

tickle



#80

Violet Bond, Jess Hewitt,
Anne Spalter, Catherine Mason, Fay Carsons



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Issue 80

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In this issue, we cover the wild and wonderful *new* of Violet Bond, Hanged Girl and Jess Hewitt, but also begin to investigate the fascinating, and often obscure, past of our subject of choice - digital art.

To this end, we are honoured to bring on board Catherine Mason, a computer art researcher and author, with a new series of columns dealing with little known episodes from the history of the genre.

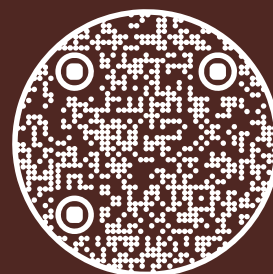
We also speak to digital artist Anne Spalter, steward of Spalter Digital, one of the world's largest collections of digital, plotter and generative art.

We are also beginning to serialise the famous Neal Cassady letter to Jack Kerouac, a singular piece of literary history that Kerouac himself described as "the greatest piece of writing I ever saw". At the end of the serialisation, the entire work will be published as an NFT in collaboration with Black Spring Press Group.

Keep an eye out for that historic moment in literary NFT's.

As ever, enjoy your Tickling, Ticklees.

Johnny Dean Mann & Jess Britton
Co-Editors



tickle



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VIOLET BOND

@VioletBondArt



The Vastness

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Towards the end of our chat with the Australian artist Violet Bond, the sun begins to rise. The sparse, unforgiving landscape begins to mill into view; the sound and the isolation emerging with it. Violet's location, Bulman Weemol, is easily the most remote situation of any creative The Tickle has spoken to. This is no Berlin apartment building or Los Angeles villa - this is nature at its most unpopulated - the nearest town is 500km away among the vastness of the Northern Territories region (a mere half a million square miles).

We labour this point for a reason: the remoteness, the proximity to nature and perhaps above all, the sense of history, give Violet's photographic works a sense of depth and provenance. In a place like Bulman Weemol, that sense of history is notable and truly impressive - the Aboriginal community in Australia can lay claim to a continuous civilisation upwards of 60,000 years, with the earliest known Aboriginal art dating back to 30,000 years ago.

In a wide ranging discussion begun long before dawn, Australian time, The Tickle sits with Violet to discuss her life and art.







"I've been specifically in Bulman for about a year now, as my husband is a ranger working with the First Nations people - this is a huge place and they work on environmental management, education and other things. The whole area is actually an Indigenous Protected Area.

Anyhow, before that I grew up in another Aboriginal community called Maningrida, in the far North of the Northern Territories, on the coast. I have always lived here.

My dad came out to Australia in 1965 as a diesel mechanic. He worked in Central Australia before coming to Maningrida in 1975. He was meant to stay for six months on a contract and he stayed 40 years. He left England originally because deep down he didn't believe in the class system, he hated it.

When he came to Australia, I think working with Aboriginal people just came really naturally to him. He's also a fisherman and Aboriginal Australians love to fish, they love the environment. And so his best friend instantly was another man named Billy who was a brilliant fisherman. They spent all their time just in boats fishing in the wilds, and I think he got a bit addicted and never left."



“...they were trying to get the rights to vote for Aboriginal people, and all the white people basically tried to run him out of town for it.”



As a white Englishman in the inarguably racist past of the governance of Australia, would that kind of lifestyle have been viewed with suspicion?

"Yes for sure, it goes further than that with my Dad - he started this organisation that had a guiding principle of listening to First Nations people. Fighting central government for land rights, self-determination, for the right to choose their future, etc. This was not popular, as you can imagine, and the whole government came down on their heads and fought them the whole way. At one point, they were trying to get the rights to vote for Aboriginal people, and all the white people basically tried to run him out of town for it. They sued him, all sorts.

He was accused of 'arming the natives to bring down the government', which is absurd. He just wanted to uplift people, because that's what he believed in as a working class person."

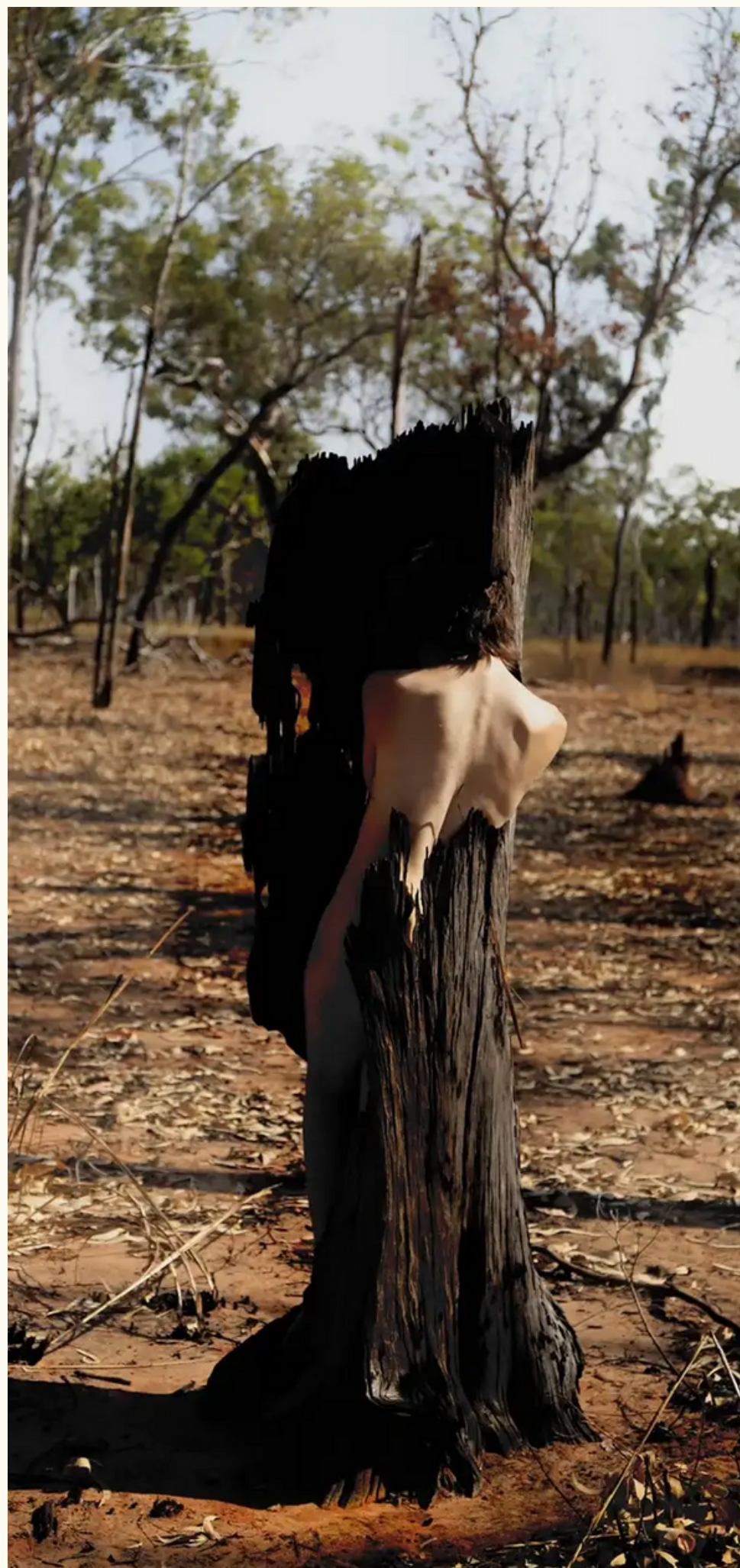
You seem to have been fully immersed in this context your entire life - how has that experience influenced your overall views on such big topics as colonialism?

"Colonisation is a big part of my narrative. In my art, I think part of it is forcing people to be okay with being uncomfortable, because we're never going to be able to have honest conversations until we're able to be uncomfortable. I want people to look at stuff that might make them feel a little bit off. I want people to actually have to ask questions about things because if we're sitting in our comfort zones all the time, we don't acknowledge the things that we've done.

Speaking purely as an Australian, we don't acknowledge the things that we've done as colonisers, as a country, that are horrific. My husband's from Tasmania and every time we go there it just drives me insane because Aboriginal people have been completely erased from the environment in Tasmania. It's just English country gardens and water fountains and oak trees - with no evidence of all the black people that used to live there.

These kinds of worldwide issues are an ongoing topic for me to talk about. We forget if we're comfortable and it's dangerous to forget.

For example, I have two small boys who are essentially the next generation of privileged white men, so right now they're growing up in a remote place as the minority. All day every day, they see other people that are different to them. They think that that's entirely normal - that's so important. The world is a big, beautiful, diverse place."





"It's funny to me that people find my work so visceral, to the extent



that they become quite upset and be quite vocal about it..."



*“...because if
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you shouldn't
be eating it.”*

Clearly for yourself, and your family, this is a wonderful position to be in, but for those not living this kind of life - is there the sense that your art might be a way to reach people in Suburban Melbourne or Sydney, or further afield, to give them an experience that may change their perspective or opinions?

“Yes, that's exactly the point.

In any kind of non-natural environment, in society, there's a disconnect. You get your meat in a neat little, plastic-wrapped packet, you go to a playground where all the grass is mowed and there's rubber matting for safety. We've become normalised to that, but it's a very weird attempt to control the natural world.

It's funny to me that people find my work so visceral, to the extent that they become quite upset and be quite vocal about it - they have these really big emotions when they watch this stuff. And that, for me, is a sign of that disconnectedness because most of the time I'm literally just sitting in some mud - it's not the end of the world. And yet the response is massively over exaggerated. It tells me that the work was good and that it was on point. I'm usually trying to hit those kind of buttons.”

Your work “The Cow Queen”, seems to fit this description very well, hit those buttons. Could you tell us a little bit about this piece and the response to it?

“Well, this one got a lot of backlash, but I said to those groups - this should be on your t-shirts. It's an excellent argument for people to go vegan because if you can't look something in the face when it's dead, then you shouldn't be eating it.

But The Cow Queen is probably my most provocative work, yes.

We live in the middle of cattle country. There are cattle stations all around us here. Millions of cows every year are killed for sausages in Australia - it's in our national ad campaigns for God's sake!. This is just another cow that was killed for sausages, but the horror forms inside people because they don't have any connection to what they're actually eating.

White people hunt and fish for enjoyment. Aboriginal people do it for cultural reasons: to survive. That's the thing. It's just normal. Like we kill cows, we eat fish. Our children collect cockles in the sand. The response from other people, finding it so strange and abnormal, is because of this disconnection we talked about. For me it's an endless source of fascination.”

Another theme in your work is found objects, and what seems to be this relation to ritual practices around death, across cultures. Could you talk a little about this?

"It comes back to this sense of interconnectedness, I think, this sense of 'things live, things die', and that's fine. I mean, I've been to hundreds of funerals in my life. And funeral practices in Aboriginal society are a very big deal - there are a whole bunch of rituals around indigenous funeral practices and I've been very lucky to be part of that. I would consider myself lucky even though there's death involved. But again, it comes down to this connectedness with the cycle of life.

I say on my website that I'm an artist primarily concerned with making art with what is around me. Bones, earth, dirt and fire - the things under my feet. The series Burial Rites is crucial here, as it was intended to honor the wild, that cycle of life and death, so using found objects is crucial here, and in many ways it takes inspiration from Aboriginal funeral practices, the burial, the flowers, the placed objects. It also takes in practices from my ancestors in Europe - pagan rites, viking burials, druid offerings, etc.

It's also important to point out that even though I take inspiration from different cultures - mostly First Nations, but others too - that I'm still a cis white female. I still have to be cautious that this is not my culture to appropriate and it's not my religion to own. So I have been privileged with proximity to another culture, but I have to be very careful that I don't start telling somebody else's story - it's not my right or my position to do that. I try to always speak in terms of my own experience."



We've spoken a little bit about your remote location, but how does the landscape speak to you? How do you scout your locations for images, etc?

“In a sense, the location scouts me”

“Firstly, I try hard to not overthink the process too much. That's kind of quite crucial for me. Because as soon as I start overthinking, the process usually becomes too controlled. Most of the time I allow the environment to inform the work, and that's probably the reason for the variation. The work is very seasonal, because those patterns are intense here - we have the rain season, the fire season, and they profoundly inform the surroundings.

I love the idea that in 10 years, you'll be able to go through my body of work, and be able to tell when the fire season was, when the dry season was. There will be this fire and growth cycle as you scroll through my objekt collections.

In terms of location scouting, I make a very conscious effort to spend lots of time basically just outside without a plan. That's really important to me. Whether it's walking or taking my dogs out, playing with my boys, it's about allowing my brain enough time to see the patterns in the landscape to see things that are interesting. It's not so much location scouting, it's consciously allowing my eyes the opportunity and the time to really see the forms in the environment around me.

In a sense, the location scouts me.”



There is a big space afforded to pottery in your creative life, it seems, could you tell us about the role that it plays? It's probably one of the most ancient forms of human craftsmanship, so it seems to tie in to your work, in that sense.

"I think on a basic level, the idea that Aboriginal Australians can walk into the environment with nothing and come out with masterpieces. It's just a profound brilliance to me. And that awareness brought me around to the idea of 'wild clay'.

There are some great American Indian YouTubers who are really great at teaching you how to find clay in the natural environment and make things with it. So when I started I was making really shitty pots that fell apart in two seconds. They were basically sand. You know, it was terrible. But I got better at it, slowly.

It's the idea of authenticity and imperfection, I think - it's the same reason that I usually don't shave my legs when I make photographic work. It's the same reason that I often take photos at the end of the day when my hair's a mess and when I've been running around in the bush and I'm dirty. That's part of the work, the stripping back of the representation of our authentic selves. And that was the clay to me. It was Bad Clay - truly terrible. I couldn't throw it on a wheel. It cracked all the time. But I loved it. It was beautiful. And it was its own self and we got to know each other very well."





*“...my four year old son
actually pressed the
shutter on my Superrare
piece because my head
was underwater.”*



Moving on to the art of photography - what's your typical shoot process?

"Well, it's funny because I'm not a very good photographer. I don't I don't even know what lens I have on my camera. I don't really care about camera settings. Well, I know what settings to use to take a half decent photo, and I just keep going until something looks good.

In a lot of cases, as with Scarab, and anything where I'm the subject, I obviously need some help, but I have no formal assistants or anything. In fact, my four year old son actually pressed the shutter on my Superrare piece because my head was underwater. I just said to him: 'hold down the button until I come back up' - he's technically the photographer of that piece.

I also enlist the help of a female ranger around here, she's called Lulu, and I work with a friend of mine, Valentina, she's a singer/musician - I set her up as a co-creator of the works she's involved in. I call those works assisted self portraits."



What are your thoughts on NFT's in general? You seem to mint across blockchains, ETH and Tezos.

"I worked in art for over a decade. I think I understand the mechanisms of art. I understand what good art is. That's my universe.

So let's start with Superrare, for instance - I'm a fully onboarded artist there. I was onboarded by a very good friend, but another white man. The platform didn't reach out to me and say, 'Violet! we love your work!'. I was onboarded by a very good friend who I am very grateful to, but another white man.

And so regardless of the quality of the work - and there are some great works there - people in Africa or in India - they're just not going to have the friendships and the relationships and the inter-language relationships of people in that space. For me, that's very problematic.

I come from a background of democracy and indigenous leadership and fighting for rights - essentially elevating people's voices. That's what my family have spent our whole life doing. So this elitism in some ETH NFT spaces doesn't sit well with me.

Tezos and its platforms are the only places that are investing intentionally in ensuring the diversity of voices. I'm a big supporter of telling people that I regularly sell work for 1000tez. You can do this on Tezos. You don't have to pander to opaque clubs of privileged white folk.

*“...this elitism
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Emotionally, I think it's quite devastating: to hear people saying 'I just want to be on Superrare. I've got to try and get Superrare. I've got to apply to Superrare'. And then magically, somehow everything will be better once they get on Superrare. That breaks my heart, because I'm on Superrare, and no one gives a fuck. Nothing changed.

I've decided that I basically hate everything about that. So I burnt my piece from there a couple of weeks ago and I'm actually going to put it on Tezos. In a collection called 'Super Rare' and then make it 5000tez.”





On the topic of diversity, as a female photographer, do you have any difficulty now or in the past finding audiences for your work? Have there been any sort of barriers in the NFT space? Are they perhaps greater than those you may have experienced in the 'real world'?

"Well, there's an episode of The Simpsons where Marge Simpson wants to become a carpenter. And no one will hire her. So she takes Homer in her toolbox and then props him up. And then when the clients leave, she goes and does the work. It does feel like that sometimes.

There are 10 times more men in NFT's at the moment, so I'm very passionate about onboarding female artists to Tezos. I've been successful in onboarding a few from the ETH side too. But my main hang up in being a female photographer has actually come from censorship.

I had some work that went to Superchief in LA. It was me crawling into the dirt with some bones and then crawling out again - it was displayed in real life in LA. Part of that deal was that they were going to put them on screens in Tokyo. I was so excited. The idea that my naked body would be crawling across the cityscape in Tokyo - that's so cool.

But they censored it. They said they wouldn't accept the work. The same happened for NFT NYC.

They said you can't have nudity unless it's a lingerie ad. So I'd say censorship has been a bigger concern for me than being filtered out because I'm a woman. And it comes from the community too, sadly. I made a piece called 'Pyre', which I did for Halloween - it was the first time I'd ever done full frontal nudity in a photo. It was about harking back to my English roots of women being burnt at the stake. It's very obvious what the connotations of that work are. But wow, the crypto bros just came for me because I had pubic hair. Incredible really.

I would say that things have started to improve. A lot of prominent male artist and collectors backed me on the Pyre issue, so that was heartening. I've only been on Tezos since July 2022, but I would argue that there seems to be a bit of a tonal shift lately. People seem to be talking about women's work and African work and work by a lot of different groups. There seems to be a lot more elevation without the defensiveness that normally comes with speaking about female artists. That's a big relief. It gives female artists the confidence to make the work they want to make as opposed to being concerned about how it might be received."

“I was on a phone call with Theo Wayne and the first time he saw my work he said ‘oh my god your work is so tez.’”



So in terms of the themes that you deal with, do you get the sense that these things are more accepted on Tezos?

"One billion percent, yes. On Tezos, I found this experimental, gritty, raw, sort of record store vibe, I was like, I'm gonna find my people here. For me, it's not really about the blockchain. It's more about the fact that the people who choose this space are more likely to appreciate my work."

I was on a phone call with Theo Wayne and the first time he saw my work he said 'oh my god your work is so tez'. It's true, right? People look at my work and they see bones and grittiness and it's all underground and unfiltered, unpolished. So yeah, that makes perfect sense."

Finally, what are your immediate creative plans?

"I want to get a grant at some stage this year, to create a 3d map of where I live on the Ranger base. A lot of my recent works were made in very close proximity to my house and it's such a fascinating environment. There's a helicopter pad in the corner where the Rangers land choppers for all kinds of stuff - doing fire work or environmental surveys. My boys think it's amazing to have helicopters landing in their backyard - it's their favourite thing."



CATHERINE MASON

@cathcomputerarthistory

Amplified or Superseded?

The technologies being used by artists today are enhancements of what was developed over fifty years ago. By studying the history of computer art and the beginnings of the human-machine interrelationship, we can build a better understanding of the digitized world we inhabit today. In this new column I am pleased to share with you some of the discoveries I have made during the twenty years I have spent researching the pioneers of this history; I hope you will enjoy exploring with me the rich origins of digital arts – and the artists who first worked with this as tool, medium, material or methodology. Many of the issues raised back then are still being debated and can even have a bearing on the way we see the world today.

This month we are looking at two early anticipators of interactive art - Ernest Edmonds (b. 1942) and Stroud Cornock (1938-2019), a science/art crossover team working in the 1970s at City of Leicester Polytechnic in the UK. Although Edmonds has always had an interest in art he decided to study mathematics and logic to PhD level, and at this time was Lecturer in the new subject of Computing. Cornock was a Royal College of Art trained sculptor, working in the Fine Art Department with an interest in all kinds of new media. Both situated their practice within the Constructivist tradition.

In 1970 Cornock and Edmonds published a very prescient paper which addressed the implications of the role of the artist in a computational age. Essentially a manifesto, in this they considered whether this machine could become the artist of the future - would the artist of the future have any role at all? Is the artist amplified or superseded by the computer? Published as part of the Computer Graphics '70 conference at Brunel University, England in April, and later published in the American journal *Leonardo* <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1572419>, they proposed that interaction, driven by computing, was a key attribute to art that would bring with it significant opportunities for participation and for re-designating the role of the artist.



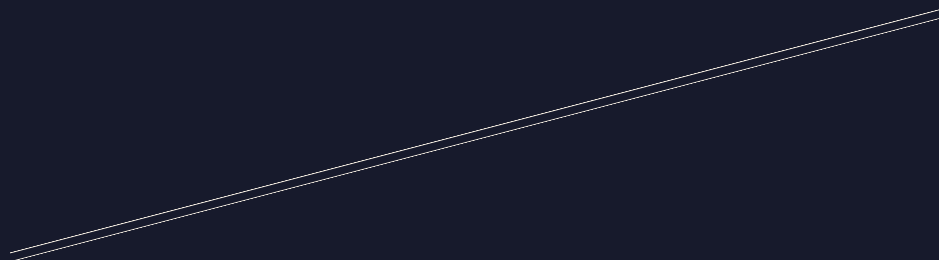
Stroud Cornock and Ernest Edmonds, *Datapack, 1969-70, installation view at Computer Graphics '70. Cornock (left) & Edmonds (right), receiving inputs by telephone. photo © courtesy E Edmonds.

The structure of the British polytechnic system at this time allowed for cross-fertilisation of ideas. Separate schools (including colleges of technology and art schools) were incorporated into one bigger and better-resourced learning institution under one administrative umbrella. This meant that people from different departments could easily meet, opening up possibilities for collaboration. The City of Leicester Polytechnic was very advanced because it had a computer - ONE computer in the whole institution at this time. (It later became De Montfort University in 1992).

