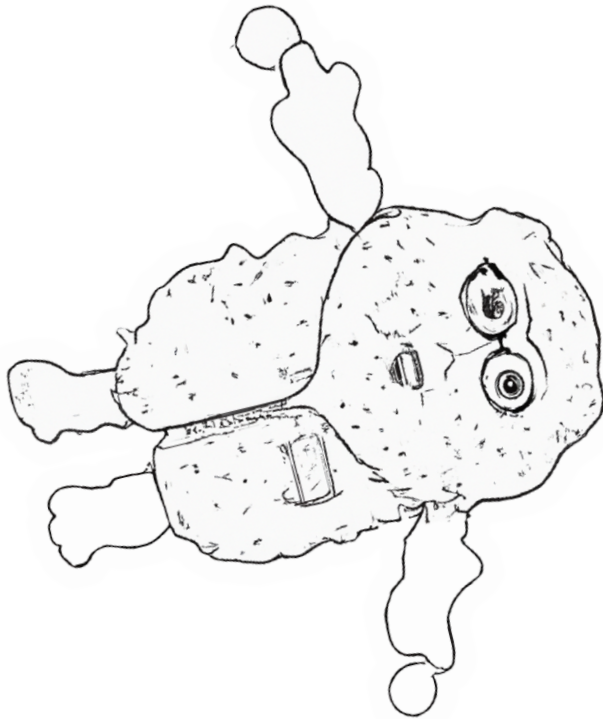


**emerging
digital
media
art &
design
practices**

**garrett
laroy
johnson,
phd**



edited january 2025

<https://diagrammatic.media>

DIAGRAMATIC MEDIA: SUBJECTIVITY - ECOLOGY - EVENT

DISSERTATION, media arts and sciences. Defended October 2022. 187 pp.

[Download link.](#)

ABSTRACT: This dissertation charts another path for Media Arts and Sciences (MAS) by generating institutional and creative research practices that work against logics of integration and extraction. Drawing on activist, psychoanalyst, and philosopher Félix Guattari, I use institutional analysis to model how MAS came to inherit legacies of 1970s cyberlibertarianism and digital utopianism, which disavow politics in favor of technocratic steering. A key consequence of this disavowal, I argue, is an embrace of an integrative and market-driven mode of interdisciplinarity.

Responding to technocratic MAS, I argue for re-consideration of politics in MAS through an approach to research, creation, and practice informed by Guattari's concept of diagrammatics. Diagrammatics centers subjectivity in crises of mental, social, and environmental ecology. Through creative social practice with computational media art, I work towards a notion of diagrammatic media grounded in experience.

Media diagrammatics intertwines the extensive engineering of concrete machines (artmaking, systems building, event making) and the speculative engineering of abstract machines (dreaming, conceptualizing, modeling, critiquing). Diagrammatic media objects (e.g., radiophonic aberrances in the electromagnetic field, a book, an autumn leaf) are lures for thinking-feeling. Diagrammatic media proposes we stop thinking in terms of computational media systems altogether and begin thinking about diagrammatic assemblages of concrete and abstract machines.

A prototype of a tangible media-rich writing system called diagrammatic points to the relationship between lateral thinking, moving, and feeling in learning and writing. I speculate on a slow network for the system that actualizes new modes of collaborative writing. Portacular Resonances, a radiophonic media installation, drives a Sci-Phi endeavor about contemporary anxiety differently: as a clue for cosmic becoming that spirals upward from emotional capitalism's reactive affect and into a potential collectivizing force. Finally, through the Guattarian concept of the machine and a bespoke interview protocol, I ask about the conditions for transformation in gathering events such as SloMoCo, a slow conference for artist researchers.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT PEER REVIEW.

Four anonymous reviews as part of the Leonardo Abstract Database.

1. This abstract employs a theoretical model derived from Félix Guattari to interrogate current positions of Media Arts and Sciences (MAS) as inheritants of 1970s cyber-libertarianism and digital utopianism. The author proposes a new path for MAS that draws upon Guattari's concept of diagrammatics, in which subjectivity is centered. The research leans heavily upon the language of Guattari and Gilles Deleuze, which is highly particular and quite specialized; however, its themes relate well to a philosophical positioning on the relationship between art and technology that's relevant to LABS.

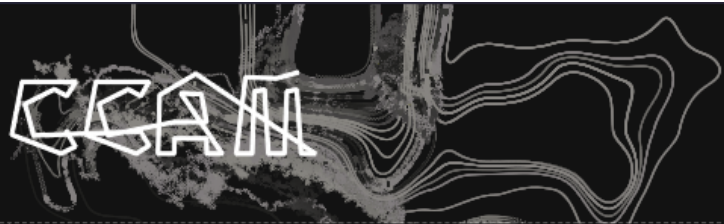
2. Interesting abstract, well written with a clear conceptual underpinning to the contribution.

3. An unusual paper arguing for thinking through the media art <> science dyad using conceptual rather than actual machines as the key. Very relevant.

4. Brilliant, applicable, topical, theoretical, practical, political - all at the nexus of art, science and technology.

5. The abstract is interesting however particularly challenging. Perhaps a more accessible language would have improved the thesis's readability. ((In fact, I believe an abstract should have a certain degree of readability.) The second section of the abstract was particularly hard to comprehend. I would suggest rewriting the abstract in a simpler, but not superficial, way.





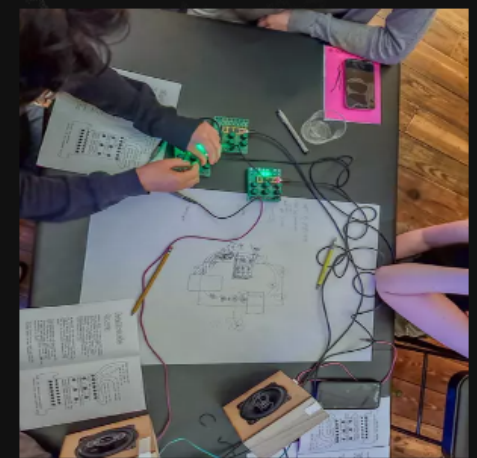
- [Programs](#) [] [Projects](#) []
- [Resources](#) [] [About](#) []
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CCAM: CENTER FOR CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT MACHINES
 experimental organization at the nexus of art, technology, and contemporary thought

Founded Summer 2023
 501c3

[more here](#)

CENTER FOR CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT MACHINES



Center for Concrete and Abstract Machines is an artist-run platform at the nexus of art, technology, and contemporary thought.

