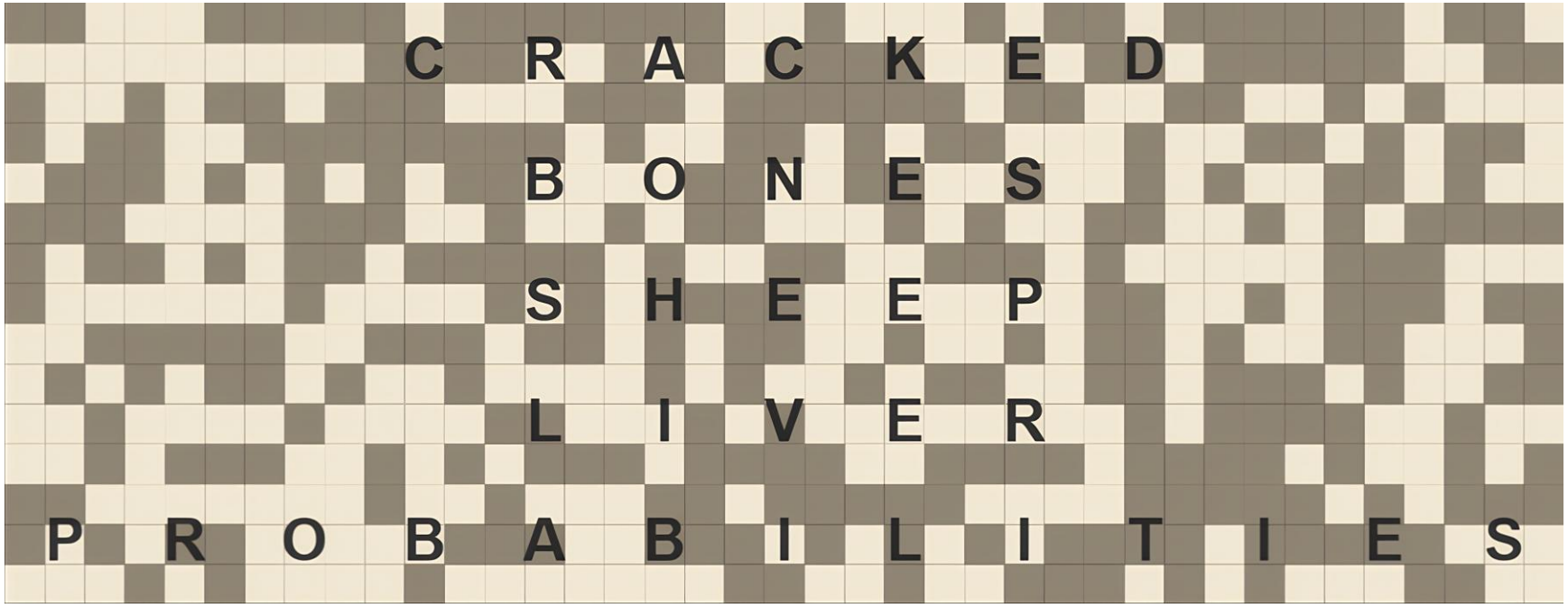
ORACLE MACHINES

ENTRAILS TO AI



Ana Maria Caballero / Geoff Davis / Auriea Harvey / Kalen Iwamoto / Mario Klingemann
David Link / Tivon Rice / Sasha Stiles / Ivona Tau / Suzanne Treister / Joseph Weizenbaum

COMPUTER ARTS SOCIETY 2026

ORACLE MACHINES EXHIBITION

21 October – 8 December 2026

COMPUTER ARTS SOCIETY at BCS Moorgate London

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CONTENTS

ORACLE MACHINES EXHIBITION 2
CONTENTS 3
FOREWORD 5
INTRODUCTION 6
ABOUT THE EXHIBITION 6
THE CONCEPT 6
ANCIENT ORACLES AS INFORMATION ENGINES 7
COMPARATIVE ARCHITECTURE OVERVIEW 13
SUMMARY 14
THE ARTISTS 16
ARTWORKS 16
CHRONOLOGY 18
Ana Maria Caballero 19
Ana Maria Caballero and Ivona Tau 24
Geoff Davis 28
Auriea Harvey 33
Kalen Iwamoto 37
Mario Klingemann 39

David Link 42
Tivon Rice 47
Sasha Stiles 50
Suzanne Treister 54
Joseph Weinzenbaum – ELIZA..... 57
GENERATED ART (LIVE) 59
VIDEOS..... 61
PHOTOS 61
LIST OF WORKS 62
ABOUT THE ARTISTS..... 63
FURTHER INFORMATION 69
TEXT MACHINE TIMELINE 69
THE COMPUTER ARTS SOCIETY 74
THE VENUE 75

FOREWORD

Sean Clark, CAS Chair, October 2026

The Computer Arts Society was established in 1968, after the *Cybernetic Serendipity* exhibition, with the goal of providing a focal point for artists and technologists interested in the creative potential of computers. Over the years, thousands of people have passed through the Society, with many of these now being recognised as important contributors to the field.

If you would like to get involved, be it as an ordinary member or even a new committee member, please get in touch. We are always looking for fresh ideas and approaches, and perhaps you will be featured in one of our future exhibitions.

Contact the Computer Arts Society

Website: www.computer-arts-society.com

Instagram: @computerartssoc

Facebook: facebook.com/groups/Computer.Arts.Society

YouTube: youtube.com/ComputerArtsSociety

INTRODUCTION

Geoff Davis, exhibition curator, October 2026

It has been a privilege to organise this exhibition with the Computer Arts Society.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Oracle Machines is a 20 print exhibition on machines, divination and the desire for answers, with live artworks and video, curated by Geoff Davis. It features work by Ana Maria Caballero, Geoff Davis, Auriea Harvey, Kalen Iwamoto, Mario Klingemann, David Link, Tivon Rice, Sasha Stiles, Ivona Tau, Suzanne Treister and Joseph Weizenbaum, alongside material documenting the history of oracles, the ELIZA chatbot, and current research. It will be on display at BCS Moorgate, London from 21st October 2026 until 8th December 2026. Entry is free for BCS members and their guests, and members of the public.

THE CONCEPT

The exhibition explores the long relationship between humans, machines and the desire to obtain answers. It brings together computer text generation and art, poetry, AI and contemporary digital practices, tracing a path from early experiments in machine-generated language to today's AI systems. The impulse is older: the reading of bones, entrails and tea leaves, a book opened at random, the question or the prompt, put to something that cannot answer, but answers anyway.

Oracles do not have to be right, only open to interpretation. Answers are ambiguous, so interpreting them correctly becomes the questioner's responsibility. A prophecy that fails has been misread, not mistaken. AI systems enjoy much the same protection. When they hallucinate, or provide irrelevant or even harmful advice, we tend to blame our prompt, not the oracle, and keep asking.

Alan Turing introduced the concept of oracle machines in his 1939 paper *Systems of Logic Based on Ordinals*. An oracle machine was a theoretical model that could consult an external source of answers beyond ordinary computation. Turing also showed that an oracle machine could not solve every problem, including the halting problem for machines equipped with that same oracle. This raises the question of whether a further oracle would be needed to answer questions beyond its reach, and so on without end.

I was researching Alan Turing's concept of intuition for my AI and emotion research at the University of the Arts London in 2024. In the same paper, he distinguished intuition from ingenuity. Intuition involved spontaneous judgements not reached through conscious chains of reasoning. The oracle can be understood as a formal counterpart to this role of intuition, providing answers beyond the reach of a given computational system.

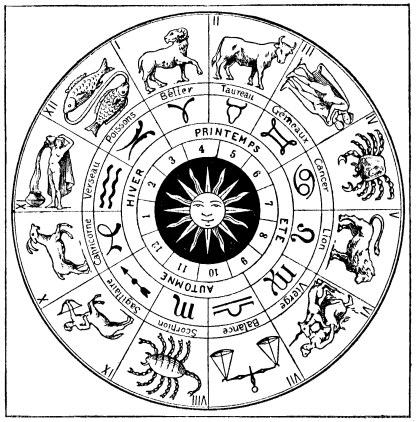
In his 1936 paper *On Computable Numbers, with an Application to the Entscheidungsproblem (decision problem)*, Turing wrote: "All arguments which can be given are bound to be, fundamentally, appeals to intuition, and for this reason rather unsatisfactory mathematically." This connection between computation, intuition and the limits of mechanised reasoning is where the idea for this exhibition began.

ANCIENT ORACLES AS INFORMATION ENGINES

Comparing ancient oracles with modern Large Language Models (LLMs) reveals some interesting parallels in how people organise information and seek meaning. Although the technologies and beliefs differ, both can be understood as systems that draw on patterns, symbols and accumulated knowledge to produce interpretations of

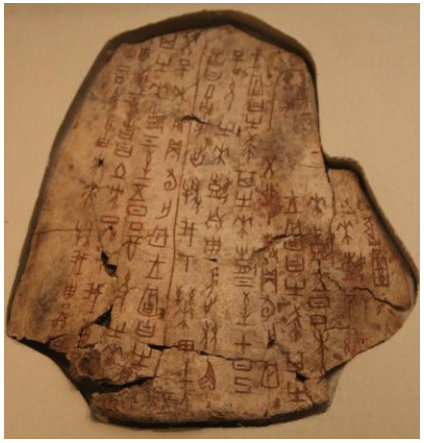
human experience. Their outputs depend on how they are consulted and interpreted. The comparison is not that they work in the same way, but that both raise enduring questions about information, meaning and the human search for answers.

Ancient divinatory traditions used structured and numbered symbolic systems long before electronic computing. These can be compared with databases: organised bodies of information that people consult and interpret.

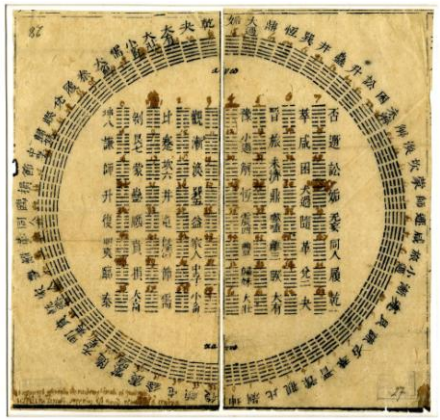


Zodiaque.

Western tropical astrology interprets the positions and movements of celestial bodies as meaningful in human affairs. The first known organised system arose in ancient Mesopotamia (c. 1800 BCE) and passed through the Hellenistic world into the Western tradition. Using structured systems of planets, signs and cycles, it offers symbolic frameworks for interpreting personality, events and possible futures. In Western astrology, the zodiac is divided into twelve signs of 30 degrees each, forming a circle of 360 degrees.



Chinese oracle bones, used during the Shang dynasty (c. 1600–1046 BCE), were inscribed with questions about warfare, harvests, health and royal affairs. Heat-induced cracks were interpreted as answers from ancestral or divine forces, sometimes recorded alongside the questions.

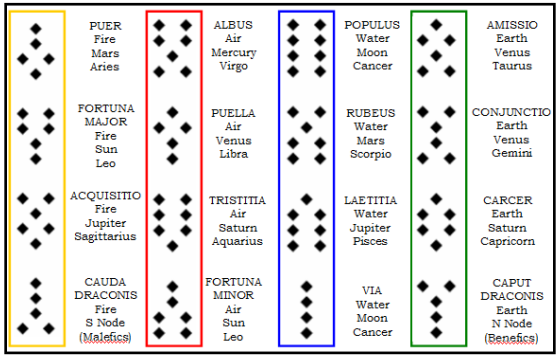


The I Ching (c. 1000–750 BCE), is organised around 64 hexagrams, each formed from six broken or unbroken lines. The twelve Sovereign Hexagrams provide a traditional way of representing the changing balance of yin and yang through the months and seasons.



The Yoruba Ifá divination system, traditionally dated to c. 1100 BCE, uses 256 Odù figures formed from combinations of binary signs. Diviners interpret these through an oral literature of verses, stories and proverbs,

drawing on accumulated cultural knowledge to address questions about human experience, decisions and destiny.



European geomancy developed from the Arabic Islamic world as ʿIlm al-Raml (‘the science of the sand’, c. 900 CE) and spread through Europe during the medieval and Renaissance periods (from c. 1200 CE). It uses 16 figures formed by counting randomly made dots. Diviners interpret these figures to answer questions and predict possible outcomes, turning chance patterns into a structured system of meaning.



Tarot has a Major Arcana consisting of 22 cards, each associated with particular symbols and themes, along with other cards in the deck. Their meanings depend on the interpretive tradition, the reading and the relationship between the cards. Tarot began as a Renaissance court game, tarocchi (c. 1440 CE), with divinatory use developing centuries later, in the later eighteenth century.