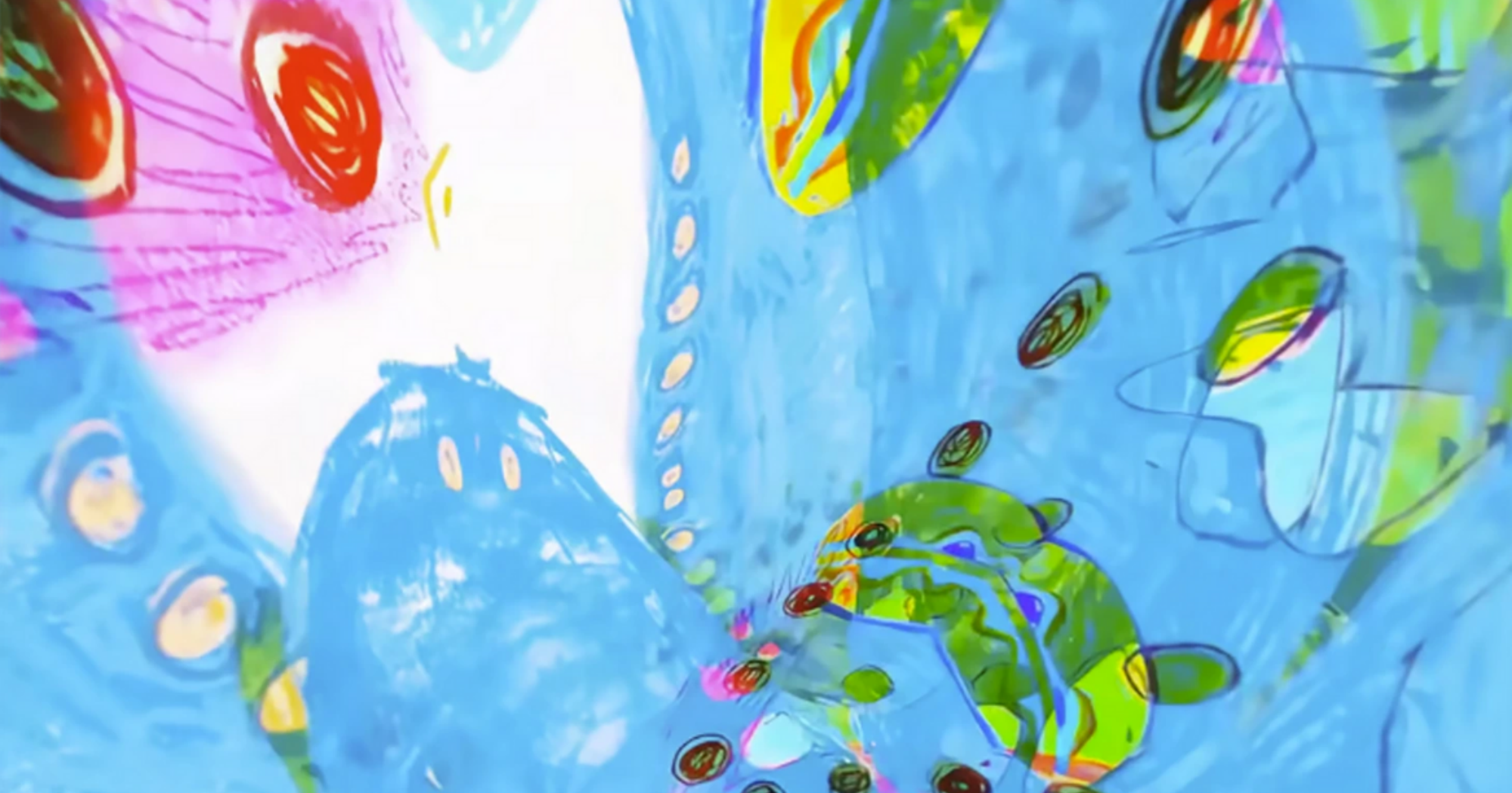
Jointly Cornock and Edmonds made an interactive artwork, *Datapack, (shown here), to illustrate some of the points made in their paper. Visitors to the exhibition could have 'a conversation' with the computer through the teletype, that drove a graph plotter and produced a drawing – a record of the dialog. Each conversation was unique and couldn't be repeated, because each communication exchange that happens is a unique exchange. The final output, including the typed record of the interaction and explanatory material, were presented to the participant in a transparent envelope - a 'pack of data', which was considered an edition of multiples.

The example of Edmonds and Cornock truly represents the spirit of early computer arts involving as it does those from the science and humanities sides working collaboratively across disciplines. They argued that far from being replaced by machines, artists can have a greatly amplified power if they embrace the complex, real-time responses of an interactive art system, one where the artist and the viewer become an integral part of the artwork.

Catherine Mason



"...far from being replaced by machines, artists can have a greatly amplified power if they embrace the complex, real-time responses of an interactive art system"



**ANNE
SPALTER**

@annespalter

Spalter Digital

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Within the relatively recent history of digital/computer art, Anne is a true pioneer, having been teaching the subject at degree level for over 30 years. Still active today as a practicing artist, and the steward, with her husband Michael, of one of the world's largest and most comprehensive collections of digital art - Spalter Digital - she has cemented her place, along with luminaries such as Lorna Mills, at the root of everything that takes place in the contemporary digital art world as we know it today.

The Tickle spoke with Anne to discuss her fascinating career and her work with the Spalter Digital collection.



You are the steward of the The Anne and Michael Spalter Digital Art Collection (Spalter Digital) How did you start? You've been doing this for decades, which is far, far longer than most people in this space.

*"I am. I steward it with Michael Spalter, and he instigated the beginning of the collecting when I was writing my book, *The Computer in the Visual Arts*. It took over five years, and everyone who knew me was forced to learn about digital art, because I was obsessed. I began really wondering who were the artists who started this field and were the pioneers and first tackled this, trying to make artwork with mainframes and early computers. It was hard to even discover who they were. There just weren't that many research resources out there, and I began finding them and I wanted to interview them and started doing that slowly.*

Michael was an art history major, and he said, "You know, these people, they're like the Impressionists...the academy hates them, they can't get their work shown. No one understands what they're doing. But they all know each other." And they're actually really incredibly sophisticated people. They've trained with other artists. They know what they're doing, but they're just working sort of in an alternative reality, making this work. And he said, "It'd be great if we can support them."

*We started collecting small things that were within our range then, but the work was also quite inexpensive because it was so sidelined, and there was so much hostility. I always recommend Grant Taylor's book *When the Machine Made Art: The Troubled History of Computer Art*, which explains some of why there was so much hostility and frankly, there's still hostility, but not to the degree that there was then. The collection grew organically until shows like *The LACMA one* that just opened put that early work in context with traditional art history. I feel like those strands are finally being braided together."*



Thinking of some practitioners, for example, you've got some pieces from Ben Laposky. He was one of the very early practitioners in computer arts, but he was a military man. He was a working man and he spent most of his life working in trade. Was there much of a sense that these figures were aware of their place in the larger art world or is this something that came after their efforts?

"I think it really depends on the individual because people who were drawn to this were very independent thinkers, and they came from different areas. Some were purely from the sciences and were experimenting visually, and some were strictly from the arts. I think they were also individualistic, there wasn't one type of person. And Ben Laposky wasn't even using what we think of today as a computer. He used an oscilloscope. It's actually an analog machine where he used waveforms and trigonometry to make artwork."



That kind of technology was slightly related to some of the early video game technology, like the Intellivision, which had an oscilloscope kind of look to it. They weren't strictly pixels being involved in that.

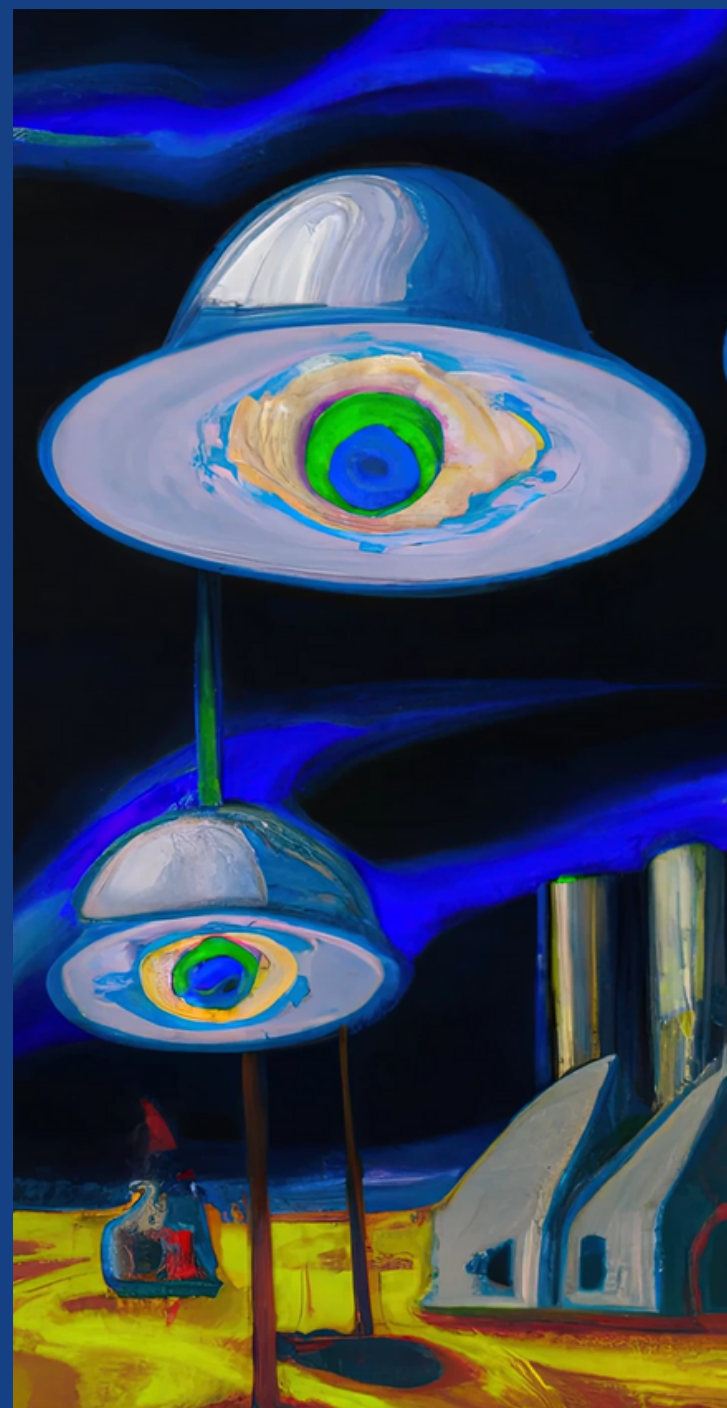
"Well, early screens were vector based. It was a line being drawn; things being described mathematically in an equation rather than a series of dots being drawn with a raster, like a TV."

What do you think is the main reason for the lack of representation of digital arts within the traditional art world? Is it just an issue of final products, the display of these kinds of final products, the tangibility of that? Or is it the same sense that photography was seen as cheating by the painters, perhaps it's the "ease" of production that's the issue.

"It may have been perceived as easy, but it was not easy to produce early digital artwork at all. Like photography, it was perceived as somehow taking away creativity from the human being and that had to do with the misunderstanding of what was involved with creating digital art and generative art."

Many art critics and other artists had no concept of what it was like to program, especially in early computers, how challenging it was, and how much creativity was involved and is still involved. Those artists had to use computers that were either in big corporations, huge universities, or military installations. So right away, it was associated with things that artists were not on board with, so it had a whole political negative aura around it."

For people who didn't understand some of the ways that it was being made, it sort of looked like modernism being done after modernism had already had its peak time and made it seem as if the artists didn't really understand what was going on in art history and what they were doing even though they really did. There were a lot of confusions: regular artists that did not understand the science and technology, the political things having to do with how computers were perceived, a lot of different things came together. That made it even more extreme than what photography faced."



For Ben Laposky [and others], the end result was a photograph. They printed them out and they signed them and then they sold them.

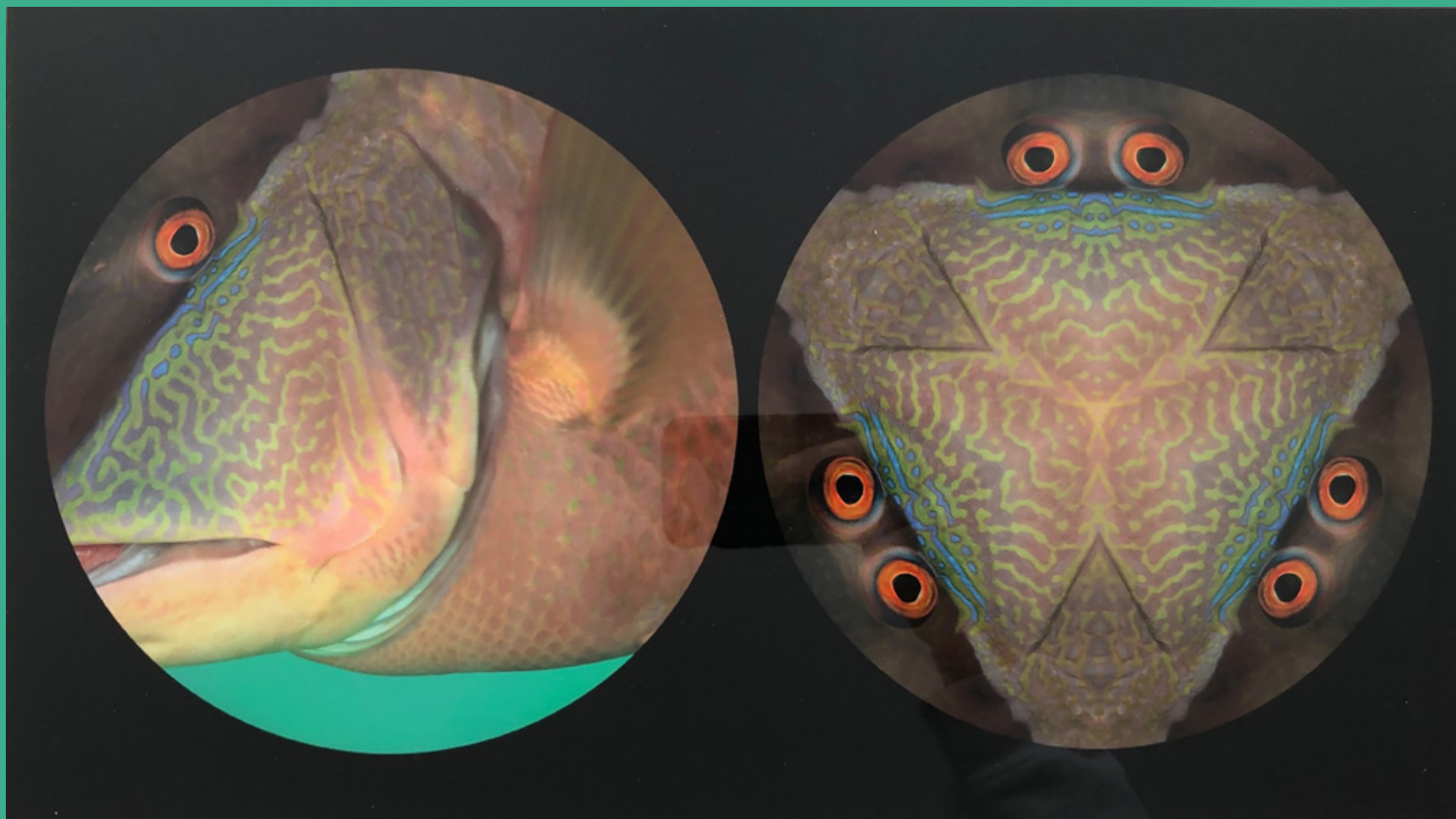
"He photographed his work right off the screen of the oscilloscope, so his pieces were photographs and others later made plotter drawings. Because many of these people came from the sciences, some of the early shows also combined things that had artwork and scientific experiments and perception experiments. So an art critic might come by and go, "Oh this is such a mishmash, you know, it's hard to tell what's going on here."



Chasing the Light Lightform in Blue Brown & White by Gisel Florez, 2018

Was there a sense that some of these early practitioners particularly weren't thinking of it as art at all?

Binocular Series Fish by Leslie Thornton, 2012



"Some were just experimenting, and then went back to just doing science or visual research, and some were artists who came to it as artists. Some were scientists who then became artists, and that's happened in the NFT space as well: some people come into it without formal training or without thinking they were going to make a living in a visual space and then became artists through practice.

And there was no money in it, you know. There's never really been a lot of money in digital art. That's been a real distinguisher with NFTs. There's been this fantastic amount of money and it's drawn the art world's attention and has helped revitalize digital art, which has been wonderful and brings a lot of people into visual creation and makes it seem like a possible life path and career path, which as an educator, I find wonderful."

“There's never really been a lot of money in digital art. That's been a real distinguisher with NFTs. There's this fantastic amount of money and it's drawn the art world's attention”



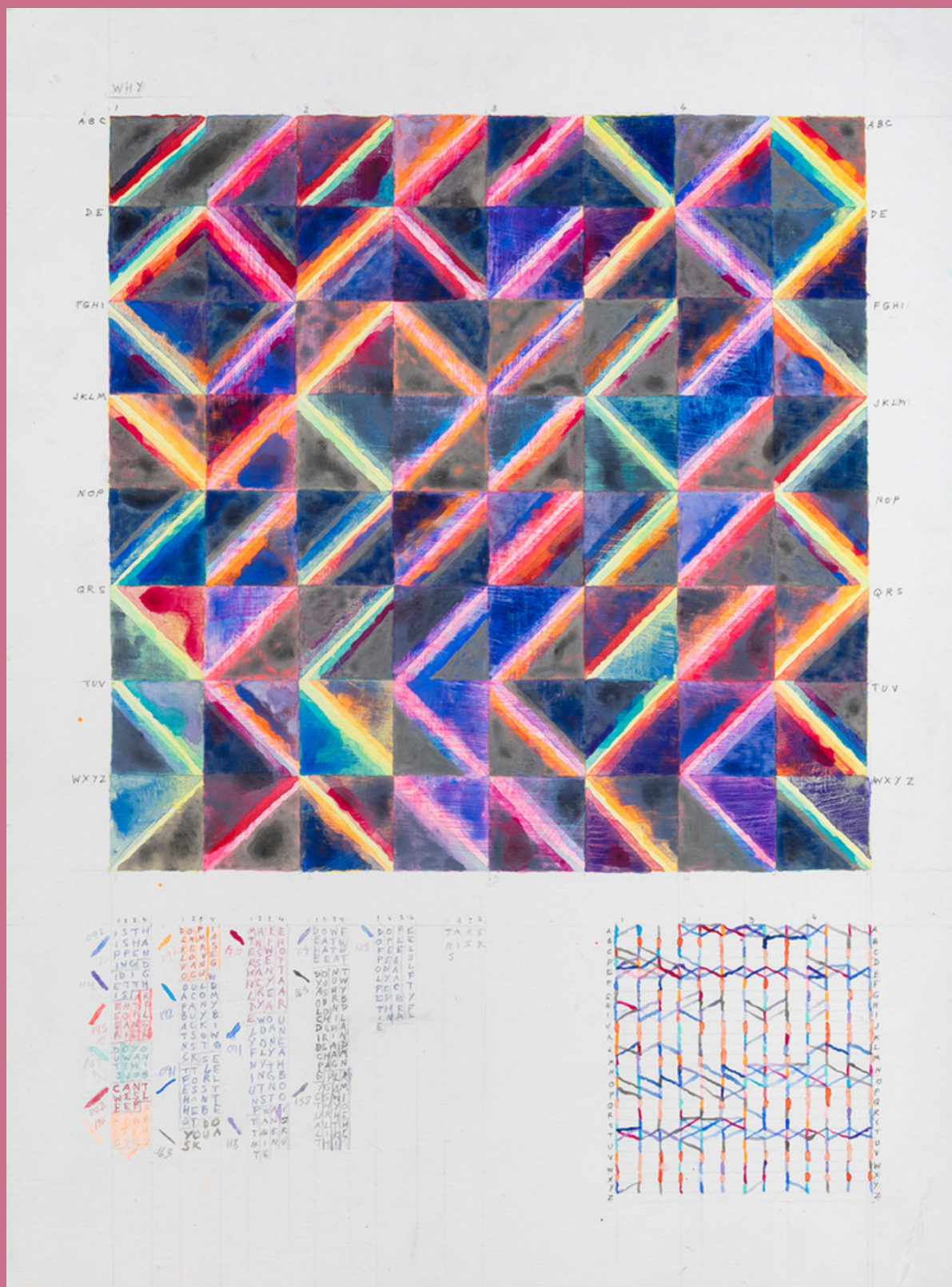
72hours by Elizabeth White, 2009

You've been involved in digital arts for decades now, obviously, which on the surface sounds astonishing, that you've been doing something so modern for so long, but then there are countless millions, potentially soon, billions around the globe who have known nothing but the computer age. Do you think it's strange that it's taken the concept of an NFT to really boost the status of digital art in that context?

"I have to say, every few years, for basically decades, I've thought, 'This is it. Now everyone's going to see this as the art of our time, and it's going to be accepted.' There's been a show or there's been a big article and I've thought, 'Okay, now everyone's gonna see this,' and it has helped move things forward, but it hasn't really done what I thought it would do.

It's kind of two steps forward, one step back. I never thought NFTs would happen. I mean, it wasn't something I was aware of. I never thought cryptocurrency would have any effect on the art world or artists. It came out of left field for me, but I think it's been fantastic. So once again, I think this is it. It's really going to help digital art, and maybe this will be the thing that puts digital art on the map and lets people embrace it. "

“...every few years, for basically decades, I’ve thought, 'This is it. Now everyone's going to see [digital art] as the art of our time, and it's going to be accepted.' but it hasn't really...”

