

# Peter Hammill, Painting By Numbers

It's not that complicated,  
no more than a clench of fist  
she want to paint her heart out,  
she want to tell it as she sees it is.  
Authority condemns her,  
they say to paint's a waste without a base,  
some bedrock of idea.

Painting by numbers doesn't add up,  
Painting by numbers doesn't add up,  
it's passionless bed-rest,  
work-body that's headless,  
a head that's without heart  
painting by numbers doesn't add up to art.

Her constant vows mean nothing,  
not content alone that sells  
The Market Theory beckons,  
no-one remembers what the story tells;  
no-one remembers passion,  
we just recite the line  
that art is fine and fashion costly.

Painting by numbers doesn't add up;  
safety in numbers, put your hands up  
in mute surrender...  
they'll break her or bend her  
for the heart on her sleeve.  
Painting by numbers all the modern world believes.

And the whole thing falls apart  
when the movement's more important than the art;  
when we're more concerned  
with what's been thought than said  
this is the moment when the culture's dead.

It's not that complicated,  
it's simple as can be:  
she want to paint her heart out,  
they want a programme for the BBC  
where academic critics can talk of art that's fine  
like holy wine the Blessed Intellectuals!

Painting by numbers, safety in numbers...  
The poets from Venus assume that they've seen us  
they're quick to depart.  
Painting by numbers doesn't add up to art.