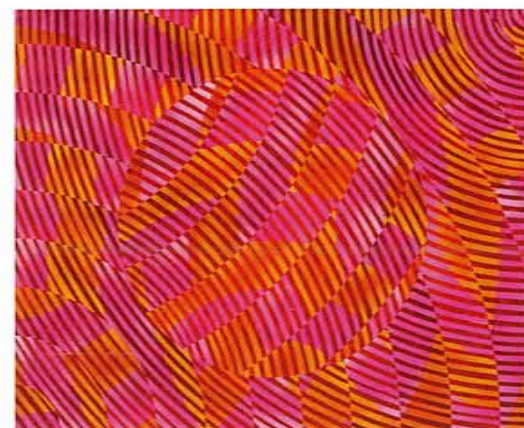
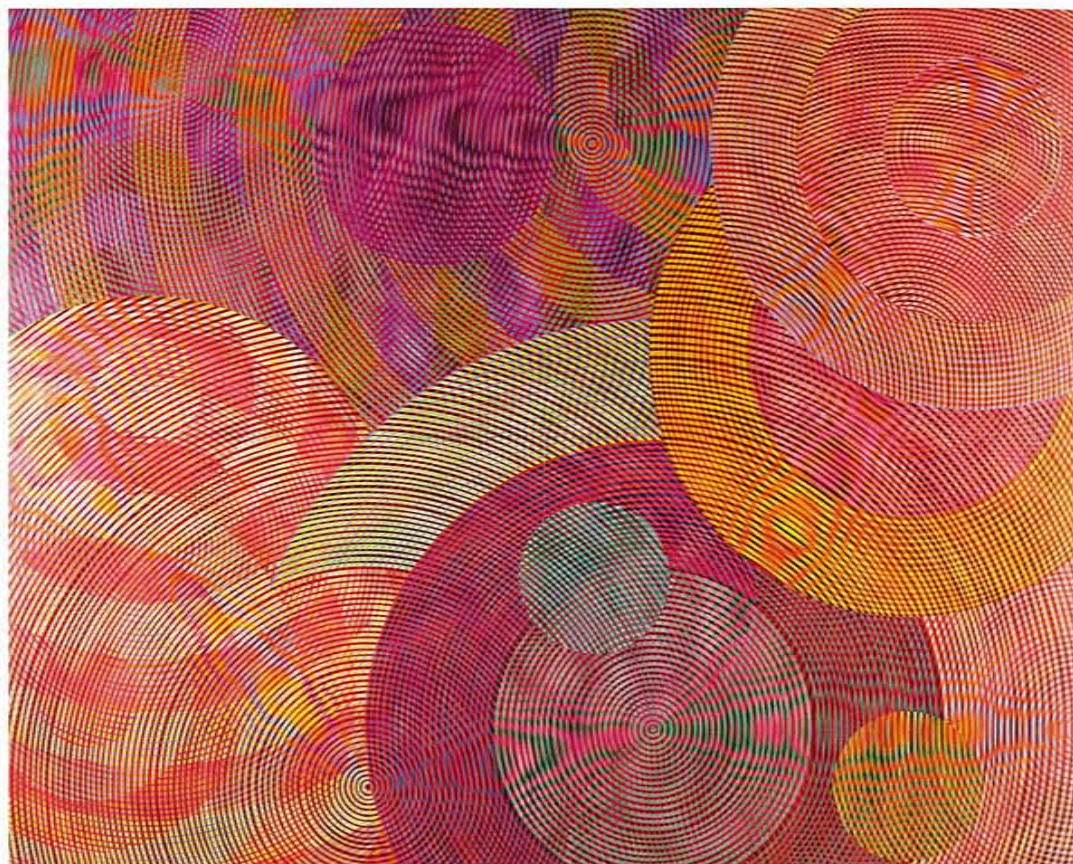


John Aslanidis: *Sonic Network #2 and Fragments*
 Gallery 9, Sydney
 25 November – 16 December 2006

The retinal flutter so disdained by the de facto granddaddy of conceptual art is very much in evidence in these intricate paintings by Melbourne-based John Aslanidis. One literally feels the eye vibrate as it strains to register the competing colours that zing out from these tightly structured and (mostly) modestly sized canvases. The majority of the works, entitled *Sonic Fragments* 2006, share a common motif comprising a central disc with diffracting ripples either side. The motif provides the template for the artist's experiments with colour and perception. As the eye moves from one painting to the next, the after-image lingers at an almost equal intensity, adding yet another layer to each. However, the works together, rather than remaining within the confines of retinal stimulation, seem to emit pulsating rays that one feels as much as sees, that one even comes close to hearing.

