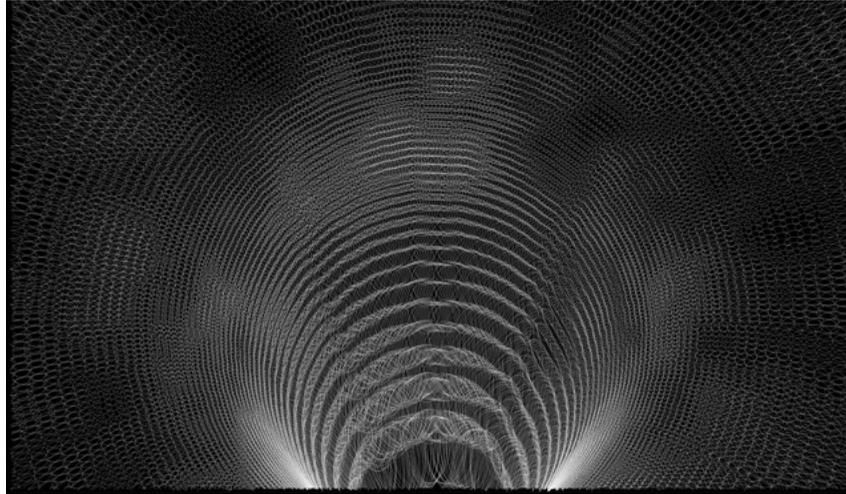


Robotic Drawings Turn Computer Code Into Undulating 3D Patterns

By Kevin Holmes — Jul 15 2014



On Thursday the Joshua Liner Gallery in New York opens its Summer Mixer group exhibition, showcasing a selection of traditional art and new media pieces. One of the participating artists, Michael Theodore, will be exhibiting a series of machine-etched scratchboard engravings.

For these etchings, Theodore commissioned engineers at Boulder Engineering Studio to build a robotic arm that could create millions of tiny straight lines from computer code. The lines were placed in precise locations on a layer of black ink, forming intricate and undulating patterns by revealing white clay that lies beneath. “Most of the time I am looking to uncover gestures that can be strung together into larger patterns,” the artist says about his work. Each engraving took the machine between 10 to 16 hours to produce.

The machine is able to realize ideas and formations that the human hand could never reproduce and the resulting patterns give the works a three dimensional quality. Theodore is inspired by snapshots of our perceptual experience, and he strives to capture this abstract or ephemeral moment in his work.

“I am interested in what happens when you dramatically slow down your normal experience of the world,” he says. “I try to drink in perceptual experience in a kind of nonverbal, nonthinking state. But when I reflect on the experience later, I am extremely analytical.”

Technology allows him to model specific parts of this altered experience—“an exact angle of light, or a specific type of intermittent fluttering sound”—and recreate it in abstract form in his art.

Thematically, the entropic nature of the world—order versus chaos—has a heavy presence in many of his pieces and these latest works are no exception. “Virtually every work begins with some type of orderly surface or process, which is then subjected to turbulence,” he explains.

“The works in the show all began with the idea of tiny loops arranged in a grid. I imagined the grid as a three dimensional surface which was then pushed, pulled, and twisted, sometimes gently, sometimes violently. I am fascinated by the fertile regions poised between symmetry and anarchy, and allowed remnants of both to persist in the final pieces.”

To see Michael Theodore’s work and other artists from the exhibition visit the Group Exhibition Summer Mixer 2014, Joshua Liner Gallery, July 17 to August 27 2014, 540 West 28th Street New York, NY 10001

Jul. 2014. Web. Jul. 2014 < <http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/robotic-drawings-turn-computer-code-into-intricately-etched-patterns> >