

**MICHAEL BELL-SMITH**

Foxy Production, New York



**MICHAEL BELL-SMITH, GLITTER BEND,** 2008. VIDEO. COURTESY FOXY PRODUCTION, NEW YORK.

Michael Bell-Smith's art is poetically deceptive; though it feigns simplicity and restraint in its end result, there lies a distinct concept behind its aesthetically seductive veneer. "Bouncing Lights Forever" consisted of six works that were projected or displayed on flat screens, creating a deft confluence of video, animation, digitization and archaic computer gaming systems like Nintendo. Avoiding a sense of recuperated adolescence or nostalgia, Bell-Smith updates this anachronism to a sophisticated formal and conceptual trope by expanding the relatively new genre of media art into heady terrain. In *Moving, Endless (Sample)* (2008), for example, five screens

placed in a horizontal row display a myriad of tableaux in various colors ranging from saturated yet pastel-like blissful blues, tranquil tangerines and mellow yellows. These colors, however therapeutic, interrogate ontological questions about the nature and certainty of perception. While the works are ostensibly in the register of pure abstraction, they can also be seen as digital, illuminated surrogates of sorts for such things as sunsets or sunrises on celestial bodies other than earth. In terrestrial terms these works palpitate between dichotomies of painting/moving image, dynamism/stasis, figure/ground, surface/depth and high/low tech. But the linchpin in Bell-Smith's modus operandi is revealing his works' digital, atomistic infrastructure as an aesthetic device and as commentary on the fetish of digital culture and the obsession for the technologically new. As such, he dispels the technophilia that mars so much work in this medium.

**Raul Zamudio**