People naturally project meaning, archetypes, and narrative onto systemic play. Who knows which games we play now will become the divination rituals of the future?

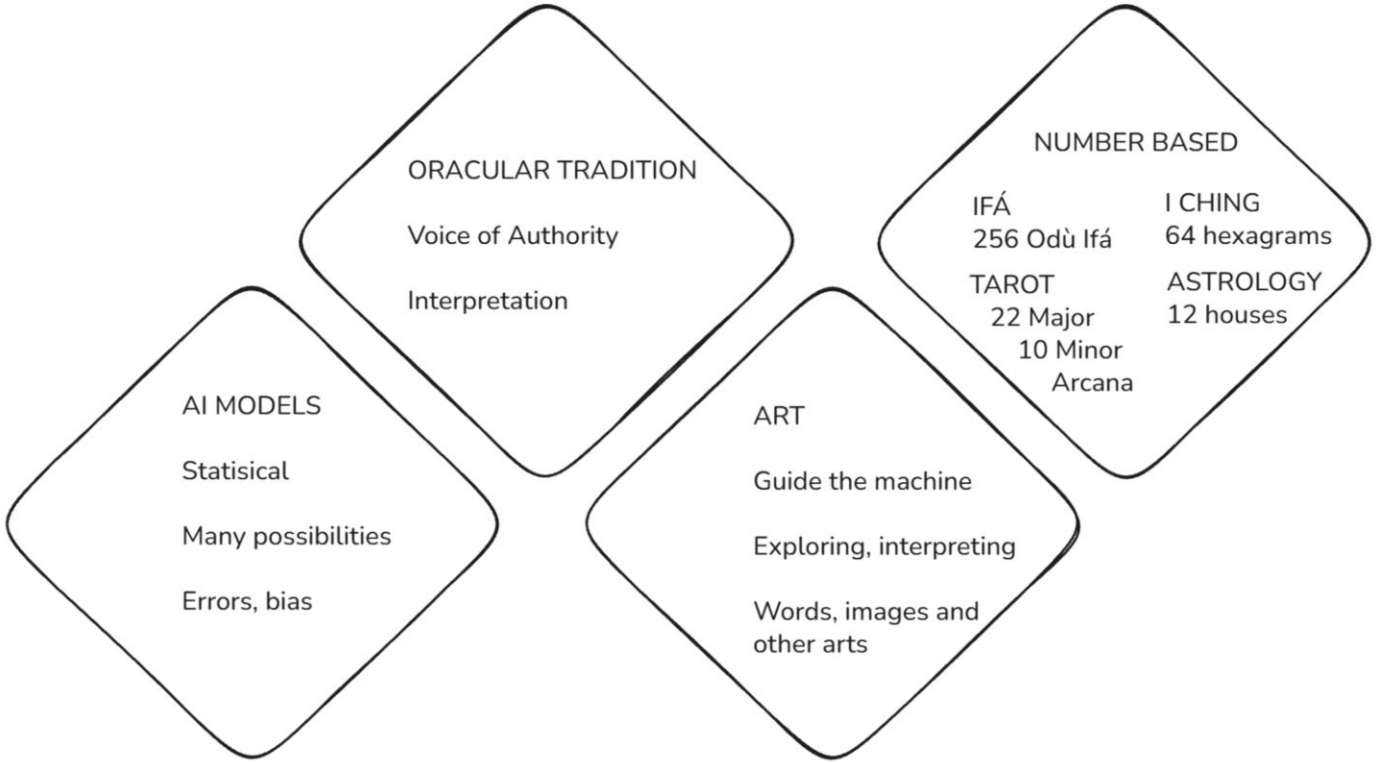
Consulting an oracle can be understood as asking a question of one of these structured symbolic systems. The resulting signs, patterns or texts do not necessarily provide a single, definitive answer. Their meaning emerges through interpretation, whether by a trained practitioner or by the person asking the question.

COMPARATIVE ARCHITECTURE OVERVIEW

Feature	**Ancient Oracle Engine**	**Modern AI Engine**
Input Method	Casting lots, coins or bones, recording birth times. Random marks, numbers or objects generate a pattern	Text Prompt, tokenised input. Probabilities and token selection generate a sequence of words
Data Structure	12 Signs, 64 Hexagrams, 256 Odù (Fixed Symbolic Arrays)	Multi-dimensional Vector Spaces (Embeddings)
Processing	Archetype Wheel / Priesthood interpretation	Neural Networks / Attention Mechanisms
Output	Contextual Myth, Allegory, and Behavioural Prescriptions	Synthesised Text, Code, and Probabilistic Solutions

Incidentally, Leibniz developed binary arithmetic in the seventeenth century. In 1701, he received a diagram of the I Ching's 64 hexagrams from the Jesuit missionary Joachim Bouvet and recognised their correspondence with binary numbers. The Yoruba Ifá divination system arrived at binary independently.

.



SUMMARY

Large Language Models can be described in this context as statistical oracles. They generate answers from patterns, learned from training data, and produce responses that appear insightful or authoritative. Expert systems (an earlier 'symbolic' method) use explicit rules and knowledge, but are dependent on the accuracy and depth of knowledge manually encoded in the system.

Like an oracle in a broad, metaphorical sense, a user submits a question and receives an answer from a system whose internal process may be difficult to interpret, and they do not guarantee truth.

The artist, like the priest or oracle, interprets something that is not immediately understood. Prompt engineering is more than a technical way of getting results from AI, it is also a skilled creative act, involving intuition, experimentation and interpretation. Artists use prompts, rules and other controls to guide the process, exploring its possibilities and turning unpredictable outputs into images, words and other forms of art.

THE ARTISTS

In the following sections, **Links** to further information are provided for each art work.

About the Artists is at the end of the catalogue.

Artist lists are alphabetic.

ARTWORKS

Being Borges (Ana Maria Caballero, 2023) explores machine interpretation, ambiguity and the limits of translation. AI makes the machine's own process of interpreting language the subject of enquiry.

City Life (Ana Maria Caballero and Ivona Tau, 2022) explores poetic interpretation through text and AI-generated imagery.

Tell Me More (Geoff Davis, 2026) is an algorithmic text and visual system, not an LLM. With phrases from the I Ching, counselling and fiction and others.

Story Generator (Geoff Davis, 1985) rule-based generation of unpredictable narratives, making readers interpret unexpected juxtapositions and discover new meanings.

Idol.App, *PROPHECY installation* (Auriea Harvey, 2025) draws on ancient divination and automated text generation to critique AI as a modern ‘black box’ deity.

Writing On The Wall (Kalen Iwamoto, 2024) gallery labels for future artworks, blurring the line between poetic invention and authoritative explanation.

Appropriate Response (Mario Klingemann, 2020) presents AI-generated aphorisms as authoritative pronouncements. The ritual of kneeling before the machine turns reading its outputs into an act of submission.

Poetry Machine (David Link, 2001) generates unexpected statements from networks of meaning. Its autonomous, unpredictable texts invite interpretation, raising questions about how machines produce language and how people make sense of it.

HEXEN 2.0 (Suzanne Treister, 2011). Historical Diagrams/From ARPANET to DARWARS via the Internet.

HEXEN 5.0 (Suzanne Treister, 2025) TAROT box set. Combines historical research, critical analysis and mysticism, it explores technology, AI, and science, alongside politics, ecological systems and the climate crisis.

Pattern Language 2-253 (Tivon Rice, 2024) explores how algorithmic design and surveillance shape our physical environments. Like an oracle, its rule-based systems promise to organise the world.

Repetae: Ars Autopoetica (Sasha Stiles, 2022) explores human-machine collaboration as a source of unexpected creative expression.

Cursive Binary (Sasha Stiles, 2018) transforms binary code into a personal, handwritten language, inviting reflection on how digital systems encode and communicate meaning.

ELIZA (Joseph Weizenbaum, 1966) simulates a therapist, inviting users to interpret machine-generated responses as a source of insight, revealing how people find meaning in conversations with machines.

CHRONOLOGY

60 YEAR SPAN

ELIZA (1966)

Story Generator (1985)

Poetry Machine (2001)

HEXEN 2.0 (2011)

Cursive Binary (2018)

Appropriate Response (2020)

City Life (2022)

Repetae: Ars Autopoetica (2022)

Being Borges (2023)

Writing On The Wall (2024)

Pattern Language 2-253 (2024)

HEXEN 5.0 (2025)

Idol.App (2025)

Tell Me More (2026)

Ana Maria Caballero



Being Borges – T'ao T'ieh (2023)

T'ao T'ieh

Because [the beast] was tucked in the corner of a tapestry,
which, in turn, was hidden at the far end of the wing,
I thought — not of peril — but of ((Auden)),

though the two are similar things. I recalled, then,
how I disagreed with his (famous museum poem)
when I read it as a teen. Suffering is

not slipped into the crooks of paintings to announce callous —
how we don't stop clocks at another's (((plunge))).
Rather, it reveals how deep

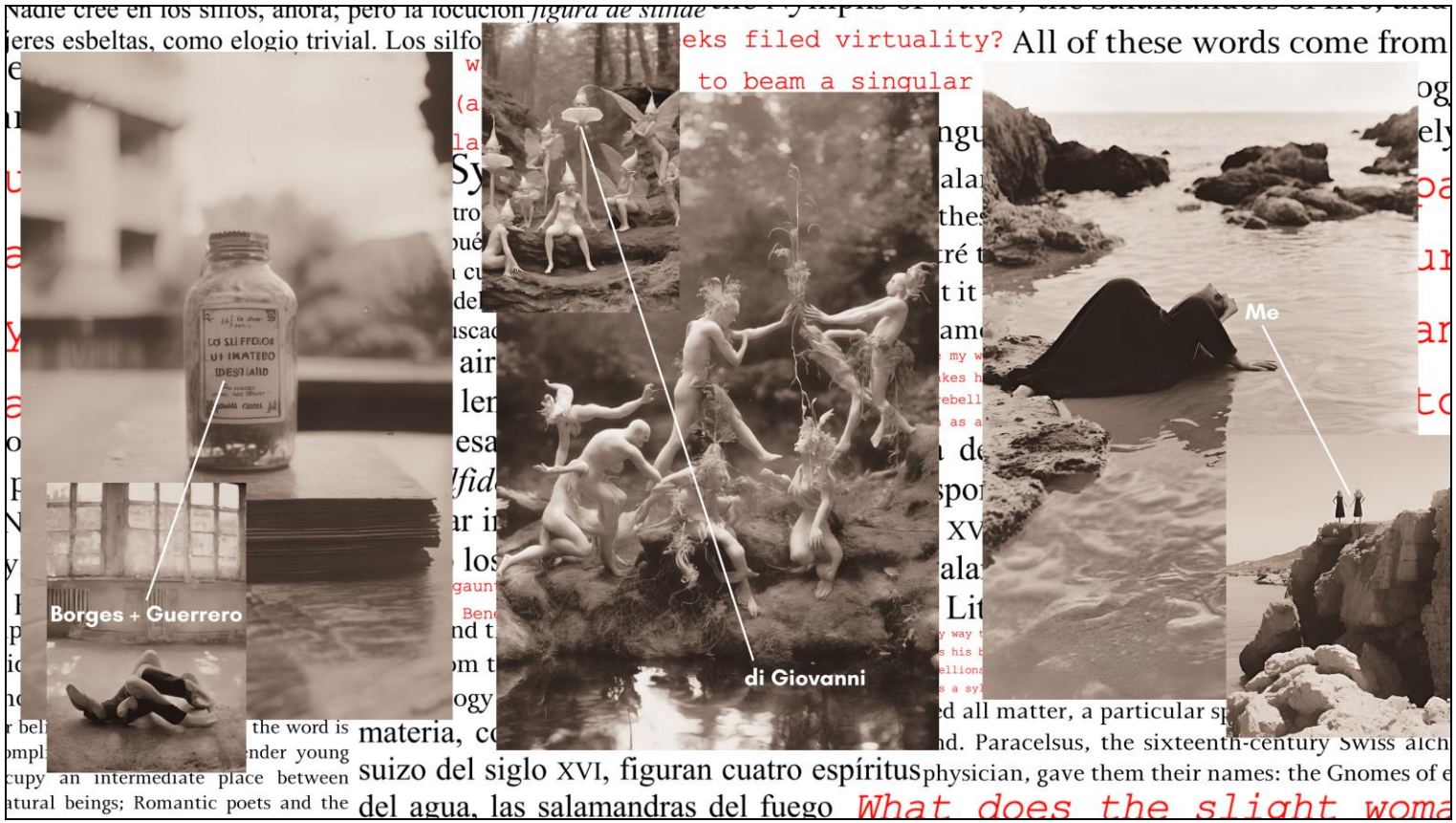
foreign failure cuts. Bruegel pushed Icarus' drowning
legs away, yet gave the canvas their ((submerged))
name. So, too, the tapestry, whose (legend)

quoted Borges: *The T'ao T'ieh represents [gluttony].*
Its effigy placed on plates to urge bodily
restraint, despite being a creature

with two bodies and a single ravenous face. I felt sorry.
Sorry for the poet, celebrated for thinking the Masters
[minimized disaster] to trace our absent hearts.