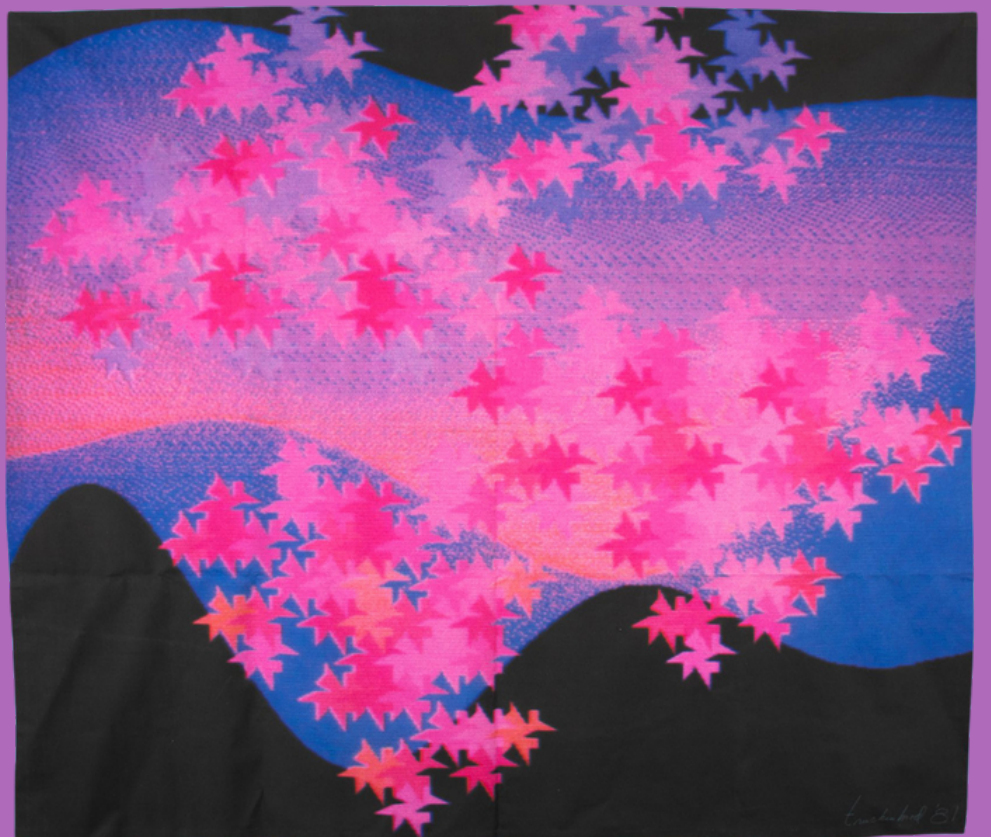


At Brown and RISD, you taught courses in digital fine arts. Did you encounter much resistance from the university? From the art world? To be able to call it something like that seems quite a bold move in 1990.

"Yeah, in the 1990s. I actually started teaching my second year as a graduate student. I wanted to take a course on the computer because I wanted to learn more about it and there weren't any, so the head of the painting department actually asked me to teach the class. It was a little bit like the one eyed leading the blind and I was learning something and teaching it the next day, practically.

I had visiting critics come to look at my work and refuse to look at it, not look at it and say, "I don't like it because you did it with the computer; I think it's ugly" or something, but literally refuse to even look at it, because they knew I had used a computer somewhere in the process. So there were definitely people who were hostile to the whole concept, but other people who were curious, so fortunately it balanced out in my favor."

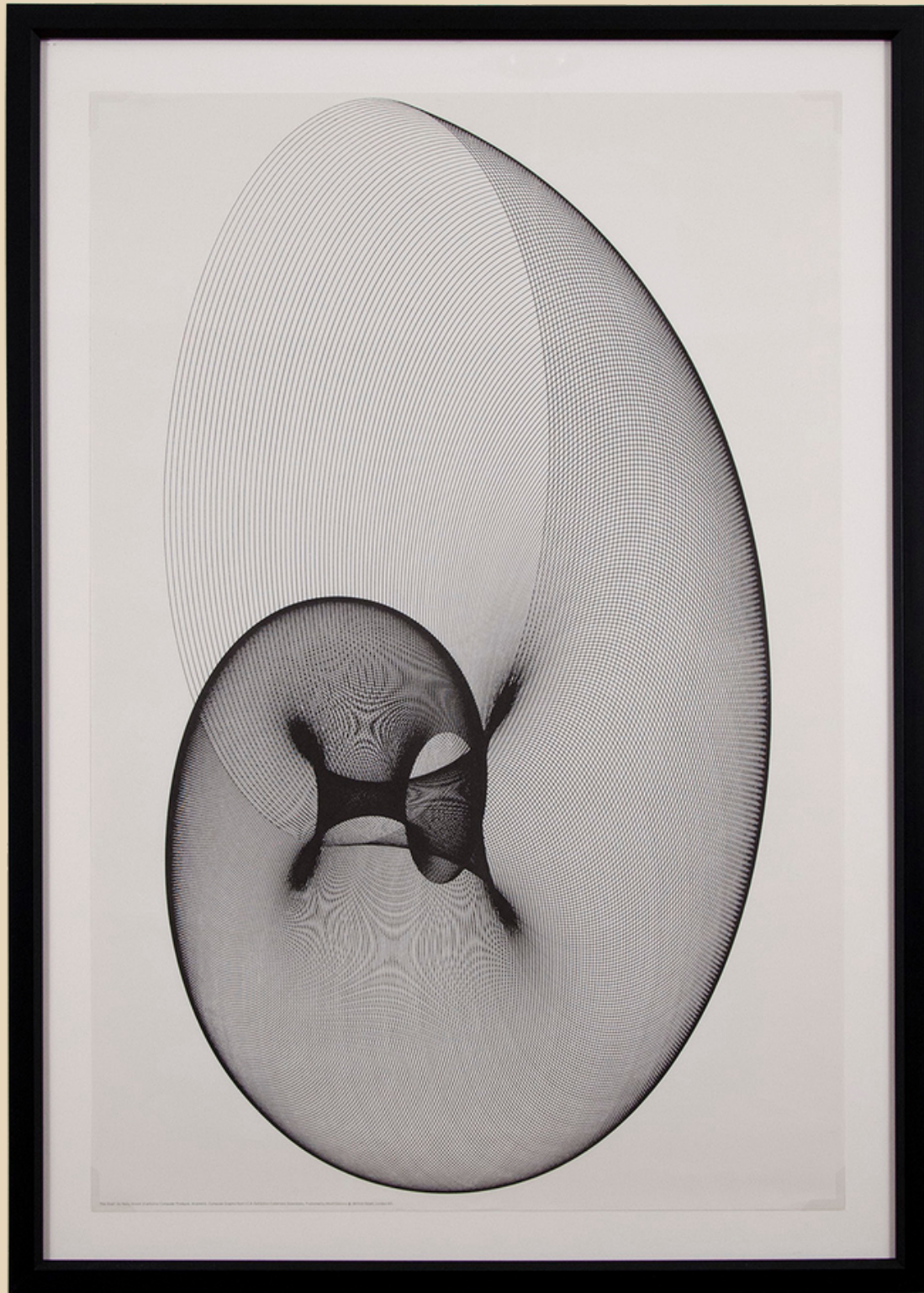
Slack Tides by Joan Truckenbrod, 1981



“I had visiting critics come to look at my work and and literally refuse to look at it ...because they knew I had used a computer somewhere in the process.”

Untitled (Daybreak) by Grace Hertlein





The Snail by Kerry Strand (1968)

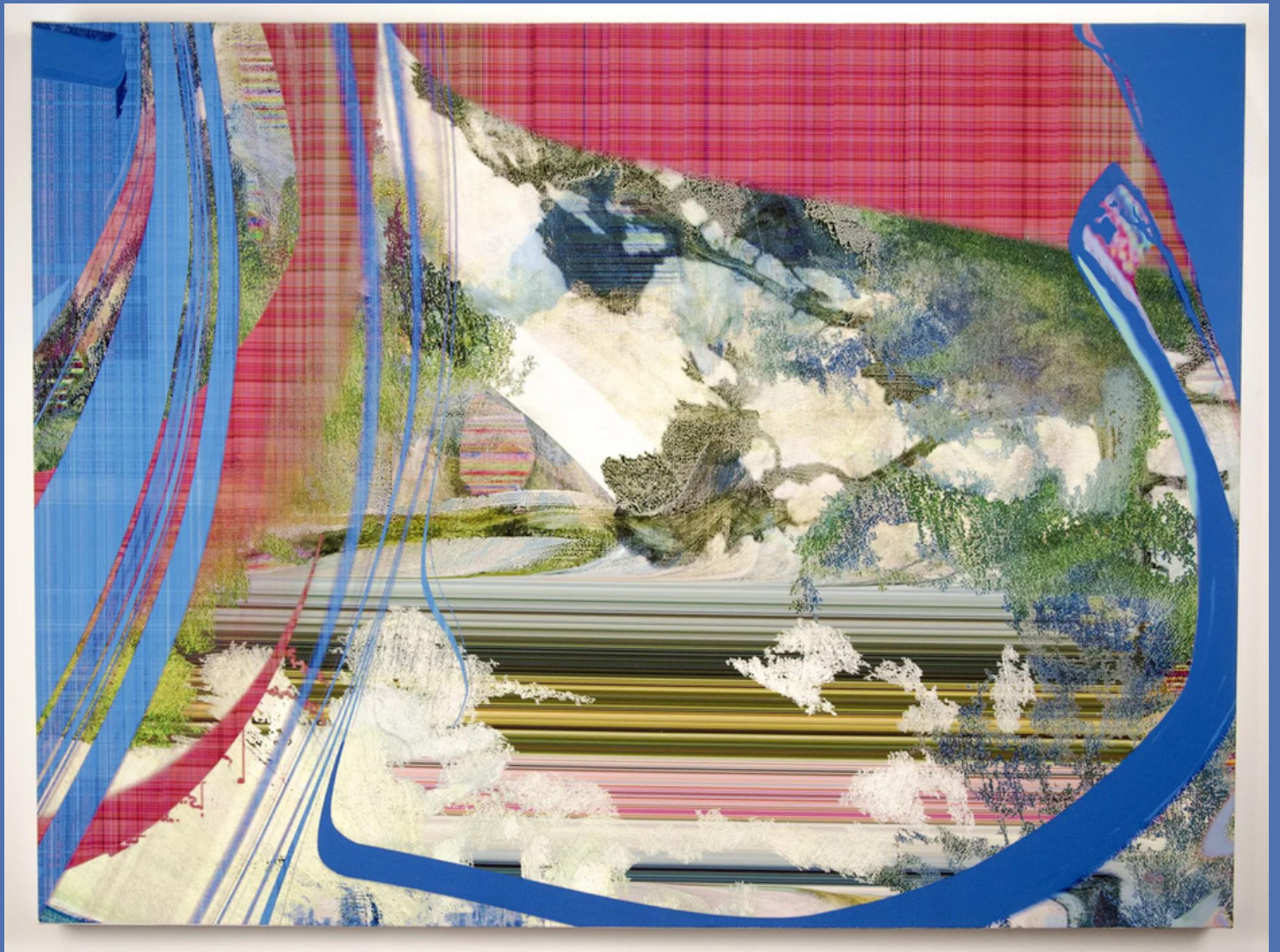
In the beginning there was a sense that you were using tools that replicated analog methods: painting, drawing, erasing. The history of the computer is very tied in with the history of generative art through algorithms and code and math. But was there code or generative artwork at the time? Were you aware of that strand of art history?

"I think if I'd said there's going to be programming involved or any kind of math equation, I would have had zero students sign up at all. But that is more common now. I think some art schools even have required basic coding classes. I think School of Visual Arts in New York now has one where you learn Processing, which is a coding language based on JavaScript that's aimed at artists."

3

Clean Water Act by Anna Ursyn, 2007





Untitled by Claire Corey, 2009

Within this very niche world of NFTs, it seems like generative art has become a huge thing and is commanding huge prices, and it's such a different world, isn't it? Even if you've been a digital artist your entire career. Your thoughts?

"That is actually, to me, one of the most exciting things about the NFT space, I was thrilled when I discovered this platform that I'm sure you know of called Art Blocks, and I saw that they were creating generative artwork online.

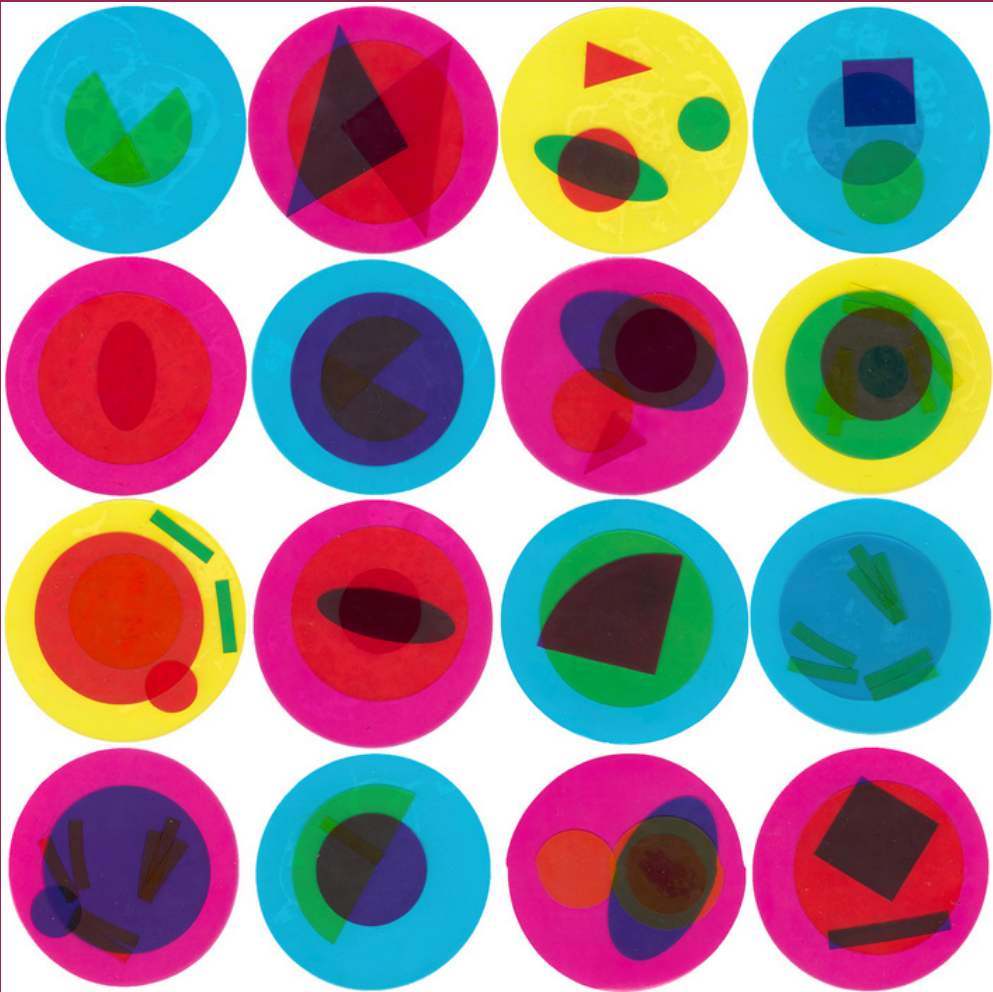
We had been collecting generative artwork forever, and seeing it in the NFT space and this new format, where you mint it on demand, and you didn't know what the work would look like I thought was so incredibly exciting. I ended up being one of the first people on their curatorial board and have been involved with them for a long time now. I think Art Blocks and fx(hash) and other platforms have helped bring attention to generative artwork, but the idea of this "vending machine for art" has really helped bring it to a new generation. That's super exciting."

Looking at your work The Bell Machine and its process of repeating identical prompts, you're engaging in an almost generative art sort of process, of constant revisions of the same idea, which will come out different. What are your thoughts on human repetition versus algorithmic repetition, and how does that affect the way you see other people's outlooks and the way you create your own?

"The project was part of a larger Feral File project with the Buffalo AKG museum where we each had to choose a piece in the collection and respond to it. I was responding to a Magritte painting. Even though I was using similar prompts, each time I was getting different images, I think I wrote in the description that it was sort of like a slot machine where you're pulling the lever and you're seeing what comes out and what kind of response are you going to get?"

And I think that's at the heart of a lot of generative art making. You have the algorithm and you're running it, and you're just running it over and over again. And do you like this composition or you don't like it, you know? That's how the early algorithmic artists worked, they kept running their program over and over again, and then a lot of the instances they would discard and the ones that they liked, and they felt met their aesthetic criteria, they would keep. That's where the repetition came in for me."

Colorform Multiverse by Liza Grace, 2021



In your collection, the Spalter Digital collection, there's a lot of pen plotter works and obviously, that is a generative system, it's coded, it's algorithmic, but as you just mentioned, there's a sense of curation by the artist of the final output. Do you see that as fundamentally different from modern generative artwork as NFT's - that sense of where the art is and where the curation is?

"I don't think so. I think it is maybe an even higher level challenge to make 1000 images that are all going to look good. That's pretty hard to program. The earlier generative artists had the luxury of tossing anything that didn't look good, whereas the long form generative art as Tyler Hobbs dubbed it, you have to write something where they're all going to come out above threshold, that's an added constraint on the program.

But I think in all of these cases, and something that critics didn't understand, the art comes from inside the artist. It's not that the computer is making the art or somehow usurping the creativity. You can tell who's writing the algorithm.

The creativity comes out whether the computer is involved or they used a pencil or computer or whatever the medium is; bizarrely, I find that's true even with prompt-based AI. If two people put in the same words, they're going to get similar results, but over time, two artists working with prompt-based AI create totally different bodies of work.

It has to do with your selection. Even if you're working just with oil paint, you make a brushstroke and you make some sort of selective choice. You're going to keep it or you're going to paint over it. You're constantly selecting and making decisions as you go, and then you come up with something that's your art and your aesthetic. I find that even when I'm trying to make artwork, I end up with something that looks like my work. Even though it's algorithmic, it's text based. It's in some ways so removed from something like painting, where you use your hand, and obviously, that's going to just translate something expressive directly onto the paper. But somehow, no matter what media or process I use, the work remains consistent, which is kind of mysterious and amazing."



Magic Mirror and Looking Glass Tea Set by Claudia Hart, 2014

A lot has changed over the last two or three years, let alone the last 30 years. So what do you sort of think is the next step for digital art in the art world? And in general, in terms of how the artwork will evolve and be accepted?

"I'm hoping that NFTs continue, and that cryptocurrency doesn't implode. With the changing regulations, I'm not really sure what's going to happen in that space, but I'm hoping that it continues, because I think it's really great for artists, it's great for collectors. I think ultimately it's also very good for the art world, because it addresses some of the dysfunctional aspects of the art world, and hopefully they'll integrate more and work well together."

"They're still pretty separate. Most of the collectors in the NFT space don't collect traditional art and vice versa. There's some overlap, but not as much as hopefully there will be in the future. And I hope that this attention to digital artwork and especially early digital artwork continues and that museums continue to collect it and people become aware of how fantastic and undervalued it is."

The Garden of Emoji Delights by Carla Gannis, 2013





True False by Leslie Roberts, 2019

Is there a sense that the collection project for yourself and for Michael is a method of education; that is, using it to deliberately push for educational projects in institutions?

"Yes, and that's why we have it all online, so that it's accessible for curators and students and people who want to know about it, because it's hard to go somewhere and see a lot of this work right now. Museums haven't collected a lot of it."

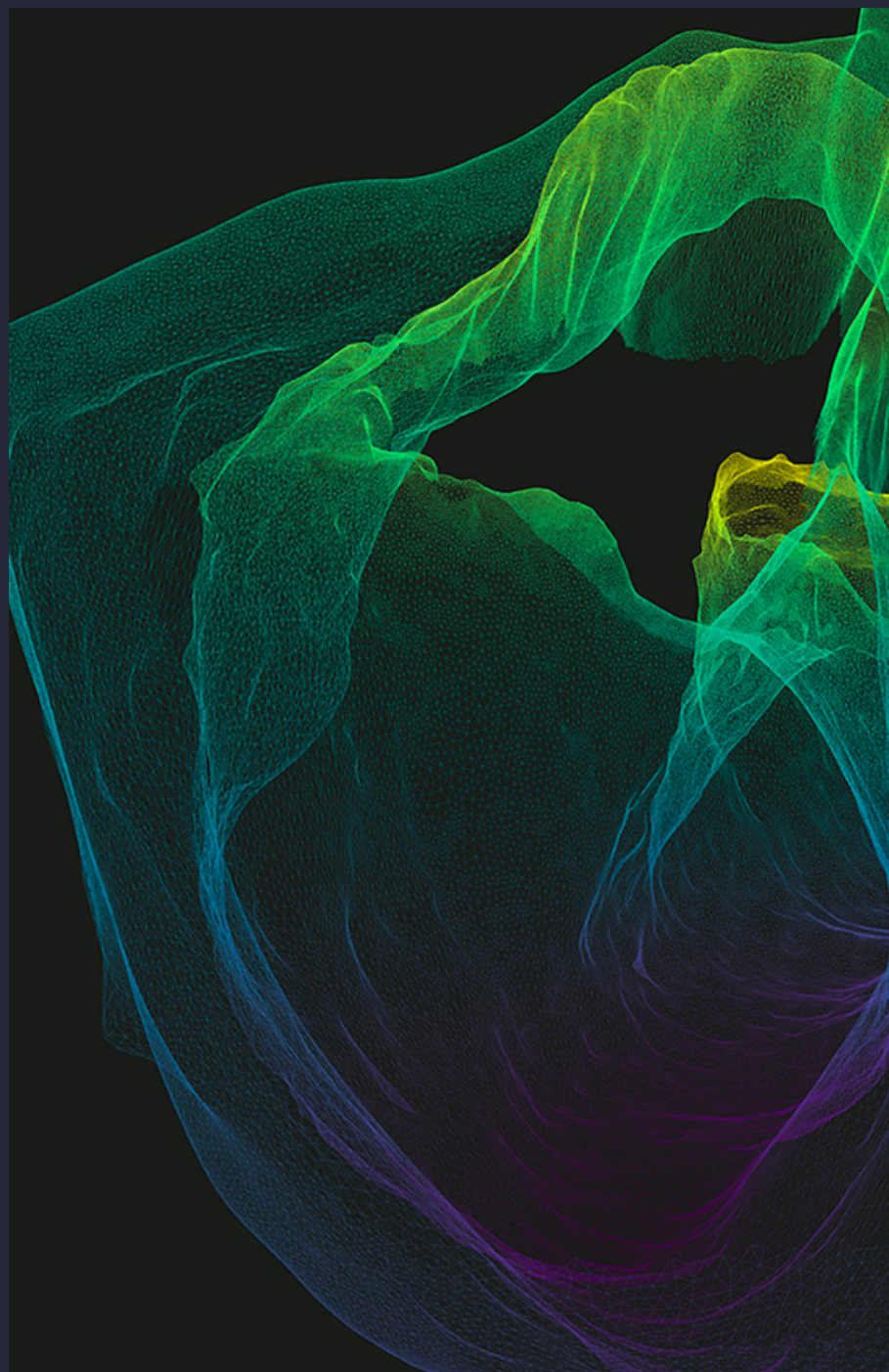
Going back to your art school days, what were you doing initially in your graduate show and beyond that with analog techniques?