[Program Calendar](#)

[Research Projects](#)

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Programs

[View All](#)



I WANT AN AI FOR PRESIDENT



I WANT AN AI FOR PRESIDENT
Live-action role play
collaboration w. games
artist Kristin McWharter,
Doug Rosman

2.15.24 Hammy Wammy
8.22.24 Co-prosperity Sphere
[more here](#)

[all graphic design by me](#)

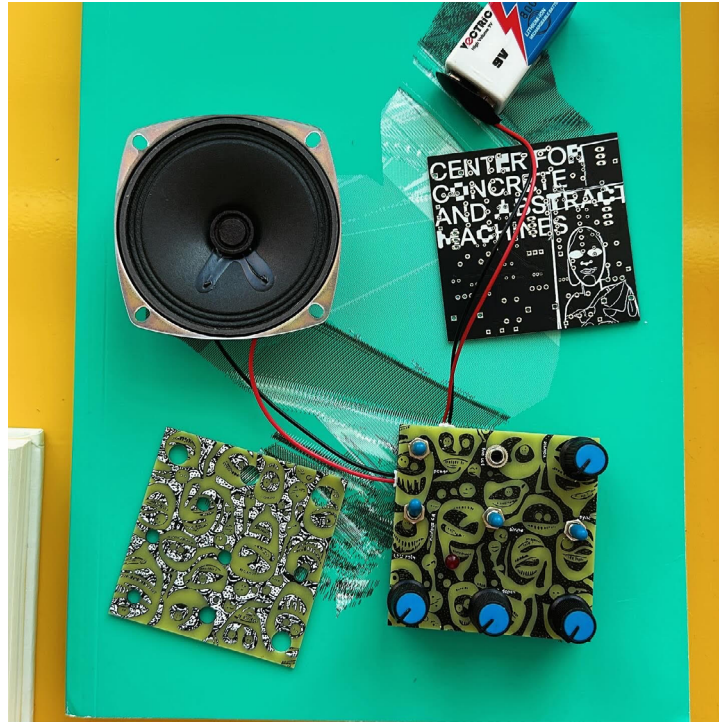


**modular synthesis
performance**

self built and designed
hardware and software

recent performances:
> NoNation, Chicago IL
> Comfort Station, Chicago
IL

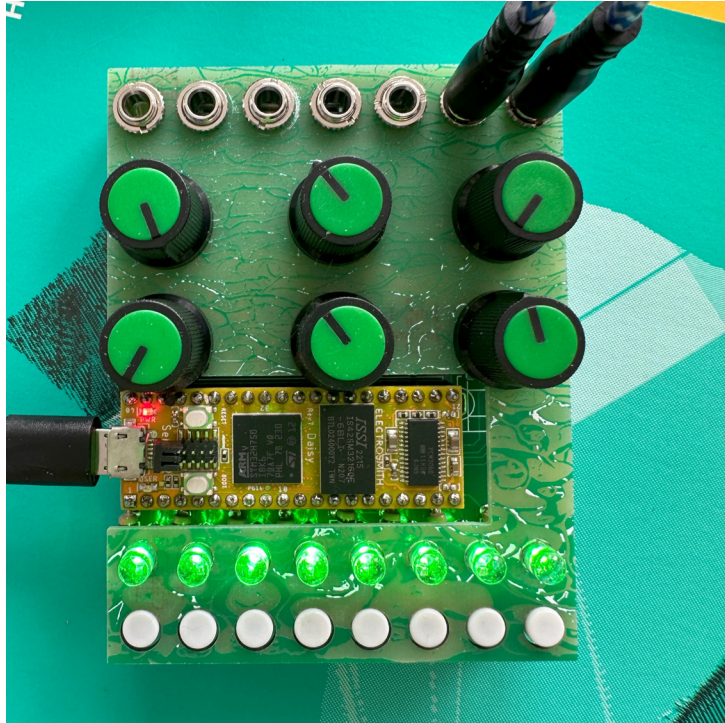




ALIEN SCREAMER
pocket hardware synthesizer
PCB design

[more here](#)



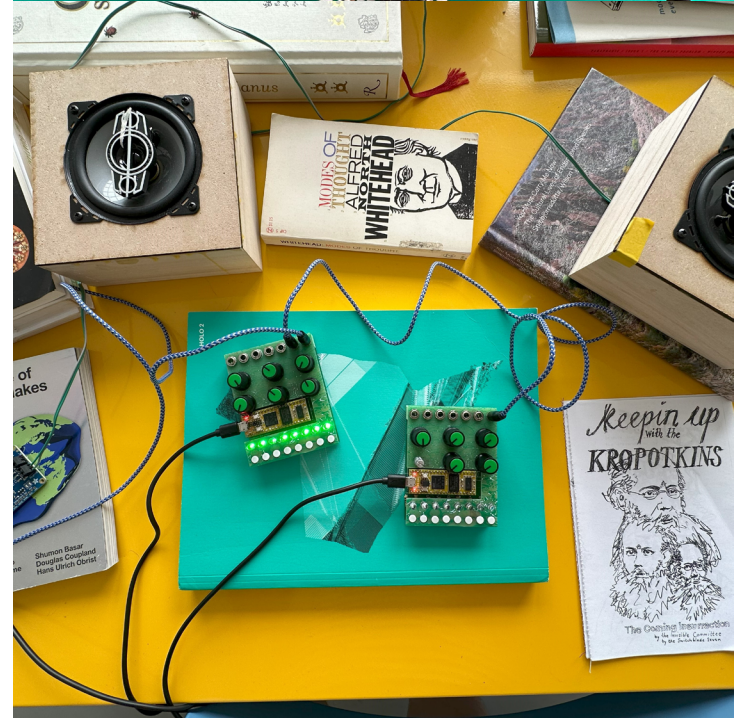
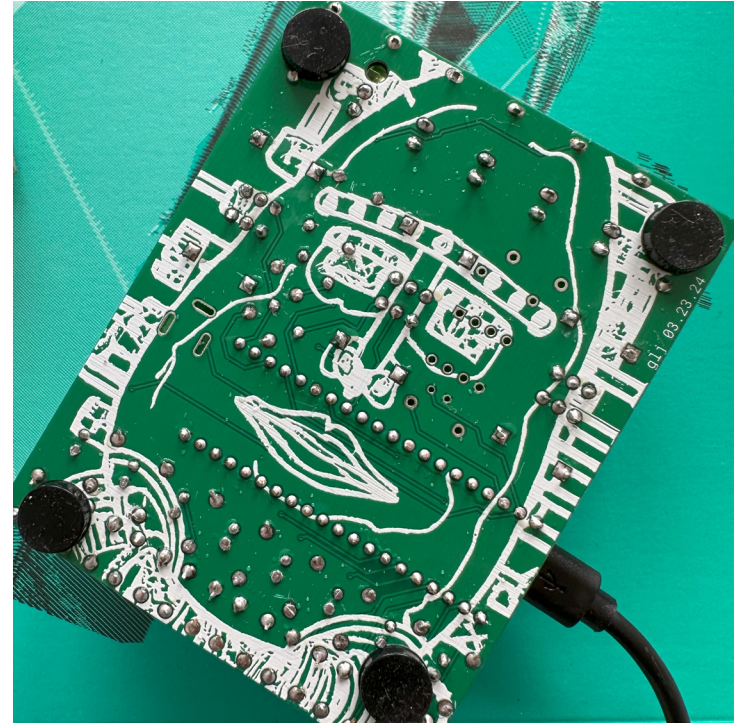
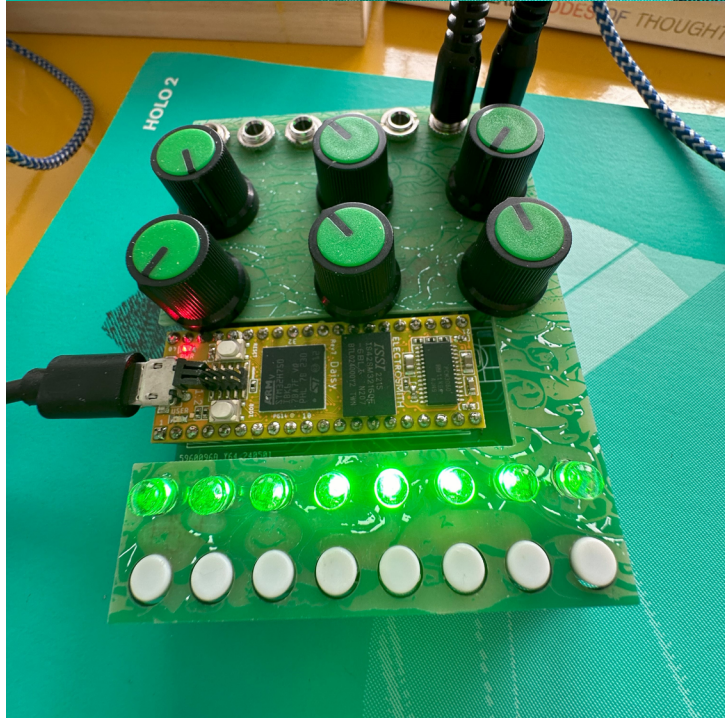