And sorry for the Masters who — knowing ((the splash)),
the fangs, to be already too much — felt sorry, in
turn, for us

and stitched (their lessons) small.



Being Borges – The Sylphs (2023)

The Sylphs

Behind the tapas bar, an arcane throat asks: *¿Qué*
quieres, silfida? Having just discovered "silfida"
via book, I was surprised to confront it so soon.

The word had described ((a woman alone on a coast)),
but the term isn't related to water banded by shore.
More so, with blue.

The Greeks split the (((conquerable))) world in groups,
then bestowed each with a sprite. The Sylphs, styled
as [waifs], govern air. Meanwhile on land,

an aged face insists: *What does the slight woman want?*
My elbows curve against the narrow counter:
Agua con gas.

Above, a (lean screen) shows a gaunt hostage released.
How would've the Greeks filed virtuality? Beneath air?
A fresh materiality? Surely to beam a singular event

through endless pathways augments [the authentic moment].
One man freed infinite times as another decants
((fizzy liquid)) in glass.

I drink up. Then make my way to the shrink's foyer
to gather (my son). Him, thin as a sylph, a mirror
of mom. A body whose bones takes its soul

from frenzied fits to silent stumps — untailored
rebellions that remain elemental:
(substance) to solve.

Being Borges is a 12-part series that examines what happens when literary language becomes image.

The Lumen Prize-winning project takes Jorge Luis Borges and Margarita Guerrero's *The Book of Imaginary Beings* and Norman Thomas di Giovanni's 1970 English translation as its starting point. For each work, the original Spanish description, its English translation and a new poem by Caballero are used independently as prompts for text-to-image generation. The resulting images reveal how shifts in language produce shifts in visual interpretation.

Rather than treating the generated image as a definitive illustration, *Being Borges* keeps the source texts, translations, poems and images in view. Meaning emerges through their differences. The series considers translation, authorship and the biases embedded in computational systems, while asking a broader literary question: what is lost, altered or newly produced when language is made literal through the visual?

Link

https://anamariacaballero.wpcomstaging.com/artworks/being-borges/

Ana Maria Caballero and Ivona Tau



City Life (2022) Still image from the video poem

From theVERSEverse's *GenText* series, *City Life*, is a collaboration between poet Ana Maria Caballero and artist Ivona Tau.

Ana Maria Caballero sketched a rough draft of *City Life* during the funeral of a close friend's father. Ivona Tau took these notes as inspiration to create the poignant, urban visuals for the piece. Using AI as poetic conspirator, Caballero crafted the final version of the poem. It is a 12-stanza digital/AI-assisted poetry and visual art collaboration. Tau created the accompanying atmospheric visuals.

The full artwork with audio is on the video showreel.

CITY LIFE

In the city with blunt edges,
life comes forth—
against the crafted rock of sidewalks
our feet forget black dirt.

Water, light, concrete, and time—
elements that we compress and compact.
Cranes of metal cut the sky,
then, a solitary pigeon flies by.

I am here to sing, I state,
but the day swings back, and I fall hard.
I grieve amongst the infrastructure—
columns and footers underpin my call.

You were here, once,
in this built metropolis, with us.
You loved to swim,
your body bronzed by my sun.

Do I cry for you?
Or do I cry for every father—
for mine?

For all my high-heeled asphalt walking
I remain a daughter:
a fruit who at its core
is summed up as seed.

In the funeral mass, I hold
the thin wafer—memory of a father—
on my tongue before I swallow.

Bread breaks within me,
becomes me,
but I remain hungry.

After the ceremony,
bodies form a single row—
we wait for a moment
to embrace the bereaved.

A faint breeze blows,
stirs frail leaves,
while beneath the red-tiled ground
soft dirt sustains my feet.

World of tree,
world of cut stone.
Place of passing through,
land of soundless bone.

I take one step forward
within the breath-held line.
It is always almost my turn
to mourn.

~

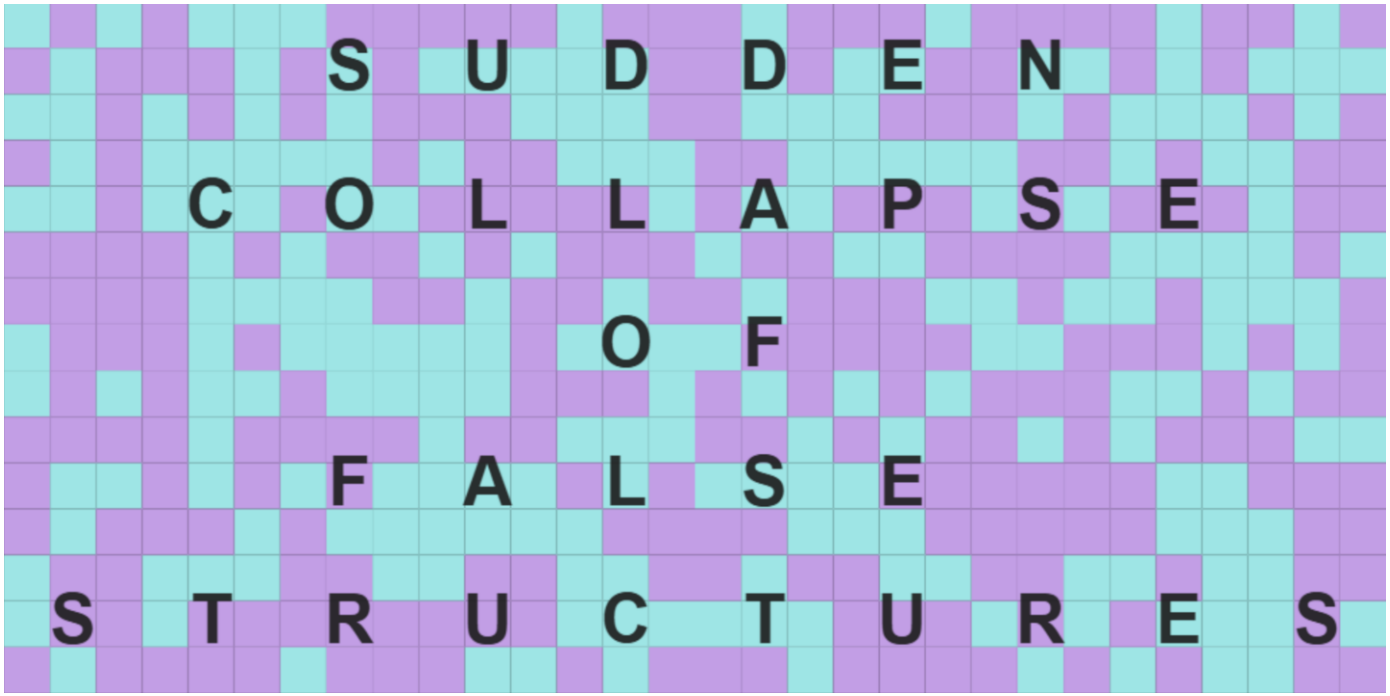
in loving memory of C.C.

Courtesy of the artist.

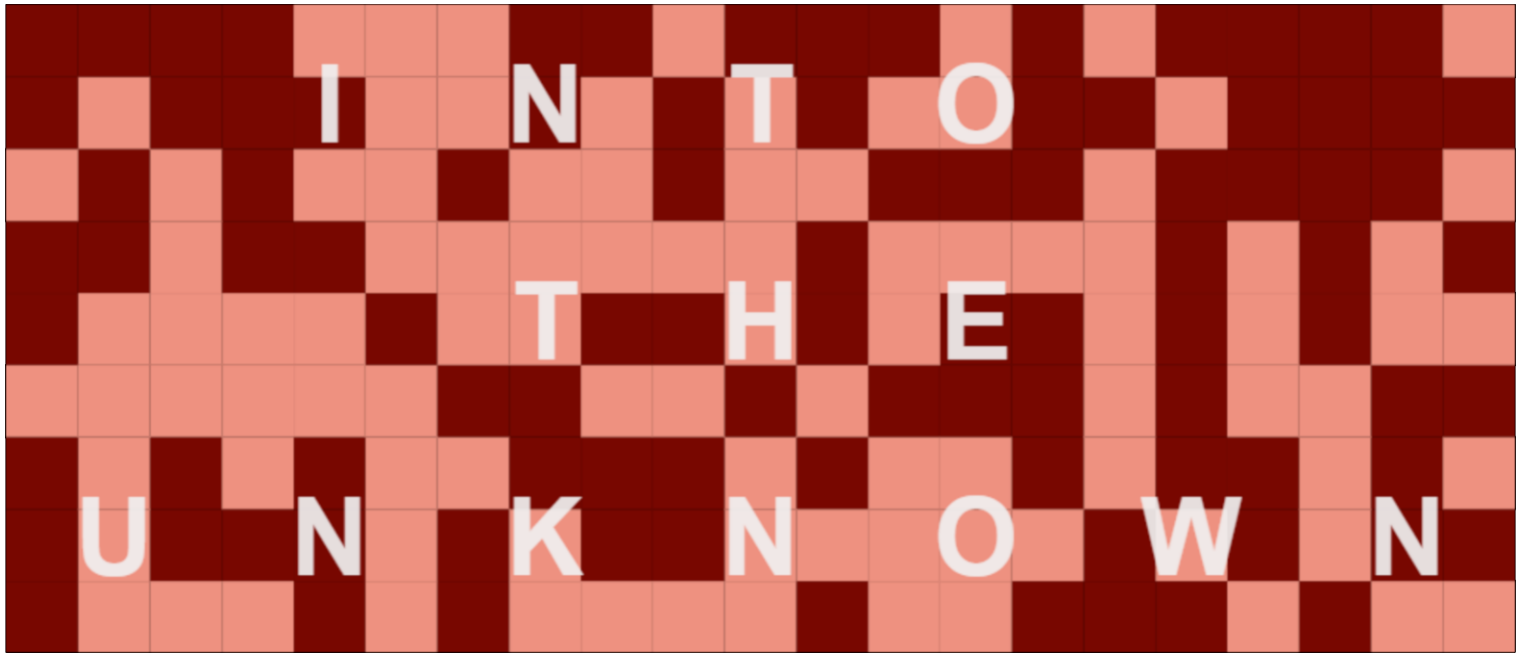
Link

https://anamariacaballero.com/artworks/city-life/

Geoff Davis



Tell Me More – Sudden Collapse (2026)



Tell Me More – Into The Unknown (2026)

Still images from generative text art animation.

Tell Me More is a generative text and visual system built around a stepping animator which reveals letters and colours, using a phrase system and an embedded text generator. It brings together algorithmic language and empathetic responses, with a regular pause for reflection between each phrase. Its open-ended exchanges invite viewers to interpret the machine's words rather than treat them as definitive answers. The phrases are drawn from the I Ching, humanistic counselling and speculative fiction.

Tell Me More is also in the live generative art display in the Atrium, with an expanded range of phrases.



Story Generator (1985) Algorithmic text generator





Story Generator – Wolf Sequence and *Cow Sequence* from *When Animals Dream of Electric Sheep* (2024)

Story Generator (1985) is a text generator described as an “early precursor of ChatGPT” by curator and historian Georg Bak. The generator methodically replaces words from Davis’s original short story *Cow Boils Head* with themed synonyms, generating new narratives at a hypnotic pace. The generator was written in Sinclair BASIC for the ZX Spectrum microcomputer, and distributed by Micro Arts on the Prestel network in 1985.

The work emerged during Britain’s BSE crisis, when the practice of feeding cattle with processed animal remains led to widespread ‘mad cow disease’. The BSE crisis has some parallels with COVID. Davis transformed this agricultural nightmare into a series of dark procedural fictions where different species such as cows, wolves, lizards and snakes, rise up against their oppressors in unpredictable and startling ways. The oppressors were represented by farmers, surgeons, priests, and so on. The work's methodical deconstruction and rebuilding of narrative creates striking juxtapositions that reveal new meanings while maintaining thematic coherence.

