L.A. SIGGRAPH

ON THE THRESHOLD

As most L.A. SIGGRAPH members know, there will be no regular, general meeting in February. INSTEAD, we hope all of our members will attend "On The Threshold," the showcase event at THE PALACE. This electro-media event is the result of the efforts of many of our local SIGGRAPH members, working in co-operation with the Independant Composers Association and the Visual Music Alliance.

Tickets to the showcase at the Palace:
Title: "On The Threshold."   Price: $12.50.
Where: THE PALACE, 1735 N. Vine Street, Hollywood, half block north of Hollywood Blvd. To get to the event from the Hollywood Freeway, if you are tra-veling north, exit on Hollywood Blvd. Go west to Vine Street and turn right. If you are traveling south on the freeway, exit on Highland, turn left on Hollywood Blvd. and left on Vine Street.
When : February 12, 1985. No-host Cocktails at 8:00 pm, SHOWTIME at 9:00 pm, Dancing after the show until....?
Tickets: To reserve tickets, **call Ticket Master** at (213) 480-3232 or (714) 740-2000 or **contact Ticket Master locations** at May Company, Music Plus or Sportmart stores. Ticket sales have been very strong, tickets may no longer be available at the door.

Computer graphics, original music, live dancers and lasers will be combined to produce an interactive experience of combined media. The input and enthu-siasm from the artistic community has been remark-able and exciting. In the beginning, it was not know if enough works could be assembled to have a show. At this point, the producers regret that they have had so many submissions that a great num-ber of fine pieces could not be included.

A number of sophisticated computer graphics sys-tems,or time on the system, has been donated to produce work for the show. A partial list includes:
1. **System 4**: a digitally manipulated raster rescan system that uses analog broadcast television to move, twist and manipulate objects in real time. Only a few systems of this type exist in the world. The only such system in L.A. is located at Editel Animation Services in Hollywood and is operated by Ed Kramer, a SIGGRAPH member and chairman of the Visuals Committee for the Palace event.
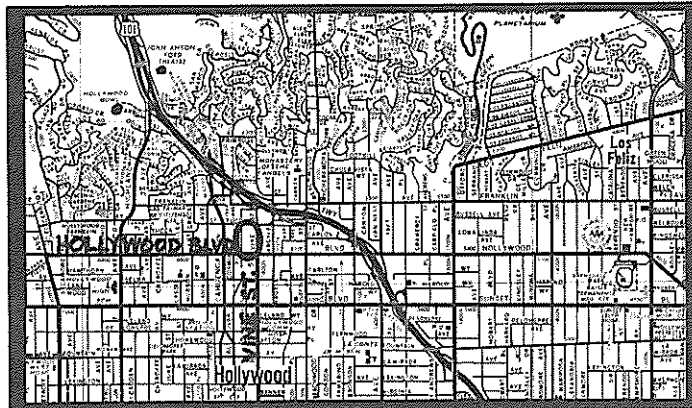
2. **The Fairlight Computer Video Instrument.** This is a new computer based video synthesis and graph-ics system. A microprocessor-controlled field store offers a large range of real time digital ef-fects including color generation and modification (over 4000 colors), mattes, chroma-key, pixelation, strobe, paint and draw. Dancers will appear live, on stage, while their image is maipulated by the fairlight and projected on screen in real time.

3. **Laser Media.** SIGGRAPH's own Joan Collins, pro-ducer of the show, will introduce "Autodrive," an animated laser cartoon, hot off the press....and more!

In addition to many other interactive and stand-alone examples of computer animation, we will have the contributions of Ron Hays, producer of multi-media extravaganzas at the Hollywood Bowl, the US Festival and other international venues, and Eve Lenzner, a Canadian dancer and choreographer who's credits include the Pennsylvania Ballet Co., Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, the Bolshoi and Kirov Dance Companies, as well as serving on the coaching staff of the Canadian Winter Olympic Team.

We have secured the generous donation of **profes-sional video equipment** from EZTV, thru Michael J. Masucci, and a **television facilities** truck from Rio Hondo College, thru the office of Larry Scher.

IT'S GOING TO BE A GREAT EVENING OF COMPUTER GRAPHICS, ENTERTAINMENT AND DANCING. DON'T MISS IT!!! RANDY RANDALL.

art technology

I would like to bring you a guest contributor, who is a music artist, writing about computer generated art. Ted Peterson is Music Committee Chairman for "On The Threshold," the showcase event at The Palace. He is a composer, musician and a member of the Independant Composers Association (I.C.A.) and the Visual Music Alliance (V.M.A.). RANDY RANDALL.