CCAM EARTH

reprogrammable hardware
collective music making
workshop design
fabricated x30 pieces

[more here](#)

Chicago House Music firmware
designed in collaboration
with Juan Flores





WEIRD DREAMS, WEIRD ANALYSIS
group show +
interdisciplinary
symposium

[more here](#)

curation

pop-up version at Society
for Literature, Science,
and the Arts @ Design
North, Arizona 10.23

ft. artists from
Montreal, Berlin,
Chicago, NYC

Full exhibition co-
curated with Dakota
Gearhart (NYC)
at Co-Prosperity, Chicago
forthcoming Spring 2025



Decolonial sciences lab



2024 fellows
Nimrod Astarhan
Jared Brown
Letaru Dralega
Ladipo Famodou



**BADSLAB: Black Arts and Decolonial
Sciences**

microresidency + community building
program

May 2024

[more here](#)

program co-design and co-curation
with the Fyrthyr Institute for
Unsettling Technologies

ft. artists from Uganda, Chicago,
and Tel Aviv

Watershed
art & ecology

futurhythm machines

:: CHICAGO HOUSE

12-4 DIY SYNTH WORKSHOP

4-6 PANEL::

Thomas Defrantz

Meida McNeal

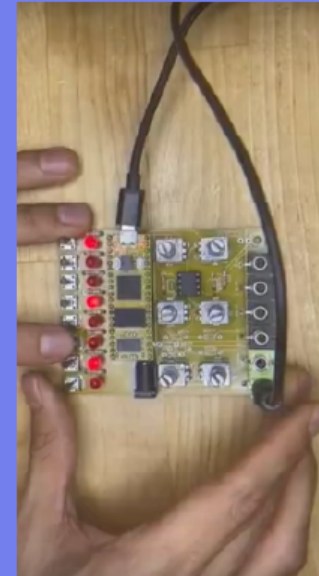
Duane Powell

6-8 RECEPTION + MUSIC



TERRA

FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN ART



FUTURHYTHMACHINES:: CHICAGO HOUSE

synth workshop + panel + party
May 2024

workshop lead, event producer, event co-
concept w. Muindi Fanuel Muindi (Portland)

[more here](#)

partners:

Terra Foundation, Artists Run Chicago,
Watershed Art and Ecology, the Fyrthyr
Institute, Hyde Park Arts Center

WE DON'T KNOW YET
WHAT CINEMA
CAN DO



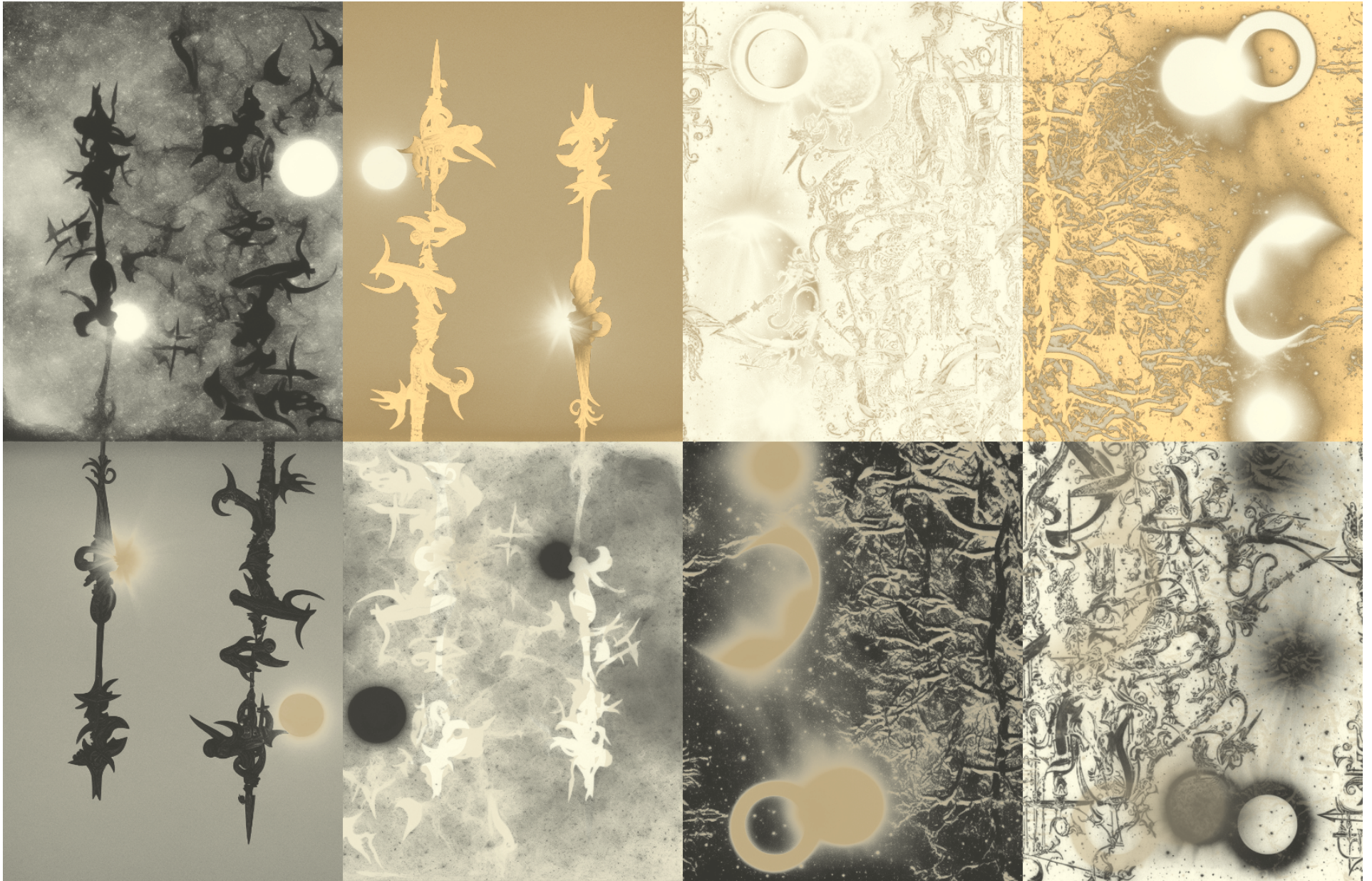
WE DON'T KNOW YET: what a
cinema can do

April 5 2024

curation, production,
conception

in partnership with the
Onion City Film Festival

[more here](#)



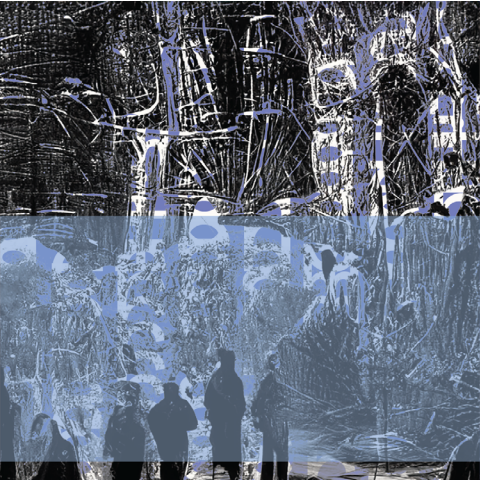
solstice. excerpt of risograph zine (mockup shown). winter 2025.
comfyUI StableDiffusion. Image processing in p5*js, inDesign.In
Progress.

