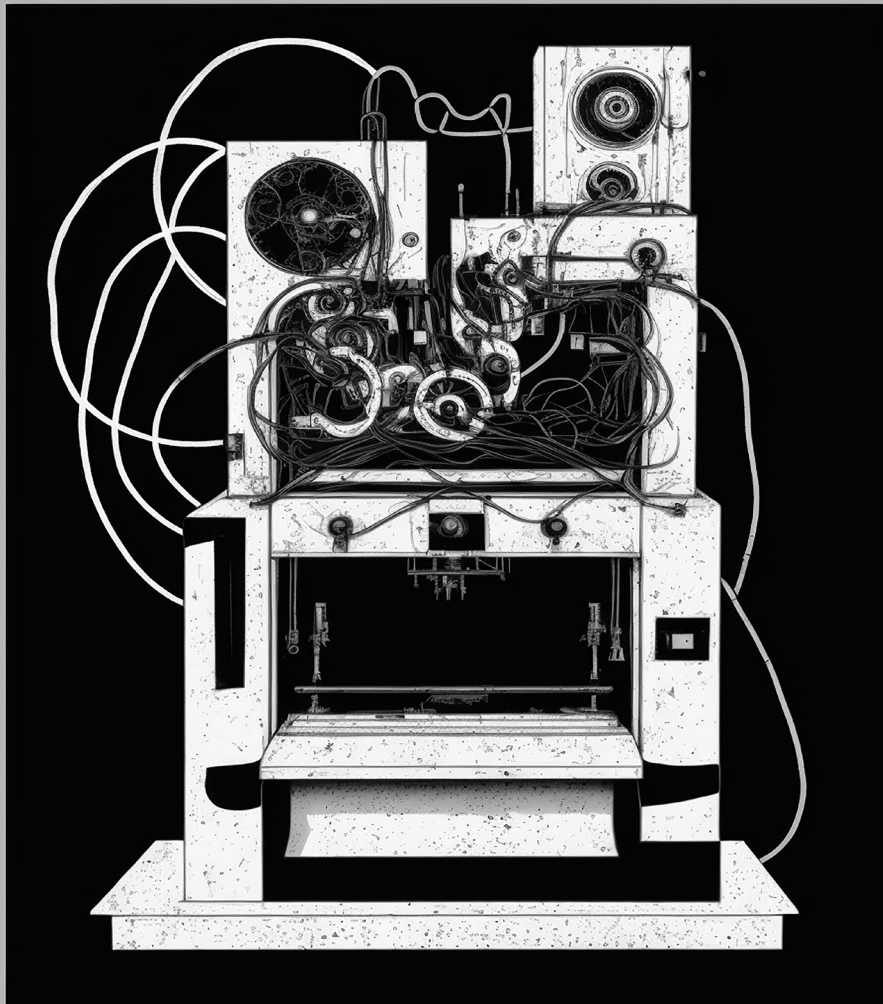# CENTER FOR MACHINE ARTS

JULY 22ND NOON-8PM

**PHIRAK SUON - SILVIA LOPEZ CHAVEZ - JOEL CAMMARATA
MARTIN BAUER - TOBIAS LEINGRUBER - ANDEE COLLARD
EDDIE SERRATOS - FINN KILLEEN - JENN KARSON - BRE PETTIS**

189 N. WATER ST. PEEKSKILL NEW YORK

Introduction

Center For Machine Arts was born out of a desire to return to a state of creativity that was discovered at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts. We've initiated a community at the Center For Machine Arts that brings artists together to make art with machines. We have gathered artists we admire and art-making friends to make experimental art all week. There isn't a plan and we are working from the mindset of "something will happen."

This is the second cohort and the support has been fantastic. We are exploring the pathway to becoming a non-profit and figuring out how we keep the momentum to gather and empower artists who use machines to bring their art from the digital into the world of the physical.

This week we have been focused on pen plotter work and that forces us to make art that is mostly flat and linear and made of lines. Lines go from point to point to make lines and the lines stack up like hay in a haystack to make images. The work was designed in many different ways but almost always had to travel through a process of becoming an SVG file which stands for Scalable Vector Graphics. We love this SVG

format because these images aren't pixels, they are points with lines between them. Infinately scalable art.