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Technology and art have been tied ever since the first humans used something other than mud and blood to represent objects through symbols. If a sequence from cave painting to computer generated art were made, a fairly accurate view of the technology of each era could be plotted. New paints and methods of drying were developed, new materials and techniques of sculpture emerged and new ideas of perspective were born; all of these changes observed as they were applied to art. A very convincing case for the development of perspective from the study of architectural drawings has been made by E.H. Gombrich and others. Animation, and light generated forms of art (laser, photography, lumia) reveal the technology of our day.

It appears that using technology to create art is an integral part of human experience, but the use of technology to create images - real or imagined - does not necessarily make art. Art may be comprised of cultural biases, symbols, religion, money, technology, and leisure. Art includes many other factors, as both E.H. Gombrich and Susan Langer have pointed out. Two forces, in general, appear to be at work.

One is technique - the artist must first master the media. The second is content - after the media are mastered, the artist must have something to say and a way to say it. This may be through an accepted symbology or one that the artist creates, modifies, borrows, or distorts to reflect his own idiosyncratic view.

With reguard to artistic content, Jose Ortega y Gasset wrote in The Dehumanization of Art, the following (here paraphrased): "The best minds of the young in Madrid, Paris, New York, and London, have rejected the existing art ideas and tenets; in fact, not only rejected them, but despise them." People have made a case for nonrepresentational art from approximately that time (1920's) till today (1985). Certainly, lumia and video feedback are nonrepresentational as are many of the computer generated graphics. Why then, is there any problem? Technology is being used in the creation of art and lumia or computer graphics are only products of artists who set them in motion. Given the aesthetics propounded by Ortega y Gasset and others, no problems should exist here. Yet something is missing.

Lumia can be represented, in their present incarnation, by light effects created by passing a laser through some type of distortion device such as a plastic disk. The effect is of a cloud that seems to shine from every point and actually resembles a light source rather than a reflection. As hypnotic and fascinating as these images appear to be, interest is lost after a short while. This is due in part to the following paradox: Too much sameness is boring because the mind has little to process. Too much change is boring because after a short

time, constant change becomes the same thing as constant similarity. The work of music therapists like Juliette Alvin, art therapists and studies of vision by Eastman Kodak Co. and the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (S.M.P.T.E.) have pretty much substantiated the fact that human perception can accept and remember enormous amounts of regognizable detail. However, there are limits to human perception of unrecognizable complexity and these limits can be easily reached.

As beautiful as lumia are to watch, only the most naive would consider the creation of lumia the equivelant to the creation of a work by Titan, Dali, or Picasso. Still, lumia can be used in an art context. Technologically generated effects such as lumia, video feedback, computer generated random graphics, and even discrete "pictures" that are technologically generated have a problem of representation.

Marshall McLuhan wrote about the medium being the message and he may have been more correct than he imagined. The current crop of technological toys generate figures and geometries that it would have taken a traditional animator or film maker months if not years to duplicate. In this sense, the figures loose some of their value; the value of human time.

If an artist spends two years creating a picture and then this picture is scanned with a camera, digitized by a computer and reproduced with a plotter/laser/printer/photo processor or other similar tool, the only value the painting could have would be in what it "says" as a work of ART. In other words, the substance of the work must have more value than the technology used to create and display it. The medium only transmits the content of something; it is an agreement to the method of transmission according to Korzybski. Agreement can be made to the fact that the computer has created the picture but this does not give the picture any more value than the content or statement of the picture.

If a cave painter had mixed up his paint and painted red on the wall, he would have a red wall. Now, he might say that the real value of the wall was in the way he mixed the paint with just so much of this color and that, but the wall would lose its unique quality once the feat had been duplicated.

It is much the same case with computer graphics. It's fine to paint a picture with a computer and marvel at the fact that a computer painted the picture. Pictures, however, have been painted in many different ways in the past. The power of the computer lies in the fact that it has the ability to create a geometry that the eye has not seen and it can use this geometry to make a statement that could NOT be made by any other medium. The oil and aeronautical industries use CAD systems to visually illustrate a multitude of data in four, five or even six dimensions. The technology is new, the physical statements are the same. The eye must still be given an object to look at.

