

Paul Hertz

Artist Statement 2025

I use algorithmic processes to generate my archival pigment prints, intermedia compositions, animations and installations. My work has been exhibited and associated with the Algorists, a group of artists who use algorithms and computer programming to generate art, and with glitch art, a digital media tendency for which Chicago is a noted center. From my own point of view, my field is intermedia composition, with a particular interest in structures and processes that can be translated from one medium to another. I explore algorithms and emergent forms, data structures, noise, and error, particularly where they can be expressed both as image and as sound. Through the many processes I have explored, I have built a pattern-maker's toolkit of software, some of which is published as open source software.

Throughout the time that I have been producing prints, and earlier when I produced drawings and paintings, I have collaborated with musicians, composers, and theatrical performance groups. Most of my visual work relates to sound or to music. My generative system ignoTheory, which I began working with in Spain in 1980, combined tiling patterns and graphs to create paintings, installations, performances and music. My most recent software library, PixelAudio, provides a generalized approach to combining audio signals and images. My recent intermedia collaborations and my most recent digital prints were created using software processes that I incorporated into PixelAudio.

Forms accrue meaning through use and social interaction. In performances as Ignotus the Mage, a dysfunctional fortuneteller who can't see beyond the present, I use a deck of cards to create tiling patterns for a participant whom I engage in conversation as I "interpret the present" in the patterns they create. Ultimately, I am concerned with how meaning emerges from form and how multi-sensory imagination can evoke symbolic knowledge. Intermedia, algorithmic art and glitch are all processes where our fragmentary and conflicted consciousness investigates the world and tries to communicate its discoveries. Aesthetic experience may be the superficial result, but the generation of structures through which people can understand the world is the true aspiration of my work.

Chicago, 2025