Black
ecolonial
ciences

open
coll

lab fellowships application due
 may 10-20 april 10

I WANT AN AI FOR PRESIDENT



CENTER FOR CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT MACHINES

syntho-kether

performance
hunter whitaker-morrow
 the emissary [prayer 1]

Hunter Whitaker-Morrow is an artist who works in modes of video installation, experimental documentary, and performance.

His work, both structuralist and conceptual, centers on an exploration of the moving image as socio-historical text, mass media as archive, and the potentialities of audio-visual constructions to serve as instruments of liberation.

excerpt from graphic design for CCAM: Center for Concrete and Abstract Machines. 2023-24.

graphic design with various machine learning + computer vision workflows. StableDiffusion/ComfyUI, p5*js, Illustrator

more CCAM graphic design on instagram @ccam_chicago

I WANT AN AI FOR PRESIDENT

Co-Prosperity Sphere
 3219 S Morgan St

Thursday 8.22.24
 7:30 Doors
 8:00 Sharp

RSVP
 link-in-bio

2023 rundown:

- 0 seminar
- 0 symposium
- 10 open-working group sessions
- 0 gallery show
- 0 electronic sound workshops
- 0 screening + panel + party

1000 apply by
 july 1

plateaus

101

performances: installations:

[WE DONT KNOW YET] [WE DONT KNOW YET] [WE DONT KNOW YET]

WHAT CAN BE
CINEMA
line up:

alan perry
hunter whitaker
-morrow
ruby que
liyan zhao +
liam obrien

luciana decker
orozco
kristin mcwharter
andrew wood

CHICAGO FILMMAKERS
onion city
EXPERIMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL

CENTER FOR CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT MACHINES
Public Works

more machine learning
graphic design.
more at IG @ccam_chicago

Real-time Video Workshop

Juliana Castro Duperly

6-9pm
6.18 + 19.24 \$35+

This workshop is dedicated to developing experimental visual projects, where images are created, manipulated, and mixed in real-time.

Participants will learn to mix and process video towards real-time visual performance with a focus on output techniques in Resolume Arena.

Juliana Duperly.
Video, sound artist, and educator interested in language as a performative act.

CCAM

↓ ← ↗

8.9 + 8.16
18-2000 CT
chicago + online

ATP 101:
how to make rhizome

A plateau is always in the middle, not at the beginning or the end.

A rhizome is made of plateaus. very special:

Gregory Bateson uses the word "plateau" to designate something very special:

a continuous, self-vibrating region of intensities

CCAM





center for concrete and abstract machines

[in]formal
[in]formations
07.03.23
new inc, new york

Schedule

11.00 opening remarks	
	session 1
11.15 Kristin McWharter How to Be a Good Sport: Algorithms for Competitive Collectives	4.15-5.00 Asa Sakrison Concerning Concern, Creativity and Caring for Our Practices
	reception
12.00 Daniel Lichtman Collective Worldbuilding with the Community Game Development Toolkit	5-6 Balcony, Light refreshments provided

Lunch
12-45 walk together to Manan [1-826]

session 2

1.45 Muindi Fanuel Muindi
Measure with Care

2.30 Lee Tusman
Web-based Preservation of Online Art Communities

[break]

session 3

3.30 Garrett Laroy Johnson
"To Get Concrete, We Have to Get Abstract": Towards Collectives of Machinic Fluency in Media Arts

Web-based Preservation of Online Art Communities

Lee Tusman
New York

As a new media artist, programmer and member of DIY art communities, Tusman is engaged in strategic digital preservation of web-based and born-digital media created by artist communities. While artist-run communities of earlier eras may be documented through photographic prints, video, and publications, these recent communities are primarily promoted and documented online, on closed proprietary platforms, with an emphasis on immediacy but not on long term archiving. Tusman presents a number of approaches to addressing this issue, from DIY approaches to self-hosting and personally-made tools to low-code/no-code approaches and leveraging a slipstream approach to piggybacking on corporate tools.



Informal Informations. Zine for CCAM: Center for Concrete and Abstract Machines. 2023-24.

graphic design with various machine learning + computer vision workflows. StableDiffusion/ComfyUI, p5*js, Illustrator

more CCAM graphic design on instagram @ccam_chicago

Collective Worldbuilding with the Community Game Development Toolkit

Daniel Lichtman
New York

In this session Daniel Lichtman will introduce the Community Game Development Toolkit and lead a collective worldbuilding activity using the toolkit.

The Community Game Development Toolkit is a set of tools that make it easy and fun for students, artists, researchers and community members to create their own collage-based, interactive 3D environments and story-based games without the use of coding or other specialized game-design skills. Built on the Unity game engine, the toolkit provides intuitive tools for diverse communities to represent their own traditions, rituals and heritages through interactive, visual storytelling.

In order to quickly create vibrant, visually rich scenes without the use of 3D modeling, the toolkit draws on creators' own photos, collages, drawings, sound recordings and 3D scans to create objects and textures in 3D space. This technique allows creators to bring their own visual references and sensibility into the game environment and makes creative experimentation rewarding and fun for creators who may have no prior experience in 3D modeling or even visual art.

How to Be a Good Sport: Algorithms for Competitive Collectives

Kristin McWharter
Chicago

Competition holds a deeply emotional tenor cultivated through shared narratives of champions, losers, underdogs, and what is deemed 'fair'. Drawing on frameworks of oppositional and cooperative play, Artist Kristin McWharter presents her work "Football Practice", a software simulation developed through a public workshop series that delves into histories and cultural impacts of American Football. The work reflects on the archetypal narrative structures expressed from the sport's gameplay and how these narratives in turn shape current understandings of community, citizenship, and nationalism.

Inspired by popular sports video games such as Madden as well as the practice game mode where users change, alter, or manipulate how a game looks or behaves, Football Practice uses simulation and collective decision making to reexamine how sport influences collective identity. This talk will explore the oppositional and cooperative play structures, and systems of collective decision making that inform emergent narratives and how access points to parsing the structural histories of America's most lucrative sports enterprise.



special thanks to:
NEW INC (space)
Dakota Gearhart (logistics)
Asa Sakrison (snacks)
Phillip Thurtle (vibes)

Measure w/ Care

Muindi Fanuel Muindi
Seattle

Alternatively, what if problems of measurement do not revolve around the resolving power of our measuring instruments and data processing tools but, instead, revolve around the "indeterminacy" of the realities that we attempt to measure? What if the choices that we make regarding what to measure, when and where to measure, and how precisely to measure are responsible for prematurely or belatedly resolving outcomes in favorable or unfavorable ways?

