A screen shot of a computer

Description automatically generatedReview of **Blue Period** [by Jeremy Rotsztain](https://frm.fm/a/jeremy_rotsztain)

Figure

The piece ‘Blue Period’ (see figure 1) by Jeremy Rotsztain is a pre-programmed generative painting that occurs on a screen. The piece blurs the line between animation and gestural painting, using algorithmic processes that simulate the materiality of paint. A virtual camera is used in this looped video to guide the viewer’s point of view through an array of blue tones. On screen we see textures, gestures, scales and mark-making similar to that we would expect to see in a traditional action painting or abstract expressionist piece, but the flatness of the digital media cannot be escaped even when lead through the painterly maze. The project poses questions concerning intention and authenticity of pre-saved gestural marks that appear to the artist to be somewhat energetic or natural by the hand of a physical action painter. The organised, preconceived and changeable nature of digital gives the artist ability to be selective in the gestures made, and this makes me wonder what it is that Rotszain is attempting to express in this piece when acting as a painter.

The vivid colours achieved by a digital media makes the piece graphically appealing and the animation element is what draws me to the piece and its potential in birthing a new type of abstract expressionism or action painting, but it is also the animation that discourages me from being able to see the piece as visually successful as a still. The use of animation to shed through the layers of the digital painting encourages me to visualize paintings by Japanese action painters such as Kazuo Shiraga and Shozo Shimamoto suddenly broken apart into time fragments of their meeting with the canvas. Almost as if ever gesture made could be suspended in its layering but still hold free from its destined surface.

In critic of this project, I would not compare this piece to those of traditional action pieces due to its lack of texture and transparency, although this dense field of blue does lend itself to the animation in this specific piece. To me this project should represent the ability to move through a painting and consider the time of execution of each unrestrained paint stroke or splash. The materials should be further defined, to give texture, that would further suggest painting rather than the graphical flat visual we receive. The flat layers do lend themselves further to be a part of the perhaps a 3D landscape, becoming a sculptural piece rather than that of a traditionally mounted painting.

From this project, I feel intrigued to further this idea of creating digital action paintings, giving a program the ability to make decisions on widths, textures, colours and tools. The camera would thereby act as a mediator between audience and artist (machine being artist in this case). The act of creation then becomes secondary, as you equip the program with the tools it needs to create abstracts of its own. With this idea, I could begin to play on the idea of completion in action painting, thereby randomising when a still of the generative piece would be taken, forcing the machine to start a fresh. This project could hold much in terms of critical theory, as we would then consider how machine products thereby are viewed as not expressive, purely procedural, thereby also suggesting that this art is therefore of ‘lesser’ value to works authentically produced by a conscious expressive hand with the ability to emit emotion and impulse in the true nature of action painting.