Imagination would appear to be the key; unfortunately, the people with the imagination and minds that work on that special intuitive level are not usually the same people who succumb to the rigors of a computer. The Renaissance had warrior poets who made the bridge between the practical and the poetic. This same type of mind will eventually use the computer to expand the art vocabulary in many far reaching, human ways. When the picture makers are through, a Dali, or Cage will emerge and take art, through technology, in a completly new direction. THEODORE R. PETERSON.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

MARCH:

For the March meeting, we will again return to Caltech on the 12th at 7:30 pm. We will feature Silicon Graphics, a company which has implemented their own proprietary V.L.S.I. chip as a geometry engine. It provides ultra-hi-speed coordinate transformation and matrix multiplication. It was developed at Stanford by Dr. Clark. He started the company three years ago. Their system is called the Iris System, a Unix/Ethernet environment capable of real-time rendering of simple models. The applications are animation, limited simulation, CAD and scientific research.

APRIL:

The April 9th meeting will be hosted at 7:30 pm, by Digital Productions, creators of very hi-res, film quality Digital Scene Simulation sm; produced using the Cray X-MP super computer. A recent example of their work is the Jupiter animation for the motion picture "2010."

MAY:

The May meeting on the 14th, will find us once again at Caltech at 7:30 pm, for a program presented by Greg Passmore.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

acm
SIGGRAPH '85 ART SHOW

ENTRY FORM   85
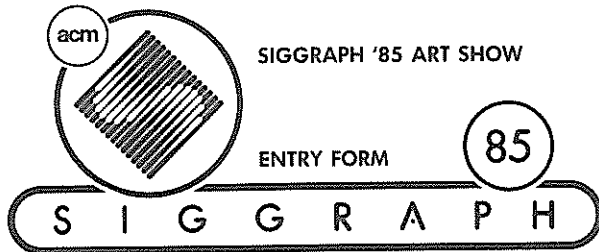
S I G G R A P H

SIGGRAPH '85:
The Twelfth Annual Conference on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques will be held in San Francisco, July 22-26, 1985.

The SIGGRAPH '85 Art Show will feature the latest achievements of artists and designers working with computer graphics and interactive techniques in all media.

This year the SIGGRAPH '85 Art Show will be on-site at the conference. The Moscone Center provides ample gallery space for the display of drawings, lithographs, murals, constructions, photographs, sculpture, ceramics, textile and fiber art and environments for viewing videotapes and framebuffer imagery. Recent creative efforts involving computer graphics in the areas of architecture, product design and communication arts will also be incorporated into this year's exhibition. Proposals for large-scale sculpture, interactive computer graphics installations and environments will also be considered.

The deadline for submission of proposals to the SIGGRAPH '85 Art Show is March 15, 1985.

Artists may, of course, participate in the Art Show and also enter their work in the Film and Video Show. The entry deadline for the Film and Video Show is April 17, 1985.

A guide for participating artists and entry form will be available from your local SIGGRAPH chapter. Look for available forms at upcoming events and meetings, or contact RANDY RANDALL at The Picture Business, 320 Wilshire Blvd., Suite B-3, Santa Monica, CA 90401. (213) 394-7408. If you write, please include the suite number. If you call, please leave a message including your name, address and the nature of your request. LET'S HAVE OUR LOCAL CHAPTER WELL REPRESENTED! RANDY RANDALL.

SEMINARS FOR PRESENTATIONS:
A series of seminars is being presented by INFORMATION AGE COMPUTER GRAPHICS. These programs are designed for those persons learning about and evaluating computerized graphics systems for presentations, i.e. slide systems and video graphics. They are especially appropriate for those involved in the graphic arts. Seminars are unbiased and objective since they are not sponsored by any manufacturing vendor.

February seminars will be presented on the 26th, in Los Angeles, and on the 28th, in Long Beach. For information write to: Information Age Computer Graphics, P.O. Box 233 Hermosa Beach, CA 90254 or call (213) 376-7514. For those unable to attend a seminar, there is also a handbook available that discusses this topic of presentation systems. RANDY HARABIN.