This talk takes up the proposition that many seemingly complicated problems of measurement stem from the fact that no truly objective measures are possible whenever and wherever incomplete formal systems collide with indeterminate material realities. Such problematic collisions occur between the openness of formal systems and material realities to chance and creativity, are not at all rare: they are everyday challenges that can be overcome with the aid of relatively simple social forms and social practices, provided that these forms and practices are community-specific and site-specific.

Do all problems of measurement really revolve around the "resolving power" of our measuring instruments and data processing tools? Or, in other words, can all problems of measurement really be solved by fashioning instruments capable of more precise measurements and by developing data processing tools that record, sort, filter, and match measurements with greater accuracy? Is the imperative really to feed more precise data into our machines and models in order to more accurately predict favorable and unfavorable outcomes?

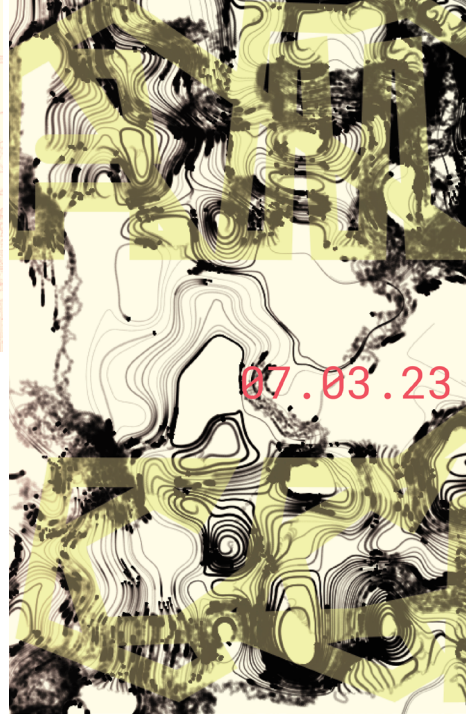
"To Get Concrete, We Have to Get Abstract": Towards Machinic Fluency in Media Arts

Garrett Laroy Johnson
Chicago

This talk proposes 'machinic fluency' as driver of new collective organizational practices in arts-research. First, I describe a machinic fluency. Second, I outline and project the activities of CCAM, the Center for Concrete and Abstract Machines, a nascent Chicago-based organization for media arts study and practice.

Machinic Fluency describes a marriage between theoretical and applied practice. The machinic references the work of Felix Guattari, who proposed the machinopoeie as a framework for generating understanding and tactical interventions in our contemporary political and social situation. The machinopoeie is made up of machinic assemblages both concrete and abstract. Drawing on Albert North Whitehead, I outline a dialectic between concrete and abstract connected to a practical, transdisciplinary fluency informed by Gilbert Simondon's essay on the technical mentality.

Elaborating practically on technical mentality, I report on the immediate and project happenings of CCAM. CCAM is an artist-run center for experimental media arts research + practice founded Summer 2023 that looks to make paths for technical and theoretical exchange with practitioners and theorists around the world. CCAM offers courses of study in technical and theory and hosts working and critique groups look forward to offering transdisciplinary collaborative and intensive workshops, as well as microwesidences.



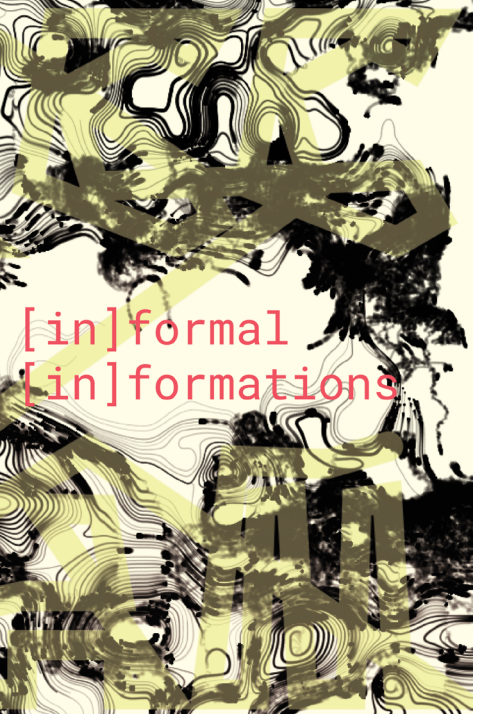
07.03.23

Concerning Concern, Creativity, and Caring for Our Practices

Asa Sakrison
Portland

Can we align to public concerns without bending our individual creative impulses? Or is bending our practice always part of the process, as responsive creatures living emergently in community? I don't have answers or guidelines for reckoning with this tension between the individual and the public, but I do have some questions and anecdotes, and would like to offer some time for reflection on the concept of care in our practices.

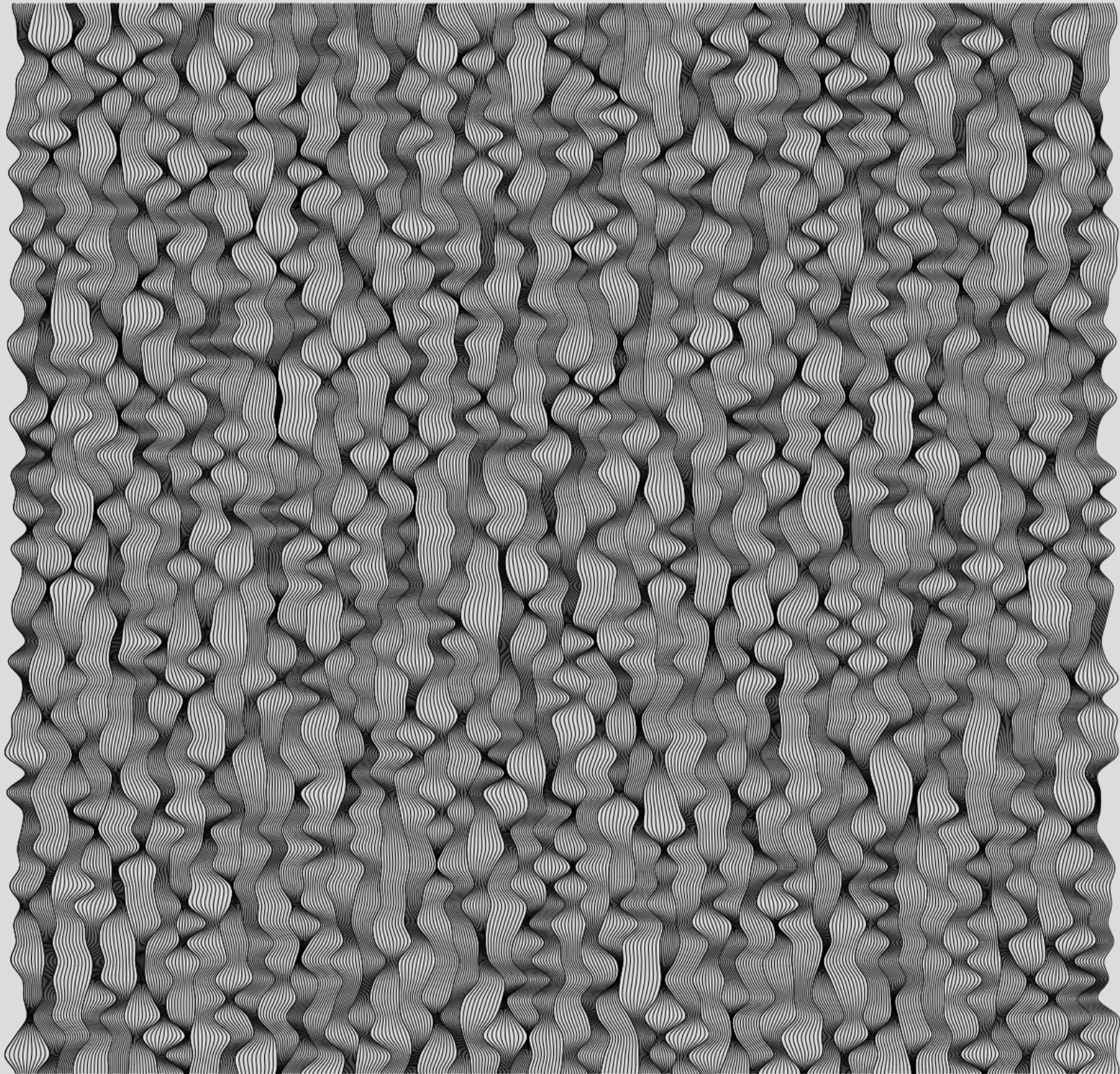
While speculative fiction and the act of imagining possible futures is important and inspiring, I find myself drawn more and more to the question of "how can I care for you in this present moment?" In my own experience, there's something about shifting the scale from the public in the future, to the person next to me in the present, that activates a certain mode of being-with that is very nourishing. From this place of being-with, how then can we imagine the future together? I don't know, but I do know there is immense power in asking "what do you need to feel supported right now?"

