

Kurt Ralske  
(Young Projects)  
Flash Art  
By Jeremy Steffen  
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"The Mechanical Bride" is the first solo show of the New York-based visual artist Kurt Ralske. The title refers to the homonym Marshall McLuhan's 1951 book, emphasizing his intention to investigate the hidden meaning found within the images that belong to the common imaginary.

Ralske's creative process is based on the photographs and videos from master cinematographers of the past like Gillo Pontecorvo or F.W. Murnau, in a constant dialogue between past and present. Most of Ralske's work deals with analyzing, decomposing, and recomposing preexisting cinematographic sequences using custom designed software to create a new visual universe by dissolving sound and images. He condenses the brightest shots of Tokyo Story (1953) the slowest shots of Equinox Flower, (1958) or the longest shots of Early Summer (1951) by director Yasujiro Ozu, rendering intense black and white or bright abstract mosaics in a continuous fluid motion, where organic geometrical shapes and human silhouettes seem to pour down the screen at a slow pace. Ralske's flow of images blurs the border between painterly static images and digital motion. The second section of the exhibition pays a tribute to the work of German special effects expert Eugen Schufftan. Ralske's work suggest images that blend the original figures, by disrupting the first intention of Schufftan's sequences from 1929.

His method represents the ideal extension of the infamous Schufftan Process, a technical procedure designed to create multiple exposure on a single image used by Fritz Lang's Metropolis in 1927. Through visual, temporal and physical distortions, simple daily gestures are multiplied into infinity, revealing a sensual consmos populated by ghosts without faces who epitomize pure expressive entities. Ralske's technique brings what he calls "the relics of cinematic history" back to a new digital life, where the perception of time is replaced by simultaneity.

Ralske combines modern cutting edge technology with classic experimental films of the past just as a physician would use an endoscope to scrutiny a sick body. His work is a study that oscillate between the clergy of the past and the present, while questioning the innter foundations of our process of visual perception and historical memory.