

Robert Spahr

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education

Parson's School of Design, New York City, 1991, Master of Fine Arts, Magna Cum Laude
Vera List Sculpture Award, 1989 - 1991

Art Academy of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, 1988, Bachelors of Fine Arts, Magna Cum
Stephen H. Wilder Traveling Scholarship, 1988,
Art Academy Scholarships, 1984-1988

current research

Current Research (Computational Art)

I am interested in how the ideas and images presented to us by the media affect our world view. As the ever present cable news cycle pushes a daily message of fear, filled with political polarization; domestic and foreign terrorism; recent kidnapped white girls; celebrity scandals; and the imminent threat of hurricane, earthquake or flood, I began to think about how these digital images and text operated, one day influencing our daily discourse, the next day vanishing without a trace. Digital leftovers reminded me of redundant computer programming. Code that was once useful, but later forgotten and obsolete.

For my current work I have borrowed the computer hacker term 'Cruft', defined as an unpleasant substance; excess; superfluous junk; and redundant or superseded computer code. To create this work I call CRUFT, I write simple algorithms that an automated computer system follows. The instructions outline what websites to target, and the system then downloads selected images and text, which are then used as source material, and remixed to create new artwork on a schedule that imitates the 24 hour cable news cycle.

selected exhibitions

Selected Exhibitions

2011

GA2011 – XIV Generative Art Conference – Politecnico di Milano University, Rome, Italy
Presented a paper on the 'Pedagogy of Generative Art', which was published in the conference proceedings. December 2011

Cervantes Gallery, Piazza Navona, Rome, Italy. As part of the GA2011 – XIV Generative Art Conference, I presented a generative performance piece entitled, 'Red Queens Race (surveillance machine),' December 2011

10 Years + Counting (10YAC) Invited to be a featured artist to present 'Crude Cruft' in the online exhibit to mark the 10 year anniversary of our nation at war. <http://www.10yearsandcounting.org>, September 11 - October 7, 2011.

iV2011, Digital Art Gallery, an Int'l Conference on Information Visualization, London, England 2011

cgiv2011, Digital Art Gallery, Computer Graphics, Imaging and Visualization, Singapore, 2011

Friction Research Issue #4 (Reclaim the Mind), 2011, published by Nictoglobe Online Magazine for Transmedial Art & Acts, edited by Andreas Maria Jacobs. A series of digital publications on the theory and practice of New Media Art. Exhibited 'Panopticon and Crude Cruft.' May 2011

SOS ART 2011, An exhibit and event of creative expressions for Peace and Justice, Art Academy of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio. Exhibited an artist book entitled "Six October Days" of automated poetry generated from the words of radio talk show host, Rush Limbaugh. Presented a reading of selected works from the book. March 2011.

Intermedia Event, Big Muddy Film Festival, Carbondale, Illinois. Presented a collaborative performance as a member of the artists collective 'i/o workshop.' This performance consisted of live art and real-time automated computer generated images created by the use of genetic algorithms. February, 2011

2010

GA2010 – XIII Generative Art Conference – Politecnico di Milano University, Italy
Presented a paper and a short audio piece called Stub Cruft. December 2010

DRHA 2010 Conference: Digital Resources for the Humanities and Arts, Brunell University, London, England. Presented a live art performance using genetic algorithms. September, 2010.

Projections Performance Process, PPP Show at the Surplus Gallery, Carbondale, IL. Phase Transition, a multimedia installation created in collaboration with fellow members of i/o workshop.

Close Seconds, Radiofutura, Digital Media and Local Cultures, Porto, Portugal. A real-time sound piece created and streamed live from Carbondale to Portugal that was then broadcast live on the radio. Collaboration with fellow members of i/o workshop. October 15, 2010.

