

# THE AESTHETICS OF THE ARCHIVE

Abram (Stern) was through at Stanford last night talking to our Mellon Workshop in New Media about net.art – here is the talk in his wiki – [link]

There are many interesting matters for an archaeologist – net.art's focus on broken bits of computer code, frequent nostalgia for older art forms, reuse of media fragments. And above all the classic issue of media archaeology – how to archive and document work that is insubstantial, time-based and ephemeral?

The evening turned out to less of a presentation and more of a shared exploration through the collection of pieces held in his wiki.

Abram's own work is actually more interesting than most of the classics of net.art. Fred (Turner) made a comment on his wonderful IP collage that got me thinking.

This work takes the IP address of a visitor to the site, treats the numbers as coordinates and color reference and maps the rectangle onto a white canvas. The result is a growing layered image of quite extraordinary beauty. Fred's comment – this is a work in [the aesthetics of archiving](#).

Philip (of philosophistry) also uses a color coded graphic to visualize and navigate the postings on his blog – a remarkable manifestation of changing tones and themes.

Then I recalled a work of the Three Landscapes Project at Stanford – the book in a room, a diary of our inquiries into the notion of landscape, produced by Cliff McLucas for the project.

It explicitly worked upon the [graphics of record](#) – how to represent a year long inquiry into the notion of place – a layered intermingling of our research,

information and findings on three specific landscapes, talks with colleagues, and how it changed in the process of collaborative inquiry, the collaboratory.

More of the scope of media archaeology.