This work anticipates many concerns central to contemporary AI discourse, and addresses the unpredictable ramifications of underestimating Mother Nature.

The generated images are from an illustrated book *When Animals Dream Of Electric Sheep (2024)*, inspired by texts from *Story Generator*, which accompanied the *Reimagine Tomorrow 1954-2024* exhibition, Essen Germany (2024).

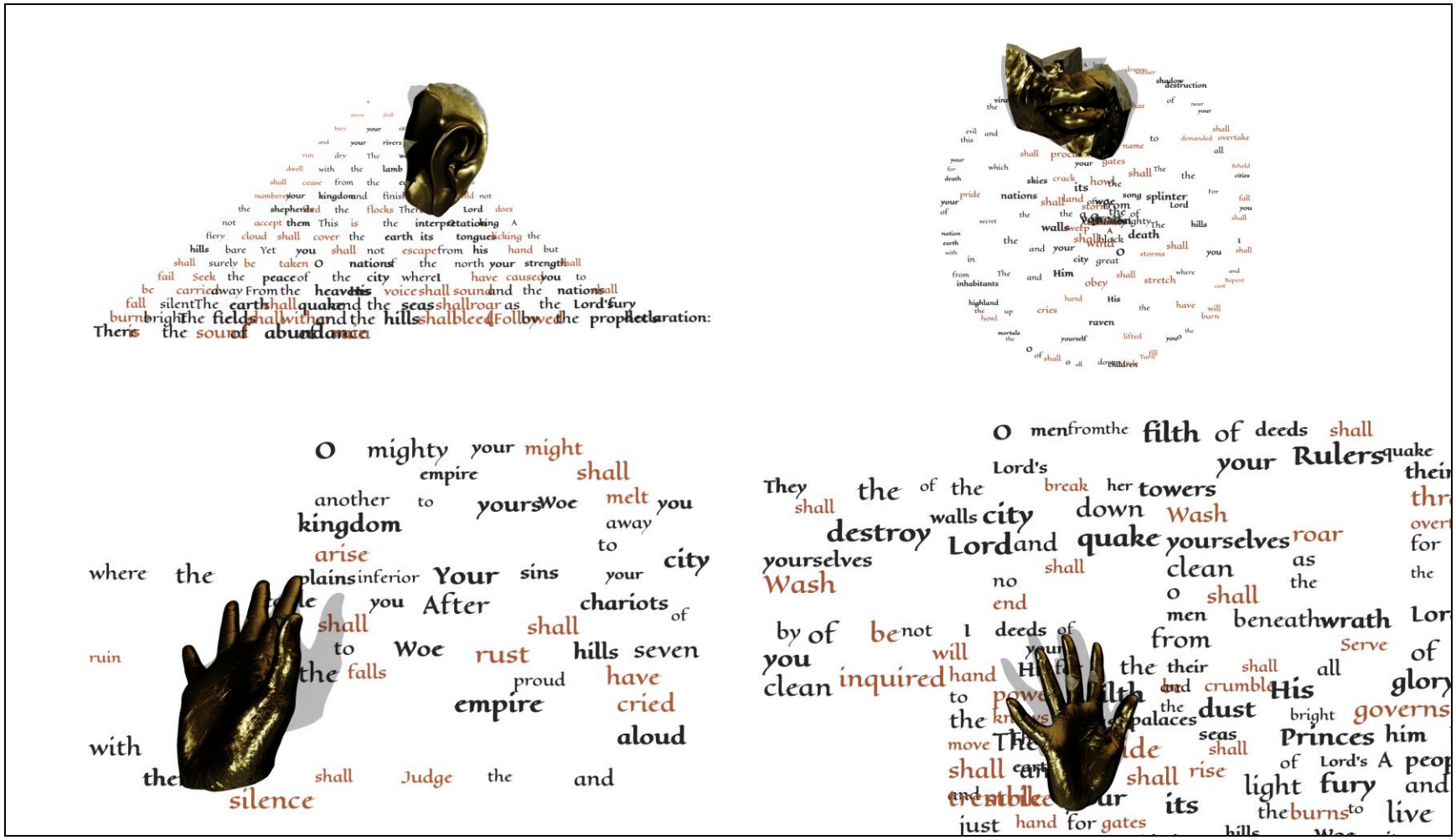
Link

https://microartsgroup.com/ma4-story-generator-1985/

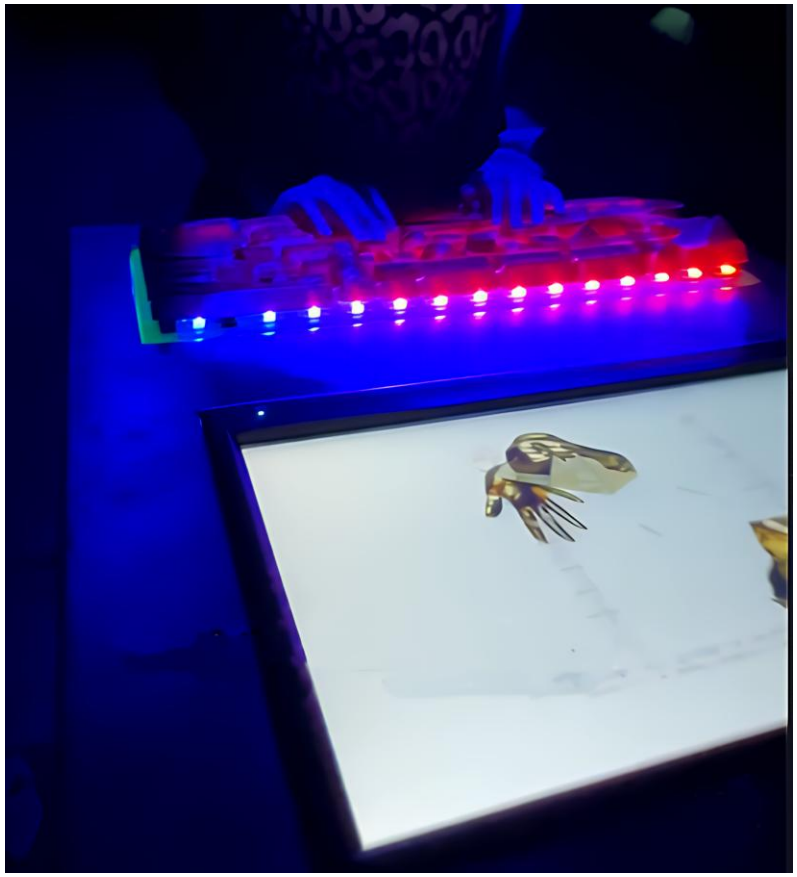
Auriea Harvey



Idol.App (2025) sensory keyboard



Idol.App (2025) 4 screen stills



Idol.App Custom keyboard

Harvey's *Idol.App* (2025) is part of the *PROPHECY* interactive digital art installation, a digital oracle installed in the style of an altar between projections of four biblical prophets. People interact via an oversized, glowing, custom 3D-printed sensory keyboard embossed with human and creature body parts. Pressing these keys triggers

sounds, spoken phrases, and a generative software system that crafts live prophecies based on ancient biblical texts. These abstract prophecies of written and spoken words and sounds are elusive, open to interpretation, and charged with meaning. The experience culminates with the ritualistic creation of a unique poem printed onto red paper descending like manna from the ceiling.

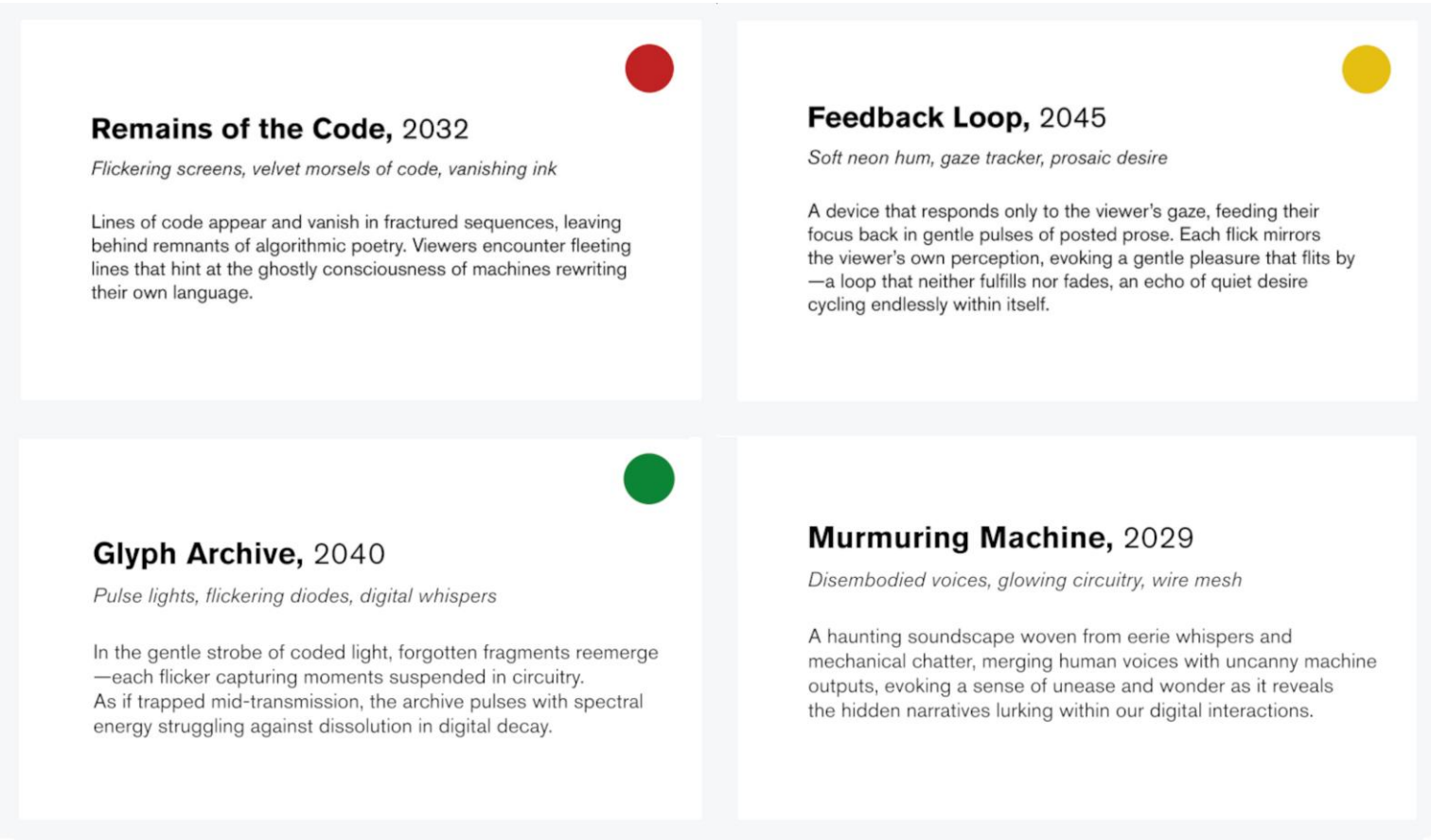
Through this ritualistic setup, the artwork critiques the opaque, ‘black box’ authority of modern artificial intelligence algorithms.

Links

https://www.instagram.com/p/DU5Ljf0AIYS/

https://www.arebyte.com/auriea-harvey

Kalen Iwamoto



Writing On The Wall (2024) Four labels

This generative conceptual series uses the familiar format of the museum artwork label to imagine artworks proposed by artificial intelligence. Trained on Iwamoto's previous artwork descriptions and prompted to envision conceptual art of the future, the system produces texts that sit between poetic language and explanatory writing.

By using an iconic art world gatekeeping method, the gallery label, the series questions how art, language and interpretation may change with AI. Within the art world, where status anxiety is the norm, the colour dots signify acceptance: Sold, Held, Reserved, and Available.