Projection, Group exhibition at the Varsity Theater, Carbondale, IL. Curated by Erin Smith. August 2010

Urban Interventions, Group Exhibition at the Reed Gallery, College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning, University of Cincinnati, Jan. 14 - Feb 19, 2010

"Recent Thoughts on Panoptic Cruft (fragments)." Surveillance and Society. Volume 7, No 2 (2010): 98-101 Online Journal

2009

Generative Art International Conference, GA2009, Politecnico di Milano University, Milan, Italy
Genetic algorithms creating artworks and a performance score, documented in a paper. Dec 15-17, 2009

Combined Faculty Art Exhibition, University Museum,
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL, Nov 12 - Dec 13, 2009

7th Annual Process, Performance, Projection
Surplus Gallery, SIUC, Carbondale, IL Nov 10-13, 2009

Group Exhibition: Domestic, presented by AC [Institute Direct Chapel]
547 W. 27th St, #519 New York, NY 10001, Mar 19 - Apr 11, 2009

2008

VERSION>08 Dark Matter
Version Festival is an annual international convergence of activists and artists showcasing emerging, progressive trends in art, politics, technology and music. Chicago, Illinois, Apr 17-27, 2008

Hunter_Gatherer
presented by CAST Gallery and Stock-site.org.au, Tasmania, Australia, 1st Apr–1st Jun 2008

Computer Art Congress 2008, CAC.2, Mexico City and Toluca City, Mexico, Mar 26, 27, 28, 2008

Ubuntu.Kuqala: An Online Digital Media Arts Exhibition
Curated by Dale Hudson and Sharon Lin Tay,
Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival
Ithaca College NY, 31 Mar–06 Apr 2008

Computer Art Congress 2008, CAC.2, Mexico City and Toluca City, Mexico, Mar 26, 27, 28, 2008

Iraqi Memorial, Commemorating Civilian Deaths, 2008 "Crude Cruft (1 minute memory tondo)"

International Workshop on Asia and Commons in the Information Age, ACIA
Christopher Adams, writer and critic based in Taipei
presentation: "CRUFT: The generative and procedural artwork of Robert Spahr",
Media Exchange 2, VT Art Salon, Taipei, Taiwan, January 18, 2008

2007

Generative Art Conference, GA2007, Milan Polytechnic University, Milan, Italy 2007

Worldwide Moving Image III, E32 NIGHT, 5C Cultural Center 5C Cafe, NYC 2007

Secret Artworks, Time Warner ArtWorks Gallery, Cincinnati, OH, 2007

2006

[R][R][F]200x--->XP - Version 3, Digital Art Festival Rosario/Argentina, 2006

Perform.Media, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 2006

Faculty Exhibition, Hartford Art School, Joseloff Gallery, West Hartford, CT, 2006

International Conference on Information Visualization, IV 2006, London, England, 2006

Computer Graphics, Imaging and Visualization, CGIV 2006, Sydney, Australia, 2006

PLAY, Drainmag.com, A refereed on-line journal published biannually. 2006

Trampoline Event #19, Nottingham, United Kingdom, Broadway Cinema. 2006

Adding Insult to Imagery? Artistic Responses to Censorship and Media, Indiana Univ. of Pennsylvania, &
Central Missouri State Univ. 2006 *Curated and with a catalog essay by Dr. Robert W. Sweeny*

2005

CRUFT, Solo Exhibition, Manifest Gallery, Cincinnati, Ohio, 2005 *Catalog published.*

#7: December edition of Hz Journal (Mire Cruft), Stockholm, Sweden. 2005

Pendu Gallery Online Exhibit, 2005

2004

Hourly Cruft included in the ArtBase, Rhizome.org at the New Museum in New York City 2004

6th International Salon of Digital Art, Havana, Cuba 2004 *Catalog published.*

Digital Art Gallery, an Int'l Conference on Information Visualisation, London, England 2004

Computer Graphics, Imaging and Visualization 2004, Penang, Malaysia

The Profession of Art, National Juried Exhibition, Foundry Art Centre, St. Charles, MO 2004

brainwrench.com 1998-2003

brainWrench.com

A website of digital images that can be sent as electronic greeting cards. brainWrench.com founded by Robert Spahr in June of 1998, is subversive. The sacred and profane are all expressed through innocent-appearing eCards, that turn the BlueMountain.com and American Greetings format upside down. Thousands of people have used these images to share with others ideas not easily expressed.

expanded arts 1995-1997

Expanded Arts - theatre & film

Expanded Arts was founded by Jennifer Pias and Robert Spahr in February of 1995, at 85 Ludlow St. NYC. The critically acclaimed theatre company produced numerous productions in it's "Storefront Theatre". Expanded Arts presented "Free Shakespeare in the Park(ing) Lot" in the Municipal Lot across the street from the theatre. The successful off-broadway "Shakespeare's R&J" was first produced by Expanded Arts in September of 1997. It is now the longest running Romeo & Juliet in the history of Broadway. Every summer Expanded Arts produced "94 plays in 94 days" the marathon production of original plays presented over the 94 days of summer.