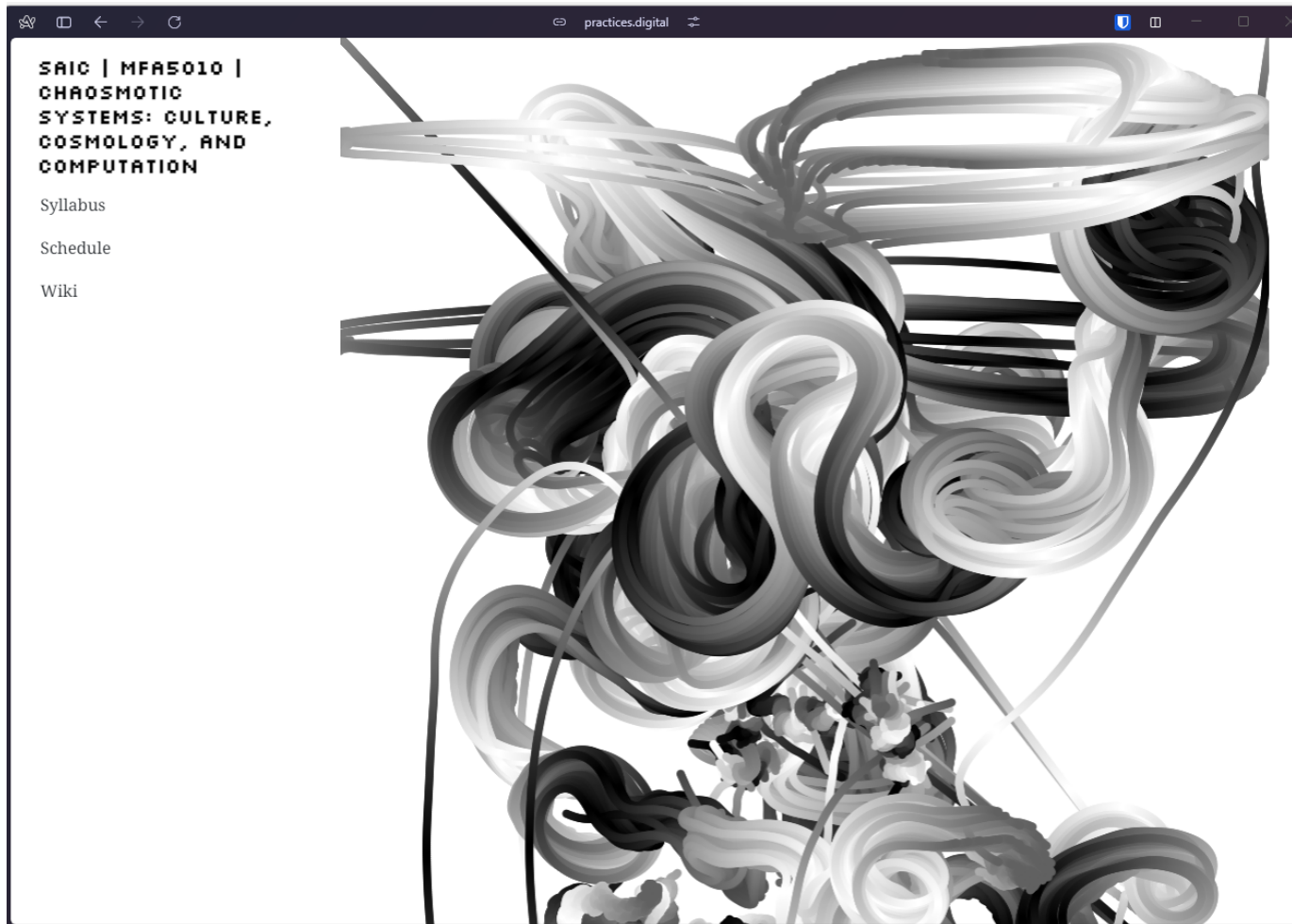


[in]formal
[in]formations

Stochastic Study. 2022.
digital image.

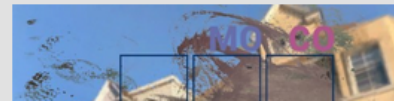
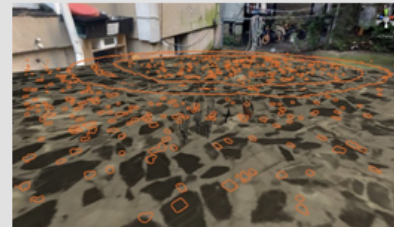
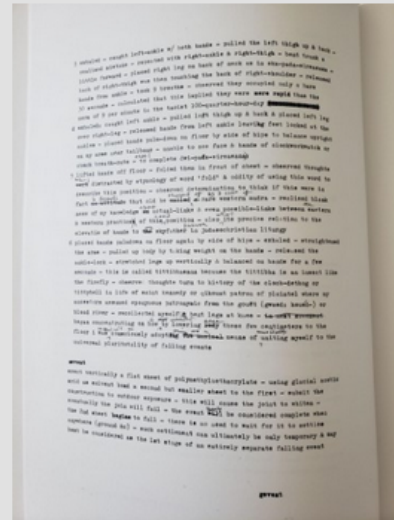
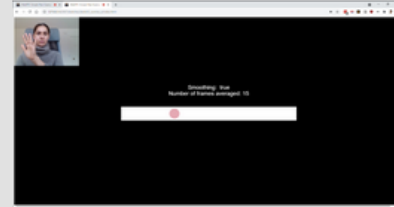
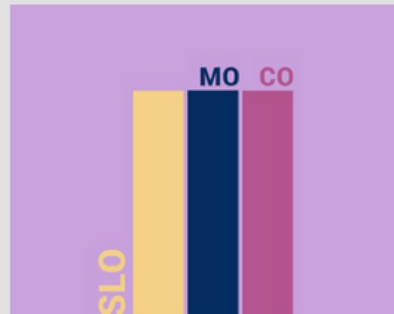
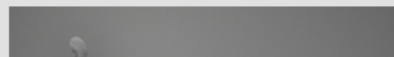
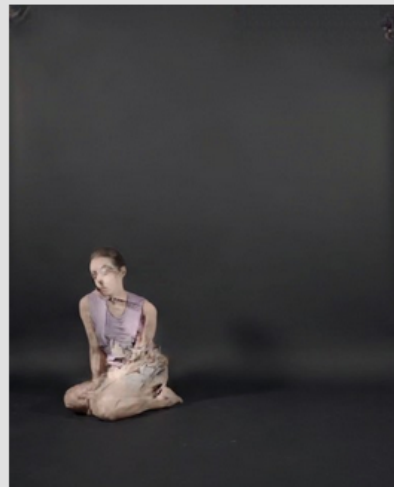
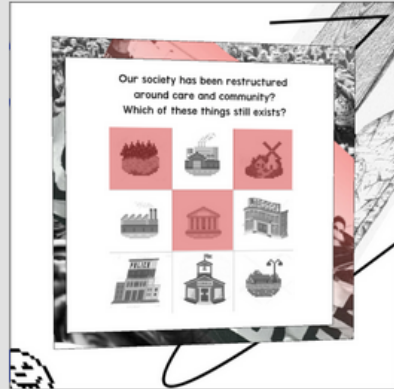
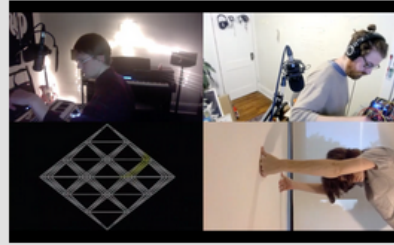
p5*js. original code [here](#).





