The Event of Art

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Variability, remixability, versioning, editioning, dispersion are all characteristics of the instrumentation of computation, engineering, software, read/listen/watch/write/re-write – programs. Procedure and program, these are the things that interest me. And today they are very, very common.

In the world of art, instructions coming out of conceptual art and avant garde music is not at all new. Think only of Sol LeWitt, Yoko Ono, La Monte Young, Pierre Boulez through to Sophie Calle, Oulipo, each working with a prescribed sets of constraints. These artists worked with algorithms and instructions prior to our world of software and computation which of course amplifies and takes further instructions.

I was first introduced to the idea of computation by a musician and saw that it allowed for continual iteration and variability. My films now would be made with instructions, in this case instructions of code.

In algorithmic computation, the movement of stillness, viewed in a continuum, is something other than the cinematograph: it is an ellipsis of movements or instances in a varying or computational register of ordering and time. In such a register, one that is computational and algorithmic, the movement of instances (as in 24 frames a second) is not sequential (as if to replicate the real) but simply instances, movements to be ordered in any which way.
Joan of Arc, Computational Montage
(length variable)

The film is made by a set of instructions that both generate new sounds and new shot durations. It’s made in a program designed in MAX/MSP/Jitter. The films and hundreds of them I’ve made can play for hours and days and years never repeating themselves. It is endlessly emerging. As my friend would say,

There is no original, only versions to infinity and it is beautiful.
Where the one work is made of instructions the one is fixed. The film was made at a period when I was very interested in micro sounds. It’s made with one photograph. I made a number of image films.

But note the difference, where the first film can play infinitely, the second is finite. Around 2002, I wanted to rewrite the film projector in software as a variable instrument. Film as most of us know comes to us as a single channel or one screen, fixed temporal event. And, as its one screen, we have an *mise-en-scène* of one shot following another. But it does not need to be that way.
With this new computational instrument the stratagem of orchestrating the movement of image instances in something entirely different, each image is discrete and atemporal, and in time I will explore it in relation to the figuration of story and representation.

In my previous work, the photograph, the film frame, and the video field have each been the discrete unit that iterates, permutes within an envelope of computational possibility. In this proposed work I want to further my existing MAX Patch as an authoring platform to arrange and sequence narrative instances. The outcome is to make a multiple video window and surround sound installation in a flexible authoring environment that is variable and computational.

Record
Midsummer
Textures, 2007