"I started painting, just traditional painting/drawing, but I'd say the content of my work has been the same since day one. It's always been modern landscape, highways, airplanes, water, themes from the collective unconscious. What is our modern landscape and how does it affect us and how do we interact with it? How does it shape our identity? No matter what medium I'm using."

What do you have planned as personal projects? And what are your acquisition plans for the collection?

"I'm just working on more NFTs for different shows. In one project I am working on a series of projective alter egos in the metaverse. They are sort of a projection of myself as a series of weird AI-generated balloon friends floating around in the space of the computer. I'm obsessed with the Chinese spy balloons, and all these other weird objects that apparently have been floating around above us. I've always been really into balloons."

Acquisitions are more of the same: early computer artists. They're all they're all undervalued. They're all amazing. And they're out there. People should take advantage before the world catches on."



Rainbow Flythrough by Lynda Benglis (2019)

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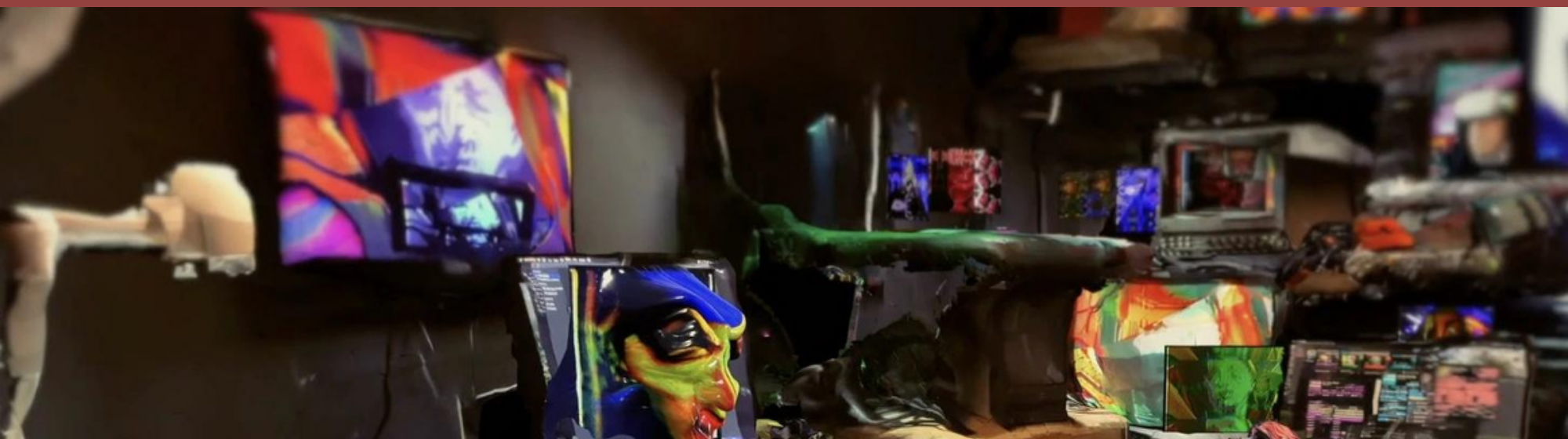
JAMES ALEC HARDY

@jamesalechardy

Escaping the Grid

To view digital art, a form of screen is needed, whether it is a computer screen, tablet, smart phone, virtual reality headset, or maybe as a video projection. I will wager that the initial viewing point of most NFTs is via smart phone, followed up by a closer inspection of the goods via web browser on a larger screen?

The minting platforms and aggregated marketplaces conveniently display the artworks neatly in a grid-based format, featuring useful sorting and filtering tools. The other default view being the forever scrolling feed of freshly minted contributions, burying older “grails” with chronology. Wow! what a dream for both artist and collector. An organised user-interface optimised to glance back at your creations/collections in convenient pages of thumbnail-sized images, it’s all very useful but...hang on one second... this is not why I channelled my artist vision into a file-sized chunk of data, I did not envisage my art to be presented like this! To me this presentation of the artwork excludes one very important thing...what is it again?... oh yes, context!





So what are the options? which alternatives exist for artist or collector to approach the conundrum of how to authentically and idealistically present our digital artworks? How does an artwork appear in a metaverse environment? How does this display alter our relationship to the artwork?

With screen-displayed art, I would argue that the artist should try to describe the intended presentation of their art, within the description of the work. This is excruciatingly difficult to achieve and maintain consistently, I have devoted my practice towards this pursuit, with each new work a new challenge. Unlimited within a subjective world of ideas, there also exists the opposite approach, having a distinct lack of attention to how works are displayed, relying on whatever tech or screen is available.

So what are the boundaries and obstacles to overcome to display art in metaverse platforms? Well here is a cool thing... to get started you don't need to buy any virtual land, there are several which offer full utility to build and display completely for free. Either by connecting your collection via your wallet, or by manually uploading file content.

Each of the platforms share similar functions, and each possesses their own unique quirks, all generally providing immediate access to start building in virtual space. I doubt that many artists have been thinking about making artworks specifically to be shown like this yet, which may be why at this stage- as a second thought, the display of a Jpeg Image on a virtual wall, in a virtual house, in a virtual land, on an arrangement of coloured pixels is not going to resemble a "master piece" yet. This in-world curation is an area which I am pursuing and hope to explore through collaboration with other artists.

*"I will wager
that the initial
viewing point
of most NFTs is
via smart
phone..."*

I should state my biases and intentions, revealing this text as a brief effort to explain how I formed my opinions around the presentation of NFT artworks.

In early 2021 I felt a sense of urgency to start building spaces to display group exhibitions of art I had collected, without having any prior experience with 3D software. This was made easy with a few ready made templates and services meaning I could “walk around” the works, as if encountered in an architectural space.

Over the last two years I have modified my work flow, expanding my vision towards using these available platforms to make and display moving image, and video installation artworks. I have stretched, pushed and twisted the functions in order to hack the existing templates, attempting to simulate experiences which I'd love to visit in real-world gallery scenarios. I have built an interconnected-universe of environments spread across several world-building platforms, and now all there is left to do, is to invite people to view and participate.

As pure escapism, I have found that strolling around spaces viewing art and environments, is not much different to gaming, idling away hours, and for what gain? Can a tokenised Jpeg positioned on a virtual wall create a powerfully emotional experience from being discovered? Or could it act as a meeting point, a hangout? A discussion point for a small group to hold a lively and constructive critique? A culturally revolutionary moment?

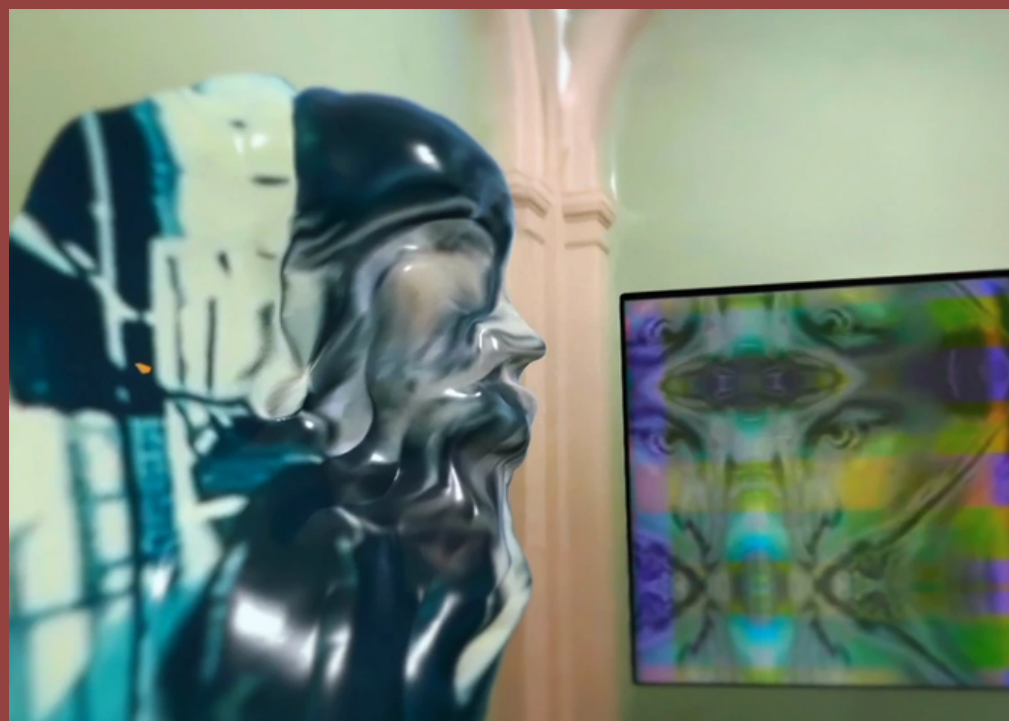
I believe a key to creating value around virtual exhibitions, exists in the production of an event of a shared experience, which creates memories and conversations which exist beyond the digital space. Galleries use artist talks and panel discussions as additional moments in the life-cycle of an exhibition to enrich and pump the show, as well as an inaugurating “private view” event. These can all be mirrored in virtual spaces, but we just need to organise a crucial factor first; participation.

The issue is coordination of timings, getting people to be simultaneously located at a screen and to have access to a link, with available time (and patience), in the same place, sharing a moment.

"I felt a sense of urgency to start building spaces..."

I remain excited about the future potential in the use metaverse space to formulate and generate art ideas, helping to reach deeper depths of enquiry and integrity around the context to display the work, through being part of the creative process. I read a disproportionate amount of negatively framed reviews of the existing content, whilst recognising that we have a dichotomy of resolution vs internet access speeds; We have futuristic crystal clear definition production tools, yet we have the equivalent of 1980's games console tech to build with.

Surely this will improve over the next few years? Will VR be a tool for a greater mass adoption for experiencing artworks? Will there be a huge technological leap with AR (augmented reality) / wearable tech (glasses), dare I even say implantable tech. Is lighter, faster technology what is needed to seamlessly provide smoother access to a flow of metaverse worlds? Will we be deceived into more thrilling and memorable sensations, which turn-out to be glorified adverts and shop fronts for online retail brands selling us stuff?



My relatively recent entrance to VR has been immediately impressive, and I see how the technology leans towards producing psychedelic and immersive sensations, which certainly suits the output from my practice, which may be a further bias.

Before using VR, I could never have imagined how my video works could resonate with 3D meshes and forms, which has given me whole new approach to production. My recent collaboration piece with Ralph Steadman, began with a visit to his studio, where I captured a 3D Scan of his working space using LiDAR. I recreated a version of his studio at a huge scale, reducing a visitor's experience to being the size of a mouse, and located on his drawing board. A few hops around and jumping into a concealed portal connects to a round trip of 10 progressively abstract spaces. The final NFT is a dramatised cinematic circumnavigation through all of the environments looping back to the start, following the path of creation of artworks within a virtual "Studiotope". This certainly nods towards the film "inception", which in turn can be seen as a study around "simulation theory", where one can very quickly fall deep into the rabbit hole. Philosophically the tools become useful metaphors to explore these concepts, where we can create dreams within dreams, and illusions within illusions. A new layer of context is created which helps guide us towards the art, adding a narrative which is absent from the sterile grid-format.

The ability to clone spaces, to then recharge with a new exhibition of artworks, means the worlds expand and grow, unlike the traditional physical galleries which are limited by finite scarcity of space to showcase the art. There are no rules, however physical gallery exhibition duration may last a week, a month or longer. The metaverse gallery model allows the shows to exist beyond time, ultimately limited by the life span of the platform which it is hosted on.

I really think that we have a responsibility as creators to harness and exploit all the tools and resources available- and to share and educate each other in order to try to sustain a healthy and active cultural hub. Most reading this will be au fait with the various blockchains and platforms, or at least curious. Whether creator or collector be, I can't express enough how much I would encourage us to produce dynamic displays, to cement and further our discourse. A strong encouragement is to support the artist shows and events by turning up, or if not tell others that can. Visit the show and take a screenshot/screenselfie, harvest the cultural capital and share.



At this stage I'm not sure if I'm breaking out-of or breaking in-to something, but one way or another I am certainly not standing still.

James Alec Hardy



*JESS
HEWITT*

@rustysniper1

The first thing I really noticed about your work as NFTs was that you're a bonafide OG. I don't like the phrase; I try not to use it. But in this case, it's fairly relevant because you were there in the first days of Hic et Nunc, for example, on Tezos. Your first mint was about a few days after it started, which is pretty impressive. I wondered if you could talk to us about your early steps into NFTs. I was fascinated as to how you so quickly became aware of Hic et Nunc - was Tezos or ETH your first blockchain?

I saw a lot of other artists that I liked and respected getting into it and having success and I thought, "Well, I'll try that too." And I did have some success. So, it was very encouraging to me to continue. I started off on Ethereum on Rarible and OpenSea and when Hic et Nunc launched, I think I heard about it through Mario Klingemann. It sounded really interesting. As you say Tickle was trying to not be focused on the "crypto-y" aspects of crypto art, it was more about the ideal - more democratized, more welcoming to artists in less fortunate countries, and I was really excited to be a part of that. I was kind of heartbroken when Hic et Nunc shut down and the whole drama around it. I don't think the Tezos market has really ever 100% recovered from that.



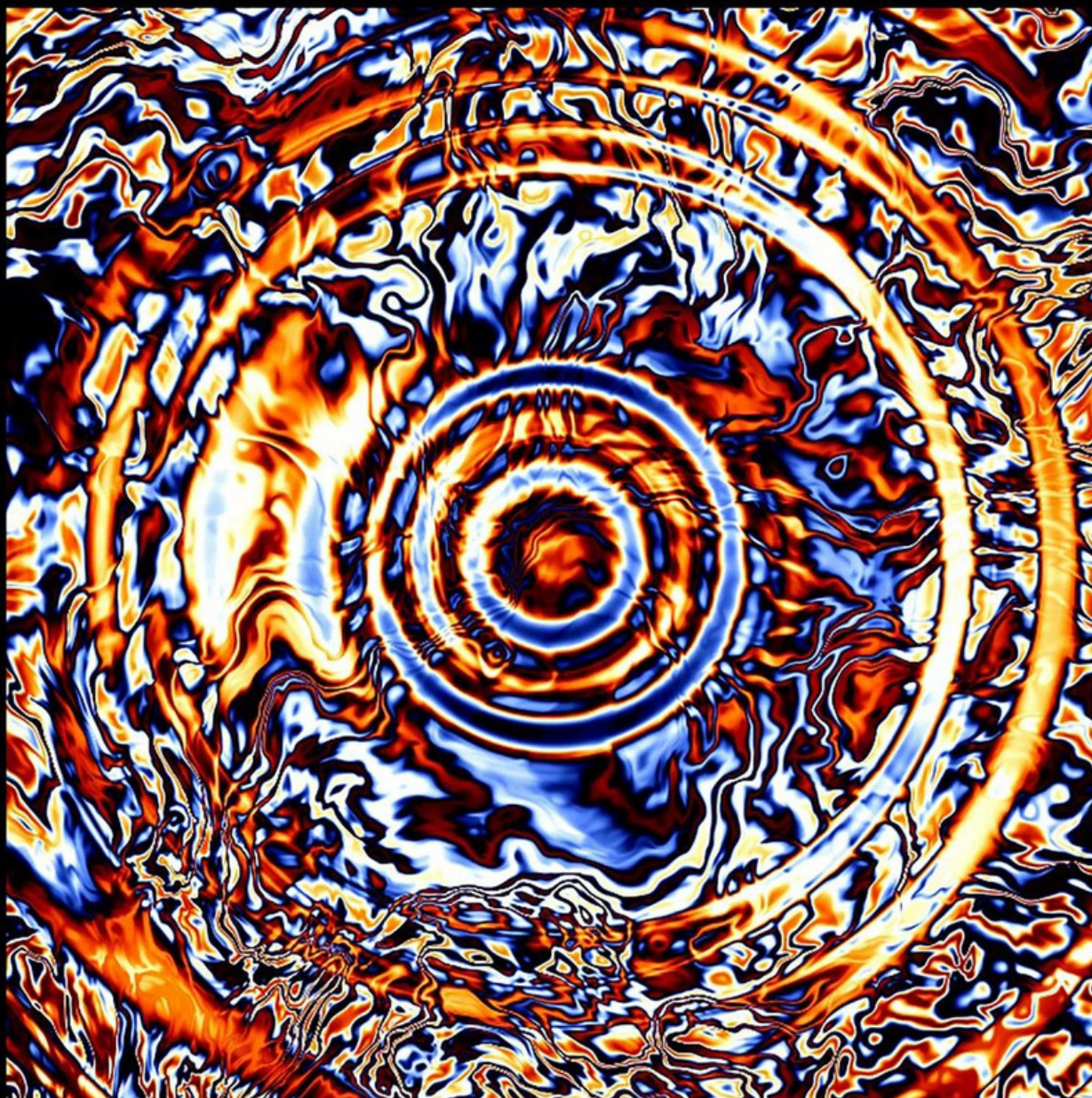
You mentioned that some of the artists you knew and respected had joined NFTs as an inspiration to you. Could you name some people who you saw move into that space?

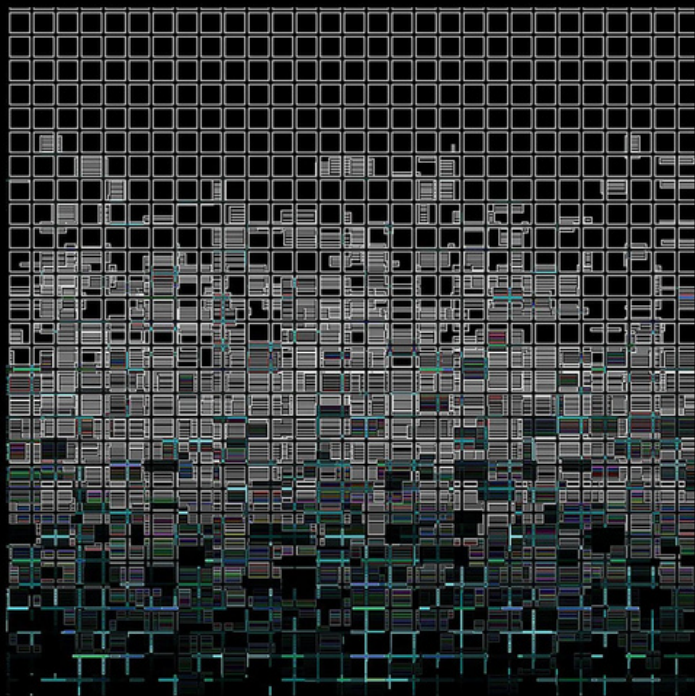
"Sure. Sarah Zucker. You are probably familiar with Hexeosis and Pi-Slices. I started off as psychedelic animation works and I was very inspired by those two, and to see them getting involved in the space I thought, 'You know, maybe this is something I can do too.'"

I saw an interview with Anne Spalter, and she mentions your works and that she'd encountered them on Tezos. She says a note of caution at the end of that interview: "I'm not really sure whether Tezos will even be here in 10 years."

What are your thoughts on the blockchain in general? Do you see it gaining strength since then with fx(hash) and such, or do you think there's still a bit of doubt about its future?

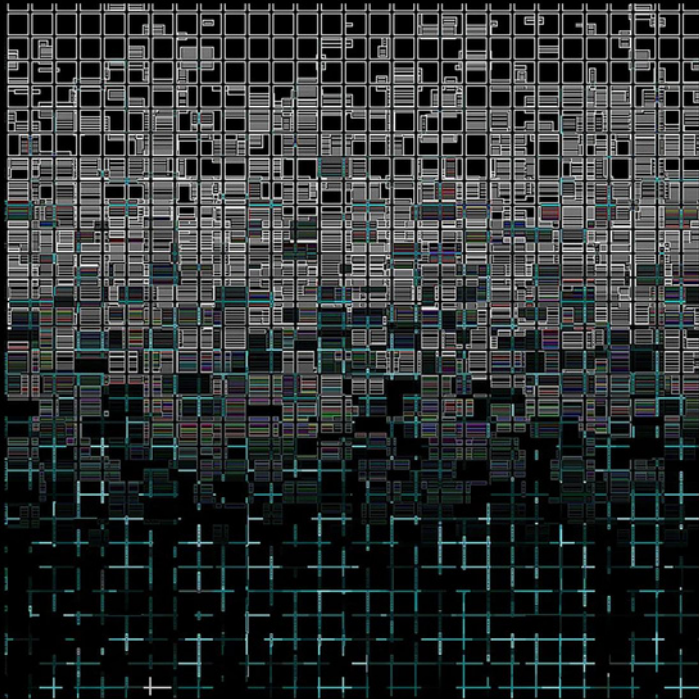
"Well, I think unfortunately it's tied to the crypto market, the larger market, which has been on a downward trend for maybe the past year, and I think that's hurt art on the blockchain. Definitely Hic et Nunc closing was...there's nothing really to fill its place. There's Teia, which was the community-led replacement for it, but I don't think it's ever quite caught on the way that Hic et Nunc had been. fx(hash) is fantastic and has a lot of potential to make up the gap between the Ethereum and Tezos art scenes here."