Selected Film & Video - Directed & Edited

Sharmy the Scab, (digital film 72 min.), Summer 1997
 Alice in Wonderland dream sequence, Video (4 min), October 1996
 Beatrice, Video (15 min) an original adaptation of Rappacini's Daughter, Summer 1996
 The Balcony (scene 8) Super 8mm (3 min), October 1995
 Oedipus Interpreted, Super 8mm (5 min), September 1994

Selected Plays – Directed

Macbeth, William Shakespeare, March 1997
 Alice in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll, an original adaptation, October 1996
 94 plays in 94 days festival, several short original plays, Summer 1996
 Lotteria, Roy Friedman, June 1996
 King Lear, William Shakespeare, Shakespeare in the Park(ing) Lot, June 1996
 Elephant Calf, Bertolt Brecht, April 1996
 Christie in Love, Howard Brenton, March, 1996
 A Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens, an original adaptation, December 1995
 The Balcony, Jean Genet, October 1995
 Bread & Circuses festival, several short original plays, Fall 1995
 Edgar Allen Poe Shorts, an original adaptation of several short stories, October 1995
 Medea, Euripides, September, 1995
 94 plays in 94 days festival, several short original plays, Summer 1995
 Midsummer Nights Dream, William Shakespeare, Shakespeare in the Park(ing) Lot, June 1995
 The Lesson, Eugene Ionesco, March 1995

Selected Set Design – Designer

King Lear, William Shakespeare, June 1996
 Waiting for Godot, Samuel Beckett, March 1995
 Julius Caesar, William Shakespeare, November 1994
 Exit the King, Eugene Ionesco, The Kraine, September 1994
 Bald Soprano, Eugene Ionesco, The Kraine, (includes short video segment), June 1994
 End Game, Samuel Beckett, The Kraine, June 1994
 Machinal, Sophie Treadwell, Atlantic Theatre/New Aesthetics Workshop, March 1994

live art workshop 1993-1994

Live Art Workshop

Moderator of a group of multi-disciplinary artists, we would meet for weekly seminars to develop collaborative performance. Reading texts such as Marinetti's Futurist Manifesto, Artaud's The Theatre and it's Double, Dadaist writings, John Cage on the use of chance & Allen Kaprow on Happenings, we developed "Strategies of Live Art" that were then used to create live art performances.

Selected Performances

Oedipus Interpreted, The Red Room, September 1994
 Oedipus (an excerpt work in progress), Event Series #11, August 1994
 Inert, The Kraine Theatre, June 1994
 Inert (an excerpt work in progress), Event Series #10, June 1994
 Fluids, The Red Room, May, 1994
 Untitled, (cone, box, light), Benefit Show for The Kraine, May 1994
 Fluids (an excerpt), Event Series #8, March 1994
 Untitled, (cone, box, light), Event Series #7, February 1994
 An Environmental Fashion Show, The Red Room, February 1994

art actions 1992-1993

Art Actions

Reading "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" by Walter Benjamin, had such a profound effect on my thinking, that I began to re-evaluate my entire strategy of making art. I started presenting "Art Actions", public events resulting in various art objects created as residue, or a form of physical documentation. I no longer felt limited to traditional materials; xeroxed images, sounds, smells, language, and time became part of my vocabulary. The artwork was now variable, changing over time, unlike my previous static art objects.

