Author: Caroline Dawson, carolineajd@gmail.com

Clare Strand, *The Discrete Channel with Noise: Algorithmic Painting, Destination #1*

Now I'm going to describe the receiver image of the source image I have just described. This one is called *The Discrete Channel with Noise: Algorithmic Painting: Destination #1*. It was made between 2017 and 2018.

It's an acrylic painting on paper, portrait in format. It measures 160cm in width and 198cm in height. Which is around the size of a king-sized bed. … These paintings are huge, at least ten times the size of the original photographs that line the adjacent wall. The paper is attached to a white background within a frame, and a border runs all around the edge … between the photograph and the thin white frame. The frame is 6cm in depth. The format, size and framing are identical to the other paintings in the series.

Initially … looking at this painting, I feel like I am viewing a pixelated version of the photograph I just described. The information of the original photograph is present, but it is abstracted to a basic sort of representation, translated through many squares.

When I look more closely, it becomes something else. It no longer reminds me of a pixelated digital image, slowly downloading over a poor internet connection … I start to notice the human traces. Each painting is unglazed and composed on paper rather than canvas. The little mistakes made by a slip of the hand holding the paint brush, an unattached bristle or piece of dust left between the paper and the paint, the nature of the heavy acrylic paint … and the curves and contours this brings to the fall of the paper.

Each of the numbers within the grid on the transmitter image translate to a colour of paint that has been used by Strand. With a limited colour palette of

10 grey-scale colours, there are areas of the painting which are painted in the same colour which might not have been, had the artist had a greater range of tones to work with. Instead of painting each square individually, it looks like the artist has made each of these areas into Tetris blocks … or joined up, square-edged blocks of colour. For example … the woman's shirt is a block of the same grey, still following the shape of the shirt in the original photograph … each curve of the material is now translated as a cluster of colour. In the source image … many handwritten number 3's spread over her shirt like a pattern, there is now a block of light grey.

The black background is now almost totally black, with the exception of a few dark grey strips on the right of the painting, which represent the light reflecting from the dado rail paneling.

On the left side of the image the thin light grey panel from the photograph runs down from the top left corner, and stops one-third of a way from the bottom left corner. This panel is the same as in the photograph, as is the darkness of the black background.

The crouching woman is in the same position, but it is difficult, without the referent image, to make out the human figure … and likely impossible to ascertain that the figure is looking at or through a piece of equipment. Her right hand still conceals her face, but now it is the formation of the blocks that represent her hands that make it hard to see what she is doing.

Her back becomes a jagged, grey diagonal half way down the left side of the composition, and her lighter-coloured left arm rests on her left thigh. Her bottom, thighs and calves are all touching as she crouches low onto the floor. In the source image, her dark skirt was dotted with number 4's and 5s. 4 where the light from the flash or a light source behind the photographer hits her right thigh. Now it is a dark grey clump of squares, highlighted with a lighter grey clump of squares across her right thigh, and a lighter, paler grey of her calves and feet.

The biggest change of colour occurs in a concentrated area is seen around her dark, straight, short bob hair style. In the photograph, her hair was a mixture of 3's, 4's and 5's. Here it is a mixture of different grey squares.

Overall the painting appears like an enlargement of pixels – where original information is lost and, perhaps, new information gained in the process of transmission and reception.