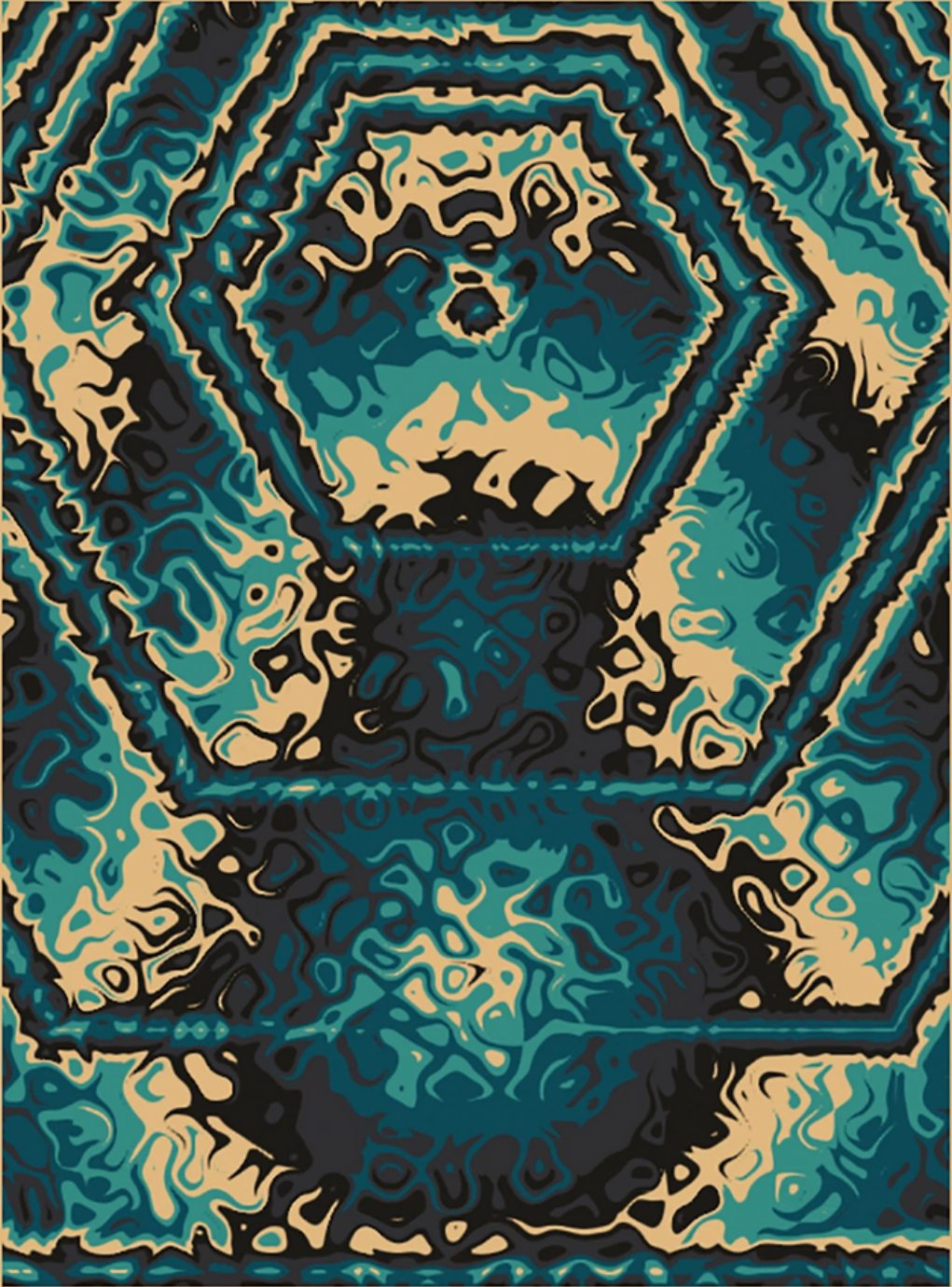




There seems to be a certain set of collectors on a fx(hash) that wouldn't necessarily be on Tezos if it wasn't for the generative art platform. Was that something that you've seen in general, that generative art collectors tend to navigate towards Ethereum more?

"There's a group of collectors that are Ethereum collectors, there's some that do both, and there's some that prefer Tezos, but I'd say there's probably more money overall in Ethereum."

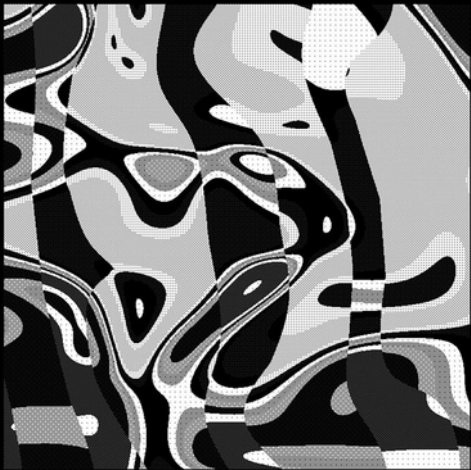




You mentioned one of your projects was in collaboration with Tender, wasn't it? I wonder if you could speak to us a little bit about how that interaction was different than your interaction with ArtBlocks or these relationships. How do they develop for you?

"I released Divergent Convergence, which was a long-form project on fx(hash), and they, after that, took it up as one of their "Icon" projects..."

"I wouldn't say it was a partnership. I released Divergent Convergence, which was a long-form project on fx(hash), and after that they took it up as one of their "Icon" projects, but we weren't really collaborating on it. I have, however, reached out to them for guidance on an upcoming project and they have been fantastic as far as pricing guidance. I hadn't been keeping up with the market trends, and they definitely have their finger on the pulse of that. So they've been great, and I know they have a huge amount of respect in the community."

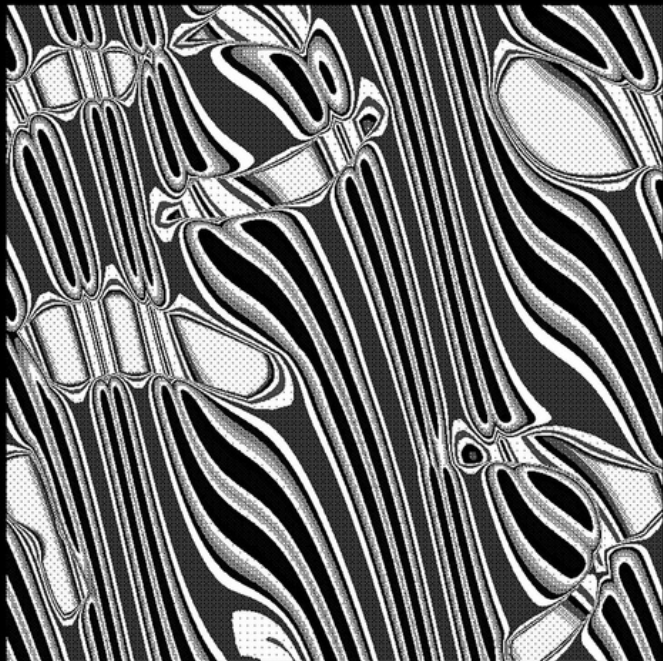


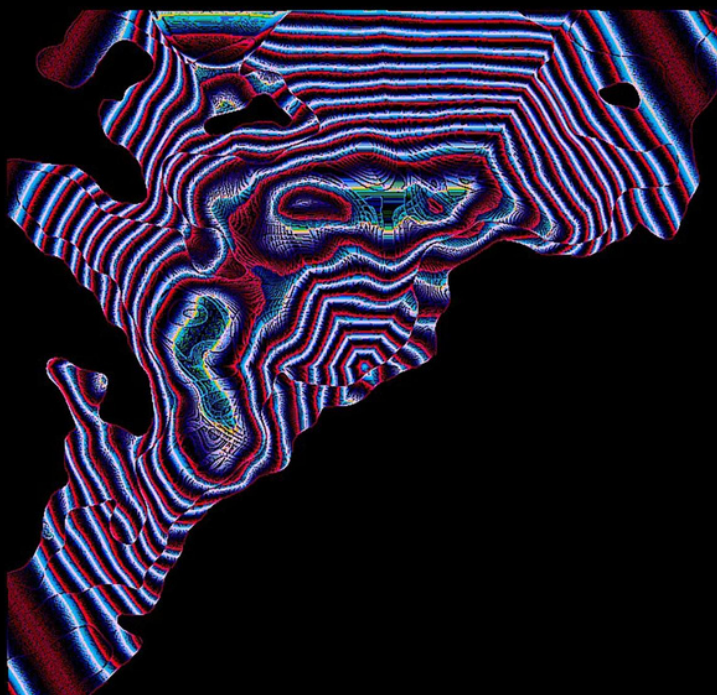
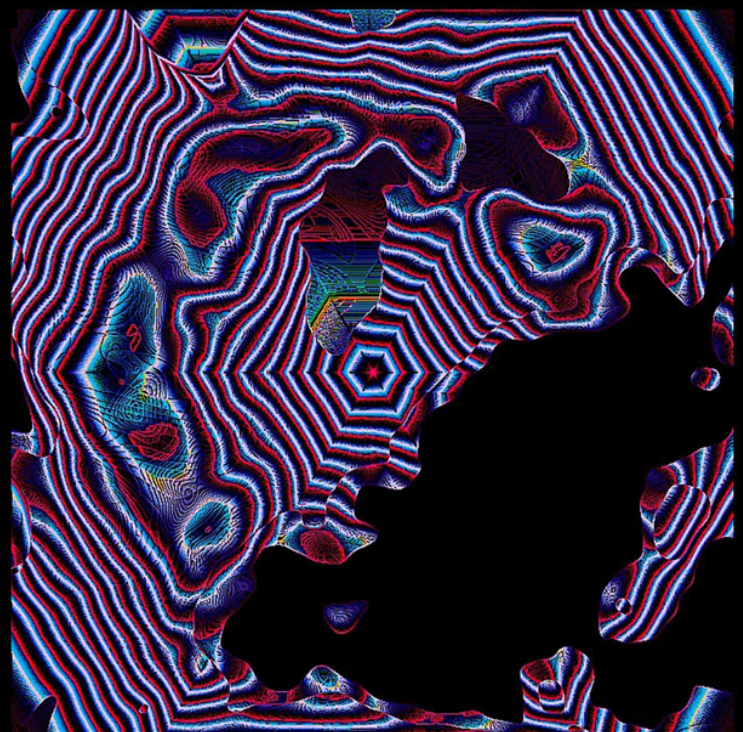
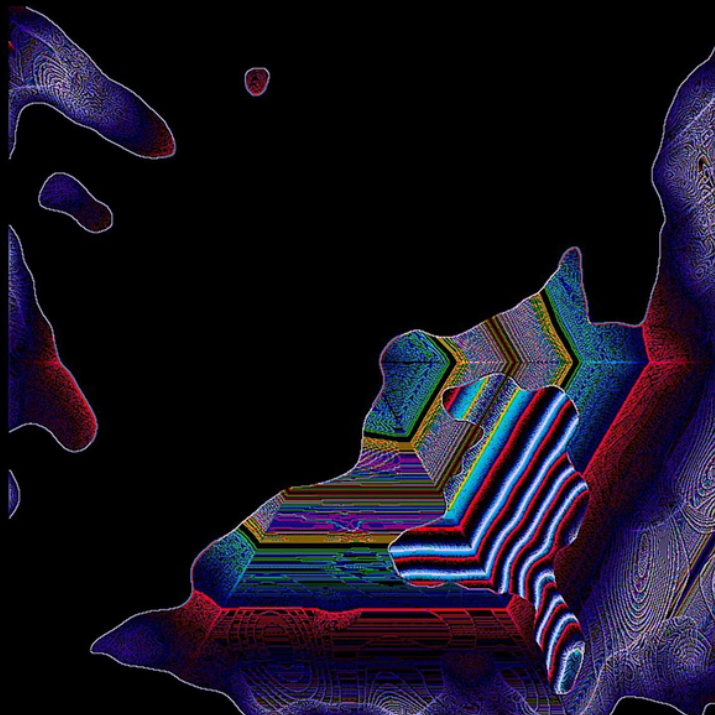
Do you think that your next project will be part of the Tender Pass, which I don't think existed at the time of the project you were mentioning?

"They haven't. We haven't come to an agreement on that, but I would be open to it if they were interested."

Taking it back slightly about your more general background in terms of visual arts, you mentioned that initially, you were creating psychedelic animations, but have you always been a generative artist? What was your art schooling, your overall art background?

"I don't have a formal art background, it's always been a hobby for me. When I was younger, I liked colored pencil and collage mainly as what I worked with. I haven't quite made the transition to digital drawing or collage. It just just doesn't go as smoothly for me as the real thing. But when I decided to start making digital art, I pretty much went all in on generative. I had some background with code and indie game development. I work with shaders, but I learned shader language from game development and procedural texture generation and so I think it's a natural progression from there to generative art."







Was your day job/background in video games or in some kind of tech industry related to coding?

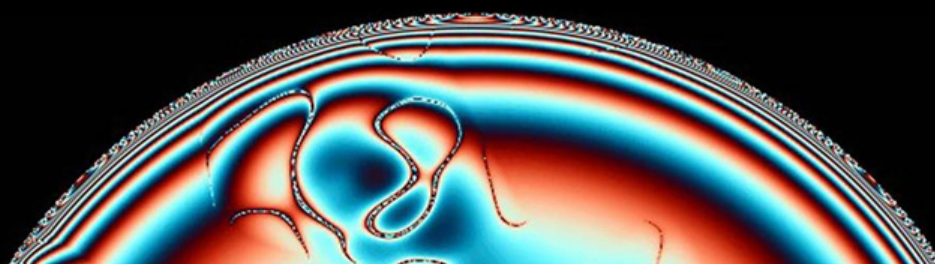
"Oh, I've been kind of a jack of all trades. I've done human resources, IT, retail management - all over the map. I've always kept art. I think I was raised with the belief system that you can't make a living from art. Art is the thing you do for fun or as a hobby. So I haven't (until very recently) tried to focus on having a career in art."

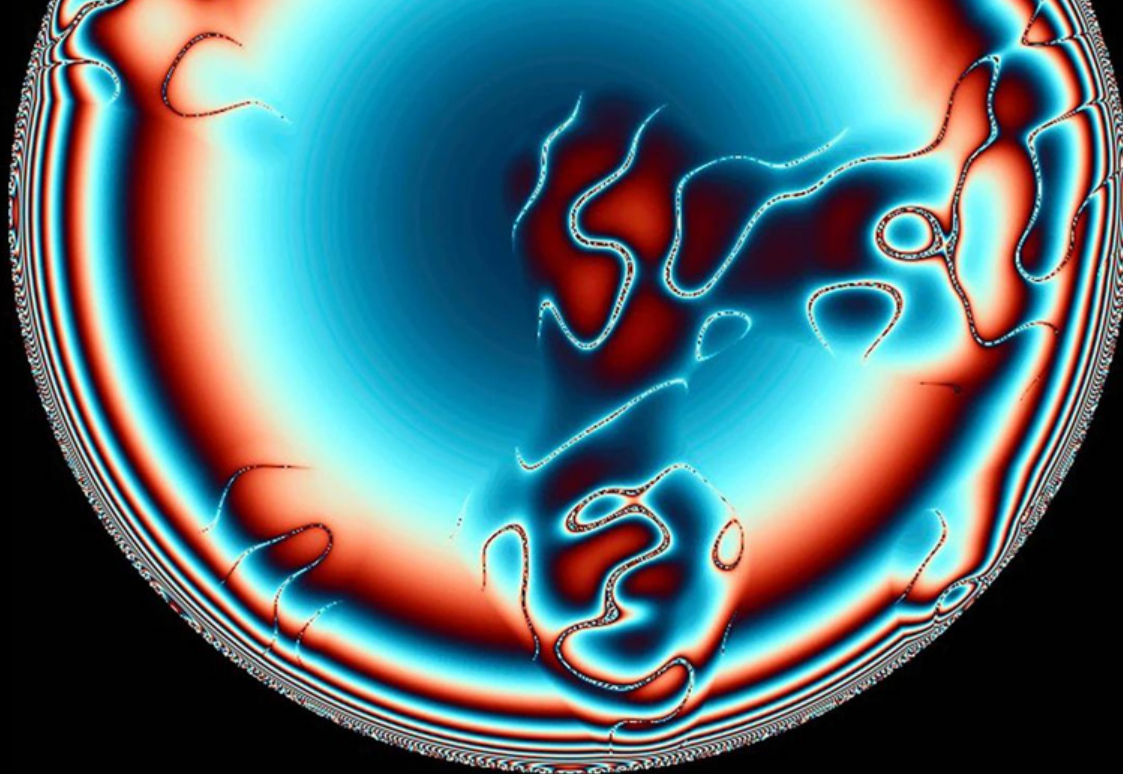
Would you say that you're a full time artist now, and if so how long has that been the case for you?

"Yeah, maybe two, two years?"

In terms of your persona as an artist, you were known for a long time, not as Jess Hewitt but as Rusty Sniper. What was the thinking behind keeping that side of your existence more incognito?

"Rusty Sniper was my gamer handle before I became an artist and when I joined Twitter, I just joined with that handle. But as I began to have some success as an artist. I didn't want to be known by my gamer handle. I wanted to connect directly with my real name."





You've been involved with the project Generative Toys, which is creating tools "to empower the world's creatives with simple and powerful tools" to then go on and create their own things. Does your background in game development affect that in some way, through the approach of providing and creating tools that are then used by others? It seems to be a fairly "Game Dev" kind of approach.

"I hadn't really made the connection, but I think there might be something to that. My process for coming up with new projects involved writing code that would let me experiment and iterate really quickly. The project Noisedeck that we (Generative Toys) makes kind of iterated from that. It allows you to really quickly go through random outputs, and once you find something that's close to what you like, then you can hone it and get it exactly how you want it. I find that approach to inspiration/creativity really works well for me."

"...once you find something that's close to what you like, then you can hone it and get it exactly how you want it. I find that approach to inspiration/creativity really works well for me."

So it's almost like a sketchpad, a shortcut to quick ideas that you iterate upon.

"Right, and I'm surprisingly not a very visual person, so to see something and then I can go "Yes, that's what I want to make," is easier for me than to try to conceptualize something and then make it happen."

Do you ever think of ideas and create them first as a hand drawn sketch or some notes on some code, perhaps? They seem to come from a variety of cultural sources: science fiction, cartoons, psychedelia.

"I guess I have an abstract concept and I'll take some notes on it, and then I'll make an experimental project and start playing around with it. Maybe it'll go the direction I intended and maybe it'll go some other way, and it ends up being way cooler than what I originally thought."

You use the Gen Toy as well for your own projects, is that right? I read that you used it for your ArtBlocks project, Haywire Cafe.

"I do, and quite a bit of the art that I have on OpenSea and the stuff that I used to put on Hic et Nunc was made with Noisedeck. I have my own special build of it that has my own modules that I don't share with everybody, so that it's kind of my own style."



There seem to be two slightly different approaches to your workflow. One is this kind of *"iterate and fine tune and work a system until it creates your desired output"* and then you mint that final single piece as as the artwork, and then there's the long-form generative process, which is a bit wilder, you have to kind of fine tune the system itself, and then let it loose into infinite outputs. Do you see those workflows as entirely separate?