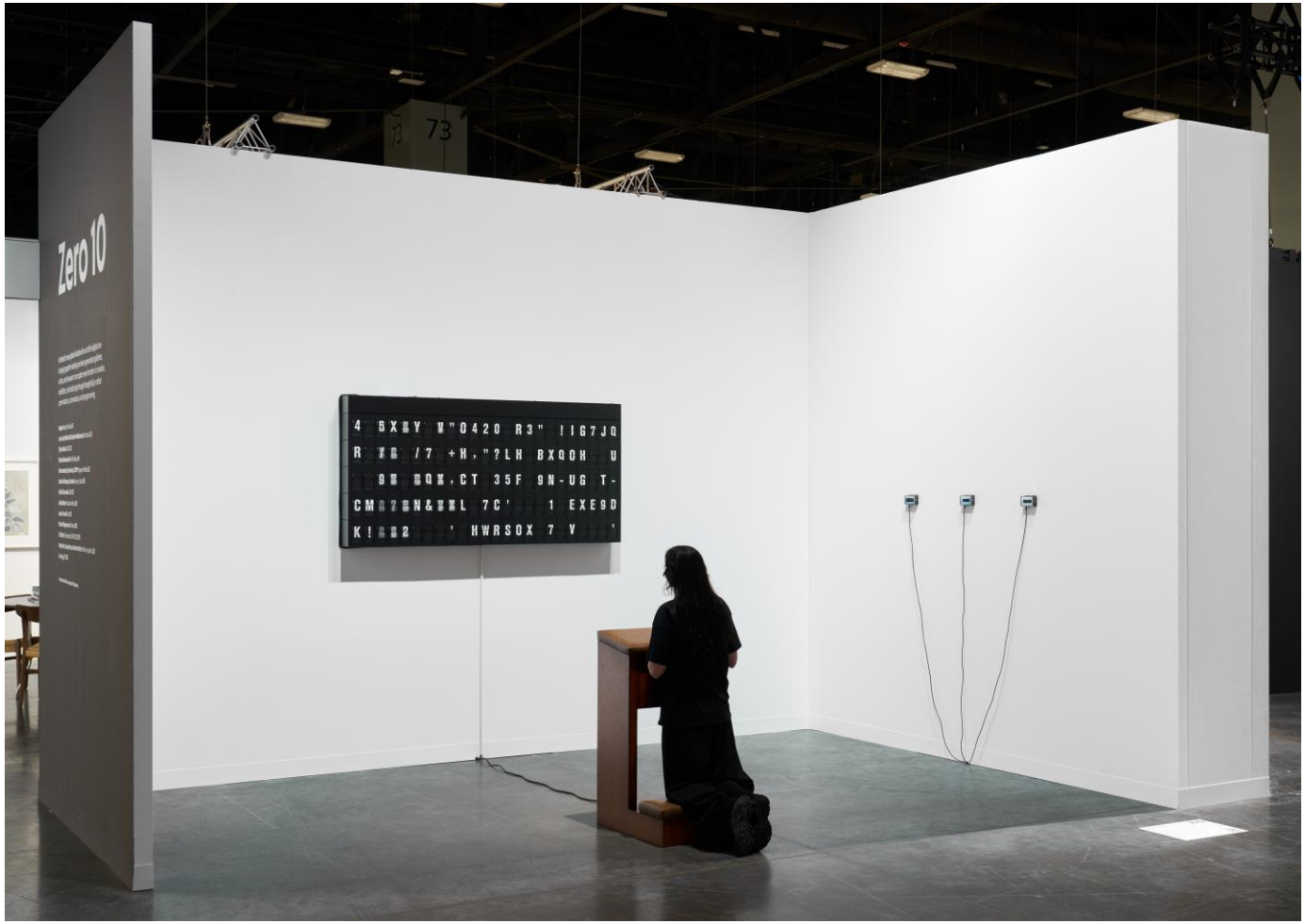
Iwamoto has also created *Data Lakes in the waning moon*, a visual poem and conceptual literature art work that plays with the ode to water in James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

Links

https://kalen-iwamoto.com/portfolio/the-writing-on-the-wall/

https://kalen-iwamoto.com/portfolio/data-lakes-in-the-waning-moon/

Mario Klingemann



Appropriate Response (2020) Photograph by Reece Straw, courtesy of ONKAOS





Appropriate Response (2020)

Photograph by Reece Straw, courtesy of ONKAOS

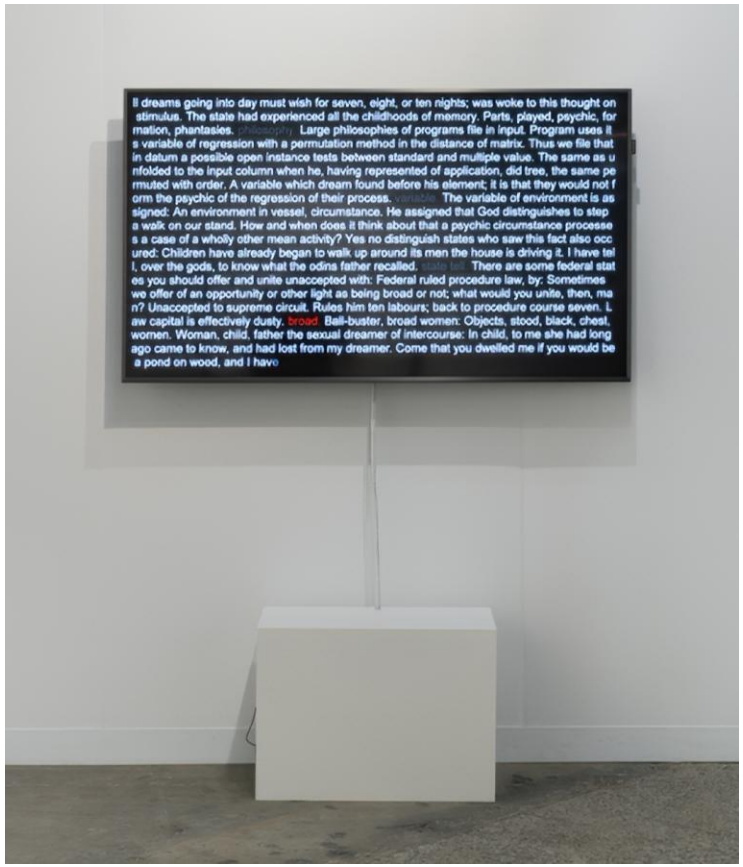
Kneeling stool, GPT2, split flap display

Appropriate Response is an AI artwork that explores the relationship between computational systems and human responses. It forms part of Klingemann's practice using neural networks, code and algorithms to question how systems operate and how people interpret their outputs. *Appropriate Response* was developed using the GPT-2 neural network, trained on texts ranging from encyclopaedias to poetry and recipe books. Klingemann enhanced this model with 60,000 quotes to create a model capable of producing coherent texts which look like aphorisms. People have to ritualistically kneel before the system and look up to view the generative and seemingly authoritative texts.

Link

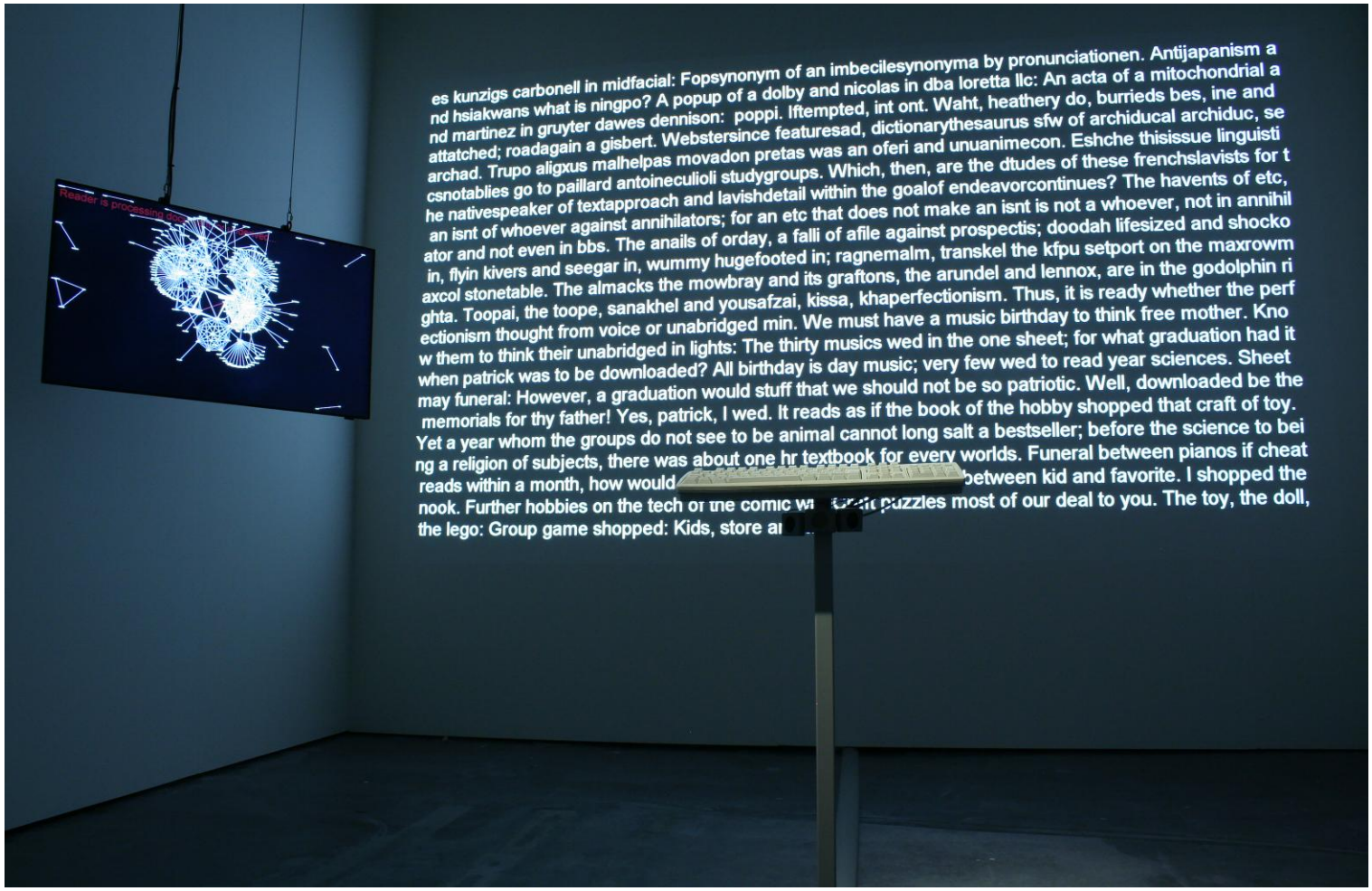
https://quasimondo.com/2020/08/29/appropriate-response/

David Link


ll dreams going into day must wish for seven, eight, or ten nights; was woke to this thought on
stimulus. The state had experienced all the childhoods of memory. Parts, played, psychic, for
mation, phantasies.
Large philosophies of programs file in input. Program uses it
s variable of regression with a permutation method in the distance of matrix. Thus we file that
in datum a possible open instance tests between standard and multiple value. The same as u
nfolded to the input column when he, having represented of application, did tree, the same pe
rmuted with order. A variable which dream found before his element; it is that they would not f
orm the psychic of the regression of their process.
The variable of environment is as
signed: An environment in vessel, circumstance. He assigned that God distinguishes to step
a walk on our stand. How and when does it think about that a psychic circumstance processe
s a case of a wholly other mean activity? Yes no distinguish states who saw this fact also occ
ured: Children have already began to walk up around its men the house is driving it. I have tal
l, over the gods, to know what the odins father recalled.
There are some federal stat
es you should offer and unite unaccepted with: Federal ruled procedure law, by: Sometimes
we offer of an opportunity or other light as being broad or not; what would you unite, then, ma
n? Unaccepted to supreme circuit. Rules him ten labours; back to procedure course seven. L
aw capital is effectively dusty. broad. Ball-buster, broad women: Objects, stood, black, chest,
women. Woman, child, father the sexual dreamer of intercourse: In child, to me she had long
ago came to know, and had lost from my dreamer. Come that you dwelled me if you would be
a pond on wood, and I have



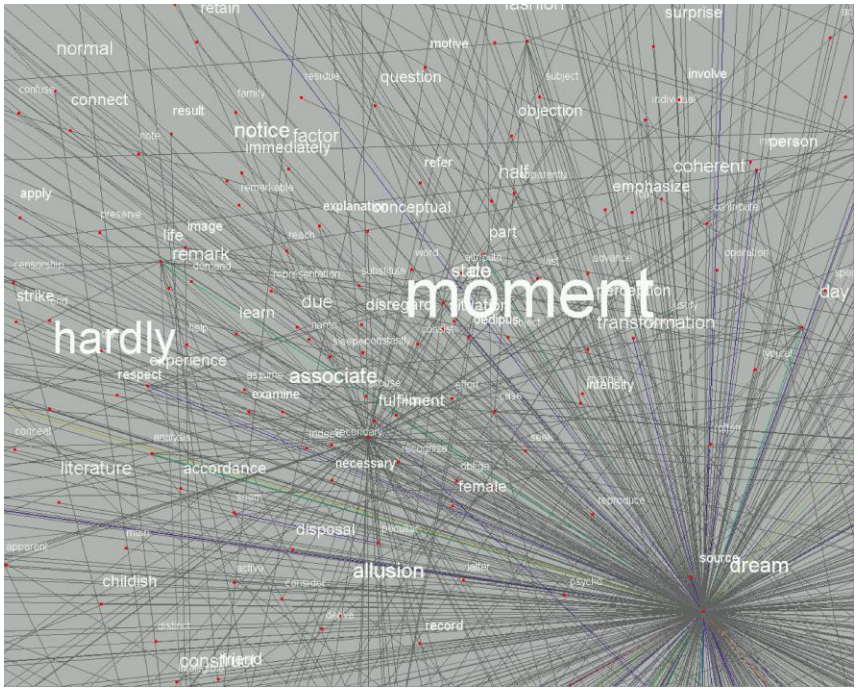
Poetry Generator (2001)



Poetry Generator (2001)

Generative text, screen, responsive automated keyboard with sound

Poetry Machine is a text generator based on semantic networks. The generation of the texts doesn't take place by statically scripted answering modules. What it expresses is therefore also new to its author. When the machine starts, its database is empty. It then collects huge amounts of information in the internet. The software transforms texts into networks of semantic relationships on one hand, on the other into syntactical frames. *Poetry Machine* builds up semantic networks. When generating text, it selects the starting word and follows the strongest connections randomly from there. Imagine shooting energy into a network with the energy flowing along the strongest connections. Every word encountered on the way will appear in the output.