Screengrab from **practices.digital** website. Material from various art & technology courses open to teaching commons. 2021-23.

HTML, CSS, JS, Eleventy 11ty, Bootstrap, p5*js. [Link to webpage.](#)



P
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C
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provocat



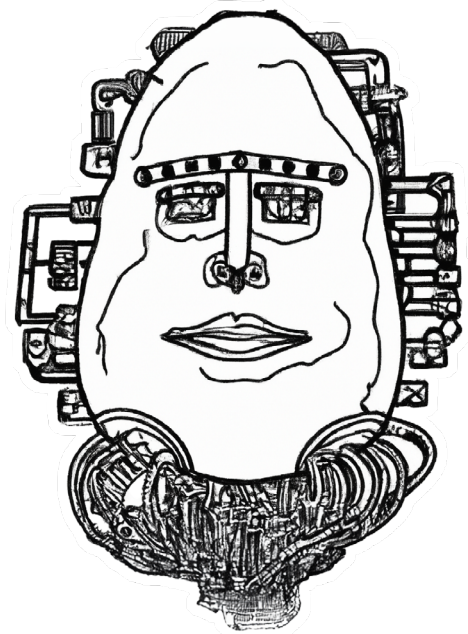
Screengrab from SLO MoCo web archive. A 9-month event and microresidency series organized for the Movement and Computing Community. Website. 2021.

In collaboration with over 50 artist groups internationally.

Eleventy 11ty, Bootstrap, Masonry. Artist created media ported from Manifold.

[Link to webpage.](#)

[Link to dissertation chapter 3.](#)



stillframe from **field report on the institute for imposters**. 2021. video piece.

voice acting and writing in collaboration with learning scientists Marina Basu, Anani Vasquez, and Tim Wells and computational linguist Xioameng Zhang and social geographer Jonathan Bratt

Premiere, Unity, Max/MSP. complete video [here](#).





Tactical Finance. 2017.
Handbuilt Ethereum cryptocurrency miner + custom Ethereum smart contracts.



Computational photography generated from movement-driven real-time atmospheric climate model. **The Gift and the Ledger** workshop. 2020. 11x17" digital print.

in collaboration with philosopher & poet Muindi Fanuel Muindi, ecologist Ylfa Muindi, and computational media artist Brandon Mechtley.

Max/MSP. Computer vision. 8.2 channel sound array. Floor projection. Read Muindi's writeup on the workshop [here](#). Read Ylfa's write up [here](#).

Still image from performance with Lanterns digital-kinetic interactive sound and light system. Captured from performance at Goldsmiths, London. June 2017.

in collaboration with choreographer/dancer Britta Joy Peterson, lighting designer Evan C. Anderson.

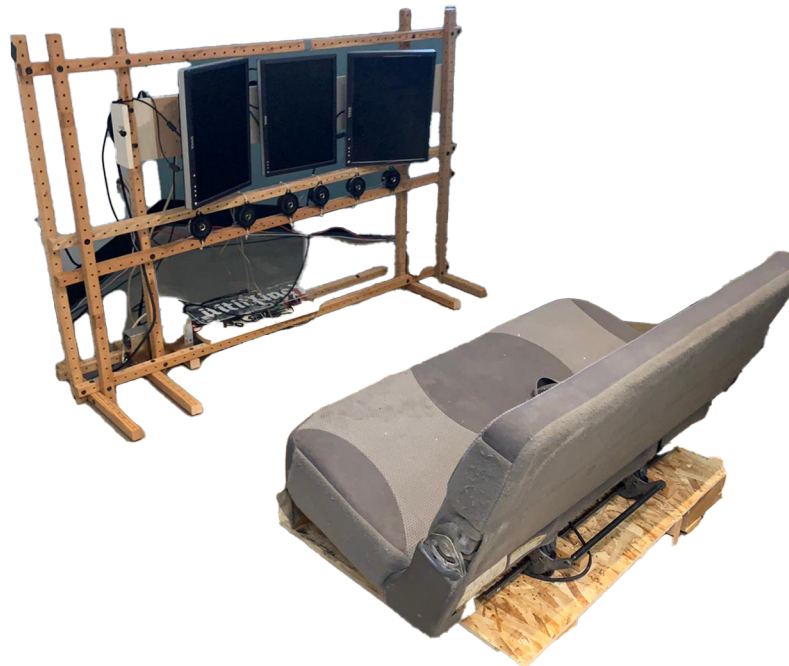
Max/MSP. 6 GameTrak controllers. 6 DMX dimmer boxers. 6 Arduinos. Ethernet infrastructure. 16.2 channel responsive sound. 36 LED filaments. Solo performance [here](#) and group rehearsals [here](#).



stillframe from documentation for **heat and noise [renao]**. interactive light and immersive-sound installation. 2019.

in collaboration with cultural geographer / sinologist Jonathan Bratt and computational media artist Brandon Mechtley

Max/MSP. Computer vision. 8.2 channel sound array. 4x4 lighting array and computationally controlled DMX light programming system. complete video [here](#). Link to MOCO publication [here](#).



Video, sound, and haptic installation.
Idiotic Resonances: Uncanny Valley of the Sun. 2019.

in collaboration with computational media artist Brandon Mechtley.

Max/MSP. Field recordings FM car radios.
2 Raspberry Pi microcomputers. Amplifier and 6 channel sound. 3 discarded monitors.
Used van seat fitted with bass haptic motors and custom floor mount. Gridbeam rapid prototyping wood.

Full video & audio channels [here](#).
Dissertation chapter on resonances, radio, and anxiety [here](#).



stillframe documentation for interactive sound and light dance piece
Sentient. residency at St. Cyprian's, SF. 2016

in collaboration with choreographer/dancer Britta Joy Peterson and lighting
designer Evan C. Anderson.

filament lighting arrays. mylar. DMX dimmers. wearable motion sensors. MIDI
controlled church organ. Max/MSP.





stillframe from documentation for **Visible Sketch V.4.** dance piece with interactive sound. 2016.

in collaboration with choreographer Britta Joy Peterson.

