

I first met Roz Dimon when working on my “Rembrandt/Not Rembrandt” exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum (1995-1996). She co-curated and appeared in a contemporaneous exhibition, “code,” a highly successful show of digital art at the Ricco/Maresca Gallery in Soho. It struck me at the time that computer art was analogous to Rembrandt’s experiments in etching, then (ca. 1625 onward) a new, faster and more flexible form of making prints, which allowed fairly widespread distribution. Learning of Roz’s original work in oil painting, which of course was Rembrandt’s main concern, reinforced the connection, which simply illustrates how many breakthroughs in artistic expression are linked with formal and technical innovation.

Roz’s studio is something of a blend between Rembrandt’s and a lab at Apple or IBM. The usual coffee cans with paint brushes, immortalized by Jasper Johns in a famous early bronze, vie silently for attention with humming computer screens on which the work sometimes recalls Johns but also leaves him far behind. This is not art for the masses and yet is accessible to them, via website, and through its quality and modern imagery. What impresses me most is how draftsmanship, color, invention, significant motifs, etc. still matter, at least in the work of this particular digital artist and painter. Humor reminiscent of Oldenberg and Klee is embodied in drawing a bit (byte?) like John’s or Matisse’s, while spliced-in images and scraps of text come and go like Rauschenbergs, Warhols, and Ms. Dimon’s own always-on, surge-unprotected imagination. One work in particular seems similar at once to Manet’s Olympia (male version) and a view of downtown Tokyo at night. This is encouraging. I feel that I’ve seen the future and it’s better than previously assumed.

Walter Liedtke, Curator

Metropolitan Museum of Art