"There is a different process when you are creating a long-form project. Every output has to be good. Most of the time you have the idea, you get it to work, and then 95% of the time is weeding out the outputs that don't look good, so that you can guarantee every piece that someone mints will be as you intend: a quality output. That's a much more involved and difficult process than working towards an individual piece or a small curated series where you can only choose the ones that you like, and it doesn't matter if the rest of the output isn't that great or not what you intended. "

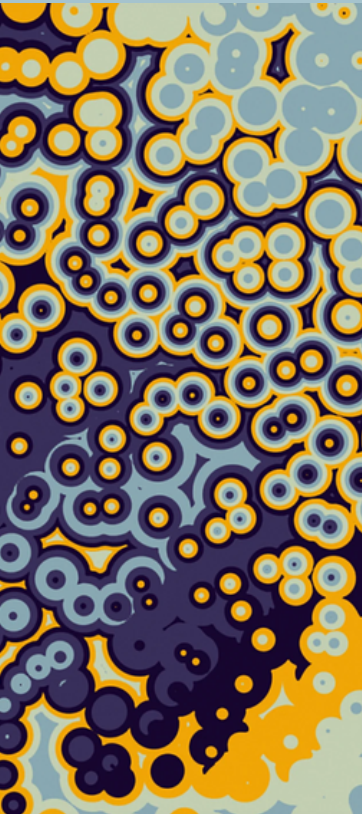
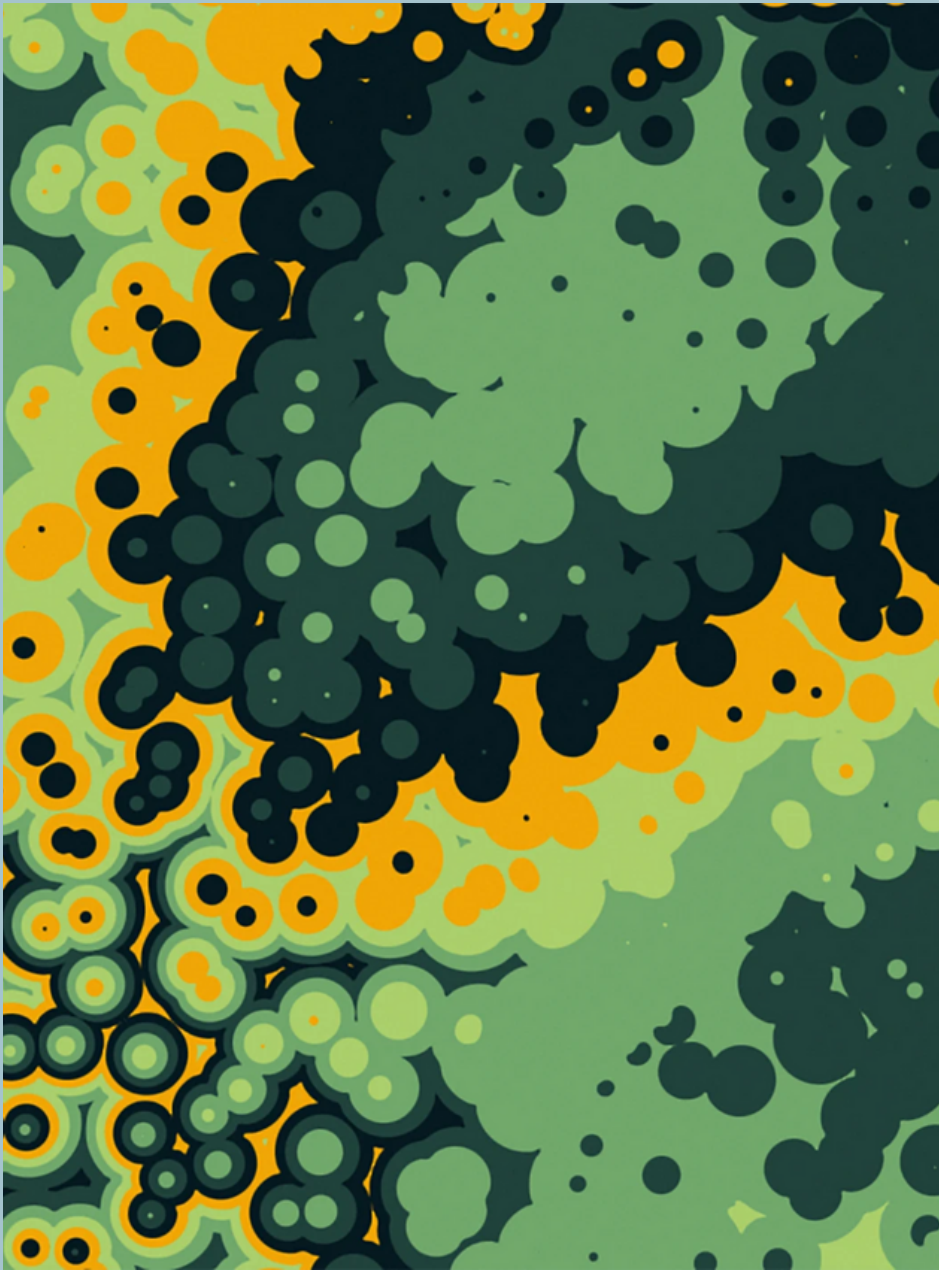


It's as if you're putting your authority as a creator at different points in the process almost, the generative work is more towards the system and the other work is more towards the output. Do you find one more rewarding than the other?

"I would say that the long-form, while it's way more involved, is more rewarding. You create a project that creates hundreds of pieces of art, as opposed to creating a project and then handpicking five or six outputs from that. Just the amount of work and focus that it takes, it's tremendously satisfying when it's finished and successful."

Speaking of successful projects, who would you name as influences within the generative long-form art space?

"I belong to a generative art community, so there are probably 150 of us on there. We are not all active, but there's a lot of art sharing; there are so many, it's hard to choose. I have a special affiliation for Piter Pasma. I think we have similar inspiration from cartoonish and psychedelic influences. I feel that I always vibe with his projects. He's very talented."



I wanted to ask you about the narrative impetus behind some of your work - there seems to be a fictional or science fictional impetus. 'Proximity' for example, from one of your early Hic et Nunc works has a science fiction-inflected quote as the description, and *Haywire Cafe* is principally about the visual aesthetic of mid-century cartoons - you speak in the description about wanting to "[transport] people to other realms". This seems like quite a fantastical science fiction idea as well. Is there a consistent narrative through the work?

"That's true. I'm a big fan of science fiction, especially that of Philip K. Dick. I really like that you're not sure what's real by the end of one of his books. I would like to bring that quality to my art. I think I strive for that."

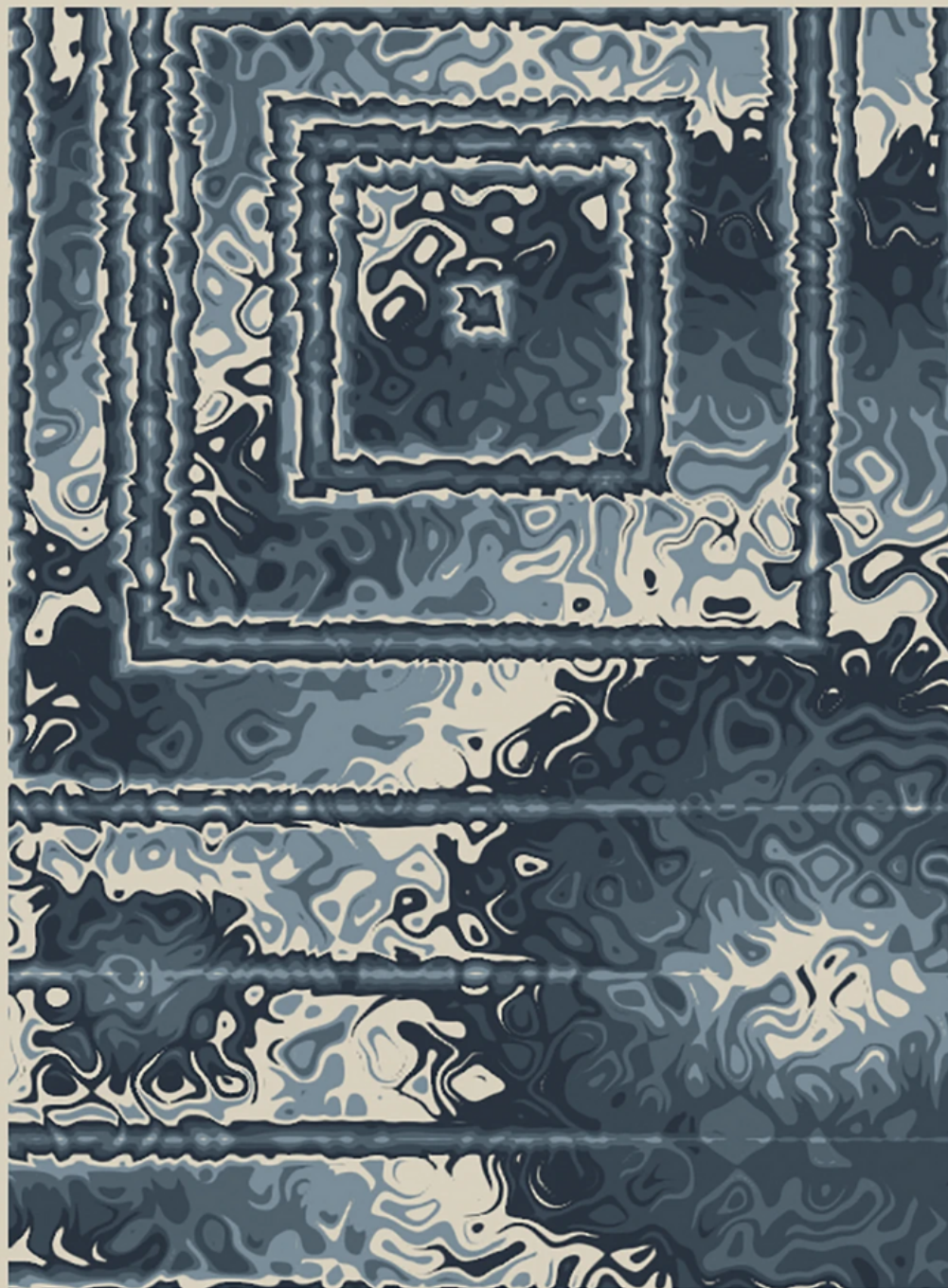
Do you think that perhaps the explosion in popularity of generative art, certainly among NFTs, is going to bring about a greater understanding in the wider art world, among the general public, of the nuances and specificities of generative art compared to more traditional art forms?

"I think that's probably already happened to an extent with the greater visibility of fx(hash) and ArtBlocks and people are beginning to be able to differentiate between different styles. I think that if generative art continues to be popular and grows in popularity, then the understanding of it will also follow."

*"For some, the code is the art.
And for others, the code is just
a means to an end."*

Where do you see the art in generative art? Does it lie more with the code, the code base, the systems, or does it lie more with the outputs, the aesthetics?

"That's an interesting question. And I know that among the generative art community different artists will give you very different answers. For some, the code is the art. And for others, the code is just a means to an end. I think I'm somewhere in the middle. I feel that it's both the code, and it's kind of the artist's vision, and it's manifested as code and the output, so I don't think you can have one without the other. It's not the full picture without both."



Do you think there are artists who are perhaps way more extreme towards certain ends of that spectrum?

"Definitely. There are artists who are very much about the code. The code itself to them is beautiful. And they will even release the code in a visual sense, along with the project. In their mind, the code and the math that it contains is a beauty of its own, and maybe even the primary beauty of their work."

As a layperson, all you have is the output. Perhaps that obfuscates and conceals the true art perhaps behind certain aspects of generative art. Do you think there are ways in which education could be enhanced for the non-expert, or non-technical viewers?

"I think it's helpful to write a project overview or description that explains without using code, what you're doing, and the process. I think you can explain that in a way that even if someone doesn't know how to write code, they can understand "I'm doing this loop of things where I put circles." You can explain it in a way that is accessible to people without being overly technical."

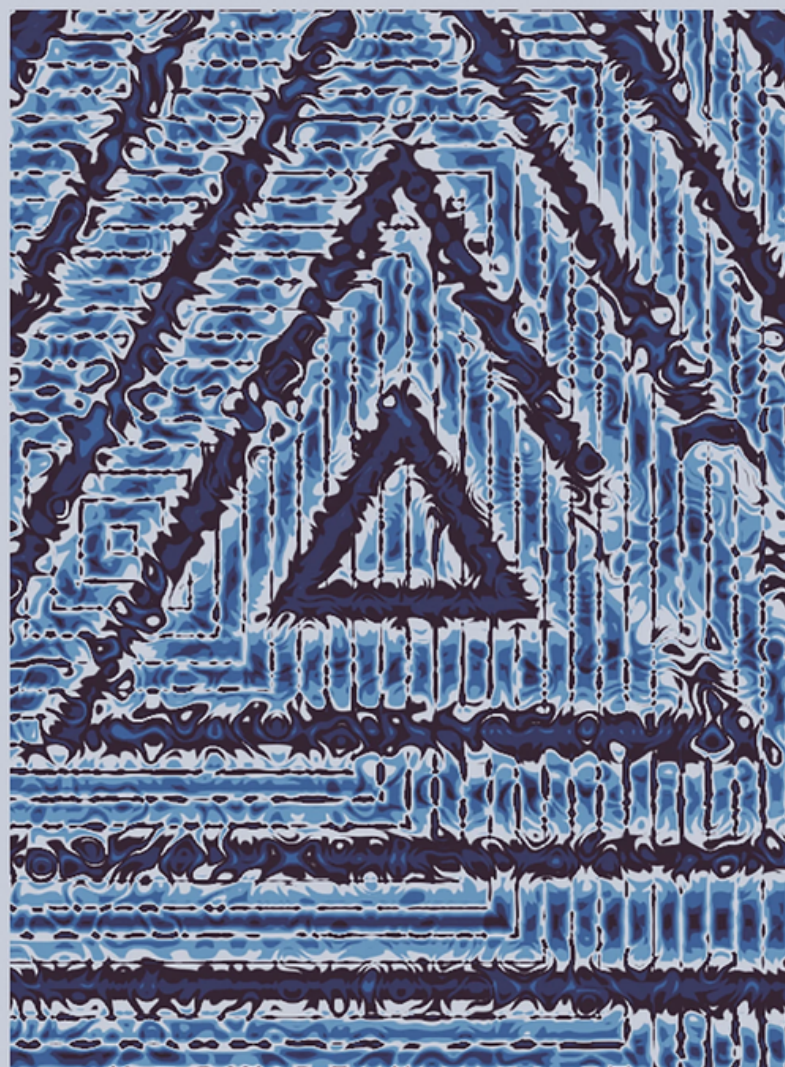
Your approach to developing Generative Toys seems very collaborative, very open source, very generous. Is that something you'd say that you have strongly as a principle?

"I would. I would say that probably is true. There are people who treat their art practice more as a business. And for me, I think it's a business but it's also almost a spiritual practice. It's a means of self expression and a means of connecting with other people. And I think it's important for me to not lose sight of that."

You mentioned that generative art was always a kind of hobby, and that you didn't go art school - do you have any analog practices?

"I do still experiment. I tried acrylic painting a few years ago, I didn't really excel at that, but I had fun doing some abstract acrylics, and I do still work with collage from time to time, nothing that I'd be really willing to really say is a finished piece."

*"It's a means
of self
expression
and a means
of connecting
with other
people."*



Do you find that that influences your generative work?
Do you play around with physical materials and think,
“Oh, actually, that’s an interesting play of color or texture
or light”...?

*"I think probably the real world experiences do ask, “How
can I replicate that digitally? How can I create that same
feeling with generative technique?"*

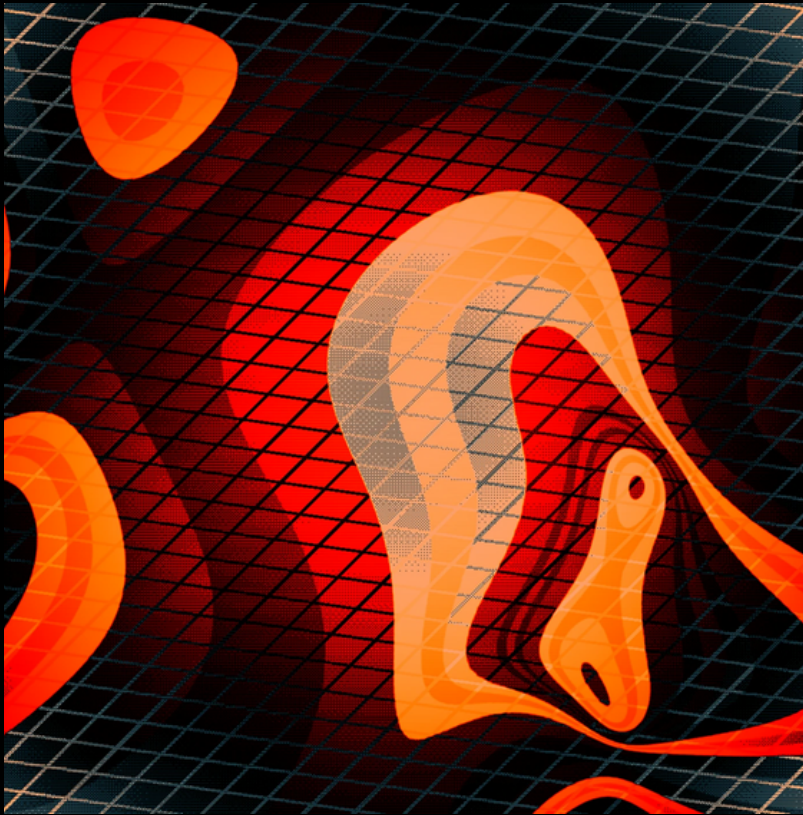
In terms of the projects that you’re working on now, and
maybe in the future, do you see your focus moving in
any particular direction? Are you particularly excited
about any projects that you can talk about?

*"I’ve got one that’s almost ready for fx(hash) that’s going
to be called Boundary Issues. It’s a bit of an evolution of
the themes from Divergent Convergence (order and
chaos). Maybe a little more towards the order for this
one. That should be out soon. After that, I think I want to
step back and decide on a direction. I feel like I need to
do something really different."*



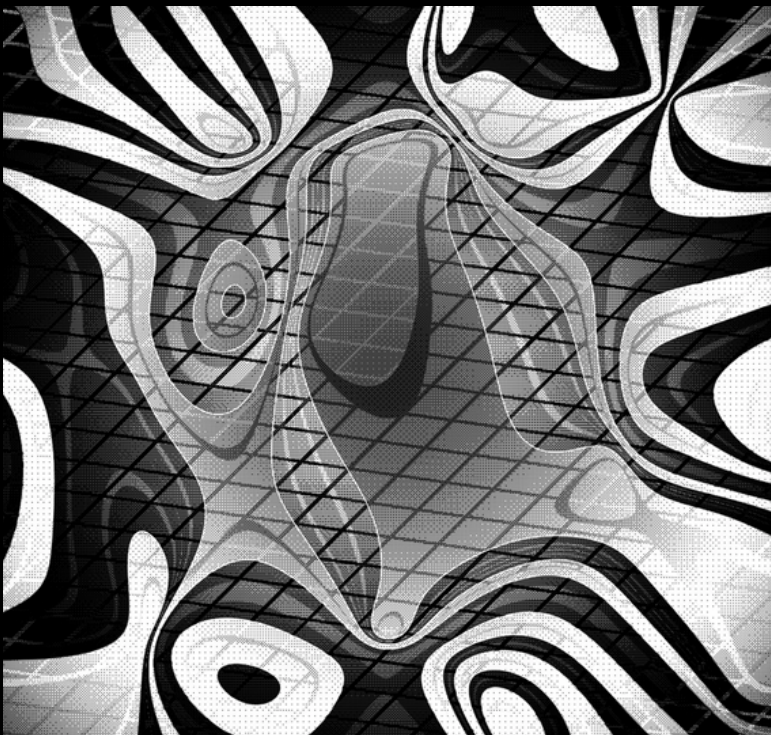
Would you say that there is a parallel between your art and your systems that you use in your art, and the way that you experience life in a general sense?

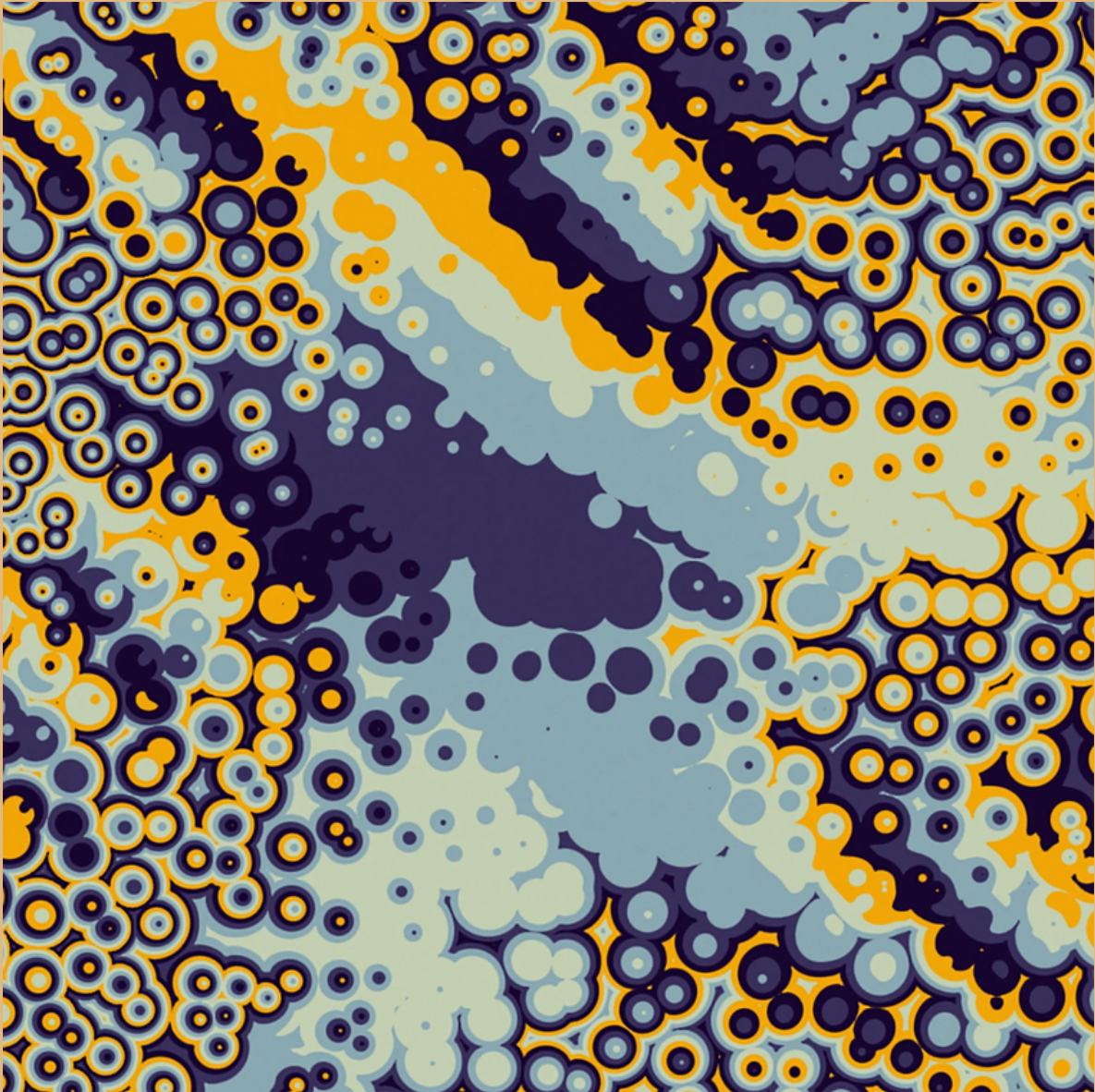
"If you see that my interest in science fiction comes through in my art, then definitely it's kind of flowing out of me and whether I intend it to or not."



Do you see all of your projects so far as connected in some sense?

"I think so. There's probably like an evolution happening. I started out with psychedelic animations and then once I started trying to make long- form, that caused a major shift in my thinking. Instead of thinking about the individual pieces, thinking about the system as a whole. And so what comes after that? I think an interesting development is allowing, when people mint a long-form piece, to choose the parameters that they want or customize it just the way that they want, which is I think of an upcoming feature for fx(hash). And then you're co-creating with the person who mints, I mean, you're doing that anyway with a long-form project, but they're having direct creative control over the output that you, the artist, allowed them to work with. I think that's really exciting."