Max/MSP. Computer vision. 2 Kinect cameras. 4 channel sound array.

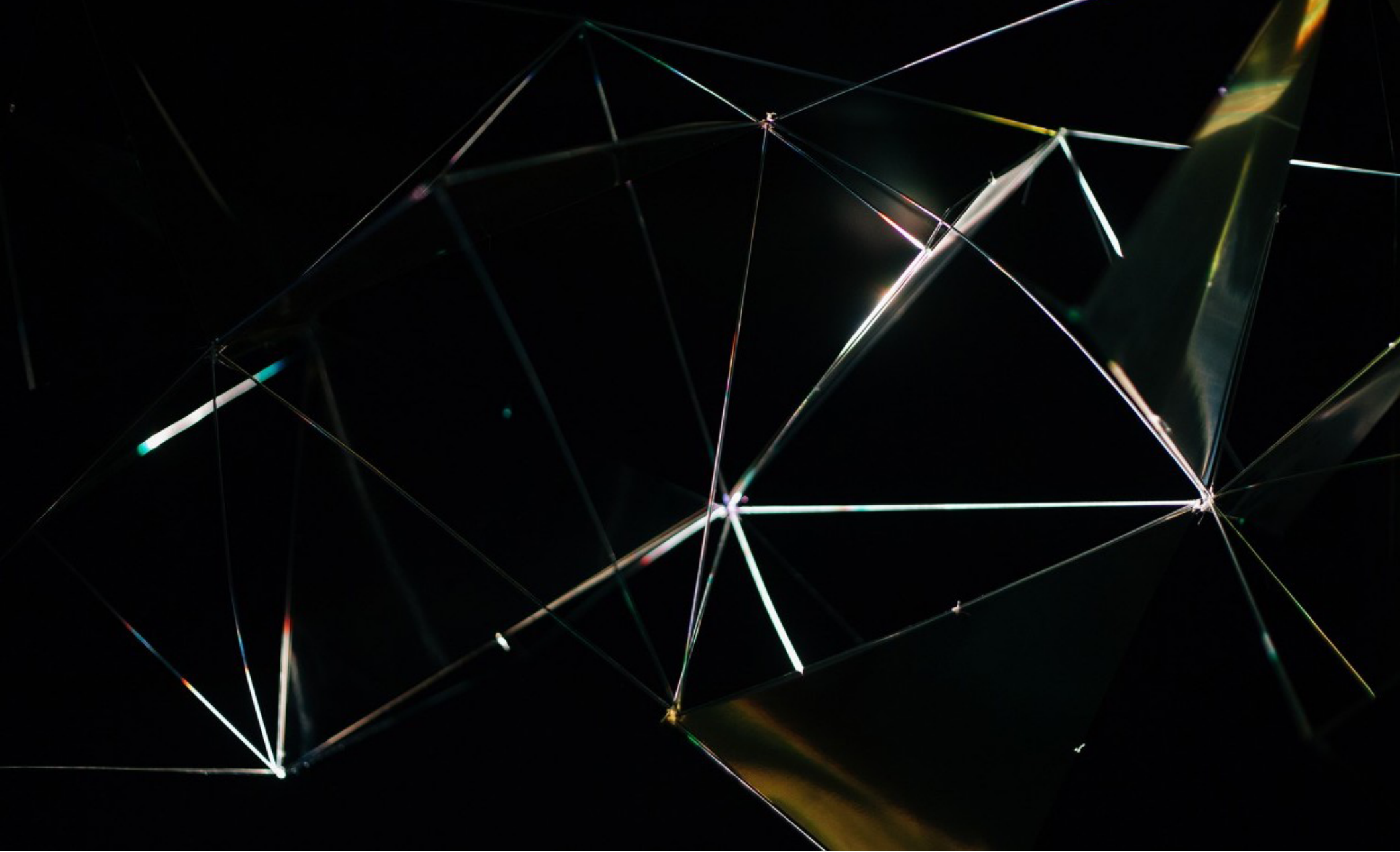
complete video document [here](#).



Screengrab from **TOPO** twitter bot. Photograph from opening of public art installation at Scottsdale Fashion Square. 2016.

in collaboration with designers and fabricators Matthew Briggs and Luke Kautz.

Twitter Bot (Markov model) trained on tweets from Scottsdale area. Pan-Tilt DMX lights. Mylar. LED Lighting. CNC milled foam.



stillframe from documentation for **Celestial Variations v2**. sculptural installation. 2015.

in collaboration with designers and fabricators Matthew Briggs and Muharrem Yildirim.

metal dowels. reflective cardstock. DMX controlled spots. 8-channel generative audio. Max/MSP.

Publicity photo for **LORKAS: Laptop Orchestra of Arizona State**. multimedia sound, video ensemble w. nomadic responsive lighting structures. 2015.

Member from 2011-2013, director 2013-2015. In collaboration with dozens of artists, technologists, composers, musicians, dancers, designers and fabricators.

Laptops, 8-channel spatialized sound, MIDI controllers, floor projection, wooden dowels, mounted lights, rope, MaxMSP, ChuckK, SuperCollider.

Archived website [here](#).

Fox News spot [here](#).

Performance w. nomadic responsive lighting structures [here](#).



Album cover for **LORKAS: nodes**. 2015.

Producer, performer, composer, director in collaboration with 12 other musicians and artists.

cassette.

Bandcamp [here](#).

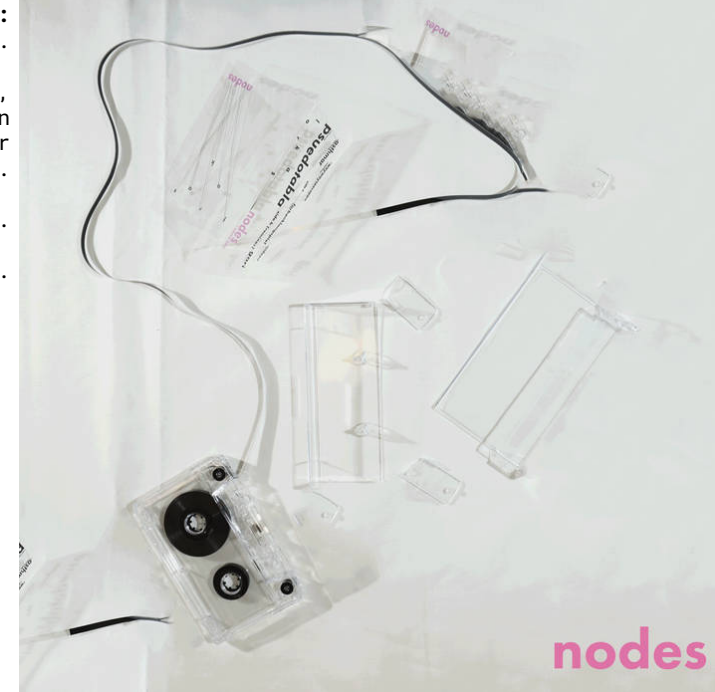


Photo of **GULCH/BUBO split**. 2015.

in Gulch: live electronics, laptop processing.

in Bubo: Cello, laptop processing.

cassette.

Bandcamp [here](#).