COLUMBIA COLLEGE-HOLLYWOOD:
in conjunction with the New York Institute of Technology, has announced that they now have the Image Manipulation and Graphic Enhancement System - IMAGES. In-depth hands-on training on the IMAGES II system is given once every three months at the computer graphics lab of Columbia College. Also available is an accredited computer graphics program with beginning, intermediate and advanced lab classes. Additional classes include Composition For The Electronic Medium and The Computer - A Means For Electronic Storyboarding. For information contact Alan Ames, head of the COLUMBIA COLLEGE-HOLLYWOOD Computer Graphics Lab, Redd Foxx Building, 933 N. La Brea, Hollywood, CA 90038, (213) 851-0550. ALAN AMES.

ED TANNENBAUM / MARCI JAVRIL:
Computer/video artist Ed Tannenbaum's live performance, "Technological Feets," will be presented in the local area. Ed and dancer Marci Javril work improvisationally with music. The Chroma-chron, a specialized interactive video system invented by Tannenbaum, is used to process the dancer's image, in real-time, and display the visual effects for both the dancer to interpret and the audience to enjoy. The image processor utilizes a computer controled framebuffer, color mapping image recognition techniques and software which allows the machine to be "played" like a musical instrument.

February 8 & 9: Newport Harbor Art Museum, 850 San Clemente Drive, Newport Beach, CA 92660. Contact Ellen Breitman, Educational Curator, (714) 759-1122.

February 16, 17 & 18: Fleet Space Theatre & Science Center, Balboa Park, P.O. Box 33303, San Diego, CA 92103. Contact Mary Edinger, Public Relations, (619) 238-1233. MARCI JAVRIL.

COMPUTER GRAPHICS CLASSES

The computer graphics program at Orange Coast College began as an interdisciplinary effort of the faculty members from Science and Art, and has since expanded to include faculty from Business, Technology, Literature and Languages. The special emphasis, however, is on the Fine Arts. C.G. is housed in this division under the direction of Donna Westerman. Visual literacy is seen as the thread that ties the various aspects of this technology together.

By bringing together people from diverse backgrounds (artists, programmers, scientists, etc.), in a situation where they have to communicate with each other, OCC hopes to remedy some of the problems inherent in this new field: team projects are an important aspect of the introductory class. Much of the software used in the classes has been written and documented by the students. They are encouraged to attend special industry events, are present at many advisory meetings and have made public presentations of their work in video shows and regular art exhibits. The State has recently approved the granting of a certificate to students completing the program at OCC.
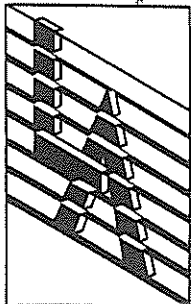
A broad based industry advisory board has played a major role in determining the most effective and viable approach to structuring the program. This group of executives consists of representatives from a cross-section of application areas, from aerospace and medicine to entertainment and graphic design. Industry provids guest speakers, films & slides, hardware & software donations and opens doors to students for special projects. They also use the OCC program as a job bank.

A major highlight here is the lab itself. There are 30 Apple II computers with color and b/w monitors, dual disk drives and various input/output devices. These are connected to a Nestar hard disk system, but also operate as stand alone units. There are 2 number nine boards with the Visual Data Enterprises software and video digitizing equipment working off Apple IIe's, and an IBM PC with a new graphics board which allows real-time animation. A Digital Graphics CAT 1611 system offers 16 million colors and broadcast quality video capabilities. The lab is continually expanding and is run for the most part as an open lab, so there is ample opportunity for hands-on experience.

Classes currently being offered include: Introduction to Computer Graphics, Color and Design for Computer Graphics, Motion Graphics, Programming for Computer Graphics, Math Topics for Computer Graphics, Documentation for Computer Graphics and CAD. New classes are being added to the curriculum. Photo/Computer Graphics was developed jointly through the Photo and the Art Departments and will emphasize development of skills in using both the computers and the darkroom. Joni Salinger, a graduate of the Cranbrook Institute in Michigan and instructor of color photography at OCC, will be teaching this course. Design Methodology is another new course to be developed this Spring.
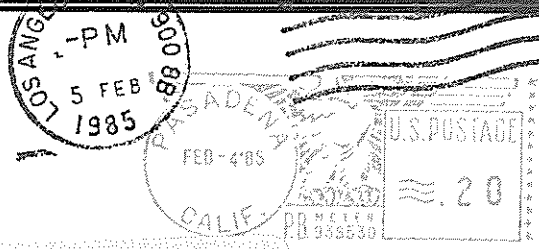
For further information, contact the Fine Arts Division at (714) 432-5629. Donna Westerman.