

“He looked past Chin toward streams of numbers running in opposite directions. He understood how much it meant to him, the roll and flip of data on a screen. He studied the figural diagrams that brought organic patterns into play, birdwing and chambered shell. It was shallow thinking to maintain that numbers and charts were the cold compression of unruly human energies, every sort of yearning and midnight sweat reduced to lucid units in the financial markets. In fact data itself was soulful and glowing, a dynamic aspect of the life process. This was the eloquence of alphabets and numeric systems, now fully realized in electronic form, in the zero-oneness of the world, the digital imperative that defined every breath of the planet's living billions. Here was the heave of the biosphere. Our bodies and oceans were here, knowable and whole.” - Don DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, Scribner, New York, 2003

For his fourth solo exhibition with Raucci/Santamaria, Cheyney Thompson (born 1975, Baton Rouge, Louisiana; lives and works in New York) is presenting a series of paintings that conclude his latest series of works. These works continue to focus on further analysis of the technology, distribution and circulation of painting.

Drawing on algebraic models and algorithms present in the structure and study of statistics, applied to economic and financial processes, the artist takes the abstract dimension of the data composing it and attempts to translate it into a two-dimensional pictorial representation.

In his use of color, Thompson tries to create a basic structure combining standardized models used in the system of the painter and inventor Albert Henry Munsell. This color system – or simply the Munsell system – is a spatial representation used as an international standard to define colors based on three dimensional coordinates: hue, value (lightness) and chroma (color purity). Munsell created the system in the early twentieth century and in the 1930s the United States Department of Agriculture adopted it as its official color system for soil research. Even today, it is applied graphically in statistical tables regarding industry and agriculture. The artist took the data resulting from the set of color values to create a spatial model of all the colors derived from the dimensions of the gallery and then translated them into the exhibited works. Thompson has inserted a theoretical entity into this spatial model, an imaginary unit referred to in statistics as *stochastic*. An arbitrary datum is introduced to check a probabilistic calculation of possible spatial dimensions, translated into a sequence of random steps defined as a “random walk”. This “random walk” comes from the study of certain types of movement that are seemingly not tied to a precise order and that, above all, can be noted in the observations of the nineteenth-century botanist Robert Brown, who studied pollen floating on water. In the early twentieth century, mathematician Louis Bachelier then organized these observations into models and formulas he used for models of the fluctuation of stock and financial markets. In this case, the “random walk” present in Thompson’s subject

produced a new sequence of color values, which he mapped onto a grid composed of small squares, in a contiguous non-intersecting path resembling a computerized graphic diagram. This is a dimension that strives to lend form and visibility to the continuous movement of the flow of data and codes that multiply perpetually in seeming chaos and that we can only perceive if they are captured and translated through the contemplation of these works.

Cheyney Thompson has had solo exhibitions at the MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the Kunstverein Braunschweig, Germany. His work was included in 2008 Whitney Biennial, New York; *“Une Histoire”*, Centre Pompidou, Paris; *“Chat Jet – Painting ‘Beyond’ The Medium”* at Künstlerhaus Graz; *“The Indiscipline of Painting”*, Tate St. Ives, England; *“Systems Analysis”* at West London Projects and the Langen Foundation, Germany; *“Greater New York”* at the P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York; and the Venice Biennale (2003).

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