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Kinetic art proves it never got the flick

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In an era dominated by the screens of computers, mobile phones and televisions, making art is not easy. There is so much to look at, and so many people making slide shows and videos that there seems little to be gained by calling yourself an artist.

Many carry on painting as if nothing has happened, making works that could just as easily have been made in the 1960s as today.

Others, however, experiment with the ideas that have come out of a culture dominated by screens.

A video cut-up by Elizabeth McAlpine called "The Film footage missed by a viewer through blinking while watching the feature film Don't Look Now" is this kind of experiment. It shows how it is possible to experience the emotional highs and lows of a film in just seven minutes.

McAlpine, a London artist, is the star of a new exhibition of photography, installation and video works that twist our perception of

time. In another video, she has made a collage of the whiteouts that big explosions create in feature films.

With only one second taken from each blast, an old television screen flickers brilliantly as we hear a soft rumble of destruction.

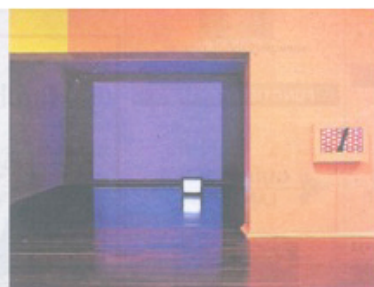
On a bigger projection behind this work, another flickering screen shows a series of flash frames of single colours that have been lifted from film trailers.

These collages make a brilliant meditation on what the screen does to our mind. The fast flashes are somehow calming and seductive, just as cinema and television are. The works disturb our sense of ourselves in space and time, just as film and television does.

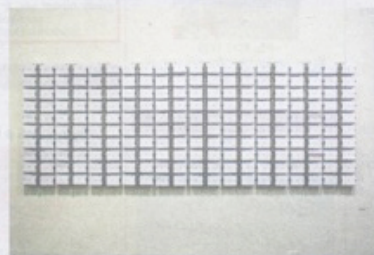
Other artists on show include Perth's Rebecca Baumann, whose flicking clock cards have been some of the most original works produced in the city over the past few years.

There are also two films by New Zealand artist Len Lye, famous around the world for his experiments with movement.

Lye began making works in the



Receptive: Elizabeth McAlpine's *Light Reading* and Len Lye's *Colour Box*, deal with how technology has changed.



Original: Rebecca Baumann's *Automated Colour Field* explores the perception of time.

1930s, and was at the forefront of what could be called kinetic art. Kinetics came into use in the 1960s to describe light shows, machines that

destroyed themselves, mobiles hanging from the ceiling and explosions in the name of art. As new technologies came into

everyday use, the term kinetic was sidelined, as the idea of digital art became fashionable.

Now the novelty of computers has waned, the idea of kinetic art is on the rise again. It describes anything that moves in art, whether on a screen or not.

The art of Baumann and McAlpine has the look and feel of a 21st century that is not worried about how technologies do what they do. What is important is the effect they create.

Here all kinds of technologies are used to explore the perception of time. Some of these experiments are better than others, which is a price artists pay for exploring new visual ideas.

All the work is installed with such flair, however, that such differences in quality are coloured over.

Walls painted in tones of blue, orange, red and yellow curve into the air above the visitor, turning the exhibition into a total installation.

Strangely shaped sculptures and photographs dot the space, appearing like relics of a retro lounge or a spaceship.

The show is very much in tune with the times, having a foothold in some of the best ideas circulating in the world of contemporary art.

First Amongst Equals is at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art until December 30.