There's the sense that generative art is a malleable medium that has infinite potential, in terms of human creativity and technical ability. Would that be something that you would subscribe to?

"Absolutely, as computers get more capable, so do our capabilities as far as what we can create with them. Especially with the new AI capabilities - really just fantastic. I mean, 10 years ago, who would have thought that you would be able to do these kinds of things, so that makes the future really exciting to think about."

"With work life balance, you've got to make sure that you're taking care of yourself and remember to do all the basic stuff, eat and sleep, and get outside once in a while."

Could you have predicted 10 years ago that this is where you would be and what you would be doing?

"Absolutely not."

How do you deal with the work-life balance of existing in this space, between creating the work, promoting it, and managing your own collections? Are there any downsides to doing this all independently?

"I would say the downside is you have to be good at all of those things and how many people are good at all of those things? Not very many. I definitely am not. I don't excel at self promotion. I like to create things and share them. but when it comes to engaging with people on social media and putting myself out there, I don't do that well at that. So that's a challenge for me. I also tend at the end of a project, to get overly perfectionist, where I probably should have released it weeks ago, but I've got to fine tune this and fine tune this and I'm never quite 100% satisfied. With work life balance, you've got to make sure that you're taking care of yourself and remember to do all the basic stuff, eat and sleep, and get outside once in a while."



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objktone

A collection of curated 1/1 artworks by artists from across the globe

MAX PAPESCHI

@MaxPapeschi

JESSE DRAXLER

@JesseDraxler

MIMMO DABBRESCIA

@mimmodabbrescia

COLDIE

@Coldie

LECHATNØIR

@LNØir

KEVIN ABOSCH

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OMENTEJOVEM

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NEUROCOLOR

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JENNI PASANEN

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QUBIBI

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GOLDCAT

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ESRA ESLEN

@esraeslen

LORNA MILLS

@lm_netwebs

Mimmo Dabbrescia - Salvador Dali - Port Lligat - 1963

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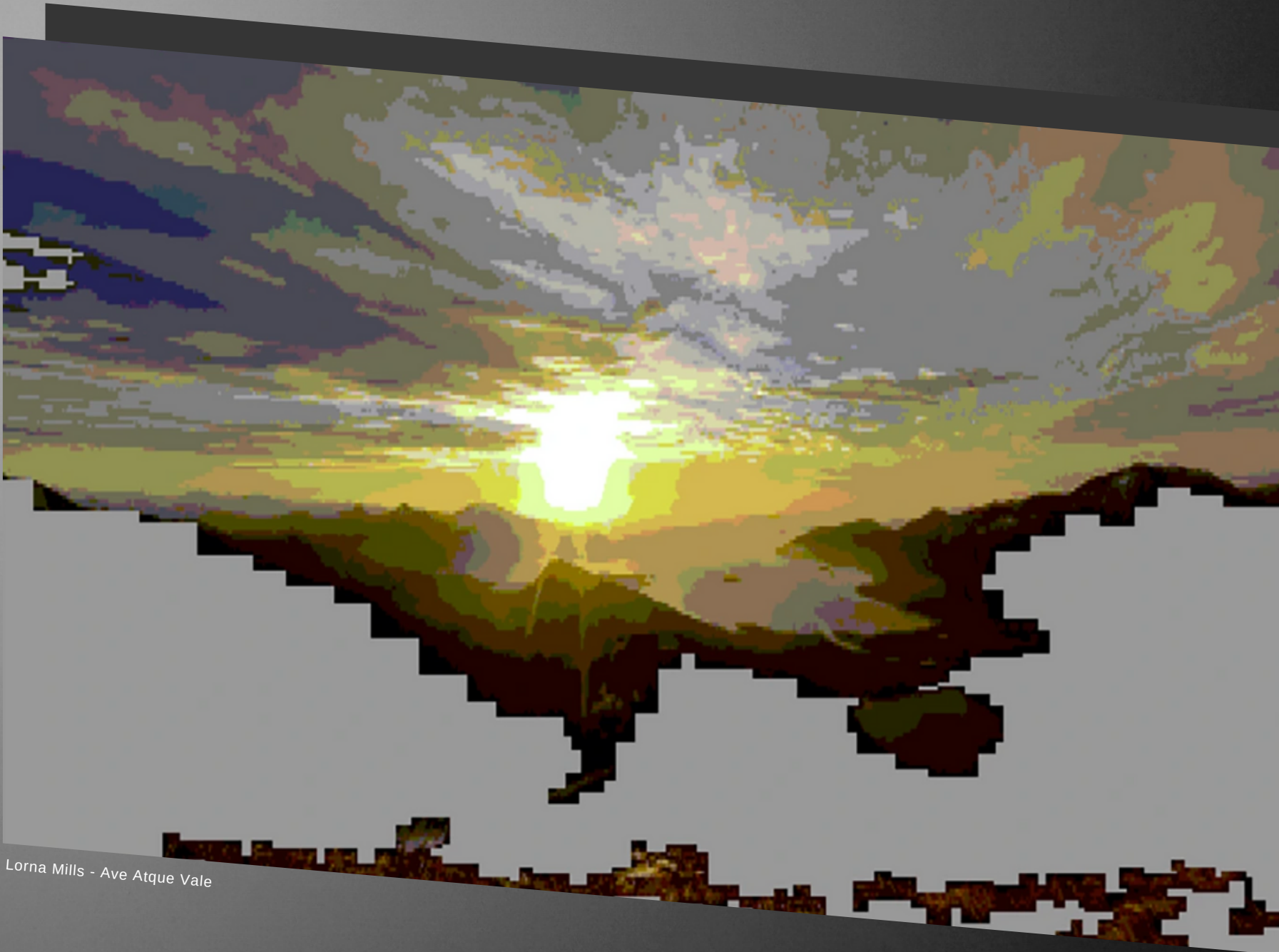
LeChatNoir - Crystal Pill

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LORNA MILLS

@lm_netwebs

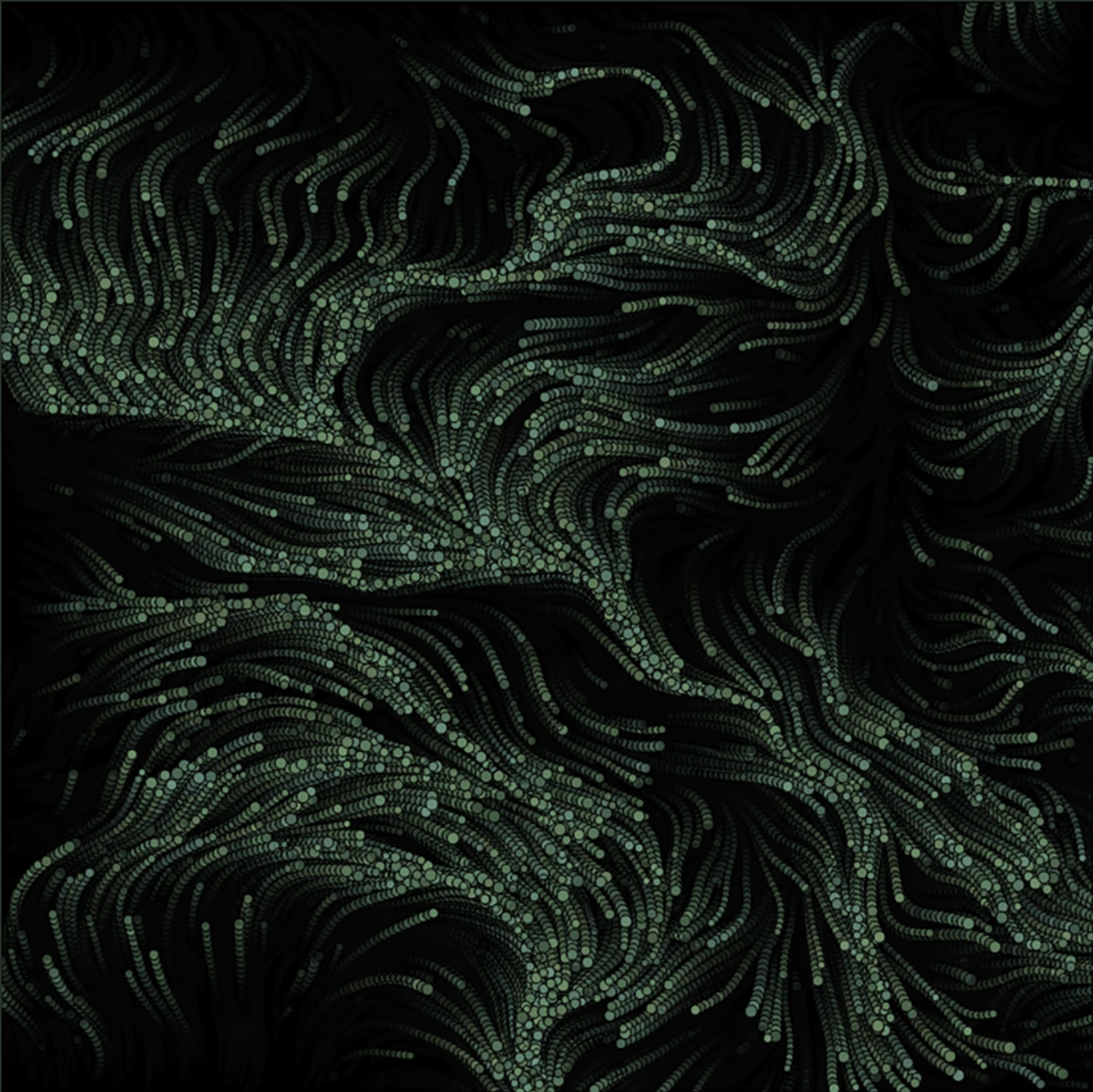


Lorna Mills - Ave Atque Vale

fx(hash) presents

FAY CARSONS

@hangedgirl23

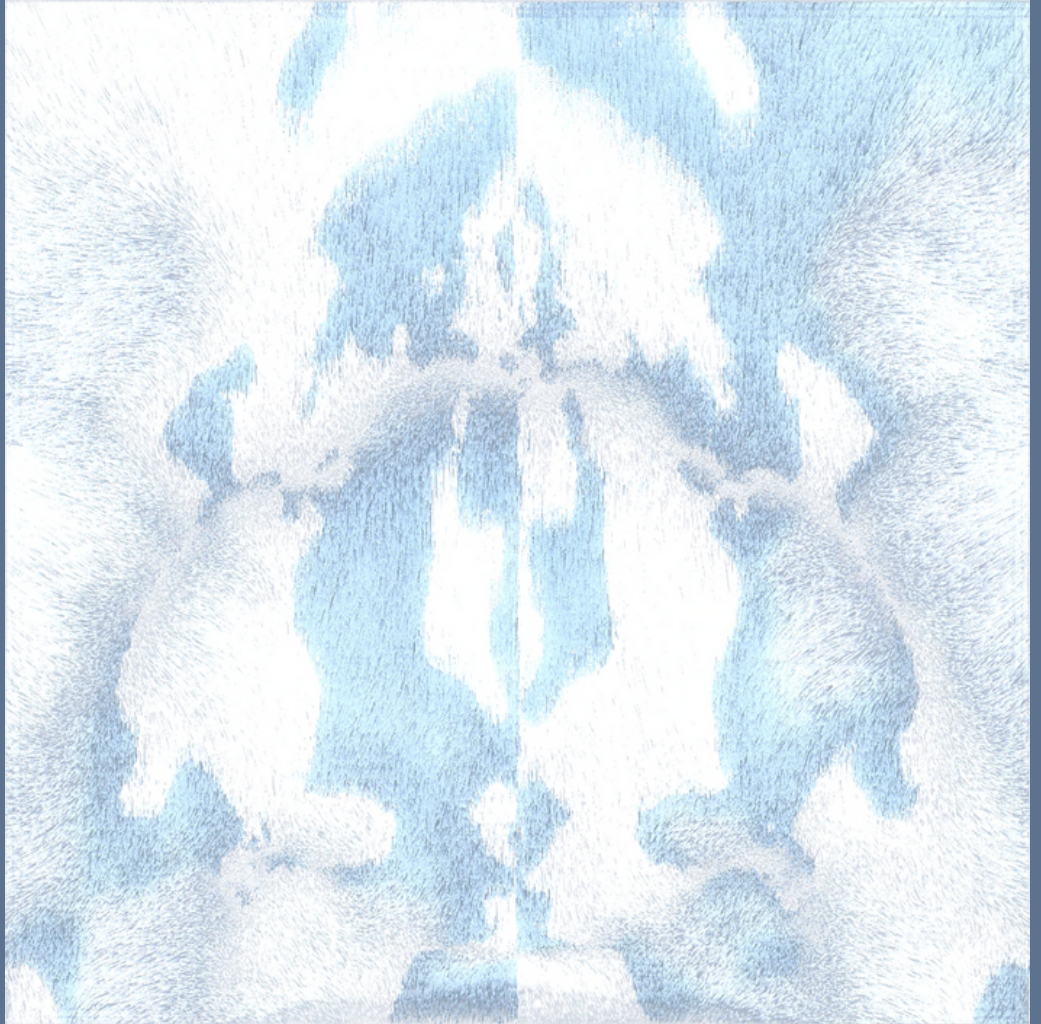


How did you get started coding and making art?

"I've been a musician since I was a kid, and surrounded by art almost all my life. I had played around a bit with sketches, watercolor etc, like anyone does, but never really went anywhere with it. over the pandemic I met Ella Hoepfner (@gengrdrn) who got me interested in CS and sort of mentored me through learning the core concepts. Progressed from writing small generative musical utilities on Monome products(their Teletype synthesizer module, in particular) to p5, then onto clojurescript and shaders."

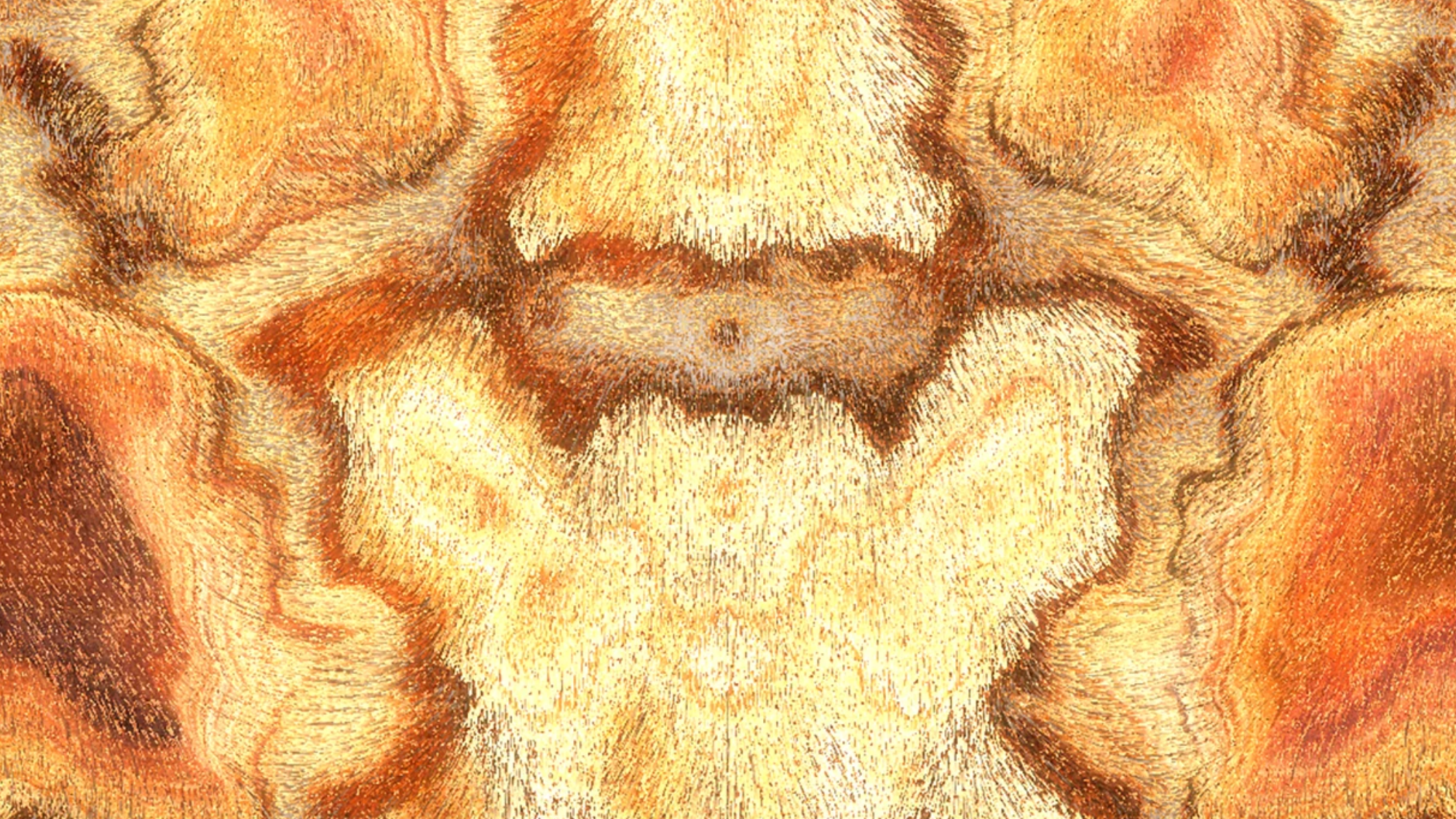
Why/how did you decide to start making generative NFT's on fxhash?

"Publishing projects on Fxhash just made sense, I was looking for some sort of goal to set for myself while I was doing these generative art projects, learning to code, and creating a polished product that I could post there seemed like a good balance of being challenging and actually achievable at my skill level. Being a musician who, until very recently, worked service industry jobs, the prospect of making some pocket money is of course a positive."



Who/what are your artistic influences?

"There are a few contemporary artists I like, Anselm Kiefer, Rick Owens, Stefan Burnett of Death Grips. I don't have any traditional art education so the pool of inspirations I draw from consists of just whatever I encounter that catches my eye. Weathered concrete, urban decay, construction equipment, psychedelia, limit experiences. I feel like the textures I encounter in my day to day life have more of an effect on my sense of aesthetics than anything."



What is your process for your generative art works?
What tools, languages, techniques do you use?

"Right now I'm working with ClojureScript and WebGL, primarily via a webgl wrapper/utility library @gengrdrn wrote and I've contributed to a bit. Which is really nice because it allows for meta-programming, really reducing the headache of WebGL.

Lately I've been really interested in raymarching, constructive solid geometry, and using them to create complex, aesthetically pleasing shapes. "angels" was in part born out of an attempt at achieving this. aside from that I don't really know that I'm up to much that's special, algorithmically at least, I use the same basic tools like flow fields, controlled randomness/probability, agent-based systems, that most other generative artists I encounter use. A lot of my utilities are shadertoy code that I've rewritten for the CLJS WebGL wrapper I mentioned."



Which creative coders do you take inspiration from?

"I'm a big fan of @piterpasma, which I think shows in my work. some of the things he does with raymarching really blow my mind. He seems to have really mastered shaders in a way that I aspire to. Eric de Giuli @eeedg_ is another, his work is so organic while also having this almost dream like quality that I really enjoy. Really good with color. Sage Jenson @mxsage was one of the first generative artists I encountered, and their absolutely breathtaking pathtraced physarum projects have a permanent place in my mind. And of course Ella Hoepfner @gengrdrn, who's taught me most of what I know about computer science in general. Her algorithms really make my head hurt sometimes, but when I really grok them it all comes together beautifully. Really talented artist and programmer.."

What are you currently working on/what are your art plans for the future?

"Right now, I'm planning on continuing to explore raymarching, maybe incorporating pathtracing or volumetric rendering. Also, adding generative music and audio-reactive elements to my pieces. Regardless of technique, I want to create generative art with an edge to it. I don't see a lot of myself or the people I love in these spaces, which isn't a criticism, but I'd like to attempt to fill that niche."

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<



REX FLEXASAURUS

@RexFlexasaurus

The Role of Art Guilds and Group Chats in Digital Arts *ft. Basaia*

If you are anything like me and really engaged with CT and the digital art movement you are probably in a number of group chats. When I started collecting digital art three years ago I never really used twitter much but was quickly assimilated into a number of cohorts as I got deeper into the realm of web3. Throughout art history groups have served a collective purpose as those of similar interest were inevitably drawn together - Dadaist, Impressionist, Der Blaue Reiter, Bauhaus, Pre-Raphaelites, Fauvism, De Stijl, etc. There are so many historical legacies of groups of artists creating in a similar vein shaping the course of art history.

In the digital era and the tools of social media we have at our disposal, artists disseminate information en masse unlike any other time in history. I never thought when I joined these rather innocuous group chats the kind of connections and support I would personally receive as a result of engagement with this modality of belonging to an “art club” of sorts, even if unofficial. As well as having discovered many of the artists I now collect.

While some are rather casual or centered around sharing works and light banter, others take on more official status as art guilds or organizations with a collective identity often shaped partially by geographic similarities or taste. The three that I’m most engaged with are the HAG (Hen Artist Guild) Creme De La Creme and MAIF (an AI art guild started by @Clownvamp). These chats contain artists, curators, collectors and creatives from all over the world.



They become ground zero for the incubation of opinions about art (sometimes passionately debated), life and collaboration. I've seen the most spontaneous collaborations happen as a result of these social experiments and can honestly say I don't think any other dynamic could have launched so many different projects and given life to so much creative endeavour in such a short span of time. I asked Basaia de la creme (@3a5a1a), an artist from Argentina and one of the founders of the La Creme "Metaverse Club & Art DAO" for some of his impressions about guilds.



Rex Flexasaurus

Why did you start an art group chat?

