bernard jacobson gallery

Harold Cohen

New Paintings

8th April – 7th May 2011

One of the very few artists ever to explore the new science of artificial intelligence for his own art-making purposes, Harold Cohen developed his now-celebrated AARON programme, and, before most of his public knew what computers were, they exhibited together at prestigious venues on both sides of the Atlantic: the Tate Gallery, the Brooklyn Museum, the San Francisco Museum, the LA County Museum, documenta 6 and many other international locations.

Since its inception in the early seventies, AARON has become increasingly autonomous as an artist, and virtually all of Cohen's work has been generated, and made physically, by the programme; first through a series of drawing machines, then painting machines built by Cohen (both now in the permanent collection of the Museum of Computing History in Mountainview, California) and more recently through the use of wide-format printers.

Last year, however, Cohen recast his relationship to AARON, redefining its role in his art-making practice. Instead of generating finished works on paper, the programme is now required to produce the digital equivalent of underpaintings on canvas, which Cohen then carries forward to completed oil paintings. The result, to be seen in the forthcoming exhibition at the Bernard Jacobson Gallery, is a series of vividly original works, and it marks the fusion of two important aspects of the work of a major artist and innovator now at the height of his powers.