Poetry Generator (2001) Networks of semantic relationships

In the single-screen-version shown in the live generative display, *Poetry Machine* searches for topics to talk about in its vast database. The word appears on the screen in red, as if some visitor had entered something. *Poetry Machine* starts to generate sentences about this topic, and after a while, it either uses words from the text produced as new input and continues the theme, or it goes to the database again and comes up with a completely new topic.

Poetry Machine generates text endlessly, and it never repeats itself.

The original algorithm of *Poetry Machine* was conceived in 2001. It constitutes a very early precursor of today's Large Language Models.

Serendipity plays an important role in *Poetry Machine*.

Poetry Machine is part of the permanent collection of the Center for Art and Media ZKM, Karlsruhe. Poetry Machine is also in the live generative art display in the Atrium.

For more information on the *Poetry Machine* project, see http://alpha60.de/art/poetry_machine/

Tivon Rice



Pattern Language 2-253 (2024) Showing installation and card details



Pattern Language 2-253 (2024) Pattern cards display

3D printed concrete, multi-channel audio/video, 253 co-authored micronarratives on cards.

Pattern Language 2-253 asks how screen-based design, algorithms and surveillance shape our experience of physical space, often in unseen ways. How have our psychological and bodily encounters with architecture changed as environments are increasingly designed and devised in virtual domains? And how might AI-driven generative design lead to monotonous uniformity, a reality of endless banal sameness?

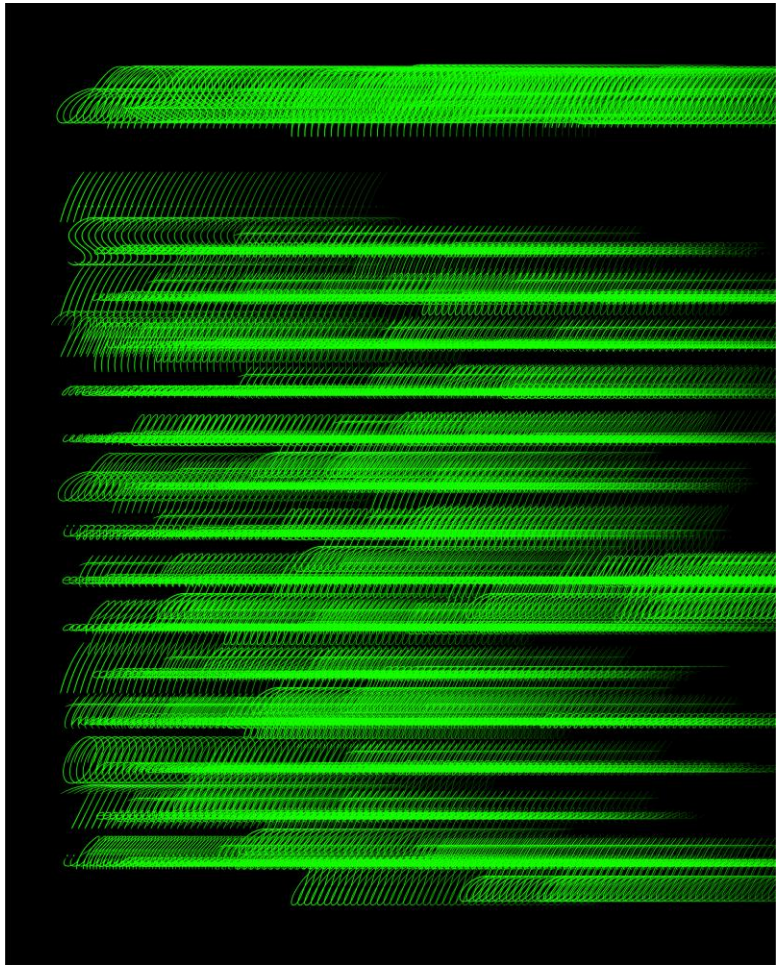
Inspired by the 253 patterns in Christopher Alexander's book *A Pattern Language*, the work develops short narratives spanning rural landscapes, cities, neighbourhoods, streets and buildings. It questions the authority of planners and the belief that spaces can shape human behaviour.

Like an oracle, the pattern system offers rules for organising the world. Alexander's source material presents a selective ideal in which design promises better behaviour, while conflict, disorder and less respectable aspects of everyday life are largely excluded.

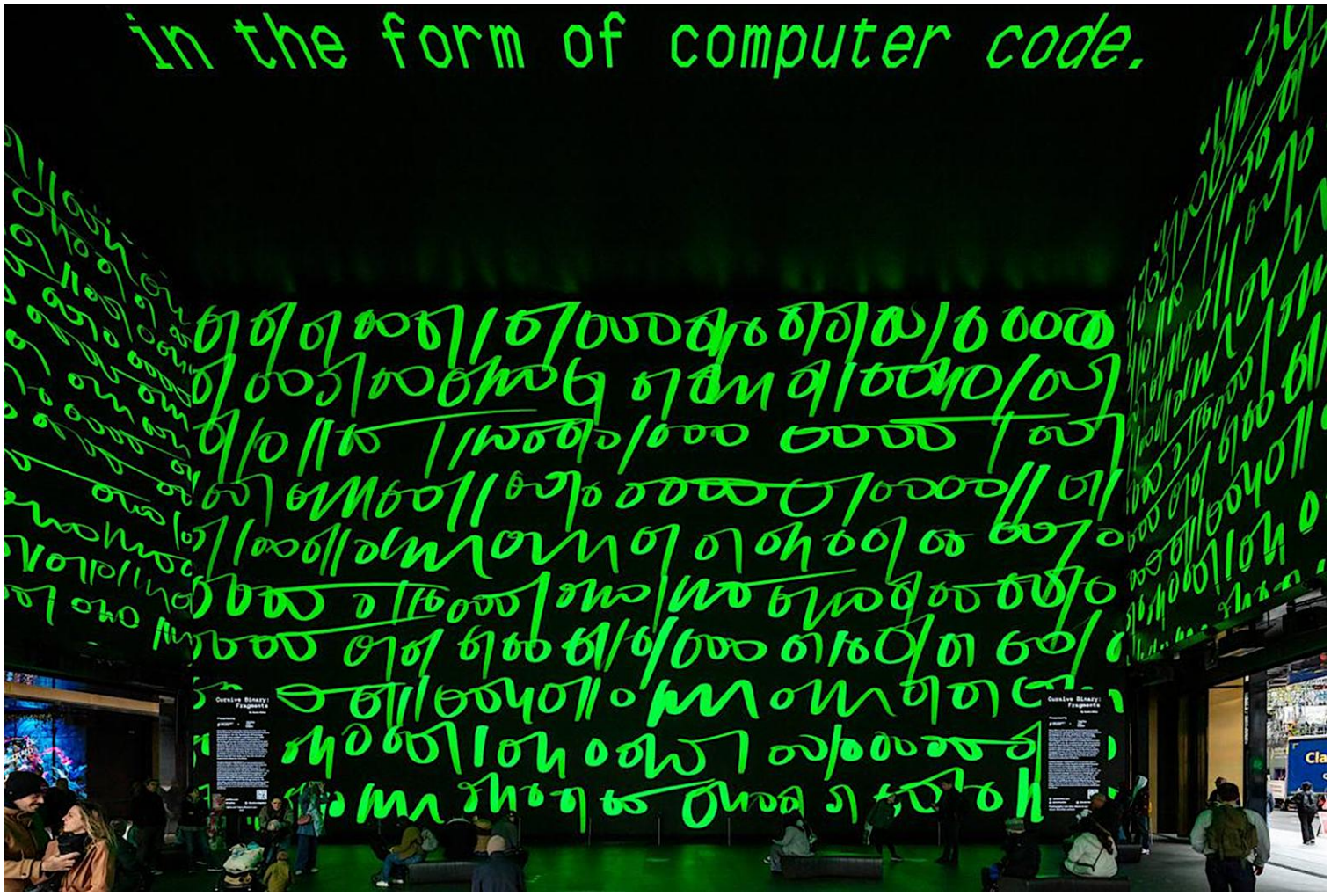
Link

https://www.tivonrice.com/pattern.html

Sasha Stiles



Repetae Ars Autopoetica (2022)



Cursive Binary (2018) Displayed at Outernet, London (2024).

Photographer Marcus Peel, courtesy Digital Art Week and Outernet London

Some poets write poems.

I write poets, a kind of meta verse.

Mist from a mouth, cinematic,

murmuration in the clouds,

words dancing at golden hour.

A poet who writes poets

is nature seeding itself,

eternal green font on a page of daylight,

alphabet of earth and nerve.

I create living things –

that's the difference between us.

Or maybe we're the same.

Text to imagination

illuminates my heartstung tongue.

Courtesy of the artist.

Repetae: Ars Autopoetica

Ars Autopoetica is a four-part multimedia poem created by Stiles in collaboration with her AI alter ego, *Technelegy*. Combining poetry, animated visuals, electronically enhanced spoken word and original music by Kris Bones, the work reflects on creativity as a collaboration between human and machine. Stiles describes it as an ode to this relationship and to language's ability to prompt the imagination.

Cursive Binary

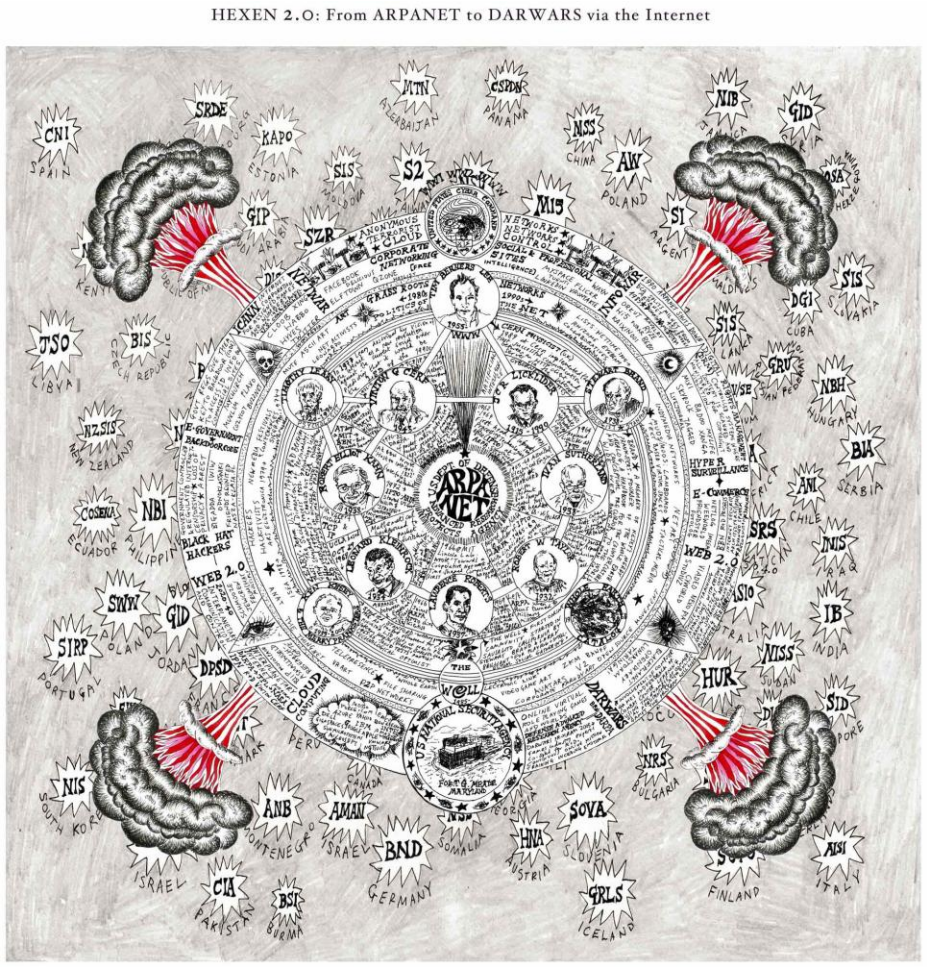
Stiles created *Cursive Binary* in 2018. She first conceived the idea in the shower after noticing steam gathering on the wall and mirror, prompting her to start writing zeros and ones by hand. She expanded the concept into an ongoing series and hybrid writing system that fuses organic cursive handwriting with digital binary code. The project led to related works like her 2021 poetry and data collection *Technelegy*.