A lot of folks think that machines and artificial intelligence take the human out of the picture, but the reality couldn't be more opposed to that. The machines don't cooperate, documentation on the internet isn't always accurate, and pens and ink and motors don't always behave as expected. In some ways the machines bring humanity to our digital work by forcing us to accept their mistakes and flaws and mis-steps. Sometimes we even encourage these flaws that manifest as the work travels from the digital to the physical. The work is a conversation between humans and machines, we ask questions, we play, we sometimes argue. Artificial Intelligence is in the news all the time these days and it can be controversial. We are finding ways of making it work for us.

This month's cohort is international, including artists from Germany, England, and the Dominican Republic; we have artists from both the East and West coast of the U.S. As we prepared for the residency, the Northeast U.S. experienced record rain and flash flooding as well as air quality issues from Canadian forest fires. During the residency we were revisited by Covid with two members testing positive. We donned our masks and collectively quarantined. This layering of environmental and health crises seems to be the new normal, and we're adapting.

Despite these challenges, the good company and creative culture of Peekskill dominated our experience. We've been eating really well thanks to the abundance of good restaurants in the Peekskill area and spent many evenings talking over food. We've been talking about the craft of plotting, the artistic exploration of process, artificial intelligence, automation, and the opportunities of art practices that move through digital and physical realms.

You'll see works in this show that vary from explorations of technique and to expressions of social criticism. You'll see lines that have the precision of a scalpel and lines that wobble like kindergarten scribbles.

We visited a city council meeting this week where we witnessed the age-old battle over a proposed mural where proposed art was met with fear and criticism. Silvia, who is a professional muralist was moved to share her experience with the council and said that some artworks celebrate history, but the future is made with experimental artworks. This week Peekskill shined as a vibrant place with contemporary art being made right now and influencing tomorrow.

We welcome you into the conversation we have started with this work. The artists are in the room. We hope you take photos and post them to social media with your commentary and tell us what you think and which images resonate. If making art with machines is something that you want to do or see more of, we'll have a sheet where you can sign up for our mailing list. We want to expand our reach and welcome others to explore this frontier of machine arts.

Bre Pettis and Jenn Karson

#CenterForMachineArts

Jenn Karson
Colchester, Vermont, USA
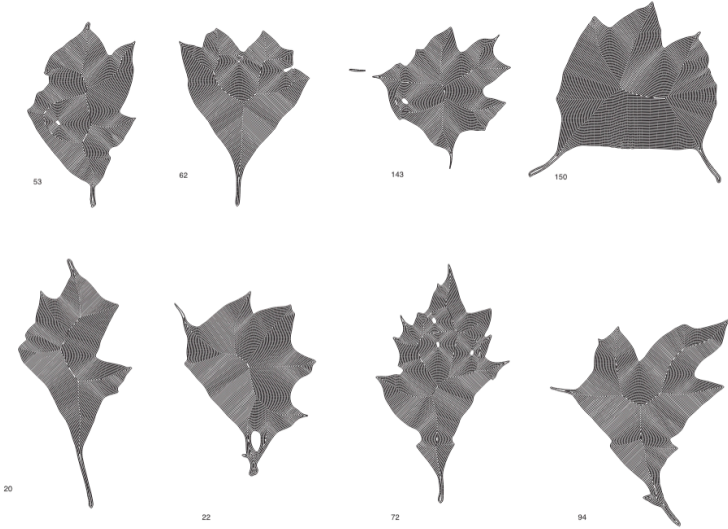
Damaged Leaf Dataset Generation 3,
July 2023
24" x 36"
Plotted ink on paper

At the center of my current work is a collection of 5000 damaged oak and maple leaves I collected during the 2021 and 2022 Lymantria dispar (spongy moth) outbreaks in Colchester, Vermont. Provoked by drought and climate change, the caterpillar outbreaks defoliated oak and maple trees in the early spring, killing beloved neighborhood trees. My work with the Center for Machine Arts June 2023 cohort explores the tension between the natural world and technological advancement by asking Can Machines repair damaged leaves? Can technological advancements solve the environmental crisis on a local level? Engravings made on the Bantam Tools desktop CNC contrast the formal qualities of oak and maple leaves with marks made by machines, juxtaposing organic leaf patterns and machine tooling textures. This work reveals the beauty of machine and plant efficiencies, their shared seductive qualities, and the inherent conflict between them.