"Each day art further diminishes its self-respect by bowing down before external reality; each day the painter becomes more and more given to painting not what he dreams but what he sees. Nevertheless it is a happiness to dream, and it used to be a glory to express what one dreamt. But I ask you! Does the painter still know this happiness? Could you find an honest observer to declare that the invasion of photography and the great industrial madness of our times have no part at all in this deplorable result? Are we to suppose that a people whose eyes are growing used to considering the results of a material science as though they were the products of the beautiful, will not in the course of time have singularly diminished its faculties of judging and of feeling what are among the most ethereal and immaterial aspects of creation?"

What's the biggest way you see it helping yourself and other artists?

"More than anything sharing the group with more experienced people, maybe someone has an idea and shares it and the group perfects it, you know, it is always said that 2 heads think better than one, imagine 75 heads. We share projects of other artists, we debate about blockchain, market places, art, mainly it helps the nft culture of each member but also we make connections to participate in projects or collaborations."

Is there any possible negative side to being in an art guild?

"As everything can have a negative side- very few. However in my case I have noticed many people do not understand why I can not add people to the group (limited number or that I do not make decisions alone) but more than that and the occasional misunderstanding between members the rest is all positive. Respectful communities and real common interests always work well I find."

Is there anything else you want to add about the experience?

"Simply want to thank all the groups I belong to, not only the Creme De La Creme, but also the Vanguard formed by many artists from Argentina and all over the world, HAG (my mentors in the nft space) or Weird CLub, From all of them I learn a lot and they all help me in one way or another, even though I am more or less active in each one."

Bas himself has a very specific style. His pieces are bright and painterly with nods to various fashion designs and clothing apparel as well as popular culture and you see that style and the motifs of the group repeated in a lot of the individual artist work or in the many collaborative efforts the collective has spawned. I myself worked with Bas on curating the "Real Art of the Deal" show for the project I created- the Tezos Art Vending Machine and several other members of the collective created work for it. When I had the idea for the a project that would randomly distribute art via a custom contract and user interface on Tezos I told the members of HAG about it which was met with great enthusiasm and support, which without I most certainly have would never proceeded with as a concept. Two group members, @Mightymoss and @FendelMarc actually became team members and key collaborators as a result. It's fair to say there's a huge amount of artists talent in the group and potential to channel that into a more collective groove as the space advances. As everyone encourages each other to keep going and creating. Bas touched on another fair point which is that from these groups people tend to gravitate in the same circles drawing inspiration and sharing techniques or information from each- such as I am also HAG and Weird CLub which he mentions along with a number of other creators from the space.

It has become clear to me that there's this ripple effect happening and while people are just excited to be in a collective sharing their efforts and energy the wide spread implications of these loosely formed art guilds are extremely far reaching. Shaping the direction of the space in more poignant ways. Galleries spring from them, exhibitions, new formats styles and ideas that would have never existed otherwise. Next time you find yourself endlessly scrolling twitter or maybe even just sharing a laugh in one of your group chats know that what may seem innocuous and fun is probably actually helping create the story of art as we know it. Like the many art groups and guilds that came before we study now, there is a real basis for the role of group chats and if you haven't found yours yet keep looking because the right one is out there. Or start one today, because you never know to where or whom it might lead..."

Rex Flexasaurus





THE JOAN ANDERSON LETTER

by Neal Cassady



Unacceptable, compelling...

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

As readers may know, the Beat Generation had its big centenary recently with Jack Kerouac. Although arguably problematic, *On The Road*, his era-defining novel, remains the most read, and best-selling, book of their gang, although poet Ginsberg and killer-junkie-surrealist William S Burroughs are equally famous as literary figures - usually identified as outlaw type outliers, whose queer, pro-drug, hyper-sexual, freewheeling lifestyles and texts prefigured the 60s and are a high watermark of American transgressive behaviour.

Most of the members were young white men, but at least, it can be argued, they were bisexual, but their key other members, a married couple, The Cassadys, were even more surprising. Carolyn Cassady, whose centenary begins in April 2023, was a poet, painter, memoirist and lover of most of the others; her husband inspired Ginsberg's best anal sex poem; but Neal Cassady did more than that. He was the literal icon of the group. Neal was what would now be called a criminal - he had stolen dozens, maybe 100s of cars and been in jail and prison, where he wrote and read widely.

His Letter to Kerouac, originally sent in 1950, excerpted here and called the *Joan Anderson Letter*, is known as the Holy Grail of the Beats. It established a frank, pell-mell, funny, shockingly blunt and sexual style that inspired Kerouac to write *On The Road*. It is by today's standards still shocking. That his writing has remained unacceptable, compelling and galvanising for 60 plus years is impressive.

Neal, who was handsome and athletic and had sex daily with as many people as he could and loved music, books, beer and talking, was the embodiment of post-war American youth. James Dean and Marlon Brando are modelled on his type. In *On The Road*, his character is central to the story and as such he is now mythic like Tom Sawyer, but a real man. The real man died young but not before spending time travelling with Ken Kesey and the acid guru of the 60s Timothy Leary. Neal probably met every major hippie, rock musician and actor in California before he died.

Everyone wanted to know him, and Carolyn was often the brilliant feminist witness - her book *Off The Road* tells her side of the story. But back to this fabled letter. About 15,000 words long, it was assumed lost but recently found and sold to an American university for a fortune. The right to publish it worldwide currently remains with the family who have licensed Black Spring Press to get it out into the world.

The fact such an important literary work is being excerpted as an NFT is both beautiful and thrilling. Neal and Jack loved cars and new ways of being on the go - they loved typewriters (Burroughs' father's company made some computing devices and typewriters) - and Kerouac famously composed *On The Road* on one long unbroken roll of paper. They would have had a ball with the blockchain.

**Dr Todd Swift, Publisher,
Black Spring Press**

DEAR JACK,

To hell with the dirty lousy shit, I've had enough horseshit. I got my own pure little bangtail mind and the confines of its binding please me yet. I wake to more horrors than Céline, not a vain statement for now I've passed thru just repetitious shudderings and nightmare twitches. I have discovered new sure doom, but this is my secret, and if I'm to find the pleasure of its divulgence in recognizable form I must tighten my grip while abiding the weight of years. The exquisite twists of this self-wrought terror rival Fleur de Mal in that they are hopeless. Aha! I am well beyond help, though, and my helplessness has only tiny Action to dominate. I am fettered by cobwebs, countless fine creases in delibly etched on the brain. There are no unexplored paths in my mind and few that are not entangled in the weave of my misery mists.

"I am well beyond help..."

It is but gentle fog thru which I navigate and make friendly by constant intimate communion. Within the hour from arising from the suffer-couch, each sleep I've gained anew the daily grease for the bearings on which I roll. I embrace to its exhaustion the night's gleanings with the sure calm now maintained by my dry brittle soul. This calls for strength, you bums, all jump off the gravy-train of stupidity. Fall to the game of your inheritance and shove to the hilt for salvation. I'm within my rights, for deep are the roots and deeper its nourishment. Lovely life, where is thy sting?

Dec, 17, 50

Dear Jack;

To hell with the dirty lousy shit, I've had enough horseshit. I got my own pure little bangtail mind and the confines of its binding please me yet. I wake to more horrors than Céline, not a vain statement for now I've passed thru just repititious shudderings and nightmare twitch. I have discovered new sure doom, but this is my secret, and if I'm to find the pleasure of its devulgance in recognizable form I must tighten my grip while abiding the wait of years. The exquisite twists of this self-wrough terror rival Fleur de Mal in that they are as hopeless. Aha! I am well beyond hope, though, and my helplessness has only tiny Action to dominate. I am fettered by cobwebs, countless fine creases indelibly etched on the b. There are no unexplored paths in my mind and few that are not entangled in the weave of my misery mists. It is but gentle fog thru which I navigate and made friendly by constant intimate communion. Within the hour from arising off the suffer-couch each sleep I've gained anew the daily greasef on the bearings on which I roll. I embrace to its exhaustion the night's gleanings with the sure calm mind now mantained by my dry brittle soul. This calls for strength, you bums, all jump off the gravy-train of stupid. Fall to the game of your inheritance and shove to the hilt for salvation. I'm within my rights for deep are the roots and deeper its nourishment.

"I shall surely shed tears for the first time since mother's death in 1936"

Dark facts I put to you; I've been cut off. I had to go to San Luis O. for the last 10 days. I earned but 180 bucks in the last 5 weeks. The fixing of the car for east trip is proving well nigh impossible. If I must travel by train, transportation of tape recorder big problem, but on the soul of death I vow to have you and this fragile instrument wedded within the month. I must tomorrow find job here in SF to get money for trip. Carolyn is about to starve, as is Diana. Poverty looms big, to be even solvent by May will entail huge effort and larger luck.

If I can't have car in NY for our winter tour of sad Galloway I shall surely shed tears for first time since mother's death in 1936. There are 27 separate items I must attend before Jan.1, this is but SF, too, Booming south may prove necessary with loss of time and more hassles. All this mess I struggle to straighten and prevent inconvenience of plans, there is yet hope all can be made well, actually the whole thing hinges on car and money. So, bah!

Enfolded in bleak Obispo and blank Hinkle's household for the second time in less than 2 months, 3 weeks and 10 days respectively, I had nothing to blast but Melville and Céline. In one sitting (poor ass) of 30 hours I took between my ears Moby Dick from end to end, while forcing into my belly—where it settled so sour—the inanely sick dialogue of Helen and Al. This copy of Herman's Hankering was a magnificent Modern Library giant with great pen-and-ink illustrations. Of course, I was inclined not to enthuse over the old boy too much and certainly picked him up offhandily for I'd read it all long ago. Then too, the new school hangup (remember a certain lecture we attended on MD?) and all the hustlebustle of his recent rediscovery made me pretty sure I wouldn't find another mystery to delve, and I didn't. I simply had a nice ordinary period of reading except that as I read I replaced certain words, admired others, and all in all went thru the thing as one author digging another for help, yet critically. One new impression, especially when compared to long-ago reading; he is simple, writes so simple and is very simple to understand. It's wonderful that he is so, would that I was as clear, would too that I had his strength as I have his philosophy and death knowledge. Céline too, I knew again, hasn't got it like good ole Tommy boy, yet Ferdy is purty and his humor's a zoomer.



Naturally, there is nothing I can tell you about this trio (long tom, big tom, lunging plunging gaping gulping grasping gone gurgleboy tom, but best; Tasty Tommy. Dirty Ferdy, filthy ferdy, lousy louie, looney louie, lecherous louie, lazy louie, lucky louie, blue Lou, limpin' lou, ad infinitum or ad nauseum or et al or etc or on and on and so forth about huge herman, humpback herman, hardy herman, hasty herman, hamstrung her man, healthy herman, hallalulah her man, Spermy Hermie—dammit, I saved the best name for Melville until last, and in fact got the idea for this whole parentheses from it, now what? I just forgot it completely that's all, fapdratit).



– that's a period, whazza matter. You can't see or sumpin? (flap for flappy) Less than 5 years ago I met my true love. The winter of 1945 had already buffeted Denver for a considerable time when this momentous event occurred. Still retaining the shreds of the imposing position held some years before by unceasing philosophating, I was engaged in stretching the rags of my regal robes over the remnants of old pupils. This I did to exist. Those young hoodlums to whom I'd once been master had turned to other things, and it was a hard task to convert their weakened concern into crumbs of refuge.

"...there was to be little bullshit between us and instinctively we all tried to cure our souls by a pure affair."

I was introduced to the soldier behind the wheel who was the car's lone occupant. His name was Kenneth Collins, a stocky tough looking little guy who had known my friend for years. He was on a 10-day pass and looking for women. I told him I was on my way to a girl's room and said he could come along and take over if he wanted to. He liked the idea and we drove to her place, went up the stairs and knocked on her door. At first she told me to go away and refused to open, but I talked for a few minutes and she gave in.

I walked into the room and saw a vision. A perfect beauty of such loveliness that I forgot everything else and immediately swore to forego all my ordinary pursuits until I made her. Desire intensely burned from my stunned eyes when I met her first glance from those light brown cowpools. Then I knew who she was, Jennifer Jones, only much more voluptuous with full tits and rounded ass. Amazing! A perfect real reproduction of Jennifer Jones on the edge of the bed. Oh Jack, everything went along so nicely, as I think of it I just bubble. What I mean is that the other babe, whom I'd met the night before, and Kenny hit it off great right from the start and this left me free to devote my whole mind to Jennifer. In fact so powerfully did I make myself felt that all four of us soon knew there was to be little bullshit between us and instinctively we all tried to cure our souls by a pure affair. JJones name was Joan Anderson, she came from a small midwestern town some weeks before on the first trip she'd ever made. She was approaching 20 and very innocent. The virginity of her entire nature shone thru to me as clearly as a virtue, altho I saw she was nearly 5 months in pregnancy.

Within an hour this incredibly shy creature was bashfully installed beside me in the booth of a jumping joint. While Kenny and his box danced, Joan unlimbered to my massage and as she floated on her gentle comedown I was bursting to blow. We soon left the bar and slipped into K's snug Hotel where they at once retired to bed with a bottle. I was com missioned to take K's car back to his brother's and Joan accompanied me. My excitement as I drove penetrated Joan's belly and she began to approach the peak I was on. The long return walk contained all the combination of illusions that makes young blood so prone to boil. One of those rare periods of sensation everyone has felt, the air, the girl, the hope. She put me straight on her condition; usual stuff, hi-school boy she'd known for years, first time, left home because it started to show, etc. Sad and weeping for so long, her eyes had disremembered sparkle. The talk sure knowledge vowed of our eternal union made but sparks of splintered joy come out of her twin suffered flintholes.

(12)
I rushed my trip to the clothes-depot, made good connections and was quickly on my way back to the warm apt., and my Joan. As you well know, Jack the route from 12th and Ogden to 16th and Loncolnsts. lies for the most part, if one so desires, along E. Colfax Ave. Horrible mistake, stupid moment; I chose that path just to dig people on the crowded thoroughfare as I hustled by them. At midblock between Penna. and Pearl Sts. is a tavern whose plateglass front ill-conceals the patrons of its booths. I was almost past this bar when I glanced up to see my younger B. Brother inside drinking beer alone. I had made good time and the hard habit of lushing that I was so addicted to pushed me thru the door to bum a quickie off him. Surprise, surprise, he was loaded with loot and, more surprising, gushed all over me. He ordered as fast as I could drink, and I didn't let the waitress stop, finishing the glass in a gulp; one draught for the first few, then two for the next several and so on until I was sipping normally by the time an hour had fled. First off he wanted a phone number--the reason for his generosity I suspect--and I was the only one who could give it to him. He claimed to have been sitting there actually brooding over the very girl on the other end of this phone number, and I believed him; had to take it true, because for the last five months it had become increasingly clear that he was hotashell for this chick--who was my girl. I gave him the number and he dashed from one booth to the other. (got that, old man, beerbooth to phonebooth) I had cautioned him not to mention my name, nor tell her I was there, and he said he wouldn't. But he did, altho he denied it later. The reason for his disloyalty, despite it cost me Joan, was justifiable since, as one will when about to be denied a date of importance while drinking, he had used my whereabouts as a lastditch lure to tempt her out. He came back to the booth from the booth (see here, phone booth to barbooth, don't you know--barbooth is a terrific dicegame for highstaked illegal gambling in N. Denver, too, so there crestfallen, she had said she couldn't leave the house just now, but to call her back in a half-hour or so; this didn't cheer him as it would have me, he's richer and less easily satisfied. He called her again, about 45 minutes after I had first been pulled into the dive by my powerful thirst, and she said for him to wait at this joint and she'd be down within an hour. This length of time didn't seem unreasonable, she lived quiteaways further out in eastdenver. I thought everything was going perfectly. Bill got the girl, I got my drinks and still had a short period of grace in which to sloop up more before she showed (I certainly didn't intend to be there when she arrived) and I'd only be a little late returning to Joan where I'd plead hassel in getting the clothes. Oh sad shock, oh-unpleasant time; had I just not guzzled that last beer all the following would not be written and I could end this story with, "And they lived happily ever after".
Whoa, old buddy, read slowly for a bit and have patience with my verbosity (if you haven't been slowed to a stop already by my stilted style, and too, I mean more patience beyond that which you've needed for my unfunny parentheticals. There are two things I've got to say here; one is a sidepoint and it'll come second, the first is essential to the understanding of this unending trash; so, I gotta bore you with one of my hollywood flashbacks--duller, in fact. I'll leave out the most of it and be as brief as possible to make it tight, altho, by the nature of it, this'll be hard--especially since I'm tired. Number 1: On June 2, 1945 I was released from Colorado State Reformatory, after doing 11 months and 10 days (know the song?) of hard labor. Soon after returning to Denver I had the rare luck to meet a 16-year-old East hi beauty who had well-to-do parents; a mother and pretty older sister to be exact. Cherry Mary (Mary Ann Freeland) was her name because she lived on Cherry St. and was a cherry when I met her. That condition didn't last long I ripped into her like a maniac and she loved it. A tremendous affair, countless countless things to be said about it--I can hardly help from blurting out 20 or 30 statements right now despite resolution to condense. I'm firm (ha) and the story of our 5 months intercourse--with its many incidents that are perculating this moment in my brain; about carnival-night we met (Eltich's), the hundreds of mountain trips in her new mercury, rented trucks with mattress in back, at her cabin, cabins I broke into, day I got her to bang Hal Chase, time I gave her clap after momentous meeting between her and mother of my second child (only boy before Diana's, time I knocked her up; and knocked it,

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Back at the hotel we walked into a bounding bed on which K and his partner were going at it in a big way. They didn't pause for greeting or in anyway acknowledge our presence, just kept ripping away at 80 per. I was twinning with eagerness as Joan and I smuck into the offside of the double bed. I didn't rush, didn't push, (much) didn't force and only held her in firm tender caress. With one hand gently clasping her bottom and the other supporting her back I kissed the sweet face and lips then progressed my mouth to the heavy breasts, while my enormous cock slid under the silk slip and pounded against the soft belly pressed under me. She was still so young the couple beside us bothered her, so I did not fuck then, but kept at what I was doing for an hour or so. Finally K and his left us to go eat and we was alone, yet I wisely contained myself from all-out attack for we had been tense for so long and the edge of thrill worn off just enough so that to do it now would not please her perfectly. I pointed this out and she agreed later that night would indeed be wonderfully right. K and girlie came back and we all went jumping on his money. Joan and I were in fine accord and her eyes were now shining full with joyous love. We planned and planned, there was no limit all we had to do was begin. The next morning, after a night of licking the platter clean, K decided he'd had enough of his lovely and abruptly kicked her out. I could have stayed on with him for the few days before he went back to camp and I sadly needed a roof for each transient night, but Joan must stay with her friend until she was settled and, not to leave my mate, I followed the girls onto the icy streets.

Back at the hotel we walked into a bounding bed on which K and his partner were going at it in a big way. They didn't pause for greeting or in any way acknowledge our presence, just kept ripping away at 60 per. I was twitching with eagerness as Joan and I snuck into the offside of the double bed. I didn't rush, didn't push, (much) didn't force and only held her in firm tender caress. With one hand gently clasping her bottom and the other supporting her back I kissed the sweet face and lips then progressed my mouth into the heavy breasts, while my enormous cock slid under the silk slip and pounded against the soft belly pressed under me. She was still so young the couple beside us bothered her, so I did not fuck then, but kept at what I was doing for an hour or so. Finally K and his left us to go eat and we were alone, yet I wisely contained my self from all-out attack for we had been tense for so long and the edge of the thrill worn off just enough so that to do it now would not please her perfectly. I pointed this out and she agreed later that night would indeed be wonderfully right.



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Neither of them knew a connection for some loot and mine had been pushed to the limit where they would have guffawed loudly at my asking for an actual cash dollar, especially for a silly waste like a hotel room. We walked for some time, then, offhand, Joan mentioned a cab driver who'd tried to father her some weeks before. She recalled his name and I got her right on the ball. Making contact by cab phone she arranged to meet him at 4 o'clock when he got off duty. We passed the time until then (3 or 4 hours) in Kenny's hotel lobby, and when Joan left to make the meet, her buddy and I stayed there to be out of the cold. Our most optimistic wishes were more than confirmed as my beauty returned in good time with money in her purse and supper in her mixer. The old boy (about 50) was really fatherly alright, happily married and with an amount of dough, he just gushed with pity at my poor innocent's plight and his wallet was touched, too. Knowing I could sneak in and out at any hour in my old haunt, (one of many such) the Denver hotel, I told the girls to rent the cheapest weekly room there. Then began the tragedy.

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Purposely I have not said much about Joan's girlfriend, the one I'd met first you understand. Altho she wouldn't give out with it on the initial night, the next day her high nasal twang pro claimed the name of Mary Lou Berle. I had spent the winter of 1942 in the Ozarks and knew her hometown of Big Springs, Mo. and without another ear to bend that was familiar with that section of the country, her homesick mind really poured the blurb to me. A couple of years before, at 16, she'd left home and hitchhiked to Springfield Mo. and got a job on the local radio station sing ing those horrible hillbilly songs every 6 A.M. This didn't last too long and she'd tramped here and there in the Midwest until she met Joan and together they had Greyhound together to Denver. Let me tell you, boy, I know there is nothing like a fine old mountain ballad, but when Mary Lou got drunk (nightly) and began "The Maple on the Hill" in yodeling screech, as her frosty blue eyes wept buckets, my cringing belly would curl into a genuine Gordion Knot.

Not that she wasn't a lovely; blonde hair well bleached, smooth facial features, altho pancake makeup skin was much too dry, 5'2" figure, but the too-small breasts were more than compensated by the oversize ass so her weight, I judge, while just outside 123 3/4 lbs. did not yet, I suspect, approach 125 lbs., unless of course my hasty estimate is inaccurate, then naturally I allow, nay, urge, that you draw your own conclusions about her avoir du pois. Amen, and may god rest ye merry gentlemen.

Speaking of Miss Berle's behind I must say here that the one quality of it, indeed, the sole property by which I remember her whole body, was an exquisite overfleshiness that is not too often found. The tempting jelly of her physical self paralleled her entire spiritual being in that the excessive soft mass made for too much matter thru which to wade, and this adequate defense defeated my most wonderfully casual attack; since I was not a perfect fool. We became buddies with our guard up.

...TBC