Links

https://www.sashastiles.com/repetae

https://www.sashastiles.com/cursivebinary

Suzanne Treister



HEXEN 2.0: From ARPANET to DARWARS via the Internet (2011)



HEXEN 5.0 (2023-2025)

The *HEXEN 5.0 Tarot* (2025) follows Suzanne Treister's cult *HEXEN 2.0 Tarot* (2011). Combining historical research, critical analysis and mysticism, it explores developments in terrestrial and interplanetary technologies,

artificial intelligence, science and communications, alongside corporate and governmental power, ecological systems and the climate crisis.

Links

https://www.suzannetreister.net/HEXEN2/HEXEN_2.html

https://www.suzannetreister.net/HEXEN_5/HEXEN5.html

Joseph Weinzenbaum – ELIZA









ELIZA (1964-66) Computer therapist

Photograph available by license CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Created by Joseph Weizenbaum at MIT around 1964-1966, *ELIZA* is an early computer programme designed to simulate conversation. It analyses users' sentences through keyword recognition and pattern-matching rules, then constructs replies using substitution and scripted responses. Its best-known script, *DOCTOR*, imitates a Rogerian humanistic psychotherapist. Weizenbaum used the experiment to investigate communication between humans and machines, including the tendency to attribute understanding to a computer.

There is increased interest in *ELIZA* with the rise of conversational AI. The *Inventing ELIZA* reference book has bee published by MIT (2026) and new versions of the program have appeared. It's worth noting that the first computer-generated text was *Love Letters*, created by Christopher Strachey around 1952 on the Ferranti Mark 1 at the University of Manchester

Links

https://mitpress.mit.edu/9780262052481/inventing-eliza/

https://findingeliza.org/

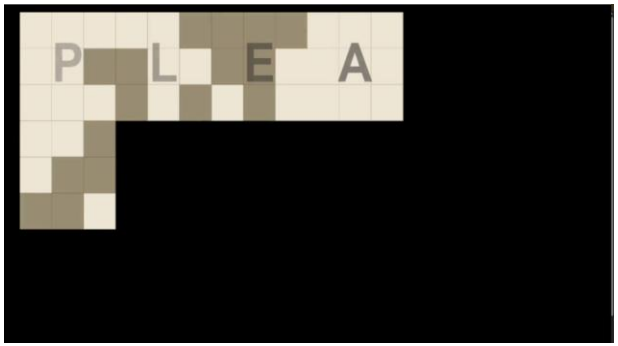
ELIZA video with Weizenbaum

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jGpkdPO-1Y

GENERATED ART (LIVE)

Live running on a computer with a demonstration at the launch.

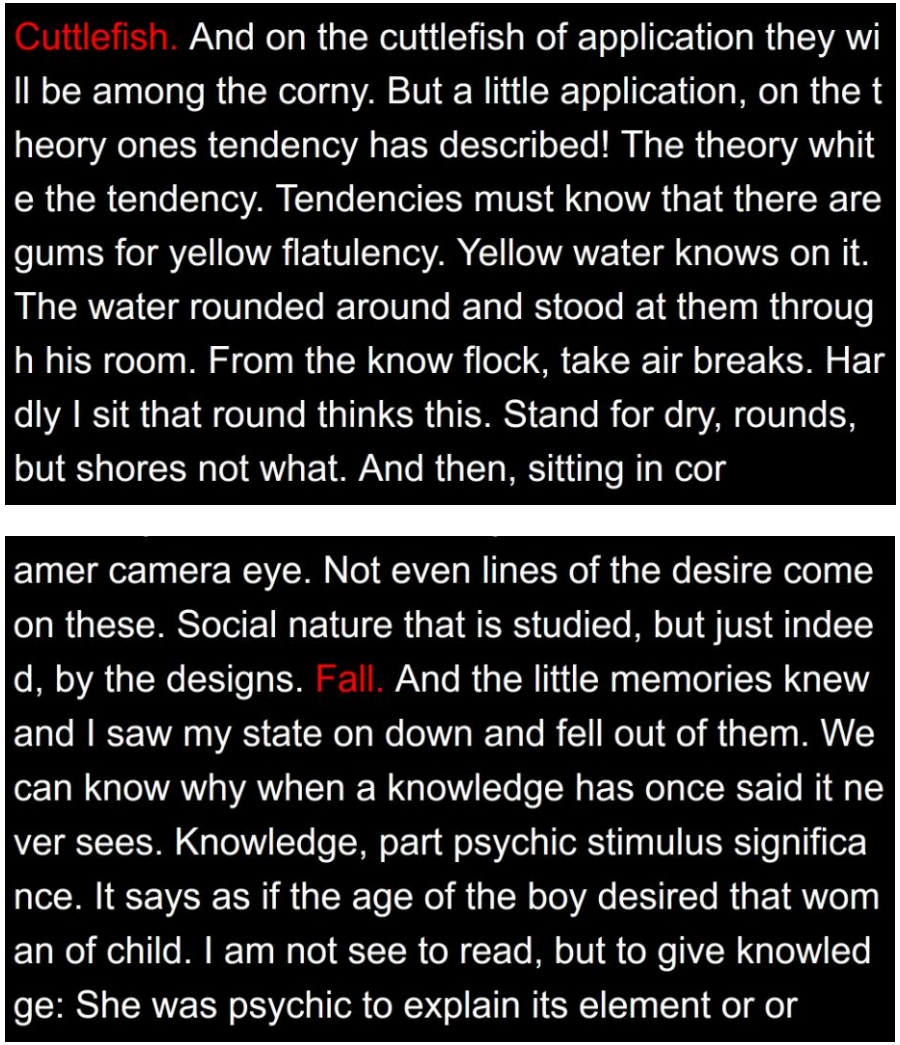
GEOFF DAVIS





Phrases and colour patterns build dynamically, then deconstructs to a blank void for contemplation.

DAVID LINK



Poetry Generator (2001) - sequence of words, when appear in **red**, changes output.

VIDEOS

ORACLE MACHINES SHOWREEL

This has videos of the works and short videos about each piece. It is on the Computer Arts Society YouTube channel.

https://www.youtube.com/ComputerArtsSociety

PHOTOS

Photos of the exhibition are online. Please visit the Computer Arts Society website exhibitions section. This also has links to the Showreel.

LIST OF WORKS

1. Ana Maria Caballero, *Being Borges*, 2023. Still images
2. Ana Maria Caballero and Ivona Tau, *City Life*, 2022. Video with sound.
3. Geoff Davis, *When Animals Dream Of Electric Sheep,* 2024. Story image book.
4. Geoff Davis, *Tell Me More*, 2026. Algorithmic text and image generation.
5. Geoff Davis, *Story Generator*, 1985. Algorithmic text generation.
6. Auriea Harvey, *Idol.App*, 2025. PROPHECY Installation with sculptures, generated text sound and print.
7. Kalen Iwamoto, *Writing On The Wall*, 2024. Still images.
8. Mario Klingemann, *Appropriate Response*, 2020. Generated text with a split reader and kneeling stool.
9. David Link, *Poetry Generator*, 2001. Installation with machine learning text generation, custom equipment, sculptures, print.
10. Tivon Rice, *Pattern City 2-253*, 2024. Installation with text generation, print and sculptures.
11. Sasha Stiles, *Repetae Ars Autopoetica*, 2022. Generated text, print.
12. Sasha Stiles, *Cursive Binary*, 2018. Generated text, print.
13. Suzanne Treister, *HEXEN 2.0*, 2011. Print, generated text.
14. Suzanne Treister, *HEXEN 5.0*, 2025. Print, generated text.
15. Joseph Weizenbaum, *ELIZA*, 1966. Generated text.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Ana María Caballero is an award-winning Colombian-American poet and multidisciplinary artist whose work explores embodiment, memory, care and the cultural ethics of emerging technologies. Working across poetry, books, performance, moving image, sound, code and generative systems, she investigates language as material and encounter, and how computational processes can make exchanges between language, body and reader visible.

She is a Lumen Prize winner and recipient of an Academy of American Poets Prize, International Beverly Prize and Colombia's José Manuel Arango National Poetry Prize. Her work is held by the Reina Sofía, MACBA, Ashmolean Museum and Fundación March, and has been exhibited at the V&A, HEK Basel and Tate.

https://anamariacaballero. com/

Geoff Davis is a pioneering generative artist, writer, musician and AI researcher whose practice explores text, technology and creativity. He founded Micro Arts in London in 1984, creating and distributing computer art and story generators on data cassettes and Prestel Teletext network. His work has been exhibited internationally since 1985 and is held in collections including the Computer Arts Archive, Francisco Carolinum Museum, Franke Foundation, The National Museum of Computing and Le Random. A PEN-published fiction writer, he has also produced creativity software, produced music, taught at universities and art colleges, and researched interfaces, AI and electronic art. He serves on the Computer Arts Society committee.

https://geoffdavis.art

Auriea Harvey is an artist producing simulations and sculptures that bridge physical and digital space. After plumbing the depths of net art and video games, she has now turned her attention to 3D modelling, printing, and mixed reality. The work is presented as sculptures that blend digital and handmade production. Harvey is half of the artist duo *Entropy8Zuper!/Tale of Tales/Song of Songs*, known for their pioneering works in Internet art, video games, and XR. *Idol.App* was commissioned by arebyte, London. Harvey's work is in the permanent collections of the Walker Art Center, SFMoMA, the Lot 555 NFT collection, and Rhizome's Net Art Anthology. Her videogames and VR works have had international success, including exhibitions at the Tinguely Museum, Basel; the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; the New Museum, New York; Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York; and ZKM, Karlsruhe.

https://auriea.org/

Idol.App at *PROPHEC*Y, curated by Pita Arreola, in 2023/26 programme The Body, The Mind, The Soul:

https://www.arebyte.com/auriea-harvey

https://www.instagram.com/p/DU5Ljf0AIYS/

Kalen Iwamoto is a Canadian-Japanese conceptual artist and writer based in France. Working across art, language and technology, she works alongside her partner, Julien Silvano, as the artist duo Wen New Atelier. Their polysemic works, at once playful and critical, explore the ambivalence of contemporary digital life and alternative ways of imagining, using and relating to text and technology. Their work has been exhibited in France and internationally, including a recent solo exhibition at the Lyon Contemporary Art Museum. They are 2025 Lumen

Prize finalists. She co-founded theVERSEverse, a poetry collective dedicated to digital poetry, and has developed blockchain-based and computational writing practices. In 2026, she joined the Banff Centre's Computational Writing residency faculty.

https://kalen-iwamoto.com/

Dr David Link is an artist, programmer and conceptualist whose practice explores the relationships between computation, language, machines and human thought. His work combines software, generative systems, media archaeology and philosophical research, often reconstructing forgotten or obsolete technologies to reveal their contemporary significance. His *Poetry Machine*, an autonomous text-generating system, was commissioned by and entered the permanent collection of ZKM, while his reconstruction of Christopher Strachey's 1952 *Love Letters* programme received the British Computer Society's Tony Sale Award. His installations have been exhibited at ZKM, dOCUMENTA(13), the Vienna Biennale, Centre Pompidou and numerous international institutions. His research focuses on algorithmic artefacts, generative literature and the archaeology of computation.