This synaesthetic effect is important to Aslanidis' project, given his interest and background in sound art, an interest with an electronic bent. (During the 1990s Aslanidis was a member of the electronic music group Clan Analogue, which explored the confluences between aural and visual information.) The patterns depicted in the paintings are, as their titles suggest, in part inspired by sonar waves; they attempt to visualise sound. Synaesthesia—the ability to perceive information intended for one sense by means of another, such as hearing colour or seeing music—has for some time been associated with heightened creativity and lateral thinking. Famous synaesthetes include the great colourist Wassily Kandinsky, Albert Einstein, and modernist composers such as Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov. Some recent research, moreover, suggests that synaesthesia played a key role in the development of language; apparently sounds used to name many worldly phenomena were not completely arbitrary, but connected to synaesthetic effects—for example, sound reflected the shape or feel of an object.

The objective of simulating a synaesthetic experience for the viewer, then, might be to facilitate an awareness of *how* one comes to a state of knowledge, thereby also aiming to evoke *alternate* ways of knowing. Certainly, these paintings seek to capture in a still image the time-based nature and deeply embodied perception of sound. Given that vision is conventionally considered the least embodied sense—the sense most closely aligned with mind and spirit—the synaesthetic impulse of these paintings attempts to bring the viewer back into his or her body.



from top: John Aslanidis, *Sonic Network No. 2, 2005-06*. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 244 x 305cm; John Aslanidis, *Sonic / Crosscurrent Fragment No. 1, 2006*. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 66.5 x 81.5cm. Courtesy the artist and Gallery 9, Sydney.

Hence, while Aslanidis' paintings *Sonic Fragments*, *Sonic Crosscurrents* and *Sonic Networks* revel in the joy of colour and pattern, they evoke much more than a retinal flutter. Their iconography connects macrocosm and microcosm, vision and sound. By way of the artist's skilful manipulation of form and colour and his thorough grounding in the science of human perception and sound, the paintings activate the full sensorium. They heighten both the viewer's cognisance of their body as an interpreter of stimuli, and their awareness of the process of meaning-making.

Jacqueline Millner

'Out of Time-A Contemporary View'
 Museum of Modern Art, New York
 3 August 2006 – 9 April 2007

Shortly after seeing Andy Warhol's epic 'Empire' 1964, a silent black and white record of New York's Empire State Building shot at twenty-four frames per second and projected, for eight-plus hours, at sixteen frames, filmmaker Jonas Mekas wrote of Warhol's 'celebrating our existence by slowing our perception'. Warhol's

minimal variation opened up time, feeding the illusion that we are seeing more: time appears distended as we watch. Warhol's generosity here is on a par perhaps with that exercised in his multiple portraits screened on a single surface—the Elvises, or Marilyn's—but now the tragic edge that underlay his redemptive gestures is more apparent. Writing on the 1964 Flower paintings in 1970, at a time when it was not certain Warhol had a practice with a future, John Coplans noted how their 'flash of beauty...suddenly becomes tragic under the

viewer's gaze'. Warhol filmed the building from daylight to dark, mimicking the film image's own passage into oblivion. Arrested in a flash of light, the image, like the landmark, passes into darkness.

'Empire' opened 'Out of Time', the Museum of Modern Art's most recent re-installation of its Contemporary Galleries, a task undertaken as part of its ongoing revision of contemporary art. A show hung on the idea of 'exploring some of the tensions in recent experiences of time', the exhibition was more simply and cor-