Selected Actions and Exhibitions

Untitled (America), Art Action, Event Series #6, January 1994
 Flash Apparently Official, Art Action, Event Series #5, December 1993
 American Dream Cycle (part 2), Art Action, Event Series #4, October 1993
 American Dream Cycle (part 1), Art Action, Event Series #3, September 1993
 My Fellow Americans, Art Action, Event Series #1, June 1993
 Placebo, Art Action, March 1993
 Action/Documentation, Art Action, Kraine Theatre Gallery, December 1992

Gallery & Event Series Curator

Kraine Theatre Gallery, NYC September 1992 - September 1994
 Founder and creator of the Kraine Theatre Gallery. Over the two years of it's existence, the gallery presented group and solo exhibitions of painting, sculpture, drawings, photography, video, and artist books. As the curator, I also conceived and organized evenings of theatre, music, dance, film, and performance art which coincided with the gallery openings.

traditional media 1988-1992

Traditional Media – Selected Exhibitions

Placebo, Solo Exhibition, Kraine Theatre Gallery, NYC, March 1993
 Group Show, Kraine Theatre Gallery, NYC, June, 1993
 Group Show, Kraine Theatre Gallery, NYC, December 1992
 Small Works, 80 Washington Sq. East, Juror: Arnold Glimcher, Pace Gallery, (Received Jurors Award), NYC, 1992
 MFA Thesis Exhibition, NYC, 1990
 MFA Drawing Show, NYC, 1990
 Two Person Show, Carnegie Art Center, Covington, KY, 1989
 Two Person Show, KZF Gallery, Cincinnati, OH, 1988
 13th Annual Competitive, Arts Consortium, Juror: Danial Brown, KZF Gallery, Cincinnati, OH, 1988

teaching experience

Teaching Experience

Assistant Professor, New Media
Department of Cinema and Photography
College of Mass Communication and Media Arts
Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2009-present
New Media Production*
*History of New Media**
*Explorations in Live Art**
*Generative Art**
*Web Design / Interactive Design**
*Net.Art**
Intro to Sound and Image

Lecturer, Graphic Design
SUNY, Purchase College, 2008-2009
*Design for the Web **
*Digital Media for Designers I**
*Interactive Design**

Lecturer, New Media
SUNY, Purchase College, 2005-2009
*Creating Web Documents **

Adjunct Assistant Professor, Multimedia
University of the Arts, 2007
*Special Topics: Propaganda and Persuasion in a Digital Age**

Adjunct Assistant Professor, Media Arts
Hartford Art School, 2006

*Introduction to Media Arts**
*Explorations in Live Art/Digital Video**

Adjunct Assistant Professor of Visual Arts
Dowling College, 2005-2006
Designing with the Computer I (3 sessions)
History of Graphic Design

Guest Lecture, Robert Spahr: CRUFT
Art Academy of Cincinnati, 2005

Visiting Artist, Digital Media Seminar
Xavier University, 2004

Guest Lecture, Benjamin: Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction
Art Academy of Cincinnati, 2004

Instructor, HTML, Illustrator, Photoshop & Quark
Career Center, New York City 1998

Moderator, Live Art Workshop,
The Kraine 1993-1994

Teaching Assistant of Professor Donald Porcaro
Parson's School of Design, 1990-1991
Introduction to Sculpture

* courses developed

travel

Travel

Rome, Italy, December 2011
Milan, Italy, December 2010
London, England, September 2010
Milan, Italy, Dec 2009
Cross Country (NYC-San Francisco) United States, Jul-Aug 2004
Rome and Florence, Italy, Mar 2000
Southwestern United States, Jul 1992
Italy, Greece and Germany, Mar - Apr 1989

technical employment

Technical Employment

Developed and Designed the website for the PBS Documentary 'The Tragedy of Bataan', written and directed by Jan Thompson, 2011.
Associate Manager of Educational Technology, Art+Design, SUNY Purchase College 2008-2009
Webmaster, Siegel+Gale, strategic branding firm, 2006-2008
Web Producer, Beliefnet.com and Soulmatch.com, web portal, 2004-2005
Usability Designer, QA Manager, Global Education Network, online college courses, 2000-2004
Web Producer, Product Manager, About.com, web portal, 1999-2000
Intranet Coordinator, RIA Group, 1998-1999