Artware

FVNMA 4830.001
Paul Hertz, Instructor

The *Software* exhibition, curated by Jack Burnham at the Jewish Museum in 1970, reconfigured the relation of art to idea through the metaphor of "software." For Burnham, "software" was analogous to the aesthetic and conceptual context of an art work, while the work itself was "hardware": "hardware and software mutually affect and interact, determining each other's nature for a given problem." Computer art pioneer Frieder Nake viewed the interaction between [software | code | concept] and [hardware | production | art] as open and malleable to such an extent that the computer could be understood as a semiotics engine, producing sheaves of signs from a single generative application.

Using a variety of free, open source media applications and commercial applications available at SAIC, the Artware course will examine the shifting relationships between concept and realization, code and production. Because distribution and community are an essential part of both freeware and art, the course will include a study of the social context of open source art and open source software, with consideration of how careers in new media art may be constructed through "outsider" channels and communities.

In this studio course students will learn aspects of the JavaScript and Java computer languages, the authoring environments Processing and MaxMSP/Jitter, and libraries such as of WebGL. We will emphasize hacking and code modding as a learning style whose goal is the creation and distribution of New Media Art works. Artware projects such as GlitchSort by Paul Hertz, ExtraFile by Kim Asendorf and the Satromizer by Ben Syverson and Jon Satrom will be featured.

Themes

New Media Art, i.e. Glitch

Software Cultures, licensing via FLOSS, COPY-IT-RIGHT, (X), etc

Media Cultures, i.e. Appropriation and Remix

Distribution Networks, i.e. the Internet, Google Play, iTunes App Store, etc

Software Development and Design cycles, i.e. packages, versioning, forking, etc

Communities of practice, i.e. GitHub

Course Sequence

Node A: The Production Cycle Unchained. Using a variety of software applications and output technologies, we will explore how a single generative concept can be realized in multiple ways.

1. January 29
2. February 5
3. February 12

Node B: Personal Media Bots. Software as an instrument to deliver your personal style of expression. Working with different hackable applications and programming languages, we will examine the possibility of conscientiously creating style as a by-product of interaction, constraints and affordances. Can we get beyond a personal repertory of interface gestures to the creation of shareable culture engines?

4. February 19
5. February 26
6. Midterm Project March 5
7. March 12
8. March 19
Spring Break, March 21–24

Node C: Distribution Culture. Picking up where we left off, we will look at historical examples of distribution culture and its potential for topicality, robustness, and survival. In the spirit of Jack Burnham, we will venture beyond the confines of art to consider the wider implications of distribution culture, examining such areas as documentary cinema, tactical media, hacker networks, licensing strategies, and just plain giving away the store.

9. March 26
10. April 2
11. April 9
12. April 16

Final Project

13. April 23: Work on Projects
14. April 30: Work on Projects (Critique week, no class)
15. May 7: Critique and Recapitulation