behind it as well." Techspressionism made sense because the word itself was fused from disparate sources, in the same fashion as his work.

"Technology has always been an integral part of my process, and referenced in the imagery," he says. "But the abstract expressionists played a big influence on me as well."



Inazuma, 2013. Acrylic and pigment with liquid polymer on birch panels, 24 x 62 inches. Triptych.




form in words, titling the piece *The Techspressionist Manifesto* “The word ‘manifesto’ bothers me a bit,” he says, “because it can seem overly serious, but I did draw inspiration from things like Marinetti’s *The Futurist Manifesto*. [*The Techspressionist Manifesto*] is me trying make the case for the computer being a valid artistic tool.”

Goldberg describes the relationship between technology and art as symbiotic and essential. If technological development throughout the course of history can be credited with paint, printing presses, cameras and typewriters, then the computer is simply the latest advancement in the line, and just as authentic a medium of expression. Goldberg considers his method an extension of traditional drawing, despite the heat “machine-made” work occasionally gets from critics: it is still him at the tablet, the work still emerging from the stylus in his hand.

“Nothing is ever truly computer-generated,” he writes. “The human mind has always provided the code.”

The *Manifesto* is a sort stage-setter for the collection of Goldberg’s work that will be displayed at the Glenn Horowitz Bookseller East Hampton Gallery beginning October 11th. The exhibition, called, unsurprisingly, *Techspressionism*, rounds out Goldberg’s futuristic sensibilities with some newer pieces that reflect his Japanese heritage. The techspressionist formula is a perfect blueprint for what Goldberg calls “Eastern aesthetic within a Western formalist framework,” a literal layering of cultures: the base paintings often reference Japanese calligraphy, on hemp based *kinwashi* (“golden-fibers”) paper in Sumi ink, while the printed layers reflect his characteristic vector work, with chalice forms, wire frames, and grids.



Next up for Goldberg is a new project, involving video-conferencing technology, that the artist has been playing with for nearly a decade. An early adopter of webcam communication, Goldberg first used a Connectix camera and the desktop app *CU-SeeMe* in the mid-90’s to create a series of portraits based on screen captures. While he worked mostly in abstract after completing the series, he was reminded of his love of portraiture this past summer, when he participated in photographer Rick Wenner’s Irrational Portrait Gallery. After taking pictures of 20 artists, Goldberg included, Wenner presented each with a 40x60 canvas print of themselves to be the basis for

“But I asked [Wenner] if I could have the file.” The result was a large oil-on-linen piece that incorporated the same printing and layering techniques employed in his abstract work.





Left: 623 *Variation #3*, 2014. Acrylic, pearlescent latex glaze and pigment on linen. 48 x 32 inches. | Right: *Seicho*, 2014. Oil and pigment on linen. 48 x 32 inches. With his new venture, which he is calling the Remote Portraiture Project, Goldberg is interested in combining these two experiences. Using video-conferencing technology, the artist will take screen captures of a number of people who have guided him as an artist. The images will serve as the basis of the work, assembled through layers of paint and large format printing with perhaps other digital components added as well, like text transcripts of the artist's conversations with the subjects. "I've been working in an abstract way for so long," Goldberg says, "that it's refreshing to see people see portraits. They don't have to try to figure out what it is

executed.”

It is hard not to appreciate Goldberg’s manner and style, in portraiture or otherwise. Despite the increasing number of apps and programs that boast the ability to make an artist out of anyone —you’re just one filter, one edit away from a masterpiece — Goldberg manages to give technology a seat at his studio table without compromising the human side of creativity. What seems sometimes like a battle between code and craft can, if you squint, or use a large format printer, look a little more like a dance. From techspressionism’s layering of paint and print, hand and machine, a third camp has formed: the possibility of art and technology working in tandem.

Backchannel is a digital magazine that delivers readers the most revealing technology stories in a single weekly dispatch: no fluff. [Learn more here.](#)

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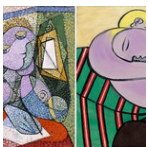
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