

Robert Siedel (Young Projects)  
Flash Art  
By Anne Martens  
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Experiencing "Black Mirror: Video Sculptures and Moving Paintings" is like entering a cave and discovering an awesome 21st-century grotto. On a meandering path in darkness, surrounded by luminous walls and amorphous shapes, one senses an omnipotent nature hewn by technology and culture.

In this survey of works by German artist Robert Seidell animations are projected onto screens, walls, mirrors and sculptures, with occasional monitor displays. On them, abstract forms, monochromatic or bursting with color, flow, undulate and transform.

In Dive Painting #1 (2007), across a row of face-up monitors, stripes primary hues shift back and forth in blinking rhythm, reminiscent of a Nam June Paik installation. Inorganic in tone, it seems vastly different from all else, marking how much the artist's work has changed recently. Another older work, Grau (2004), foreshadows later works with morphing shapes resembling chromosomes, roots, feathers, branches. It is not surprising that Seidel studied botany and biology before focusing on media design.

Notable works represent a leap from two to three dimensions, including Chiral (2010) and Black Mirror (2011), which exist in two iterations each. The first Chiral, a projection onto a torn-apart Chinese lantern, suggests fragile eggshells lit by sunshine. The second Chiral includes the same animation projected onto wall-sized crumpled white paper, cut into vertical strips - creating the effect of a waterfall. The sculptures' translucency diffuses the animation's hard edges and saturated colors, even as the shifting light seems to intensify.

In Black Mirror, two intricate cut-paper sculptures evoke chandeliers hung before a wall of mirrors, with animated light casting impressions of fire, corral, ice and gemstones. A Rorschach pattern can be discerned in one of the sculpture's reflections.

Experiencing Seidel's art seems both external to the self and internalized. Mirages come and go as fleeting as thought, with just their collective impact lingering.

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