Bre Pettis
Peekskill, New York, USA
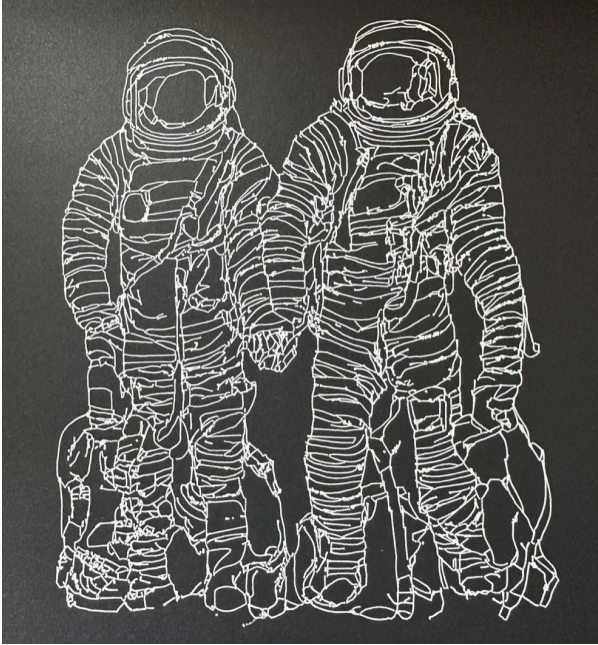
Astronauts Holding Hands
White Gel Pen on Black Paper

Text to image tools embody this approach. With the help of Jason Stillerman, I've got a stabile diffusion checkpoint model that has been trained on a dataset of blind contour drawings I made in 2002 of naked people and heavy machinery. I can prompt Stabile diffusion with text prompts to make drawings in my own style. For this drawing I put in "line drawing of two astronauts holding hands in space wearing spacesuits in the style of Bre Pettis" I've got a whole series of artworks with the theme that the safest place to be yourself, may not be on this world. I've made images of spaceships for endangered species, biosphere space stations as off-world utopias, and now I'm exploring the idea of intimacy in isolation with astronauts hugging and holding hands in space.

Phirak Suon
Seattle, Washington, USA
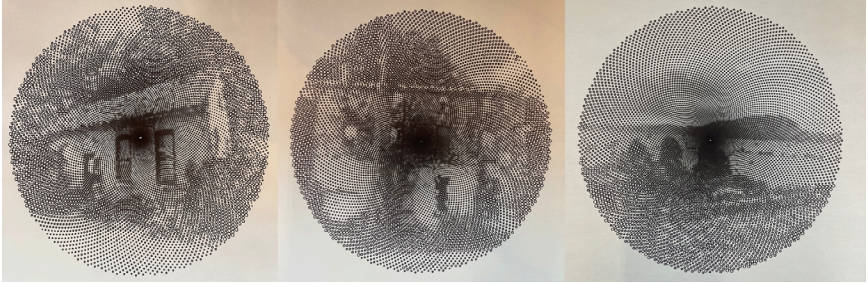
Pixelation Studies
Black gel pen on paper

My work has been focused on generative design created using Gcode. I've been exploring different ways to generate pixelated images or patterns in glass, ceramic, paper, etc. The Center for Machine Arts studio and the surrounding Peekskill have been great sources of subjects for me to explore generative drawings. Stipple, ASCII, and anamorphic drawing are some of the processes I've used this week to create imagery from photographs.

This new body of work is very much process-driven, where the end product is somewhat unknown to me. Using pens and papers as constraints, I want to see how a series of lines or dots can blur the boundary between photograph and drawing.

Eddie Serratos
Alexandria, Virginia, USA
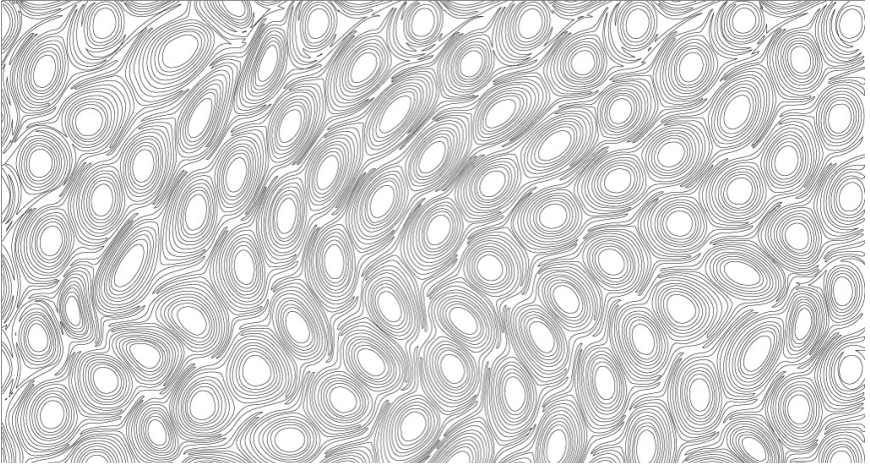
15" x 20"