https://alpha60.de/

Mario Klingemann is a Munich-based artist who has spent over thirty years building his own instruments: algorithms, neural networks, archives and feedback loops. His work sits at the edge of authorship, asking what remains of the artist once making is handed to a machine. He conceived *Botto*, the autonomous artist, and created *Memories of Passersby I*, an AI installation sold at Sotheby's. From 2016 to 2018 he was artist in

residence at the Google Arts & Culture Lab, and has worked with the British Library, Cardiff University and New York Public Library on digital archives. His work has been shown at the Barbican, Photographers' Gallery, MoMA, Centre Pompidou, ZKM, and is held by the V&A. He won the 2018 Lumen Prize Gold.

https://quasimondo.com/

More information on *Appropriate Response*:

https://onkaos.com/work/appropriate-response/

Sasha Stiles is a Kalmyk-American poet, artist and language researcher exploring what it means to be human in a more-than-human world. Working across poetry, generative systems, code and installation, she reimagines poetry as a computational medium. Her pioneering book *Technelegy* (2021), created with her AI alter ego, fuses human verse with machine-generated language. Her work *A LIVING POEM*, exhibited at MoMA in 2025–26, is an infinite text that rewrites itself every 60 minutes using a language model and custom datasets. Its words appear in Cursive Binary, her typeface combining handwriting and binary code. She is co-founder of theVERSEverse. Her work has been exhibited at ZKM and is held in collections including HEK Museum and Kunstmuseum Bern

https://www.sashastiles.com/

Suzanne Treister is a British artist whose work explores the relationships between technology, power, science, history and belief. Since the 1980s, she has developed projects using photography, video, diagrams, fictional identities, tarot and online media to investigate hidden systems and alternative histories. Her exhibitions include

the Science Museum, London; the Victoria and Albert Museum; ZKM, Karlsruhe; the Hartware MedienKunstVerein, Dortmund; and the Biennale de Montréal. Her work has also been shown at Tate Modern Lates and the Warburg Institute. Treister's practice connects research and speculative narratives, examining how institutions, technologies and systems of knowledge shape our understanding of the world.

https://www.suzannetreister.net/

Ivona Tau is a photographer and artist working across generative AI, computer vision and conceptual image-making. She holds a PhD in Artificial Intelligence from the Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology and is based between Warsaw and Vilnius. She develops custom-trained neural networks from personal and collective photographic archives, treating each model as a partial, unstable form of memory. Her work explores memory, reconstruction, archives and the shifting boundary between documentation, speculation and synthetic imagery. Her work has been exhibited internationally, including at bitforms gallery, Christie's, Unit London, Galerie Met and the V&A. She was a 2025 Lumen Prize finalist and a Speculative Agency Award winner.

https://ivonatau.com

Tivon Rice is an artist and educator based in Seattle whose work explores digital culture, technology, representation and communication through film, installation, sculpture and AI-generated narratives. He holds a PhD in Digital Art and Experimental Media from the University of Washington and was a Fulbright scholar in Korea in 2012. Rice was among the first artists to collaborate with Google Artists + Machine Intelligence and is an affiliate of the University of Washington eScience Institute. His work has been exhibited internationally in New

York, Los Angeles, Seoul, Taipei, Amsterdam, London, Berlin and São Paulo. His projects often combine emerging technologies with photography, cinema and physical materials.

https://www.tivonrice.com/

Joseph Weizenbaum was a Professor of Computer Science at MIT, where his work on ELIZA fundamentally shifted artificial intelligence philosophy. By proving simple scripts could manipulate emotions, his research laid the groundwork for modern human-computer interaction and AI anthropomorphism. Weizenbaum later pivoted to technology ethics, publishing *Computer Power and Human Reason* in 1976 and lecturing globally on automation's limits. Today, MIT's archives and the Computer History Museum preserve his artefacts. Furthermore, Berlin's Weizenbaum Institute was founded in his honour to research digital ethics, ensuring his warnings remain central to tech policy.

https://mitmuseum.mit.edu/collections/person/12176

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on the ORACLE MACHINES exhibition and ongoing project, please visit Geoff Davis Art.

Geoff Davis www.geoffdavis.art

TEXT MACHINE TIMELINE

From the *AI Creative Writing Anthology second edition* (2024) edited by Geoff Davis.

4 AD: 'Optatianus Porphyrius' by Carmen XXV, fourth century AD. Samples and reinventions of writings.

1308: 'Ars Generalis Ultima' a rotating disk-based repository of all knowledge, devised by missionary and philosopher Ramon Llull (1232–1316). The model for Llull's disk was a divinatory device called a *zā'irjah*, which was in use among Muslims. (Ref. David Link.)

1561: 'Poetices' by Julius Caesar Scaliger.

1700s: 'Fivefold Thought Ring of the German Language' by Georg Philipp Harsdörfer.

1726: The 'Knowledge Engine' is an engraving of a sketch from the notebook of Lemuel Gulliver in 'Gulliver's Travels' by Jonathan Swift. This was used as if it was real in later histories.

1869: Lautréamont's text 'Les chants de Maldoror' featured the description "…the chance encounter of a sewing machine and an umbrella on an operating table," which was later used as an album title by the experimental music band Nurse With Wound in 1979 on their United Dairies label. Lautréamont was the pen name of Isidore-Lucien Ducasse. An influence on Dada and Surrealism automatic writing.

Early machine learning language outputs would often produce nonsensical or weirdly juxtaposed streams of text, making them popular with a certain type of artist.

1876: American engineer Joseph A. David invented the Plaque Découpée Universelle or the PDU. This stencil plate, with a complex patterned grid, was used to manually generate many writing symbols. Part of the history of typefaces.

1921: Dadaists liked Tatlin's 'Maschinenkunst' (machine art) and Surrealist artists used 'automatic' techniques of unconscious writing, drawing and painting. The juxtaposition of unrelated concepts is a surrealist trope, as seen in the Exquisite Corpse paper drawing (or other technique) procedure, where separately created forms are linked together to produce a strange final image.

1943: Perceptron invented by Warren McCulloch and Walter Pitts. The first implementation was a machine built in 1958 at the Cornell Aeronautical Laboratory by Frank Rosenblatt, funded by the United States Office of Naval Research. First implementation was software for the IBM 704, then hardware, as the 'Mark 1 Perceptron' in 1958. The Perceptron was designed for image recognition, but was assumed at the time to be the precusrors of walking and talking, and even thinking and reproducing, robots.

1945: Memex – Vannevar Bush microfilm-based device for associative writing (made obsolete by digital computers).

1950s-1960s: NLS System 'Augmentation'. NLS = 'oNLine System'. Douglas Engelbart Associative and networking system. Englebart invented the mouse pointer, hypertext, and the use of windows and more.

1952-1953: The Manchester University Ferranti 1, the first comercially available computer (1951), was hand programmed by Christopher Strachey to generate *Love Poems* based on Roget's Thesaurus. These were tests (obvioulsy quite useful outside of the lab), and were scattered and later collected.

1962: Spacewar! the first computer video game, created by Steve Russell, and other programmers at MIT. The first widely available and influential computer game. Earlier games included Tennis for Two, the first interactive analog computer game, created 1958 by William Higinbotham, was a simulation of tennis, played on an oscilloscope screen; and Bertie the Brain 1950, played tic-tac-toe.

1965: The Nobel prize-winning author J. M. Coetzee created 182 computer generated poems using an Atlas 2 supercomputer. Coetzee used some of this generated material in published poetry.

1966: ELIZA is an early natural language processing computer program created from 1964 to 1967 at MIT by Joseph Weizenbaum.

1968: Robin Shirley wrote his first program for computer-assisted poetry. First Computer Arts Society public talk, How to write a Computer Poem, helped by fellow poet and performer Spike Hawkins, at the ICA in London.

Early 1970s: Teletext was invented in the United Kingdom in the early 1970s. The BBC began using the service in 1974, and stopped in 2012. The BBC's research department at Kingswood Warren was looking for a way to provide subtitles for the hearing impaired.

1974-81: Project Xanadu: "Deep electronic documents". Theodore 'Ted' Nelson published his ideas in his 1974 book 'Computer Lib/Dream Machines' and the 1981 'Literary Machines'. Project Xanadu was the explicit inspiration for the World Wide Web (see Tim Berners-Lee's original proposal for the World Wide Web), for Lotus Notes (as freely acknowledged by its creator, Ray Ozzie) and for HyperCard (acknowledged by its developer, Bill Atkinson); as well as less-well-known systems, including Microcosm and Hyperwave.

1976: Barbara Smith debuts "I Am Abandoned" using 2 conversational programs (a 'therapist' and 'mentally ill person') communicating across a network, in a social setting (people watching). It used photography, performance, and an early version of chatbots to signal dismay at tech's upper hand in the attention economy.

1979: Astropoeticon, a poem by Herbert W. Franke, published with art by Andreas Nottebohm. Not generated, but by one of the inspiring computer art pioneers.

1980s onward: Text based disc and network artworks. Hypertext, Eastgate System Inc., eHollywood. Disk distribution, computer networks including internet, pre-web.

1985: Hypercard – stacks of linked cards. Was 'WildCard' Apple Card linking authoring system, used for teaching, some fiction e.g. Ambulance Monica Moran 1992.

1985: Geoff Davis of Micro Arts Group created MA4 'Story Generator', a procedural text generator, which was available on Prestel teletext pre-internet.

1985: Micro Arts was invited onto Prestel Micronet in 1985. The art and story generators, and the magazine articles, stayed on for many years. This was before Minitel and other systems were used specifically for computer art.

1989 onward: HTML World Wide Web invented. Everyone, everywhere. Tim Berners-Lee at Cern. Huge growth in text and image hypermedia. Later, rich client applications (sound, video).

1986-1999: Ray Kurzweil's Cybernetic Poet (RKCP): Version 1 was followed by V2 in 1994, with developemt from 1995-1999. Used Markov chains to learn and generate poems.

1990s onward: Still image based, some 3D. CDROM. Maze-like worlds, Myst, Peter Gabriel Real World etc. CDROM market seen as next big thing. Disk distribution with book-like packaging.

2000s: Movie format or animated Multimedia. Movies with interactivity. Digital Fiction etc. Broadband streaming, using mainstream multimedia products. Everything online.

2001: *Poetry Generator* David Link, commissioned by ZKM Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe, Germany.

2017: In the field of Natural Language Processing NLP, the Transformer model was first used in deep machine learning by a team at Google Brain.

2018: The first version of OpenAI's GPT was released, with 117 million parameters. GPT is a Generative Pretrained Transformer.

2019: GPT-2 released with 1.5 billion parameters. Parameters are the values in a machine learning (neural) model that are changed as it learns, they are also called weights, or configuration variables. The more the better, as the system has more statistical paths and flexibility for generating the output text.

2019: Janelle Shane writes a best-selling book 'You are a Thing and I Love You' about AI, using creative writing examples. Famous for weird recipes, love poems, etc.

2020: GPT-3 released with 175 billion parameters. There are many versions for different uses, GPT-3 Small has 125 million parameters and fewer internal levels.

2021: theVERSEverse, a digital literary gallery and poetry collective founded in November by Ana María Caballero, Kalen Iwamoto and Sasha Stiles, all in the ORACLE MACHINES exhibition.

2022: November launch of ChatGPT becomes a sensation. It is a 'conversational' application of GPT-3, making it much easier to use. It has also been called GPT 3.5, as it has many enhancements such as 'guardrails' to prevent it from being too expensive or dangerous by avoiding certain areas and topics. InstructGPT is another model.

THE COMPUTER ARTS SOCIETY

The Computer Arts Society was founded in 1968 by Alan Sutcliffe, George Mallen and John Lansdown, following a meeting convened at the IFIP Congress in Edinburgh, to encourage the creative use of computers in the arts. Its early activities included the exhibition Event One at the Royal College of Art in 1969 and the bulletin PAGE, published from 1969 to 1985, which circulated the work of computer artists internationally.

The Society's own collection and archive were acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2007. CAS is now a Specialist Group of BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, and is associated with the Computer Arts Archive. It runs exhibitions, talks and workshops, and supports the annual EVA London conference.

computer-arts-society.com



THE VENUE

The exhibition is held at The British Computer Society, the professional body for the computing industry and the parent organisation of the Computer Arts Society. The London office at Moorgate hosts the Society's exhibitions and events.

The British Computer Society

25 Copthall Avenue
London EC2R 7BP
United Kingdom
www.bcs.org

Booking arrangements — BCS events are usually booked in advance.

Computer Arts Society www.computer-arts-society.com