

Multimedia as Art

A Selection of History and Current Trends

by Chad Udell

The birth of multimedia: Early 20th century

- ✦ A simple definition:
 - ✦ multimedia – Of or relating to the combined use of several media
- ✦ The Origin:
 - ✦ The Dadaists created the first interactive art, the first blending of mediums into a new form of art, and the among the first to turn what was typically seen as non-art into art. Ready-Mades and Kinetic Art.
- ✦ Lots more info at Siggraph.org

Pre-digital Multimedia: 30's – 60's

- ✦ Film and Music Performers add complementary media to their performances
- ✦ Artists like Warhol expand into media delivery and avant-garde filmmaking, installations, etc.

Advent of the computer age: 60's–80's

- Plotters and Punchcard based art
- 1968 – The First Bitmap Graphics were produced
- In the late 70's the home computer was born.
- The early community, while primarily geeks and programmers did have an arty side.
- Evidence: Birth of the GUI
- Examples:
 - Charles Csuri: http://www.csuri.com/digital-art/art-objects-0_1.php
 - John Whitney: <http://www.siggraph.org/artdesign/profile/whitney/whitney.html>

Computer Graphics Spreads: 80's – 90's

- ✦ Photoshop, After Effects (Originally COSA's Egg - Company of Science and Art), and Hypercard
 - ✦ HyperCard: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HyperCard>
- ✦ Birth of Postscript / Vector art
- ✦ Algorithmic art/Generative Art outside of the lab/super computer
- ✦ 3D Graphics Cards
- ✦ The Demo Scene - <http://scene.org>
- ✦ VJs and Club Graphics

Computer Graphics Grows up and Goes online: Early to Late 90's

✦ Director/Shockwave

- ✦ Easy integration with hardware, used for CDs and Installations - Physical Computing
- ✦ Had a timeline and a metaphor understood by creative people - Stage, Cast, Behaviors

✦ FutureSplash

- ✦ Flash!
 - ✦ Light vector animation
 - ✦ Easy, inexpensive
 - ✦ Flash 5 brought a real scripting language and dot syntax. Hardcore art was possible.

Early Web Art: 1999–2003

- ✦ Joshua Davis
 - ✦ praystation.com - archived at <http://www.joshuadavis.com/gallery/>
 - ✦ once-upon-a-forest - <http://www.once-upon-a-forest.com/>
- ✦ RadioHead's Hypertext experiments
- ✦ Other Designers/Artists
 - ✦ Yugo P
 - ✦ Todd Purgason

Current Web Art: 2003–2007

✦ Jared Tarbell

- ✦ levitated.net

✦ Erik Natzke

- ✦ jot.natzke.com

✦ Dr. Woofoo

- ✦ <http://www.drwoohoo.com/>

✦ Processing.org

- ✦ Flight 404 - <http://flight404.com/blog/>
- ✦ setpixel.com

✦ WWW - <http://vvvv.org/tiki-index.php>

- ✦ Marius Watz - Unlekker.net

Basics in Current Generative Art

✦ Common Concepts

- ✦ Symmetry
- ✦ Multiplicity
- ✦ Randomness
- ✦ Complexity
- ✦ Fractals

✦ Emerging Trends

- ✦ Real-Time vs Pre-Rendered
- ✦ Learning Patterns/Modifying Algorithms
- ✦ Web connected/multi-user

Local Computer/Generative Art

- Stream.ing – <http://stream-ing.com>
- 413/491 – Spring Project – Internet Mood Ring
- Erik Natzke – Visiting in the Spring – Date TBD
- KulerCreator – <http://visualrinse.com/kulercreator>