My work is an exploration of accuracy and repeatability with the help of machines. The aim is to achieve precise, consistent, and ultimately repeatable results. The use of machines allows me to experiment and make adjustments easily, leading to a balance between technical precision and artistic expression.

Joel Cammarata
Daly City, California, USA
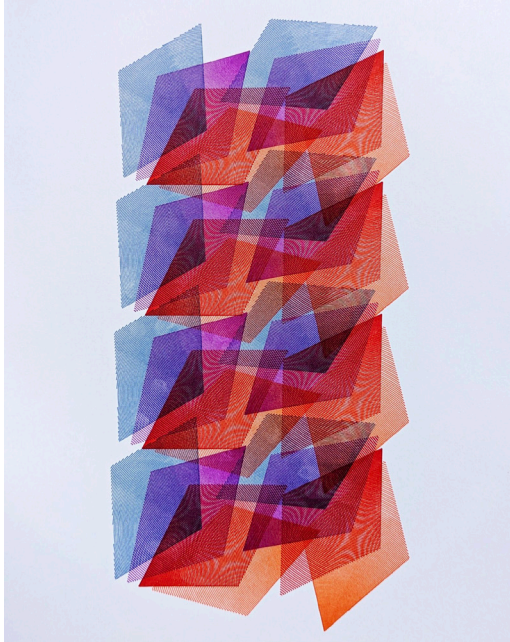
23.0720.04
11"x17" plot made on HP DraftMaster

This week started with a furry of efforts to embrace new techniques coupled with the difficulties inherent in learning to work with new machines. Day 4 circled back to the mantra that has always brought me success, keep it simple. My work always strives for a sense of balance; between positive and negative space, bold and neutral colors, heavy and light linework. While there are no set guidelines or rules in the process, the digital files are constantly reworked, results revealing themselves at the end of the pipeline on the paper. From here there is a return to the digital in reaction to the physical. This piece originated from a file originally plotted over 3 years ago where it sat idly on my laptop, waiting for access to the speed and scale afforded by the larger machinery present at the Center to realize its full colorful potential.

Andee Collard
Bolton, Greater Manchester, UK

Peekskills Waterfront. 2023.
Oil on canvas. 24x18 inches.

I am fascinated by technology and its influence on history. Making work influenced by Peekskills has been fascinating, the local landscape is a confluence of the industrial and nature. Using a self built machine to capture the ever changing view has been a challenging but rewarding experience. I see my use of machinery in the canon of past artists using the inventions of the modern world to capture their view. I am particularly fond of Monet's inventive practice which included making work in quasi-photographic series, having a floating studio boat and even digging a trench to more easily paint a large canvas outside. Artists have always found new ways of working and I am excited by the opportunities afforded by assisting my digital machines to make analogue paintings and drawings.

Silvia Lopez Chavez
Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Machine Tribe No. 2
42 in x 30 in
Bantam Tools Bluebox Plotter, colored pencils, white and
metallic pens, on US map

Community is at the center of my work. It is inspired by
humans, and the spaces we inhabit; how our environment
influences who we become. There is always a sense of play
and exploration that takes place from observation and
understanding context. This piece started from my love for
portraiture, I drew the members of cohort no. 2 at the center
for machine arts. A US map purchased during a field trip to
the local retake remake store was the perfect backdrop for
the portraits. Experimenting with a variety of materials with a
mixed media approach has always been part of my process;
in this case a human and machine collaboration took place
to create the final artwork.

