

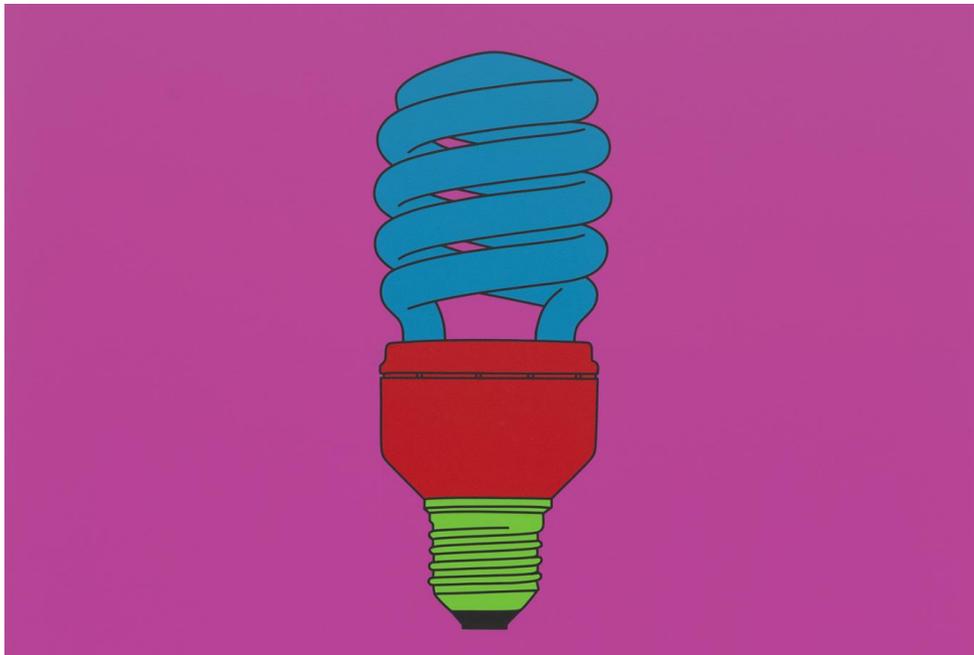
## GAGOSIAN GALLERY

### EveningStandard.

#### Michael Craig-Martin and Simon Denny at the Serpentine, exhibition review

*Michael Craig-Martin's stonking show is full of exuberant, joyous colour, while Simon Denny has created a kind of museum of hacking, proving that it means much more than countercultural online activism*

Ben Luke



*A symbol of waste: Michael Craig-Martin's lightbulb © Michael Craig-Martin. Courtesy the artist and Gagosian Gallery. Photo: Mike Bruce*

#### Michael Craig-Martin, Serpentine Gallery ★★★★★☆

Outside the Serpentine, ahead of a long avenue of trees heading west in Kensington Gardens, is an emblem of Michael Craig-Martin's show, his first in a London public gallery since 1989.

It's a sculpture of a lightbulb, or, more accurately, the drawing of a lightbulb — just the outline of screw-in bulb, in bright magenta, its lightness belying its material, powder-coated steel.

As Craig-Martin has said, when he first captured the bulb — among other ordinary objects he began to draw in the same clear, graphic style in the Eighties — he never expected “that it would become a thing of design history”.

But it has — it's a symbol of waste, on its way to obsolescence, replaced by the ecobulbs, the coiling form of which he captures in a painting elsewhere. Craig-Martin never intended his work to become social history, a chronicle of our progress from analogue to digital, and the increasing speed in which the objects lose use-value or meaning. But it has: anyone remember the Tungsten Palm Pilot, a personal organiser? Or still use cassettes?

Even Craig-Martin's process has shifted from drawing on paper to the computer. He now has a library of digital drawings that are like found objects, repurposed as he sees fit. At times they're stark, alone on the canvas, at others they're in combinations of overlapping lines, or on a jostling wallpaper pattern. In *Eye of the Storm*, a forest of images fills the canvas.

That he does all this in exuberant, joyous colour means that it adds up to a stonking show. His hues are as direct and nameable as his objects — the bluest blues, the reddest reds. Bright magenta and turquoise fill some galleries' walls, too, and this is Craig-Martin's real achievement — he's created a complete installation that doesn't feel in the least repetitive, playing with the Serpentine's symmetry. He proves that conceptual rigour and sensual, colourist flair aren't incongruous.

At the Serpentine Sackler, Simon Denny has created a kind of museum of hacking, proving that it means much more than countercultural online activism, and indeed links directly to state and corporate approaches to their businesses. Denny is a chronicler rather than a critic, and while his show is fascinating, intelligent and appropriately complex (you could spend a day here), I'm not sure where the art lies in this work — it just lacks an invigorating visual spark.

*Until February 14, Serpentine Gallery (020 7402 6075, [serpentinegalleries.org](http://serpentinegalleries.org))*