Tobias Leingruber
Munich, Germany

A photo composition with a printed marilyn1.gif, 2023

The brand new marilyn1.gif has a resolution of 320 x 200 pixels in 16 colors. The unique quality of the recreated and rethought image is expected to be similar to the original 1985 Amiga image by Andy Warhol, which is not accessible to the public.

Artist statement: In 2012 the artist Cory Arcangel found out that the Andy Warhol Foundation was in possession of an Amiga computer that was used by Andy Warhol. In 2014, through "forensic retrocomputing", a group of scientists at the Carnegie Mellon University were able to excavate 28 never-seen-before images from that computer. A couple of these images were released via an NFT auction and sold for several million dollars, although the quality of these images was heavily altered. As a normal person, all you can find online are a few low-res JPG images that come with bad image compression artifacts that render them unusable. The original rediscovered images have disappeared again in the Warhol Foundations' archive. This is why in 2022 I set-out to recreate a top-quality variant of my very favorite and never-released image, the marilyn1.pic. I call it the marilyn1.gif and it has a resolution of 320 x 200 perfect uncompressed pixels and I consider it as the best variant of the image outside the Andy Warhol Foundation. After many failed attempts trying to recreate the image I managed to finalize it at the Center for Machine arts, most notably with the help of "SVG god" Andee Collard. A high-res pixel-perfect print of the marilyn.gif will be part of the group

Martin Bauer
Berlin, Germany

Internet Self Portrait
Acrylic on paper, 24x36 inches

Going to Peekskill for a week to work at the Center for Machine Arts — what
do I want to do there?
My idea for our workshop this July was to try out new techniques of plotter
drawings. New machines and new drawing and painting mediums. My
current work in Berlin is usually abstract art with bold brushstrokes in oil.
In a plotter drawing digital vector data is converted into a physical drawing by
motors moving a tool. With the right tools this can be very accurate but I very
much enjoy the errors and accidents that happen when you use brushes, paint
and ink. They add a human element to the precise drawing of the vector lines
on screen. The physical world we live in always has an uncontrollable element
and I like that to become visible at the boundaries between digital and real..
Starting with fuzzy charcoal plotter drawings that are a mess I switched to
acrylic paint. The piece above was made over two days by adding several
layers of metallic acrylic paint and blue iridescent medium to it. I built my
own tool and used a sponge hotglued to a metal piston to apply the paint.
The final layer is a spontaneously done self portrait made right here in our
workshop space with an iPhone and drawn as a line drawing with an acrylic
pen.
digital, analog & accident.

Finn Killeen
South Burlington, Vermont, USA
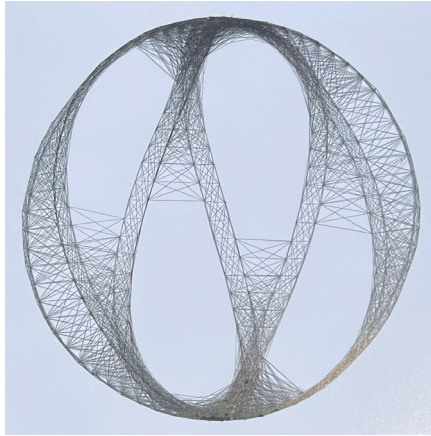
1st Lissajous
Pilot .38 Gel Pen on 17x11 Gloss Paper (trimmed)

This is one of my first, sucessful, pen plots. The image itself is superimposed sine waves or "Lissajous Figures". All figures were generated in Javascript using P5.js. This process of generative design is also new to me. Pen plotting has been a process of exploration and problem solving as the density of these patterns often ripped the paper. This issue was due to many variables such as pen force, speed, ink type, paper type etc. Working with the machine, and sometimes for it, is a compromise between what I intended and what was possible.

Give us a shout
Instagram: centerformachinearts
Twitter: ctr4machinearts
#CenterForMachineArts

This summer at the Center for Machine Arts, is hosting two weeks of immersive workshops, one in June (11th-18th) and one in July (16th-23rd). For each week, we gathered a cohort of 8 individuals artists. During their time at the Center for Machine Arts, artists have access to the full manufacturing capability of the Bantam Tools workshop and a number of different types of machines including pen plotters, cnc machines, laser cutters, 3D printers, and more. Plotters both historical and fresh out of the 3D printer were used and abused in the pursuit of fresh work.

This zine documents only a sample of the work created by The Center For Machine Arts July cohort that was exhibited on July 22-23, 2023.